

London Assembly Police and Crime Committee – Wednesday 24 January 2024**Transcript of Agenda Item 5 - Question and Answer Session with the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime and the Metropolitan Police Service – Panel 1**

Caroline Russell AM (Chair): We now move on to our main item of business and I would like to welcome our first panel of guests from the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS). We have Detective Chief Superintendent Andy Cox, Operational Command Unit Commander for the Transformation Programme, and National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) Lead for the Collision Investigation Programme; Acting Detective Superintendent Ross Morrell, from the Roads and Transport Policing; Superintendent Dan Card, North East Basic Command Unit (BCU). We have Commander Kyle Gordon, from Frontline Policing and also the National Lead for Roads Operations Investigations; and Pauline Pateman-West, who is Head of Met Prosecutions. Welcome to all of you and thank you so much for coming and being here together so that we have all the right people to answer all of the questions.

In the first session [of this investigation, on 22 November 2023] where we were hearing from people involved in legal cases, from victims, from campaigners, one of the things that came up was the business of what is the definition of a serious injury collision, because there are different definitions, and who gets to investigate what. I just wondered if we could just clear that up at the top of the meeting. Is that something for you, Kyle, to take?

Commander Kyle Gordon (Local Policing Commander, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service, and National Police Chiefs' Council Lead, National Roads Policing Operations): Thank you very much, Chair. It will not surprise you that I have brought a number of subject matter experts with me today to make sure we get this absolutely right to your satisfaction, therefore I will ask Ross if he will pick that up from the Roads and Transport Policing Command (RTPC).

Acting Detective Superintendent Ross Morrell (Roads and Transport, Serious Collision Investigation Unit, Metropolitan Police Service): Currently my team, the Serious Collision Investigation Unit (SCIU), takes all fatal collisions and serious personal injury collisions. The definition is the Department of Transport's (DfT) definition: in essence, anything that equates to a grievous bodily harm injury is considered as serious.

Caroline Russell AM (Chair): Is that about 100 collisions a year that you take through the SCIU?

Acting Detective Superintendent Ross Morrell (Roads and Transport, Serious Collision Investigation Unit, Metropolitan Police Service): Yes, it is about that.

Caroline Russell AM (Chair): OK. There are a lot of other collisions that have serious implications for the person injured, broken limbs, things that can make a real difference in terms of your ability to do your job and whatever. What happens to the bulk of the collisions? Is that in the order of 3,000-plus a year?

Acting Detective Superintendent Ross Morrell (Roads and Transport, Serious Collision Investigation Unit, Metropolitan Police Service): Yes, and that is taken by our MO10, Met Prosecutions.

Caroline Russell AM (Chair): That goes through Marlow --

Acting Detective Superintendent Ross Morrell (Roads and Transport, Serious Collision Investigation Unit, Metropolitan Police Service): To Pauline, yes.

Caroline Russell AM (Chair): Goes to Pauline [Pateman-West] at Marlow House.

Pauline Pateman-West (Head of Traffic Prosecutions, Metropolitan Police Service): Yes. Anything that is reported via Single Online Home, and that does include some serious, will be dealt with by my Unit. If there is any indication of driving under the influence, then the BCU would retain primacy for that secondary investigation. Any other criminality involved that would be retained by the BCU. Also, if there is any indication of dangerous driving, then that should be retained by the BCU to retain primacy for the ongoing secondary investigation.

Caroline Russell AM (Chair): Just to be clear, the ones that do not get taken by the SCIU, but where there is an indication of driving under the influence or dangerous driving, those go to the BCU, are those investigated at BCU level rather than by the SCIU team?

Pauline Pateman-West (Head of Traffic Prosecutions, Metropolitan Police Service): Yes.

Caroline Russell AM (Chair): Does that sit with you, Dan?

Superintendent Dan Card (North East Basic Command Unit, Metropolitan Police Service): Yes, obviously Ross's team deals with the very, very serious personal injury collisions. The ones that fall beneath that are generally reported via frontline policing, BCU, and then after the initial investigations are done it goes to Pauline's team for the backup.

The other thing I would probably say, just to give you some context, is because of the way injuries are recorded, you do get some anomalies. For example, if you fall off your pushbike or you fall off your motorcycle and you were to break a finger, that would be considered a serious injury because it is a broken bone. However, you might not necessarily have a life-changing injury because of it. Therefore, it is sometimes slightly more difficult and nuanced to pick out the exact level of injuries when we talk about serious injuries because people automatically think that is going to be something significant. Sometimes it is not, and it is at the lower end of serious, but that is not me playing down the effect that it has on people, it is just to give you some idea of how it is recorded in context.

Caroline Russell AM (Chair): Yes. There is a range of injuries that are covered by the term "serious" and that could range from things that people really would think of as serious in common everyday speaking to something smaller like a broken finger or twisted ankle. No, twisted ankle would not be because there is no broken bone.

Superintendent Dan Card (North East Basic Command Unit, Metropolitan Police Service): No, that would be a slight [injury]. That is the problem, there is quite a sliding scale in that.

Caroline Russell AM (Chair): OK. Just to get a sense of the scale of the numbers of collisions that are being investigated at BCU level, how many roughly are being dealt with in a year?

Commander Kyle Gordon (Local Policing Commander, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service, and National Police Chiefs' Council Lead, National Roads Policing Operations): Chair, I wonder just while some of those figures might be being looked at, I should have started off by giving a little bit

of context. I thought maybe you were just clarifying the first point and then we would move in. It might be useful just to set that context for the MPS in terms of the sheer volume and scale of what is being dealt with.

Caroline Russell AM (Chair): That would be very helpful.

Commander Kyle Gordon (Local Policing Commander, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service, and National Police Chiefs' Council Lead, National Roads Policing Operations): London's roads are incredibly busy, you will know that without me having to state the obvious, there are some 2.6 million vehicles registered within the capital. According to the Transport for London (TfL) website, they travel an estimated 19 billion miles per annum across 9,200 miles of road. What that meant was that in 2023, according to the figures I have been given, that resulted in around 115,000 reported collisions, broken down roughly as 82,000 damage only and 32,000 with injury, and approximately 3,500 of these classed as serious. Of course, as we all know, this is near and dear to my heart as the National Lead. It also resulted in almost 100 people tragically losing their lives on London's roads.

In addition to this, of course, the MPS also responds to some 36,000 reported road traffic offences coming into our call centres as well. Despite all of this volume, and that is a lot of volume, the MPS reached the I Grade [immediate urgency] calls for injury road traffic collisions within the target of 15 minutes almost 78 per cent of the time, and a median time of arrival of ten minutes and 15 seconds. S Grade [significant urgency] calls, the ones that sit just underneath the immediate injury road traffic collisions, were reached over 85 per cent of the time within the target of 60 minutes, with a median response time of around 21 and a half minutes.

Of course, none of this happens in a vacuum. It has been widely discussed both here and further afield the challenges that the MPS is currently under in terms of finances, capacity, and sheer volume, leading to pieces of work like the Right Care Right Person that thankfully is starting to create some of that capacity on the frontline.

As the National Lead for Roads Policing Operations, Investigations and Intelligence, and of course that is why I have brought Andy Cox with me today, as he is my Deputy in one of those fields, these matters are near and dear to our hearts. However, what I can say from a national perspective then looking in, and it is fortunate for the MPS that it does have two serving senior officers who are both National Leads, but of course when His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) back in 2019-2020 did the first deep dive on roads policing across the whole of the United Kingdom (UK), while it is not perfect, the MPS was very much seen as the gold standard, both in terms of capability and capacity. Therefore, having a dedicated standalone RTPC with the resources that we have and the capability that we have within that, things like having Professionalising Investigation Programme (PIP) level 2 detectives working on these investigations and the Forensic Collision Investigation Unit (FCIU) having the strength that it does. It is useful just to give that context, because of course we are, I imagine, going to start having a conversation about times when victims may have felt let down or when we could have done things better. However, given the volume that the MPS is dealing with across the whole piece, given what we have with that sheer volume of collisions being reported into us, I just wanted to set that context. It might help lend some wider understanding as the questions are asked.

Caroline Russell AM (Chair): Thank you. That is really helpful. What about just the way that the different collisions are categorised into the different types of investigation, is it obvious what gets looked at by the SCIU and what gets looked at BCU level?

