



Agenda Item
5.2

Meeting	SPA People Committee
Date	31 May 2023
Location	Video Conference
Title of Paper	Bi-Annual Your Safety Matters Update
Presented By	PI Lorna Watson, Your Safety Matters Secretariat
Recommendation to Members	For Discussion
Appendix Attached	No

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide a bi-annual update outlining activity undertaken under the Your Safety Matters end-to-end strategic review of all issues related to the prevention of violence and abusive behaviour against police officers and police/SPA staff, to ensure they are effectively trained, equipped and supported while carrying out their duties.

Members are invited to discuss the content of this report.



1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 During the last two years, Your Safety Matters (YSM) has put measures in place to deliver the Chief Constable’s commitment to reducing the impact of violence on officers and staff. New measures have been introduced and existing measures refined, where required, to improve safety including a review of Officer Safety Training (OST) and equipment, and enhanced conflict resolution skills. These commitments have been driven through the YSM Diamond Group, chaired by DCC Taylor and cascaded locally through the YSM Champions Network.

- 1.2 APU strategic analysts have provided the YSM Diamond Group with products which deliver an up-to-date view of assaults on police officers and staff. These analyses provide insights on, but not limited to, locations of assaults, the types of injuries sustained and a focus on repeat offenders and victims. This work has been important in establishing the national picture of assaults on police officers and staff across Scotland and has been used to underpin officer safety training and reviews of current processes.

2. Main Topic of discussion

Aim of the YSM Diamond Group

- 2.1 The 2019 Terms of Reference for the YSM Diamond Group outlined their purpose to undertake an end-to-end strategic review of all challenges related to the prevention of violence against police officers and police/SPA staff and to ensure Police Scotland/SPA staff were effectively trained, equipped and supported while carrying out their duties. In November 2022 this was updated and the scope expanded;

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

- 2.2 The addition expands the scope of YSM to include a focus on psychological wellbeing and will allow strategic analysts to provide the group with new and impactful insights on the effect violent and abusive behaviour has on our officers and staff. It reinforces our dedication as an organisation to understand this impact and put processes in place to support officers and staff in their duties.
- 2.3 Developing and increasing the initial scope of the YSM Diamond Group from the 'prevention of violence' to the 'prevention of violence and abusive behaviour' will include a focus on crimes and offences that have the potential to impact officers and staff negatively both physically and psychologically.

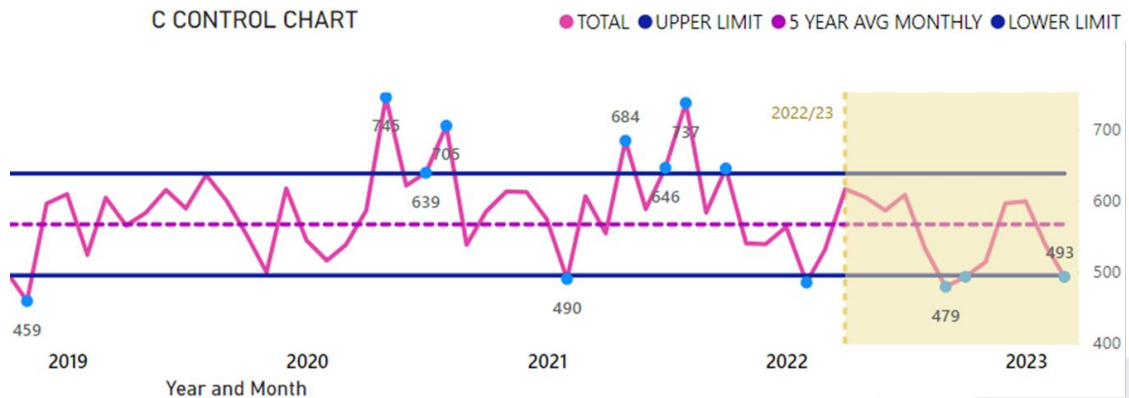
YSM Champions Network

- 2.4 Following the establishment of the YSM Diamond Group, each division was asked to provide a representative who would be their YSM Champion in order to ensure a direct link between the YSM Diamond Group and our frontline officers and staff. The champions are responsible for establishing themselves as a single point of contact for all divisional issues relevant to Your Safety Matters, this includes executing recommendations made by the Diamond Group at a divisional level and thereafter providing feedback.
- 2.5 The YSM Champions Network meets on a bi-monthly basis and is chaired by ACC Johnson. The outcome of these meetings is then fed into the Diamond Group via an established agenda item, with all YSM Champions provided with an opportunity to attend the Diamond Group on a rotational basis to present feedback on specific actions undertaken, updates on progress and examples of good practice.
- 2.6 The Champions Network provides an opportunity for organisational learning, sharing experiences from operational policing at a division level and discussion around any issues encountered.
- 2.7 The Champion's Network has been fundamental in sharing the organisational message that no police officer or member of staff should experience violence or violent behaviour whilst at work.

