

# City of London Corporation Committee Report

<b>Committee(s):</b> Local Policing Committee - For Information	<b>Dated:</b> 16 <sup>th</sup> September 2025
<b>Subject:</b> City of London Police Vulnerability Overview – Biannual Update Sept 25	<b>Public report:</b> For Information
<b>This update provides</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Overview of Governance and Delivery</b></li> </ul>	Policing Plan
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	No
<b>If so, how much?</b>	NA
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	NA
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?</b>	NA
<b>Report of:</b> Commissioner City of London Police	Commissioner - City of London Police
<b>Report author:</b> Detective Chief Superintendent Mandy Horsburgh	Head of Crime and Specialist Operations and Strategic Vulnerability Lead - City of London Police

## Summary

This report reflects the bi-annual update on performance and delivery of the policing and partnership response to vulnerability and effectively the City of London Police (CoLP) is identifying, supporting and safeguarding vulnerable people.

This updates Members on the activity across key vulnerability strands within the City of London Police (CoLP), in partnership with colleagues within the Community Safety Team and Departments of Children and Adult services respectively.

The report will provide an oversight of strategic governance, current and future demand and collaboration taking place across the following vulnerability strands:

- Domestic Abuse
- Sexual Violence
- Child Sexual Exploitation and Child Protection
- Modern Day Slavery and Human Trafficking

- Hate Crime
- Mental Health

These are drawn out from the nominated strands of vulnerability defined and governed through the CoLP Strategic Vulnerability Board (SVB). The above are identified as the key areas of focus for City of London Police and Partnerships based on current and future threat harm and risk and identified as most likely to impact the square mile.

It is to be noted that drugs and drug related harm is covered within other deep dive reports fed into this committee.

The CoLP is a statutory safeguarding partner within the City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership (CHSCP) and the City and Hackney Safeguarding Adult Board (CHSAB). Both partnerships monitor the effectiveness of work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults, championing good practice and analysing data to inform service planning. The Commander Operations and Security, supported by Detective Chief Superintendent Specialist Operations, represent the CoLP on both Boards. The City specific sub-committees, meet bi-monthly, for both children and adults and report on the work of the sub-committees into the main Boards and are independently chaired and have representation from the CoLP as well as City of London Corporation (CoLC), Health, Education and other agencies. The Safer City Partnership also receives regular updates from the various Children and Adults Safeguarding Boards supporting the City.

Internally activity across vulnerability is driven through the Strategic Vulnerability Group (SVG), chaired by the Head of Crime and Specialist Operations, Detective Chief Superintendent.

This provides strategic oversight and direction on activity across the 14 vulnerability strands. These are aligned to the National Vulnerability Action Plan actions and themes. The group also provides governance and delivery oversight for the Violence Against Women and Girls Strategic Plan, Op Soteria<sup>1</sup> and Rape and Serious Sexual Offences (RASSO) working group.

Vulnerability sits within the Policing Plan as an operational priority to keep those who live, work and visit the city safe and feeling safe and is a golden thread that cuts across all aspects of policing, supporting delivery of the ambitions within the Corporate Plan.

In addition, HQ Services provide additional oversight of plan compliance with recommendations made by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) from both local and national reviews.

In terms of crime investigation, the Public Protection Unit (PPU) provide the investigative and safeguarding response across vulnerability issues, made up of specially trained detectives in dealing with domestic abuse, sexual offences and child protection.

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<sup>1</sup> [Operation Soteria – Transforming the Investigation of Rape \(npcc.police.uk\)](https://www.npcc.police.uk/operation-soteria)

## **Recommendation(s)**

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

## **Main Report**

### **Background**

1. In accordance with National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) direction, the CoLP align their activity to the National Vulnerability Action Plan (NVAP) that is structured around eleven strands of vulnerability, each with a dedicated lead at Superintendent/Chief Inspector. The current CoLP strands are as follows:

- Domestic Abuse
- Sexual Violence
- Stalking and Harassment
- Harmful Practices
  - (includes Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), Forced Marriage and Honour Based Abuse)
- Hate Crime
- Mental Health/Suicide
- Drugs and Drug Related Harm
- PREVENT
- Adults at Risk
- Child Protection
- Child Sexual and Criminal Exploitation
- Missing Persons
- Human Trafficking/Modern Slavery (MSHT)
- Management of serious and violent offenders (MOSOVO)

A full list of strategic and tactical owners is listed at Appendix to this report.

2. Governance of Vulnerability is provided by Strategic Vulnerability Group, maintaining bespoke strand action plans in line with NVAP themes listed above.
3. In addition, HQ Services provide additional oversight of plan compliance with recommendations made by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) from both local and national reviews.
4. The CoLP also feed into the Vulnerability Knowledge and Practice Programme (VKPP). This National programme maintains an overview of Police Force Vulnerability Action Plans (VAPs) providing opportunities for peer review, the sharing of best practice and the achievement of continuous improvement.

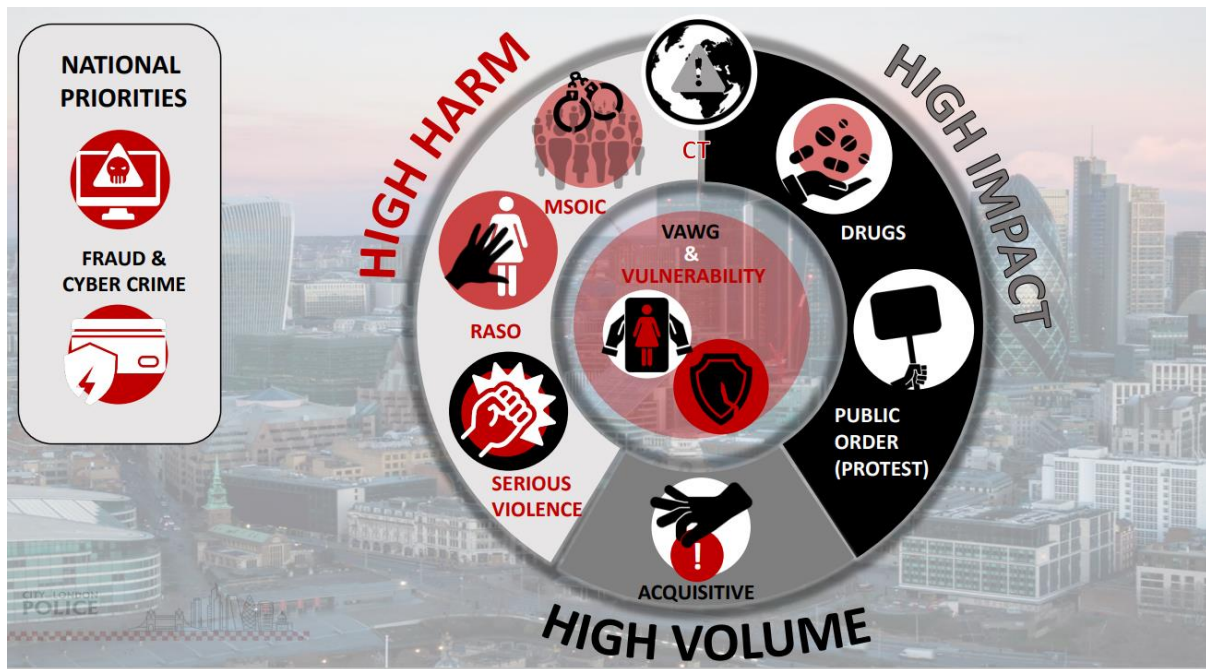
5. The CoLP Strategic Vulnerability Group (SVG) maintain a specific Vulnerability Risk Register that aligns to the CoLP risk management process.
6. The CoLP is a statutory safeguarding partner within the City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership (CHSCP) and the City and Hackney Safeguarding Adult Board (CHSAB). Both partnerships monitor the effectiveness of work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults, championing good practice and analysing data to inform service planning. The Commander Operations and Security, supported by Detective Chief Superintendent Specialist Operations, represent the CoLP on both Boards. The City specific sub-committees, meet bi-monthly, for both children and adults and report on the work of the sub-committees into the main Boards and are independently chaired and have representation from the CoLP as well as City of London Corporation (CoLC), Health, Education and other agencies. The Safer City Partnership also receives regular updates from the various Children and Adults Safeguarding Boards supporting the City.

