

POLICING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE:
POLICE POLICY AND DISCRETION AND
THE NEED FOR A MULTI-AGENCY RESPONSE

by

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PREFACE

Setting

As gatekeeper to the criminal justice system the Police Service is placed in a unique position to respond to the problem of domestic violence. The police are a reactive agency that is available 24 hours every day, but the activities, or more appropriately the inactivity, of the police to effectively deal with domestic violence has been the subject of considerable scrutiny over the past 20 years or so. Previous research has tended to centre around the victims and perpetrators of domestic violence and pointed towards a police service that is generally unsympathetic and unhelpful. Whilst considerable advances have been made over recent years and attitudes are changing, there is still the perception, whether right or wrong, that the police stance has not changed sufficiently to make any real difference.

For the past 25 years the researcher has been a serving police officer and cannot recall a time during his career when he did not have some involvement either directly or indirectly with the problems caused by domestic violence. In 1987, when appointed as Chief Inspector in the Community Services Department of the Northumbria Police, it became apparent to the researcher that domestic violence was an issue that was beginning to come to the forefront, because of his involvement with other statutory agencies and voluntary organisations. Whilst at the Police Staff College the following year he was encouraged to further his academic experience by undertaking post graduate research into a police related subject. Consequently in 1989 he was registered as a part-time post-graduate student at The University of Newcastle upon Tyne in order to study in more depth the police response to domestic violence, specifically investigating the need for a multi agency approach. During the ensuing years

the researcher spent 3 years as Deputy Commander at Washington, Tyne & Wear, where a successful independent Womens' Refuge and Advice Centre was operating. It was during this time that he was able to view the problem of domestic violence at the 'sharp end' and have some impact upon policy and operational matters. Since 1993 the researcher has been attached to the Complaints and Discipline Department of Northumbria Police and, although somewhat removed from conventional operational policing, has been involved in an investigative and overseeing role, particularly dealing with matters of police policy.

Whilst there are many benefits in research into the police response to domestic violence being undertaken by a serving police officer, there are also a number of drawbacks to insider research which have been well documented in previous studies. An individual researcher's own experiences and theoretical position must have some influence upon any research carried out and no interview can be conducted in a political or academic vacuum. It is important for any researcher to recognise the positions, opinions and bias that he or she may have and understand how they might influence their research; but that needs to be balanced against the benefit of being aware of operating procedures and practices and even the culture that exists within any given organisation of which that researcher is a member.

Semantics

Much of the material read during the early stages of research referred to matrimonial violence rather than domestic violence and probably reflected the view that such violence was matrimonial, in that it was reserved for that particular form of violence that occurred in families between couples who were married or had been or were about to be married. Even the term spousal abuse carries those same connotations. The common terminology now in

use is domestic violence as this reflects more accurately the declining influence and need for relationships between couples to have a matrimonial make-up. Nevertheless the term domestic violence itself does present a problem in terms of definition, as it covers occurrences of such disparity, ranging from minor verbal exchanges to violent homicide. It is now a universally accepted term used to describe that particular form of insidious violence that occurs usually in the home, behind closed doors.

Amidst the variety of definitions attributed to domestic violence the following was considered to be one of the simplest and yet most accurate; domestic violence is the physical, sexual, emotional or mental abuse or threats of such by partners or ex-partners, whether married or not. This definition alludes to the fact that men can sometimes be the victims rather than the perpetrators of domestic violence. It also divides the main protagonists into two distinct camps - victims and offenders - these being the necessary ingredients for any action of violence to take place.

The central issue of this research is that domestic violence is a societal problem upon which both police policy and practices need to be focused. The police response over the years has failed to address the problem and there has developed a growing realisation that domestic violence was indeed a real policing problem. At the same time there developed a gathering view that the police alone cannot deal with the problem, but that multi agency cooperation was one of the most effective solutions to a complex societal problem.

During the period of this research a number of possible solutions have emerged but they have tended to highlight further problems which have, in turn, been superseded by other apparent

solutions. The end result is that the police are still the central agency with a responsibility for dealing with the effects of domestic violence but the problem is not being addressed. This research has not simply investigated the police response but the nature of the organisation in which that response takes place.

Findings

When setting out the findings of this research the objective is to point out both the strengths and weaknesses of the police response to domestic violence, in particular when the police response is part of a coordinated multi agency response.

It is evident that change is needed but social change does not take place by chance but occurs within a framework of obligations, rights, expectations and even traditions, some of which need to diminish whilst others develop. The evidence does indicate an improved service to victims when police officers realise that domestic violence is not just a police, but also a societal problem that needs a concerted coordinated response from within society and where the police perform a pivotal role as gatekeepers to the criminal justice system.

Chapter 1

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: SETTING THE SCENE

The aim of this research was to consider the real extent of the problem of domestic violence, the nature and effectiveness of the police response (especially in relation to policy) and also to evaluate the effectiveness in cases where a multi-agency approach has been adopted. The objective was to produce an independent evaluation of how the problem of domestic violence was being tackled, particularly by the police and just how more effective multi-agency initiatives were in dealing with this problem.

Domestic violence is a complex problem that highlights the dichotomy that exists between an individual's freedom and responsibility and the conflict between loyalty and privacy in personal relationships. This opening chapter attempts to set the scene by considering the central issue of this research from different sociological perspectives whilst attempting some clear definition of what actually constitutes domestic violence. Even a simple examination and definition of the term "violence" presents difficulties, particularly when considering the legal responses and remedies at law that are in place to deal with such matters. As Borkowski (1983, p.119) has said:-

"The problem is that social values determine the definition of social problems, which in turn influence policies."

As gatekeepers to the criminal justice system the police are placed in a unique position to respond to domestic violence but clearly established policy and multi agency cooperation are both essential and necessary to ensure the police response can be effective.

The Research Issue

Domestic violence is not just a policing problem but it is a societal problem that has, over recent years, caused both the policies and practices of a variety of statutory agencies and voluntary organisations to be the focus of a considerable amount of scrutiny and research. Traditionally the police have been regarded as the one agency with statutory responsibility for dealing with domestic violence, in view of the fact that such violence is considered to be both a criminal matter and a potential public order problem. The fact that such matters usually occur in the privacy of a person's home is largely irrelevant because criminal assaults can be committed in private places, as can some public order offences. The police response over the years has clearly failed to address the problem of domestic violence, directing resources purely to deal with the immediate consequences of such violence, but not in a way which has dealt with the tendency to repetition. There has developed a growing realisation within the police service and society as a whole, that domestic violence is a real policing problem, but one which the police alone are unable to deal with satisfactorily. This understanding stemmed from a wider realisation that domestic violence was much more than simply a problem facing a particular minority of the population but a problem that affected the whole of society and required a wider response.

When this particular research study commenced in 1989 there was enthusiastic interest within the police service to develop multi-agency initiatives and strategies to tackle the problem of ever increasing levels of reported crime. A multi agency approach to crime prevention was viewed as the way forward, by tackling the problem of crime at its roots, and attempting thereby to deal with the actual causes of the problem, rather than simply addressing the consequences. This research therefore sought, in the early stages, to

investigate whether a multi-agency response presented a possible solution to the problem of domestic violence. As time has passed, however, the value of multi agency responses to deal with a variety of crime orientated societal problems became apparent and such measures were accordingly universally accepted. What started off as quite a radical, innovative response identified in this research and therefore a novel research enquiry became a reality to the point that multi agency responses were seen to provide a ready made answer when tackling the problem of domestic violence, with little need for prior research knowledge as to their efficacy.

At the same time both legislation and policies were being introduced within the criminal justice system to divert certain offenders away from the over burdened courts system, primarily through both adult and juvenile cautions. With the emphasis still on innovation, this research considered one or two new schemes where perpetrators of domestic violence were both swiftly and apparently successfully dealt with by means of adult caution. During the course of time such measures also became accepted as the norm and as another possible solution to the problem of domestic violence. What emerges therefore is a scenario where a possible solution is found to the problem, but very quickly that solution is superseded by another quite different solution with the result that a number of possible solutions are assimilated in time into a more cohesive response to the problem of domestic violence. Such a scenario is not uncommon in policing. Towards the end of this research, partnership schemes and campaigns such as "Zero tolerance" were considered long before such concepts became universally recognised.

Whilst the study and general understanding of domestic violence has progressed considerably during the course of this research, the central issue of this research still remains - domestic violence is a societal problem of some magnitude where the police as a lead agency have statutory responsibility; albeit it is recognised that the police service alone is ineffective in dealing with the problem but nonetheless still needs to make domestic violence a priority area of policing. The fact that a number of possible solutions have emerged, whilst the problem of domestic violence has not diminished outlines the fact that domestic violence is a very complex problem within society where there is no single solution. It is a reasonable thesis that domestic violence as a societal problem, is not being fully addressed, either by the police or by any of the other statutory agencies, despite advances in policing strategy in the 1990s.

Different Perspectives

In order to understand the social world or particular problems that occur within society there is a need to consider appropriate sociological perspectives. This researcher, as will be shown, favours a structuralist approach for both the consensus and conflict perspectives stress the systematic nature of society, focusing on the whole of society, social structure and relationships within such. Our actions are generally structured by our social environment because our attitudes and values influence us and tend to effect the organisation and structure of the society in which we live. This research approaches the problem of domestic violence from a sociological perspective based on consensus structuralism - society is an integrated system of interdependent parts, being held together and kept in order through consensus on basic values. The police are a uniformed organisation with clearly defined rank and command structures operating within a well

defined legal code and system of discipline. Policing is by consent, operating within the criminal justice system so that change usually comes in the form of imposed legislation or legal directives. For the police to effect change there is a need for negotiation and consensus, hence the key to success of multi-agency initiatives introduced and driven by the police. On the other hand the police find great difficulty in implementing or effecting change where there is neither the will nor the support from society as a whole so to do.

Nevertheless the police need also to be viewed as agents of change. A symbolic interactionist perspective considers an individual within society as a social being who has the capacity to invent and originate. As such an individual has the capacity to renegotiate the specific order in which that person is structured - an individual within society rather than a mere puppet of society. During this research the researcher has come across a number of individuals, particularly senior police officers, who have initiated responses and procedures when considering domestic violence. Whilst such initiatives have been relatively successful when that particular individual has been in the driving seat, effecting change, they have tended to diminish in effectiveness once that particular individual has moved on.

Defining the Problem

There is considerable difficulty in establishing a clear definition of what constitutes domestic violence, for whilst attitudes may well have changed, the labelling of "battered wives" remains an important issue that challenges our society today. This research has revealed the following more recent attempts at defining domestic violence, selected from a vast reservoir of such definitions:-

- * The intentional and persistent physical, mental or sexual abuse of a woman, or woman and children, in a way that causes pain or injury or the threat of such abuse by her male partner with whom she lives or has lived. (McMinn, 1991).
- * The physical, sexual, emotional and mental abuse of women by male partners or ex partners. (Victim Support, 1992).
- * When a person or persons causes or attempt to cause physical harm to any other family or household member, including ex partners. (Donnan, 1991).

These definitions draw a distinction between behaviour and relationships, highlighting the fact that the abuse or harm can be physical, sexual, emotional and mental whilst generally restricting the relationships involved to partners or ex-partners. It is relatively easier to define the relationships involved than it is to attempt to define what constitutes "violence" in such relationships.

Whilst a common theme is evident in all these definitions there is much merit in the simple definition found in Lorna Smith's 1989 research study:- domestic violence is violence which occurs within the context of marriage or cohabitation.

Of course domestic violence is a problem that has been around for some considerable time. In 1878 a paper published by Frances Power Cobbe, entitled "Wife Torture in England", highlighted the extreme violence evident in the "kicking" district of Liverpool where numbers of working class women were either maimed or kicked to death by their husbands. Whilst such extreme displays of violence are totally abhorrent, more subtle forms of domestic violence have been around for considerably longer. The fifteenth century cleric, Friar Cherubino of Sienna, offered the following advice to husbands:-

When you see your wife commit an offence, don't rush at her with insults and violent blows. Scold her sharply, bully and terrify her and if this doesn't work..... take up a stick and beat her soundly, for it is better to punish the body and correct the soul than to damage the soul and spare the body... then readily beat, not in a rage, but out of charity and concern for her soul, so that the beating will rebound to your merit and her good.

(From Friar Cherubino Regole della vita Matrimoniale (1888) - these rules were compiled by the Friar between 1450 and 1481).

Now some five hundred years later men are still inflicting such gratuitous violence upon their partners, the only difference being that there is no longer a hypocritical pretence that such behaviour will be of lasting spiritual benefit to the women concerned. Unfortunately the term 'domestic violence' and in particular the word 'domestic' does to some extent trivialise the violence involved, however as it is now universally recognisable terminology it would be very difficult to come up with a more suitable alternative term.

Violence

To a police officer, there is some difficulty with the apparently straightforward term 'violence' because this would seem to exclude those disputes where the victim is uninjured and no violence has actually taken place. A wide interpretation of violence would include the threat or fear of violence both physical and emotional, but a purer definition would see violence in terms of a direct physical assault resulting in some type of injury. Whichever view is taken, any act of violence, whether committed in public or private, is an affront to society and therefore domestic violence ought not to be an exception. Even at the lower end of the scale, the less serious examples of domestic violence would constitute a common assault and as such even common assault is a crime.

At a basic level crime may be defined as "a grave offence punishable by law; serious wrongdoing; sin; a very foolish deed" but a more refined definition would regard crime as "any unlawful or anti social act or acts which give rise to public anxiety and which interfere with the quality of life of citizens". Which ever perspective one would care to choose all crimes can be broken down into three constituent elements:-

- * The victim (can be a person, premises or even an institution).
- * The perpetrator (a person who commits the crime).
- * The opportunity (the situation or circumstances which bring the victim and the criminal together).

A crime can only occur when all these three elements are present at the same time; if any one of these elements is missing, or removed, then a crime can be prevented.

Much of the previous research into domestic violence has looked in depth at the victim and to a lesser extent at the perpetrator, however the third constituent part of a crime which appears to have been to some extent overlooked is "the opportunity". Of course if "the opportunity" is the situation or circumstances which bring the victim and criminal together this would be very difficult to prevent in the case of domestic violence where, in most cases, both the victim and offender co-habit. Therefore if the opportunity does exist to this extent and one does not blame the victim, then any preventative measures ought of necessity be directed towards the criminal, or the offender. Indeed many initiatives, notably in California and other parts of the United States have been directed at dealing with offenders, to varying degrees of success.

One of the earliest criminal cases on record of domestic violence concerns one Margaret Neffeld of York who, in 1395, alleged before an ecclesiastical court that her husband had attacked her with a dagger, wounded her and caused her grievous harm (Baur and Ritt 1983). Even though she was able to bring witnesses to court, who gave evidence about the assault upon her, the court did not consider the evidence sufficient to warrant a separation and she was forced to continue to live with her husband. History does not record what fate befell that unfortunate woman, but it was only as recently as 1891 when the legal right of a man to beat his wife was finally abolished (Freeman 1979). Unfortunately such violence has still been condoned in a number of separate perverse judgements until quite recently, particularly where women have been convicted of homicide following years of abuse at the hands of their violent partners.

It is interesting to note, however, that the issue of domestic violence was an area of concern in America some 300 years before the research in this country by Dobash and Dobash (1979) and their contemporaries. Between 1640 and 1680 the Puritans in Massachusetts, appear to have been in the forefront of the fight against domestic violence (Pleck 1989). The Puritans regarded family violence as a sin and introduced laws dealing with child abuse and domestic violence. By introducing such laws the State of Massachusetts was supported not only by the church but also by society, although it would appear that the attitude of these Puritans in New England was very much reflecting the attitude purveying in the 'old country' back in England.

It would seem that a number of notable preachers, including Richard Baxter and William Perkins, spoke openly against wife beating, but when the Puritans, and in particular Oliver

Cromwell, swept to power no legislation was ever passed to outlaw wife beating in England. The reason why New England was the only one of the new colonies to introduce legislation against wife beating appears to be that their state legislation was based upon the Bible and very strict Christian moral standards. Unfortunately there is little information to show how effective this legislation was, but the mere fact that it was enacted does show at least that it was on the political agenda even at that time. One can hardly expect domestic violence to have been a matter of any real social concern in Britain when it is only since the turn of the century that women have actually had the right to vote and ceased being regarded as chattels in the marriage environment.

Considering a Legal Response

The main legislation dealing with assaults is still the Offences Against the Person Act 1861, but generally this Act categorizes assaults with regard to the seriousness of the injury inflicted rather than the standing or otherwise of the victim.

The most widely used parts of this legislation have, until quite recently, been:-

- * Assault occasioning actual bodily harm - S.47 Offences Against the Person Act 1861
- * Wounding or inflicting grievous bodily harm - S.20 Offences Against the Person Act 1861
- * Wounding or inflicting grievous bodily harm with intent so to do - S.18 Offences Against the Person Act 1861

Whilst the first two categories could result in the offender receiving a maximum of 5 years imprisonment the last category does actually carry a maximum sentence of life

imprisonment. Obviously the more serious the injury, the more likely the offender is to receive a custodial sentence. With regard to the offences of wounding/grievous bodily harm, these relate to the more serious injuries and are more usually dealt with by the Crown Court and more likely to result in a prison sentence. Assault occasioning actual bodily harm (S.47 Assault) was always the most widely used part of the legislation and covered assaults ranging from minor bruising at its lowest level to possibly a broken nose or dislocated teeth at a more serious level. Where assaults occurred resulting in negligible injuries then common assault was always available, albeit usually the fines imposed for common assault fail to exceed the penalties imposed for unlawful parking. Unfortunately in 1994 the head of the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) issued guidelines to all Police Forces on charging procedures in relation to less serious assaults. The result of this directive was to increase the scope of common assault to include the less serious assaults which involve minor bruising, cuts and abrasions and thereby no longer regarding such assaults as Section 47 Assaults. The immediate effect of this approach has resulted in the offence of assault being trivialised, with the benefit to the legal profession being that such matters are more expeditiously dealt with in the Magistrates Court.

A person charged with Section 47 Assault faced the possibility of a custodial sentence, even if the courts failed to impose such a sentence in appropriate cases. However, in the experience of the researcher, police officers do not take the offence of common assault seriously at all and the effect of the latest CPS directive certainly trivialises the less serious assaults and this cannot be good news for the victims of domestic violence. This highlights a problem where even though the law is quite specific, the policies of the prosecuting authorities would seek to undermine any attempt at positive action. A further problem is

the police unhelpful. The situation is further exacerbated when breaches of injunctions have taken place and police officers are reluctant or decline to take action in such matters.

Family protection orders at court injunctions for cases of domestic violence are considered to be of little value. Whilst at first sight such injunctions appear effective, an injunction may ban a violent husband from entering the street or close proximity of the victim's home, such effect is diminished if the offender has gone before the arrival of the police. When the police eventually catch up with him he may well deny breaching the injunction and if the only evidence is that of the woman concerned, it is not necessarily surprising that no further action is taken. An injunction without a power of arrest does not send out the right signals to a violent partner - it indicates that even if the order is breached there is no likelihood of arrest, unless that person commits a criminal offence. It offers little in the way of protection for the victim.

These legal provisions to a large extent now encompass co-habitees as well as married women and whilst each piece of new legislation is introduced to clarify and provide legal remedies to the problem of domestic violence, they do not appear to be working in practice. This may well be due more to the difficulty of enforcement of legislation rather than weakness in the legislation itself. Remedies at civil law are complicated and although the law is in place to respond to the problems presented by acts of domestic violence, the reality is that in practice it is inadequate and inaccessible to women unless they employ the services of a solicitor.

The inability of the police to deal effectively with domestic violence can be attributed in part to the legal restraints within which the police are obliged to operate as a statutory body within a structured society. Within the framework of the criminal law the difficulties that face officers dealing with assaults and other criminal offences linked with domestic violence have already been outlined. The civil law however, is just as ineffective in dealing with domestic violence even though attempts have been made to introduce legislation with the specific aim of tackling violent partners. The most recent legislation, The Family Law Act 1996, has been hailed as the only piece of civil legislation that is specifically there to help victims and confront the perpetrators of domestic violence. This particular piece of legislation, albeit within the ambit of civil law, emerged on the statute books at a very late stage in this research - in fact at a time when it had almost concluded. It is possible only to refer to it, but it may in time prove to have considerable impact, more so than previous legislation. Already on its way through Parliament, previously the Matrimonial Homes and Domestic Violence Bill 1994, it caused some considerable controversy when no lesser person than the Lord Chief Justice vociferously and publicly made known the opposition that the judiciary had to certain provisions of the Bill. There is a problem at law when the judiciary are not seen to support certain legislation as they ought, but the problem is more acute when they openly declare their outright opposition to certain legislation.

Brought back as Part IV of the Family Law Bill 1995, and granted Royal Assent as the Family Law Act 1996 the main provisions are protection for one family member against molestation or violence by another 'family' member, and regulation of the family home by way of an occupation order when relationships have broken down. In order to provide better enforcement powers for the police, the Act requires the relevant court to attach a

power of arrest to the issue of a court order where there have been acts of violence against the applicant or a child, whether such violence is indeed actual or threatened. When the Bill was in consultation stage the Law Commission proposed that the police should have the power to apply for injunctions and orders on behalf of victims of domestic violence where they themselves are frightened or reluctant so to do. This proposal was not taken up and has not been incorporated into the Act itself, which is hardly surprising as the Home Office Select Committee in March 1993 voiced their disapproval of such a measure. The Family Law Act 1996 does afford considerable protection to children who are caught up in a domestic violence setting but does not seem to afford any great protection to women who suffer abuse although it may protect their home. Although it simplifies and consolidates previous legislation it fails to take a far sighted approach by not addressing the fundamental problems facing victims of domestic violence, particularly if they are not married to the perpetrators.

The Role of the Police

The police have been criticised for poor record keeping with regard to incidents of domestic violence (Edwards 1986) and this has been linked to a general reluctance on their behalf to become involved in the first place in such matters. It follows that a comparatively low arrest rate together with an even lower rate of conviction can be attributed to a policy of mediation rather than prosecution. It is almost thirty years since the researcher joined the police and at that time can recall having a zeal to arrest persons who committed acts of violence whether in public places or in the privacy of their own homes. Having left Police Training School with the definition of what constituted an assault clearly in one's mind and whilst never actually dissuaded from arresting someone for committing an assault, it was

made very clear by one's colleagues and supervisory officers to stay clear of domestic incidents. These were classed as family matters and there was no encouragement to respond quickly to such calls, in fact it was a deliberate policy to take ones time in order to let the participants either sort the problem out or go to bed. Such a course of action appeared quite acceptable at that time.

Having attended domestic incidents on a number of occasions when arrests were made, these were only on occasions when the violence was still taking place or where the violent man directed his anger towards the police instead. Although these arrests were usually quite violent, one did not subsequently detect the courts meting out anything other than a relatively lenient sentence. It was regularly pointed out that women who complained of acts of domestic violence, invariably withdrew their complaints at some later stage of the proceedings and, in reality, that was the researcher's experience both as a young police officer and for some considerable time afterwards.

There was however, a change of emphasis sometime in the mid 1980s the primary evidence for that belief being the fact that this research would not have been contemplated if domestic violence were not becoming sufficiently high on the agenda to warrant such attention and interest by a senior police officer. About that time Northumbria Police had installed a computerised command and control system which was linked to hi-tech area control rooms, thus heralding the eventual demise of paper based systems of recording. This considerably enhanced both the accuracy and relative ease of retrieval of information relating to operational incidents that were dealt with by police officers in Northumbria. Being aware of the criticism that was still being levelled at the police for poor record

keeping (Edwards 1986 et al) this system provided the researcher with the opportunity to gather together information relating to domestic incidents and the police response to such on a large scale (over 22,000 incidents per annum). The results would give a clearer picture than much of the research which was centred around paper based systems which were accepted as being inaccurate and limited in both quantity and quality of information.

Police Policy

Computer print outs and statistical information are of limited value unless interpreted, analysed and evaluated by someone with indepth knowledge of the relevant systems and procedures which impinge upon the information thus gathered. It was of considerable benefit for the researcher to be a senior officer who had previously dealt with numerous incidents of domestic violence, and at that time was in charge of managing resources that were dealing, amongst numerous other matters, with domestic incidents. This provided an insight and depth of inside knowledge which it is believed has enhanced the standing of this research.

It is accepted however, that looking beyond the obvious information such as response times and arrest rates the whole question of police policy in such matters was of paramount importance. Outside factors such as legislation and directives, particularly from the Home Office, had a considerable bearing on the direction of police policy in operational matters, notwithstanding the fact that individuals of sufficiently high rank and a commensurate strength of character were able to influence the shaping of police policy. Chief Superintendent Brian Taylor (Northumbria) and Chief Superintendent Ian Buchan (Metropolitan) were both able to introduce and establish a policy that would change the way

domestic violence was viewed in their particular police area to the extent that a positive intervention with a radical approach to prosecution was introduced as a matter of policy. This resulted in both men attracting considerable media attention, and highlighted clear examples of the individual within society being able to renegotiate the specific order in which that person is structured. As time went on a very real dichotomy was evident with respect to the implementation of policy by senior police officers on the one hand, whilst on the other hand this policy was at times being compromised by the individual application of police discretion by junior officers called upon to respond to and deal with acts of domestic violence. The researcher was left with the problem of considering how police policy could best be implemented in such situations.

Multi Agency Cooperation

As this research progressed the researcher became aware of developments that were taking place in response to the problem of domestic violence and gained an increasing number of important contacts from a diversity of statutory agencies and voluntary organisations operating within the area of "domestic violence". At times the amount of information that emerged was almost overwhelming, but it became very clear that no one agency or organisation had the primacy or the will to deal with domestic violence in isolation of other agencies and organisations. The need for a coordinated multi agency approach was increasingly beginning to be recognised even during the early stages of this research when few people had an understanding of what a multi agency approach actually entailed. As far back as 1984 a Home Office Circular which dealt with crime prevention matters encouraged the police to become involved in a coordinated multi agency approach to crime prevention in partnership with statutory agencies and individuals within the community:-

A primary objective of the police has always been the prevention of crime. However, since some of the factors affecting crime lie outside the control or direct influence of the police, crime prevention cannot be left to them alone. Every individual citizen, and all those agencies whose policies and practices can influence the extent of crime, should make their contribution. Preventing crime is the task of the whole community. (Home Office Circular 8/1984).

In fact there has been such progress in these matters that multi agency approaches are now better known as "partnership schemes" with almost statutory backing and what was then considered as radical is now very much standard practice. Yet such initiatives still are instigated and become successful through consensus and negotiation by the various agencies involved.

During his career as a police officer the researcher has been brought up in a working environment where he has been required to search for and gather evidence in order to present a case at court that is proved beyond reasonable doubt. The court room is a setting wherein opinions count for little and where facts are based upon evidence that has to be proved to be accurate and credible. This research has sought to identify the best information available, establish its source and veracity and then present the 'evidence' with clarity and impartiality. Only then has it been possible to formulate opinions and pronounce judgements upon particular findings.

This research is different to, and adds to the weight of, other research because it does not simply investigate the police response to domestic violence, but the nature of the police culture within which that response is made. Rather than confining the research to particular aspects of domestic violence or considering the success or otherwise of specific initiatives, this research has been concerned to overview a broad spectrum of approaches and initiatives

over quite a long time span. This is what makes it different. When writing about the police response to domestic violence, the researcher has been able to draw upon a considerable amount of experience both as an operational police officer who has attended numerous domestic incidents and also as a senior police officer who has had responsibility for setting out policy on policing matters. It is necessary to have both theoretical and relevant practical experience before putting oneself forward as an expert in any particular subject. There are a number of persons who give "expert" evidence at court, but only after having satisfied the court of their qualifications and relevant experience to be considered as such. Having carried out this research while still carrying out a demanding full time role as a Chief Inspector/Superintendent within the fifth largest Police Force in the country, it does provide a considerable challenge. Whilst this could be seen as a hinderance to completing this study it has helped to keep the researcher completely focused upon this research and provided access and openings that would otherwise not be available to others undertaking post graduate research of a similar nature.

Chapter 2

DESIGNING THE STUDY

There are certainly pitfalls where a police officer is performing the role of researcher, when attempting to investigate the effectiveness of the police response to a particular problem, viz domestic violence. There is a danger of unwittingly failing to be objective and critical when evaluating the response of an organisation that, in effect, employs the researcher. Whilst there are a number of obvious benefits (knowledge of police culture, insider information) when the researcher has a dual role as both an academic researcher and a serving police officer, there are also a number of drawbacks. This is particularly evident when interpreting statistics or information gathered during the research and allowing professional judgement to interfere with an academic interpretation of the evidence thus gathered. Of course this problem is not just restricted to police officers, performing a dual role, but has emerged as an issue in other fields of research. There is always a danger that any ethnographical research, whilst studying people, their interactions and environment, fails to maintain a correct balance between a researcher's personal experiences and those of the individuals subject to the research. Ryan (1970) considered it very difficult for any researcher to remain objective and not allow their beliefs to be influenced by personal hopes and fears. The tendency to view social science as being second best to 'natural' science is to over emphasise feelings and beliefs, which are to a large extent irrelevant and a hinderance to properly carrying out research of social life.

