

From Metropolitan Police BCU Commander's Weekly Message

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Supporting Victims: It has been a busy week with lots to update you about. On Friday Commissioner Mark Rowley [announced a new crime victims' helpline](#) as part of a key priority in the Turnaround Plan to provide a more compassionate and effective service to victims.

The helpline [will give people better access to key information about their cases](#) and has been made possible thanks to a £3m investment by City Hall.

Sir Mark said: "Our officers and staff often interact with people during the most traumatic moments of their lives. They do a great job in the vast majority of cases but the stretch on their time and the nature of our work sometimes means our follow up and co-ordination with specialist victim support is not good enough.

"That is why we are harnessing new technology and creating a dedicated team to boost our service. I know my entire service wants to put the victim's voice at the heart of everything we do. We are committed to listening to victims' experiences and using this feedback to implement the practical measures that will make a real difference for victims."

The helpline will be accompanied by a raft of other measures to improve the support we give victims including our pledge to attend burglaries, better information and a more responsive service when people call 999.

Mental health demand: [Sir Mark was on Newsnight recently where he spoke about the need for those in mental health crisis to get the right support from the right organisation](#), rather than officers currently having to step into that gap. He also described the demand that mental health incidents were placing on the Met and how the Met plans to implement the "Right care, Right Person" model piloted in Humberside to ensure those in need of help get it from the right healthcare professional – not well-meaning officers.

Rooting out corruption: Another key part of our Turnaround Plan is to improve our standards and on Monday we [launched a new initiative to make sure only the right people are working for us](#). **Operation Assure** will mean that where officers or staff member's behaviour is identified as being of concern, particularly where it involves breaches of public trust, their vetting status will be reviewed

Reviews could be triggered by the conclusion of a criminal investigation, a misconduct hearing where a written warning, final written warning or a reduction in rank has been issued, or when adverse information about an individual comes to the Met's notice. Reviews will be carried out by a senior vetting officer, and could lead to a decision to revoke the individual's minimum vetting status. If revoked, the individual will be unable to access police premises and systems, which could lead to dismissal under the performance regulations. This process will be rolled out across police forces in England and Wales but the Met is the first to take these steps.

Commander James Harman said: "When a member of the public asks a police officer for help, they should be confident that the Met has vetted that person to an appropriate level, and kept that vetting under review. We should all recognise that vetting is not an administrative exercise – it is an expression of public trust."

Robust action: Our commitment to rooting out the corrupt was shown last week when an officer was dismissed from the service after he was convicted of sexual offences. In January PC Hussain Chehab, pleaded guilty to sexual activity with a girl aged 13-15 – which happened prior to his joining the Met. He also admitted making indecent photographs of a child and engaging in sexual communication with a child. [The panel at the accelerated misconduct hearing chaired by Assistant Commission Barbara Gray dismissed Chehab and he will now be barred from working in policing](#). He is also due to be sentenced for the offences this Friday (17th March).

[A PCSO has also been sentenced for sexually assaulting a female colleague in a Met gym](#). PCSO Edward Oniba, who is suspended from duty was found guilty on Monday 13th of sexual assault by touching. Misconduct proceedings will now take place as soon as possible.

Protecting women and girls: [On Tuesday the National Police Chiefs Council published its first benchmark report on Violence against Women and Girls](#) which was designed to reveal the scale of the problem both in the public arena and within policing.

DAC Helen Millichap, the Met's lead on violence against women and girls, welcomed the report saying: "We want to make London a safe city for women and girls. Every day we are out tackling violence and abuse and arresting predatory men. We are using the same specialist tactics and technology to identify and bring more offenders to justice as we do for other serious crime. We are working closely with partners and any whose expertise can help to improve the response and support women and girls get."

The report highlighted the numbers of allegations made against those in policing and the outcomes of those case. It found that in a six-month period across England and Wales allegations ranging from inappropriate use of handcuffs to harassments and sexual assaults were made against 0.7% of the police workforce. In the Met that figure was slightly lower at 0.5%.