#### **Current Position.**

7. Historically the City of London (CoL) receives low numbers of reports across all areas of vulnerability in comparison to surrounding boroughs. As such, the CoLP, along with partners aim to proactively understand the safeguarding and vulnerability issues affecting the CoL, focusing on prevention and raising awareness within the community. This work assists the discovery of hidden demand and with increased victim/public confidence could increase referrals/reporting.
8. In addition, HQ Services provide additional oversight of plan compliance with recommendations made by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) from both local and national reviews.
9. In terms of crime investigation, the Public Protection Unit (PPU) provide the investigative and safeguarding response across vulnerability issues, made up of specially trained detectives in dealing with domestic abuse, sexual offences and child protection.
10. CoLP remains committed in its response to Violence Against Women and Girls and continues to work with NPCC team, Vulnerability Knowledge and Practice Programme (VKPP) and College of Policing to ensure we continue to provide an effective policing response and support victims with professionalism and vigour. The VKPP is currently assisting us in response to our request for a peer led review to assist with our commitment to deliver the very best service in protecting and safeguarding those that most need our help.
11. City of London Police's effectiveness of how we deal with Protecting Vulnerable People and how well we manage high risk suspects and

offenders were both thematic areas of inspection in the most recent HMICFRS PEEL Inspection. Both areas were graded adequate with the latter being an upgrade from requires improvement from the previous inspection.

12. The largest proportion of vulnerability linked crime investigations within the City of London relate to sexual offences and domestic abuse. The majority of these relate to non-resident victims, visiting or working within the City. Through close partnership working with surrounding boroughs, the City of London Corporation (CoL) and the Vulnerable Victim Advocate (VVA), the CoLP ensures that any risks relating to both residents and non-resident victims and offenders are effectively managed. This is achieved through the array of effective multi-agency safeguarding meetings that are embedded within CoL processes, including the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) for domestic abuse, the Community MARAC or Multi Agency Risk Management (MARM), the Multi-Agency Child Exploitation meeting (MACE) and statutory child protection meetings.
13. A vulnerability dashboard is produced monthly that reports on demand and informs activity and tasking across the vulnerability strands. This is complimented by the strategic threat assessment and resulting control strategy that is produced for consideration of Tactical Tasking and Co-ordination Group (TTCG) aiding tactical alignment with threat and demand.
14. The dashboard includes a wide range of performance metrics across the vulnerability themes. This includes measurements to assess the impact and outcomes of policing activity against demand and drive future activity, initiatives, and focus. It is imperative that this includes partnership data where available. The Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are also integrated in the performance framework within local policing, specialist operations performance groups and is also included as a cross-cutting theme within the control strategy.



*Fig 1 Control Strategy*

15. The City of London Corporation (CoL) has a dedicated Violence Against Women and Girls sub-group managed through the Community Safety Partnership and reports into the Safer City Partnership (SCP). The sub-group is attended by the CoLP, key partners and stakeholders and chaired by a member of City of London Police. The sub-group and SCP is a key forum for driving partnership activity across the Violence Against Women and Girls spectrum.
16. In addition to CoL's Violence Against Women and Girls Forum, the Professionalism and Trust Team within the City of London Police are the strategic leads for Violence Against Women and Girls and report into the SVB. This governance structure is used to progress actions against the National Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy and its three pillars- Building Trust and Confidence, Relentless Perpetrator Pursuit and Creating Safer Spaces.
17. Our commitment to Op Soteria, a National programme to improve policing's response to rape and serious sexual offences, cements our commitment to improving our supervision of Violence Against Women and Girls investigations and ensuring we are making the best use of our policing powers to protect women and girls. In conjunction with our partners, including those at the Corporation, we also continue this important work within our communities, with the ongoing success of our 'Op Reframe' initiative to create safer spaces for women during our nighttime economy.

## **Domestic Abuse**

18. Effective scrutiny and oversight are provided at both internal and external level. This is to ensure that across the whole system there is a collective effort in delivery of:

- a. Effective Investigations of domestic abuse
- b. Providing quality service to victims of domestic abuse
- c. Ensuring positive outcomes for victims of domestic abuse

This allows partners to set clear areas of accountability and success measures in line with the above.

Illustration below demonstrates the multi disciplined effort in delivery of our collective aims.



*Fig 2 Oversight of service provision and governance for Domestic Abuse.*

19. Following the introduction of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, changes were made to legislation and Domestic Abuse Protection (DAP) Orders which are civil orders obtained through the magistrate's court were introduced as an additional method to protect victims. There is minimal use of these Orders have been sought by the CoLP. This is mainly because most CoLP Domestic Abuse offenders are arrested and the recent changes in the Bail Act means that robust bail conditions and protective measures can be used negating the need for a DAP Order.

20. In conjunction with this CoLP also have a high take up and amongst the best forces in delivering successful evidence led prosecutions. In the most recent HMICFRS Inspection this was highlighted as a positive policing approach. This again negates the necessity for protection orders to be used. However, this is reviewed on a case-by-case basis and where opportunities arise these will be pursued as a protective measure for victims. HMICFRS dip sampled 13 cases within their inspection and found all 13 cases to have been subject to a review in this way. This should provide confidence that CoLP continue to rigorously explore all opportunities to utilise orders where appropriate.
21. All domestic abuse investigations and non-crime matters are allocated to the PPU for investigation and safeguarding. The PPU work closely with the CoL to safeguard victims and in all cases consider evidence led prosecutions.
22. The force refers victims of domestic violence to independent domestic violence advisors, who are trained specialists in supporting victims at high risk of harm. The force has a good working relationship with these advisors, which assists in getting the best outcomes for victims.
23. Many of the domestic violence cases the force investigates involve visitors to the City of London. Less than 17% (YTD n36) represent City Residents.

## Data

24. Levels of Domestic Abuse continue a gradual increase as footfall continues to rise. Domestic Abuse incidents (including crime and other incidents) have shown a steady increase from April-June 2025 (n80) following fluctuating levels between January and April. With low residential populations the data is not comparable to other forces with overall recorded crime comparisons low. However, a large majority of CoLP crimes can be attributed to the Nighttime economy (NTE) rather than residents which is a continuing trend.

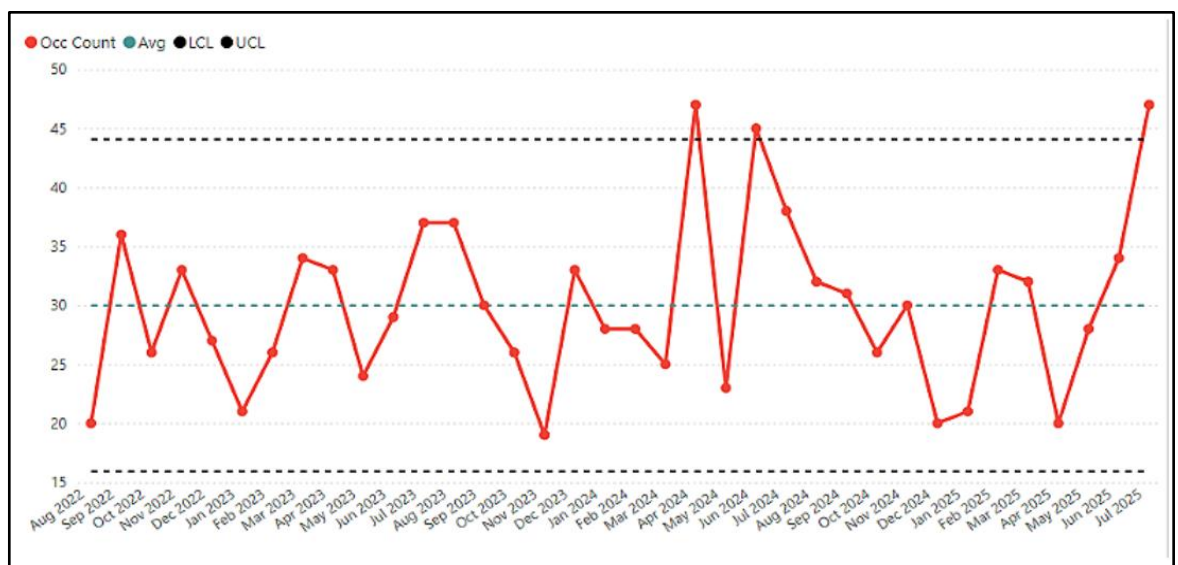
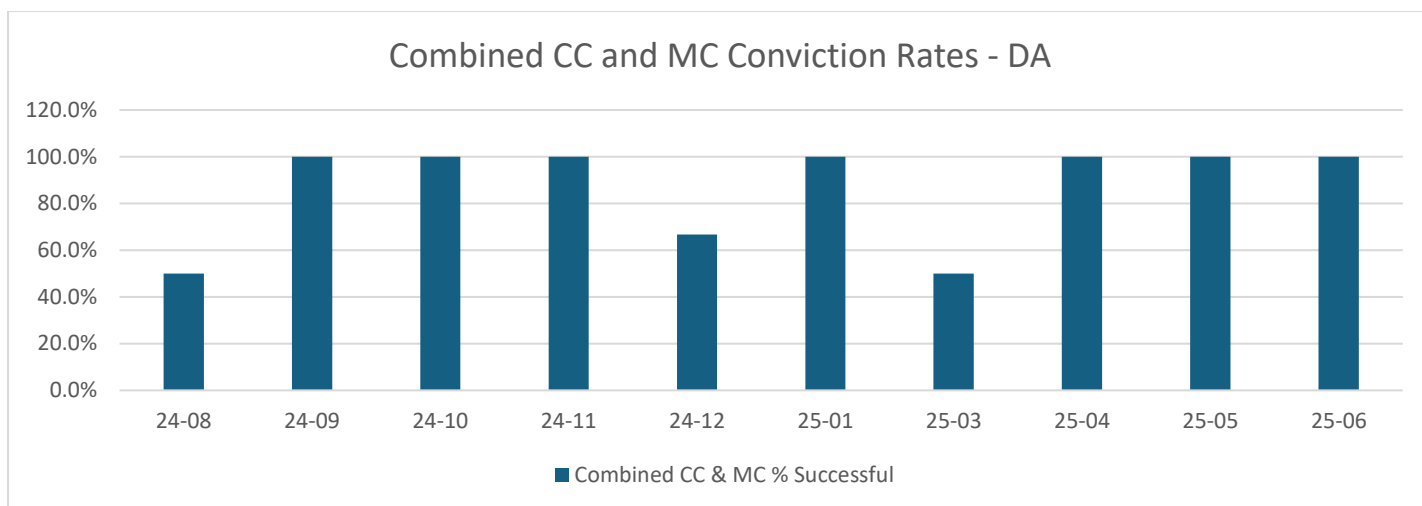