The problems encountered by the dual role of researchers are presented by Hobbs and May (1993). In particular May points out that researchers who highlight the value of their objectivity, frequently do so in order to disguise an unwillingness and inability to be

reflexive. However a purist view would suggest that no data that is collected is untainted by the hands of the researcher. His comments may well be directed towards researchers like Riemer (1977) who believed that 'opportunistic research strategies' enabled the researcher to use to their advantage familiar situations, relying upon insider knowledge rather than simply having knowledge about their area of study.

The researcher knows the language and symbolic meanings of those being studied. This enables the researcher to avoid meaningless and irrelevant questions, and to probe sensitive areas with greater ease. (Riemer 1977, p.474)

In this context Hobbs (1993) suggests that as a researcher speaking about the East End (of London) with an East End accent, he highlighted the problems of insider research. He found that when presenting his research verbally to academic audiences, he was rarely interrogated or even questioned about any issue "theoretical or methodological". As a perceived expert in the field even the most obtuse, rigid generalisations by him were accepted without criticism by such audiences, despite the fact that he had, at that time, published nothing. He subsequently realised that his oral presentations were "naive, loosely formulated and theoretically vacuous" and counted for little in a real academic setting.

This the world that produces (sociologists), that licenses them to do the kind of work they do, and within which the kind of work they do must find a place if it is to count as worth attention. In itself Being There is a postcard experience... It is Being Here, a scholar among scholars, that gets your sociology read, published, reviewed, cited, taught. (Geertz, 1988 - quoted in Hobbs and May, 1993, p.51)

An individual researcher's own experiences and theoretical position must have some influence upon any research carried out and no interview can be conducted in a political or

academic vacuum. What is important, however, is for a researcher to recognise the positions, opinions and bias that he or she may have and understand how they could influence any particular research undertaken.

When considering research strategies, there needs to be an awareness of the interdependence between issues that are to be researched and sociological perspectives. Different research techniques are employed to highlight particular facets of a problem, but when making decisions to do with the research, these are not formulated in a vacuum; rather the researcher is making such decisions in the light of his or her theoretical, sociological assertions.

This research primarily approaches the problem of domestic violence from a sociological perspective based on consensus structuralism, particularly because the intention was to consider the effectiveness of a multi agency response to a societal problem - domestic violence. Individuals within society acquire and develop certain patterns of behaviour which are passed on from one generation to another, and which ultimately form part of the culture of that society. It is therefore important that there exists within society a general consensus about the particular values and patterns of behaviour that need to exist for any society to function satisfactorily. Accepting that socialisation is the process by which an individual acquires the culture of his or her society, individuals are socialised into conforming to the existing state of affairs. Individuals may come and go but societies have a natural tendency towards harmony and self regulation and are therefore able to continue as an integrated whole and can be viewed as a social structure that is cohesive and stable. This perspective was developed by Durkheim who emphasised the manner in which society

exercises constraints upon individuals, with particular emphasis upon the moral nature of social relationships. This functionalist approach to society is based on the assertion that all aspects of a society serve a particular purpose and are vital to ensure the survival of that society. Stressing the importance of parts within a system, all cultural or social phenomena have a positive function to perform within society. Therefore viewing society as a moral entity that exists over and above the individual, there needs to be some common agreement about how individuals behave towards each other in their relationships with one another.

As domestic violence is a societal problem an effective response cannot be found by looking to one particular agency within society, but rather by adopting a multi agency response to the problem. In effect this will trigger a societal response to a societal problem. The disadvantage of a functionalist approach however, is that it does not seem to take account of both changes to and conflict within society and tends to place too much emphasis upon the process of socialisation. It is difficult to argue against the criticism that functionalism tends to present an over simplified view of human interaction, but it is very appropriate when considering the response of an organisation such as the police who pride themselves that policing Britain is by consent.

Of course this research is not bound exclusively to one sociological perspective, particularly when considering the role of certain pressure groups within society. Those involved in the womens' movement have had considerable success in bringing the issue of domestic violence on to the political agenda. Being critical of a society that is male dominated and male orientated they certainly view consensus theorists as appeasing the unfair system that

exists, (Dobash & Dobash 1992) for as long as things remain as they are, those who are privileged will naturally retain their privilege. Such a conflict structuralistic approach views an individual's ideas as being shaped by the pressures imposed by agencies within society whilst an individual's actions are regulated by forces of social control; it is conflict and not consensus that brings about change within society.

Whilst such a perspective does have considerable merit, it has to be acknowledged that societies do change, social institutes are open to reform and innovation and collectively individuals within society can bring about change without being in conflict with society all the time. Even though the womens' movement has been successful in placing domestic violence as an issue that needs to be addressed by society, it is women who have entered the field of politics both nationally and locally, as well as the many dedicated women who work in the refuges, that are presently confronting society with the problem of domestic violence. To such an extent, conflict has in many instances given way to consensus, particularly when funding becomes an issue in furtherance of any cause that may be seen as political.

Unfortunately neither consensus nor conflict structuralism as sociological perspectives are suitable when considering the actions of certain individuals who have been able to bring about change. In particular Chief Superintendent Ian Buchan of the Metropolitan Police and Chief Superintendent Brian Taylor of Northumbria Police where able to bring about changes in the way the police were to deal with domestic violence in their localities and in so doing were able to influence the way in which society was viewing and responding to the problem of domestic violence in their police areas. Whilst their specific involvement is considered

in some detail later in this research, they are included here because the researcher views their involvement as representative of the sociological perspective of symbolic interaction. This approach highlights the importance of considering any form of social action from the view point of the individuals involved and in particular the meanings that they give to their actions. This approach relies upon the assumption that the organisation of social life emanates from within a society and as a result of the ongoing process of interaction between the various members of society. Individuals do not operate within a vacuum, for matters which influence their decisions rely upon the values and beliefs they have developed through socialisation and practical constraints upon their actions.

Senior police officers cannot be seen to be engaging in conflict within society, neither were those individuals content to wait for the police, as an organisation, to respond to the problem of domestic violence in due course. Rather, as individuals, they took the lead and to a large extent, the police as an organisation followed that lead. Of course once those officers moved on and their influence waned, the specific initiatives they introduced appeared to lose their impact considerably. It is similarly argued that a symbolic interactionist approach does not recognise the extent to which society is a system and relies too much upon a common sense understanding of society. Nevertheless the various perspectives, to a varying degree of effectiveness, have been adopted by this research in order to attempt to understand and appreciate the social world within which this problem of domestic violence exists.

Having considered the various sociological perspectives, this research was progressed on similar lines to an in depth investigation or enquiry, which necessitated adopting a number

of different styles of approach and investigation to consider the main research issue. The methods of enquiry involved retrieving and assimilating historic data, evaluating live empirical information, interviewing individuals both by way of questionnaire or personal interview and personal visits to, or contact with, particular initiatives and projects in various parts of Britain. Being aware of the problem created by insider research, this research did benefit by considering the work undertaken by Bourlet (1988) in addition to the more critical analysis of the police carried out by Chatterton (1983) and Reiner (1985).

Specifically the research involved 7 methods of enquiry:-

- * Overview of literature and previous research.
- * Evaluation of statistics relating to incidents of domestic violence taken from the Northumbria Police incident logging computer.
- * Examination of all records and information relating to specific cases of domestic violence in one particular police area (Washington).
- * Interviews of police officers by way of questionnaire and personal interview.
- * Personal visits and careful examination of various domestic violence initiatives both in Great Britain and elsewhere.
- * Interviews with victims of domestic violence by way of questionnaire.
- * Evaluation of findings from research and articles completed during the course of this study.

The obvious starting point for any research would entail a systematic review of previous literature and research and this did highlight some gaps, notably in the acquisition of reliable statistical information concerning the actual police response to calls reporting

incidents of domestic violence. Having therefore obtained this information at the outset of his research, it was updated annually throughout the period of the research. In order to consider more specific issues, detailed statistical information was then acquired which involved looking more closely at one particular area contained within these statistics. This research is therefore underpinned by a considerable amount of literature, including that relating to matters of police policy, and statistical information in connection with the actual police response to domestic violence incidents.

The research then developed to a more personal level which necessitated more in-depth interviews with police officers, victims of violence and other practitioners in the field. This part of the research complimented, and added significantly to, the information already obtained through statistical analysis and previous research. At the same time a number of initiatives were visited to consider at first hand the effectiveness or otherwise of specific initiatives involving either the implementation of police policy or multi agency cooperation. The aim therefore was not simply to consider the police response to domestic violence but the nature of the organisation within which that response takes place.

Although each of the seven areas of research are covered in considerable depth in subsequent chapters, it would be prudent now to outline the methodology adopted in each area.

Overview of Literature and Previous Research

Some very important research studies carried out in the nineteen seventies and eighties has resulted in a hard core of established literature on the subject of domestic violence; notably

Dobash & Dobash (1979 - 1992), Borkowski (1983), Pahl (1982, 1985), Edwards (1986, 1989). By drawing together the considerable amount of research material available, there was a need to focus attention on matters which related to the police response to domestic violence and evaluation thereof. It became readily apparent that whilst this was valuable reference material, much of the classic research undertaken was some ten years old when I began my research.

In 1989 Home Office Research Study 107 brought into one research document the relevant and current literature and research on this subject. This single document, in essence, summarises the advances in the study and understanding of domestic violence and was a good starting point for new research.

In addition to academic studies a large amount of literature has been produced by organisations as diverse as Women's Aid, the Metropolitan Police and House of Commons Select Committees. One benefit of being a serving police officer was the liaison the researcher had established within various agencies, both statutory and voluntary, before commencing this research, which provided one with access to a diversity of individuals and sources of knowledge in the field of research into domestic violence. Many of the practitioners and individuals with considerable "hands on" experience provided information and knowledge which was extremely beneficial. Whilst an overview of literature is a vital starting point to all good research, there has emerged a considerable volume of new material since this research began. Therefore the overview of literature and research has become an ongoing process throughout the period of this research.

Evaluation of Statistics Relating to Incidents of Domestic Violence in Northumbria

As gatekeepers to the criminal justice system the Police Service is placed in a unique position to respond to the problem of domestic violence. The police are a reactive agency that is available 24 hours each day and, to the victims of domestic violence, they are only a telephone call away. Smith (1989) considered that, in relation to domestic violence, the standard of record keeping undertaken by the police was poor resulting in under-reporting of such incidents. This will always be the case where such matters are recorded manually on message pads, and where individual officers exercise discretion even to the point of whether to record such incidents in the first place.

If those matters which are reported to the police represent only the tip of the iceberg, it is very difficult to attempt any meaningful analysis, when there is under-recording of reported domestic violence by the police. However, since mid 1984, Northumbria Police have channelled all incoming telephone calls requiring police attention into its three strategically placed Area Operations Rooms. All such calls are entered into part of the Force computer system, which specifically deals with the recording and logging of all incidents that require action and allocation of police resources. When this system was inaugurated, it was decided all such recorded incidents would be allocated specific code numbers for reference and retrieval purposes. These code numbers are added to incidents at the time when they were finally dealt with, so that incidents ranging from burglaries to traffic accidents were each allocated their own final incident code number. Fortunately at that time, it was decided to allocate all completed incidents of a domestic violence nature with the final incident code "36", so by retrieving details of all domestic violence incidents it has been

possible to create an accurate picture of the extent of the problem of domestic violence in Northumbria over a number of years.

Where research is carried out with a relatively small sample survey, the results can be open to question. In 1986, Northumbria Police were dealing with over 16,000 reported domestic incidents annually and in the space of three years, this figure had increased by over one third to just over 22,500 annual incidents. By analysing these specific incident logs, this research has been able to establish the month, day, time and place of each such incident. Furthermore, the exact nature of the incident, details of the parties involved, police officers concerned and other specific information was also available for examination. These incident logs are basically computerised records of incidents reported to the police which remain "live" on the Force Computer for a relatively short period of 28 days. After this period, any retrieval of information has to be made through the Information Technology Department of the Force whose main computer facility was at that time based at Byker, Newcastle upon Tyne.

This aspect of the research was very intensive and required the researcher to view all the incident logs and then extract the necessary information on to various charts and tables. Because of the bulk nature of these print outs, storage has been a problem, with all matter having to be securely stored at Northumbria Police HQ.

Having examined details of all recorded domestic incidents that had taken place during 1989, the next step was to compare the overall result with information available from previous years. Unfortunately because of a policy decision by Northumbria Police the

following year, which affected the ability to identify and retrieve information about domestic incidents, it was impossible to draw meaningful comparisons in the years immediately following. The status quo was returned at the end of 1992 and in subsequent years a more accurate recording of such incidents has proved possible.

An extract of one such print out (suitably amended in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1984) is appended at Annex '2'.

Examination of all Records and Information Relating to Specific Cases of Domestic Violence in Washington

At the time this research commenced Northumbria Police was divided geographically into 6 territorial divisions and then those were further divided into 22 sub divisions. This situation remained largely unchanged until the end of 1993 when a substantial forcewide re-organisation occurred which abolished the divisional tier of command and re-aligned the 22 sub divisions into 15 separate Area Commands.

In March 1990 the researcher was appointed as Deputy Commander, at Washington which was the busiest of the 22 sub divisions, dealing with an average 150 reported domestic incidents each month. This situation provided the researcher with the perfect opportunity to view in detail individual domestic incidents occurring in one particular area. A great deal of information was contained on each of these incident logs but the important details required were contained within the text of the particular log. A proforma was therefore devised in order that the detailed information extracted from the relevant computer log generated for each of these recorded incidents could be transferred for easier retrieval

and analysis. This questionnaire was amended after consultation with researchers associated with Newcastle University (one of whom is this researcher's supervisor) who were conducting research into the working of the Domestic Violence Unit at South Shields and were using a similar proforma for their project. In view of the relatively small number of incidents researched, it was possible to retrieve and analyse much more detailed information about each incident, for example the numbers of police officers sent to deal with each incident, actual time spent at the incident and even the cost, in terms of the police response, to each incident.

A decision was made to consider one specific month (May 1990) as this was a month outside the normal holiday period and where seasonal variations and holiday commitments would not have a great effect upon operational policy. This process was subsequently repeated to consider the domestic incidents which occurred during one 24 hour period (New Years Eve/New Years Day 1992) in Washington. Using the same methodology it was possible to obtain details of all reported domestic incidents but those were considered in greater detail and each one followed through to conclusion, particularly those that resulted in subsequent court proceedings.

A copy of this form is appended at Annex '3'.

Interviews of Police Officers by Way of Questionnaire and Personal Interview

Having considered computer print outs and records of incidents of domestic violence, it was important to find out what the police officers think who are called upon day and night to deal with the problem of domestic violence. In order to obtain their views, a questionnaire

was devised with the intention of reaching as many as possible of the 120 police officers, of various rank, who had the responsibility for policing Washington sub division. This questionnaire consisted of 22 relatively straight forward questions, each of which presented a range of possible answers which simply required the officer to tick the most appropriate one. As the Deputy Commander at Washington at that time, this was one occasion when the researcher was ideally placed to pursue this part of the research and personally supervise and oversee the completion of these questionnaires within his own sub division.

These questionnaires were anonymous, although officers had to identify their rank and particular department to which they were attached. The questionnaires were completed under supervision over a period of three days and were usually completed by the officers during the briefing period at the commencement of their tour of duty. This is the time when all officers come together for briefing prior to commencing their tour of duty and has the advantage that usually an Inspector or at least a Sergeant is present in a supervisory role. The completion of the majority of these questionnaires were personally supervised by the researcher, with the exception of some officers on night duty and a small contingent who were based at another police station situated within the sub division. In those particular cases the supervision was undertaken by the Duty Inspector who had been previously briefed by me about these matters. Although it was hoped that 100 questionnaires could be completed, because of leave and other extractions, it was only possible to obtain 80 completed questionnaires as. Nevertheless, this number represented a substantial proportion of the officers based at Washington sub division for it meant that two thirds of all the police officers based at Washington participated in this research. This aspect of the research was viewed as a natural progression from the forcewide response,

to a local police response, and then to obtaining the views of the individual police officers working in that particular police area.

A copy of this particular questionnaire is appended at Annex '4'.

In order to obtain a more in depth study of the attitudes of police officers towards dealing with domestic violence a small number of officers of various ranks were then selected for personal interviews. The officers were interviewed at length and the conversations recorded on tape, these conversations were subsequently transcribed and analysed. The salient parts have been incorporated within the findings of this research, all officers were afforded complete anonymity and encouraged to be frank and honest throughout the interview.

Examination of Domestic Violence Initiatives outside Northumbria

The researcher was supplied from various sources with information about a number of domestic violence initiatives, both in Britain and further afield. A number of these projects required a personal visit to examine the particular initiative at first hand and talk to the persons involved. This was particularly the case in relation to the general work undertaken by the Metropolitan Police and the Royal Ulster Constabulary, in addition to specific initiatives such as the Domestic Violence Units at Tottenham and South Shields. It was not possible to visit each individual project or initiative however, in many instances a telephone call followed up by supportive literature was considered appropriate. Careful and considered analysis was required of each particular project, not least because of a tendency of those involved to proclaim any initiative as a success in some way or another. Where projects or initiatives did not appear to be effective, there did appear to be a reluctance

from the parties involved to admit to any such deficiency. It was considered important for the purpose of this research to look in depth at the 'failed' projects as well as those which appeared to have met with some success. Each of these visits to particular projects, was followed up with subsequent contact by telephone to clarify any minor points or ambiguities. The focus was, in particular, upon the influence of police policy in such matters.

Policy, whether it is in the form of a directive from a senior police officer, or a circular from the Home Office, must have an influence upon the response to domestic violence by operational police officers. The impact that policy has upon this particular problem came in for close scrutiny, looking at those specific instances where policy has been introduced and the resulting effect or ineffectiveness of such action. Careful attention was given to the various pro-active police-motivated initiatives and schemes that have been introduced during recent years in an effort to combat domestic violence. Obviously, the police are not the only organisation that has an interest in dealing with the problem of domestic violence and initiatives undertaken by various statutory bodies and voluntary agencies such as Victim Support and Women' Aid were also considered. This aspect required the researcher spending considerable time with individuals and a number of disparate groups of people, not so much talking about the problem but more listening to what they have to say.

Because of the length of time that this research has been ongoing, it has been possible to monitor annually many of the projects involved and identify those which have floundered and failed as well as those which have been successful. Whilst there was a desire to

publish details of successful initiatives there was understandably a reluctance on the part of those involved to discuss those initiatives which had failed, for whatever reason.

Interviews with Victims of Domestic Violence

At an early stage in this research, it was considered important to seek the views of the victims of domestic violence and work out the means by which this could be achieved. Whilst personal interview is undoubtedly the best means of obtaining information from individuals, one has to question whether a woman in a refuge, would feel at ease discussing her problems with a senior male police officer. Of course the alternative would be for the researcher to use the services of a female police officer to undertake the interviews on his behalf and this course of action was eventually followed when the initial approach ran into some difficulties.

It was considered that the most effective way to obtain the views of such victims would be for the researcher to make contact with those directly involved in daily contact with victims of domestic violence. Contact was made with a local refuge at Washington and the coordinator spoken to, who carefully went through the questionnaire that had been prepared. This questionnaire was divided into three distinct sections; the first sought information about the person being interviewed; the second section sought information about the violent partner involved, whilst the last section required the person to comment upon the assistance or otherwise of the various agencies and organisations that have an interest in the field of domestic violence. In most cases the questionnaire simply required the person interviewed to tick one of a number of alternatives whilst giving the opportunity for supportive comment where required.

The researcher spent a great deal of time with the individual at the refuge who agreed to administer the questionnaire by talking to victims of domestic violence and ensuring that questionnaires were completed by such women. The questionnaires were completely anonymous in that there was no means of identifying individuals, notwithstanding the questionnaires were completed in the comparative safety and anonymity of the refuge. The completed questionnaires were subsequently analysed.

In all a total of 12 questionnaires were completed but, to ensure that the views of those surveyed were not unique to Washington, this process was replicated at another refuge in Northumberland. With the same questionnaire, the researcher repeated the training process with the refuge co-ordinators who were to supervise the completion of these documents. Unfortunately none of these questionnaires were ever completed for reasons that are fully outlined later. It was therefore decided to utilise the services of a policewoman who had a forcewide responsibility for social crime prevention and had established good contacts with all the refuges across the region. She was fully briefed and supervised the completion of the questionnaire at two separate Womens' Refuges on Tyneside. The outcome was that a further 8 questionnaires were completed, but she did experience some difficulty and a general reluctance upon the part of women at the refuge to complete a questionnaire. The reason for the reluctance was simply that domestic violence is quite topical now and a growing number of undergraduates and students undertaking vocational qualifications in social services and the probation service are studying domestic violence and focussing their attention upon the inhabitants of Womens' Refuges. One can fully understand the predicament of these women and would not wish in any way to further add to their problems and stress by making them feel that they were in a 'goldfish bowl' environment.

Whilst one would certainly have liked more completed questionnaires it must be accepted that, in comparison to the 80 police officers who completed questionnaires, a group of 20 victims of violence is a comparatively much smaller number for the purpose of analysis.

A copy of this questionnaire is attached at Annex '5'.

Evaluation of Findings from other Research

Considerable advances have taken place in the study and awareness of the problem of domestic violence since this research commenced in 1989. More than 6 years further along the road, some of the initial research information appears rather dated whilst other material has been superseded by new legislation or more recent research. Throughout the research a number of conferences and seminars on domestic violence were attended notably at Newcastle, Washington, Liverpool, Stirling and London. Whilst some research has stood the test of time, other research which appeared quite radical and exciting at the time, does not seem so valuable. Without doubt, this has been an exciting period in the study of the problem of domestic violence. To some extent it may be fortunate that the rapid advances and new initiatives that emerged as we entered the nineteen nineties have very much slowed down and become more settled.

The research material used and acquired during this study is available at Northumbria Police Headquarters, where because of the personal and sensitive nature of the material it is kept in a secure condition.

Chapter 3

REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND PREVIOUS RESEARCH

A Starting Point

At the time this research commenced in 1989 it became apparent that there was no single reference document which presented an accurate and comprehensive overview of previous research and literature into the study of domestic violence. This was all to change with the publication that year of Home Office Research Study 107 (Smith 1989), which was to become an invaluable asset to this research. In particular this document pointed the way forward for the various agencies involved, notably the Police and the Crown Prosecution Service, whilst many of the issues raised have, over the past seven years, been considered and dealt with in this research.

It would be improper to undertake any review of the literature without paying tribute to this particular research study, notwithstanding the fact that so many practitioners operating within the field of domestic violence appear unaware of its existence. That research study was followed a year later by the notable circular from the Home Office (60/1990) specifically dealing with domestic violence. However, since that time other research findings have emerged, to the point that the whole field of study of the problem of domestic violence has progressed substantially over the past 7 years.

The Tip of the Iceberg

No research has been able to accurately determine the extent of the problem of domestic violence in our society today as there is no accurate single source of information which can

be drawn upon for this purpose. It is obviously difficult to count incidents which for the most part take place 'behind closed doors'. Whilst recognising that the police are but one of the sources of information concerning domestic violence, the level at which it is believed such matters are reported is subject to considerable variance. Dobash & Dobash (1979) put the figure as low as 2 per cent of all incidents whilst Pahl (1985) considered it to be as high as 85 per cent, although in the latter case the research was conducted amongst women living in refuges and therefore a high incidence of reporting would normally be expected.

Although one can only guess at the actual incidence of domestic violence that occurs, previous research indicates that it is only the tip of the iceberg that is actually reported. There is little doubt that as the problem of domestic violence continues to attract media interest and attention that more women will either realise that they are victims of such violence or else will be prepared to report such violence. Quite recently research carried out by Middlesex University Centre for Criminology (1993) revealed that 1 in 10 women were victims of domestic violence, 1 in 5 men struck their partners and 6 in 10 men saw violence against their partner as a legitimate option. Although these figures are appalling one suspects that the actual number of women who are victims and the number of men who are perpetrators may well be somewhat higher than this.

When looking at the level of reported domestic violence the problem of obtaining accurate statistical information is difficult when the only organisation who are obliged to record such matters are the police. The problem is that it is left to an individual officer's discretion whether the circumstances surrounding the 'violence' amounts to a crime or not and in many instances such matters are not recorded as crimes. Edwards (1989) found that only

12 per cent of domestic violence reported to the police were recorded as crimes. Police officers do however have discretion as to whether to record a domestic incident as a crime, as they have discretion in a much wider sense whether to record any incident they attend as a crime. If police officers choose not to record such incidents as crimes then the level of crime related to incidents of domestic violence will be low.

The under reporting of crimes of domestic violence does have a knock-on effect, particularly when one views domestic assaults as a proportion of the total number of assaults that are actually reported. The British Crime Survey in 1987 revealed that one in four of all reported assaults could be regarded as a domestic assault (Davidoff and Dowds 1989). Statistics can often become quite dated and results can fluctuate from year to year, yet one figure that has remained fairly static over recent years relates to victims of homicide. About half of all female victims of homicide are killed by their current or former partners/lovers while the corresponding percentage of male victims has rarely risen above 10 per cent. It is worthy of note that the last woman to be executed in Britain in 1926 was convicted of murder in such circumstances.

On the other hand a considerable amount of domestic violence reported to the police is not recorded as a crime because the injuries sustained are either not immediately apparent or not sufficient to warrant such proceedings. Nevertheless, most of the problems identified in previous research which have pointed out the difficulty in actually determining the extent of the problem would be resolved if the police did keep accurate and comprehensive records of all reported instances of domestic violence. The act of merely reporting domestic violence can of itself be of help to the victim, for by merely reporting instances of domestic

violence the sense of injustice and outrage felt by that individual can be reduced and replaced by some sense of control if the offender is subsequently arrested by the police. The balance is further redressed in favour of the victim if the offender is subsequently convicted or required to make some form of restitution.

Recording Domestic Violence

The ability of the police to accurately record incidents of domestic violence has been the subject of considerable criticism by most, if not all, of the previous research literature (Edwards 1989, Oppenlander 1982 et al). Smith (1989, p.40) claimed that in England and Wales calls requiring some form of police response were recorded on "the station message pad" together with details of the officer attending and the eventual outcome. It is somewhat surprising that as late as 1989 some police forces were still using a paper based archaic system of recording incidents that had changed very little since the days of Sir Robert Peel in the last century, because by the mid 1980s and certainly at the end of that decade the majority of police forces were operating computer based command and control systems. The reality is that a large percentage of present day operational officers would have had little or no experience of paper based systems.

It has been identified that messages relating to domestic violence incidents could easily be tossed into the waste paper bin and not acted upon (Edwards 1989), but the same cannot be true of computerised records. Once information is fed into a computer linked to a command and control system it cannot be removed - no matter how many subsequent amendments or alterations are made the original entry can always be retrieved. There ought not to be a problem with record keeping now but more recent research (Walker &

McNicol 1994) showed that although information about domestic incidents was generally quite accurately inputted, it was not always being acted upon. The police are keeping records of domestic incidents and probably these records are quite accurate, but the problem is that they are not being used as well as they could be to provide valuable information and clear statistical information for the benefit of both police officers and victims alike.

It has been estimated that as much as 25 per cent of all calls to the police involve domestic incidents (Smith 1989) which places a considerable demand upon police resources. If that were true then the Police Service ought to have addressed the problem of domestic violence long before now. The research which has looked at a considerable number of incidents per annum, indicates that domestic incidents account for about 4 per cent of the total number of reported incidents, a figure considerably lower than previous research would indicate. Of course this research has benefited from being able to refer to historic computerised records and has not been reliant upon paper based records, which are unreliable.

Explaining the Violence

Research into domestic violence, conducted from different viewpoints, whether legal, social or medical, presents us with a variety of conclusions, which touch upon other areas of social concern. While offenders come from all socio-economic backgrounds, occupations, races and religions, a significant number of men (12 per cent) who beat their wives also abuse their children and are also violent outside the home environment (Coleman and Bottomley 1976). Many victims also claim their violent partners have an unhealthy interest in pornography (Walker 1979).

In addition from various research the following common traits appear in relation to men who assault their partners:-

- * Lack of interpersonal skills
- * Poor communication
- * Misperception of harmless communication as being threatening
- * Denial of the obvious when confronted

Whilst earlier research refers to wife battering and matrimonial violence, more recent studies speak of domestic violence and abuse by partners rather than husbands. The breakdown of marriage and increase in the numbers of couples co-habiting and indeed the numbers of children born outside marriage has considerably increased of recent years. This liberalisation of relationships has not resulted in a decrease in the level of domestic violence in Britain but has resulted in such violence being viewed as occurring in relationships rather than during the course of marriage. A report published in June 1992 (DPCS) showed that couples who co-habitate before marriage are twice as likely to separate or divorce than couples who go through a marriage service before living together. Looking at marriages over a period of 17 years, 21 per cent of marriages where the couples cohabited before marriage ended in divorce or separation while the corresponding figure of 'traditional' marriages was 11 per cent (DPCS). Two possible explanations were put forward to explain this disparity:-

1. Couples who cohabit before marriage may be uncertain about, or have a weaker commitment to marriage.
2. Couples who cohabit, are more likely to be unconventional and more readily willing to accept divorce and separation.