Identifying and bringing those in the Met who corrupt our integrity by committing abuses against women and girls to justice is vital in rebuilding the trust of our communities and increasing reporting. Although we know there is much more to do, I want to reassure you that there is already a significant programme of change in the Met that will improve women's and girls' safety.

As well as Operation Assure which I've outlined above, **Project Onyx** is reviewing the actions taken in each case in which an officer or staff members has been accused of domestic or sexually abusive behaviour in the past decade to make sure the response was appropriate.

The Domestic Abuse and Sexual Offences team in our professional standards command is bringing specialist capability to the investigation of this kind of allegations while the new Anti-Corruption and Abuse Command is proactively seeking out those who commit abuse from within the service. A new hotline enabling the anonymous reporting of abusive police employees was launched in Autumn, and later this Spring we will publish a refreshed Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Action Plan, which will build on feedback and progress already made. We are committed to progressing this work in partnership and by listening.

Our efforts to tackle VAWG and earn women's trust were recently the subject of an in-depth article in Cosmopolitan which is available to read on [their website](#).

Operational Successes:

There has been lots of success across London in recent days where Met people are striving to bring justice for victims of crime. These include:

- [A joint operation with the National Crime Agency which led to a £70m criminal money laundering service being dismantled](#). Investigators used evidence gained via surveillance, combined with the analysis of banking and Companies' House records, to prove criminals set up bank accounts linked to shell companies to launder the money through. Money would be sent from one shell company to another in a complex web of transfers, before it was sent out to international accounts held in countries including Germany, Czech Republic, U.A.E, Hong Kong, and Singapore. The two men also laundered £10m they had generated by claiming fraudulent bounce back loans – intended to help businesses after the Covid lockdowns, for the various shell companies they had set up.
- [The jailing of a man who sprayed ammonia and pointed a gun at officer](#). James Boyle, 22 from Brixton, was sentenced to 16 years having pleaded guilty to administering a poison or noxious substance with intent and a raft of other offences. The overwhelming evidence gathered during our investigation left him with no choice but to plead guilty and we have no doubt that he would have caused further harm was he not identified and arrested so quickly.
- And there have been some really significant results in our work to combat violence against women and girls.
- [Combined Project Vigilant and Town Centre Team](#) patrols have seen reduction in local VAWG cases. Project Vigilant uses plain clothed and uniformed officers to patrol busy night-time locations to spot and deter predatory behaviour. In Romford and Ilford, we have seen a 12.4% reduction in VAWG offences. (Also, in [Romford our engagement with schoolchildren made the local news](#) with a project to teach pupils about knife crime)
- Another man has been sentenced after a [forensic trace on a concrete slab led detectives to the suspect](#). Jermaine Myers, 37 was given hospital order after he pleaded guilty, by diminished responsibility, to the manslaughter of Nicholas Sutin who he killed in an unprovoked attack in North Finchley.

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- A man has been charged with the [murder of a woman in Westminster in 1994](#). Sandip Patel was charged with murder of Marina Koppell who died after being stabbed at her home in 1994. Marina was 39-years-old at the time of her death. This development comes following a review of the investigation by the Met's Special Casework Team who review unsolved homicide cases.
- And the [Met's Predatory Offender Unit tracked down and arrested a man for stalking and sending sexual images](#). The arrest was made on Tuesday following a report from a woman who stated her former partner was harassing her by repeatedly calling her, leaving threatening voicemails and turning up at her home.
- [A man has been jailed for 25 years after stabbing his ex-girlfriend 18 times](#). Robin Ibrahim admitted attempted murder and possession of an offensive weapon thanks to the fast-time work by officers which secured evidence of the attack. The bravery of the victim and the public that steps in was commended.
- [And a man who robbed a lone woman but was detained with the help of members of the public has been jailed](#). Gary McKibbin and another man robbed a woman of her earrings before violently pushing her to the floor in an attempt to take more items from her. Several quick-thinking members of the community intervened and managed to detain McKibbin until officers arrived a short time later. The second man managed to escape.

I hope you all have a peaceful and relaxing weekend. I look forward to updating you with more of the Met's journey toward more trust, less crime and high standards next week.

Chief Superintendent Andy Brittain

BCU Commander – South Area