



**Kent  
Police**



# **I PAG Report**

## **Domestic Abuse**

**Report compiled by:**

**Local Policing and Partnerships -Community Liaison**

**Gurvinder Sandher, Chair of County Independent Police Advisory  
Group**

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## **Introduction by Gurvinder Sandher: Chair of the County Independent Police Advisory Group (IPAG)**

This is the third report undertaken by the IPAG. Once again, I am delighted to have had the strong support of both my IPAG colleagues and those in Kent Police and I would like to thank them all for their hard work and commitment in the formulation of this report and recommendations.

Domestic abuse (DA) can impact on individuals irrespective of their race, religion, sexual orientation, gender, disability or age. Where it does it is important that all the diverse communities of Kent have:

- The confidence to report the crimes.
- The confidence that Kent Police will respond and act effectively, as well as provide support and
- The level of response, action and support is consistent across the county.

It is clear good work is being undertaken by Kent Police around domestic abuse. This good work is not only providing practical support to partner agencies, but it is also being proactive in raising awareness of DA issues and the recently launched campaign to coincide with the football World Cup is a good example of this.

The County IPAG, decided to review domestic abuse as one of its priorities, in the summer of 2013. This was prior to the date of the HMIC inspection of Kent Police, on the subject of tackling domestic abuse being confirmed. The IPAG welcome the recent HMIC inspection and the recommendations, which form part of an action plan being progressed under the scrutiny of Chief Officers. I hope that this report and recommendations will support Kent Police in the delivery of their domestic abuse action plan and future DA arrangements.

The IPAG value their relationship with Kent Police and the unique opportunity that IPAG membership brings in the provision of constructive feedback to Kent Police. It is important that for the IPAG to be truly effective, it is not seen as a talking shop but that it actually delivers something tangible. I believe that the recommendations made in the report are focused, realistic and deliverable and the implementation of these recommendations will help support Kent Police to deliver a first class DA service to victims of domestic abuse.

Finally I would like to thank again all the IPAG members who have taken time out as volunteers to be involved either in the focus groups or the questionnaires which provided the data for this report.

## **The role of Independent Police Advisory Group members**

In order to monitor and enhance services, whilst reflecting the needs of the whole community, it is essential Kent Police engage and listen to members of diverse communities and groups in Kent and Medway. To achieve this effectively Kent Police need to maintain engagement processes which have the confidence of Kent communities and promote a desire to participate.

Kent Police has a strong record of promoting equality and diversity in service delivery and employment. The development of the County Independent Police Advisory

Group (IPAG) and Divisional Independent Police Advisory Groups plays a crucial part in building trust and confidence in our communities and allows Kent Police to seek independent advice on a wide range of matters. In addition, all members of the County IPAG and a number of Divisional IPAG members also act as Independent Critical Incident Advisors (ICIA's).

Independent Critical Incident Advisors are managed through the Community Liaison Team and governance is through the Critical Incident Review Board. ICIA's are members of the community who have knowledge around a community of place or community of interest; they are security vetted and receive relevant awareness training for their role. They offer independent, critical advice, for example during the on-going management of a critical incident and can help the police by:

- Developing sensitive and effective policing
- Challenging assumptions and mind sets
- Demonstrating openness and accountability
- Providing independent advice from a community perspective
- Building trust and confidence with families, individuals and communities

The connectivity that IPAG and ICIA members have within Kent's diverse communities and groups and the service they provide to Kent Police, often within a sensitive environment, demonstrates the significance of their contribution to this report and the key findings from the focus groups and survey returns.

### **Objectives of Report**

This report has been jointly compiled by Inspector Ian Sandwell from the Kent Police 'Partnership and Communities Department' and Gurvinder Sandher the Chair of the County Independent Police Advisory Group (IPAG). The Central Analytical Team provided analysis on both the DA surveys returned to Kent Police and the IPAG Focus Groups.

This report details research and engagement undertaken between Kent Police and the IPAG membership in tackling Domestic Abuse, with a particular focus on engaging diverse communities and groups. The report provides Kent Police an opportunity to take into account the views of IPAG members, who have established links within many of our diverse communities and groups. The report summarises feedback from the IPAG members and presents recommendations. The report will be presented to DCC Brandon, Force Lead on IPAG and Equality, Diversity and Human Rights (EDHR), for consideration of the recommendations. The report and recommendations will also be shared with Ann Barnes, the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner, to support the Police and Crime Commissioner with engagement of Kent's communities and groups affected by domestic abuse.

### **Definition - Domestic Abuse**

The cross-government definition of domestic violence and abuse is:

*"any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:*

- *psychological*
- *physical*
- *sexual*
- *financial*
- *emotional”.*

*Controlling behaviour* is defined as a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

*Coercive behaviour* is defined as: an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim. This definition includes so-called honour-based violence, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

### **Background - National Context (Source - HMIC)**

Domestic abuse causes both serious harm and constitutes a considerable proportion of overall crime. It costs society an estimated £15.7 billion a year. 77 women were killed by their partners or ex-partners in 2012/13. In the UK, one in four young people aged 10 to 24 reported that they experienced domestic violence and abuse during their childhood. Three Forces told HMIC that crime relating to domestic abuse constitutes some 8 % of all recorded crime in their area, and one third of their recorded assaults with injury. On average the police receive an emergency call relating to domestic abuse every 30 seconds.