Therefore, as half the 350,000 couples who marry each year in Britain actually cohabit beforehand, the breakdown in marriages, which at present affects about 200,000 families each year, is set to increase at a considerable rate. To follow on from this the problem of stress in marriage was the subject of study which concluded that "relationship with partner" was the lowest cause of stress in marriage whilst the major cause was attributed to a person's job. A survey of 700 people in Britain commissioned by BUPA into the causes of effects of stress found that concerns about employment, finances and families were the main causes of stress. Table 3(1) outlines the findings of this survey which was conducted by Nielsens in 1992 and lists the major causes of stress in marriage, highlighting the different responses given by the men and women surveyed.

Table 3(1) The causes of stress in marriage - (shown as a percentage)

Cause	Male and Female	Male	Female
Job	33	48	23
Financial Problems	29	30	29
Children	27	14	35
Health	23	21	23
Relatives	13	6	17
Fear of unemployment	10	10	11
Relationship with partner	10	9	11

Although stress is commonplace, those interviewed said they reacted to it generally by becoming impatient, irritable or even angry. Unfortunately there is insufficient information about the make-up of the sample group interviewed but a relatively small number (10 per cent) placed the blame for their stress directly on to their partners.

A random survey of single parent families in Northern Ireland (Evason 1982) revealed that 56 per cent of those who were separated or divorced had been involved in violent relationships with men. Similar research carried out in Bristol (Borkowski 1983) amongst recently divorced women put this figure a little lower at 40 per cent. This picture is replicated in the United States where a US Harris poll showed that around two thirds of women who had either recently divorced or separated reported violence in their most recent relationship (Browne 1987). Unfortunately the act of separation or divorce does not stop the violence as figures published by the US Department of Justice show that three quarters of all domestic assaults reported to the police occurred after either divorce or separation (Hart 1990).

Whilst there is a commonly held view that women subject of domestic violence are subject to repeat victimisation, even when they change partners, it is difficult to find any substantial evidence from previous research to support this assertion. There is however considerable evidence that domestic violence in particular relationships does escalate and become increasingly more violent during the period of a relationship. Hanmer & Stanko (1985) found that 90 per cent of domestic violence reported related to women who had suffered repeat victimisation which often involved systematic beatings of increasing ferocity.

The Female Perspective

Whilst both social movements and the times within which they exist remain generally static, the actual theories about such movements tend to bring into focus and concept their aims, nature and consequences.

While social movements may effect changes in political, economic and social conditions, they also arise out of and are themselves affected by changes in these external contexts, as well as by changes within their own membership or organisation. (Dobash & Dobash 1992).

To argue that social change can only be accomplished by challenging the institutional and ideological structures of society would cause one to appreciate the value of social movements, with the emphasis upon equality, individual autonomy and quality of life in general. Therefore in any study of domestic violence the role of the womens' movement as one such social movement is vitally important. There is little doubt the womens' movement was very much influenced by a rather radical form of feminism from the United States and also socialist feminist thought.

During the nineteen seventies a number of National Womens' Liberation Conferences were held in Great Britain focusing on a number of issues, one of which was a demand to end male violence:-

Freedom from intimidation by threat or use of violence or sexual coercion, regardless of marital status; and an end to all laws, assumptions and institutions which perpetuate male dominance and mens' aggression towards women." (Coote and Campbell, 1987, 'quoted in Dobash and Dobash, 1992, p.25)

Refuges for "battered wives" and indeed Womens' Aid as an organisation have their roots in this social movement and indeed continue to effect change which has over the years benefited countless numbers of women and children who are victims of domestic violence. The central aims remain unchanged over the years; helping victims of domestic violence, challenging male violence and changing the position of women in society. Unfortunately

as their primary success has been in establishing womens' refuges, to help victims of domestic violence, there is a danger of losing sight of visionary goals while caught up with the practicalities of running and funding such refuges. The reality is that those women who are seen as refuge workers are in effect members of a very powerful social movement, even though that association may not be readily apparent. There is a dichotomy here between being a social movement seeking social change for women or performing a social service providing assistance to a relatively small number of victims.

The conflict approach evident during the early years of the womens' movement when they mobilised large numbers for demonstrations and marches or smaller numbers for squatting in empty houses to use as refuges has tended to give way to political lobbying and a more consensus approach with the various statutory agencies, including the police. The latter approach has been found to be the most effective if the aim is to obtain continuing funding from both local and central government, notwithstanding the male dominance of such bodies.

The 'feminist' perspective highlights the fact that men, and not women, are the cause of and responsible for domestic violence, which is merely a reflection of inequalities in a society where male domination and power are underpinned by long held cultural belief and institutional organisation and practice.

Dobash & Dobash (1992) believe that to view the success of the womens' movement in terms purely of the number of refuges established or the success of programmes to confront male perpetrators of domestic violence would not do them justice, even though thousands

of women have received support and domestic violence as a social problem has been brought into the public arena quite firmly.

This has provided a vehicle for change within the institutions of the state as well as within the wider society. Perceptions, discourse and reactions have all been challenged. The vision of transforming the position of women in society forms the wider goal and the continuing challenge. (Dobash & Dobash 1992, p.298).

The family is generally portrayed as a private social group where the man is seen as the dominant head of the household, with the women being subordinate and supportive to their partner. Pahl (1985) and Horley (1988) point out that traditional male dominated views about the role of women within marriage and within the family effect the way in which domestic violence is viewed by society and, accordingly, the response towards acts of domestic violence by the police and other statutory agencies. Patriarchy is put forward by Dobash & Dobash (1979, 1984) to explain this male dominance in domestic relationships while Edwards (1985) claims that our legal system actually underpins the notion of female subordination within family and domestic relationships. Horley (1988) views domestic violence as part of the overall propensity for men to use violence as a means of asserting their power and dominion whether or not the victim is male or female.

When seeking to consider which other factors linked with male dominance and power in order to explore violence against women, Roy (1977) found that money, jealousy, sex and alcohol were the four major factors which contributed towards acts of domestic violence occurring. Evason (1982) and Dobash & Dobash (1979) agreed that money, or the lack of it, was the main contributory factors resulting in domestic violence although jealousy also figured prominently. Evason (1982) looked at a number of victims of different age,

education and social class and found the common factor to be that the violent husbands were generally those who held a traditional view of male supremacy where the man was the head of the house. The feminist standpoint is epitomised by Strauss (1977) in the following comment reiterated by Smith (1989 p.29).

The cultural norms and values permitting and sometimes encouraging husband-to-wife violence reflect the hierarchical and male dominated type of society which characterises the Western world.

This viewpoint relates to the Western world and does not seem to take account of cultural norms and values of the large number of families from within ethnic communities where the problem is more pronounced. The argument put forward that women are the victims of domestic violence might simply be answered by the fact that they are physically weaker than men and therefore more likely to be the victim of violence rather than the perpetrator. However with a growing interest, particularly amongst women, in achieving physical fitness and a growing refusal to accept such violence or domination by men, the feminist view is becoming more acceptable than it was even when this research commenced.

Approaches to the Problem

The old adage that an Englishman's home is his castle has proved to be a major stumbling block in dealing effectively with abuse that occurs within families, and in particular when the victims suffers domestic violence. There is an obvious reluctance on the part of the public agencies, especially the police, to become involved in matters that occur in the privacy of one's own home. Most Police Forces have some form of computerised command and control system and are thereby able to maximise their use of resources by

a system of grading response times. Berk (1980) and Edwards (1986) noted that by categorising calls reporting incidents of domestic violence as non urgent cases, the response times of officers attending such incidents was considerably longer than if the disturbance had occurred in the street or a public place such as a restaurant or public house. A very good reason for a slow response time is to allow the violence or disorder to subside, so that when the officer finally arrives the situation is relatively calm and consequently there is considerably less scope and need for positive action, in the form of an arrest.

Oppenlander (1982) found that even when officers were dispatched to deal with incidents of domestic violence, which were still in progress, they tended to arrive some considerable time later. Interviews with police officers that were conducted as part of that study highlighted the fact that individual officers chose to purposely drag their heels in attending such incidents with the specific intention that they would be resolved before their arrival. Whilst research generally does not reveal evidence of inordinate delays - Edwards (1986) found that officers were usually sent to deal with such incidents within five to ten minutes - the London Strategic Policing Unit (1986) claimed that officers often took up to an hour to arrive and in some cases never arrived at all, thus highlighting the apathy and low esteem with which domestic violence appeared to be held within the police. The culture that existed within the police during the nineteen eighties has changed somewhat and there is now a drive towards greater efficiency and cost effectiveness which ought to mean that officers are responding more quickly to calls of domestic violence. That is, however, no guarantee that upon arrival the matter will be dealt with more effectively than before.

If such calls were treated with more urgency and officers responded more quickly, then there is more likelihood the officers would arrive while the violence is actually taking place. It then follows that the possibility of the violent partner being arrested is considerably enhanced. Unfortunately police officers do not regard domestic incidents as a core function in the same way as dealing with two persons fighting in the street or in a late night take-away and instead view domestic incidents as matters that are more to do with social work or marriage counselling (Bell 1985). If officers consider that domestic violence is a family matter and accept it as part of domestic life, then it follows there is no real will or enthusiasm to tackle the problem. Edwards (1986) found this to be the case in consequence of a number of interviews with police officers, who accepted domestic violence in the same way they accepted that adolescent youths would hang around on street corners. It only becomes a problem when it gets out of hand or when the violence is at such a level that it cannot be ignored.

Observing the Police Response

A considerable amount of previous research has focused upon the actual police response to domestic violence and the attitudes and approaches of the officers involved have been inferred from the findings of that research.

Chatterton (1983) noted a tendency amongst police officers not to enforce the criminal law in everyday practical policing situations. In many situations the legal victim of a criminal assault was not perceived to also be a moral victim and in such situations the offender would not be arrested. Particularly in incidents of domestic violence the moral blamelessness of the husband was viewed as against the moral blameworthiness of the wife

resulting in police officers taking a moral rather than a legal stance and accordingly failing to arrest for domestic violence. Generally if the victims of domestic assaults were considered to be weak or defenceless this would ensure a sympathetic response from police officers. Chatterton contested that police under enforce certain laws, but jealously guard the discretion which that implies. He noticed a reluctance to arrest in domestic cases, on the assumption that a subsequent withdrawal by the complainant would undo all the work undertaken by officers. This problem was highlighted by Edwards (1989) quoting comments made by police officers during a study of the police response to domestic violence in London and Kent:-

"There is a lot of work and you take statements, make a pocket book entry, nick someone, then there's the worry of everything being tickety boo for court, that takes about 16 hours; only for the husband or wife to say thanks but no thanks. You think all that ---- hard work is going out the window..." (Edwards, 1989 p.103).

The only situation that was observed to result in an arrest was where the violence continued after the arrival of the police and the violent partner became argumentative and threatening towards the police officers present. Reiner (1985) found that domestic disputes were the type of incident regarded as "rubbish", because the officers involved felt they were performing a social role rather than carrying out a policing function. Whilst most officers accepted dealing with domestic violence as part of their role, their personal feelings were of a reluctance to become involved and a certain amount of ambiguity about what was required of them.

Reiner believed that the police culture is both a reflection of and a means to perpetrate the power differences that exist within the social structure it is charged with policing. A police

officer 'is a mediator for the relations of power in a society'. The prevalence of sexist attitudes within the police force is seen to influence the recruitment and promotion prospects of women within the police and in more general terms, policing strategies involving women. Patriarchal attitudes remain unchallenged because of a relatively low proportion of female police officers, particularly those of senior rank. It is not just individual male attitudes but the organisation itself that appears to foster patriarchy within the police, to the extent that police work is considered "mens' work", characterised by drinking as a test of manhood and physical courage. This is highlighted by the fact that it was only during the latter part of this research that a woman police officer finally reached the rank of Chief Constable in a British Police Force.

Evidence from the research of Edwards (1989) and Homant & Kennedy (1985) tends to indicate that early intervention is an effective means to stop or reduce the amount of domestic violence against women, but very often the victim does not report the violence until it has become established. It is then much more difficult to deal with and obviously the quality of the intervention and subsequent support given will dictate whether women will report such matters in future. This is an area where much criticism has been levelled at the police who feel at times unable to become involved in minor instances of domestic violence, choosing to regard such assaults as civil matters whose remedy lies in the civil courts and not within the criminal justice system. The whole concept of police officers mediating rather than directly intervening in domestic violence is the subject of much debate throughout this research as it is outlined in considerable detail in much of the previous research. (Edwards 1986, Bourlet 1988, Smith 1989).

An apparently simple solution to the problem of domestic violence was put forward by some research notably Edwards (1986 & 1989), Horley (1988) recommending that the discretion allowed police officers whether to actually perform an arrest in cases of domestic violence should be removed. If police officers arrested all offenders for domestic violence then this early intervention would be the answer to the problem of domestic violence (Buel 1988). The rationale behind mandatory arrest is that it removes the offender from the victim and sends the appropriate signals, to not just the offender but to society as a whole that domestic violence is being viewed seriously and attempts made to deal with it in a decisive way. Above all, the actual physical arrest of an offender serves as a deterrent to that person and would seek to deter others also from committing such violence (Sherman & Berk 1984). Unfortunately this argument viewed from a legal, organisational standpoint is much more complex and as a concept is unacceptable for a police service operating within a liberal democracy.

Mandatory Arrest

This policy of mandatory arrest was considered in a consultation report on the police and justice system response to domestic violence which was submitted to the Department of the Solicitor General of Canada (Canadian Research Institute for Law and the Family - 1993). The report considered such an approach might inhibit the development of long term solutions to the problem and also remove all discretion and decision making to the courts, who are unable to effectively and expediently deal with the problem of domestic violence. Further it was considered this policy was inconsistent with the philosophy of community policing which prefers long term solutions being proffered rather than short term initiatives. Quite simply the problem of mandatory arrests was causing a 'log jam' in the courts and

thereby clogging up the criminal justice system. That particular research highlighted the need for improved awareness and training for members of the various agencies that operate within the criminal justice system of the extent of the problem of domestic violence. It also revealed a lack of understanding and knowledge of their exact roles with regard to such cases.

Those who believe a policy of mandatory arrest by the police will to some extent solve the problem appear to have little if any knowledge of the workings of the criminal justice system in Britain. A more enlightened approach would favour a policy which encourages but does not enforce arrest in every case (Dunford 1989). Such a policy has the support of the police by allowing them some discretion in whether to arrest or not and also seeks to take account of the victims wishes in such matters. In any case in Britain a policy of mandatory arrest whether it is preferred by a Chief Officer of Police or a senior official at the Home Office does not have the weight of law behind it and the legality of arrests within such policies has been challenged (English 1990). There is evidence also that even when offenders have been arrested the victims either withdraw their complaint or request no further action be taken for fear of reprisal.

Certain advances have been made by the police particularly in response to Home Office Circular 60/1990 which not only reminded police officers of the statutory powers available to them to deal with instances of domestic violence, but also required Chief Constables to develop a specific policy statement and a strategy to deal with domestic violence. The overall message of the circular moved police officers away from mediation towards positive

action (arrest) and to support victims of domestic violence, particularly commending the establishing of dedicated Domestic Violence Units (DVUs) within police stations.

Domestic Violence Units

If a policy of mandatory arrest was not the answer to the problem then many considered that establishing DVUs would provide the solution. The researcher was able to spend time at the two most well known DVUs in the country at Tottenham and South Shields. At the time this research commenced DVUs were in the process of being established and there was no ready source of previous research available to me. The situation has since progressed with research into the DVU at South Shields and in the Metropolitan Police area having been subsequently published, (Walker & McNicol, 1994 and Morley & Mullender, 1994).

With regard to the operation of DVUs in the Metropolitan Police area, the officers attached to those units tended to be marginalised from operational policing whilst not always adequately carrying out their supportive roles to victims with regard to counselling and referring to relevant agencies. In any case the units were normally only open during office hours so that victims were very often confronted merely with an answering machine.

When women ring to report an incident of violence the desk officers insist on transferring them to the domestic violence unit. Frequently the officers are not in, so the client fails to get any service at all. Most domestic violence units are staffed by one or two officers only. This means that any woman calling the unit will invariably receive an answer phone message requesting her to leave her name and number so that an officer can get back to her. This is useless to women who have no home phone or who are staying in bed and breakfast or other temporary accommodation, who feel unable to give a refuge number or who are fearful that their abuser may intercept a call intended for them (Morley & Mullender 1994 p.21 - 2)).

The evaluation of the South Shields DVU viewed it as part of an overall strategy to raise the awareness of domestic violence within the community whilst through inter-agency cooperation, providing a better service to victims of domestic violence. It concluded that the DVU provided only a partial improvement in the service to victims of domestic violence, primarily because of a lack of commitment and meaningful communication from those to whom the DVU depended upon for support. (Walker & McNicol 1994).

No matter how effective any one agency or any single initiative may appear to be, the problem of domestic violence is a complex problem to which there is not a single simple solution and for which no individual agency can claim to have all the answers. Domestic Violence Units are to be viewed as one amongst a number of responses that can be effective in tackling the consequences of domestic violence, although their preventative value is questionable.

Seeking to Provide the Answer

A number of successful initiatives have been well documented but are particularly centred around the behaviour of offenders.

i Duluth, Minnesota, USA

The Duluth Domestic Abuse Initiative Intervention Project (DAIP) encapsulates a strategy that seeks to reduce violence that men commit towards their partners through tough arrest policies coupled with educational programmes. This initiative which began in 1980, linked a policy of arrest with effective training but ran into some difficulty with officers choosing to use their discretion whether or not to arrest offenders. This was remedied by the issuing of guidelines which directed that, where police officers used their discretion not to arrest they were directed to submit written reports to justify the action taken. The success of the positive arrest policy resulted ultimately in more arrests being made, more offenders appearing at court and

pleading guilty and consequently a reduction in the number of assaults reported.

The initiative's success was due not only to an improved police response but also to an improvement in the prosecution process, which outlined the sentences that offenders were likely to receive in consequence of a court appearance:

- * Imprisonment.
- * Suspended prison sentence.
- * Deferred prison sentence.
- * Probation Order.

Apart from straightforward imprisonment the other sentences have a requirement to undergo counselling which reinforces the fact that the Duluth Project has been successful in removing the emphasis and the blame quite clearly from the victim to the offender.

ii **London, Ontario, Canada**

This initiative was established in the early 1970s and was innovative in seeking a more proactive response from the police as a result of a deliberate policy of training officers in the art of crisis intervention. In this instance the police were supported not so much by the courts but by trained counsellors from a family consultant service set up to work alongside police officers attending domestic incidents. By the mid 70s the initiative had proved such a success in dealing with domestic incidents that the family consultant service became a permanent civilian department within the police. Their role is to take over from police officers who initially attend domestic incidents, and offer counselling and information about the possibility of referral to other agencies. This is seen as one of the earliest examples of a multi agency initiative that has developed even to the extent of having an established coordinating committee.

iii **Minneapolis, USA**

The Minneapolis Experiment which was studied by Sherman and Berk (1984) looked at the individual effectiveness of three separate police responses to domestic violence; arrest, mediation, separation. Arrest was considered to produce the least reported amount of repeat offending however when this experiment was subsequently replicated in six different cities spread across America, the situation was different. Research findings were only available for five of the six projects, however in only two of the replicated experiments was there evidence to show that arrest produced a deterrent effect (Sherman 1992). Mandatory arrest was not seen to be so effective,

nevertheless rather than being obligatory this did seem to work as part of a coordinated response from the criminal justice system

iv **Other Initiatives**

Obviously the number of projects and experiments being established and evaluated is increasing but the above three classic research projects represent particular approaches that are worthy of particular mention. Other projects which do stand out are the Streatham Project in North London, the Domestic Violence Unit in South Tyneside and Washington Women in Need on Wearside. These projects have all come to the fore during the period of this research study and accordingly are individually considered in some depth later.

Seeking Help

Much of the research literature to varying degrees has examined the various groups to whom victims of domestic violence turn for help. The level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction felt by victims to the support or lack of support provided by various organisations and groups within society, does not appear to vary significantly:-

* **Family and Friends**

It might appear obvious but women who are victims of domestic violence usually turn to parents and relatives for help, particularly mothers and sisters (Dobash & Dobash 1979; Pahl 1985). The support offered usually amounts to a shoulder to cry on and temporary accommodation, but not long term support. Friends and particularly female friends were supportive and usually provided more help than other family members (Pahl 1985; Bowker 1983). Neighbours who were friends were very supportive, however neighbours who were not close friends were actually found to be apathetic, indifferent and even antagonistic. (Dobash & Dobash 1979).

* **General Practitioners**

The fact that most general practitioners are male and perceived very much as being middle class in outlook may account for the fact that many victims of domestic violence do not find them particularly helpful. Whilst most women simply want to talk to their doctors about the problems they are facing and feel they are being listened to (Dobash & Dobash 1979) the usual

response would be the prescription of tranquillizer or similar treatment for the symptoms rather than to establish the cause of the problem. (Walker 1979; Borkowski 1983). Sadly many women do end up having to rely on tranquillizer or similar medication.

* **Social Services**

Because of the increasingly interventionative role of Social Service into family life many women are reluctant to seek assistance from this agency, fearing their children may ultimately be taken into care (Maynard 1985). On the other hand many victims of domestic violence value the role and the help given by Social Services in referring them to a refuge and also helping them claim appropriate benefits, local authority housing, child care facilities etc (Pahl 1985). Of all the various agencies involved Social Services is the only one that is able to supply tangible support.

* **Housing Agencies**

Local Authorities do have a statutory responsibility to provide adequate housing for those assessed as vulnerable and victims of domestic violence come into this category usually only where children are involved. Regrettably the housing offered to such women by local authorities is usually to be found amongst the poorer housing stock contained within areas of high crime or problem housing estates. Obviously with the support of either a social worker or family doctor obtaining suitable housing may be less traumatic but this problem does ensure that many victims feel obliged to continue living with their violent partner. (Maguire 1992). The involvement and the effectiveness of refuges is an area that forms an important part of this research. Whilst there are too few refuges providing an insufficient number of places, and while they remain under-resourced and underfunded, victims' needs are not being met. This is a particular area that will be examined at considerable depth throughout my research study.

* **Legal Profession**

Solicitors are becoming increasingly aware and involved with victims of domestic violence with the result that most refuges have access to a solicitor, predominately female, who is both sympathetic to the needs of women in such situations and also well versed in the legal aspects surrounding the whole field of domestic violence. Although Pahl (1985) found solicitors to be helpful, this was restricted to those employed to assist particular women in domestic related proceedings. Where solicitors were involved in the criminal justice system, either as prosecutors or defenders, they were certainly found to be unhelpful and lacking both in interest and compassion. (Smith 1989).

* **Other Groups**

Comment has already been made in this overview of literature and research upon the role of the police in this matter. As this research unfolds they come in for considerable scrutiny as do other agencies and organisations such as the Probation Service, Relate, Marriage Guidance, Victim Support, the Church and so on. Apart from the police there is very little previous research material available in relation to the other groups mentioned which probably reflects both their inactivity and ineffectiveness in dealing with this particular problem.

Summary

There is now a considerable amount of literature and research material available, not just in relation to the police response to domestic violence but also reflecting the effectiveness or otherwise of the other statutory agencies and voluntary organisations involved. More recently this research has shown the willingness of various agencies and organisations to work together in a coordinated and multi-faceted approach in order to tackle the problem of domestic violence. None of the previous search is able to accurately reflect the true extent of the problem and it is unlikely that any future research ever will, for the violence occurs in private. The offender is unlikely to report the matter and obviously the violence will only come to light if the victim decides to tell someone. In most cases it is difficult for women to seek help in the first place, only to find that the response of the various agencies involved is woefully inadequate. Women who are victims of domestic violence and seek help, do so not really expecting much in the first place - they are in one way not disappointed because they expect very little and often receive no help at all.

As the gatekeepers to the criminal justice system the police are felt to be only a phone call away when help is needed. The police response over the years has been unacceptable as there has been a consistent failure to protect women even when subject to violence at a

serious level. The importance of a clear policy by the police on domestic violence has been evident for a number of years but only became a reality when the Home Office took action to advise and direct Chief Officers. There is ample research to support the case for a positive arrest policy (Sherman and Berk 1984 et al) and while this needs to be as part of a coordinated response to tackle domestic violence, its success is very much short term if considered in isolation or as the only solution to the problem. Research by Gamache, Edelson and Schock (1988) produced guidelines for a positive intervention policy, highlighting the fact that intervention must be seen as a positive step by the police to end the violence by supporting and protecting the victim, while at the same time imposing sanctions against the violent partner, including the prospect of loss of liberty. Whilst other research would endorse those findings, the one recommendation which underpins these guidelines is that intervention must be coordinated. This simply means that the police alone cannot be effective in tackling domestic violence if their intervention is not part of a coordinated "multi agency" approach, for the researcher's theoretical position supports structuralism and in particular a functionalist approach in line with Durkheim.

Examples of best practice, particularly from North America and Canada, that have been well documented, point to the need for key individuals from a variety of statutory agencies and voluntary organisations to coordinate their approach and tackle the problem together.

A multi agency or partnership approach gets results by way of a team effort rather than one or two "stars" doing their own thing in isolation to each other. The following conclusions may be drawn from a review of the literature and research:-

- * There is great difficulty in establishing the extent of the problem of domestic violence due to a large degree to the inadequacy of the way in which police have traditionally recorded such matters.
- * Police response to domestic violence has been inadequate and failed to help its victims.
- * A policy of intervention in place of mediation is expected from the police now.
- * There appears considerable difficulty in translating what is regarded as policy by Chief Officers into working practices of operational police officers.
- * The police response needs to be part of a coordinated response of all those having an interest in dealing with domestic violence.
- * The failure of legislation and the criminal justice system in general to support victims of domestic violence appears to mirror the general apathy that exists within society as a whole to deal with domestic violence as a social rather than a private matter. ;
- * Whilst the literature has identified the problem and some research has promulgated solutions there is a cost involved. Unless society is willing to direct adequate funding and resources to deal with domestic violence the problem will remain largely unresolved.

Having reviewed the literature and previous research a number of gaps were evident, which it was considered this research could well address. :-

- * Apart from Bourlet (1988) there was no apparent evidence to indicate the effectiveness of police policy and, in particular, whether policy implemented by senior officers would be effective if police officers continued to apply individual discretion when dealing with domestic violence incidents.
- * Whilst there was considerable information supporting the argument for mandatory arrest there did not appear to be any information outlining the benefits of dealing with domestic violence outside the criminal judicial system. In particular there seemed to be some merit in considering whether some of the less serious incidents of domestic violence could be best dealt with by way of a caution. The Streatham Project was subsequently to provide the vehicle for such an analysis to be undertaken.

- * At the time this research commenced multi agency cooperation and initiatives to tackle crime related problems were very much in their infancy. This was the very reason for this research in the first place and obviously was the one gap in the review of previous research and literature that needed to be filled.
- * During the course of time those gaps, which were initially apparent, have to a large extent been filled, not just by this research, but by other research projects and initiatives that have developed over the ensuing years and whose findings have been reported upon and evaluated by this research.

Chapter 4

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE:

RECORDING AND ANALYSING THE PROBLEM IN NORTHUMBRIA POLICE

The Setting

As a serving officer in the Northumbria Police, it was considered that an obvious starting point for this research would be in the home force, where the manner in which incidents of domestic violence were recorded and investigated could be researched in some detail. Northumbria Police is the fifth largest of 43 Police Forces in England and Wales, covering the rural county of Northumberland and the Metropolitan county of Tyne and Wear. Almost 90 per cent of the area covered by the Force is rural whilst the remaining 10 percent (Tyne and Wear conurbation) houses around 85 percent of the total population of the Force. The two main cities, Newcastle upon Tyne and Sunderland, both have populations of around 300,000 whilst there are a further 10 towns with populations in excess of 35,000, making a total population of about 1½ million. The geographical boundaries of the Force are as follows; to the north is Scotland, to the east is the North Sea, (75 miles of coastline) to the south is the country of Durham and to the west lies Cumbria.

Viewing the social factors in general terms, regional unemployment exceeds the national average within the urban areas and is also very high within the rural areas. (Tyne and Wear 12 per cent, Northumberland 9 per cent). Traditional industries of ship building, coal mining and heavy engineering have all but gone, with the resulting unemployment being off set only by slight increases in leisure and service industries. Some new

manufacturing jobs have been established, most of which are relatively small in number, with the exception of the giant Nissan car plant at Washington.

The Force

Northumbria Police was established by amalgamation in 1974 and currently has an establishment of about 3,600 officers. Following a comprehensive review of the Force, considerable changes were made to the structure of the organisation, particularly at command level during 1993. The Force is now geographically divided into 15 individual territorial Area Commands, each one being autonomous and headed by a Superintendent (See Annex 6). The abolition of the Chief Superintendent rank, together with the dramatic reduction of senior ranks has produced a much leaner layer of management, completely removing the old style divisional tier of senior management which previously existed. The current level of 38 Superintendents and 52 Chief Inspectors represents a reduction of about 50 per cent in each rank since the restructuring took place.