Power BI Dashboards

- 2.8 The development of the Your Safety Matters Dashboards, which includes the Crime Report Dashboard, Health and Safety Dashboard, Reporting Rate Dashboard and the new YSM Use of Force Dashboard, have increased our ability to analyse assaults on police officers and staff.
- 2.9 Increased analysis and regular reporting commissioned by the YSM Diamond Group has provided key insights to inform action to impact on assaults on officers and staff.
- 2.10 2022/23 has seen a reduction in assaults on police officers and staff of 6.2% (-438) from the PFY and a 2.1% (-143.2) reduction on the 5 year mean. As illustrated in the Control Chart below the number of assaults in 2020/21 often surpassed the upper limit

and were outliers. There has been no replication of this in 2022/23, the only outliers have been below the lower limit.



Source: YSM Crime Police Assault Data Dashboard, 28/04/2023

- 2.11 The number of assaults per 1K incidents have also decreased. In 2021/22 there were 8.7 assaults per 1K incidents and in 2022/23 this has reduced to 8.2 per 1K incidents.
- 2.12 There has also been a reduction in assaults from the 5 year average. Assaults on officers and staff rose to a high of 7,314 in 2020/21, assaults have now decreased for the second year in a row and the current 5 year average is now 6,800.2. Therefore in 2022/23 we saw a reduction of 143.2 (-2.1%) from this.
- 2.13 This reduction in assaults on police officers and staff at a national level is a positive result for the YSM Diamond Group and Police Scotland officers and staff.
- 2.14 The YSM Health and Safety dashboard provides insight into reporting (the percentage of crime reports for assaults against officers and staff that also have a health and safety report submitted). The health and safety reporting rate has increased since the inception of the YSM Diamond Group from below 50% to the current 69.9%. This has stayed relatively stable throughout this financial year, remaining between 62.6% and 82.3%.



- 2.15 High reporting levels provide us with robust data to inform meaningful comparisons, stronger analysis and richer insights. The YSM Diamond Group keeps a continued focus on reporting and this is closely monitored.
- 2.16 Following the introduction of YSM Health and Safety dashboards, health and safety reports have increased from 4,782 reports in 2021/22 to 4,820 reports in 2022/23, this increase is even more impressive when comparing it to the 3 year mean (3,556.7) equating to a 35.5% increase.
- 2.17 The injury rate for officers and staff has decreased from the last financial year (27.6%) to 26.2%. Due to historically low reporting rates, it has been difficult to conclude that there has been a reduction in injury rates as there may have been injuries that were not recorded through health and safety previously. However, with the increase in reporting and decrease in number of injuries (-54), it is likely that there has been a true reduction to the injury rate.

INJURY		
1,264	1318	1,254.7
2022/23	2021/22	3 YR AVG
26.2%	27.6%	35.3%
2022/23 IR	2021/22 IR	3 YEAR IR

- 2.18 This is supported by the reduction in RIDDORs (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations) where there has been a similar reduction in RIDDOR reportable assaults from 45 in 2021/22 to 30 in 2022/23 (YTD). Changes to Operational Safety Training (OST) can also be regarded as a contributing factor to this decrease in injury to officers and further analysis will continue to work to identify when and where officers are at most risk.
- 2.19 The most recent dashboard developed is the Use of Force Dashboard and was published in April 2023. This data adds another layer of information to current analysis where insights can be drawn on the tactic used, its effectiveness (as rated by the officer), the locus, impact factor and demographic information.

- 2.20 Supply, quality and understanding of data has greatly improved since the inception of the YSM Diamond Group. Moving forwards crime data will be more accessible with the roll out of a single National Crime solution (National UNIFI). Once the roll out is complete across the organisation (circa 2024) local analysts will no longer be required to produce snapshot reports to access local data and insight.