Figure 3 Domestic Abuse Incidents over time 2022 to July 2025



25. Whilst July 25 showed the greatest month on month increase it included the lowest numbers of high-risk domestic abuse gradings with only n4 of the n47 reported through the month. No high-risk cases represented City residents.
26. Those cases assessed as high risk or medium risk whereby victims are residents will be referred into the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC). This Multi-Agency Response is attended by representatives from the Community Safety Team (CST), social care, health, housing, victim support and other commissioned and voluntary services. The MARAC allows for effective information sharing and risk management across partners, focussing on the victim, perpetrator, and children. Regular joint agency training sessions are held for MARAC members, covering areas such as information sharing, risk assessment and safeguarding.
27. For noting MARAC in the City of London hears high risk DA cases or cases referred under professional judgement which may include those cases assessed as medium or standard risk. This agile approach means that a greater range of victims are afforded access to the opportunities provided by MARAC than would ordinarily be excluded to due to not reaching threshold of high-risk grading. COLP MARAC will only hear cases relating to City resident victims therefore referral rates are low.
28. There are currently no live cases currently being managed under the governance of the City MARAC with four cases being transferred to the victims residential MARAC arrangements.
29. YTD the CoLP charge rate for DA crimes is at 12% with 21% of domestic abuse investigations remaining live and likely to attract positive outcomes as they progress. This is well above national averages. The CoLP continues to maintain a higher-than-average conviction rate – testament to our focus on evidence gathering, supporting the victim and Evidence Led Prosecutions (ELP). Over the last 12 months the conviction rate has sat regularly at 100%. Whilst actual numbers may be low this outlines the quality of service afforded to victims of DA within the square mile.



*Fig 5 Domestic Abuse Conviction Rates City of London Police Aug 24 to Jun 25*

30. There are no significant changes this quarter with the following the greatest crime types; • Domestic non-crime incidents are our highest report with 45 offences (41%). These largely appear to be verbal arguments in public. • Violence without injury (overwhelmingly Common Assault)- 73 occurrences (91.3%) • Violence with injury (overwhelmingly ABH offences)- 34 occurrences (72%) • Stalking & Harassment (25 occurrences).
31. YTD approximately 17% of domestic crime reported can be attributed to City residents and accounts for 36 incidents over the 12-month period. Of these 36 incidents there are no live cases being managed through the City MARAC however 4 cases have been transferred to the appropriate local authority managing the safeguarding needs of the victim.
32. COLP have well developed Domestic Abuse partnerships across the Criminal Justice System. COLP forms part of the London South DA Focus Group which meets bi-monthly to discuss performance data, cracked and ineffective cases and consider best practice and joint training opportunities.
33. The Courts DA Steering Group, including CPS, MPS, victim support services and courts considers partnership working and driving improvements for victims across the CJ system. COLP has a dedicated Domestic Abuse Court at Westminster Mags, which is seen as the national best practice and gives rise to increased greater victim focus and improved outcomes for victims.
34. COLP are active partners in the London South Joint Operational Improvement Meeting (JOIM), following the national Criminal Justice Meeting structure, attended by AOJ DI/DCI. A range of performance metrics and issues are discussed at this meeting, including disclosure, case file quality and discontinuance rates. The JOIM feeds into the newly formed Strategic Joint Improvement Board (JIB) attended by Commander Operations and Senior Crown Prosecutors. This is focussed solely on COLP performance and identifies COL specific areas of focus. For example, currently considering CPS/police review of current open DA cases with

suspects on bail/RUI – something which would not be available across other forces due to our size. The COLP DA relationship with CPS is extremely positive and has been commented on by CPS leaders as being well developed and an example of how this can lead to positive outcomes for victims (as evidenced by conviction rates).

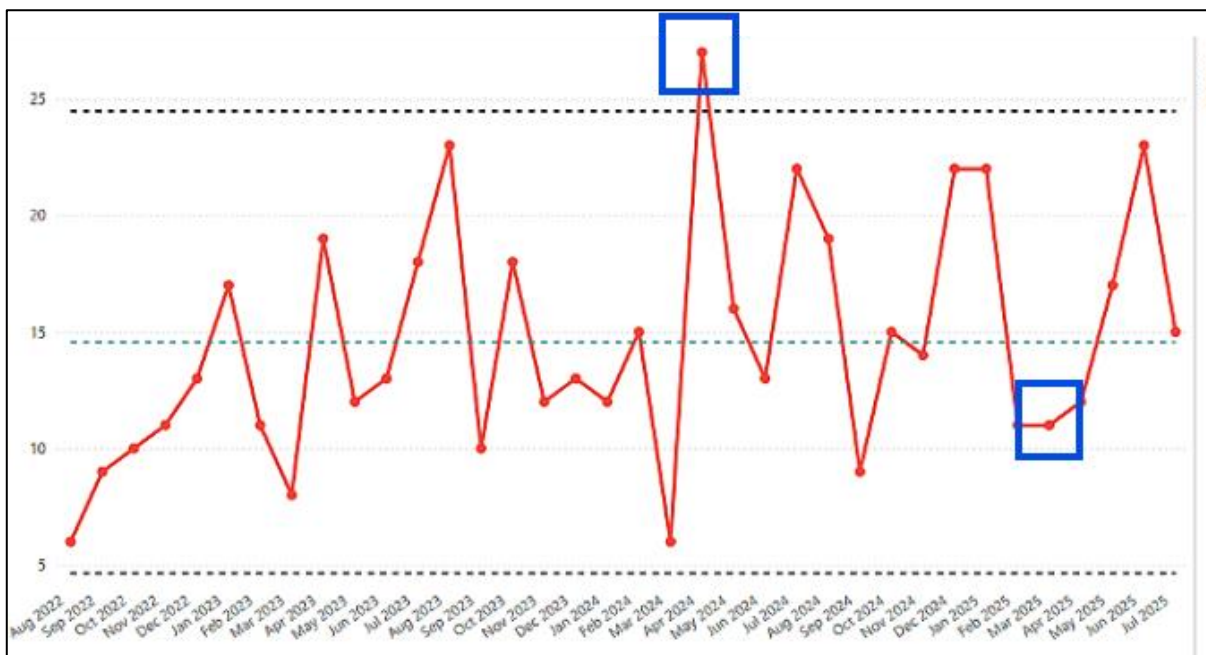
### **Sexual Violence – Rape**

35. Serious sexual offences within the City of London remain thankfully low. Of the rape cases reported CoLP has the best positive outcome rate within forces of 13.3% FYTD and with 40.2% of reported crime remaining open for investigation. This does not suggest any degree of complacency and there is the ambition to increase this further and continuously improve the victim journey. It is recognised this builds trust and confidence in reporting with victims. The national Op Soteria Improvement plan continues to work across Law Enforcement agencies and CPS to improve outcomes and more importantly victim journey across the whole system.
36. There have been 44 (23.5%) Rape offences recorded in the past 12 months (to 23/07/25) compared to 43 in the 12 months preceding. This previous quarter we saw 52 sexual offences an increase of 18% compared to the FQ4. Furthermore, rape offences have also seen a 55% increase this quarter compared to the previous (+5) The most prevalent Rape offence in the last 3 months are • Rape of a woman o16 (70% ~ 9 occ) The most prevalent Other Sexual Offences in the 3months are • Sexual Assault on a Female (62% ~ 24 occ)

### **Sexual Violence – Sexual offences**

37. Most sexual offences reported in the City of London are lower-level sexual touching offences, often linked to the night-time economy, alongside exposure offences. City of London Police YTD have achieved a 14.1% positive outcome rate with 38.4% of crime not yet assigned an outcome and remaining under investigation.
38. Following deep dive analytical work identified that, whilst numbers remain low sexual offences remain on the increase. It has also been identified 'spikes' in sexual offending appear in April, Summer and Christmas periods. It is possible this is due to higher footfall numbers during these times however further work is underway to understand attributing factors further.
39. Op Castillio was established in March 2025 to assist in reducing the seasonal demand described above. The purpose of the operation forms part of the wider Prevention Strategy and is specifically focussed on reducing sexual violence across the square mile. Taking this evidence led approach in April 25 sought to reduce the anticipated rise in reporting during this period. This achieved success and reduced sexual offending and suppressed the anticipated surge in offending. This was achieved through proactive prevention activity such as education through business/licensing webinars,

increased partnership activity through Op Reframe and use of behavioural detection officers.