This whole scale reorganisation occurred during the period of this research. However, as almost all of the research in Northumbria Police was conducted between 1989 and 1992, it has not had any real adverse effect upon the research, except that comparison between various Area Commands after 1994 became extremely difficult because of the change in boundaries in a number of instances. It would therefore be prudent at this point to outline the structure of the Force that was in existence during most of this research period and particularly as all the information and data gathered related to Divisions and Sub Divisions that are no longer in existence.

The Old Structure

Between 1974 and 1993 Northumbria Police was run on traditional lines of Chief Officers, Divisional Command, Sub Divisional Command and Support Services. The Force was made up of 6 separate geographical administrative divisions, the boundaries of which were generally co-terminus with the six individual local authorities within Northumbria Police area (See Annex 7). A Chief Superintendent was in command of each division with a deputy of Superintendent rank and administrative support. Generally the Chief Superintendent was responsible for the general policing of that division in addition to promulgating Force policy and establishing divisional policy on more local matters. The divisions were each divided into a number of sub divisions (22 in total) which were usually based upon a town, part of one of the cities or a rural area. Sub Divisions were commanded by a Superintendent with a Chief Inspector as deputy and the role of the Superintendent, in addition to the day to day running of the sub division, was to promulgate both Force and divisional policy whilst establishing sub divisional policy on more local issues.

The following list outlines the Divisions and Sub Divisions in Northumbria Police during this period; divisions were each allocated a unique letter for recording purposes and each sub division further identified in respect of their parent division.

i) **Divisions**

A	-	Northern Division
B	-	Newcastle Division
C	-	North Tyneside Division
D	-	Gateshead Division
E	-	South Tyneside Division
F	-	Sunderland Division

ii) **Sub Divisions**

A1	-	Morpeth
A2/3	-	Berwick/Alnwick
A4/5	-	Hexham/Prudhoe
A6	-	Ashington
B1	-	Newcastle Central
B2	-	Newcastle East
B3	-	Newcastle West
B4	-	Newburn
B5	-	Gosforth
C1	-	North Shields
C2	-	Whitley Bay
C3/4	-	Wallsend/Forest Hall
C5/6	-	Blyth/Cramlington
D1	-	Gateshead
D2	-	Felling
D3	-	Whickham
E1	-	South Shields
E2	-	Jarrow
F1	-	Sunderland Central
F2	-	Sunderland West
F3	-	Sunderland North
F4/5	-	Washington/Houghton-I-Spring

In order to outline the exact setting of each of these sub divisions geographically within the Northumbria Police area Figure 4(1) shows the rural sub divisions, located in Northumberland and Figure 4(2) shows the urban sub divisions located predominantly within Tyne and Wear.

Figure 4(1) The rural sub divisions within A or Northern Division (1989 - 1993)

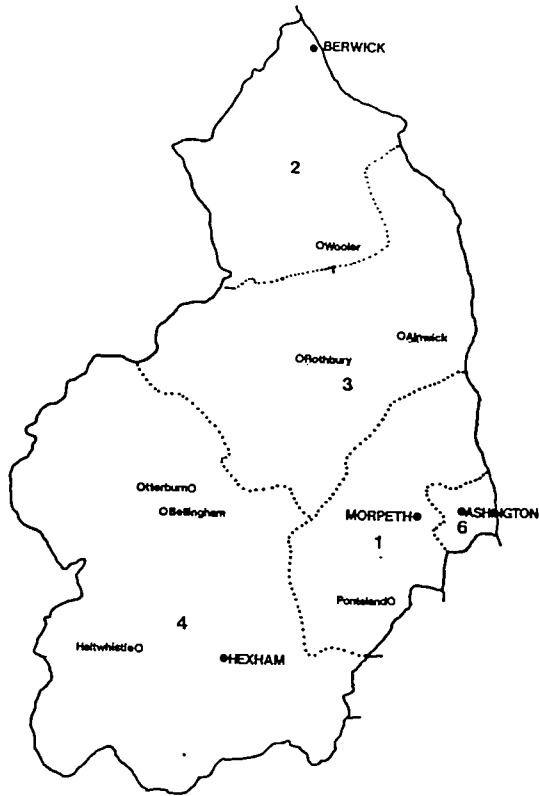
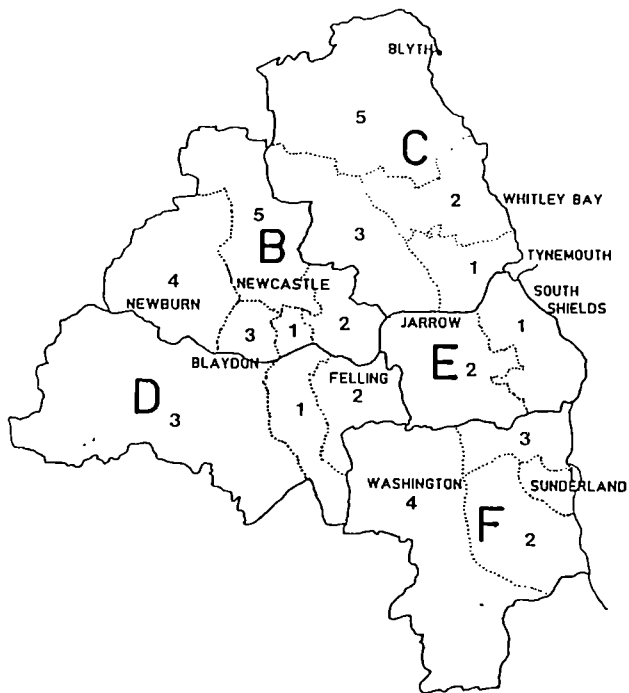


Figure 4(2) The urban sub divisions within B - F Divisions (1989 - 1993)



Computerisation: Records of Incidents

One of the most frequent criticisms levelled at the police is that they are not sufficiently concerned about domestic violence and do not at the outset always record such matters. Edwards (1986) believed that domestic violence was the biggest blind spot in official statistics, for when considering domestic violence, there appeared to be no single source of information that is able accurately to show the extent of the problem. Smith (1989) examined the manner in which Police Forces in England and Wales actually recorded reports of domestic violence. She found that such incidents were usually recorded on the 'station message pad', together with details of the officer dealing with the incident and the eventual outcome. Even if this system were strictly adhered to, it does present considerable difficulties in actually abstracting from manually recorded information, specific details relating to incidents of domestic violence.

Fortunately, since mid 1984, the system of recording and dealing with incoming calls requiring police attention in Northumbria has been centred upon three strategically located area control rooms. These replaced the traditional system where calls were dealt with by individual police stations and messages recorded manually on 'station message pads'.

All incoming calls from members of the public requiring police attention are channelled by the telephone operators into the Area Operations Room which covers that particular area. The staff working in these Area Operations Rooms (AORs) have responsibility for the deployment of police officers in response to emergency and other calls. These purpose built AORs replaced the out of date Force Control Room and the many individual communication rooms attached to each of the various police stations throughout the Force

area, as the purpose of the new AORs was, not just to update the communications network but, to standardise and improve the handling of all calls from members of the public. The three AORs are each manned around the clock and the staff have available a range of police resources from which they can direct the most appropriate response to any reported incident.

Incoming calls are entered into part of the Force Computer System dealing specially with the recording and logging of all incidents that require action and allocation of police resources. This command and control system ensures that details of all such calls are kept 'live' on the system for 28 days, after which time they are stored on disc for the purpose of retrieval at some subsequent date if required. It is therefore a relatively simple task to retrieve information about any given incident, for even a matter of years after the event has taken place it can now still be retrieved from archived computer discs.

Records of Domestic Violence Incidents

This system, to a large extent, overcomes the problems highlighted particularly by Smith (1989) in which officers wrote details of reported domestic violence incidents on 'station message pads'. These messages could be easily mislaid whether intentionally or accidentally and without doubt this criticism is justified, when such an archaic message recording system is employed. The computerised recording system is a considerable improvement upon traditional paper based manual recording systems but it has a further advantage concerning the retrieval of information stored. When the Northumbria Police computerised Incident Logging System was inaugurated a decision was made that all incidents recorded would be allocated specific code numbers for recording purposes once

they had been finally dealt with. Therefore incidents ranging from burglaries to road traffic accidents and even lost dogs were allocated their own final incident code number, which was appended to an incident record once it had been finalised. All incidents of a domestic violence nature were allocated the final incident code number '36', so that by simply typing in this code number, it is possible to view all incidents of a domestic violence nature that had occurred in the Northumbria Police area within the last 28 days. Beyond that period the information needs to be retrieved from hard discs stored within the Information Technology Department of the Force.

Access to the Force computer network, incident logging system and archive material is governed by the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1984. Being conscious of these restraints and being in a position to access the system, as a member of Northumbria Police, the researcher was able to study domestic violence incidents on a force wide basis or at particular towns or other locations throughout the Force area. It was even possible to pinpoint domestic violence incidents that had occurred on any one particular 'beat' anywhere in Northumbria. As each sub division had its own unique identifier (eg A1 - Morpeth, A2 Berwick/Alnwick etc) and all domestic violence incidents were allocated a final incident code number (36), it is a relatively simple task to specifically extract from the Force computer details of all domestic violence incidents recorded for any given sub division.

This aspect of the research was undertaken during the close of 1989 and the early part of the following year. The Information Technology Department of the Force were able to retrieve details of domestic incidents going back as far as 1986 from the archived hard disc

copies and as this research progressed other pieces of archived statistical information were retrieved by the Information Technology Department and this was also much appreciated, particularly in view of the complicated procedures for retrieving such information.

Yearly Comparisons

It ought to be pointed out at this stage that a wide definition was employed by the Force when referring to incidents of domestic violence, for the definition of such incidents extended beyond violence between matrimonial partners but included those incidents where the participants were boyfriend/girlfriend, 'common-law' husband/wife or close relatives living in the same house. A similarly wide definition was used of the term violence, which ranged from incidents of actual physical violence to damage, violent arguments, disorder and 'ordinary' household rows. By means of retrieval, already outlined, it was possible to establish details of the total number of recorded domestic incidents in Northumbria Police going back a number of years. Table 4(1) shows the actual number of recorded incidents of domestic violence between 1986 and 1989 together with the percentage increase per annum of such incidents.

Table 4(1) Domestic violence incidents recorded 1986 - 1989

Year	No of domestic incidents	Percentage increase on previous year
1986	16,766	-
1987	18,784	10.5
1988	20,373	8.0
1989	22,555	10.0

Having acquired this information, the next task was to establish the actual number of all reported incidents during those four years and establish whether this annual increase in reported domestic violence was reflected in the overall number of reported incidents. Table 4(2) shows the overall total number of incidents reported in Northumbria Police between 1986 and 1989 together with the percentage increase upon the previous year.

Table 4(2) Total number of incidents recorded 1986 - 1989

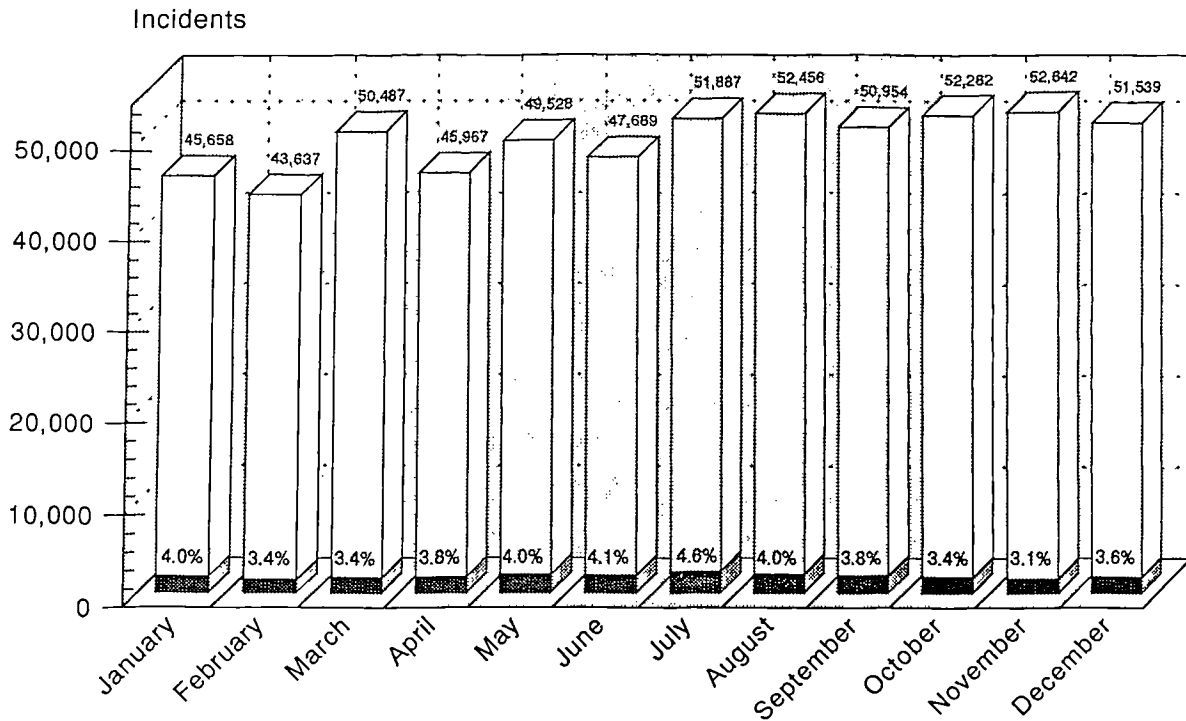
Year	Total number of incidents	Percentage increase on previous year
1986	501,752	-
1987	511,588	2.0
1988	518,727	1.4
1989	594,726	13.0

During this period there has been a steady increase in the number of reported domestic violence incidents, 8 - 10 per cent annually, with an overall increase of just over 25 per cent. The increase in the total number of all incidents reported was much lower and really only increased significantly in 1989, whilst the overall increase was again lower at 15 percent. At the outset this information revealed that whilst there was a gradual increase in the number of recorded incidents that police officers were dealing with, there was a substantial increase during this period in reported incidents of domestic violence. Nevertheless the total number of domestic violence incidents recorded in 1989, although at first sight quite significant at 22,555, only represented just under 4 per cent (3.8 per cent) of the total number of incidents reported. The average figure for the period 1986 - 1989 was 3.7 per cent and does not therefore represent a particularly high percentage in relation to incidents of general crime and disorder.

Domestic Violence in Northumbria in 1989

As a starting point it was considered necessary to look at all the incidents recorded during that year and then specifically at domestic violence incidents. The total number of incidents reported each month during 1989 is shown in Figure 4(3) which also shows the number of domestic incidents reported each month as a percentage of the overall total.

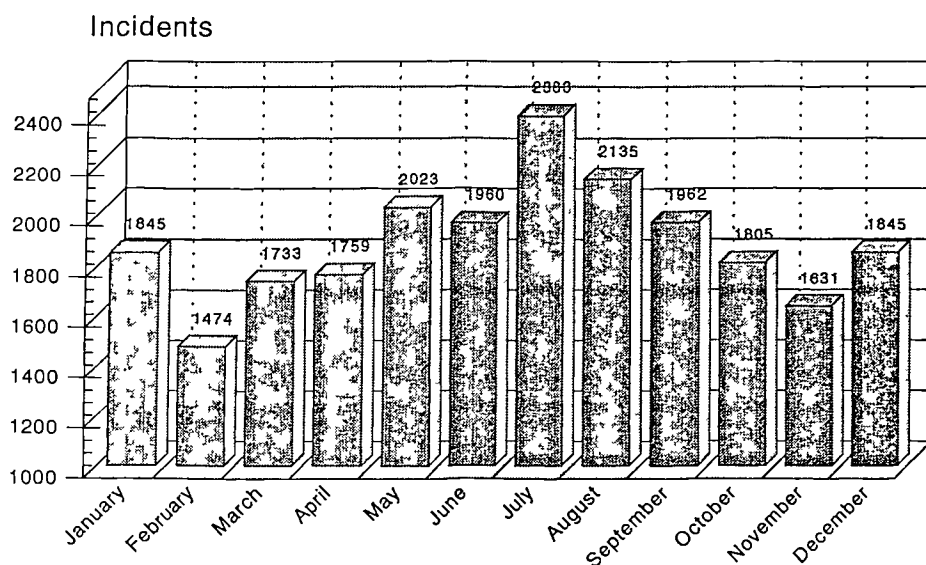
Figure 4(3) Total number of reported incidents per month (1989) also showing the numbers of domestic incidents



Whilst there was not a great deal of variation in the number of reported incidents each month averaging about 50,000, there appeared a much greater fluctuation in the level of reported incidents of domestic violence, particularly during the summer months. It was important therefore to look at domestic violence incidents and Figure 4(4) shows that from February towards a peak in July, there was a noticeable rise which then declined to a

similar low level in November. The festive months of January and December stand out as identical pillars on either side of this neatly defined pointed graph. One can attribute the relatively high numbers of such incidents for these two months to the disproportionately high number of domestic violence incidents recorded over Christmas and New Year. (On New Years' Day the incidence of domestic violence was over three times the average for a normal day).

Figure 4(4) Total number of domestic violence incidents per month (1989)

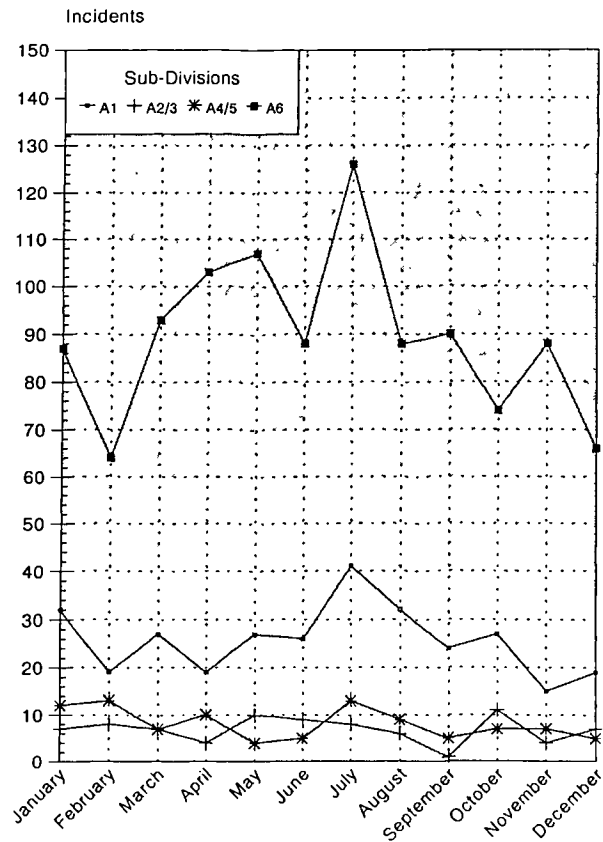


Domestic Violence Recorded in Divisions - Trends and Comparisons

Having viewed the total number of domestic violence incidents recorded on a monthly basis throughout 1989, this information was then translated from the previous bar chart into graphical form and a separate graph prepared for each of the six territorial divisions within the Force. However, instead of merely producing a composite graph for each division it

was considered it would be more accurate to assimilate this information by providing separate graphs for each of the individual sub divisions within the aforementioned graphs.

Figure 4(5) Total number of domestic violence incidents (1989) A or Northern Division

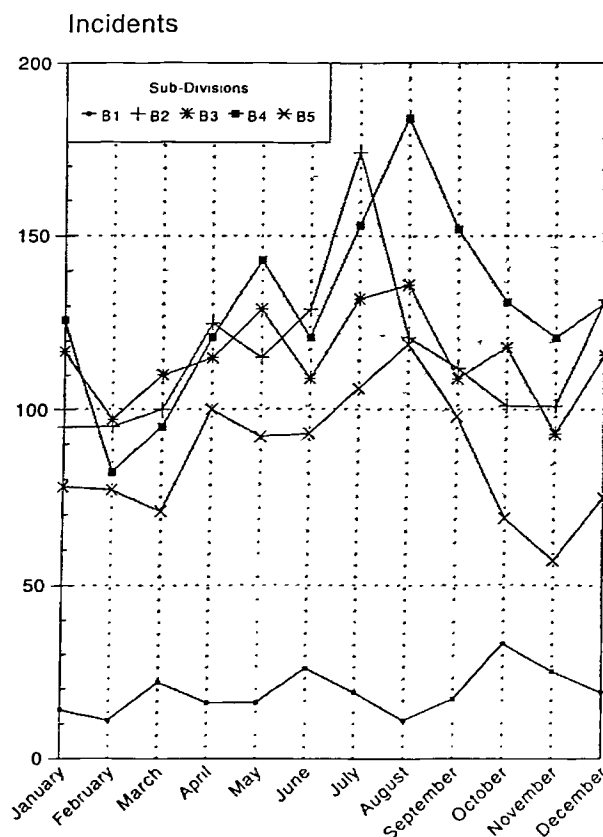


The researcher immediately encountered a problem with the rural Northern Division because of the low incidence of reported domestic violence compared to the urban areas within the Force. This was exacerbated by the fact that because of the vast geographical size of this division only emergency calls received on the 999 system were directed to the Area Operations Room during the period of my research. Whilst these calls were automatically recorded on the Force computerised incident logging system any incoming calls received at Berwick and Hexham which were not emergency calls were recorded manually on the traditional station message pads. This had to be checked manually but it

certainly brought home the considerable benefits of a computerised incident logging and recording system. In actual fact these rural stations have since been incorporated into the Force computerised system, but in any case the actual number of domestic violence incidents involved represents a very small number indeed.

There is a well defined pattern within the Northern Division of a peak during July which is more obvious in respect of the two busiest sub divisions, Ashington (A6) and Morpeth (A1), and less well defined in the 'quieter' sub divisions where the incidence of reported domestic violence is quite small. One would expect less domestic violence to be reported in the more rural areas where there is a greater sense of community and tradition and a general reluctance to involve outside agencies such as the police in matters that concern the family and are regarded as private.

Figure 4(6) Total number of domestic violence incidents (1989) B or Newcastle Division

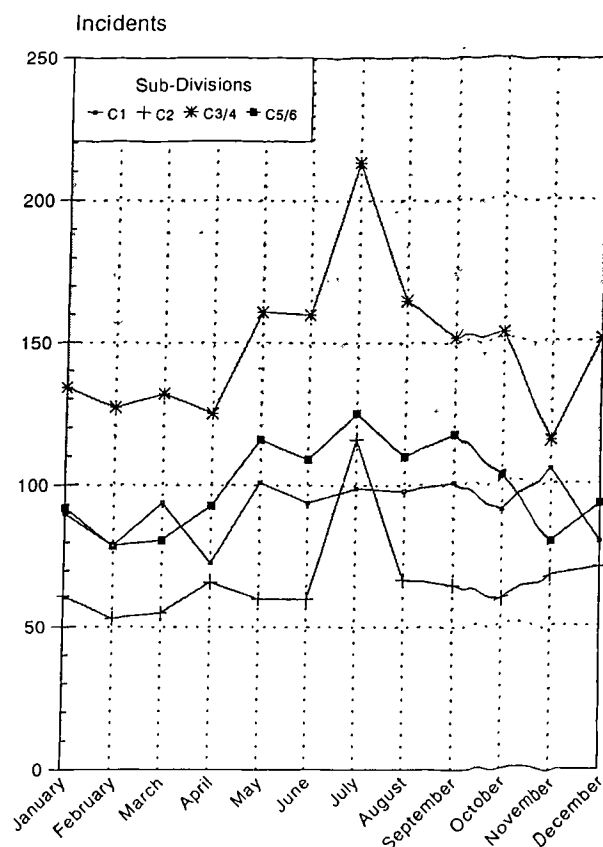


Newcastle Division was traditionally the busiest of the six divisions and accordingly had the largest number of police officers stationed there. Whilst at first sight Newcastle Central (B1) has very little incidence of reported domestic violence in comparison to the other sub divisions, it does have a relatively small residential population located there being predominantly a city centre police area. Nevertheless a considerable amount of violence does occur on the streets and in the large number of city centre pubs and night clubs located there and a proportion of this violence can be viewed as domestic by nature. However, as the majority of violent incidents to which officers respond are initially recorded as disturbances or disorder linked with licensed premises these are not recorded as domestic violence incidents even though members of families either contribute towards or are caught up in the violence.

The rest of Newcastle Division clearly illustrates the recognised peak in mid summer (July/August) whilst also busy during the festive season. As with the Northern Division the level of reported domestic violence is quite high in May but then drops in June prior to reaching a peak in July and August. It is difficult to explain the increase of such incidents in May and subsequent decrease during the following month, except that there are usually two bank holiday weekends in May when children are away from school and therefore more opportunities for families to spend more time together with the likelihood of increased tension and problems.

Figure 4(7) Total number of domestic violence incidents (1989) C or North Tyneside

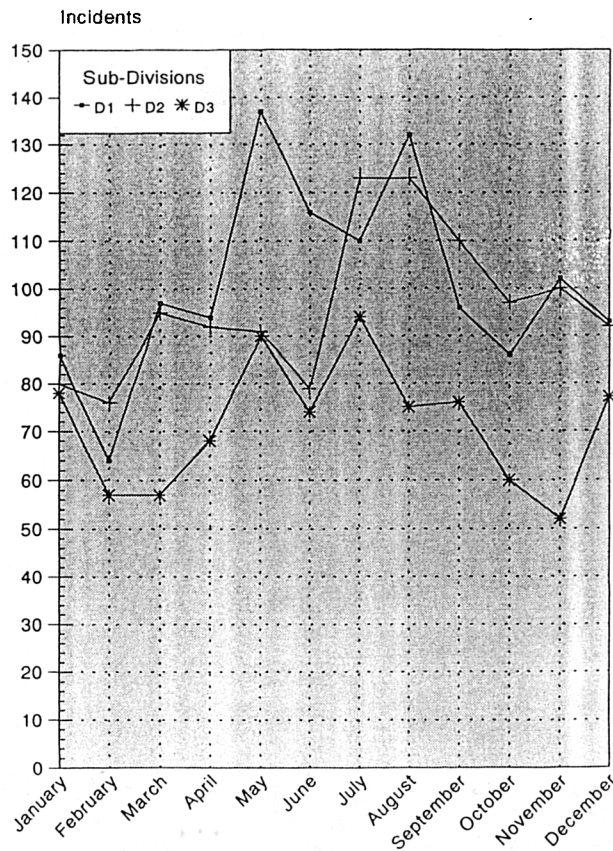
Division



Once again the clearly defined peak is evident during July and in fact more pronounced than in the previous divisions. It is interesting to note that North Shields Sub Division (C1) has a fairly static level of reported domestic violence throughout the summer and to a large extent throughout the year. Located within North Shields is the infamous Meadowell Estate, which became the scene of serious rioting in the late summer of 1991. The location of Meadowell and other problem developments within North Shields may well distort the figures somewhat because of the constant high incidence of disorder, petty crime and domestic violence prevalent there. There are no real peaks and troughs, just a continual high level of incidents.

Figure 4(8) Total number of domestic violence incidents (1989)

D or Gateshead Division



Gateshead Division is unusual in that the pattern of recorded incidents of domestic violence differs in each of the three sub divisions. In Gateshead (D1) the peak is certainly in May and to a lesser extent in August, these increases being quite pronounced. Domestic violence in Felling (D2) peaks significantly in July and August whilst Whickham (D3) is more akin to the situation in Gateshead, albeit to a lesser extent and with July as the busiest month. The disparity may well lie in the make up of the various sub division:- Gateshead is a busy town with a mixture of private and local authority housing; Felling is made up predominantly of large council estates and older type rented accommodation with no significant town centre area, whilst Whickham is predominantly rural.

Figure 4(9) Total number of domestic violence incidents (1989) E or South Tyneside

Division



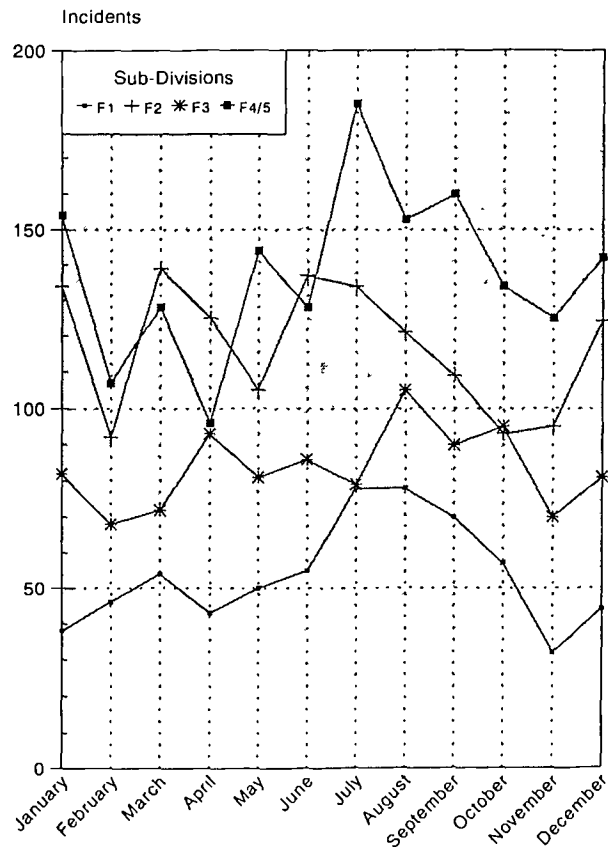
South Tyneside Division was the smallest of the six divisions and had only two sub divisions, South Shields (E1) and Jarrow (E2). In South Shields domestic violence incidents peaked sharply in May and then gradually declined until December with a definite reduction in July and August. On the other hand in Jarrow there was a steady uniform rise from April to July and then quite a decrease to August before another slight rise in the late autumn, at the time of the mid term school holidays.

