

Meeting	SPA Policing Performance Committee
Date	09 March 2021
Location	Video Conferencing
Title of Paper	Your Safety Matters
Presented By	DCC Taylor, People and Professionalism
Recommendation to Members	For Discussion
Appendix Attached	Yes Appendix A – Your Safety Matters Diamond Group Terms of Reference

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 towards 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 includes the follows:

- During 2019/20 there were 6,463 assaults (6,441 common assaults and 22 serious assaults) of on-duty police officers and members 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 bodily 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 a number of recommendations for further work are being progressed. The recommendations include:

- Further research into the circumstances during which assaults occur to identify procedural improvements. This was presented at a YSM meeting on 18 November and included recommendations to reduce the incidence of assault, which is now informing work across Police Scotland.
- Develop academic research proposals with the Scottish Institute for Policing Research (SIPR). Proposals include examining the causes, consequences and preventive measures relating to assaults and could include offender interviews. This may also involve embedding an academic researcher within Police Scotland for a period of time. SIPR has recently approved funding and it is anticipated that the process of selecting suitable research candidates will commence shortly.

2.5 Following the publication of the assault pledge and supporting guidance, work has continued to develop an enhanced Communication Plan to embed this guidance into daily operational practice. This Plan has led to the creation of a number of publications to raise awareness and reinforce the assault pledge, including messaging within custody suites and front counters, and notices that will be displayed externally on all marked police vehicles. A dedicated spotlight area on the Force intranet home page linking to a YSM sub-section has provided a platform to highlight YSM developments and signpost the publication of supporting material.

- 2.6 A number of lived experience videos have also been created featuring officers and staff discussing incidents which have impacted them, linking to key messages regarding self-help, aftercare/support structures, and reporting processes. These videos are also edited for release externally and have received significant positive interaction and feedback from the public, far exceeding that received in relation to other current campaigns.
- 2.7 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, with roll out scheduled to commence in January 2021. However, as a result of current Covid restrictions, the delivery of this training has been paused. Resumption is subject to ongoing review and it is anticipated that OST training will re-commence shortly. In addition to the OST package, development of wider conflict management training is ongoing, including training programmes specifically designed for police staff.
- 2.8 YSM includes representation from across the Service, including Forensic Services. YSM has overseen joint work between 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.
- 2.9 Informed by Focus Group feedback, YSM has developed a number of external work streams, including work with the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) in relation to ensuring a shared understanding among prosecutors of the issues linked to assaults on officers and staff. COPFS has already provided data on the prosecution of Police Assaults and has also compiled data on crimes where recording practises require assaults on officers and staff to be reported under other charges e.g. resist arrest. COPFS is currently reviewing and contextualising the raw data for further discussion by YSM.
- 2.10 Following YSM consultation, COPFS is considering the inclusion of an 'impact sub-section' within police prosecution reports which will be read in court to be considered during sentencing. This section will

outline the impact of an assault of the officer and their family, impact on police service delivery, and the impact on the wider community. Discussion is also ongoing to develop mechanisms to provide case feedback and court outcome updates to 'victim' officers/staff members.

- 2.11 In December 2020, the Your Safety Matters Champions Network was established and met for the first time. This group consists of senior management level representation from all local policing divisions, SCD, Forensic Services, Custody and C3. The YSM Champions will review and drive local implementation of YSM Diamond Group recommendations and provide focused feedback in relation to officer and staff perception around violence and abusive behaviour more generally. This group will meet quarterly to ensure shared learning and provide feedback on progress.
- 2.12 As part of the development of metrics to capture and track the impact of activity, the YSM Diamond Group commissioned work to improve the collation of incident data and provide crime/incident trends to support analytical insight into violence against officers and staff.
- 2.13 Using the PowerBi Dashboard system, analysts have produced 2 key datasets drawn from 'Police Assault' crime data and accident/injury data provided by personnel management systems. The newly established YSM Dashboards provide both quantitative and qualitative data that outlines current performance against previous years, in addition to national, divisional and sub-divisional trend data. The YSM Dashboards are available to YSM Champions to support local review and the tasking of specific analysis to underpin activity to protect officers and staff.
- 2.14 YSM performance data will also be presented within quarterly performance reports and will develop as YSM analysis and review informs future data capture. Reporting will also capture developing crime/incident trends, with current reporting including Covid related assaults on officers and staff.
- 2.15 YSM is engaged with national activity being undertaken by the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) in relation to assaults on officers and staff. This includes participation in a peer knowledge sharing group, maximising opportunities to identify operational learning and good practice collectively across UK Policing Organisations. Following the initial sessions, informal benchmarking indicates that Police Scotland policy development and activity is in

line with activity elsewhere in the UK and, in some areas, is in advance of national activity.

- 2.16 Police Scotland analysts are also engaging with NPCC to examine the potential to benchmark Police Scotland data in relation to assaults on officers and staff against forces elsewhere. Discussions are ongoing and will seek to develop benchmarking process that take account of differing legislative and criminal justice processes, and the various ICT systems in used by other UK forces.
- 2.17 Prevention, Partnerships and Community Wellbeing (PPCW) Division presented a Prevention Plan at a YSM Diamond Group on 27 January 2021, which identified proposed activity across its business area. The Plan identified a number of societal issues which potentially influence public interaction with police and proposed the development of long term solutions and interventions to reduce violence and abuse towards police officers and staff.
- 2.18 The Plan also identified multiple partners that are engaged with Police Scotland through existing and emerging work streams, which will be used to support YSM prevention activity. There was recognition of opportunities for organisational learning across health and other emergency services, to identify activity undertaken by those organisations to reduce harm and support their staff. By sharing data and engaging in joint initiatives, there is an opportunity to not only highlight the level of violence and abuse faced by all front line emergency services, but to develop complementary approaches to support emergency workers subjected to violence and abusive behaviour.

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