Divisional Snapshot Review – Learning and Insights

- 2.21 APU has utilised YSM dashboards, snapshot reports from local analysts and consultation with YSM Champions to produce valuable insights in the form of Divisional Snapshot Reports. These have highlighted a number of contributory factors and common themes around the numbers of assaults on officers and staff that the YSM Diamond Group can discuss and act on to enact change.
- 2.22 This continuous analysis and subsequent collection of divisional deep dive analysis has been beneficial to the depth and breadth of our knowledge around police/staff assaults. Key learning areas are outlined in the following sections along with the insights that informed them and the actions that the YSM group have taken.

Social and Cultural Factors

- 2.23 Social and cultural factors such as alcohol use, attitudes towards the police and levels of deprivation have all been identified in multiple snapshot reports as contributory factors.
- 2.24 The impact of intoxication is an insight that has been raised in all of the snapshot reports. In early reports the opening/ partial re-opening of night time economy between the periods of lockdown was thought to explain increases in assaults on police officers and staff.
- 2.25 The lockdowns were then permanently lifted and the night time economy reinstated for Friday and Saturday nights. Peak days/ times for all subsequent reports were 2100hrs-0400hrs on Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights. This suggests that alcohol is a long term contributing factor to the number of assaults on police officers and staff. This insight has informed prevention work and within the YSM Prevention Action Plan where there are multiple commitments aimed at reducing alcohol and substance related violence.

Repeat Offenders

- 2.26 Another insight highlighted across several snapshot reports and features in the YSM Prevention Action plan is the impact of repeat offenders. In a large proportion of cases this is an offender that commits multiple assaults against more than one officer during the course of one incident as opposed to an offender that assaults police officers and staff multiple times over separate incidents.
- 2.27 Case studies included in snapshot reports have also been used to spotlight repeat offenders promoting discussions around these offenders by the YSM Group. In the main these repeat offenders have been identified as children or young people where they currently represent 25% of all offenders. The December 2021 snapshot report on A division further highlighted that offenders under 16 years had the highest recidivism rate (multiple assaults over separate incidents). Identifying repeat offenders has allowed us to develop targeted actions in relation to young offenders with partnership working being highlighted as key to addressing the underlying causes of this insight.

Overall Violent Crime (OVC)

- 2.28 A further insight gleaned from across multiple snapshot reports is a correlation between OVC and the number of assaults on police officers and staff. Although causation cannot be confirmed and it cannot be said to be true in every instance, on the whole if there is an increase in violence towards officers and staff this is also seen in OVC. This insight further supports the actions the Violence Prevention Plan has laid out regarding reducing OVC.

Reporting Rates

- 2.29 As discussed above the sustained increase in Reporting Rates has been an impactful achievement of the YSM Diamond Group to date. We can now more accurately report on the details of assaults and therefore target action appropriately. YSM continually cascade the importance of this to officers and staff to maintain the reporting rate.
- 2.30 In October 2022 a review of two divisions with high reporting rates (D & G Division) was conducted by APU exploring best practice in maintaining high levels of reporting. Both divisions have slightly different process for how they report assaults to

Health and Safety, however, they both share some key features which can be regarded as best practice:

- Assaults on officers/staff are viewed as a priority at the Divisional level.
 - This helps reinforce to officers/staff the importance of reporting assaults to health and safety and that it is not just a tick box exercise.
- Resource to identify missed reports.
 - Resources are allocated to identify if a crime report has been submitted but a report to health and safety has not.
- Assaults on officers/staff are discussed daily.
 - This helps embed the entire process of reporting assaults to health and safety and will help ensure reporting becomes business as usual.
- Improved Divisional Intranet page and signposting to Reporting
 - This will further increase the general awareness and mainstreaming of reporting and could not only improve the reporting rate but the quality of the officer/staff input.

2.31 It was concluded that the exact process of reporting can vary amongst divisions, however, all of the processes utilised should include the key principles identified above to improve/maintain high reporting rates.

Psychological Wellbeing

2.32 Police Scotland is committed to ensuring officers and staff are supported to the best of our ability and a four stage review of the current Health and Wellbeing Programme is taking place. As discussed, the new Terms of Reference for the YSM Diamond Group now includes an end-to-end strategic review of all issues related to the psychological wellbeing of officers and staff and this will be a key focus for the group.

