



Chief Constable Andy Marsh
Chief Executive
College of Policing

By e-mail only

15 November 2022

Home Office response to super-complaint recommendations

Forces' ability to respond to, and tackle, violence against women and girls (VAWG) is not only crucial to protecting victims of these incredibly serious crimes, but also to upholding public confidence in the police service. This government is committed to ensuring that perpetrators of these offences have nowhere to hide.

Where these acts are committed by members of the police service, it is all the more concerning. The public must be assured that the police are there to protect them, but this behaviour undermines the very nature of what it means to serve in the police.

I am therefore incredibly grateful to the work of the College of Policing, together with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) and the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC), in investigating and responding to the Centre for Women's Justice's super-complaint on police-perpetrated domestic abuse.

The Government is committed to improving the response to domestic abuse and that is why, earlier this year, we published the cross-Government Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan, investing more than £230 million to tackle these heinous crimes. This includes up to £3.3 million to help fund the rollout of Domestic Abuse Matters training to police forces including those who have yet to deliver it or who do not have their own specific domestic abuse training.

However, this report recognises there is a great deal more to be done and I welcome the collective action of the sector to address this.

Recommendation four

The Home Office should consider whether it would be appropriate to make any changes to legislation to ensure that police victims of PPDA do not have weaker rights (for example, in relation to being kept informed of investigations and subsequent proceedings, and to seek an independent review of the outcome of an investigation) than non-police victims of PPDA. Consideration should be given to

what implications any changes would have for the wider police complaints and disciplinary system.

We agree that it cannot be right that victims of misconduct by fellow members of the police are afforded weaker rights than members of the public. Reporting colleagues for acts such as domestic abuse is understandably difficult. It may cause worry, anxiety and stress and it is therefore essential that forces ensure all victims are supported and updated throughout an investigation.

Whilst we agree in principle that greater parity would be helpful, this will necessarily require further work with partners, including the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) and Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC), to work through how this could be achieved.

Recommendation five

The Home Office should provide further guidance on the types of considerations to take into account when deciding to restrict an officer's duties (for example, move them to a new role or location) while there is an ongoing investigation into their conduct, with a view to ensuring that there is sufficient safeguarding of victims, members of the public and the integrity of any ongoing investigation.

It is not right that some victims who work for the police might feel ostracised or unsafe as a result of decisions on how or where to redeploy colleagues who are accused of these acts.

I would expect Chief Constables to give careful consideration to the impact on victims and witnesses and ensure that their safety and welfare are paramount in any such decision. I would also expect consideration to be given to the wider impact on the public, so that forces are not putting members of the public at any risk by re-deploying officers into inappropriate roles.

But whilst the government has legislated to enable these powers, decisions on both suspension and where and how to redeploy police officers is an operational one for Chief Constables. We are therefore unable to accept this recommendation, but I would urge Chief Constables to carefully consider the points made in this report when making these decisions.

Recommendation six

To improve the consistent recording and monitoring of PPDA cases, the Home Office should amend the Annual Data Requirement connected to misconduct cases and criminal investigations. Police forces should be required to report the number of misconduct cases and criminal investigations involving PPDA and the associated outcomes of these cases. These statistics should be published by the Home Office, so that they can support internal and external scrutiny of the police response to PPDA.

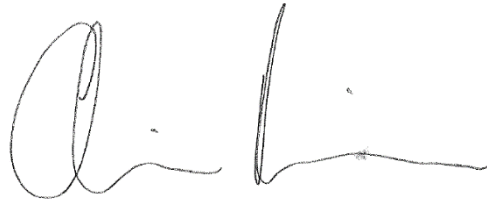
Improving the quality and accuracy of data is crucial to understanding the extent of police-perpetrated domestic abuse – as well as other forms of violent or sexual misconduct. It also makes tackling it more effective.

The Home Office amended its Annual Data Requirement on police misconduct last year and, in June, we delivered our first ever standalone misconduct statistics publication. We expect to publish the next tranche of data, for 2021/22, in the near future.

Through work conducted earlier this year by the College of Policing, as part of the VAWG

Taskforce, the IT system used by all forces to manage complaints and misconduct was updated. This now requires forces, where appropriate, to select that a case includes “VAWG – police perpetrated” or “VAWG – police injured party”. On that same list, forces are required to select any case of domestic abuse and together this enables both the Home Office – and Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) – to extract data on cases of police perpetrated domestic abuse.

To ensure the collection of accurate data, we will continue to engage with the IOPC, which has committed to reviewing its data capture guidance to forces.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Philp', with a stylized flourish at the end.

The Rt Hon Chris Philp MP

Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Fire