*Fig 6 Sexual Offending In City of London Aug 22 to Jul 25*

40. To consolidate and build on this work CSupt Helen Isaac has been appointed as the prevention lead for sexual offending in the City of London.
41. Further analytical work is in place to complete problem profiles specific to the periods of the year that spike occur. From which it is then intended an intensification period of prevention activity will be developed with a specific focus and be evidence led.
42. The prevention work already in place is critical. Op Reframe is well established and runs monthly throughout the square mile. Op Reframe has continued this quarter providing a reassuring high visibility presence amongst the nighttime economy aligned to licensing and partnership activity. Officers ran safety and crime prevention initiatives into the New Year, including 'Ask for Angela' testing at licenced premises, drink spiking workshops and sampling, and initiatives aimed at getting people home safely. Over 40 Safe havens are available across the City as part of the response, particularly to support women during night-time economy hours, these are tested quarterly and CoLP sit on the National Safe Haven delivery board.

43. Licensing continues to co-ordinate nighttime safety initiatives including, but not limited to :

- a. Covert Spiking response testing in LP's with follow up engagement and education.
- b. Joint RPU, Servator, Dog Section, SOGS, NHP and Licensing drug Operations to intercept drugs that lead to vulnerability and violence coming into the City through road networks and transport hubs
- c. Upcoming launch of the City Safe Bus – providing a Safe Space for Vulnerable persons and St Johns/CoLP Cycle Medics Initiative
- d. Bespoke Ask4Angela and Spiking training & design out crime visit for venues that have had failings in real life scenarios, during testing or that have requested it
- e. Licensing Bus compliance checks 1600 – 0200, Thursday to Saturday
- f. Collaborative Operations with Business Improvement District, Crime-Stoppers, First Aid Nursing Yeomanry and over 50 partners.
- g. Co-Management of the Safety Thirst accreditation for venues which now includes an onus on preventing VAWG
- h. Training BTP Officers around City transport hubs to align with CoLP Licensing Safety Initiatives that can be delivered autonomously
- i. WAVE Training delivered to 80+ front line LP staff and management, 3 times per month
- j. Collaboration with LP's and Our Safer City to improve on offerings such as Taxi Marshalling which includes a handful of our venues supporting with funding to accommodate vulnerable women and girls getting a black cab home.

44. In support of the prevention of sexual offences in the square mile has seen officers trained as behavioural detection officers deployed in the NTE to identify predatory behaviour and take proactive intervention measures with individuals. This has been funded through the Home Office Serious Violence Fund. Whilst the 'Op Vigilant' (Op Vigilant is TVP, ours is Servator VAWG and is now established) is in its infancy it will allow the City to develop a perpetrator focus in reducing the risk of sexual offending in the square mile.

45. CoLP is an adopter force for Op Soteria. An implementation plan has been developed following feedback from the National Op Soteria team and progress is monitored through the monthly RASSO working group chaired by the Soteria lead D/Supt Waight.

## Data

46. Volumes of other sexual offences have been slowly increasing. Whilst these are relatively low numbers for rape, they are serious and high harm offences. Other Sexual Offences can vary in terms of harm. The increasing trend may be attributed to increase confidence and reporting by the public.
47. CoLP is seeing a sharp increase in sexual offending since March 2025. Although we did not see the out of tolerance levels shown in the previous year, we have seen sharp increases month on month with an average increase of 26% each month. However, we remain within tolerance levels. In the 12-month period to date (30/07/25) the volume of sexual offences remained relatively unchanged (1.1%) compared to the previous 12 months. It is important to note we are still talking about increases of incredibly low numbers of offences. A total of 187 occurrences for the past 12 months
48. Most offences continue to be linked to the Nighttime economy (69% ~ 129 occ) with the proportion not significantly different to previous years (73%) and no significant changes in recent months (59%). The highest volume of offences occurs between 23:00-00:59 (27%) and Weekdays consistently showing higher offences compared weekend. A large majority occur at Bishopsgate (12% ~22 occ) similarly to the previous 12 months (23 occ). COLP's sexual offences continue not to be linked to domestic abuse incidents with 0 incidents since May and June domestic related. This is lower than the national average which is around 10% of sexual crimes flagged as domestic incidents. Over the past 12 months 12 offences are domestic abuse related (6%)
49. The Heat Map analysis shows occurrence times show peaks on Thursday evenings, and then clustering in the early hours of Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

