

Meeting	SPA Policing Performance Committee
Date	17 November 2020
Location	Video Conference
Title of Paper	Update on early findings of Your Safety Matters Diamond Group Review
Presented By	DCC Fiona Taylor, People and Professionalism
Recommendation to Members	For Discussion
Appendix Attached	Yes Appendix A – Your Safety Matters Diamond Group Diamond Group

PURPOSE

This purpose of this paper is to provide an overview of work undertaken to date relating to the Your Safety Matters strategic review of violence and abusive behaviour towards police officers and police/SPA staff.

Members are invited to discuss the content of this paper.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In August 2019, the Chief Constable highlighted an increase in assaults on emergency workers to members of the SPA Board, with statistics showing assaults on Police Officers above the 5 year mean for the second consecutive year. The Chief Constable stated that being assaulted is absolutely not 'simply part of the job' and that no police officer or member of police staff should expect to be assaulted or abused in the course of their work.
- 1.2 The Chief Constable tasked DCC Taylor to undertake an end-to-end strategic review of all issues related to the prevention of violence against police officers and staff, to ensure they are effectively trained, equipped and supported while carrying out their duties. A Diamond Group was established under the title 'Your Safety Matters' (YSM). The YSM Group's Terms of Reference (ToR) is attached at Appendix A.

2. FURTHER DETAIL ON THE REPORT TOPIC

- 2.1 One of the initial YSM activities was the development of an Assault Pledge that clearly articulated the Chief Constable's view that violence or abusive behaviour towards officers and staff will not be tolerated. In the course of developing the Assault Pledge, YSM consulted with police officers, staff and volunteers from across the organisation in a series of focus groups. The outcomes of these focus groups were incorporated into the development of the Assault Pledge, which is also reflected in the Chief Constable's Commitments for 2020/21.
- 2.2 Launched in August 2020, the Chief Constable's Assault Pledge commits to:
 - Providing officers and staff with the training and tools they need to do their job safely;
 - Ensuring that the Service responds to violence or abuse toward officers and staff with the same care and compassion afforded to members of the public;
 - Advocating for officers and staff to secure the support of partners and the public.

The Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Lord Advocate both publicly supported the Assault Pledge during its launch.

- 2.3 YSM has commissioned research into assaults on officers and staff. Findings of this analysis include the following:

OFFICIAL

- During 2019/20 there were 6,463 assaults (6,441 common assaults and 22 serious assaults) of on-duty police officers and member of staff (which will be referred to as police assaults in this report). This represented an increase of 6.2% from 2018/19 and an increase of 15.4% from the 5 year average. It is worth noting that common assault (common law) fell over the same period, decreasing by 0.8% from 2018/19 and 2.0% from the 5 year mean.
- Police Scotland has reported an increase of between 2-8% in the number of police assaults in each of the past 5 years, however, this consistent upward trend is not reflected across all territorial divisions.
- Analysis of a large randomised sample of crime reports found that 99% of police assaults were against police officers with the remaining 1% against staff members.
- The likelihood of officers being assaulted was found to vary by the type of incident attended. Over 30% of all assaults occurred when officers were dispatched to attend a reported disturbance despite this incident type accounting for only 7.4% of all incidents. Ten incident types accounted for almost 80% of police assaults. The range of incident types serves as a reminder that violence towards officers can happen in unexpected situations.
- The victims of police assaults were male in just over three quarters (76.3%) of assaults analysed, roughly three times the volume of female colleagues (23.7%).
- Approximately two thirds (66%) of assaults on police officers take place in either an open space, private property, or commercial premises. A further 19% occur in either police premises (13%) or a police vehicle (6%). The vast majority (86%) of assaults on police staff occur within police premises.
- The top five most frequently used methods of assault are to kick, punch, spit, head butt and bite the police officer or member of staff. Physical injuries occur in approximately 30% of police assaults with the most common form of injuries recorded being bruising / inflammation (10% of all assaults), exposure to body fluids (8%), bites (3%), abrasion / grazing (3%), and cuts and lacerations (3%). More serious types of injury e.g. fractures and puncture wounds are relatively rare (0.2%).
- Statistics typically reflect physical injuries sustained, however it is recognised that victim's mental wellbeing may also be affected. Miller and Burchell (2019) conducted research into police officers/staff mental health in the UK (all nations); their early findings found that 66% of respondents reported a psychological and/or mental health issue which they felt was a direct result of police work. While this currently is not broken

down into violence against officer/staff, what is clear is that situations that officers have to deal with can have a negative impact on an individual's mental health. It should be noted that Police Scotland focus group research found that the Force does a good job at supporting officers/staff who have been victims of assaults.

- Consumption of alcohol and/or controlled substances were identified as significant contributory factors based on the analysis of a large number of randomly selected police assaults recorded in 2018/19 and 2019/20 and associated custody data. Alcohol was considered to be a factor in approximately three quarters of the assaults analysed, and drugs in one quarter.
- Approximately three quarters (74.0%) of police assaults involved male offenders with just over half (56%) of all offenders being less than 30 years of age.