A Domestic Violence Unit had at that time been established at South Shields and was very active during the summer months. Upon meeting the officers attached to the Unit at that time, they firmly believed that this apparent reduction at the height of summer was

attributable to their presence and influence as it had just recently been set up. The Domestic Violence Unit is however considered in more depth later.

Figure 4(10) Total number of domestic violence incidents (1989) F or Sunderland

Division



The final division to be considered, Sunderland, provided results that were to some extent erratic. The two sub divisions with the highest number of residential properties, Sunderland West (F2) and Washington (F4/5) provided results that showed almost alternate peaks and troughs on a monthly basis, at least for the first half of the year. Nevertheless the tendency was for the numbers of recorded domestic violence incidents to peak during the early part of the summer months and then tail off gradually.

Level of Domestic Violence Forcewide

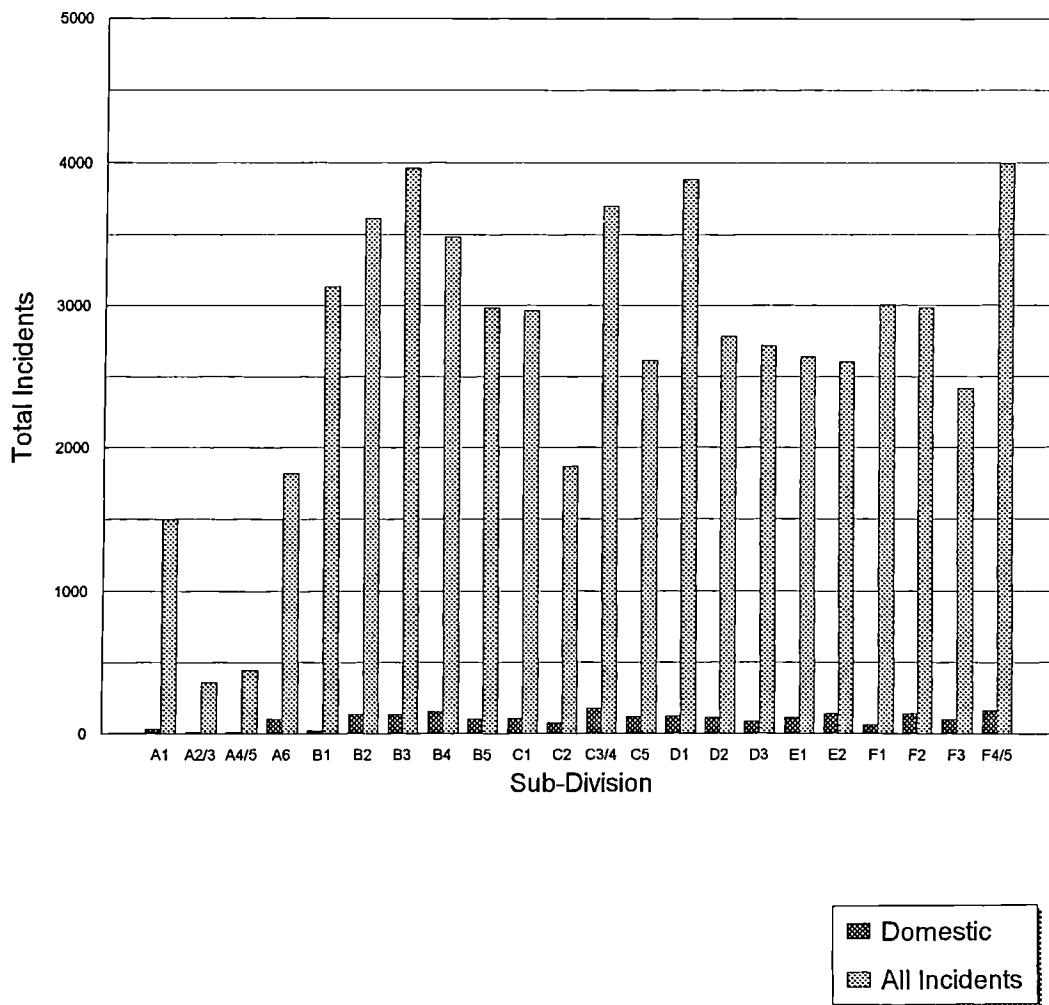
By examining the information contained within these graphs it is evident that the numbers of domestic violence incidents reported varies considerably from division to division and indeed from sub division to sub division. Generally the number of such incidents is in direct proportion to the actual number of overall incidents recorded; the busiest sub divisions, (Washington/Houghton, Gateshead, Newcastle West, Wallsend/Forest Hall) also have the highest levels of reported domestic violence. There are however some noticeable variations, for example Newcastle Central which regularly has one of the highest levels of reported crime and is one of the busiest sub divisions in the Force, yet it has a relatively small incidence of domestic violence reported. In the majority of sub divisions the peak period for domestic violence is in the summer months, particularly July and August, whilst in others this peak period is secondary to a preceding surge during the month of May.

In order to consider this information more closely an examination was made of the incidence of reported domestic violence for each sub division in relation to the overall number of incidents reported to see whether any common factors emerged or other trends stood out. Figure 4(11) outlines the total number of recorded incidents in each of the 22 Sub Divisions, with the number of domestic incidents recorded alongside.

Reference has already been made to the under reporting in part of the Northern Division where only emergency (999) calls were directed to the Area Operations Room and thus recorded on the Force computer system. Whilst the sub divisions involved are relatively quiet and no significant number of domestic violence incidents is involved here, it does

present a small black spot, even when relying upon information recorded on a sophisticated computerised system.

Figure 4(11) Total number of incidents per sub division also showing the total number of domestic violence incidents (1989)



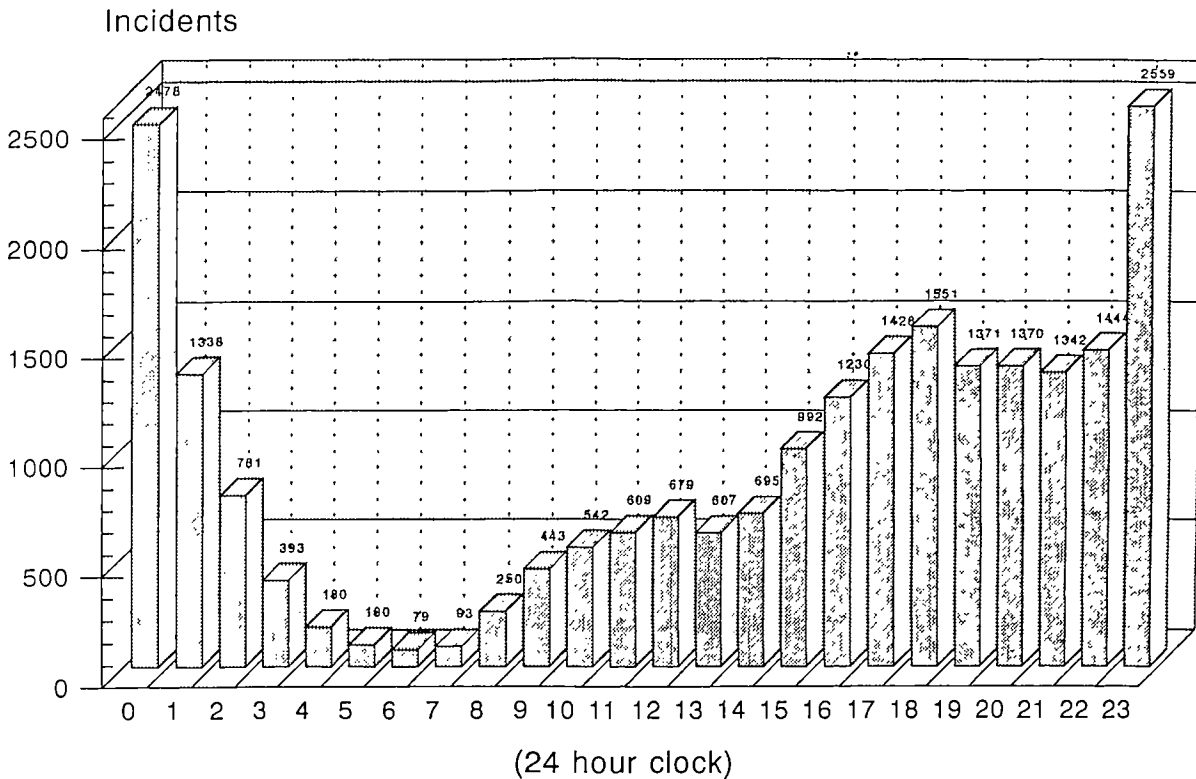
Nevertheless out of a total number of 594,726 reported incidents Force Wide only 22,555 (3.8 per cent) can be regarded as domestic violence incidents. There is some variance however as the proportion of domestic violence incidents; in Newcastle Central (B1) it is

very low (0.8 per cent), whilst the proportion of those recorded at Ashington (A6) is quite high (5.9 per cent). There is little much else that can be said about Newcastle Central but the figure for Ashington is worth looking at. Ashington is a heavily populated traditional mining area located within a rural setting. It is generally regarded by the police officers working there as an area of heavy drinking where traditional male values are very much the norm and where there is a relatively high incident of disorder generally. In view of this the researcher spent some time at Ashington and carried out supplementary research at the Womens' Refuge in Ashington, however those findings are discussed at length later in the thesis.

Influence of Alcohol

In a number of studies, alcohol abuse has been connected with domestic violence. Gelles (1974) found that violence was accompanied by drinking in about half the families studied, while Gayford (1975) and Pahl (1985) found that excessive drinking was evident in the husbands who actually committed violence. In relation to this research it was important to establish and consider the link between alcohol consumption and domestic violence. It was decided to look closely at the numbers of domestic violence incidents that were reported at the specific times when it appeared from the researcher's experience as a police officer that alcohol related offences of disorder were likely to occur. It was possible to identify from this research data the times at which domestic violence incidents actually occurred and these were incorporated within Figure 4(12).

Figure 4(12) Times of domestic violence incidents (1989)



The busiest period without question is between 11.00 pm and 1.00 am and, as this period coincides with the end of normal licensing hours, it is extremely difficult to avoid a strong association between domestic violence and drinking. Although not as pronounced as the peak that occurs at the end of permitted drinking hours, the other two high spots are at midday (12 noon - 1.00 pm) and teatime (around 6 pm). Whilst it is difficult to present any reasonable explanation for these high spots, these periods represent the times of the day when families would usually come together for meals and where friction is therefore more likely to occur. Figure 4(12) clearly shows the high level of reported domestic incidents at certain times of the day, especially in the late evening, but, above all, it vividly reveals that domestic violence is a phenomenon that takes place 24 hours a day. There is no time of the day that is clear of domestic incidents. As far as police resources are concerned, the

highest number of domestic incidents occur between 11.00 pm and 1.00 am when resources are particularly stretched dealing with disorder and alcohol related offences.

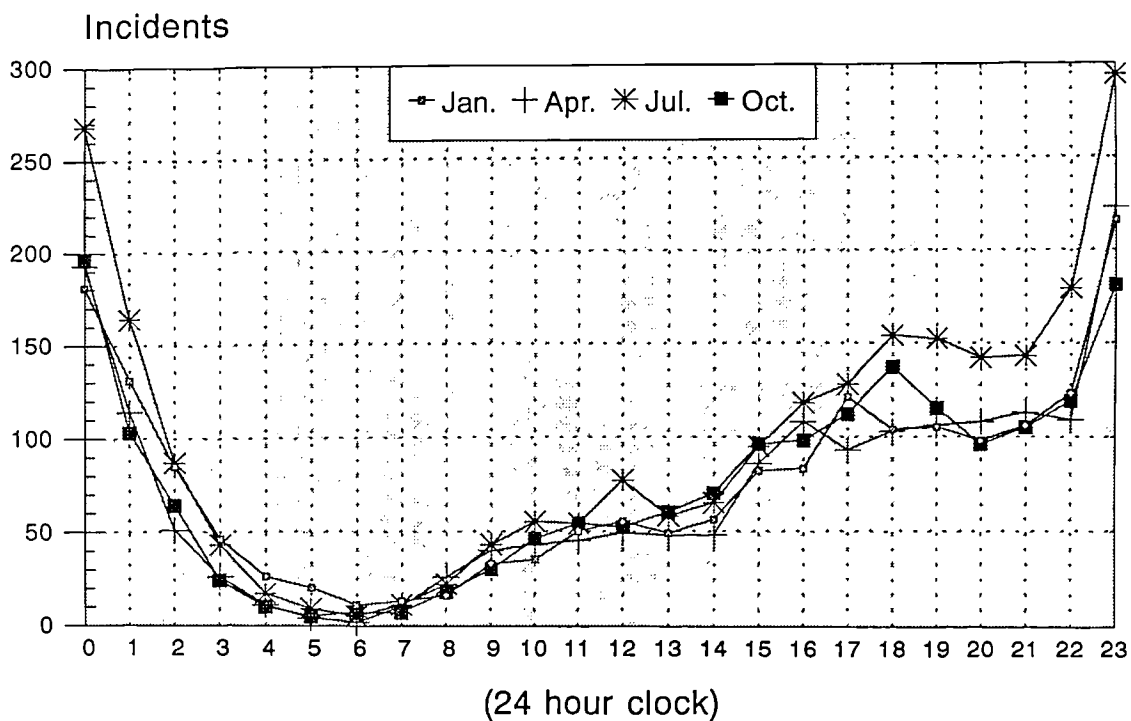
Being able to draw upon his considerable experience as a police officer, the researcher had little doubt that the period where public disorder and actual or even potential violence is at its height occurs around 11 pm at night. Because of the number of clubs and licensed premises that stay open until the early hours the potential for violent disorder extends well beyond midnight, nevertheless at around 11 pm at night one can expect some disorder on any night of the week and adequate police resources need to be available and deployed accordingly. Unfortunately calls for police assistance do not arrive at a regular steady pace but can be quite erratic. The experience of the researcher has been, having worked both in Newcastle and Sunderland city centres, that it is not uncommon for around a dozen calls all to be received almost simultaneously, reporting various outbreaks of violence in licensed premises, street corners, bus stations and taxi queues etc and even in residential properties. Unfortunately this is always the time when a significantly large number of domestic violence incidents occur or are reported. However, the danger of insider research is to overtly rely upon memory and anecdotal evidence, for unless such matters can be corroborated by accurate statistical information, it is of little academic value.

Whilst it may appear to be stating the obvious the information presented in Figure 4(12) demonstrates a clear link between domestic violence and drink. There is however, a need to pursue this avenue in more depth and accordingly more localised detailed research was subsequently carried out which is presented in a later chapter.

Seasonal variations

Does the weather have any effect upon the reporting of domestic violence or more accurately are there seasonal variations? Is it more prevalent during the long winter evenings when families are more likely to stay at home or is it more prevalent during those long warm summer evenings when there is a tendency to be out more and possibly drink more? Four separate months during 1989 were selected as a source of study of possible seasonal variations: Figure 4(13) is a graph which shows during a 24 hour period the number of domestic incidents reported in January (winter), April (spring), July (summer) and October (autumn). Each of the selected months is represented by a distinguishing line on the graph.

Figure 4(13) Times of domestic violence incidents - seasonal variations



Upon reflection, January was probably not the best winter month to choose for this comparison in view of the high number of domestic violence incidents that are actually reported on New Years Day. It does not appear, however, to have made a great deal of difference to the overall results. Considering the times at which domestic violence incidents are reported, Figure 4(13) shows there is little real variation between the selected months, although July is certainly the busiest with a marked increase in such reported incidents during the early evening, particularly between 6 pm and 9 pm. The increase in the number of incidents in the early evening generally during the warm summer months is quite noticeable. This observation was subsequently supported by an item in a local newspaper concerning the following comment passed by a worker at a women's refuge in Washington:-

January, June and July are the Refuge's busiest times when family pressures become too much and violence erupts

(Sunderland Echo - 6.1.92)

Daily Variations

Police resources are geared towards an increase in violence leading up to the weekend, with the result that additional officers perform duty on Friday and Saturday nights. One would therefore expect more incidents of domestic violence to occur at weekends than during the week. Having established that the total annual number of reported domestic incidents occurring on weekdays throughout the Force area was 2,500, the corresponding figure was between 3,000 and 4,000 for such incidents occurring daily at weekends. It is however difficult to say which is the busiest day of the week because the highest number of domestic incidents occur between 11.00 pm and 1.00 am so that an incident that may have originated late on a particular night might not come to the notice of the police until the very early

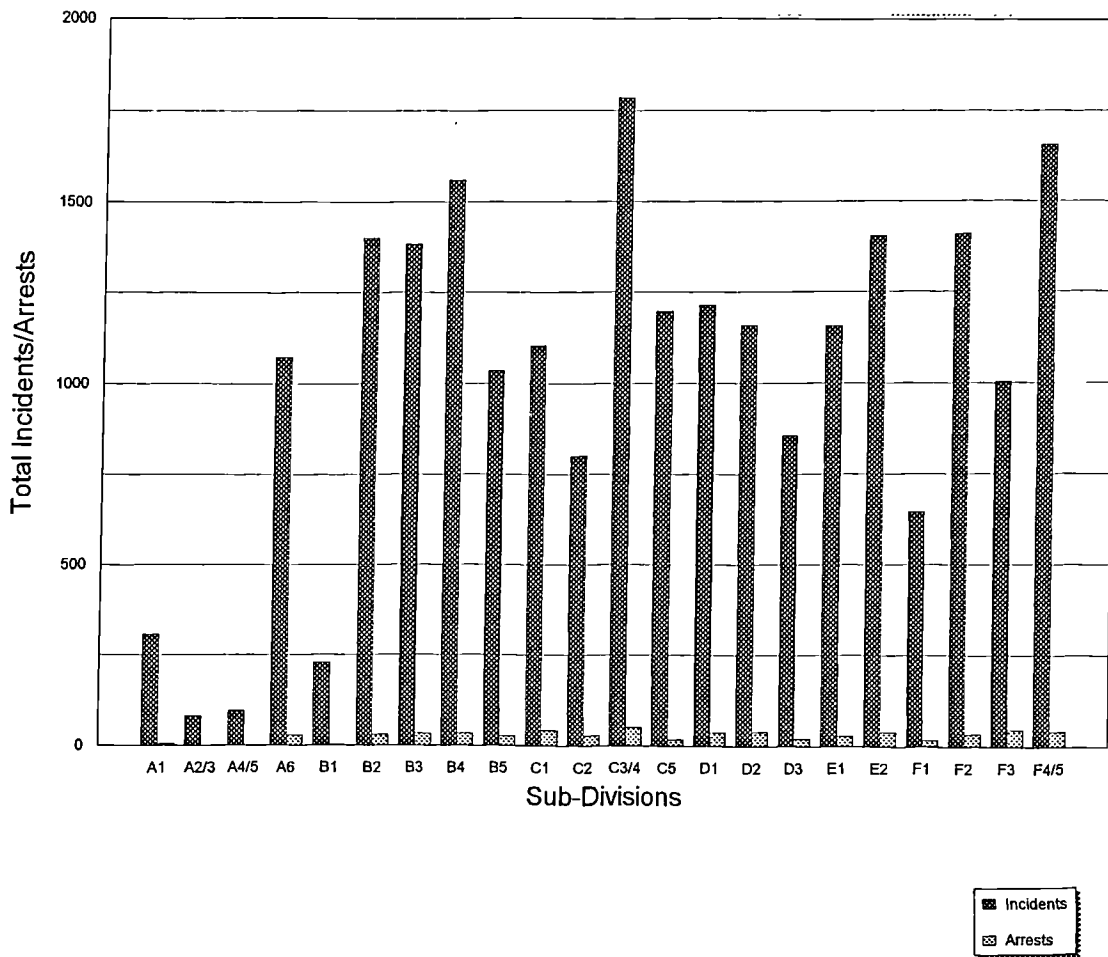
hours of the following morning. Such an incident for example would be shown as having occurred on a Sunday when in actual fact it would be regarded by the participants as having occurred on a Saturday night. This does tend to distort the overall picture, nevertheless more domestic violence incidents do occur at weekends at a time when police resources are stretched dealing with increased levels of violence and disorder anyway.

Arrest for Domestic Violence

In her book "Love and Pain", Sandra Horley (1988) affirms that it is the job of the Police to enforce law and order and to protect the public. She considered that even though a criminal offence had been committed in cases of domestic violence, the police seldom arrest the violent man concerned and when they do it is usually for breach of the peace or other similar offences. Edwards (1986) claimed that the police have the discretion to over enforce certain laws or under enforce them which is usually the case in incidents of domestic violence. Smith (1989) believed that the overwhelming evidence from research suggested that even where police officers intervened in domestic violence incidents, they failed to arrest the offender, even where the evidence was clear.

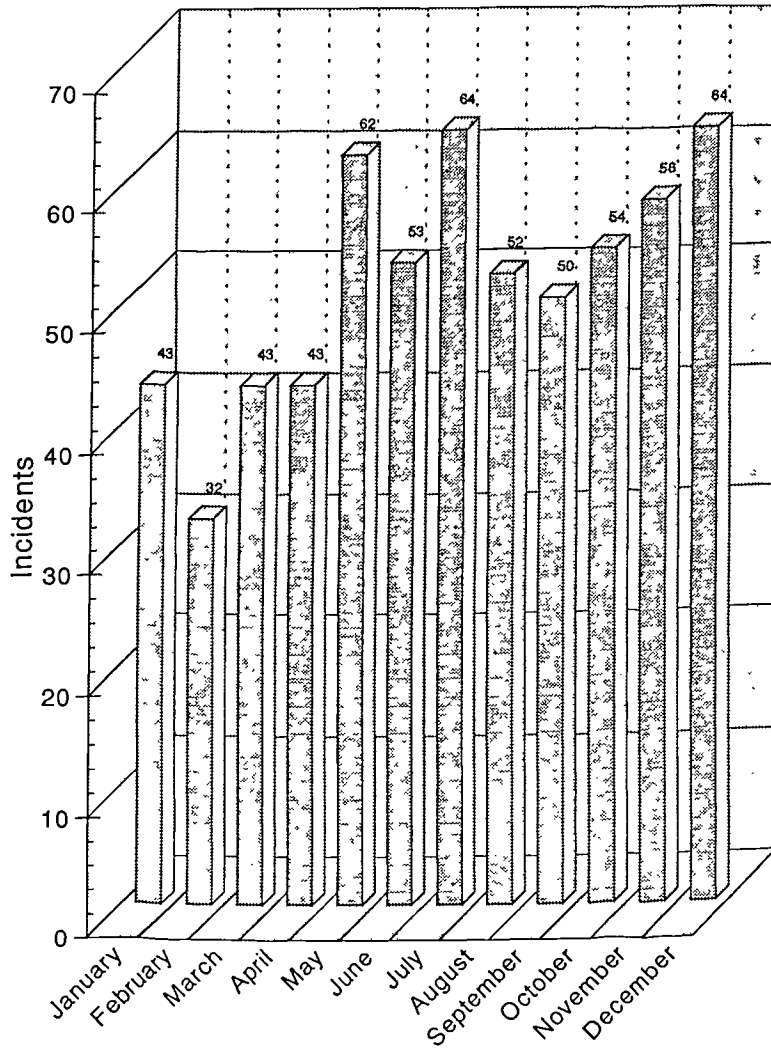
Figure 4(14) refers to 22,555 domestic violence incidents recorded in 1989. It shows that a total of 618 arrests had been made which represented an arrest rate of just under 3 per cent (2.8 per cent).

Figure 4(14) Total number of domestic violence incidents per Sub Division showing the proportion of arrests



At first sight an arrest rate of just under 3 per cent for domestic incidents would appear low, but it must be borne in mind that at domestic incidents were considered and not simply incidents of violence. Many of the domestic incidents reported are of a relatively minor nature, often no more than a stand up row between family members, where no actual assault has occurred and where arrest, therefore, would be inappropriate. Nevertheless, in what is a readily detectable offence, with the offender usually still present upon arrival of the police, it is rather difficult to justify such a poor arrest rate.

Figure 4(15) Monthly totals - Arrests for domestic violence (1989)

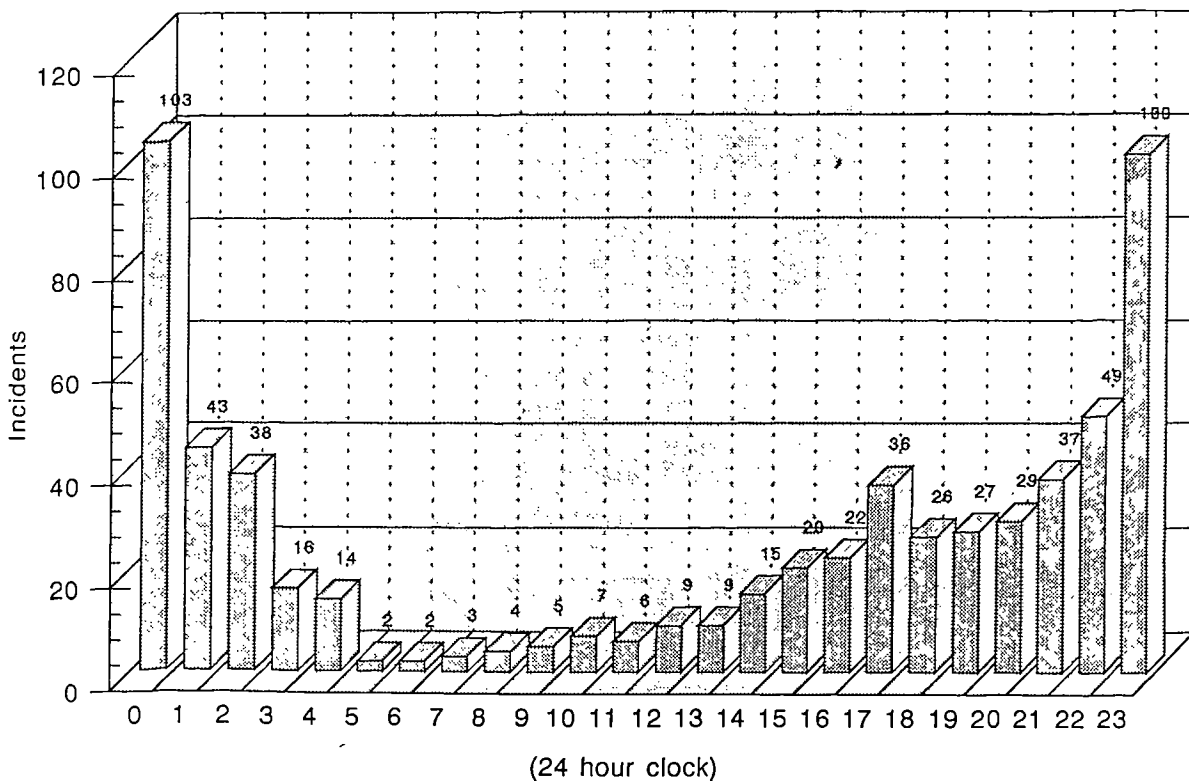


Although the actual number of persons arrested each month is quite low, Figure 4(15) illustrates clearly the variation in the monthly totals of persons arrested for domestic violence during 1989. The busiest month (December) has an arrest rate which is twice as high as the quietest month (February) which only recorded 32 arrests. With a total arrest figure of 618 for the whole year this amounts to an average of 50 arrests per month, which is just over 2 per sub division and by no means a startling figure.

Times of Arrest

An examination of the times at which these arrests for domestic violence were made showed that the arrests were in direct proportion to the number of such incidents reported. Most arrests occur between 11.00 pm and 1.00 am, the times during which the highest number of domestic incidents are reported. Figure 4(16) outlines the times when arrests were made for domestic violence and although more persons are arrested in the late evening, arrests occur continually 24 hours each day. This information again highlights the fact that the highest number of domestic incidents and the largest number of arrests occur at periods in the late evening, at the end of "permitted hours" at a time when police resources are considerably stretched. For that reason alone domestic violence is a real cause for concern in view of the resource implications of the already thin blue line.

Figure 4(16) Times of arrest resulting from domestic violence incidents



To conclude this part of the research, details were obtained of the total population and number of households for each sub division. By considering those figures in relation to the number of domestic violence incidents reported one could establish the number of domestic incidents in relation to population and households. Table 4(3) refers to the number of domestic incidents per 1000 population and per 1000 households in each of the sub divisions of Northumbria Police for 1989.