Psychological disorders is the most common absence category amongst officers and staff.

- 2.33 As outlined in the Police Scotland Strategic Threat and Risk Assessment 2023-28, nearly 1 in 5 police officers and staff have symptoms of PTSD or complex PTSD, which is significantly higher than the general population in the UK, with less than two thirds of these participants suffering unaware. Complex PTSD is a categorisation recently adopted by the World Health Organisation which sees PTSD symptoms “harden” through repeated trauma which results in a chronic condition of emotional numbness and disconnection, including with friends and family. The 2019 ‘The Job & The Life’ survey conducted by Police Care UK went on to show that 93% of police officers and staff who reported suffering from psychological issues would still go to work with no further support in place. This compounds the issues and demonstrates that early intervention and training is needed to help officers and staff recognise their symptoms as PTSD.
- 2.34 Current Police Scotland data shows that the highest percentage increase of working days lost from 20/21 – 21/22 related to insomnia, a common symptom of PTSD (although that is not to say insomnia wasn’t caused by other underlying illnesses) and other stress related illness.
- 2.35 In May 2022 the Research and Insight team conducted a study for YSM which focused on officer’s lived experiences of assaults at work (hate crime and assaults). Although there were only 12 participants the aim of the study was to gain qualitative insights about experiences. The following is a light touch summary of the study which highlighted the following key themes from the interviews;
- **The impact of assaults on officers.** Officers revealed assaults underpinning PTSD, trepidation with interacting with the public, decreased confidence in performing front line operational duties and long-term physical injuries leaving them in pain and desk-bound.
 - **Organisational Support.** Officers were aware of the campaigns to address the issue of assaults on officers and staff however they felt more needed to be done and that being assaulted is still something that ‘comes with the territory’.
 - **Role of the Team, Supervisors and Inspectors/ Chief Inspectors.** A strong team cohesiveness was often a deciding

factor on how supported officers felt and having 'shift solidarity' helped operationally and emotionally. Experiences of post-incident welfare checks carried out by line management varied.

- **Systems and Processes.** Officers highlighted a lack of trust in COPFS to apply suitable charges which contributed to officer decisions not to pursue minor assaults (e.g. verbal, hate crime).
- **Equipment and Training** - Officers provided generally positive feedback on the role of equipment like PAVA and Tasers, which was described as being more defensive than offensive, and acted as a suitable preventive measure to deter assaults. Although only 2 women took part in the study it was raised that body armour was not always fitted properly and left them feeling vulnerable.

2.36 When discussing Trauma Risk Management, officers reported that supervisors "light-hearted" approach to discussing assaults, TRiM and need for additional support was highlighted as a barrier to some officers accepting – or even feeling able to access - extra support without judgement. Officers expressed a fear of the team dynamic changing if they sought help. This highlights that culturally there are challenges and changes need to take place to ensure that officers can confidently ask for the help they need to maintain psychological wellbeing.

2.37 The YSM intranet page now has Health and Safety Lived Experience Testimony's which are a series of accounts from police officers and staff to highlight the importance of safeguarding mental and physical health and signposting to all available support available. This is the beginning of work to help address the cultural attitudes around assaults supporting all victims to source the help they require whenever it is needed.

Officer Safety Training (OST)

2.38 Between 2019/20 assaults on officers and staff had consistently been on the rise for the previous five years, which was consistent with UK national trends. Figures from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) for 2018/19 showed a 13% increase in assaults "without injury on a constable" and a 27% increase in assaults "with injury on a constable". It was also noted that assaults involving knives has also increased, although these remained relatively infrequent against police officers there were some notable incidents which resulted in enhanced first aid training to include a focus on assisting victims suffering from significant injury as a result of knife attacks.

2.39 In 2020 it was acknowledged that Police Scotland delivered the lowest amount of OST to its officers compared to other UK Forces with data obtained from the NPCC Officer and Staff Safety Review revealing that there is a direct correlation between training time and officer/staff injury rates.