Commander Kyle Gordon (Local Policing Commander, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service, and National Police Chiefs' Council Lead, National Roads Policing Operations): I will bring in Ross and Dan in a second, but of course, as any call comes into the MPS control centre, it is triaged through what we call the threat, harm, risk, investigation, vulnerability and engagement (THRIVE) process. Therefore, the call itself will be examined against the number of criteria, the threat, the harm, the investigative opportunities, etc, and it will then be tasked out accordingly at, either the immediate grade call, the standard grade call, or maybe even a follow up thereafter.

Attendance at the scene by the regional attending officers will then help colour how the initial perceptions of those collisions are graded and what investigation follows thereafter. There will of course be times whenever the initial assessment does not pan out, as I say, when you look at the number of damage-only that are reported at over 80,000 into the MPS call centre, of course we will all know from our professional and private lives that a number of those will then go on to be injury collisions at a later stage that may not have been reported in. That is why, when the officers arrived at the scene, the initial assessment of that will primarily drive whereabouts that falls, whether within the SCIU or sitting with the BCU. However, of course the initial assessment may not be the final assessment. I am wondering if Ross wants to add any more detail to that.

Acting Detective Superintendent Ross Morrell (Roads and Transport, Serious Collision Investigation Unit, Metropolitan Police Service): Yes, basically my team would take anything that is life threatening, life changing, or fatal. That is as declared by the hospital. My team, the SCIU, would deploy to all of those incidents as well as the frontline policing officers.

If, as we have said, things do change and I often describe it as sort of like sports injuries that people walk off and are fine, and then later discover that something is wrong, the same can happen with people that go to hospital. They go to hospital and are OK, and then a week later there is complication and something changes. Therefore, we do always get those.

What we have done recently is introduced a new advice that, when any of my teams are deployed, every time they are deployed, they will give the BCU officers a structured, written advice if we are not taking on the investigation ourselves, in line with what we do with murders now. All serious road traffic accidents are treated the same as murders now. We give the advice because we were aware that some officers might not know what to do and generally might be a bit concerned or worried as they have not dealt with something like that before, therefore we now have the written advice, it goes to the officers at scene, the BCU commanders and the investigation lead on the BCU.

Caroline Russell AM (Chair): Does that include a sort of checklist of things?

Acting Detective Superintendent Ross Morrell (Roads and Transport, Serious Collision Investigation Unit, Metropolitan Police Service): Yes, basically a full investigation plan.

Caroline Russell AM (Chair): Thank you. The Mayor [of London]'s Vision Zero action plan says it is going to enhance and drive excellence in collision investigation. Kyle, what work has been done within the MPS to push on that drive for excellence in collision investigation as stated in the Mayor's plan?

Commander Kyle Gordon (Local Policing Commander, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service, and National Police Chiefs' Council Lead, National Roads Policing Operations): Of course, the MPS signs up fully to the Vision Zero action plan and it is something I have been pushing nationally as well. In terms of what work has been done, it is important to set out that benchmark that the MPS, in terms of capability and capacity for investigations, is seen very much as the national standard. Some of the work that

Andy has done for me nationally with the College of Policing and the NPCC right across the UK to bring up the standard of investigators, so that they have the PIP 2, as we call it, the investigative qualification, was work that they MPS already had. We have a dedicated SCIU, which many forces do not have, the FCIU of course is one of the best, if not the best in the UK. Therefore, the standard that you get, the standard that already existed at the time of the HMICFRS inspection, already evidenced that we were providing a very, very high level. Andy, is there anything else you want to add from the national work into the MPS?

Detective Chief Superintendent Andy Cox (Operational Command Unit Commander, Transformation Programme, Metropolitan Police Service, and National Police Chiefs' Council Lead, Collision Investigation Programme):

Yes, thanks, Kyle. Good morning, everybody. Just for context, I approached Kyle I think in around about 2019 to seek his support to set up a National Collision Board. As somebody who has worked on murder, investigation and crash investigation, I recognised the two were seen very differently in terms of priority and skill set. Yet they are exactly the same investigating the death of somebody often in criminal circumstances and often needing all the same expertise, specialisms and excellence, to really lead to an effective investigation, supporting crash victims and their families, and ultimately bringing offenders to justice.

So the National Board was set up that invited every force to it, the MPS obviously included, and I was in the MPS at that time. It is really a useful exercise to bring together key leads from around the country, talk about good practice, talk about strategy, but really to give recognition to the role. I would say that, as part of that, we included external partners into the meeting, Highways England, Road Peace, for example, we included Motor Insurers' Bureau, and others such as legal services and so on, to really give a wider strategic context and to inform people and to really try to raise standards across the country. We recognise it is not perfect around the country, we recognise there is work to do.

What I would say, and this is somebody who is in the MPS, but I say it with a neutral head on, the MPS is an absolute exemplar across the country around this. We have a senior structure to it. There is no force that, for example, has a Superintendent that leads crash investigation nationally. That has obviously been identified by the HMICFRS as well. However, practitioners recognise it; we put much more resource into it. We have dedicated Family Liaison Officers (FLOs) that can support crash families.

There has been a whole load of work to do and to develop those standards. Some of the things that I initially set into train was to make it a detective-based role for reasons I set out. Very similar to murder, we would have detectives leading murder investigation, but we often had uniform officers leading crash investigation that was fatality-related. Therefore, we wanted to mandate that was a detective. My role is very much, as is Kyle's to be fair, around negotiation and influence across the country. While we consider ourselves leads, we have to negotiate and influence local applications. Around the country ultimately it is local forces that decide what they do. However, we did set out recommendations, for example, to make it a detective role, to make sure the Forensic Collision Investigation Network (FCIN), which is essentially about excellence, because it is a scientific field, therefore it is about trying to really professionalise that but to make it independent from the investigators so that it could not be seen as influenced or some form of collaboration. It is independent science, which is the FCIN, which is set up, and the MPS applies that really effectively. Then your local investigation, which is now detective-based, and I know the MPS is very compliant with those principles as well.

Caroline Russell AM (Chair): So, Andy, just going on in terms of the national guidance, do you think that has enough influence on the MPS investigations? I appreciate everyone has said that what happens at SCIU level is tip-top and amazing. What we did hear in our first meeting was that the people who were representing crash victims and the people who were then seeking support were frustrated by the more paper and desk-based processes that happen at the Marlow House end. That is obviously not your fault, Pauline. Andy,

are you comfortable that the MPS is doing enough to give the people investigating stuff at BCU level, the bigger group of serious collisions, that they have the support they need to be able to investigate? Are all of those being investigated at detective level or are some of them not?

Detective Chief Superintendent Andy Cox (Operational Command Unit Commander, Transformation Programme, Metropolitan Police Service, and National Police Chiefs' Council Lead, Collision Investigation Programme): For clarity, my remit really is around the fatal and life-changing injury stuff,

which not every force has anywhere near to the setup the MPS has. The MPS is very much a leader around fatal crash and life-changing injuries. The group has done a load around road danger reduction. You know for example the campaigns I have every year around this, which we market through the National Collision Board just around the whole road danger reduction piece and particularly around public reporting of road crime. Where again I would say the MPS is very much one of the key leaders around facilitating the public to make reports. That goes to a preventative agenda, which is really, really important. Our resolution or investigative outcomes are really strong around road crime reporting and having the public essentially 24/7 being our eyes and support, as they are in any other crime type, is essential for reducing the number of collisions we have in London. However, I do not feel fully able to comment on the level below that in terms, I think that would probably be for Ross.

Caroline Russell AM (Chair): Yes, Kyle.

Commander Kyle Gordon (Local Policing Commander, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service, and National Police Chiefs' Council Lead, National Roads Policing Operations): Yes, thank you, Chair. There is a blunt answer and there is a slightly more nuanced answer. I have given you some of the context of where we sit in London. My portfolio currently is also the MPS Strategic Lead for Emergency Response Policing right across the capital, and the reason I mention that as being important is of course the first responders to the vast majority of those reported incidents are going to be the response policing functions within the MPS.

It will not come as any surprise to anybody around this table that, like with many other areas within the MPS, when we have done the demand analysis, if there were more officers to move into that function in a way that balances the threat and risk across the range of portfolios, we absolutely would. On a daily basis, I get the outstanding call list of incidents that we still have to attend and of course road traffic incidents, I have given you some of the figures around that, but there is a lot of risk that sits in the capacity challenges that we have within the MPS, and we have to prioritise the attendance.