People may experience domestic abuse regardless of their gender, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, class, age or disability. Domestic abuse may also occur in a range of different relationships including heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bi-sexual and transgender, as well as within families. While both men and women can be victims of domestic abuse, women are much more likely to be victims than men.

### **Victims of domestic abuse in Kent by Ethnicity and Gender (Source – Corporate Services)**

*The Kent Police crime recording system (Genesis) is not able to provide a breakdown of victims of domestic abuse, across all the personal characteristics as set out in the Equality Act 2010.*

Twenty per cent of victims are male, eighty per cent are female.

In Kent districts, the population of residents from a BME population is 92,638 (6.3%). In Medway the BME population is 27,346 (10.4%). (Source-2011 Census)

The tables below provide a breakdown of reported incidents of domestic abuse to Kent Police by ethnicity over a two year period. The data is taken from the Kent Police crime recording system known as 'Genesis'.

**Domestic abuse victims**  
**Financial year 2012/13**

<b>Self-defined Ethnicity</b>	<b>Number of victims</b>	<b>Proportion of total DA victims</b>	<b>Per 1,000 population</b>
White - British	7140	86%	4.1
White - Irish	49	1%	0.0
White - Other	391	5%	0.2
Asian - Bangladeshi	12	0%	0.0
Asian - Indian	120	1%	0.1
Asian - Other	76	1%	0.0
Asian - Pakistani	9	0%	0.0
Black - African	73	1%	0.0
Black - Caribbean	42	1%	0.0
Black - Other	31	0%	0.0
Mixed - Other	19	0%	0.0
Mixed - White / Asian	10	0%	0.0
Mixed - White / Black African	15	0%	0.0
Mixed - White/ Black Caribbean	21	0%	0.0
Not Stated - 3rd Party	78	1%	0.0
Not Stated - Declined	21	0%	0.0
Not Stated - Not Understood	136	2%	0.1
Chinese	3	0%	0.0
Other	43	1%	0.0
(Blank)	21	0%	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>8310</b>		

**Domestic abuse victims**  
**Financial year 2013/14**

<b>Self-defined Ethnicity</b>	<b>Number of victims</b>	<b>Proportion of total DA victims</b>	<b>Per 1,000 population</b>
White - British	9673	85%	5.6
White - Irish	59	1%	0.0
White - Other	573	5%	0.3
Asian - Bangladeshi	15	0%	0.0
Asian - Indian	154	1%	0.1
Asian - Other	94	1%	0.1
Asian - Pakistani	10	0%	0.0
Black - African	114	1%	0.1
Black - Caribbean	56	0%	0.0
Black - Other	60	1%	0.0
Mixed - Other	17	0%	0.0
Mixed - White / Asian	14	0%	0.0
Mixed - White / Black African	8	0%	0.0
Mixed - White/ Black Caribbean	38	0%	0.0
Not Stated - 3rd Party	154	1%	0.1
Not Stated - Declined	30	0%	0.0

Not Stated - Not Understood	216	2%	0.1
Chinese	17	0%	0.0
Other	94	1%	0.1
(Blank)	47	0%	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>11443</b>		

The increase in domestic abuse reporting over the two year period can be attributed to the following:

- A proactive multi agency approach to raising awareness of domestic abuse, improved reporting routes and pathways available to access support services.
- HMIC inspection on crime recording by Kent Police in 2013 which resulted in domestic abuse incidents being reclassified as domestic abuse crimes.

### **Tackling Domestic Abuse in Kent**

In Kent and Medway, there are a range of commissioned and non-commissioned services available to tackle domestic abuse. The county has a commissioned women's refuge in all but one district; this includes a refuge for BME communities. Kent County Council and Medway Unitary Authority also commission domestic abuse floating support services. This includes a floating support service for BME communities, provided by 'Rethink Sahayak' in North Kent. Commissioned Children Services are provided to support 11 to 13 year olds where a domestic abuse perpetrator has left the home and 11-16 year olds potentially exposed to teenage pregnancy and domestic abuse. A website has been set up by the Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Strategy Group (KMDASG) in order to provide a central, comprehensive resource of all Domestic Abuse related services within Kent and Medway. [www.domesticabuse.org.uk](http://www.domesticabuse.org.uk)

In 2013/14, there were 1,574 high risk domestic abuse referrals made to the Kent and Medway 'Multi -Agency Risk Assessment Conference' process (MARAC). These cases are managed by 'Independent Domestic Violence Advisors' (IDVA's).

Statistical data from the MARAC process is monitored on behalf of the Home Office by 'Co-ordinated Action against Domestic Abuse' (CAADA). CAADA collate data on MARAC outcomes and this data tends to indicate a low representation of LGBT and Disability cases referred to MARAC, based on Kent's population.