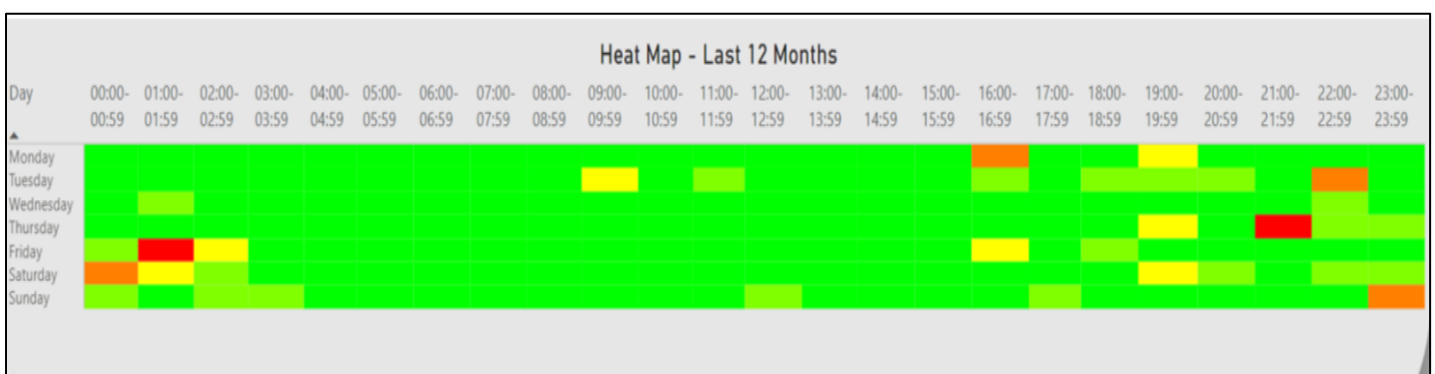


Fig 8 Heat Map Analysis – Sexual Offending in the City of London

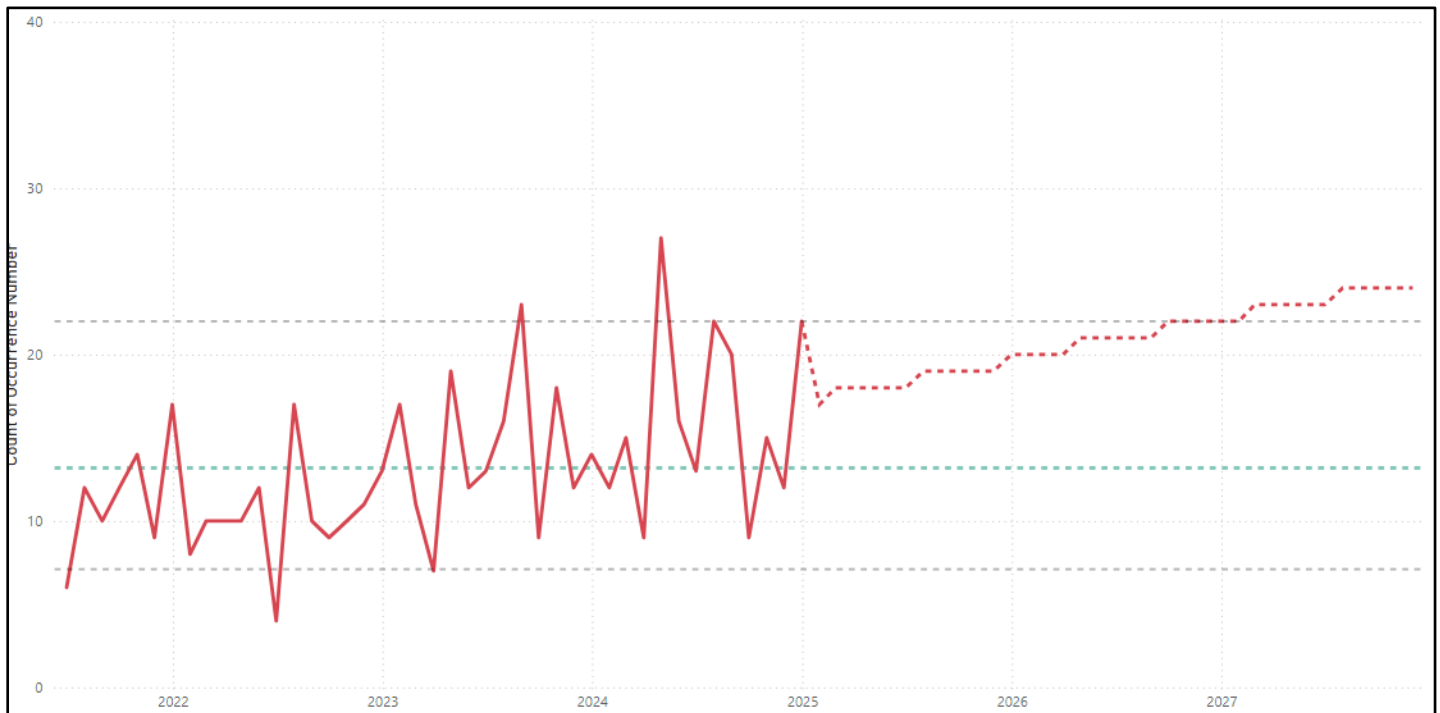




*Fig 9 Geographical Analysis – Sexual Offending in the City of London*

50. The CoLP response in this respect of focus within NTE, patrols plans and initiatives.
51. Whilst figures are increasing in reported crime levels this can be attributed to the collaborative efforts across licensing, NTE and wider Violence Against Women and Girls work. This can be seen as an increased confidence and increased awareness in reporting.
52. All sexual offences are investigated within the PPU apart from those with a suspect who is not known which are allocated to the Major Crime Team. This allows specialist officers to oversee all such investigation types with the right skills and capabilities to offer the very best service to victims. Changes in the operating model for PPU now sees 7-day cover and ensures specialist officers are appointed at the outset of the investigation.
53. The VVA plays a key role in supporting victims of sexual violence, ensuring they are supported from 'report to court'. This is alongside the team of Sexual Offence Investigation Trained (SOIT) officers whose provide the single point of contact for victims throughout the investigation.
54. The PPU work closely with the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) Rape and Serious Sexual Offences (RASSO) Unit to maximise opportunities for prosecution. At a strategic level, CoLP meet regularly bi-monthly with the London RASSO CPS led to monitor trends and ensure progress is in line with the RASSO Joint Improvement Plan. A joint CPS and CoLP scrutiny panel met in October 2024 to review a dip sample of cases discontinued by police and the rationale behind closing them.

## Predictive Analysis – Sexual Offending



*Fig10 Predictive Analysis - Sexual offending in the City of London*

55. Forecasts for sexual offences have been completed using the current process of performance and then five years. Sexual offences have been forecasted because they are a high harm crime type, representing more serious and complex investigations, and due to the increases being seen in this area.
56. Based on both the current trend and the five-year trend, both sets of predictions indicate an increasing trend over the last two years which have been realised and further increases in 2025 and 2026. Currently it is assessed that CoLP will experience a 34% increase between 2024 and 2027 - n65 extra crimes a year about n5 per month.
57. Based on the predicted increase using both methodologies it is important for the CoLP to scrutinise the resources in the PPU to ensure that they are equipped to deal with these. This is both in-terms of volumes as well as role types. Sexual offences are high harm crimes and ensuring the adequate volume of PIP 22 qualified officers is key to investigating this crime type and trying to bring offenders to justice.



## Child Sexual Exploitation and Child Abuse

58. The number of child sexual abuse (CSA) and child sexual exploitation (CSE) and cases within the City of London is low in terms of comparable commission rates with other Police forces. This is in part due to our low residential population and small number of educational establishments. However, we are experiencing increases in reporting. YTD this has shown a 178% increase (n32). All cases are referred to the PPU and investigated by specially trained officers and are operating within required capacity at this time but will remain under review going forward to ensure effective capability is maintained.

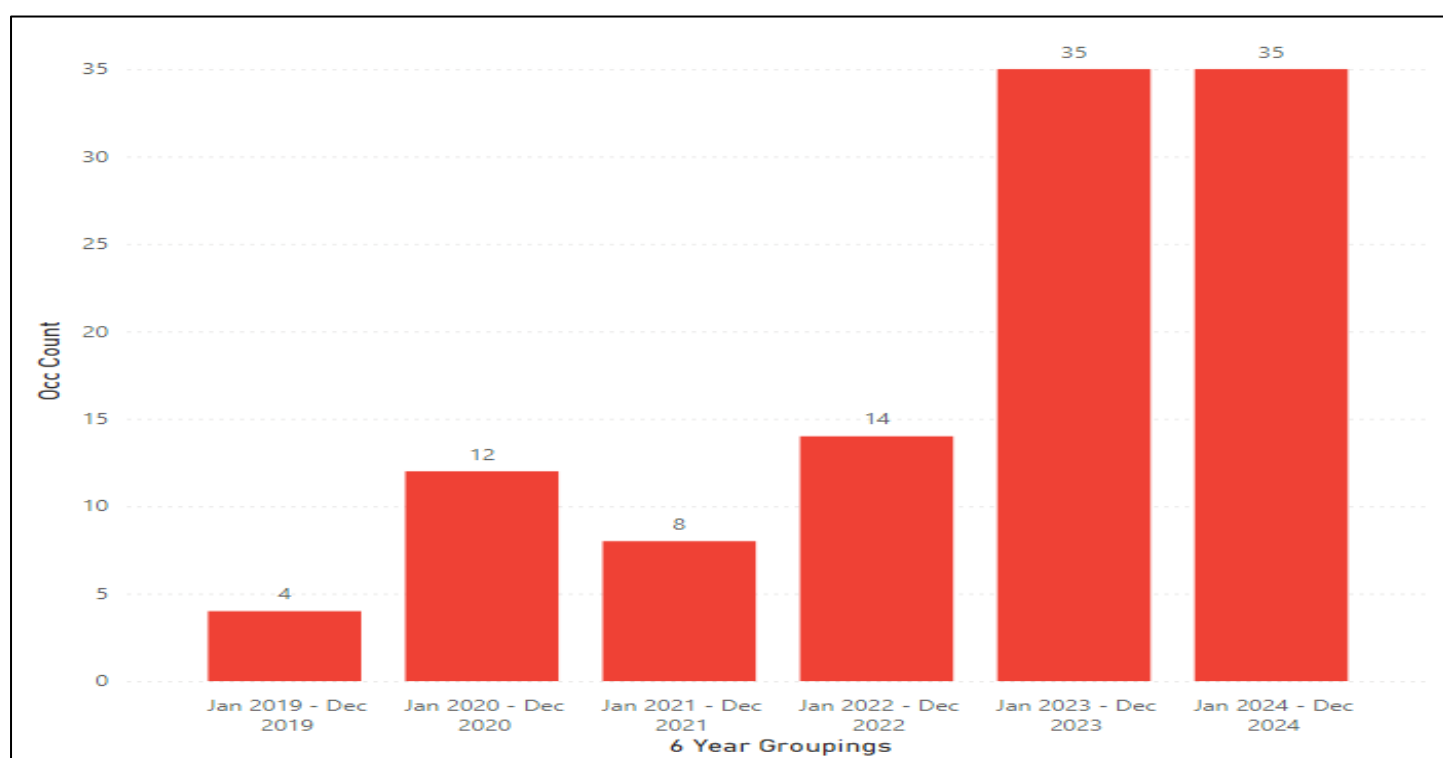


Fig 11 Child Sexual Abuse City of London Police 2019 – 2025

59. The PPU and CoLP work closely with the CoL Children's Services Team through referral of Public Protection Notifications utilising telephone or video conferencing facilities for strategy and child protection conferences. CoLP is a statutory partner of the City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership, represented by the Commander Operations to ensure statutory functions are discharged. The DCI PPU or Det. Supt of Investigations represents at the relevant sub-committees with the Head of Crime and Specialist Ops or Commander Ops and Security giving representation at executive level.

60. In relation to child exploitation, reporting across the City continues to be low. CoLP work focuses on raising awareness and ensuring frontline staff and the community identify the signs of exploitation. Similarly, CoLP seek to close any intelligence gaps when they are identified. A deep dive on child

sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation has been commissioned locally and published in March 2025.