The blunt answer of course is, as the National Lead and as a Commander for Frontline Policing, I would love to see greater capacity to be able to provide even more of a service to those crashes that do not make it on to the threshold of the SCIU. However, the reality of this is that is not the case. You will be aware from the conversation that is ongoing between the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) and the MPS under the *A New Met for London* plan, how we are seeking to build the strongest ever neighbourhoods, we are increasing resourcing in and around the uplift in public protection, and all of these are really high-risk areas of business. Roads policing and road traffic collisions fall within the main bundle of other volume stuff that the MPS is dealing with.

I have had a look in the run up to this meeting just to refresh myself in terms of what officers are given out on the BCU so that predominantly is all done through the training at Hendon. They do get an input into road traffic collision scene management, investigations, and ancillary road traffic offences, and they understand how to pull all of that together. We have new systems coming online, as you will be aware, so the CONNECT computer system that is going to bring all of our case management intelligence together is absolutely going to

enhance. The Right Care, Right Person programme of work is creating capacity that we never had before, which will enhance our capability. Of course, we need to drive the supervision of those investigations through. However, it is not detectives that investigate the vast majority of road traffic collisions in London, as is the case right across the whole of the UK, there will be those officers responding that will be carrying out most of those investigations, they will go into the Mi-Investigation support teams within the MPS, who will progress the majority of those that do not make their way in through the route that you have spoken of with Pauline.

I would love to have the equal standard right across the board and there is not of course, and we have to prioritise on a threat risk and harm basis those investigations. Therefore, the linkages across into the RTPC and the SCIU are there and that is something we have that not many other forces, if any, will have, where we think that something has become sufficiently complex or there are aggravating factors around other offences. However, as I say, the bottom line in this, the simple answer is it is not detectives that investigate the vast, vast majority of these collisions.

Caroline Russell AM (Chair): We heard obviously a murder is investigated by a detective, whereas the road traffic collisions where someone has been killed, where there is criminality, or potential criminality that needs to be investigated within the driving that led to the crash, that does not necessarily get investigated by a detective, is what we are saying.

Commander Kyle Gordon (Local Policing Commander, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service, and National Police Chiefs' Council Lead, National Roads Policing Operations): No, again, Chair, and I sense there is activity to my right as people want to come in and add fine detail, but again context is everything in terms of what should the standard be. This is national work that we are doing to try to change attitudes towards road harm. If this is an average day in the UK, every 23 minutes somebody is killed or seriously injured. That is every 23 minutes. When we walk out of here, if this is an average day in the UK, two people will have been killed or seriously injured across the UK. There is 38 million vehicles on the roads in the UK, seven million of those have some sort of noncompliance element, and we have done a lot of work nationally, including in London, to try to grip that, because we know statistically that people that do not tax their car, insure their car, register their car, are also involved in criminality. We are linking between my portfolio and the National Roads, Policing, Operations and Intelligence, we are linking ourselves across with other operational links at the NPCC to try to close that gap and we are exploring all sorts of opportunities around identification through electronic number plates and Automatic Number Plate Recognition systems.

However, the reason I tell you all of that is because this is exactly the point that you had made, Chair, is one of the things that I seek to do nationally. If there was any other policing portfolio where that level of harm to our communities and to individual families within those communities was caused in terms of the volume of people killed and seriously injured, I would wager that there might be much more of an interest in this subject. I have held this portfolio for four years and continue to make that argument. So you are absolutely right, the linkages between the other investigations and the offences that might sit in and around that with those noncompliant vehicles are absolutely crystal clear and we do push where we can. Any aggravating factors will escalate the collision to a different level. Ross, did you want to come in?

Acting Detective Superintendent Ross Morrell (Roads and Transport, Serious Collision Investigation Unit, Metropolitan Police Service): Yes. On the detective part, any road deaths that are not as a result of a medical sort of episode and involve no one else get investigated by a detective categorically. That investigation is managed by a Senior Investigating Officer (SIO) with national qualifications who is qualified to investigate murders, without doubt.

Caroline Russell AM (Chair): Yes. I totally see that, and I totally appreciate all the capacity issues. What we heard was that people who have very serious life-changing injuries, if they do not get that level of investigation, may find it hard to get the compensation they need to get on with their life. Just very briefly, if someone could just give a one-word answer on this: is the under-reporting of serious injury collisions that we heard about earlier something that is a serious issue that you are concerned about?

Acting Detective Superintendent Ross Morrell (Roads and Transport, Serious Collision Investigation Unit, Metropolitan Police Service): I would say no, in that we cannot categorically say with under-reporting what level it is at, but we would consider that, due to the nature that people with insurance companies, road vehicles and things like that, that most do get reported.

Caroline Russell AM (Chair): OK, thank you. Assembly Member Pidgeon.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Thank you very much. I want to look into the police investigation of serious injury collisions. You set up a few years ago the FCIU, there was a specific direction from the Forensic Science Regulator on that. I am wondering what impact that establishment of the FCIU has had on the investigation of serious injury collisions.

Commander Kyle Gordon (Local Policing Commander, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service, and National Police Chiefs' Council Lead, National Roads Policing Operations): I will pass across to Dan and Ross. Dan was in seat at the time, but it is worth pointing out that we - as in the MPS - sat on that Board. I sat personally on that Board because of the volume here. I absolutely support the aims of it, as Andy had said previously, absolutely critical following the recommendation from the Forensic [Science] Regulator around separating the investigation and the independence of the forensic evidence. Therefore, anything that happened in that space would absolutely have enhanced the credibility and the currency of the forensic opportunities around that. However, of course, coming from a finite pool of resources, I remember at the time that meant that we had to separate teams out in order to be compliant with both. Once you start dividing the said cake, then you are into potential challenges around just making sure you have that capacity. Dan, do you want to add anything else?

Superintendent Dan Card (North East Basic Command Unit, Metropolitan Police Service): Just really to clarify that the formation of the FCIU, that work was already being done prior to that and has been done for the last 20 or so years, but it was part of the SCIU before that. What happened was the Forensic [Science] Regulator mandated that those two workstreams needed to be separate to ensure integrity. That was not anything to do with any of the MPS's previous activity; it was just for forensic regulation.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: For good practice, yes.

Superintendent Dan Card (North East Basic Command Unit, Metropolitan Police Service): Therefore, in terms of the service delivery, the Unit had been split and given different names, but there had been not much change in what was delivered to the people of London.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: OK, it did not have a huge change in the capital.

Detective Chief Superintendent Andy Cox (Operational Command Unit Commander, Transformation Programme, Metropolitan Police Service, and National Police Chiefs' Council Lead, Collision Investigation Programme): Do you mind if I just perhaps add something as well, if I can?

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Yes, sure.

Detective Chief Superintendent Andy Cox (Operational Command Unit Commander, Transformation Programme, Metropolitan Police Service, and National Police Chiefs' Council Lead, Collision Investigation Programme): Thanks. What I would say is their training now is so extensive, they are trained almost within an inch of their life, therefore the standards can only improve in essence because of their professionalism, the accreditation process they have to go through. It is their sole focus now, whereas it was blurred before, and certainly around the country it was very blurred before. Therefore, it has given independence and expertise.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: OK. Andy, if I could stick with you. We heard earlier, I think, Kyle, you were talking about this team is gold standard overall and you do have the capability and the capacity. However, then we started talking a little bit more about capacity. Andy, do you think the MPS has the right level of resources to meet the demands of the serious injury investigations placed upon it? What is working well? What needs to change?

Detective Chief Superintendent Andy Cox (Operational Command Unit Commander, Transformation Programme, Metropolitan Police Service, and National Police Chiefs' Council Lead, Collision Investigation Programme): In terms of fatal and life-changing, yes, and it is way above, the top end essentially, it is way above anywhere else in the country, has senior leadership, leadership levels all the way through, and an extensive amount of investigators as well that are detective-based and have expertise in this field. Therefore, in terms of that level, 100 per cent, yes. However, I would almost refer you to Kyle's answer around that level below that that he gave just now.