Table 4(3) Domestic violence incidents viewed in relation to population and number of households (1989)

	Population	Households	Domestic Incidents	Domestics per 1000 population	Domestics per 1000 household
A1	47,600	16,000	308	6.47	19.25
A2/3	56,200	21,200	271	4.82	12.78
A4/5	59,200	21,500	170	2.87	7.91
A6	59,600	22,300	1073	18.00	48.11
B1	10,000	4,500	229	22.90	50.89
B2	69,500	28,200	1400	20.14	49.64
B3	48,700	19,000	1381	28.36	72.68
B4	83,400	30,400	1560	18.70	51.31
B5	72,200	27,700	1035	14.33	37.36
C1	42,400	16,100	1104	26.04	68.57
C2	57,600	21,900	801	13.91	36.57
C3/4	92,000	34,200	1787	19.42	52.25
C5	78,200	28,500	1198	15.32	42.03
D1	65,400	25,300	1213	18.55	47.94
D2	54,000	19,600	1158	21.44	59.08
D3	87,500	32,500	858	9.80	26.40
E1	72,900	27,900	1157	15.87	41.47
E2	83,500	30,200	1402	16.79	46.42
F1	35,600	15,000	645	18.12	43.00
F2	95,800	33,800	1408	14.70	41.66
F3	60,200	21,900	1002	16.64	45.75
F4/5	105,500	37,000	1656	15.70	44.75
				Average (excl 'A' Div) (18.15)	Average (excl 'A' Div) (47.65)

Because of the problem of comparing rural and urban environments, an average was obtained from these figures but without including the rural Northern Division. The average number of domestic incidents per 1000 population is 18 and the average number of domestic incidents per 1000 households is 48. These figures are quite low when viewed in this context, but does indicate that domestic violence, as reported is more prevalent within the densely populated urban conurbations than in the more rural areas. That does not mean that domestic violence does not occur so often within rural areas but, more likely, the culture within those areas would work against such matters being reported to the police.

Current Situation

Having analysed the statistical information in respect of the number of domestic incidents recorded in the Northumbria Police area during 1989, it was appreciated that there was a need to review details of recorded domestic violence incidents on an annual basis. However, in response to Home Office Circular 60/1990, which required that cases of domestic violence should be monitored by the police, a review of recording procedures was carried out by the Inspection and Development branch of Northumbria Police. The conclusion reached by the review was that too wide a definition had been used in respect of domestic incidents and that the final incident code '36' should only be allocated to those domestic incidents involving assault or brutal and threatening behaviour by a person with whom the victim lives or has lived.

This change in recording procedures was introduced as Force Policy on 1 October 1990, with the result that the number of reported incidents covered by this final incident code was dramatically reduced so that it applied purely to incidents of domestic violence and not

domestic incidents in general. Therefore with effect from that date only those "domestic" incidents where violence had been threatened or used were allocated the final incident code "36" and regarded as incidents of domestic violence. The general domestic incidents where direct violence was not involved were no longer allocated this specific code and unfortunately could no longer be retrieved from the Force Computer. The researcher was obviously concerned about the implications of this change in policy, together with a number of other senior officers who had a specific interest in domestic violence, but the arguments presented were not successful in reversing the Force Policy. It has therefore not been possible from 1990 onwards to obtain any direct comparisons with domestic violence incidents recorded in previous years. This is quite clearly reflected in Table 4(4) which outlines the total number of recorded incidents in Northumbria Police between 1989 and 1995 together with details of the total number of domestic violence incidents for the same period.

Table 4(4) Recorded domestic incidents 1989 - 1995

Year	Total number of incidents	Domestic violence incidents
1989	594,730	22,555
1990	685,261	17,929
1991	741,360	1,603
1992	734,185	1,584
1993	715,765	2,071
1994	714,484	10,364
1995	695,737	12,729

Between 1989 and 1993 the increase in the total number of incidents reported has slowed down and actually continued to decline, but the effect of amending the final incident code for domestic incidents at the end of 1990 has seen the annual number of such incidents drop

drastically from over 20,000 in 1989 to just over 1,500 in 1992. It is estimated that if these changes had not been introduced the projected total number of domestic incidents for that year would be around 23,000. In 1992 a working party was set up in Northumbria Police, ostensibly to look at domestic violence and the report by Newcastle University into the operation of Domestic Violence Unit at South Tyneside. The only recommendation that was brought into effect with some expediency related to the use of final incident code '36'.

With immediate effect incidents of domestic dispute or domestic violence should be coded with Final Incident Code 36 if they fall within the following Home Office definition: Any form of physical, sexual or emotional abuse which takes place within the context of a close relationship. In most cases, the relationship will be between parties, who are married, co-habiting or otherwise, or ex partners.

Northumbria Police Force Order
(Published 30 March 94)

To a large extent the balance has now been to some extent redressed and the number of recorded domestic incidents during 1995 is far more credible than the figures published since 1989. Unfortunately valuable research data has been lost in those intervening years and in any event the restructuring of the 22 sub divisions into 15 Area Commands would make comparisons with previous years very difficult and in some cases almost impossible because of the restructuring of the boundaries of many of the old sub divisions.

Summary

The problems of insider research are well documented by Hobbs (1993) who alluded to the fact that as a perceived expert in his field, even the most obtuse, rigid generalisations by him were accepted without criticism, even though he had at that time published no academic research. The point he was making was that relevant experience and common sense were

often highlighted during oral presentations to conceal the fact that his assertions were "naive, loosely formulated and theoretically vacuous". Much of the information obtained throughout this chapter would appear to any experienced police officer to be stating the obvious and as being a question of fact. Anecdotaly the busiest time for dealing with domestic incidents is regarded by operational police officers as being between 11 pm and 1 am and, if questioned, the researcher would have previously stated this fact with confidence and conviction. The importance of this research is that the researcher now has credible statistical evidence to support such a statement, obtained from looking at some 20,000 plus domestic incidents per annum.

The danger of looking at statistics in isolation is that because domestic incidents only account for just under 4 per cent of all incidents reported to the police, domestic violence would not appear to be that much of a problem. However, as just under one quarter of all incidents of domestic violence occur during this two hour period, when police resources are stretched to the limit, the true extent of the problem begins to emerge. Much of the information obtained throughout this chapter simply underpins and reinforces empirical data acquired from established and classical literature and research reviewed in the previous chapter.

It is, however, a cause for concern that during 1989 the arrest rate for domestic incidents was as low as 3 percent, particularly when in many instances both the attacker and the victim were present upon the arrival of the police. Whilst a number of practical reasons have been highlighted to explain, to some extent, the inability of the police to make arrests, the criticism of Edwards (1986) and Smith (1989) appears justified. This does reinforce

the view of the researcher which defines the police approach to domestic violence within society in terms of a theory of consensus structuralism. In any town centre in Britain one can surely find large numbers of revellers on a Friday or Saturday night whose behaviour would justify an arrest for a public order offence. At any large scale disturbance the majority of participants to any disorder are not arrested and in fact the number of persons generally arrested for disorder and late night violence is quite low in relation to the level of actual disorder. The policing of any incidents relating to disorder or violence is by consensus; only if the violence appears excessive, or the level of disorder is likely to escalate will arrests be made. The other main factor, identified by Edwards (1986), is where the offender is particularly abusive towards the police officers attending the incident or uses violence against them. By alluding to the fact that police officers have discretion whether to arrest or not, to a large extent conceals the fact that consensus is the preferred option and domestic violence is still not sufficiently high on the political agenda to warrant decisive action by the police.

Ultimately it is a matter for the police what incidents are to be recorded as domestic incidents. There is no doubt that some of the domestic incidents recorded during 1989 fell outside what would be regarded as domestic violence. A rather narrow interpretation of Home Office Circular 60/1990 resulted in a change in recording procedures with Northumbria Police which saw the number of domestic incidents annually drop from over 22,555 to 1,603 within twelve months. This highlights the problem of dealing with statistics - the information is available but the agencies that have control over them do have the ability to present statistics to suit a particular purpose. By apparently conforming to Home Office guidelines the problem of domestic violence can appear overnight to be not

as serious by the way the statistics are presented. This is one option available to any agency operating within society to deal with particular problems - by removing or reducing them statistically.

Chapter 5

THE WASHINGTON STUDY

Why Washington?

In the previous chapter general information was evaluated about domestic violence incidents relating to the whole of the Northumbria Police area in order to present a broad outline of the extent of the problem. Having obtained such an overview it was recognised there was a need for a more in depth study of the problem and this would be achieved by selecting one sub division for closer analysis. At that time a lot of attention was being directed towards South Shields, as a Domestic Violence Unit had been established there and research was being carried out by Newcastle University into the effectiveness of the Unit. The researcher therefore decided to steer clear of South Tyneside.

At that time the busiest sub division in the Force, which regularly had the highest number of recorded incidents, was Washington (F4) which was located within Sunderland Division. In March 1990 the researcher transferred from his post in the Community Crime Prevention Department to take over as Deputy Commander at Washington. During the three years spent at Washington the particular problems of that sub division became apparent with the realisation that domestic violence was a problem mainly because of the resource implications. Having therefore decided to choose Washington as the location for an indepth study this would give clearer meaning to the research data obtained from the general statistics.

At the time this part of the research was undertaken in 1990, Washington Sub Division was dealing with around 50,000 general incidents, 12,000 crimes and 1,650 domestic incidents per annum. In size, Washington sub division comprises 21,026 acres, is about twelve miles long and between three and five miles wide, being flanked to the east by the A19 motorway and to the west by the A1(M). The 100,000 plus residents are currently split with around 52,000 in Washington and 48,000 in Houghton le Spring, whilst the sub division is divided into two separate sections; Washington to the north and Houghton le Spring to the South. Washington is a new town development, consisting of sixteen separate villages with accompanying industrial estates. These villages are all separate entities and typically consist of a commercial centre containing shops, public houses and a community centre, surrounded by modern housing estates or developments. In these villages there is a mixture of privately owned and local authority type housing, the predominance of one or the other having an effect upon the social make-up of the villages. Those with particular problems are generally the villages with a noticeable shortage of privately owned housing developments. Being a new town development, its populace is drawn from the neighbouring more established areas of Sunderland, Gateshead, Tyneside and even further afield. In a nutshell, Washington has often been referred to as the Milton Keynes of the North East. This new town is still developing and expected to reach a ceiling in population of around 70,000 by the end of the century.

In contrast, Houghton le Spring, situated to the south of Washington, is an old market town linked to the once traditional mining communities of Shiney Row, Penshaw, Herrington, Philadelphia, Newbottle, Hetton, Fencehouse, East Rainton, Chilton Moor and Easington Lane. All these former collieries have since closed down, with the result that

unemployment runs at about 20 per cent. These are all very well established autonomous communities which have stronger links with similar former mining communities in County Durham to the south than they have with Washington to the north.

The Study

This part of the research has shown that during 1989 the average number of recorded domestic incidents that occurred in Washington was 138 per month. A decision was made to look in detail at one particular month and May was chosen, predominantly because it was a month not likely to produce distorted figures which one would otherwise expect, for example, at New Year or at the height of the summer holidays. A month was chosen that was neither the busiest nor the quietest but which appeared to produce fairly consistent statistics each year. By narrowing the field of study to one particular sub division, during a particular month, one was able to study in detail the computer log record for each individual domestic incident that had occurred there. In May 1989 there were 144 domestic violence incidents, whilst the corresponding figure for May 1990 was 154, which showed a very slight increase. The research was carried out in early June as the information was still held live on the Force computer, rather than having to obtain archived material at some later date. It was also considered that if any queries developed the researcher was in an ideal situation to speak to the officers involved and clear up any ambiguities as the incidents recorded in May 1990 were at that time still quite recent.

The Questionnaire

Obviously, the computer print out of each incident contained personal information that was subject to the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1984. In the interests of confidentiality

and to comply with the above Act, certain information was transferred about each domestic incident recorded during May 1990 onto a document in the form of a questionnaire. This original questionnaire was amended after consultation with researchers at Newcastle University who were conducting research into domestic violence in South Tyneside. There were obvious benefits in using a similar style of questionnaire when ostensibly retrieving similar information from the same computer system. It was also of benefit to subsequently study the findings of that research (Walker & McNicol 1994) and compare that evaluation with this research because May 1990 was within the period of that study also. There is no Domestic Violence Unit at Washington however, the response to, and a manner of dealing with domestic incidents would appear no different from the situation in South Tyneside where such a unit exists. Obviously, the quality of service and real assistance to victims of domestic violence after the initial response is where the difference lies and where such a unit comes into its own. In most instances the evaluation of that research replicated the findings from this study, but where noticeable points of interest or variance emerged comment has been made thereon.

The following information about each particular incident was extracted onto the questionnaire by closely examining each individual computer record:

- Reference
- Day
- Time
- Date
- Incident Log Ref No
- Final incident code
- Location
- Person reporting
- Priority given to incident
- Time from report to officer being assigned
- Time from officer being assigned to reporting back
- Nature of the incident reported

Persons involved in the incident
Offences outlined
Outcome of incident
Knowledge of previous offences and call outs
Special circumstances
Details of officers attending incident
Time spent by officers at incident

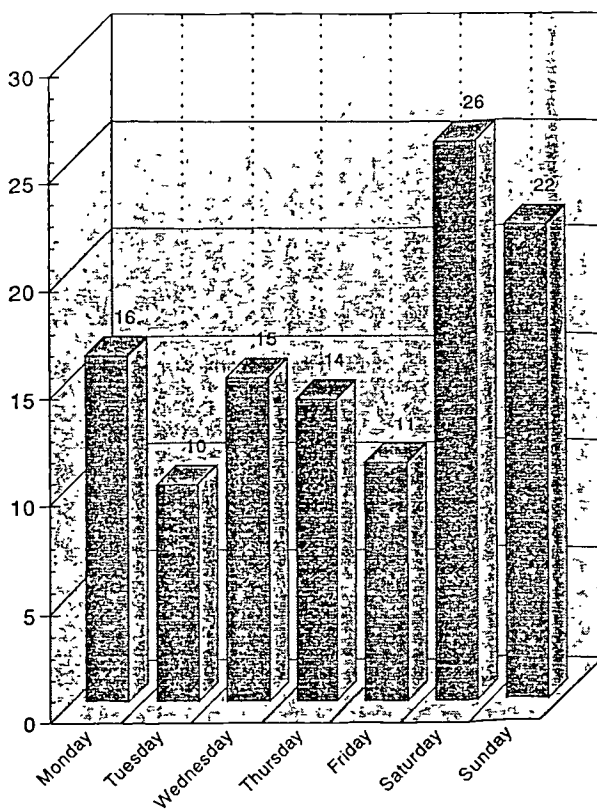
In total 154 records were examined relating to domestic violence incidents recorded in Washington sub division in May 1990. Of the 154 records examined, 40 of these, although categorised as domestic incidents and given the final incident code '36', were not domestic incidents, but were by and large disputes or assaults involving neighbours or friends which had been initially wrongly reported as domestic incidents. These 40 incidents actually account for about 25 per cent of the overall total therefore, were this chosen sample representative of the Northumbria Police area, around 5,500 of the 22,555 domestic violence incidents reported during 1989 may not have actually been domestic incidents. This is quite a sizeable proportion of the overall total. The remaining 114 domestic violence incidents recorded were genuine and provided a considerable amount of valuable information.

Only a Weekend Problem?

It was important to look closely at the times, and particular days, when these domestic incidents were reported. Saturday was the busiest day of the week, accounting for 23 per cent of all incidents followed by Sunday with 19 per cent. Surprisingly with a figure of 10 per cent, Friday was the second quietest day of the week, particularly when one would regard Friday night as the beginning of the weekend and in any case a very busy night with the potential for considerable disorder. Figure 5(1) shows the days of the week on which

those 114 domestic incidents were reported, the weekdays were noticeably quieter which presented a clear pattern of Saturday and Sunday being considerably busier than the rest of the week. This is not too different from the force-wide picture referred to in the previous chapter, and quite precisely mirrors the findings of the South Tyneside study (Walker & McNicol 1994).

Figure 5(1) Washington - Days on which domestic incidents reported



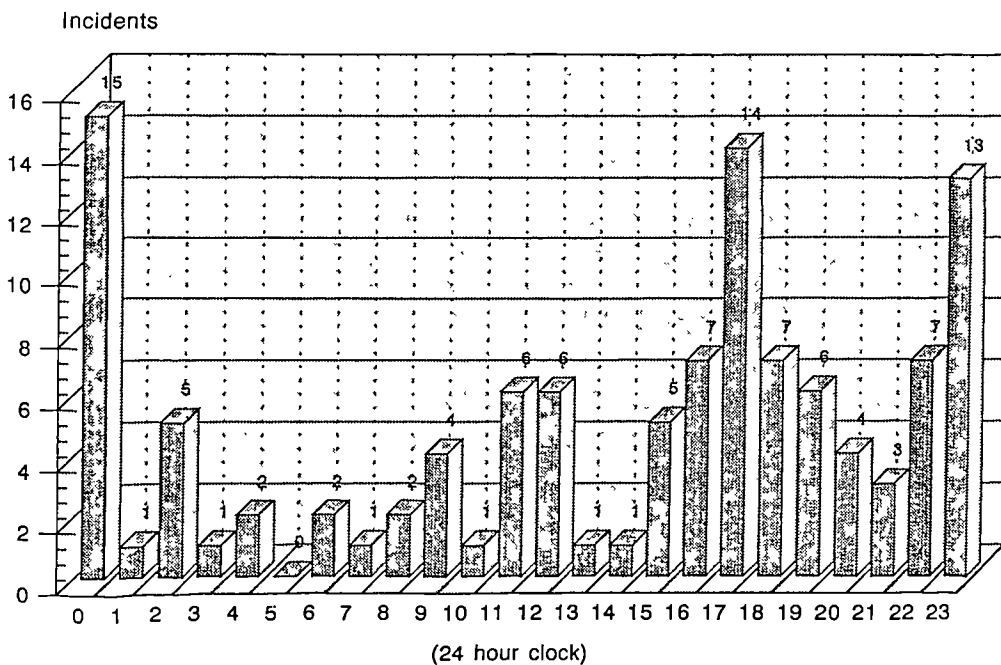
Times When Domestic Incidents Occur

With regard to the times when domestic incidents took place, by transferring the information onto a bar chart (Figure 5(2)) a clear pattern emerged, to a large extent replicating the situation discovered force wide. The busiest time was again between 11 pm and 1 am revealing that the busiest time for reported incidents of domestic violence

coincided with the end of normal licensing hours at that time. The increase in reported domestic violence incidents was even more pronounced in the South Tyneside study.

Although incidents were reported throughout the day, albeit in very low numbers at times, there was a pronounced peak at tea time (5 pm - 6 pm) when, in actual fact more incidents were reported than between 11 pm and midnight. As Washington sub division is very much residential in make up, this may well contribute significantly towards a substantially large number of domestic incidents occurring around tea time, this being one of the few occasions during the day when members of the family are likely to spend some time together. It also replicates the findings reported in the previous chapter.

Figure 5(2) Washington - Times when domestic incidents reported



Location of Domestic Incidents

Apart from the times of incidents, it was necessary to pinpoint the busiest locations in the sub division for calls relating to domestic violence, in order to establish whether such areas generated the highest number of incidents generally or if there were specific areas which had a high incidence of domestic violence, that was disproportionate to the general level of incidents occurring there.

The busiest area was Easington Lane (X3), closely followed by Barmston (S4), Blackfell (T3) and then Shiney Row (W3). Both Easington Lane and Shiney Row are located within the Houghton le Spring section and have an inordinately high level of reported violence overall, therefore this high proportion of domestic incidents is a reflection of the overall level of violence in those two communities. In contrast both Barmston and Blackfell, in Washington section, are not particularly violent areas, but both are densely populated. The housing stock is predominantly local authority type housing with not a great deal of private development and as both these areas suffer a large amount of property related petty crime, the high level of domestic incidents there tends to reflect more the density and size of the particular villages and not the violent propensities of the residents there.

As the researcher was at that time Deputy Commander of that sub division, there was an awareness of the make up and level of crime and disorder in each constituent part of the sub division. Areas that were particularly violent produced a relatively high level of domestic violence as did areas made up of large densely populated council estates. These areas were very much working class areas with relatively high levels of unemployment and corresponding higher levels of crime and disorder generally.

Persons Reporting Incidents

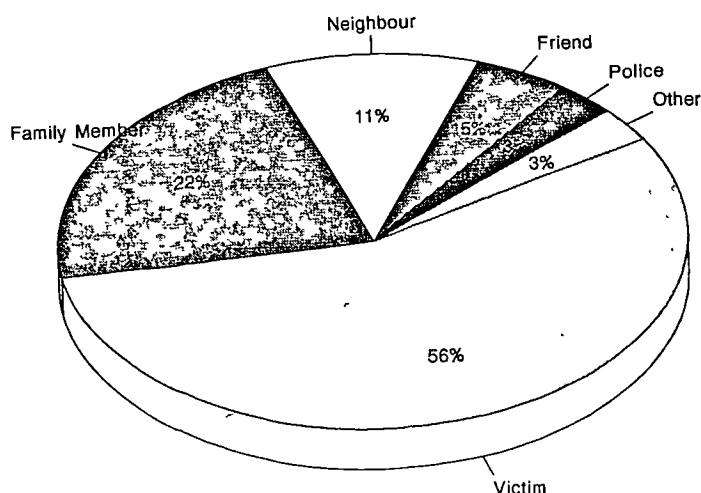
When any incident is reported, details of the person reporting the particular incident are recorded by the Area Operations Room who receive the initial telephone call. Being aware that many domestic incidents were reported by the victim, particularly those of a more minor nature, it was important to find out who else reported such matters to the police: was it relatives or even neighbours? Having looked at the incidents in question, it was established that over half the incidents (56 percent) were actually reported to the police by the victims themselves. The next largest group reporting domestic incidents were family members (22 percent), but this ought not to be surprising as they are often either directly involved in the disorder or have strong family ties with the victim. Figure 5(3) shows in the form of a pie-chart, the categories of persons who reported these domestic incidents as a percentage of the overall total.

It will be seen that the only other group of any significance were neighbours who accounted for 11 per cent of reported domestic incidents, which appears to represent a surprisingly small percentage of the overall total, bearing in mind that they are the unwitting spectators to such events. Whether domestic incidents involve direct physical violence, criminal damage or even heated arguments, neighbours cannot avoid the fact that such disputes are taking place and yet very few tend to take action by informing the police. Whilst accepting it is easy to criticise such ambivalence, it is a fact that in some neighbourhoods persons who contact the police would be viewed with some resentment, whilst others would not wish the police to attend, particularly if no direct violence has been used. Nevertheless, in nine out of every ten domestic incidents, neighbours are undoubtedly aware of what is occurring, yet have no interest in contacting the police or simply do not wish to become

involved. To some extent however, one can sympathise with this view because a neighbour who calls the police to a domestic incident is likely to engender some resentment from either one or both parties involved in the incident, and has the added problem of having to continue living there as a neighbour. It is obviously far easier not to become involved in any dispute, which seems to be a problem not unique to the area of domestic violence.

The remaining 11 per cent of incidents are split between friends (5 per cent) the Police (3 per cent) and others (3 per cent). Although a small number of domestic incidents are discovered by the police, this is not unusual as the majority of domestic incidents occur at times of peak disorder where police resources are utilised to maximum effect and are out and about patrolling the streets. In the South Tyneside study the police actually discovered 16 per cent of all reported incidents. South Tyneside Division did have considerably more officers on foot patrol than Washington where the vast majority of officers patrol in police vehicles. This comparison highlights the value of having officers on the beat, who are obliged to stop and deal with a domestic dispute they came across; whereas it is relatively simple to ignore such an incident when driving past in a police car.

Figure 5(3) Washington - Person reporting domestic incidents



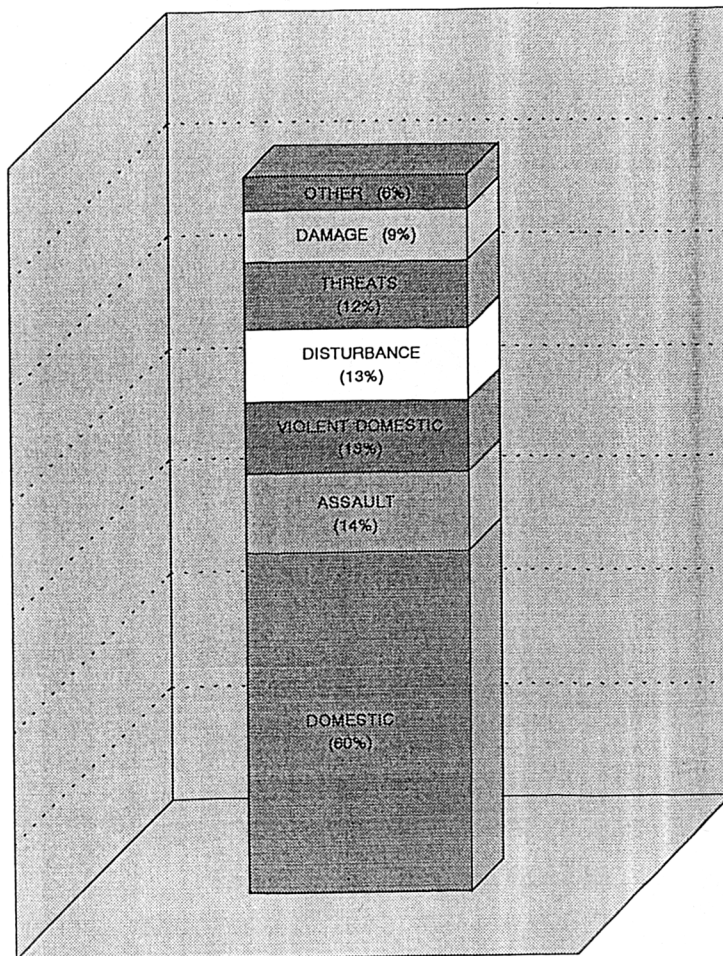
What is Reported?

No matter who actually reports a particular incident, all calls received at the Area Operations Room are classified either as 'high priority' or 'low priority'; the priority given determining the level and swiftness of the police response. A large scale disturbance, for example, would warrant 'high priority', whilst a report of children playing football in the street would be assessed to 'low priority'. Figure 5(4) displays these 114 incidents in a stack chart by defining as a percentage of the overall total, what these incidents were initially reported as by the caller. The fact that 60 per cent of the domestic incidents reported to the police were initially reported as simply 'domestics' would account for the fact that the majority of these 114 individual domestic incidents (69 per cent) were classified as 'low priority'. The 31 per cent classified as 'high priority' were predominantly made up of violent domestics (13 per cent) and assaults (14 per cent). No matter what is actually reported to the officer or civilian employee at the Area Operations Room, it is their responsibility to prioritise the incident reported. In the South Tyneside study 210 domestic incidents were reported in the two sub divisions there in May 1990 of which 29 per cent were classified as 'high priority'. The tendency to classify domestic violence as low priority does determine the way in which such an incident will be attended to.

Obviously the initial assessment as to whether a domestic incident is classified as either high or low priority relies upon the professionalism and objectivity of the person who initially receives the telephone call. The police have been criticised for minimising the seriousness of domestic violence, Edwards (1989), Smith (1989) 'et al', and therefore the fact that so many domestic incidents are given 'low priority' does make it seem that domestic incidents

are not of themselves regarded as serious matters by police officers. One does, however, need to balance that remark by pointing out that a considerable amount of crime, disorder and to some extent acts of violence are also given low priority.

Figure 5(4) Washington - Incidents reported



The researcher can recall vividly as a young police constable wanting to respond as a matter of urgency to all incidents of disorder. After a period of initial training all constables spend some time accompanied by a more experienced colleague (tutor constable) and whilst no doubt a considerable amount of sound advice and good practice rubs off, there is a problem of prejudice and subjectivity being passed on, hence the police culture.

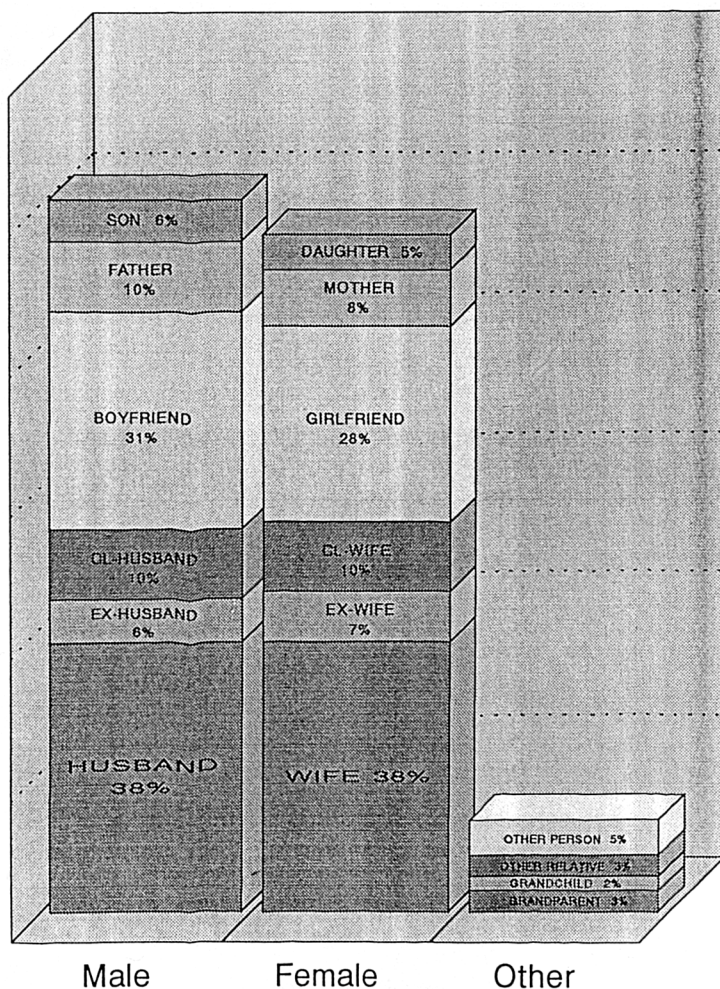
This is no doubt common to most professions, yet apparently reported upon more in the police service. The advice given is generally, "Don't hurry to get there son. Let them tire themselves out". The result is that no officer driving a police car would activate the blue flashing light or drive at break neck speed "just to attend a simply domestic". The situation does not seem to have changed over the years.