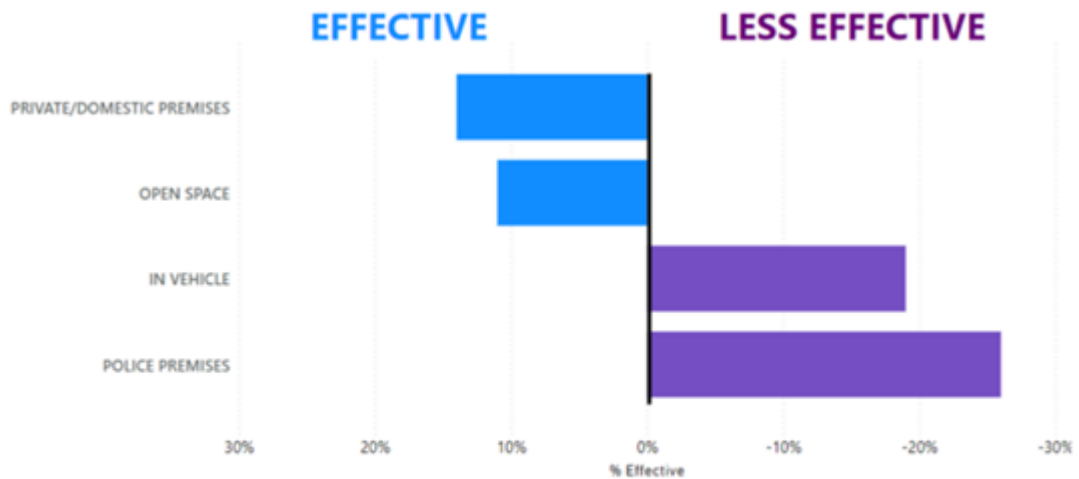
2.40 Given these valuable insights, Police Scotland altered OST training to a two day course and included a First Aid Recertification element in 2021. This training is now a mandatory annual course designed to refresh the theoretical knowledge and practical skills of Police Officers and Staff relative to operational safety and the use of force. The course is delivered in line with Police Scotland's wider criteria for the use of force, promoting readiness to act with confidence and professionalism in the operational environment.

The Course elements include:

- first aid
- the understanding and application of the National Decision Model
- situational awareness
- de-escalation and communication strategies
- conflict management
- proper use of all conventional PPE and empty hand tactics.

2.41 APU produced a paper which examined the effectiveness of the course in preventing injuries from assault. It found that within the first 30 days of the course officers and staff were 40% less likely to be injured from assault. However, when an officer/staff was assaulted a year after completing the training, the estimated effectiveness of the training decreased to 7% (although still less likely to be injured compared to someone who has not received the training).

2.42 The paper also found that the OST course seems effective in reducing injury in private/domestic premises and open spaces. However, the OST training seems be less effective in reducing the likelihood of assault related injuries in vehicles and police premises. This is supported in the divisional snapshots that have found an increase in assaults and injuries in vehicles.



Source: OST Effectiveness YSM, 2022

Note 1: The following locus types were excluded as the results had a 50% or higher chance of being random: NHS Premises, Commercial Premises.

Note 2: Open Space includes Public Place and Road/ Highway.

2.43 The dissemination of the YSM Assault pledge and ensuring updates and guidance is available to front line officers is integral to the success of the YSM group as discussed above.

Next Steps

2.44 Long term pieces of work focussing on insights that have been raised to date such as:

- Collaborate with Health and Wellbeing to further explore the psychological impact of assaults on officers and staff to inform future policy and practice.
- Explore insights into problematic locations of assaults such as police vehicles and custody, conducting a deep dive to enrich the data and our understanding for improved outcomes.
- Further analysis on repeat offenders, vulnerability and repeat victimisation.
- Investigate individual and combined data set availability in order to provide greater context and validity to inform a robust evidence base for future decision making.

2.45 Focus will also be placed on benchmarking with insights from Op Hampshire, a national view of assaults on police officers and police staff. Currently, assaults against police officers and staff in England and Wales is continuing to rise and Op Hampshire are working to gather data around the context of these assaults.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 There are no financial implications in this report.

4. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Your Safety Matters supports the prevention of violence and abusive behaviour against police officers and police/SPA staff, to ensure they are effectively trained, equipped and supported while carrying out their duties. Activities are designed to support the welfare of officers and staff and help the organisation in terms of reducing injuries and resource abstractions.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no legal implications in this report.

6. REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no reputational implications in this report.

7. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no social implications in this report.

8. COMMUNITY IMPACT

8.1 There are no community implications in this report.

9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no equality implications in this report.

10. ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no environmental implications in this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are invited to discuss the contents of this report.