Commander Kyle Gordon (Local Policing Commander, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service, and National Police Chiefs' Council Lead, National Roads Policing Operations): Yes, to colour some of that in, it is just worth pointing out, as well as a Detective Superintendent heading it up, which is unheard of across the UK, and does show the seriousness with which we give it, there are four Detective Inspectors, 16 Detective Sergeants, and 56 Detective Constables allocated to that. That is a significant resource to be dedicated to road traffic collisions that just does not exist anywhere else in the UK. We would always like more, of course we would always like more, and if we did not have all of the competing demands, we may well have more. However, that is a significant resource that is dedicated to that function within London that is just unique in UK policing.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: But, as you have already mentioned, it was 100 deaths in the last year, so it is probably quite a small resource compared to that sort of volume.

Commander Kyle Gordon (Local Policing Commander, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service, and National Police Chiefs' Council Lead, National Roads Policing Operations): Again, this is part of the challenge when we speak about a fatal road traffic collision, leaving aside the tragic consequences for the family, the community, the loved ones left behind, of course, therefore everything I say is predicated by understanding that. However, of course the outcome in terms of the injury does not in and of itself indicate the complexity of the investigation. There could be very, very simple circumstances where a collision occurs and we see that regularly, maybe somebody on what we call a powered two-wheeler, a motorcycle or a moped, at speed makes a collision with an immovable object. Not a complicated investigation. Right down the line that you might have something where there are several vehicles involved over a complex topography, therefore without knowing all of those individual cases, I cannot speak to whether or not the 100 equates to not enough, but certainly in the time that I was there the capacity was sufficient for what we had coming through the door.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: What is your vacancy rate like within the team?

Commander Kyle Gordon (Local Policing Commander, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service, and National Police Chiefs' Council Lead, National Roads Policing Operations): The vacancy rate at the minute against that, as in the latest workforce figures I have, there is 13 Detective Sergeants out of 16 allocated, and 41 Detective Constables out of 56. Therefore, there are a number of vacancies sitting across that, but if you compare that to some of the vacancy rates across things like Public Protection and other units in the MPS that is quite healthy.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Yes, but you still have considerable vacancies there, which will restrict the work. I was trying to follow this earlier, and I am not sure this was answered, but from the previous hearing and my reading on this, the vast majority of serious injury collisions are still not being investigated, is that right? Who decides what is investigated? Or have I misunderstood that?

Superintendent Dan Card (North East Basic Command Unit, Metropolitan Police Service): There is probably just a bit of context. It is not that they are not investigated; they are not investigated by the SCIU, so they will be investigated --

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Right, so that is this definition between the two, yes.

Superintendent Dan Card (North East Basic Command Unit, Metropolitan Police Service): The vast majority will be investigated at the time by frontline police officers, those officers from response teams who will conduct the initial investigation. Then what we would call the secondary investigation would be conducted by Pauline's team in MO10.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Right, OK. I am not sure if we are getting on to this later, but who decides what happens with these cases?

Superintendent Dan Card (North East Basic Command Unit, Metropolitan Police Service): A decision is taken at the time, as Mr Morrell said earlier, based on the injury level to the victim.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Right, OK, yes.

Superintendent Dan Card (North East Basic Command Unit, Metropolitan Police Service): Then other elements of complexity. If we had a diplomat involved in it, it might go to the SCIU because of the attention that is going to get, for example. However, primarily it is done based on, as Mr Gordon says, the threat, harm and risk, what is the injury to the victim, how likely are we to be able to deliver a good service because of that, and then we will take that decision based there. However, the majority of them get investigated by the local officers with the support from MO10.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: OK, lovely. I think that is all my questions covered, thank you.

Len Duvall AM: Thank you very much. It is that very point at the frontline level, at BCU level, in terms of where does screening out crimes come into that? You are describing a process that gives you that time, but those officers in that first attendance to that call and collecting that evidence, pressures at various BCUs must lead to inconsistency and a weakness in the processes between you passing it on to other colleagues or not. Tell us a little bit more, paint a picture of managing those pressures to make sure that we are not losing out in the sense of further investigations and potential prosecutions.

Superintendent Dan Card (North East Basic Command Unit, Metropolitan Police Service): It starts at the very beginning, as Commander Gordon said, around assessing that threat, harm, and risk, about how swiftly we deploy to this incident in the first instance. As Mr Gordon said, 78 per cent of the time we are meeting our charter time to get there as swift as we can and conduct an investigation. The officers then, their training involves them going through in effect a checklist to say what they are going to look at, which looks at health and safety, medical aid, then the actions of reporting it at the scene, recording it, pulling videos, speaking to witnesses, checks at the scene to make sure everyone is licenced and insured. Then it is really down to what they are told in terms of medical evidence at the scene. We are by and large led by our colleagues in the London Ambulance Service or Helicopter Emergency Medical Service, who will turn up and make an assessment at the scene.

As Mr Morrell said, when it is clearly going to unfortunately be a fatal incident, very quickly the SCIU will be activated. The challenge is always that bit in the middle as to how serious is the serious injury? Is it going to be life threatening? Is it going to be life changing? If it is, it goes down the SCIU pathway; if it is not, it is retained by the initial investigating officers who will conduct a number of inquiries and checks and investigations. If there are offences alleged or apparent there, if you have somebody drink-driving for example, they would be arrested by the officer at the scene, who will then follow that case up. If there is a slightly less serious - if you excuse the context of it - offence, then they would be reported and that would all go on our reporting system, Case Overview Preparation Application (COPA). Then, once that is uploaded onto COPA, those secondary investigations will be taken forward by Pauline's team in MO10 to support prosecution or provide information to insurance companies.

Len Duvall AM: What evidence can you provide in terms of consistency of performance across all BCUs in terms of that level of that first responder in the situation of that? Is that not a weakness or is it you think that is all OK if they follow the process, follow the issues?

Superintendent Dan Card (North East Basic Command Unit, Metropolitan Police Service): Each one of these COPAs is supervised by the line manager of the officer to make sure that they are completing what would be considered the basic checks. There is a reality to that, however, that this is operational policing and there are a number of competing demands on those officers. I would like to say to you that all of these things always end perfectly, and we do a brilliant job every time. However, that is not the case. What I can say is the officers are working extremely hard, they have a checklist centrally, are trained, therefore we are trying to increase that standard and improve that consistency on them. It is then checked by their line manager, it is checked by Pauline's team as it arrives, so we have several stages of checking before we make a decision.

Len Duvall AM: No one is trying to catch you out or pull the rug from underneath you and to be critical, we understand about the complexity and the pressures that you face. What we are trying to get to the bottom of, is there a level of inconsistency, what can we do to improve that in terms of response across London, rather than have centres of excellence of some BCUs are taking. We heard earlier on about attitude aspects to these potential crimes. That is what I am trying to get to.

Acting Detective Superintendent Ross Morrell (Roads and Transport, Serious Collision Investigation Unit, Metropolitan Police Service): If I come in there it is probably best. As we have said, is it what we would like at this point in time? No. Is it getting better? Yes. That is due to our commitment to the Vision Zero action plan, working with TfL as well. Part of that is that the advice that my teams now give, if they are called out, we are looking to enhance our training, to put more enhanced officers that are trained to a better degree within the BCUs to address that exact point. What I can say is that every element of criminality, if there is criminality involved, that will be supervised by what we call an Evidential Review Officer (ERO) that is a Sergeant or a Detective Sergeant. That is a separate qualification. They have got an additional level of

training for supervising criminal investigations. That is there. Also, due to our commitments with the Vision Zero action plan, we have put new things in place because of that. It is not what we would like, but it is getting better.

Len Duvall AM: OK, thank you.

Caroline Russell AM (Chair): Thank you. Assembly Member Desai.

Unmesh Desai AM: Thank you, Chair. Good morning, panel. My question is to you, Commander Gordon, but before I put my question to you, can I thank you for bringing the right officers with you that you felt would help us in this session. Thank you very much for your attendance. Commander, my question is about resourcing, or lack of it to be more precise. You have been asked about vacancy rates by Assembly Member Pidgeon. You talked about Right Care, Right Person, creating the capacity we never had before. However, just to clarify, can I ask you very directly, are there any specific types of vehicular offences, cars, trucks, etc, that you are forced to screen out because you simply do not have the staff or the resources?