61. City of London Police is fully engaged with the National Child Exploitation team in accepting and implementing the recommendations from the National Audit into Group based Child Exploitation and Abuse led by Baroness Casey Review.
62. Operation Makesafe is a national operation focussed on recognising CSE within hotels and other businesses. CoLP rolled this out in 2015 in partnership with the MPS. This has continued to develop and CoLP is now part of a national working group to standardise the Operation Makesafe work. Operation Makesafe deployed in July 2024 and tested the response of hotels in the city to suspected CSE a more recent deployment November – where premises fall short on testing, they are provided with advice and subject to re-visit. Testing and exercising across Hotels in the square mile took place in November 2024 with further testing is taking place throughout Summer 25.
63. The PPU DCI and Children Social Care (CSC) Service Manager jointly chair the MACE (multi agency exploitation meeting), attended by a range of partners, where the City's response to child sexual exploitation (CSE) and child criminal exploitation (CCE) is considered, in response to identified trends or future threats. The focus is on the concept of contextual safeguarding to protect individuals and the community.
64. In relation to online exploitation and abuse, CoLP receives a relatively small number of referrals from the NCA (National Crime Agency). CoLP does not have a proactive online investigation team however officers in PPU are trained to utilise the CPSys (Child Protection System online), an online system to identify those sharing indecent images of children who geolocate to the City of London. To date, no City based offenders have been identified through this system, but it is checked monthly.
65. The most likely referral following the identification of online abuse coming into the public protection teams in CoLP are following the seizure and examination of devices for other crime types of whereby indecent images of children are identified.
66. Officers involved in the investigation of indecent images of children have received appropriate training and have necessary technology in place for effective investigation of crime of this type.
67. PPU officers are also trained in the use of CAID – Child Abuse Image Database. This national system enables officers to differentiate between first generation images and those previously circulated by offenders. First generation images represent the greatest threat as the victims need to be identified and safeguarded. To date no first-generation images have been discovered because of any CoLP Indecent Images of Children (IIOC)

investigations. The CoLP Cyber Crime Unit and Digital exploitation Team assist with any proactive online work required to target offenders.

68. Information sharing with children's services at early stages of such investigations is critical to ensure effective safeguarding of children and prevent further risk to others. To ensure this is working effectively there is a planned multi agency tabletop exercise planned in Jan 2025. This has been planned and hosted by City of London Police and will be attended by PPU officers and children services whereby effective information sharing will be one of the areas tested.

69. City of London Police is in the process of reviewing the Child Centred Policing Strategy and have appointed a strategic lead to review, develop and deliver the strategy -Detective Superintendent Rice. Governance for delivery will sit within the Strategic Vulnerability Board.

### Public Protection Notices and Referrals

70. PPNs have historically fluctuated quite significantly, however have become much more stable over the past 12 months. the current 12months volume (July 24 – June 25) a significant reduction (-18.7%) on the 12months previous. It was confirmed that a qualitative review by PPU and COL safeguarding has no concerns over the types of safeguarding reports being raised and that this lower level of records is not due to underreporting

71. Whilst PPN types can fluctuate Adult at risk remains the greatest notice being recorded, followed by child concern, and then domestic abuse.

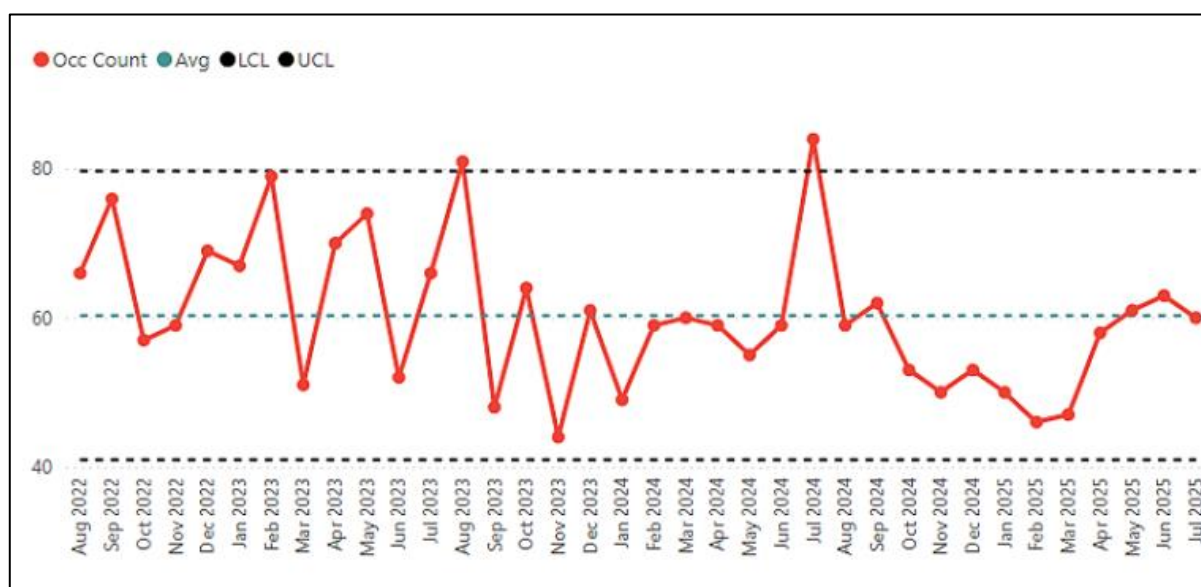


Figure 11 PPNs submitted CoLP Aug 22 – Jul 25

72. The CoLP last underwent a HMICFRS inspection specifically focussed on Child Protection in 2019. Since that time and based on emerging recommendations further training for staff has been provided to embed the concept of 'the voice of the child', and the implementation of a crime scrutiny group to review child protection investigations and referrals. This assists in to qualitatively assess the standard of reporting and investigation and ensure the child is at the centre of any police action – including treating children as children in a custody setting. These reviews report into the Crime Standards Board. Additionally, training has been provided to Control Room staff to ensure they understand vulnerability and are utilising a series of prompts designed to ensure a standard and thorough response at the outset.

### **Modern Slavery and Organised Immigration Crime (MSOIC)**

73. Modern Slavery and human trafficking are a growing theme which can crosscut through many crime types. The number of modern slavery reports has decreased since the start of the COVID pandemic. This is most likely due to the reduced footfall and slow return to pre pandemic levels of workers/ visitors to the City and crime within the City of London, as it is usually discovered because of interactions around other crime types such as drug supply and prostitution.

74. A City of London MSOIC problem profile has been developed setting out the nature of the threat on a national, regional and local basis. The profile has allowed City of London Police and Partners identify the threat picture across the square mile. Similarly, it has also identified areas whereby we may wish to explore intelligence gaps and knowledge.

75. Utilising this plan a CoL specific 4 P plan has been developed in consultation with the MSOIC regional co-ordinator and the implementation of this will be governed through the SOC oversight board. The CoLP was recently inspected by the national MSOIC lead and an enhancement plan has been developed, which will be delivered through the MSOIC working group.

## Infographic Summary – Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking (MSHT)

(APR 2024)