In all but one district in the Kent Police area there are domestic abuse 'One Stop Shops'. Between July 2012 and June 2013, 1259 people were assisted at the domestic abuse one stop shops; this compares to 1054 people between July 2011 and June 2012 and 891 people between July 2010 and June 2011. The largest attendance group in this period were 'White British' at 83%, followed by 'White European' at 3%, with 'Black or Black British' and 'Asian or Asian British' both accounting for 2% of visitors.

## **Methodology**

The methodology used in this Domestic Abuse report, follows the same approach as the two previous IPAG reports in 2013/14, namely the use of questionnaires and focus groups with IPAG members.

## **Domestic Abuse Survey**

A domestic abuse survey was devised (appendix A) and this was disseminated to all members of IPAG, Independent Critical Incident Advisors, Community Liaison Officers, Equality Champions, Staff Support Associations and some community groups. Nineteen responses were received. The surveys were analysed by the Central Analytical Team, who identified recommendations for consideration.

## **Focus Groups**

For this report, four focus groups took place. A focus group was held at the County IPAG and also at each of the three Divisional IPAG meetings. Each followed the same format with facilitation by a member of Kent Police and the IPAG Chair. There were four questions asked:

- 1) What activities can Kent Police or key partners undertake to better engage with diverse communities and understand their needs in relation to DA?
- 2) What changes can be made to improve the response by Kent Police to diverse communities?
- 3) How does Kent Police develop DA expertise to respond to specific critical DA issues in diverse communities?
- 4) What changes can Kent Police make to improve frontline awareness of how DA impacts on diverse communities?

The Focus Group findings were analysed by the Central Analytical Team, who identified recommendations for consideration.

## **IPAG DA thematic: focus group and survey summary**

### **Key findings**

- Respondents possessed a mixed/limited knowledge of DA activities and processes.
- There is a need to educate communities and groups more, to instil confidence.
- There are accessibility improvements which could be made to the website.

### **Survey summary**

There were 19 submitted surveys, however not all were fully completed. The focus groups and surveys suggested a desire for greater engagement generally between police and communities, not necessarily only for the issue of DA.

Only 2 survey respondents said they were not already aware of the DA definition with the majority being made aware through their workplace. Some raised uncertainties around how the DA definition applied or fitted into 'cultural norms', and

acknowledged some communities would not know this, particularly about the age range. Most agreed it was fit for purpose.

***"Already much better than anyone could hope for in Eastern Europe"***

Cultural norms were considered a barrier to reporting, alongside the gender issue. It was also raised that males in same sex relationships may also find it harder to report due to fear of being isolated within the community. Various factors (psychological, physiological, financial, cultural, substance misuse and the media) were correctly cited as increasing the risk of DA in a relationship, demonstrating a broad awareness of risk factors associated with domestic abuse.

***"In some ethnic communities the act of domestic violence is not abuse. It is felt that the act is the right of the perpetrator doing the abuse."***

All who answered were confident to report domestic abuse to the police, but 5 of the 18 respondents would not report on behalf of a friend. All but one would report on behalf of a family member. Greater all round knowledge (leading to confidence) would encourage reporting. Some respondents also balanced the decision to report against the severity of abuse suffered. Reporting would be discouraged by negative media, if abuse increased after reporting, if an unsympathetic response or poorly trained officers were anticipated, and if police went against the victim. A previous negative experience, a threat to family from the offender or potential shame to the family, would also discourage reporting.

***"Poor service from or experiences with the police in the past (could discourage reporting)"***

The focus groups placed a lot of emphasis on training officers and staff about other cultures and communities. However the survey responses suggest a lack of DA knowledge and understanding by some of the respondents. It was clear that CLOs had a key role to play in any future community engagement and education.

Only half of respondents were aware of the 'DA one-stop shop' and the 'Kent DA website'. More were aware of Victim Support and local DA charities. 8 respondents said they might seek support in a friend, and 7 in a GP/health visitor. Few said solicitor or a work colleague. 2 respondents suggested a faith leader as a person to support them.

There was a variety of feedback on the website, both positive and negative. It is suggested the website owner reviews all feedback.

Few respondents completed the question 'Do you have any concerns about how Kent Police investigate domestic abuse?' 3 raised concerns: 2 originating from the HMIC report, another about the lack of resources hindering police activity and support of victims. Another respondent was positive having read the HMIC report, and another felt they had insufficient information to make a judgement. One respondent wanted to conduct a study to understand why DA is acceptable in certain communities.

## **Recommendations**

1. PPU input on Kent Police DA process to County and Divisional IPAG. (To cover the law, policy, investigation and safeguarding).
2. PPU HQ to provide a single point of contact to the County IPAG.
3. Increased use of social media to publicise DA services and where possible targeted at diverse communities and groups. Police diversity and cultural awareness training, to incorporate DA awareness regarding individuals who have a protected characteristic as defined by the Equality Act 2010.
4. DA Website owner to review all feedback related to website.
5. Research low representation of LGBT and Disability referrals to MARAC and feedback to IPAG.
6. IPAG to be updated on Kent Police progress towards HMIC recommendations following HMIC DA inspection.