Commander Kyle Gordon (Local Policing Commander, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service, and National Police Chiefs' Council Lead, National Roads Policing Operations): No, there is nothing in relation to specific crime types on the road that we would specifically screen out. The screening out, if I can use your phrase in the context to which you have given it, simply starts off whenever the initial call comes in to the call handling centre and we go through the process of what is colloquially known as THRIVE, it is assessed by the call handlers against threat, harm, risk. It is worth saying that it is not the job of the police to attend damage-only road traffic collisions per se. Unless there are other aggravating factors, we do not simply arrive at the scene for the purposes of gathering information for third parties, insurance companies, etc, there is very specific criteria around why we would investigate a road traffic collision. That is the first element of screening out in terms of do we need to attend in the first place.

When the officers then do attend, it may well turn out that offences that have been alleged, etc, might not be present or there might not be evidence of that. If somebody wanted to play the system, all they would simply have to do is allege an offence at the time that they report and they would get a police response. That might be the second level of screening out.

As Dan and Ross have mentioned, then there are further elements through, as you would with any potential crime, have a look is there a crime, is there crime evidence, can it be prosecuted along reasonable lines of inquiry, and then the case file would go through. To draw all of that back down again, no, there is no policy within the MPS that says, because of capacity issues, we do not attend certain crime types on the road.

Unmesh Desai AM: Thank you. Obviously, you can always do with more resources, but that is not putting you off from investigating.

Commander Kyle Gordon (Local Policing Commander, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service, and National Police Chiefs' Council Lead, National Roads Policing Operations): No, not at all.

Unmesh Desai AM: Thank you very much.

Acting Detective Superintendent Ross Morrell (Roads and Transport, Serious Collision Investigation Unit, Metropolitan Police Service): Could I say that all of those are investigated, any injury on the road involving criminality is investigated. We do not screen anything out, first of all it is all investigated.

Unmesh Desai AM: Thank you. That is very reassuring, thank you.

Pauline Pateman-West (Head of Traffic Prosecutions, Metropolitan Police Service): Sorry, could I just add, in relation to my side of the business, any injury collision would be subject to a secondary investigation. It is the damage-only, the slight damage found, that we do not have capacity to deal with.

Unmesh Desai AM: Thank you for your attendance as well. Thank you, Chair.

Caroline Russell AM (Chair): Thank you Lord Bailey.

Lord Bailey of Paddington AM: Thank you, Chair. Good morning, panel. I just want to echo Assembly Member Desai's comments about the expertise of the team. It is very, very heartening to have you all here because you really do seem to know your beans, as they say. I want to start with Pauline, if I might. What has been the impact of the implementation of the CONNECT [integrated core policing IT solution] and what kind of effect has it had on the investigations that you carry out?

Pauline Pateman-West (Head of Traffic Prosecutions, Metropolitan Police Service): CONNECT, drop one, brought the functionality and it replaced for us COPA, so it is the case prep functionality. Any charges now go through CONNECT. In relation to investigations, it has not impacted, and it is descoped for drop two, which is due next month, February, for investigation. Therefore, collision investigation, collision reporting, casualty reporting, descoped from drop two. We are just awaiting timescales as to when that will feature on the future roadmap. CONNECT, for my team, any new system is a new system, usability so that you have that training. However, because my team deals with all of the traffic offence prosecutions in London, not just from the collisions, from traffic offence reports, or the camera side of the business as well, they are main users of the system.

They are main users of the system; they are repeat users. They are used to using the system. I cannot say there have not been some performance and technical issues, that happens with new systems, but we also have introduced lots of workarounds. There has never been any compromise to charging as a result of CONNECT. We have third-party access, so if we need to, we can lay information direct to the court system. However, no impact in relation to investigations at this stage.

Lord Bailey of Paddington AM: Do you feel it has made any improvement? Do you feel like it will work better than the system it has replaced or is that to be seen?

Pauline Pateman-West (Head of Traffic Prosecutions, Metropolitan Police Service): In time I think it will because you will have the integration of the different elements of all policing systems. We will go from intelligence to investigations to prosecution; that sharing of information and intelligence.

Lord Bailey of Paddington AM: Will it speed it up; is that the goal?

Pauline Pateman-West (Head of Traffic Prosecutions, Metropolitan Police Service): Yes. In relation to that, they are the requirements, it is delivering on those, then it should streamline the procedures.

Lord Bailey of Paddington AM: OK, thank you. Commander Gordon?

Commander Kyle Gordon (Local Policing Commander, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service, and National Police Chiefs' Council Lead, National Roads Policing Operations): Yes. I

wonder if I could just maybe give some reassurance from a perspective of somebody that, even though I am six years with the MPS, I am still considered a blow-in. I come from [police] forces that have all a similar system to CONNECT, an end-to-end integrated system. The MPS needed this system. To go to the heart of your question, once we get over the speed bump of getting officers and staff familiarised with the system and up to speed, it will absolutely improve what we do. I cannot tell you as an outsider coming into the MPS how challenging our systems are in that they are all standalone. You have case prep, you have custody, you have investigation. The rest of the UK and the forces I have been in have had systems where that is all completely seamless, from the Command and Control system, right the way through.

You have asked, "Will it improve investigation?" To give one simple example, when a golden nominal is created on one of these systems and would be investigated for road traffic collision, everything that they are wanted for, every other prosecution case that they have, every single notification of a wanted person that currently sits in separate systems will now all be in one place. You could not complete that investigation without that being flagged to you and without it being taken into consideration by the investigating officer. I know I sound a little evangelical in this space, but this will really, not just in road traffic collisions, across the board, when officers and staff are familiar with it and we get it up to speed, this will absolutely make such a significant difference to what we do.

Lord Bailey of Paddington AM: It sounds like it. What our committees, what the London Assembly does, one of the themes has always been siloing. Many councils, the Government, everybody is trying to get past siloing. It looks like this might help. Let me come to my second question to Commander Gordon. Has the MPS identified any gaps in training and what plans do you have to fill those gaps, if they exist?

Commander Kyle Gordon (Local Policing Commander, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service, and National Police Chiefs' Council Lead, National Roads Policing Operations): Yes, thanks, it gives me an opportunity to talk about some of the really good work that Ross and his team are looking at. In terms of specific gaps in training for road traffic collisions, there are no specific gaps. As I say, they get the initial training at Hendon [Police College], therefore every officer that comes through gets that. Pauline's team all have specific training and anybody who goes on then to be a specialist in relation to collision investigation gets additional training. However, I know there is work being done by Ross and his team to try to even enhance that further within the BCUs right across the MPS.

Acting Detective Superintendent Ross Morrell (Roads and Transport, Serious Collision Investigation Unit, Metropolitan Police Service): Yes, as I alluded to earlier, we are looking to enhance practitioners out there on the streets because we know that there is a lack of knowledge out there. My teams hold that specific knowledge, but elsewhere it is limited. We are looking to set up, across 12 BCUs, we will have 12 enhanced supervisors that will get specific training with regards to investigation of road traffic collisions and an additionality of two active investigators in each BCU. Therefore, there will be three people, one supervisor, two practitioners, on each BCU that are dealing with those ones we have discussed that fall outside of our remit and not into Pauline's one. They will have that training and we are looking at having a two-year rotation to upskill those, make sure we have not had anyone drop off and fill those gaps. It is something we are addressing.

Lord Bailey of Paddington AM: How advanced are you in achieving that? Do you have six or do you have one, do you have 11?

Acting Detective Superintendent Ross Morrell (Roads and Transport, Serious Collision Investigation Unit, Metropolitan Police Service): Literally, I proposed a couple of weeks ago, therefore we are right at the early stages. However, it is something that we can roll out pretty quickly. Quite a lot of

other forces have already done it. We are speaking to those. I have been speaking to Greater Manchester Police, who already do it. They are really keen on it. They find it works quite well. It is at its final planning stages and ready to go to implementation.

Lord Bailey of Paddington AM: What is your ambition, with a favourable wind, when would we have at least one officer in every BCU of your 12 that you have proposed?

Acting Detective Superintendent Ross Morrell (Roads and Transport, Serious Collision Investigation Unit, Metropolitan Police Service): I would say next year.

Lord Bailey of Paddington AM: OK. We will not hold you to that. I just want you to force yourself to have some level of ambition to get it done. Let me just come to you with this next question, Detective Superintendent Morrell. How does the SCIU pass on good practice to other police teams, including those who are first on the scene?