\*data included in this summary is from 01/02/2019 – 31/01/2024

OFFICIAL - SENSITIVE

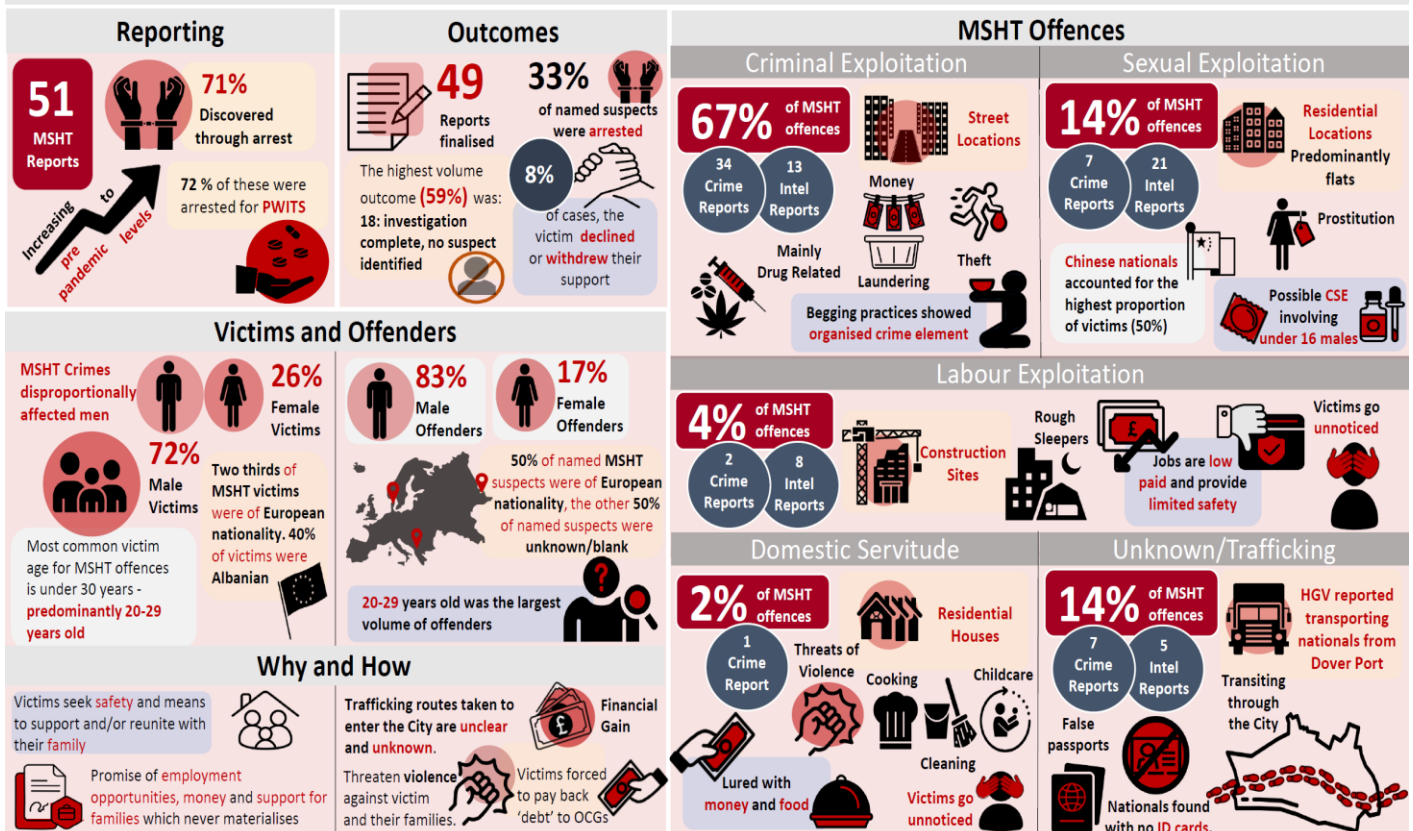


Fig 12 Problem Profile MSOIC

76. A substantial proportion of CoLP National Referral Mechanism referrals continue result from defences raised by individuals arrested for drug supply offences. Where connections to organised crime groups are identified, investigations are progressed by the Serious Organised Crime Team. PPU lead on victim support and safeguarding. This enables a coordinated approach to activity across MSHT and county lines drug activity.

77. CoLP is closely linked with local, regional and national partners, through the CoLP Modern Slavery Forum and Project Enterprise – the Pan-London practitioner meeting for police and partners. CoLP undertakes activity in line with national 'Operation Aidant' or County Lines intensification periods, each period focussing on specific area of MSHT (e.g., child exploitation, prostitution). CoLP provide a national return to the NCA following these periods of action and have ongoing investigations surrounding modern slavery and human trafficking.

78. CoLP has MSHT SPOCs in the force, who have completed an extensive training course in investigating MSHT and drive training across the CoLP. They can advise investigators and are also trained as Victim liaison officers. CoLP has Senior Investigating Officers trained in leading Major Crime and

Serious and Organised Crime Investigations that can lead and coordinate any complex investigations.

79. CoLP has significantly improved its response to proactively tackling Serious Organised Crime types that impact across local, regional and national jurisdictions. CoLP has strengthened its response to tackling organised crime by embedding and collaboratively working closely with National Crime Agency Partners.

## **Hate Crime**

80. Responsibility for the CoLP response to hate crime sits within Local Policing (Neighbourhoods) to raise awareness and increase reporting. This is closely linked with work focussing on and reviewing antisocial behaviour to ensure hate crime is not missed. Serious hate crime is investigated by the Public Protection Unit. Victims of hate crime are signposted to specialist support services either via the Vulnerable Victim Advocate or through organisations such as StopHate and TrueVision.
81. CoLP is a member of the Southeastern Regional Hate Crime Group where best practice is shared.
82. Hate Incidents Overview Hate incident volumes have been steadily falling since April 25 after a sharp decrease from March (43 occ) In May and June we had a total of 49 hate incidents. Analysing data for the most recent 12-month period (Mar 24 – Feb 25) and comparing it to the preceding 12 months here has been an increase of 14.3% (+50).
83. Racial hate crimes continue to be the most common motivator in the City over the last quarter (65% ~ 50 incidents), followed by religious and faith-based hate crimes (11.7%% ~ 9 incidents).
84. Religious and faith-based hate crimes were showing significant increases since the beginning of the year but have stabilised and are well within tolerance levels this past quarter.
85. There continues to be significant link between Hate Crime and the NTE hours with 58% of offences the past quarter committed between 1600 and 0600 however this is a decrease from the previous report of 66%. This is an increase on the previous 12 months where on average 63% of Hate Crime was linked to NTE hours.
86. The volume of Hate Crime against Officers has remained at a similar level with 5 Hate Crimes against officers between May 2025 and July 2025 compared to 4 last quarter.

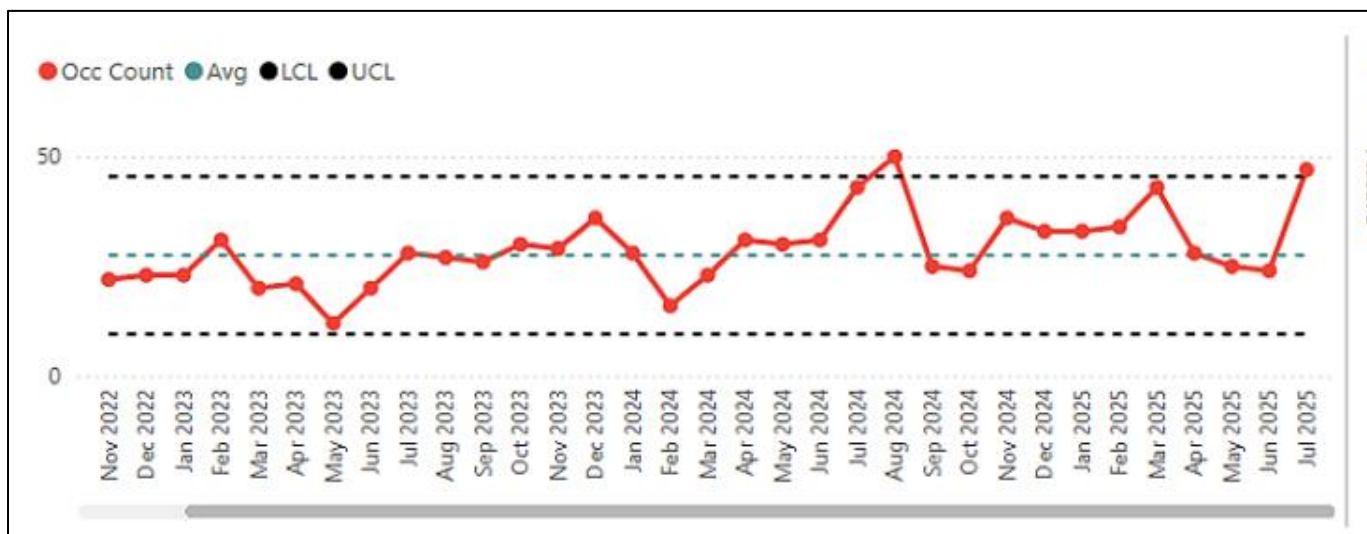


Fig 13 – Hate Crime occurrence overview - Nov 22 to Jul 25

87. There are currently 67 Open Hate related occurrences in COLP a decrease of 23 occurrences since last reporting. 74% of these are being investigated with Specialist operations with 12 others being investigated in Response or Neighbourhood Policing Teams.
88. CoLP has identified a range of opportunities to reduce hate crime and improve our response including the following:
  - a) Improving the risk assessment process for hate crime incorporating a risk template that will score the level of risk to victims for a higher level of safeguarding. This score will indicate either a standard, medium or high-risk level and will then be raised for supervisors to action any follow up safeguarding.
  - b) Providing officers with a 20-point template plan so that investigations are consistent and to the highest standard. This plan will make sure officers consider community impact statements, social media enquiries to evidence hostility, possible PREVENT referrals, intelligence checks, repeat-victim/offender and so on. This has been developed by actively reviewing Hate Crimes to identify where we can improve.
  - c) Provide weekly reports of hate crimes, and their compliance with incorporating the Hate Crime Risk assessment and 20 Point Plans
  - d) Supervising compliance in using templates correctly and filling in gaps in officer knowledge and tasking them in order to improve compliance.
  - e) The template will also ensure officers obtain Victim Personal Statement's (VPS) during initial interaction/ statement taking. This is to maximise confidence for victims, that measures are being applied for. If victim declines



a VPS, a body worn video clip of their refusal will be added to the template for transparency.