2.4 The analysis has highlighted a number of areas where action can be taken to impact current assault trends and 8 recommendations for further work are being progressed. The recommendations include:

- Further research into the circumstances during which assaults occur to identify procedural improvements;
- Develop academic research proposals with SIPR for commencement during 2020;
- Snapshot analysis in divisions where upwards trends are being observed.

2.5 Both the Focus Groups and the YSM analysis identified opportunities to improve Officer Safety Training (OST), and in particular the provision of a greater emphasis on verbal de-escalation techniques to provide greater protection to officers and staff when dealing with conflict. Following review at YSM, an enhanced two day OST and First Aid Programme was approved by the Strategic Leadership Board in July 2020. The re-designed course contains updated techniques, including a focus on verbal de-escalation, and the inclusion of enhanced first aid training.

2.6 YSM includes representation from across the Service, including Forensic Services. YSM has overseen joint work by C3 and Forensic Services to review risks associated with the deployment of Forensic Scene Examiners. As a result, functionality has now been created within C3 to provide enhanced oversight of Scene Examiner deployments, allowing dedicated control room staff to manage and monitor deployments, ensuring pertinent information regarding any safety risks are identified prior to deployment.

- 2.7 Informed by Focus Group feedback, YSM has developed a number of external work streams, including work with COPFS in relation to ensuring a shared understanding among prosecutors of the issues linked to assaults on officers and staff. Work is ongoing to finalise the inclusion of additional information within police reports provided to COPFS, highlighting the impact of assaults on the individual, the Service, and the communities' officers and staff serve. Discussions are ongoing to finalise processes to improve communication and feedback provided to officers and staff involved in the judicial process, ensuring they are informed of the outcome of any police assault prosecution.
- 2.8 Now that YSM has completed its establishment and launch phases, work is now ongoing to incorporate YSM themes into mainstream activity. The Chief Constable's Commitments relating to staff safety, together with the Chief Constable's Assault Pledge, are now reflected within the agendas of relevant Force Governance meetings. A network of YSM Champions is being established in local policing divisions and specialist departments to support operational delivery of YSM activity and provide a single point of contact for YSM products.
- 2.9 With regard to policing performance, a suite of metrics are being developed to identify trends linked to assaults on officers and staff and to measure the impact of YSM activity. YSM has also engaged with the National Police Chiefs' Council in relation to similar work being undertaken in the rest of the UK. Discussions are ongoing regarding the sharing of data and analysis, benchmarking opportunities, and operational learning and good practice.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no direct financial implications associated with this report. However, as a result of the ongoing work streams there could be future financial implications.

4. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no personnel implications directly associated with this report.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no specific legal implications to outline as part of this report.

6. REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no specific reputational implications as part of this report.

7. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no specific social implications to highlight as part of this paper.

8. COMMUNITY IMPACT

8.1 There are no specific community implications to highlight as part of this paper.

9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no specific equality implications to highlight as part of this paper.

10. ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no specific environmental implications to highlight as part of this paper.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are invited to discuss the content of this paper.

Your Safety Matters Diamond Oversight Group

Terms of Reference



- Chair:** Deputy Chief Constable, People & Professionalism
- Members:** ACC, Professionalism & Assurance
- ACC, Criminal Justice
 - ACC, Local Policing North (Contact, Command & Control Division)
 - ACC, Local Policing East
 - Director, Strategy & Analysis
 - DCS, Specialist Crime Division
 - CSU, Operational Support Division
 - Analysis & Performance Unit
 - Head of People Engagement Partnering
 - Head of Wellbeing and Inclusion
 - Head of Business Change and Analysis
 - Executive Lead (Corporate Communications)
 - Head of Crime Scene Recovery (Scottish Police Authority)
 - Head of Service Management (ICT)
 - Financial Controller (Finance Dept)
 - Health & Safety Manger
 - Trade Unions
 - Staff Associations

Purpose

To undertake an end-to-end strategic review of all issues related to the prevention of violence against police officers and police/SPA staff, to ensure Police Scotland/SPA staff are effectively trained, equipped and supported while carrying out their duties.

Remit

- To review, co-ordinate, and commission all strategic work streams that have a bearing on the prevention of violence against police officers and staff.
- To review relevant analysis and trends relating to assaults/near miss incidents on officers and staff with a view to mitigating risk and highlighting good practice.
- To develop updated policy and procedures to reduce the incidence of assault, secure the prosecution of offenders, and assure the support provided to officers and staff.
- To ensure the Force continues to deliver its legal, ethical and moral duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of police officers and staff.
- To enhance internal governance structures and communication channels to capture operational and organisational learning to identify improvement opportunities.
- To commission analysis, reports, and reviews, into specific aspects or areas related to assaults on officers and staff.
- To review and direct the development of internal and external corporate communication and marketing activity linked to Your Safety Matters.
- To consider how changes to officer and staff safety arrangements may impact on policing culture, public perception, and public confidence.

Meeting Frequency: Monthly or otherwise as directed by the Chair

Levels of Approval: Actions and outcomes agreed by the Chair following group discussion

Secretariat: People & Professionalism Staff Office

Reporting Responsibilities: Reports to Corporate Finance & People Board

Delegates to: Business Areas/Governance Structures/Short Life Working Groups involved in specific activity within the scope of the Strategic Review