Acting Detective Superintendent Ross Morrell (Roads and Transport, Serious Collision Investigation Unit, Metropolitan Police Service): It comes back to that bit that I spoke about earlier, that is brand new. This time last year we did not have it in place. What used to happen is our team is deployed, it would be assessed, we would say, "Look, it is not within our remit", and we would leave. That no longer happens. We provide the officers with structured investigation plans. Those investigation plans, they go to the officers that were on the scene, the duty officer that is controlling the scene, the Inspector that is controlling the investigations, and the BCU Commander. They all get that, and it is clear advice, a step-by-step investigation plan of what needs to be conducted.

Lord Bailey of Paddington AM: You are effectively leaving a piece of paper with a method, a plan to follow, as it were?

Acting Detective Superintendent Ross Morrell (Roads and Transport, Serious Collision Investigation Unit, Metropolitan Police Service): Yes.

Lord Bailey of Paddington AM: OK, that sounds more effective. That is it from me, Chair. Thank you.

Caroline Russell AM (Chair): Thank you, Lord Bailey. Moving on to Assembly Member Hall.

Commander Kyle Gordon (Local Policing Commander, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service, and National Police Chiefs' Council Lead, National Roads Policing Operations): Chair just before we do, and I do apologise. I wonder is it worth also pointing out two other things that I should have mentioned on the way through, just around potential gaps. However, these are forward-facing and not specific to the MPS, but to give you assurance that these things are being considered by Policing Plc across the UK.

We have, in the last couple of months, formed, with a number of key partners, the Home Office, DfT, and others, a futures group looking at what is coming down the line, because of course you are asking us about the here and now and that is right and proper, but in a very short space of time we will be investigating collisions that may have autonomous or semi-autonomous vehicles involved. Therefore, we have nationally - and that work does have people from the MPS sitting on it - but will fall down into the MPS, looking at what is coming down the line over the next five, ten, 15 years in roads policing and what might that mean for the victim and the families and the communities to whom the impact is felt.

The other piece of work that we are doing nationally as well, I have had several law firms, come in and ask us is there anything they could do to help the ordinary frontline cops, the 9 to 5 cops, understand what it is that they might do when they are already at the scene just to enhance what it is that they might do for the victims. We are considering that nationally, we want to be sure obviously that it is appropriate and proper that we would start to bring firms in to work with us around that. However, there is potentially the offer of free training and free familiarisation around some key points, so we are exploring that. If that does happen that will fall down through Andy's world nationally, including the MPS. Therefore, I thought it was worth just trying to give you some assurance around the fact we are not just trying to fix the here and now; we are continually trying to seek to improve.

Lord Bailey of Paddington AM: I think that is correct, because if you continually just focus on the here and now you will always have something to do. That mitigation piece needs to happen more across the services we provide as a country, yes, that is good to hear.

Detective Chief Superintendent Andy Cox (Operational Command Unit Commander, Transformation Programme, Metropolitan Police Service, and National Police Chiefs' Council Lead, Collision Investigation Programme): Do you mind if I just give one example of that? Disclosure, you mentioned earlier around perhaps civil matters where victims are pursuing that aspect. We have taken legal advice, we have consulted nationally, and we have delivered a new disclosure policy document, which has been shared nationally, I know it has been shared in the MPS. It essentially leans to early disclosure in civil matters because so often crash victims and their families are waiting for the criminal investigation to finish before they can pursue a civil matter and that really puts families in difficult circumstances, maybe where perhaps the breadwinner has been killed. That early disclosure running simultaneously as a civil and criminal matter is really prioritising victims and putting them first.

Lord Bailey of Paddington AM: OK, thank you.

Caroline Russell AM (Chair): Thank you. Assembly Member Hall.

Susan Hall AM (Deputy Chairman): Thank you. This is a very, very quick one, if I can ask you, Commander. I am concerned about resourcing because whenever you talk to different sections of the MPS they are so under-resourced with bums on seats, if you like. You clearly are from what you were saying earlier. When was that structure put in place?

Commander Kyle Gordon (Local Policing Commander, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service, and National Police Chiefs' Council Lead, National Roads Policing Operations): The current structure was put in place whenever the super BCUs were created, which was just prior to me arriving at the MPS. It must have been pre --

Susan Hall AM (Deputy Chairman): That is 2017.

Commander Kyle Gordon (Local Policing Commander, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service, and National Police Chiefs' Council Lead, National Roads Policing Operations): Yes.

Susan Hall AM (Deputy Chairman): It occurs to me, we went down to 29,000 frontline officers at one point, and we are now up to 34,500 frontline officers. I am just concerned that we were not hearing constantly of all these departments being so short of staff, but we are now when we have so many more frontline officers, according to your own statistics.

Commander Kyle Gordon (Local Policing Commander, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service, and National Police Chiefs' Council Lead, National Roads Policing Operations): Without turning this into a resourcing conversation, the world of policing is changing, the complexity is changing. A lot of the investigations that might have previously taken a certain amount of time, due to everything from reports by HMICFRS and the Director General's Guidance, etc, all increases the amount of investigation time that is needed. Of course, we are seeing rising call volumes, etc, post-COVID.

Susan Hall AM (Deputy Chairman): I completely understand that. I am just trying to understand have you added the positions within the department, which is why there are so many people missing? Is it exactly the same as it was to start with, which you are telling me it was? I am just concerned about the resources for the MPS in general, and I was just trying to understand where all these new police officers are going. That is my concern; but if you say it has been the same structure all this time, I will take that on board.

Commander Kyle Gordon (Local Policing Commander, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service, and National Police Chiefs' Council Lead, National Roads Policing Operations): We have had the same overarching structure. That is not to say that within each of the BCUs, once they were set up, we have looked at various changes to the teams to try to stay ahead of that. Apologies, I did not mean to mislead in saying it has been static throughout. We have looked at the best ways of doing investigations. Just to take one simple example within the Emergency Response Teams, we are on record, and others have talked about the number of officers that we have that are not deployable within the MPS. Therefore, we have created --

Susan Hall AM (Deputy Chairman): Yes, I know that.

Commander Kyle Gordon (Local Policing Commander, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service, and National Police Chiefs' Council Lead, National Roads Policing Operations): -- to try to enhance some of that. So we have sought to keep evolving. However --

Susan Hall AM (Deputy Chairman): So you have created posts. That is all I am trying to find out. If one constantly creates more posts and says, "We are 20 officers short", and then those are filled and then more posts are created, do you see my point? In general, I worry that we are not financing the MPS properly. That is my biggest concern. I am trying to get in my head whether more posts are being created, which is making, "Our department is x-amount of people short", or what is happening, bearing in mind the numbers of police officers are going up and up.

Commander Kyle Gordon (Local Policing Commander, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service, and National Police Chiefs' Council Lead, National Roads Policing Operations): It is a number of things, because of certain changes in investigative requirements, posts have been created in some teams. However, I also think that we have moved people within teams to focus on doing the same job a different way. We have a changing landscape in terms of demand pre-COVID, during COVID, post-COVID. All of those things, it would be wrong for me to suggest that there is simply one thing that has led to why these posts, we are saying, we are under. It is not the case, however, and this point I do need to be clear on, it is not the case that we have simply said, "That team, we are going to create a number of posts and therefore they are vacant". We have sought to try to match demand with capability and capacity across a number of functions and that has led to a very complex piece of work, as you might imagine, but that has led to various teams --

Susan Hall AM (Deputy Chairman): I understand. It has been a complex answer. I am still not as clear as I should be, but I will go away and do some more homework, thank you.

Commander Kyle Gordon (Local Policing Commander, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service, and National Police Chiefs' Council Lead, National Roads Policing Operations): Apologies. If I can help outside of this meeting, I am more than happy to.

Caroline Russell AM (Chair): Thank you. Assembly Member Devenish is now going to move us on to questions about the scene management and initial investigation.

Tony Devenish AM: Good morning. Thank you very much to all of you for coming. This has been slightly covered, but there are different questions. To Commander Gordon and Superintendent Card, how does the MPS minimise the risk of error when recording the severity of injuries at a collision?