- f) Introducing a 'support services available to victims' leaflet, which will be a mandatory handout for officers to provide to victim.
  - g) Organising and promotion of events to raise awareness around Hate Crime e.g. Hate Crime Awareness Week. This is completed online and within the community.
  - h) Having an intelligence-based approach to Hate Crime, disseminating briefings to frontline officers to aid their response to incidents and prevent offending.
  - i) Utilising social media to encourage awareness around Hate Crime. Also using this platform for 'Identification sought' to increase positive IDs and spotlighting good work.
  - j) Piloting of a feedback survey for officers who have experienced racism on duty, to see how we as a force can best support those experiencing hate crime. This is so that we are continuously reviewing the effectiveness of policies/procedures such as Op Hampshire (Assault on police) and the internal element of the Police Race Action Plan.
  - k) Personal Social, Health & Economic Education (PSHE) programme, which will include inputs to support City Schools in educating and protecting young people in respect of Hate Crime.
  - l) Benchmarking across forces to develop a City External Scrutiny Process, which identifies areas for improvement in responding to Hate Crime.
  - m) Developing a training package(s) to raise awareness of the impact of hate crime on colleagues and to ensure officers/staff (including Call Handlers) respond to it effectively.
  - n) Develop dynamic tactics to increase victim willingness to report hate crimes by increasing their confidence through education on public order offences.
  - o) Develop dynamic tactics to raise awareness of non-crime hate incidents.
  - p) Survey the public where possible on their awareness around hate crime and why they may not report.
  - q) To identify trends and problem locations and take dynamic responses to address such issues.
89. The proportion of hate crimes recorded in the past 12 months (August 24 – July 25) with a positive outcome proportion is 11.5%. This is in line with national averages. There is significant ambition to build on this and with 15.8% of hate Crime still under investigation this is likely to rise.



## **Mental Health**

90. Mental Health and Suicide are a separate strand under the vulnerability priority. Whilst this report does not focus on these areas, it should be noted that this is a cross-cutting issue across many of the other vulnerability areas. For example, many domestic abuse victims and perpetrators present with mental ill health, which is often an underlying issue in many of the high-risk MARAC cases discussed.
91. The CoLP, CoL & NHS fund the Mental Health Street Triage (MHST) nurses who proactively support frontline staff by providing on the street assessment of individuals presenting with mental health issues/in crisis. They ensure appropriate signposting and use of mental health detention powers, freeing up valuable police time whilst providing the right care and improved outcomes for individuals. Additionally, there is effective partnership working through the Community MARAC, chaired jointly by CoLP and the Community Safety Team where complex cases of antisocial behaviour or those with repeat mental health issues can be discussed. Where an officer acting on their own may have detained a person under S136, the MHST nurses using their skills and experience have avoided the use of a S136 detention 87 times since May, enabling the right care to be given quicker for those in crisis and reducing police involvement.
92. There is considerable work ongoing with CoL & NHS partners to provide mental Health support to those in the CoL area and reduce suicide. There is an NHS pilot scheme to help streamline the S136 process across the London Region and assist officers and Mental Health Street Triage clinicians when on duty, with finding a Hospital Based Place of Safety (HBPOS). There is also the Bridge watch initiative, that is led by The Ascension Trust, it operates in a similar way to the street Pastor project and is currently operating using trained volunteers to patrol the main bridges at key times within the City. These volunteers provide a first point of contact and support to those experiencing a mental health crisis. Additionally, there are several options being explored with partners to expedite the right care and transportation to the right place for those who find themselves in crisis.
93. Future investment in mental health initiatives and support across the partnership is imperative in reducing the burden that mental health places on the police service.
94. CoLP are working towards the implementation of Phases 1&2 of Right Care Right Person (RCRP), a nationally recognised policing model for responding to mental health crises. The purpose of RCRP is to ensure the most appropriate agency responds to a mental health incident and people in crisis can access compassionate support that appropriately meets their needs in a timely manner. Joint training with the MPS is being arranged as they have successfully utilised this decision-making model for a number of years.

Operational partners are aware of this model due to use by other police services and they will be briefed by CoLP once a go-live date is identified. The aim is for this to be implemented before the end of 2025.

95. Operation Umbara has been created to collate intelligence regarding high intensity users (HIU). A HIU is a person that presents in The City two or more times in a year in a perceived MH crisis and puts themselves or others at high risk of harm in order to get their needs met by The Emergency Services or members of the public. Through joint working with our MHST service and frontline officers submitting intelligence, HIU are identified by the Partnership and Prevention Team. Interventions like community protection warnings are utilised to divert them away from risky behaviour and give guidance on seeking appropriate help.
96. The Secure City Programme is a joint initiative between the City of London Corporation and City of London Police, which aims to deliver significant improvements to the safety of residents, workers and visitors in the Square Mile. One phase of the programme is looking at how technology could be used to support suicide prevention on the bridges. Particularly, leveraging video analytics, machine learning and artificial intelligence for CCTV systems to identify people in mental health crisis.

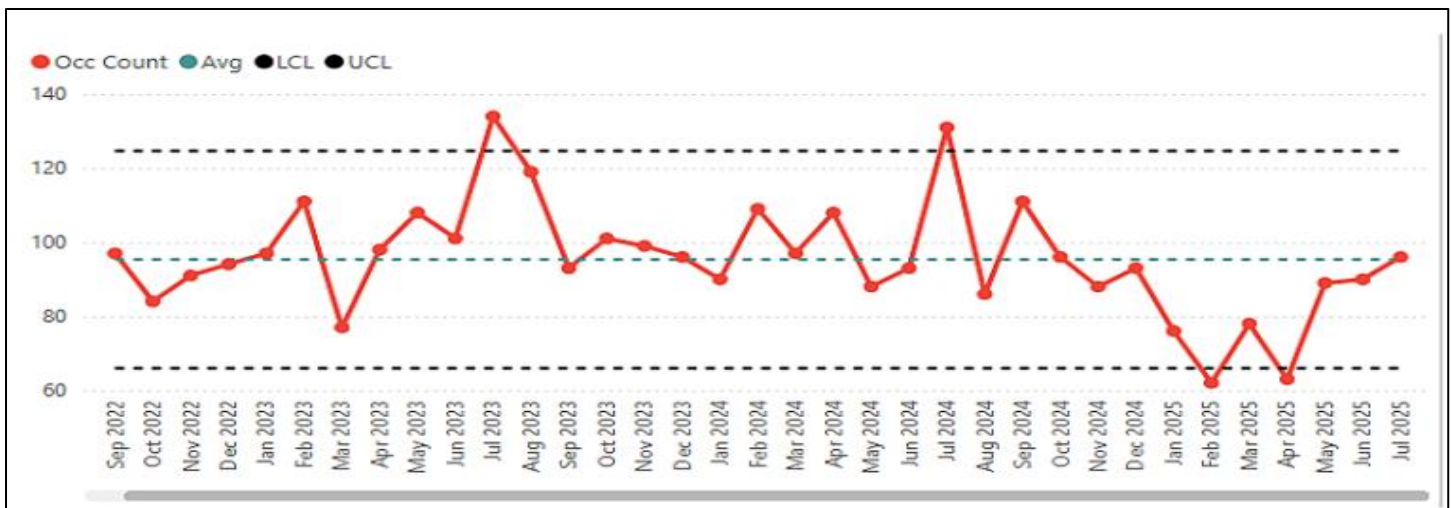


Fig 15 - Mental health Incidents Sep 22 to Jul 2025

## **Conclusion**

97. Vulnerability is 'golden thread' that weaves through all aspects of policing. CoLP and CoL work closely together to deliver activity across strategic objectives in line with the National Vulnerability Action Plan and CoLP Policing Plan 22-25. Whilst crime levels remain relatively low, partnership work to raise awareness, increase reporting and provide public reassurance is paramount to improving the effectiveness of our response that in turn will enhance trust and confidence within the community we serve.

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – City of London Police - Strategic and Tactical Vulnerability Leads.

### **Mandy Horsburgh**

Detective Chief Superintendent City of London Police.

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**Appendix 1 - City of London Police strategic and tactical leads across thematic Areas of vulnerability.**

Thematic Areas / Strands of Vulnerability	Strategic/ Thematic Lead	Tactical Owner	Comments
Child Abuse & Neglect & CSE	DCI PPU	DI PPU	Subject matter experts
Domestic Abuse	DCI PPU	Chief Inspector – Response	Evidence led decision based on commission/demographic of victims
FGM / HBV – DI PPU			Covered within Rape and Sexual Offences plan
Managing Sex Offenders	DSupt Investigations	Chief Inspector - NPT	Ensure Collaborative Approach to management of RSO in community and those impacting our communities.
Rape & Sexual Offences/Abuse	DSupt Investigations	DI PPU	SME and Leads for delivery of Op Soteria
MSHT & OIC (including prostitution)	DCI PPU	Chief Inspector - NPT	
Drugs & Drug Related Violence	DCI SOC	Chief Inspector - RPU	Ensure regional to local approach embedded in CoLP
Serious Violence	Supt Response & NPT	DCI CID Investigations	
Missing Person	Chief Inspector – Response	DI CID Investigations	
Adults at Risk – DI PPU			Covered with DA and MH Planning based on demographic and AAR in CoL

<b>Mental Health &amp; Suicide</b>	Supt Response & NPT	CI Partnerships	
<b>Hate Crime</b>	Supt Response & NPT	DI (VCU) Investigations	Ensure effective Hate Crime Investigations.
<b>VAWG</b>	CSupt P&T	DSupt P&T	Strategic Ownership of VAWG currently sit within P&T

Of Note PREVENT is managed by Counter Terrorism Policing Team at City of London Police and also report into the SVB