



**MAYOR OF LONDON**  
OFFICE FOR POLICING AND CRIME

**Unmesh Desai AM**

City Hall  
The Queen's Walk  
London  
SE1 2AA  
[lauren.harvey@london.gov.uk](mailto:lauren.harvey@london.gov.uk)

**Our ref:** MOPAC120421-D3666

**Your ref:**

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Dear Unmesh

**Response to letter of 12 April 2021 regarding 17 March PCC meeting**

Thank you for your letter of 12 April, written in your former role as Chair of the Police and Crime Committee. This letter followed the Police and Crime Committee meeting of 17 March and included a number of actions for MOPAC. Please accept my apologies for the delay in responding to you.

Please find set out below responses to the questions outlined in your original letter:

- Further information on what the Mayor and I have done to support the amendment to the Domestic Abuse Bill for migrant victims;
- The number of independent custody visits that have taken place during the pandemic;
- Further information on how MOPAC engaged with independent custody visitors and how that has been maintained during the pandemic;
- A progress report on tackling domestic violence programmes and the number of emergency departments and hospitals that had signed up to the scheme; and
- The criteria for the MyEnds programme

***Support for the amendment to the Domestic Abuse Bill for migrant victims***

We have been front and centre in challenging the Government on the hostile environment for migrant residents, specifically lobbying to ensure that migrant survivors of domestic abuse are afforded the same protections and justice as any other person.

We fully support the Step Up Migrant Women campaign, have amplified their message and have supported their proposed amendments. MOPAC's VAWG team has met with key stakeholders of this campaign on a weekly basis to ensure that we are fully informed by the experts and utilise all available options to draw attention to this very important issue. We were pleased to see the significant support that was given for the amendments at the House of Lords and were disappointed that the House of Commons rejected these amendments. We will continue to fight for the rights to give equal access for support for migrant survivors.

We are pleased with the outcome of the HMICFRS report 'Safe to Report'. The report upholds the view of Liberty and Southall Black Sisters that the current system and approach to victims

EMAIL [Sophie.Linden@mopac.london.gov.uk](mailto:Sophie.Linden@mopac.london.gov.uk) -

CITY HALL, THE QUEEN'S WALK, MORE LONDON, LONDON SE1 2AA

with insecure immigration status is causing harm to the public interest, and that this needs to be addressed. In London, we are committed to implementing local measures to ensure that we reduce the discrimination in our justice system as far as possible.

***The number of independent custody visits that have taken place during the pandemic April to March 2020/21:***

This question has been answered in two parts, point 1 shows data set across the schemes with the amount of virtual visits conducted and the point 2 gives information on how MOPAC has engaged with independent custody visitors throughout the pandemic.

**ICV point 1:**

**April to March 2020/21**

Period	Total number of visits	Number of virtual visits	Total detainees seen	Total detainees in custody
April 2020 – March 2021 *	592	263	1,665	15,978

- Analysis of the visit data indicates that there has been a 50% reduction in the total number of visits conducted in the year from April 2020 to March 2021 [compared to the previous year] and approximately half of all visits are virtual.
- ICV schemes across the UK have faced significant challenges during the pandemic and this has unavoidably impacted upon our ability to deliver the weekly in-person visits to any custody suite within the MPS estate during March 2020 – March 2021.
- MOPAC responded quickly to the pandemic by introducing and managing virtual visits. The scheme is delivering a mix of physical and virtual visits with all suites receiving fortnightly visits.
- The arrangements we have put in place are in line with our statutory obligations (which are to ensure a system for custody visiting is in place) and with Home Office expectations during the pandemic. We are one of only a handful of PCCs that have managed to maintain any physical visits to custody suites throughout 2020.

**ICV point 2:**

Further information on how MOPAC engaged with independent custody visitors and how that has been maintained during the pandemic;

- All panels have a dedicated coordinator and centralised support from MOPAC.
- Communications with volunteers and panels is mainly via email but staff regularly call volunteers and have shadowed several virtual visits since March 2020.
- Important information is shared with ICVs via their quarterly panel meetings with urgent updates circulated including closures to Custody suites as necessary.
- MOPAC staff have facilitated several virtual meetings with ICVs and chairs to discuss the response to COVID.
- ICVs are encouraged to express and share feedback, comments and concerns via multiple channels including, their reports, emails, calls and at panel meetings.
- Met Detention Staff alert MOPAC and ICVs to closures of suites and important policy updates such as PPE requirements and Track and Trace protocols.

ICVs are committed individuals and have been dedicated to keeping up their voluntary commitments during the pandemic. All have been welcome and receptive of the details of Risk Reduction Framework; PPE, Track and Trace and Risk Assessments, online meetings and training. The majority of ICVs have attended meetings and training sessions including tech support drop-in sessions to familiarise themselves with the new procedures and technology.

Whilst many volunteers welcomed the opportunity to adapt their work to allow them to work remotely from home, all have expressed concerns at the shortcomings of virtual visits. It is not always possible to speak to detainees and they must be arranged several days in advance. MOPAC has reassured them that we do not want to move to an exclusive virtual model as we recognise the importance in ICVs being able to interview detainees and view the accommodation.