Superintendent Dan Card (North East Basic Command Unit, Metropolitan Police Service): That is a good point and it is always a challenge because our officers are not medical experts. We are always at the scene led by what the other emergency services or the doctors tell us. As Mr Morrell said earlier, sometimes we find a situation where we will go to an incident and treat it in one way, and then somebody decides to go to the hospital later that day because they are not feeling well and find out they have significantly worse injuries than we thought. On the side of the road, a cop would not have access to all that advanced medical equipment to be able to diagnose that. That is an ongoing challenge in terms of how we do it, but that is why we always work really closely with our partners in the National Health Service to try to establish that wherever possible. If in any doubt, we would potentially hold a scene for a number of hours to allow us to get updated medical information so that we can make an informed decision based on the facts.

Tony Devenish AM: That is very thorough. What training and guidance is provided to borough officers to ensure they understand and thoroughly record what they are looking for at the scene of a collision please?

Superintendent Dan Card (North East Basic Command Unit, Metropolitan Police Service): The initial recruit training that they get at training school is almost eight hours' worth over a number of weeks in different stages. That is a combination of in-person learning in lectures, practices, practice or role play type events, and then online learning after that. To support that and in addition to that, there is what is called an investigation of road traffic collisions frontline checklist. All officers that report collisions have access to that via our internal intranet and that is exactly what it says, a checklist of, "Have you done X? Have you done Y?" That is the first level to support those officers in reporting that. What follows that then is, once that goes onto COPA, it is then supervised by their line manager and then there is a quality assurance process when it goes into MO10 at a later date, if it goes that way, or there is a local ERO that will make that decision if someone is arrested at the scene.

Tony Devenish AM: Great, thank you. To Pauline, how would you describe the quality of evidence being passed to MO10 by borough officers and what works well in your view and where are improvements needed?

Pauline Pateman-West (Head of Traffic Prosecutions, Metropolitan Police Service): There are sometimes gaps. It is complex on-scene management. We have identified on occasion where we have witness details missing. My case managers will look at body-worn video evidence to ensure that the details that are on the COPA record match what the officers at scene have recorded. If there are gaps, they will task the Officer in the Case (OIC). We also look to see what checks were made regarding CCTV. On the COPA record, there should be indication of what on-scene investigations regarding that were made. If it says no CCTV, we will do supplementary checks just to make sure. If there is learning then we pass that back to the OIC as well. For us, having the ability to look at body-worn video evidence has bridged some of that gap. Where we see themes then we pass that through the Criminal Justice's box at BCUs to say, "Learning for future". If we identify there are themes with specific boroughs, then we will inform their Senior Leadership Team. We are also looking at

going out to BCUs to talk to frontline officers about some of the issues that we experience just to improve standards as well.

Tony Devenish AM: Thank you very much. Thank you, Chair.

Caroline Russell AM (Chair): Thank you. I am just about to bring in Assembly Member Moema, but could I just ask, could we see the frontline checklist that gets handed out to the people who are turning up at the scene? That would be really helpful to understand exactly what people are looking for. Thank you.
Assembly Member Moema.

Sem Moema AM: Thanks. Just to follow up, Dan, you said in response to Tony that the training is about eight hours over a period of time and then it moves to online. Is that the sum total of training that officers will have to be able to investigate?

Superintendent Dan Card (North East Basic Command Unit, Metropolitan Police Service): I can give you the breakdown of where we are. They get 120 minutes' input, which is classroom based, on attending non-crime incidents, of which collisions are one of those. They then get 240 minutes of lectures around that where they need to demonstrate competency in application of operational policing to live incidents. After that they get a 30-minute e-learning task where they need to do a couple of interactive exercises on the system. Followed by another 22 minutes on driving offences, 21 minutes on vehicle offences, 12 minutes just to top up on road traffic collisions, followed by 20 minutes on driving under the influence of drink and drugs.

Sem Moema AM: OK. It just sounds - it was a comment rather question - but it sounds quite light touch.

Detective Chief Superintendent Andy Cox (Operational Command Unit Commander, Transformation Programme, Metropolitan Police Service, and National Police Chiefs' Council Lead, Collision Investigation Programme): Can I come in? The fatal crash and obviously the life-changing injuries are detective-based. To put it into context, to be a detective you have to pass a national examination. You then go through a detective course. Therefore, essentially, we are training serious collision investigators as any other detective. The whole detective training programme is extensive, we are talking weeks and weeks and weeks and examinations that have to be passed, accreditations have to be kept, continuous professional development every year in in that role. For the fatal and life-changing serious collision investigation, the training is completely different to what Dan has just articulated. You are talking about the borough officers.

Superintendent Dan Card (North East Basic Command Unit, Metropolitan Police Service): Yes, I am just talking about initial recruit training. Obviously, the more serious the offence, the more experienced officer goes and the higher level of training that would go with it.

Commander Kyle Gordon (Local Policing Commander, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service, and National Police Chiefs' Council Lead, National Roads Policing Operations): It is also worth pointing out, of course Dan has given you - and I have the same read-out exactly what we allocate under a specific heading - but officers are not trained in isolation. When they are taught scene management to do with a rape, a domestic incident, a serious assault, that is building on the training that they will get about scene management of a road traffic collision. When they are taught investigative techniques around all of these elements, that is enhancing their investigative capability. It may be slightly erroneous to look at this, albeit I understand your concern, but it might be slightly erroneous to think that in a five or six-month training window, we take somebody, a member of the public, turn them into a police officer, and it is only what they get in relation to this that would enhance their capabilities in relation to the care and the service that we provide to Londoners at road traffic collisions. It is all built upon each other, and while we have specifically

asked for that to be pulled out, because we thought we might be asked it, investigation is investigation is investigation. As officers learn the whole way through their training cycle to come out the other end, everything that is applicable to the panoply of investigations will also enhance this.

One of the things that they get is tutoring whenever they come out. A probationer officer coming out gets a tutor, so when they attend road traffic collisions, that tutor will enhance and build upon the learning that they get. The investigation then goes through the Sergeant and Pauline's team who will give feedback in terms of the investigation. There is an iterative learning cycle around all of that. I am not trying to gild the lily, but I do think it is an important distinction to make that, rather than simply say here is a very narrow look at what they get, and that is the only thing that they get, that enhances this, the investigation and scene management and the victim care that they would get for all offences can all come to bear on any incident such as this.

Acting Detective Superintendent Ross Morrell (Roads and Transport, Serious Collision Investigation Unit, Metropolitan Police Service): Chair, literally that is the important bit that we need to move away from isolation in investigation across the board and investigate as any other crime type.

Caroline Russell AM (Chair): Thank you. Assembly Member Prince.

Keith Prince AM: Thank you, Chair. We have heard, and you have given us some assurance around training and providing a specialist into each BCU, but we have also heard from Pauline that there are gaps in information when there is an attendance at scene. You have your checklist now. If I can ask Dan, but obviously, Commander Gordon, you are welcome to chip in. When do you think, leaving aside human error of course, we can get to a situation where these gaps will no longer exist? Do we have a timeline for that? Do you have a target or an aspiration?

Superintendent Dan Card (North East Basic Command Unit, Metropolitan Police Service): I will start by saying that is 100 per cent our aspiration. We want to deliver the best quality response we can. However, the reality is almost all of these are human error. There are people under pressure trying to deliver a difficult service. I cannot give you a guarantee that there will never be human error in any policing processes because it is human based. However, hopefully, the checks and balances we have, the additional training, the stuff that Ross is working on, our close links with Pauline's team, will over time improve that situation.

Keith Prince AM: But you do not have a target?

Superintendent Dan Card (North East Basic Command Unit, Metropolitan Police Service): Our target is as soon as possible and as best as we can and that is always going to be for how we want to deliver policing for London. However, we do not have a road map set out in terms of dates.

Keith Prince AM: All right, thank you. I am happy with that answer. In Paris, when there is a road traffic collision, all the authorities have 30 minutes in order to wash up and get Paris moving again. Clearly we do not have that in London. Commander Gordon, could I have your view on that? How much more information do we get in that extra 30 minutes, an hour, or whatever it is that the road is closed for, sometimes for half a day, compared to the inconvenience that it causes Londoners?