Who is Involved?

From the research it can be established that 85 per cent of all disputes were centred around couples, but not all of these simply involved husbands and wives. Figure 5(5) is a breakdown of the persons involved in these domestic violence incidents; whilst the largest category was nevertheless still husband and wife (accounting for 38 per cent of all disputes) followed by boyfriend and girlfriend (accounting for between 28 and 31 per cent of all disputes), a significant number involved common law husband and wife (10 per cent) and ex husband and wife (6 - 7 per cent). Of course the distinction between boyfriend and girlfriend and common law husband and wife does become somewhat blurred and almost utterly confusing when these parties become estranged. The South Tyneside study (Walker & McNicol 1994) reported that husbands and wives were only involved in 25 per cent of all such incidents and boyfriends and girlfriends only accounted for 10 per cent of the total figure. Whilst these percentages are somewhat lower than in this research, 41 per cent of their incidents were attributed to 'others'. Probably, within this category are many husbands, wives, boyfriends and girlfriends, but because the researcher was able to speak to the officers involved in the domestic incidents at Washington, he was better placed to specifically identify all those involved and therefore had a very small number who could be classed as 'others'.

A minority of the incidents examined (about 15 per cent) whilst domestic by nature, could not be really classed as matrimonial disputes. These invariably involved parents and adolescent children and in some instances even grandparents and other more distant relatives. In some of these incidents although starting off as a dispute between one parent and one of the children the other parent quickly became involved so by the arrival of the police it was not readily apparent just who was still involved in the dispute. By scanning details of the various incidents it appeared that in a number of incidents not just family members, but neighbours had at a times unwittingly been caught up in the dispute. Sadly in many of these incidents too, children were the silent and unwilling witnesses to the verbal and at times physical abuse their parents were caught up in.

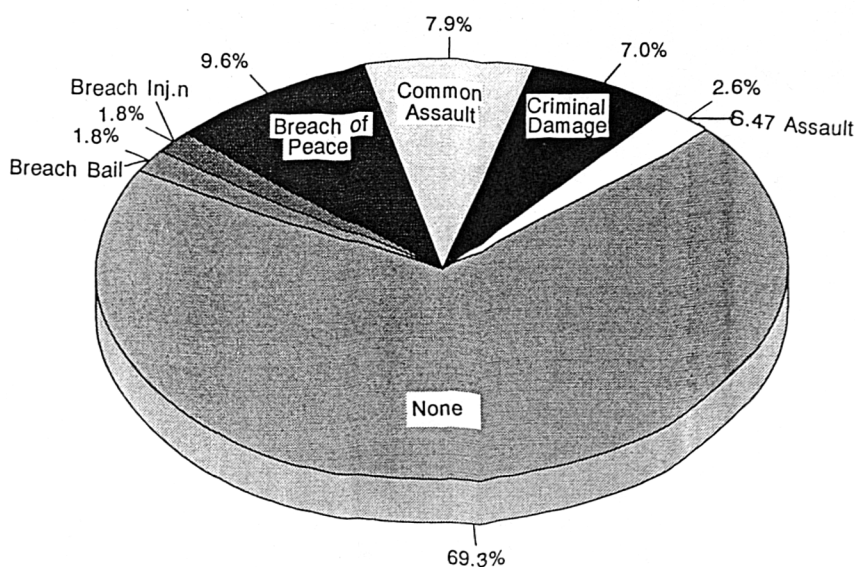
Figure 5(5) Washington - Person involved in incident



Offences Outlined

The criminal law relating to violence against individuals is comparatively simple and straightforward and in the main contained within the provisions of the Common Law and the Offences Against the Person Act 1861, as amended. From the relatively minor offence of common assault the degree of seriousness leads to assault occasioning actual bodily harm, then wounding and causing grievous bodily harm and ultimately manslaughter and murder. The punishment ranges from a fine to life imprisonment, obviously reflecting the seriousness of the offence. Of course the problem is that this study was concerned with 114 general domestic incidents and not purely incidents of domestic violence. Figure 5(6) sets out the various offences outlined as a percentage of the overall total and is not a representation of what was reported to the police, but rather what offences, if any, the officer attending the incident decided were revealed in analysis of the information that was available to him.

Figure 5(6) Washington - Offences outlined



No matter what is actually reported to the police, the officer who is despatched to deal with a domestic incident has to make a balanced assessment of what has occurred and what offences, if any, have been committed. This assessment is recorded on the incident report and in fact in almost 70 per cent of the incidents subject of this study, the officer who attended the scene determined that no criminal offences had been disclosed on that particular occasion.

This is however, no different to any other incident to which a police officer is despatched, for on many occasions police officers are sent to reported large scale disturbances in the street, but upon arrival the disorder has often abated or those responsible left the vicinity. Very often in those situations no offences are disclosed when the officer comes to make an assessment.

To translate the percentages into actual incidents Figure 5(6) shows that in May 1990 out of a total of 114 domestic incidents, only 13 involved criminal assaults, 8 involved criminal damage and 12 involved offences of disorder. These 33 incidents therefore only account for just under 30 per cent of the total number of domestic incidents. This may seem a very low percentage but, as mentioned in the previous chapter, since October 1990 incidents of domestic violence in Northumbria were recorded separately, whilst general domestic incidents in which no violence was apparent were no longer recorded as a separate category. Upon checking the information relating to domestic incidents in Washington a year later, (May 1991), it was established that instead of 144 incidents being thus recorded the figure was as low as five. Whilst these were all incidents where domestic violence had taken place it certainly highlighted the fact that in the vast majority of domestic incidents

the officer assessed that no violence has occurred. This leaves one therefore with three possible explanations:-

1. The officers assessment is correct and most domestic incidents therefore do not involve personal violence to any significant account.
2. Violence has occurred but the officer has chosen to ignore the fact and trivialise the matter.
3. Some form of violence has occurred but the victim has chosen, for whatever reason, not to report a criminal assault but merely wants the police to stop further violence.

The true answer lies to a large extent in a combination of all the above explanations, however, this still leaves us with the quite startling fact that in 70 per cent of the incidents under consideration, no offences were disclosed. If one can accept the fact that no direct violence may have occurred, resulting in physical injury in those cases, there surely ought to have been some other offence committed. There is little doubt that in the majority, if not all domestic incidents, there has been a breach of the peace, but if it had abated prior to the arrival of the police there is very little that can be done.

One of the primary duties of a police officer is preserving the 'Queen's Peace' which is regarded as the normal state of the peace and tranquillity which ought to exist in our society. The Court of Appeal has ruled that there is a breach of the peace whenever some harm is actually done or is likely to be done to a person or to his property, in his presence, or where a person is genuinely in fear of such harm occurring. However, in many domestic incidents the breach of the peace ceases, either before, or upon the arrival of the police at the scene. The term 'no offences disclosed' refers to the situation as the officer assesses it and is not an opinion of what he believes has occurred prior to his arrival.

A police officer does have the power to arrest without warrant any person who commits a breach of the peace in his presence, or a person who has been guilty of such a breach, providing there is a reasonable belief that a renewal of the breach is threatened. He can also arrest a person whose conduct is likely to cause a breach of the peace. There is no retrospective power of arrest in cases of breach of the peace so if no personal injury or damage has occurred and a violent partner behaves reasonably upon the arrival of the police, there is very little that can be done. Horley (1988) does not see it this way but police officers must not operate outside the law and obviously ought not to be criticised for not making an arrest when neither the grounds nor the power for such an arrest actually exists.

When a policeman arrives at a domestic incident he can arrest one or more parties present if they are committing a breach of the peace in his presence. Further, he can arrest one or more of the parties involved even though the disturbance has abated if he feels that a breach of the peace is likely to be immediately renewed. The officer does have a fair amount of discretion when exercising his powers but must always have grounds for any arrest and be able to justify his actions at all times.

What is the Outcome

When an incident has been dealt with the officer concerned is obliged to contact the Area Operations Room and make them aware how the matter has been finalised. Figure 5(7) outlines how the 114 domestic incidents subject of this study were finalised.

Figure 5(7) Washington - Outcome of incident

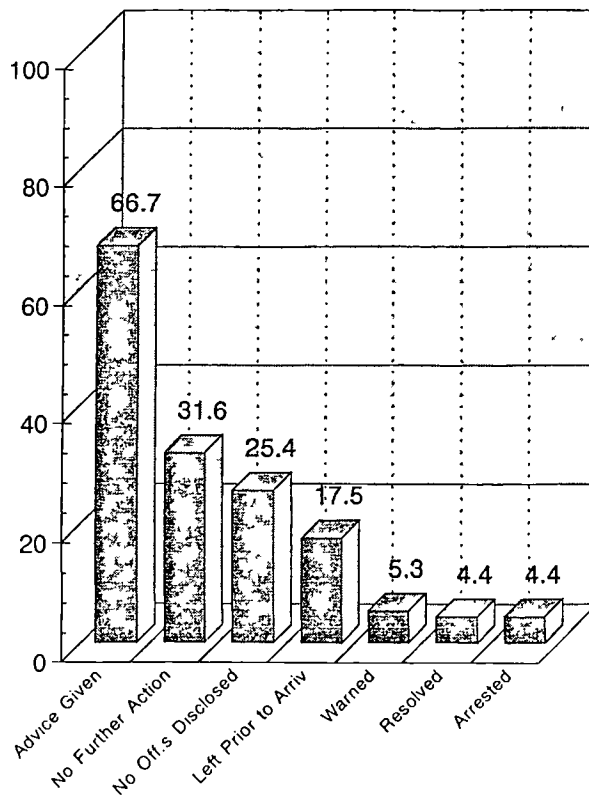


Figure 5(7) outlines the general conclusions recorded when a domestic incident is finalised, for an officer may give a quite verbose response outlining how he has dealt with a particular incident but the operator in the Area Operations will usually summarise the matter into one of the listed possible outcomes. The usual response given is, "All quiet on arrival (or departure) ---- advice given".

In about 10 per cent of incidents the matter was either resolved before the arrival of the police or a verbal warning from the officer was regarded as appropriate. The most common outcome of these incidents was the time old adage 'advice given', which immediately begs the question, 'What sort of advice was given'? The whole area relating to the manner in which individual police officers deal with domestic incidents will be dealt with at length in the next chapter. Nevertheless, the vast majority of incidents were finalised by reference to one or more of the following terms; advice give; no further action; no offences disclosed. One has also to accept that even in cases of criminal assault the victim does not always want the offender to be arrested and dealt with by the courts.

An arrest rate of 4.4 per cent whilst appearing surprisingly small, is above the Force average of just under 3 per cent. Nevertheless, this low arrest rate does give the impression that the role of the police tends to be one of mediation rather than enforced intervention. This is where the South Tyneside study produced a substantially different result because the arrest rate there during this period was around 19 per cent. A central feature of the policy in South Tyneside was the positive use of arrest and detention of the offender in cases of domestic assaults. This is the clearest evidence of the benefit to the victims of domestic violence where there is a positive arrest policy under which the police are operating. This aspect is considered in more detail later in this research.

It may be of benefit to quote the formal advice given to police officers when dealing with domestic incidents. Although a policy statement was issued in October 1990 by the Chief Constable in line with Home Office Circular 60/1990, the domestic incidents examined for May 1990 were covered at the time by this entry in Northumbria Police Standing Orders.

.... In minor cases, reconciliation may be the best course of action, but where incidents are of a serious nature the arrest of the offender may be more appropriate. All the circumstances should be considered in deciding upon the proper course including known domestic history, seriousness of the offence, likelihood of repetition etc ... (extract Northumbria Police Force Orders as at May 1990).

As already mentioned, police officers have to operate within the constraints of the law and within the framework of guidelines set out in Home Office Circular and Force Orders. There is however, still an element of discretion afforded to the officer as to how he deals with any particular incident and in many instances, whether he makes an arrest or not.

Use of Police Resources

Having spent some time looking at each of the reported domestic incidents that occurred in Washington during May 1990, there is a need to look very closely at the number of police officers involved in each incident. One can speculate upon the effect domestic violence has on police resources but it is quite surprising to see just how many officers had been involved in responding to and dealing with such incidents. Details of all the officers who had dealt with these 114 domestic incidents were extracted and separated according to rank. Table 5(1) sets out by rank a total of 241 police officers who dealt with these recorded domestic incidents. Over 90 per cent of the officers dealing with such incidents were constables and in only 1 per cent of these incidents was an Inspector directly involved, highlighting very much the low priority accorded to such incidents.

Table 5(1) Total number of officers attending domestic incidents in May 1990 in Washington

Status of officer	Nos attending incidents	Percentage of total number
Constable	219	91
Acting Sergeant	8	3
Sergeant	8	3
Inspector	2	1
Others (Special Constables)	4	2
	-	-
Total	241	100
	---	---

As a total of 241 police officers dealt with 114 recorded domestic incidents, this works out at an average of two officers per incident. In actual fact in all but one case police officers actually attended the scene of each reported domestic incident, the exception being an instance where a woman reported a minor domestic argument but specifically requested the police not to attend as her husband had subsequently left the matrimonial home. In all the remaining 113 incidents at least one police officer attended. In 63 per cent of incidents more than one officer was despatched; in 20 per cent of incidents more than two officers were sent; in 16 per cent of incidents more than three officers were sent. In one particular incident a total of ten police officers became involved in the incident, but that was violent domestic which required considerable police activity to apprehend the person responsible.

Therefore, when cases of domestic violence are reported, in many instances a substantial number of police resources are despatched, certainly enough officers in most cases to carry out an arrest. The fact that so few offenders are actually arrested appears to be down to the reluctance of individual officers to undertake such a course of action. There was a need

to discover just how many female police officers actually attend domestic incidents. By analysing the computer print outs the officers were further separated by gender, which revealed that 219 (91 per cent) were male and 22 (9 per cent) female. It may initially appear alarming that only 9 per cent of officers attending those domestic incidents were women, but as women officers only made up 10 per cent of the personnel establishment at Washington at that time, this figure is quite normal and what one would expect. This research clearly established that most officers who attended and dealt with domestic incidents were male and constables by rank, although supervisory officers predominantly attended the more violent domestics as back up or when requested in more complicated situations. However, the uniformed constables who deal with the majority of domestic incidents, sometimes alone, are often the more junior officers at the station, many of whom have less than two years police service. This will be the subject of further discussion in the next chapter.

Cost of Domestic Incidents

There is, however, a cost involved in relation to the amount of time spent by police officers engaged in attending and dealing with domestic incidents. At each incident the exact time a particular officer was allocated to that incident was recorded and also the time when that officer left the domestic incident. It was established that the 241 officers spent a total of 145 hours dealing with these domestic incidents. Although the average time spent per officer at each incident was 36 minutes, closer analysis showed that the average time spent by the first officer at an incident was 45 minutes whilst the average time spent by subsequent officers was 29 minutes. The South Tyneside study showed that in May 1990 a total of 434 officers spent 220 hours dealing with domestic incidents. This produced an

average time of 30 minutes per officer at each incident, which is not a great deal different to this research.

It was therefore apparent that domestic incidents were a particular drain on police resources; in the majority of instances at least two officers were spending over half an hour each dealing with incidents of confrontation between families. Even though the majority of domestic incidents were dealt with within half an hour, the fact that the average time spent by the first officer attending each domestic incident was 45 minutes, reveals that quite a number of these incidents were ongoing for over an hour and some for considerably longer.

According to the most recent figures published (September 1995) the average cost for the services of a police constable is £13.30 per hour. The cost therefore of dealing with all the reported domestic incidents in Washington during May 1990 is just under two thousand pounds (£1928.50) however, this is an artificially low figure as it does not include the cost of police transport, support services, file preparation and court costs in those matters where an arrest has taken place. It is nevertheless a substantial amount in as much as it relates to the initial police response to domestic violence.

Special Circumstances

In the last part of the questionnaire the text of each domestic incident was carefully examined to identify whether any particular special circumstances were prevalent, in particular an association with alcohol and violence involving property. Table 5(2) outlines the percentage of those 114 domestic incidents where special circumstances were involved.

Table 5(2) Domestic incidents where special circumstances involved

Special circumstances	No of domestics where identified	Percentage of total
Alcohol involved	11	10
Smashing up house	9	8
Injunction involved	3	3
Young persons involved (Under 18 years)	3	3
Elderly persons involved (Over 70 years)	4	4

It was possible to identify some special circumstances, in particular the association with alcohol and violence, particularly in the form of a husband 'smashing up' his own home during the dispute. It may well be that the actual figures for both categories were in reality considerably higher but full information was not always incorporated into the text of the incident message and could, therefore, not always be retrieved. The actual numbers of young people under 18 years involved directly in domestic disputes was quite low (3 per cent), yet the fact that 4 per cent were over 70 years old is quite startling and does show that no category can be regarded as too young, or even too old, to be parties to domestic violence.

The number of repeat calls where officers were sent to the same house on more than one occasion during the month was quite low, and only accounted for about 7 per cent of all incidents. Unfortunately, there was insufficient information to determine whether officers were aware of previous call-outs to particular addresses, or if the caller had previously been a victim of domestic violence in these particular cases. The number of repeat calls was quite low when compared with other research but this research was looking at quite a short

period of just one month and the number of repeat calls would have increased if the period under examination were significantly longer.

New Year's Day 1992

Having looked in depth at all domestic incidents occurring during one particular month in Washington sub division, it generally depicted a situation where domestic incidents predominantly occurred at times of potential high disorder, yet was not afforded a high priority at the outset and unlikely to result in an arrest at the conclusion. Although the incident logs provided detailed information, there was a need to analyse domestic incidents in even more detail to try and establish the reasons why police officers took a certain course of action, usually one of mediation or attempted mediation. In those cases where an arrest had taken place it was necessary to spend a considerable amount of time and energy in following up those particular cases in order to establish the eventual outcome. Further research was therefore conducted in Washington, some 18 months or so later and New Year's Day (1992) was chosen as the appropriate day for such research, because it is historically the busiest day of the year in relation to incidents of domestic violence and would give me a comparatively high sample to work on. By following this line, the research has gradually focused in on individual incidents of domestic violence. In the previous chapter all the domestic incidents reported in 1989 in one of the largest police forces in Britain (Northumbria) were considered and at the start of this chapter the research narrowed to look at the domestic incidents reported in just one sub division of the Force (Washington). By New Years Day 1992 the research had focused to look in very close detail at each of the domestic incidents that had occurred that day.

Without exception the busiest day of the year with regard to reported domestic incidents is New Year's Day, where there is an evident connection between alcohol and domestic violence, in view of the considerable amount of alcohol consumed each year from New Year's Eve into New Year's Day. As it is traditionally the busiest night of the year for the police, a much higher level of disorder and violence is generally anticipated and experienced and accordingly, extra officers and resources are deployed. At Washington sub division an average of four domestic incidents are reported each day. On 1 January 1992, there were twenty reported domestic incidents, which represents a figure five times higher than usual, but it would be inaccurate to view this figure in isolation, as the total number of all calls reporting violence and disorder is increased by a similar proportion.

Having given much thought about how to present these findings and whilst it may appear unusual and rather novel to present twenty summaries in succession, it is the clearest means of presenting a true picture of what happened on New Year's Day in 1992. Each incident has been summarised looking at seven identical factors in each case.

- | | | | |
|----|------|------------------------------|---|
| 1. | i) | Time | 0000 |
| | ii) | Priority | Low |
| | iii) | Details of call | Mrs 'A', Houghton Road, Hetton le Hole reporting a domestic with boyfriend, refusing to leave |
| | iv) | Additional information | Further call at 0029 from neighbour; police have just left and boyfriend is back banging on door. |
| | v) | Result | All in order, boyfriend warned re conduct |
| | vi) | No of officers assigned | 7 |
| | vii) | Details of reporting officer | Uniform constable (male), 2 yrs service |

- 2.
- i) Time 0050
 - ii) Priority Low
 - iii) Details of call Mrs 'B', Oxclose, Washington, request police, concerned for two year old child in common-law husband's house
 - iv) Additional information Nil
 - v) Result Advice given; child is safe and well with common-law husband, who is sober, and wife (caller) is not
 - vi) No of officers assigned 2
 - vii) Details of reporting officer Uniform constable (male), 17 yrs service

- 3.
- i) Time 0129
 - ii) Priority Low
 - iii) Details of call Miss 'C', Barmston, Washington, reports being assaulted by husband, not seriously hurt. Husband is waiting to hit her again; she is frightened to go home
 - iv) Additional information Nil
 - v) Result Dispute between caller and husband, all now sorted out. Caller will stay with friend for the night
 - vi) No of officers assigned 1
 - vii) Details of reporting officer Uniform constable (male), 1 yr's service

- 4.
- i) Time 0142
 - ii) Priority Low
 - iii) Details of call British Telecom Operator - Subscriber Mrs 'D', Easington Lane, Houghton-le-Spring rang 999 then put telephone down before speaking
 - iv) Additional information Location of incident ascertained by BT
 - v) Result Advice given re domestic problems
 - vi) No of officers assigned 4
 - vii) Details of reporting officer Uniform constable (male), 8 yrs service

5. i) Time 0247
 ii) Priority Low
 iii) Details of call Mrs 'E', Lambton, Washington, reported domestic dispute; boyfriend and her son are both drunk and fighting
 iv) Additional information Nil
 v) Result Advice given re domestic squabble
 vi) No of officers assigned 2
 vii) Details of reporting officer Uniform constable (male), 5 yrs service

6. i) Time 0248
 ii) Priority Low
 iii) Details of call Mrs 'F', Columbia, Washington, reports a man having assaulted his wife with a baseball bat, not serious
 iv) Additional information Location of incident; Sulgrave, Washington
 v) Result Dispute between man and wife, no assault, advice given
 vi) No of officers assigned 1
 vii) Details of reporting officer Uniform constable (male), 18 yrs service

7. i) Time 0357
 ii) Priority Low
 iii) Details of call Mrs 'G', Houghtonside, Houghton-le-Spring, reports window broken by boyfriend
 iv) Additional information Further call at 0401 reporting boyfriend has returned and caused damage to door. Officer at scene requesting assistance at 0414
 v) Result Male (19 yrs) arrested for criminal damage - hospital treatment required for cuts to hands and face
 vi) No of officers assigned 5
 vii) Details of reporting officer Uniform constable (male), 8 yrs service

8. i) Time 0426
 ii) Priority High
 iii) Details of call Mrs 'H', Barmston, Washington, reports being assaulted by boyfriend
 iv) Additional information Further call at 0451, boyfriend has returned and is assaulting her
 v) Result Male (18 yrs) arrested for assault occasioning actual bodily harm
 vi) No of officers assigned 4
 vii) Details of reporting officer Uniform constable (male), 12 yrs service

9. i) Time 0514
 ii) Priority Low
 iii) Details of call Mrs 'I', Donwell, Washington, reports domestic dispute between members of family
 iv) Additional information Nil
 v) Result Family dispute which has been sorted out, no offences disclosed, advice given
 vi) No of officers assigned 4
 vii) Details of reporting officer Uniform constable (male), 3 yrs service

10. i) Time 0612
 ii) Priority Low
 iii) Details of call Mrs 'J', Albany, Washington, reports an unknown man in his house refusing to leave
 iv) Additional information Nil
 v) Result Domestic dispute between husband and wife, this unknown man was caller's wife's boyfriend. Advice given, all quiet
 vi) No of officers assigned 1
 vii) Details of reporting officer Uniform constable (male), 25 yrs service

11. i) Time 0730
 ii) Priority Low
 iii) Details of call Miss 'K', Glebe, Washington, reporting a dispute with her boyfriend
 iv) Additional information Nil

- v) Result Dispute between caller and boyfriend who has been ejected from the house, all quiet on leaving, advice given
- vi) No of officers assigned 4
- vii) Details of reporting officer Uniform constable (male), 25 yrs service

- 12. i) Time 1119
- ii) Priority High
- iii) Details of call Mrs 'L', Glebe, Washington, reporting a violent domestic, drunken ex-husband is going berserk in house; children present
- iv) Additional information Further call from relative (1211) giving precise location of ex-husband who is still in the vicinity
- v) Result Male (36 yrs) arrested for breach of the peace
- vi) No of officers assigned 11
- vii) Details of reporting officer Uniform constable (male), 8 yrs service

- 13. i) Time 1145
- ii) Priority Low
- iii) Details of call Mrs 'G', Houghtonside, Houghton-l-Spring, reports that her boyfriend who has just been released from the police station in connection with a domestic incident, has called at her house threatening to kill himself
- iv) Additional information See incident No 7 for initial incident
- v) Result Boyfriend back at police station, being taken home by parents
- vi) No of officers assigned 1
- vii) Details of reporting officer Uniform constable (male), 10 yrs service

- 14. i) Time 1503
- ii) Priority Low
- iii) Details of call Mrs 'M', Oxclose, Washington, reports having been assaulted
- iv) Additional information Report made in person at police station

v)	Result	Male (22 yrs) arrested for assault occasioning actual bodily harm
vi)	No of officers assigned	1
vii)	Details of reporting officer	Uniform constable (male), 12 yrs service

15.	i)	Time	1546
	ii)	Priority	Low
	iii)	Details of call	Mr 'N', Easington Lane, Houghton-le-Spring, reports a domestic in progress on his premises
	iv)	Additional information	Nil
	v)	Result	Dispute between common-law husband and wife. Man had left prior to police arrival, no offences disclosed, advice given
	vi)	No of officers assigned	1
	vii)	Details of reporting officer	Uniform constable (male), 10 yrs service

16.	i)	Time	1645
	ii)	Priority	High
	iii)	Details of call	Mrs 'O', Glebe, Washington, reports violent domestic, man with knife to woman's head
	iv)	Additional information	Nil
	v)	Result	Male (51 yrs) arrested for aggravated burglary
	vi)	No of officers assigned	3
	vii)	Details of reporting officer	Uniform constable (male), 4 yrs service

17.	i)	Time	1710
	ii)	Priority	Low
	iii)	Details of call	Mrs 'P', Glebe, Washington, reports domestic dispute, husband drunk and causing disturbance at front door
	iv)	Additional information	Nil
	v)	Result	Male (36 yrs) arrested for drunk and disorderly
	vi)	No of officers assigned	2
	vii)	Details of reporting officer	Uniform constable (male), 3 yrs service

18. i) Time 1740
 ii) Priority Low
 iii) Details of call Mrs 'Q', Blackfell, Washington, reports having been assaulted by her ex-boyfriend
 iv) Additional information Phoning from friends' house
 v) Result Male (23 yrs) arrested for assault on caller's 4 year old child, caused during domestic argument
 vi) No of officers assigned 1
 vii) Details of reporting officer Uniform constable (male), 3 yrs service

19. i) Time 2014
 ii) Priority Low
 iii) Details of call Mrs 'R', Lambton, Washington, reports having been assaulted by her ex-husband who is presently outside her house
 iv) Additional information Caller currently at neighbour's house, ex-husband has soaked his clothes in petrol and threatening to set himself on fire
 v) Result Male (35 yrs) arrested for assault occasioning actual bodily harm and criminal damage
 vi) No of officers assigned 4
 vii) Details of reporting officer Uniform constable (male), 10 yrs service

20. i) Time 2017
 ii) Priority Low
 iii) Details of call Mrs 'S', Blackfell, Washington, reports man outside her house causing a disturbance; believes he has just broken a window
 iv) Additional information Further calls (2024 and 2046) from other residents reporting same incident
 v) Result Dispute between man and common-law wife; damage caused to door panel, no offences disclosed. Man left prior to police arrival; advice given; no further action
 vi) No of officers assigned 2
 vii) Details of reporting officer Uniform constable (male), 19 yrs service

Analysis of the Incidents

Out of these twenty domestic incidents reported to the police in Washington Sub Division on New Year's Day (1992) a total of eight resulted in the offender being arrested. This represents an arrest rate of 40 per cent, which is about ten times the normal arrest rate for domestic incidents.

It is interesting to note that half these men were arrested between 3 pm and 6 pm, two were arrested around 4 am but no arrests were made during the busy period between 11 pm and 1 am. Obviously New Year's Day is a rather extraordinary day in policing terms, but the times of arrests does tend to support the view that 'tea time' is a particular problem time in relation to domestic incidents.

The average age of the men arrested is 30 years, but the main grouping lies within the 22 - 36 years age range. The majority were arrested for assaulting their partners or ex-partners, the most serious being the oldest man in that group (51 years) who was arrested for a very serious offence of aggravated burglary (breaking into his ex-partners home and committing a serious assault).