MOPAC officers are working closely with Met Detention and Occupational Health to mirror the Met's own risk reduction framework for employees with ICVs.

## ***Progress report on tackling domestic violence programmes and the number of emergency departments and hospitals that had signed up to the scheme***

From 1 April 2019, a new Integrated Victim and Witness service was commissioned, providing support for domestic abuse within wider victim services through the London Victim and Witness Service (LVWS) as a single commissioned service with specialist elements.

The service has been carefully designed and constructed based on significant consultation with victims and survivors. We further consulted with local authority representatives to ensure that the placement of the LVWS IDVAs (independent domestic violence advisors) complement locally commissioned services. Based upon the information provided to us, 18 of the 45.5 IDVAs employed by the LVWS are co-located\* in 16 London hospitals, including one mental health trust. (\*with exceptions due to the restrictions in place resulting from the pandemic). The LVWS did not co-locate their IDVA provision in hospitals where the locally based IDVAs were in situ.

Hospital referrals for IDVA support have been steadily increasing and the engagement levels following referrals are above 70%. Upon initial analysis of performance data, it is clear that where the hospital trust is both strategically and operationally invested in a response to domestic abuse, the levels of integration of the IDVA, and subsequently the referrals, are significantly higher than the opposing counterparts. The service reports that the IDVAs on site at hospitals are particularly beneficial for persons who have sustained serious injuries. Since the suspension of co-location arrangements due to interpretations of Government restrictions, the LVWS have noticed a marked decrease in the number of referrals for those with serious injuries from the hospitals indicating a physical presence makes a difference in a person's willingness to engage.

MOPAC has also been contributing funding towards, and commissioning hospital-based support for, young victims of violence since 2014/5. Youth Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVAs) engage with victims who present with a risk of child sexual exploitation and domestic abuse/violence in a service that is integrated with clinically embedded youth workers that engage with victims of serious youth violence who present at the A&E with assault-related injuries, gunshot wounds and stabbings. The work is done in the hospital immediately after the incident, which research has shown to be a unique 'teachable moment'.

It is at this critical juncture that young people are often willing to look at making significant changes to their lives.

In 2020/21 the major trauma centre (MTC) young victims of domestic abuse/violence service supported 130 young people across four sites. Domestic abuse was the most prevalent type of violence against women and girls (VAWG) experienced, present within 70% of cases (noting that it is possible to experience more than one type of VAWG at a single time). In the same time period there were 55 referrals into the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) and 42 children's safeguarding referrals. The most prevalent age group presenting was 18-22. 77% were female and the most prevalent ethnicities were Black and White British. The most prevalent boroughs of residence for those presenting were Wandsworth (16), Westminster (14) and Southwark (12). 41 were not known or currently engaged with statutory services prior to engagement. 100% of victims reported reducing risk of harm at point of closure and follow up.

Safelives have recently published a report that examines these issues further - ['We Only Do Bones Here' - Why London needs a whole-health approach to domestic abuse.pdf](https://www.safelives.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/We-Only-Do-Bones-Here-Why-London-needs-a-whole-health-approach-to-domestic-abuse.pdf) ([safelives.org.uk](https://www.safelives.org.uk))

### ***The criteria for the MyEnds programme***

The VRU's MyEnds programme is taking a neighbourhood level approach to tackling and reducing violence. Our research has shown that the most effective way to prevent violence in these areas is to provide leaders from these communities with resources to enhance prevention measures.

In February 2021, the Mayor announced £6 million of investment for 8 consortiums across London to deliver local MyEnds programmes. Through our programme we are supporting local people and local communities to help bring about change and provide better opportunities for young people. Each community network will receive up to £750,000 funding to April 2023.

The successful bids who've been awarded MyEnds funding are consortiums in:

- **Brent** - Estates in Chalk Hill, Stonebridge and Church End
- **Lambeth** - Angell Town, Loughborough and Moorlands estates
- **Croydon** - London Road
- **Hackney** - Hackney Wick, Marsh Hill, Homerton
- **Haringey** - Tottenham Hale ward
- **Newham** - Canning Town North, Custom House, Plaistow South Ward – with a focus on the Barking Road
- **Southwark** - North Peckham estate, Rockingham, Brandon and Aylesbury
- **Tower Hamlets** - Four E14 neighbourhoods located within the Isle of Dogs - Island Gardens, Blackwall and Cubitt Town, Canary Wharf and Poplar

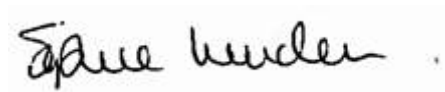
The programme has identified three strategic outcomes:

1. Stronger community networks that have a shared commitment to, understanding of, and vision for reducing violence.
2. More inclusive decision-making between local stakeholders, statutory agencies, and communities, who are connected together and are collectively leading programmes that are reducing violence.

3. Greater capacity within community-led networks. Networks are better equipped to monitor and adapt to emerging needs and, through them, people know that help is available, how to access it, and it is appropriate.

If you require any further information on the points above, please let me know.

Yours sincerely,



Sophie Linden

**Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime**

**CC. Shaun Bailey, Chair of the Police and Crime Committee**