Commander Kyle Gordon (Local Policing Commander, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service, and National Police Chiefs' Council Lead, National Roads Policing Operations): It is interesting because we have looked at this nationally as well and of course, if you take British Transport Police, it has very set times around when it clears a railway track for exactly the same reasons. There is a balance to be struck between the expediency of opening a road and getting business back to usual, and of course if we

brought that in and had an arbitrary time limit around it, I wager we will back in front of this Committee in a couple of years' time explaining why we are not investigating things that we may have investigated, our evidence that was left aside. On the other side, we know we cannot keep it open forever and I will bring Dan in around some of the work we have done in that space. However, we do not in the UK give an arbitrary time around any of these things, should it be closing a scene for a sexual offence or rape, a homicide, we do not, because it is led by the investigation and by that very nature we allow the autonomy of the officers, with suitable checks and balances, to ensure that they do a thorough job at the scene.

Superintendent Dan Card (North East Basic Command Unit, Metropolitan Police Service): Yes, and just to give you assurances, when we deal with those fatal and very serious injury collisions, we do a scene reconstruction and there is a very small number of people that do those. We have really invested in kit and equipment for them. They now have three-dimensional laser scanners, where before it was done with a tape measure and took a lot of time, now they can do it much more swiftly and effectively. We are aware of the impact it has on road closures, but for me it is the victims of these tragic circumstances that we need to focus on rather than an arbitrary time limit.

Keith Prince AM: Yes, aside fatals, but in the other instances would it not be more expedient to get the traffic moving?

Superintendent Dan Card (North East Basic Command Unit, Metropolitan Police Service): We always try to open a road as swiftly as we can, but it is that balance between doing a good service to somebody and sweeping it up. You start sweeping up roads too early, you lose crucial pieces of evidence on that, and that is the key thing we are keen to not do.

Keith Prince AM: Thank you.

Caroline Russell AM (Chair): Thank you. I am now going to bring in Assembly Member Ahmad, who is online.

Marina Ahmad AM: Thank you, Chair. I want to start off asking questions about victims, the accountability and transparency of the service that is being offered. To start with, Kyle and Pauline, what policies, processes and guidance does the MPS have in place to assure the quality of serious injury investigations?

Pauline Pateman-West (Head of Traffic Prosecutions, Metropolitan Police Service): In relation to the investigations, we have standard operating procedures that are administered. In relation to victim care then we operate within Victims' Code of Practice (VCOP), updates every 28 days. We have recognised that there are gaps in understanding victim satisfaction, therefore as part of the Victim Programme Board we are looking at post-charge surveys going out to victims. That is just looking at it holistically, they were leading crime and I have said that we can extend that for road traffic collisions as well. That is something that we are looking into. We also work with the Vision Zero action plan Advisory Group, understanding accounts from the victims and seeing where there are gaps and how we can bridge those.

Marina Ahmad AM: Thank you. Kyle?

Commander Kyle Gordon (Local Policing Commander, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service, and National Police Chiefs' Council Lead, National Roads Policing Operations): For expediency, I let Pauline cover that. I am not going to add much more to it. We are aware that there are gaps and one of the challenges we face is of course, with the volume coming through and a very young, inexperienced workforce predominantly on frontline Emergency Response Teams, it is a constant battle of

education and enhancement. We are looking at better ways of ensuring that the Emergency Response Teams and investigations they pick up do provide a better victim service. However, as Pauline says, the Victims Programme Board is the main governance checks and balances that we have, and we continually seek to try to comply with the VCOP.

Marina Ahmad AM: Thank you. My next question is for Andy. Andy, do you think Londoners have confidence in the MPS's investigation of serious injury collisions and how can that confidence be improved?

Detective Chief Superintendent Andy Cox (Operational Command Unit Commander, Transformation Programme, Metropolitan Police Service, and National Police Chiefs' Council Lead, Collision Investigation Programme): I cannot answer the confidence issue, but what I can say is do I have confidence, yes. We have a National Collision Investigator of the Year Award. We only started it in 2022, the MPS has won it, it sets the standard. When we talk through resourcing numbers for collision investigation in the MPS, and I am talking here about fatal and life-changing injuries, they are so significant, every single member of my Collision Board rolls his eyes, to be frank, around the amount of capacity the MPS has to investigate, and the fatal rates are not disproportionately different to elsewhere in the country, therefore the resourcing levels are significantly enhanced.

The expertise is significantly enhanced as well. We have the skills, the capacity, the training in place at that top end of collision investigation. We have all the FLOs, we have a real drive and energy. Then when we look at the wider Roads and Transport Command and that office as well is so significantly different to us around the country. When I Chair the National Board, reporting into Kyle, the confidence levels that I have are very, very significant in terms of what the MPS can offer.

Marina Ahmad AM: Thank you. My final question is how easy is it for victims and their families to acquire information from the MPS following a collision and how can this process be improved? Could I start with Dan please?

Superintendent Dan Card (North East Basic Command Unit, Metropolitan Police Service): I will probably pass you over to Pauline because most of these conversations that you are having here will come as a result of insurance companies and that is where it goes to that secondary investigation piece. At the scene, officers would try to facilitate the exchange of documents between parties involved in the collision but, subsequently to that, that would be done through Met Prosecutions.

Marina Ahmad AM: OK, thank you.

Pauline Pateman-West (Head of Traffic Prosecutions, Metropolitan Police Service): You are inquiring regarding the secondary investigation and updates from police if victims make contact --

Marina Ahmad AM: It really is the process full stop. How easy is it for victims to acquire the information that they need? Obviously, it is not just victims, it is their families as well, if sadly a victim has died. Just throughout the whole process, how easy is it for them to get that information?

Pauline Pateman-West (Head of Traffic Prosecutions, Metropolitan Police Service): In relation to contact, any injured party will be contacted within 48 hours by my Case Managers, they are provided details of who is undertaking their secondary investigation, who to contact, so there is that line in if they have any queries. Then there is the obligations under VCOP to update regarding the investigation every 28 days. If there is information regarding to satisfy any civil litigation, then we will facilitate that and ensure early disclosure to assist in that respect.

Marina Ahmad AM: Is there anything in that process that you think could be improved?

Pauline Pateman-West (Head of Traffic Prosecutions, Metropolitan Police Service): Sorry, I think Ross wanted to come in around the fatals.

Acting Detective Superintendent Ross Morrell (Roads and Transport, Serious Collision Investigation Unit, Metropolitan Police Service): Sorry, if I come in there and talk about the fatals. Every single criminal investigation involving a fatal collision, that family is allocated a FLO, a dedicated officer, specially trained to engage with the family. Moving forward and those improvements, we are currently running a trial of a new process that is co-funded between MOPAC and TfL where, in addition to the allocation of a FLO, the family will be allocated, in essence, a dedicated support worker, similar to what happens to rape victims and domestic violence victims, and they can assist with things such as finances, funeral arrangements, counselling, all those added extras that come with a fatal collision.

Marina Ahmad AM: OK, great, thank you very much. Thank you, Chair.

Caroline Russell AM (Chair): Thank you. We are on to the final question. There was a new pilot Victim Support Service announced in September 2023 to improve the MPS support to victims of the most serious road traffic collisions in London. I would just like to ask how that is going and where you see it going to as well? I do not know who wants to comment on that.

Acting Detective Superintendent Ross Morrell (Roads and Transport, Serious Collision Investigation Unit, Metropolitan Police Service): Yes, I will take that. That was what I was just talking about there. It is fantastic. It is the only one of its kind. We have had 20/21 qualifying investigations and nine people have been referred on. We anticipate getting more, but obviously what happens, the time of a fatal collision it is a really, really complex emotional time for families. The information is passed on and then the FLO literally will go back and re-ask at a later date, more suitable when the families have gone through that initial crisis moment. We are quite confident; it is really good, and I am really pleased with it.

Caroline Russell AM (Chair): Thank you. Thank you so much to all of you for coming. It has been really informative and particularly powerful to hear you talking about the investigation of road crime in the same breath as you talk about the investigation of murders and other serious crimes and hearing you put that emphasis on it. We have just seen the case of Gao Gao, which has just been going through the courts, and the impact on the family of someone who is killed in something like a hit and run collision, which that was, where the person does not have the decency to stop and find out how the victim is doing and whether they are safe and whether they need help. Putting the work in to try to address these crimes and bring them right down is just so important. Thank you for everything that you have shared with us. The only thing we have asked you for is the information that officers get when they turn up at the scene, the guidance for which we would very much like to see. Thank you to the guests for attending this morning and your answers to our questions.

[The meeting adjourned at 11.29am, reconvening at 11.38am.]