Only one of the men was arrested in the Houghton section of the sub division; the remainder were actually arrested in Washington. Further analysis however, shows that only 5 of the reported domestic incidents actually occurred in the Houghton section but nevertheless the arrest rate at Houghton section at 20 per cent was just less than half the corresponding arrest rate at Washington section. Apart from the difference in the make up of both sections it is of significance that the officers based at Washington section were

usually more junior in service than their counterparts at Houghton and more closely supervised as the Duty Inspector, of necessity, did tend to spend most of his time at Washington rather than Houghton.

It is very enlightening to consider the specific outcome of the cases where the offender was arrested:-

- Case No 7 - Male (19 yrs) arrested for criminal damage.
Outcome - Complaint withdrawn by injured party, released from custody, no further action.

- Case No 8 - Male (18 yrs) arrested for assault occasioning actual bodily harm.
Outcome - Appeared at the local Magistrates' Court on 2 January 1992 charged with above offence - case dismissed by Magistrates after hearing the evidence.

- Case No 12 - Male (36 yrs) arrested for breach of the peace.
Outcome - Appeared at local Magistrates' Court on 2 January 1992 charged with above offence - bound over in the sum of £50 to keep the peace for a period of six months.

- Case No 14 - Male (22 yrs) arrested for assault occasioning actual bodily harm.
Outcome - Appeared at local Magistrates' Court on 2 January 1992 charged with above offence. Contested case, adjourned until 22 June 1992 for a full hearing. Eventually appeared at Durham Crown Court on 21 October 1992. Discharged as allegation was withdrawn by the injured party at court.

- Case No 16 - Male (51 yrs) arrested for aggravated burglary.
Outcome - Appeared at local Magistrates' Court charged with above offences, case adjourned and subsequently committed for trial to the Crown Court. Appeared at Newcastle Crown Court on 1 April 1992, found guilty and ordered to do 120 hours community service.

- Case No 17 - Male (36 yrs) arrested for being drunk and disorderly.
Outcome - Appeared at local Magistrates' Court on 2 January 1992 charged with above offence - fined £30 with £25 costs.

- Case No 18 - Male (23 yrs) arrested for assault occasioning actual bodily harm (two separate assaults).

- Outcome - Appeared at local Magistrates' Court on 2 January 1992 charged with above offences. Reduced to one offence of common assault; given a conditional discharge for six months.
- Case No 19 - Male (35 yrs) arrested for assault occasioning actual bodily harm.
- Outcome - Appeared at local Magistrates' Court on 2 January 1992 charged with assault (as above) and criminal damage. Charge of criminal damage was withdrawn, assault occasioning actual bodily harm reduce to common assault; fined £100 with £30 costs.

There is always a concern about the inordinate delays that occur when attempting to bring offenders before the courts. Therefore an agreement was made with the Magistrates Clerk that any person arrested as a result of domestic violence on that day would be bailed to appear before the first available court. Therefore, not only were these eight offences dealt with decisively but they all appeared before Magistrates' Court the following day. The two most serious assaults (Case No 14 and Case No 16) were still going through the court system some 6 - 10 months after the initial incident. Only one case (No 7) failed to reach the courts, having been withdrawn by the complainant declining to prosecute. The two offenders charged with public order offences (Case No 12 and Case No 17) proceeded without problem, although the fine imposed/amount of binding over was quite lenient in both cases. Of the remaining three cases, which all relate to offences of assault occasioning actual bodily harm; one was dismissed by the court (Case No 8) while the other two (Case No 18 and Case No 19) were both reduced to common assault, a much lesser charge, and dealt with by way of a fine. From this information it would appear that there is still a tendency for the courts to view domestic violence cases less seriously than they ought.

Police Response

With regard to the police response, a total of 63 officers attended these twenty reported domestic incidents, which works out at an average of three officers per incident. In actual fact in one incident eleven officers were assigned whilst in 65 per cent of these incidents more than one officer was required to attend. Only two repeat calls appear in this sample, whilst in three cases more than one person actually reported the incident, because prior to the police attending the initial report, neighbours made further calls being unaware that the police had already been contacted.

The reported domestic incidents occurred at various locations throughout Washington Sub Division, with most of the villages accounting for either one or two incidents. Although Glebe Village is a busy area, there does not appear to be any particular reason why more domestic incidents were reported there. In view of the small number of incidents in each of the villages, this point is not of any great significance.

Resource Implications

Because of the anticipated disorder which usually occurs at New Year, there were obviously more officers on duty during the early hours of New Year's Day to deal with general incidents of disorder. Officers were obviously expecting trouble and there appears to have been a sufficient number to respond effectively to all the reported incidents. It may well be that when police resources are stretched and experiencing difficulty in responding to disorder calls, which is usually the case, the tendency is to mediate in incidents involving disorder. Bearing in mind the fact that any arrest does, of necessity, remove the officer as an operational resource; he will become tied up with both the prisoner and associated

documentation and paperwork. This must have some influence on the way in which officers approach these situations. Nevertheless, this research has benefitted by taking a close look at this one particular day, in order to follow through each of the incidents, even to the means of final disposal by the court. Where there are sufficient police resources and where there is support from the courts, the police response is somewhat improved.

Direct Observational Studies

There are, however, shortcomings when relying upon historic records of any kind of incident and domestic violence is no exception. Smith (1989) considered it important that research on the police handling of domestic incidents went beyond analysis of records and interviews with officers. She concluded that 'direct observational studies of how police actually deal with domestic violence incidents are an important source of information'.

In June 1992 domestic violence was the subject of considerable media interest, as the Victim Support report on Domestic Violence had just been released. The researcher was contacted by a reporter from Channel 4 News, who was interested in the close liaison that existed between Washington Police and the local womens' refuge run by Washington Women in Need. She was particularly interested in coming to Washington with a film crew and actually filming domestic incidents to which the police were called. This course of action was agreed, and consequently on a warm Friday night in June 1992, the Channel 4 News team arrived at Washington Police Station. The agreement was that they would travel in a Ford Transit police vehicle with four police officers who would normally make up a sub divisional task force to deal in particular with weekend disorder, including incidents of domestic violence. They had been given authority to film any incident

providing the persons involved, particularly the victims, were agreeable and the researcher accompanied the film crew to ensure the operation ran smoothly.

The task force dealt with five domestic incidents that evening which were all rather minor by nature and where most of the persons involved objected to television cameras accompanying the police officers into their homes. However, an incident occurred just after midnight which was to become the highlight of the evening for the film crew and subsequently provide the footage for their news report on Channel 4 News, ITN News and further afield.

This is an extract from the news report that was subsequently broadcast.

"Jenny Russell speaking from within the police vehicle travelling at speed, reporting to an emergency call".

"It is 12.30 am and a call for help (to the police) from a 'phone box has been abruptly halted".

"Washington Police take domestic violence seriously, because they have been listening to the victims".

"This is the sixth domestic incident the police have been called to this evening".

The police vehicle drove into a housing estate in Washington and stopped next to a telephone box where all the windows had recently been shattered. The police officers and camera crew try to find out what has happened from a crowd at the scene and establish that a young woman had been assaulted by her boyfriend and as she was telephoning the police for help he smashed the windows of the 'phone box with a baseball bat. A policewoman located the victim who was obviously distressed and displaying a number of superficial cuts

to her hands and body caused by the glass being broken in the 'phone box. A number of women at the scene lent their support to the victim, but did not seem to be taking the matter too seriously. Meanwhile the sergeant and constable who were looking for the assailant came across one of his friends who has been drinking heavily and objecting to the police interfering in this domestic. He attempted to punch the sergeant, and was arrested, while other officers had by then traced the assailant and arrested him. The victim was taken away by ambulance but there was some local sympathy for the arrested person and this developed into a public order situation where the camera crew came under threat from local residents on the estate and tactically withdraw to the safety of the police vehicle. The officers remained to calm down the situation. The camera crew returned to Washington Police Station where Jenny Russell concluded the event with this comment:-

"Women want protection and they want the violence to stop. This is where the system fails them. An arrested man is likely to be on bail within hours".

"The report (by Victim Support) highlights the real problem - the courts' reluctance or inability to jail violent men".

The result of this particular domestic incident could not be attributed to a failure of the courts. When the victim in question arrived at the police station, after receiving medical treatment, she declined to make any written statement of complaint against her boyfriend and pleaded that he be released. He was subsequently released from custody and whilst no action could be taken in relation to the assault, he was nevertheless reported for criminal damage to the telephone kiosk!

Whilst Smith (1989) was alluding to 'direct observational studies' of domestic incidents being undertaken by a qualified researcher rather than by television camera crews looking for a newsworthy item, there is certainly considerable benefit to be gained by showing the reality of domestic violence. Several million viewers nationwide would not generally be concerned at a news report that Victim Support had launched their report on the problem of domestic violence, albeit there would be some interest in the personality involved in the launch. From direct feedback, however, the public showing of a violent domestic incident as part of this news report certainly appears to have caught the viewers' attention. It is quite uncomfortable when the reality of domestic violence infringes the comfort of millions of homes nationwide, albeit it for a few brief moments at the end of the early evening news.

The 'Washington Study' was made up of three integral parts; general research into all reported domestic incidents in Washington in a particular month; in depth examination and follow up enquiries into all domestic incidents reported on a particular day and finally independent evidence obtained from direct observational studies.

This research indicated a general reluctance on the part of the police to consider domestic incidents as anything other than low priority, albeit there were occasions when direct action was taken by the police and offenders arrested. Unfortunately the criminal justice system does appear to afford an even lower priority to domestic violence than the police. Even where arrests had been made, the fines imposed were in some instances less than would be given for minor parking offences. With regard to the more serious assaults, matters appear

to have been caught up for months in the criminal justice system where the eventual outcome indicates some form of plea bargaining had taken place.

In an area the size of Washington Sub Division with a population in excess of 100,000 it is inconceivable that only just over 100 incidents of domestic violence take place each month for the actual level of domestic violence is without doubt considerably higher. The domestic incidents reported to the police are just the tip of the iceberg, but if the police are perceived to be not giving any priority to those incidents for whatever reason, the perception must be that the police do not take domestic violence seriously enough.

What does this study tell us?

Overall the 'Washington study' highlights the central problem of this research, that domestic violence is a societal problem that challenges both the policies and practices of a number of statutory and voluntary agencies operating within society. Traditionally the police are the only agency with statutory responsibility for dealing with domestic violence, but unfortunately the police response is failing to address the problem. Domestic violence is a real policing problem and whilst there is now a growing awareness within police circles of that fact, there is also a realisation that the police, in isolation, are ineffective and that a multi agency approach is needed to address what is a serious societal problem.

Domestic violence is being dealt with by a police service that directs minimum resources to tackle the problem, particularly as it is generally the least experienced police officers who respond to such calls in the first place. The police response is dictated by a degree of expediency that initially attaches low priority to such calls and ultimately results in no

further action being taken in the majority of cases. It is a police problem, but not a policing problem to which a great deal of significance attaches.

It is the victim or other family member who reports such matters in the majority of cases, but in every case it is the police officer attending who dictates the level of action and outcome which is invariably 'no further action'. A policy of mediation rather than intervention is evident. The victim seeks support from the police, who are unable to deal with the problem of domestic violence and are successful only in alleviating the consequences of such violence in the short term, generally relying upon the cooperation of the offender to achieve this.

If one views the members of the police service as being representative of the views and attitudes pervading throughout society as a whole, is it reasonable to expect the police to prioritise a problem that is neither high on the social nor political agenda? Policing by consensus is regarded as the means of maintaining a balance between the rights of individuals and the needs of a peaceful society. Can radical change be expected from a bureaucratic, male dominated police service in general or is it more achievable by a number of individuals who have the ability to influence and effect change? The way in which domestic violence was policed in Washington on New Year's Day (1992) revealed that where a police officer of sufficiently high rank has an interest in a more positive response to domestic violence, away from a policy of mediation towards direct positive intervention, then the results are quite dramatic - an arrest rate of 40 per cent that is ten times the usual expected from such incidents. This clearly shows that individuals can effect change within society, however, that individual does require the ability to be in a position to direct

resources towards the problem and establish a clear policy to replace any vague notion of individual discretion. The problem occurs, however, when that individual is moved from the equation, which is very often the case in the police service and other statutory agencies with tenure policies. In such situations the police can be agents of change but unless such initiatives are built upon and other agencies brought into the equation, then they simply stand alone as single initiatives and very soon the norm is restored - very much to the detriment of the victims of domestic violence.

Chapter 6

THE POLICE PERCEPTION OF THEIR ROLE: SEEKING THE VIEWS OF POLICE OFFICERS

The Study Group

So far this research has considered the police response to the societal problem of domestic violence. The police service, however, is an organisation that consists of a considerable number of individual police officers and support staff. Any in-depth consideration of the police response to domestic violence, must look beyond the organisational response to the views of the individual officers who are called upon daily to respond to incidents of domestic violence. The symbolic interactionist approach to any problem within society has as its basis the assumption that the organisation of social life comes about from within that very society and in consequence of the interaction between the various members of society. Such a perspective highlights the importance of considering any form of social action from the standpoint of the various individual participants involved and the 'meanings' they give to their individual actions.

In order, therefore, to understand the police response to the problem of domestic violence, one is required to establish from individual officers the 'meaning' they give to account for their actions and perceptions. By considering the collective responses of a number of individual officers, the 'police' response may be more clearly established. As a result of interviewing the police officers actually based at Washington, this would hopefully provide sufficient information to establish the rationale and reasoning behind the particular response of the police to such matters. What did they think about dealing with domestic incidents?

Why did they not arrest the offender? Are domestic incidents a real problem? How are such incidents managed? Is the police response dictated to by police culture?

The Questionnaire

Being mindful of the constraints upon police officers' time and a general reluctance to fill in questionnaires, a questionnaire was designed that could be completed in a matter of minutes, bearing in mind that the most appropriate time for completion would be when the officers paraded for duty. The researcher's experience as a police officer taught him that policemen generally are reluctant fill in questionnaires, particularly when expected to provide information in a forthright, possibly critical manner which could be traced back to source. Unless a questionnaire is completely anonymous police officers will tend to provide responses that are non controversial and politically correct, rather than providing controversial responses that may not accord with the establishment view. There would be little point in a questionnaire where all the officers gave responses in line with Home Office and Chief Officer policy. This research is somewhat different because, in this particular instance, the researcher had the trust and support of the officers who were aware the questionnaires were anonymous and that the purpose was to assist in his research. The fact that there was a 100 per cent response to the questionnaire was to a large extent supportive of such a view.

There were at that time about 150 police officers based at Washington and Houghton-le-Spring, apart from specialist offices who provided additional police cover (eg Traffic Patrol, Dog Section, Special Patrol Group). The locally based officers provide 24 hour cover and can be expected to respond to any call made to the police, including reports of

domestic violence. Although it was intended to reach 100 officers of various ranks it was not possible to attain this target because a number of officers were on leave, on holiday or detained with other operational commitments. Notwithstanding between Wednesday 26 June 1991 and Friday 28 June 1991, a total of 80 questionnaires were actually completed by the officers who patrolled Washington Sub Division at that time.

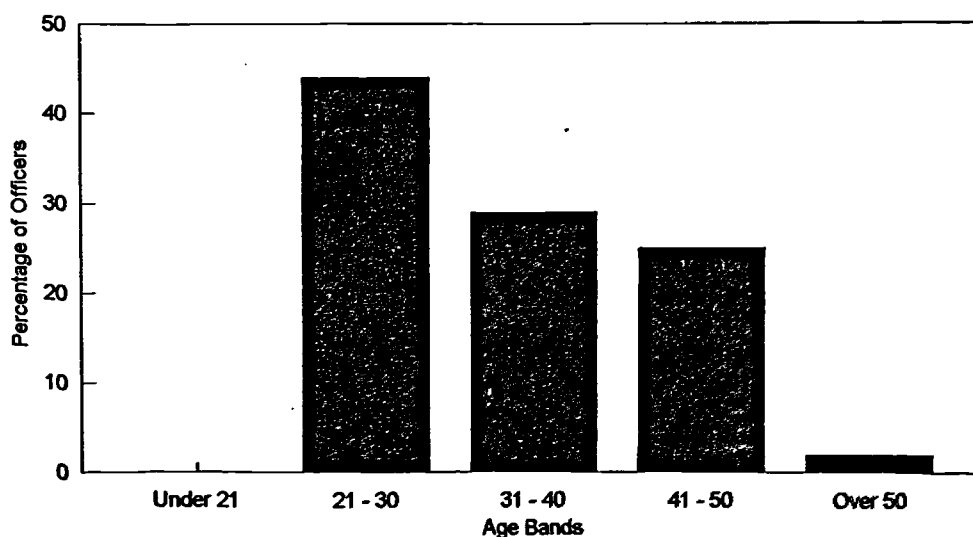
All questionnaires were completed under strict supervision for, in the majority of cases, the researcher personally distributed the questionnaires to officers as they were reporting for duty and was present while the officers completed them. In so doing, one was able to ensure that questionnaires were actually completed by officers, without discussing the questions and possible answers with each other. A number of officers asked about the confidentiality of their responses and were reassured to know that no indication was placed or required to be written on the questionnaire which could in any way identify any of the questionnaire to one particular officer. Although the distribution and completion of most questionnaires were personally supervised, in the case of a small number of officers who were on night duty and based at Houghton-le-Spring, the supervision was delegated to the Duty Inspector, who was well briefed beforehand.

At the end of the three day period it was found that this exercise had engendered a considerable amount of interest around the subject of domestic violence thereby raising the profile within the sub division. This was an unexpected benefit which had not been anticipated and which did subsequently make it easier to undertake more in-depth interviews with selected officers.

Analysis of Questionnaires

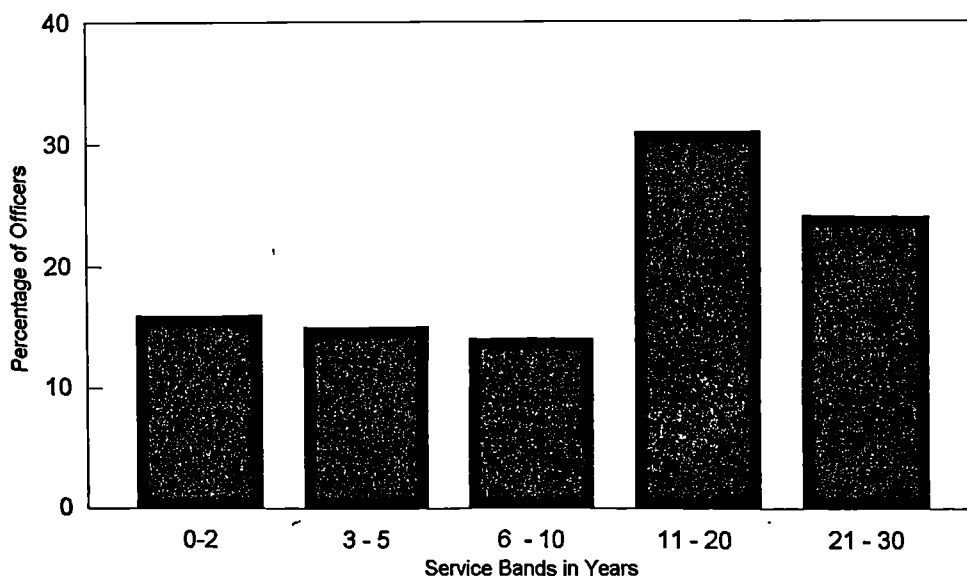
This would appear to be the first time such a survey of police officers' views about domestic violence has been conducted using such a high percentage of officers from one particular police area, with a full 100 per cent return. The results of the analysis certainly presented considerable insight into the attitude, perceptions and prejudices of officers called upon to deal with domestic incidents, but a close examination of the answers to certain questions is necessary in order that informed conclusions may be promulgated. The first group of questions sought to obtain basic information about the officer completing the questionnaire, such as age, rank, length of service, gender, and duty performed. Figure 6(1) is a breakdown of the age range of the officers surveyed and shows that the largest number were relatively young (21 - 30 years) although almost all the officers were aged between 21 and 50 years.

Figure 6(1) Age of officers involved in survey



The actual number of officers of varying ranks who completed the questionnaire, 75 per cent constables, 19 per cent sergeants, 6 per cent Inspectors, equates quite well with the actual proportion of officers in each of those ranks who are based at Washington sub division. As the previous chapter identified that 91 per cent of the officers who attended domestic incidents in Washington sub division during May 1990 were of constable rank, it is therefore appropriate that the majority of officers involved in this particular research were constables. Although there was a good cross section, varying from officers with less than two years service to officers approaching 30 years police service, the largest group were to be found in the 10 - 20 years service band, which indicates that those surveyed were, on the whole, experienced police officers. This is clearly shown in Figure 6(2) which shows the length of service of the officers surveyed. It ought to be pointed out that only 11 per cent of the officers involved in the survey were female, but that percentage needs to be considered in the light of the fact that only 10 per cent of the total number of officers stationed at Washington were women.

Figure 6(2) Length of service of officers



Having dealt with the rank of the officers involved it is just as important to consider the actual duty performed by the officers surveyed, for the majority of officers (82 per cent) were engaged on uniform patrol duties and only 11 per cent were from the CID. This too was an accurate representation of the overall make-up of Washington Sub Division where just over 10 per cent of the officers stationed there were attached to the CID. Consequently the majority of officers surveyed were those who actually responded to and attended incidents of domestic violence in Washington - uniformed constables.

Dealing with Domestic Incidents

It was generally accepted by the officers that domestic incidents were more prevalent at night than at any other time of the day. In fact only one officer took the view that such incidents were more prevalent at tea time and, although he represents a very small minority view, the evidence from the previous chapter would tend to support his assertion. Nevertheless the perception amongst the majority of officers that domestic incidents are more prevalent at night may account for the fact that 70 per cent of them would prefer to be accompanied by another officer when attending domestic incidents, but only 8 per cent would prefer to be accompanied by a female officer. Domestic incidents would appear to be seen as a problem that is best not tackled alone and preferably attended to when accompanied by another male officer.

This is very much in line with the findings of a survey of police officers' attitudes, Dolon, Hendricks & Meagher (1986), which showed that domestic violence was perceived by them as a real threat to their safety. This view was reinforced by Smith (1989) and to a large

extent by other information obtained from this questionnaire, where 78 per cent of all officers preferred being accompanied by another officer when attending domestic incidents.

However, Ellis (1987) researched assaults upon police officers in the United States during 1982 - 1983 and found that for every officer assaulted whilst dealing with a domestic incident, a total of five officers were assaulted whilst dealing with disturbances that were not domestic by nature. Even though annually in excess of 20,000 police officers are assaulted whilst on duty in England and Wales, there is no effective means at present of breaking down this figure into those assaults connected with domestic and non domestic incidents. However, a limited study undertaken within the South Wales Constabulary in 1986 found that 10 per cent of all assaults upon police officers occurred during domestic disputes (Bourlet 1988). Therefore, while researchers such as Ellis (1987) might consider that the level of assaults on police at domestic incidents is not a problem this view is not shared by police officers who actually attend such incidents.

In order to reduce the potential for violence towards the officers most of them (76 per cent) felt there would be considerable benefit in being given some background information about the family or persons involved in a domestic incident before they were actually sent there. Because of the continual upgrades to computerised command and control systems, it ought now to be possible in most police forces to give officers such information, particularly relating to previous domestic incidents at any given location or simply details of persons with a known propensity for violence being resident there.

The influence of peer pressure was also considered and the officers asked whether the manner in which they dealt with domestic incidents was affected by the views of their colleagues or supervisors. Only a very small number of officers (4 per cent) readily admitted they would be influenced by peer pressure, but rather more (20 per cent) accepted they would possibly at times be influenced in such a way. However, the overwhelming majority of officers (76 per cent) were adamant that the views of colleagues or supervisors would not affect the way in which they dealt with domestic incidents. This response is a little hard to accept, although there is a general reluctance on the part of police officers to accept that the way in which they go about their duty is influenced by and subject to peer group pressure. Most probably this finding is not just restricted to police officers.

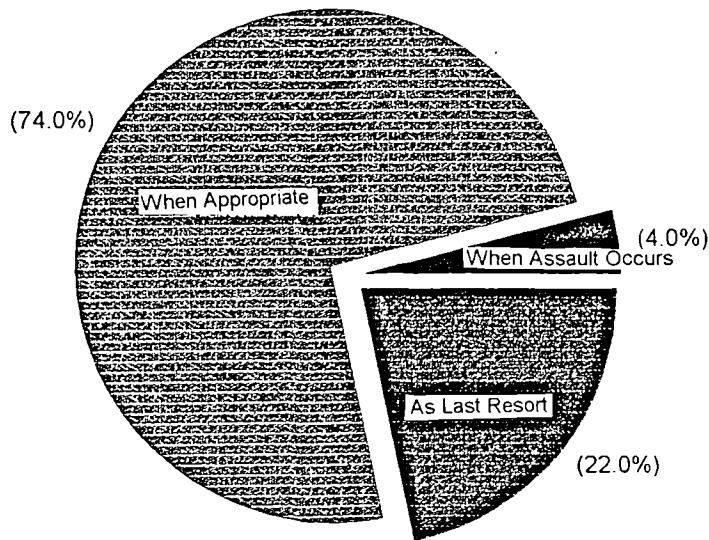
Three quarters of all officers who took part in the survey claimed their handling of domestic incidents was not affected by the views of other officers or supervisors and the majority of officers (85 per cent) believed that current legislation appertaining to domestic violence was either effective when dealing with domestic incidents or else something to fall back upon in such situations. With that in mind, one would expect a very positive approach together with a relatively high arrest rate for domestic incidents. As mentioned previously, the average arrest rate for domestic incidents in the Northumbria Police area was just under 3 per cent. None of the officers claimed their primary intention was to arrest the offender but 90 per cent declared their intention simply to calm the situation, whilst the remainder who responded freely admitted their intention was to expedite the incident as quickly as possible and then return on patrol. This was in spite of the fact that the majority of officers surveyed (69 per cent) stated that matrimonial injunctions were only of benefit if a power of arrest were attached.

Whilst Home Office Circular 60/1990 and Force policy is firmly in favour of positive intervention, rather than mediation, in cases of domestic violence, officers still attend such incidents with the intention of mediating, rather than intervening. This is compounded by the acceptance by the officers that current legislation is generally adequate to sustain a policy of intervention and arrest.

Policy and Discretion

What comes across very clearly from this survey is that no matter what policy statements or circulars are issued, police officers are insistent that they use their discretion in such matters. Domestic incidents are viewed as part of a 'grey' area of policing where discretion, experience and pragmatism are used to determine the handling and outcome of an incident, rather than reliance upon legislation or strict adherence to Force Policy. This is reinforced by the response given when officers were asked to indicate when they would consider making an arrest. Figure 6(3) outlines the circumstances under which the officers would consider such a course of action. About three quarters of the officers (74 per cent) claimed they would arrest only when they considered it necessary, whilst 21 per cent considered that an arrest was only to be used as a last resort and only 4 per cent would consider making an arrest following an assault! These findings do reiterate previous research that police officers are inclined to make their judgements as to when an assault is sufficient to warrant an offender being arrested.

Figure 6(3) Circumstances under which an arrest would be made



On the occasions when arrests are made, the one single factor believed by 90 per cent of the officers to be responsible for hindering or actually halting a successful prosecution, is the prospect of the victim withdrawing her complaint. One officer blamed the policy of the Crown Prosecution Service while the remainder held no firm views of the matter. The overwhelming view of the officers, regardless of rank, age, gender or designation was that the victim withdrawing her complaint was the main reason behind an unsuccessful prosecution. Obviously such a perception by such a large percentage of officers is bound to influence the manner in which they respond to and deal with domestic incidents. It does not however, appear to take account of the reasons behind a woman subsequently withdrawing her complaint; such as fear of her violent partner, fear for her children's safety or family pressures. This particular aspect is the subject of further discussion later in this chapter.

Not only was the victim blamed for most discontinued or unsuccessful prosecutions but when attempting to apportion blame in domestic incidents, 70 per cent of officers believed both parties were equally blameworthy; only 3 per cent actually blamed the woman partner solely, while 25 per cent blamed the male partner. It is nevertheless rather disconcerting that the majority of officers are blaming both parties when in virtually all cases, the female partners are the unfortunate victims.

A Question of Class

Of all the questions on the survey, the one that appears to have caused the most concern asked the officers to identify the social group in which they believed domestic incidents were most prevalent. In all, 10 per cent chose not to answer that question, the majority of that group being made up of the officers who were more senior either in rank or length of service and may well indicate a reluctance to appear judgemental when dealing with the issue of class in society. The same reluctance was not evident when dealing with the victims of such violence when it appeared relatively easy for the officers to apportion blame. With 57 per cent identifying the unemployed and a further 33 per cent the working class, this was only to be expected, since the vast majority of reported domestic incidents to the police emanate from those groups. There are very few domestic incidents reported in the more affluent middle class areas, but this can be put down to a reluctance to involve the police in such matters rather than an absence of domestic violence there. Washington, in keeping with the rest of Tyneside and Wearside, does suffer from a high level of unemployment (currently 12 per cent) and unemployment does cut across class boundaries. In fact the results of the study of domestic incidents occurring in Washington in the

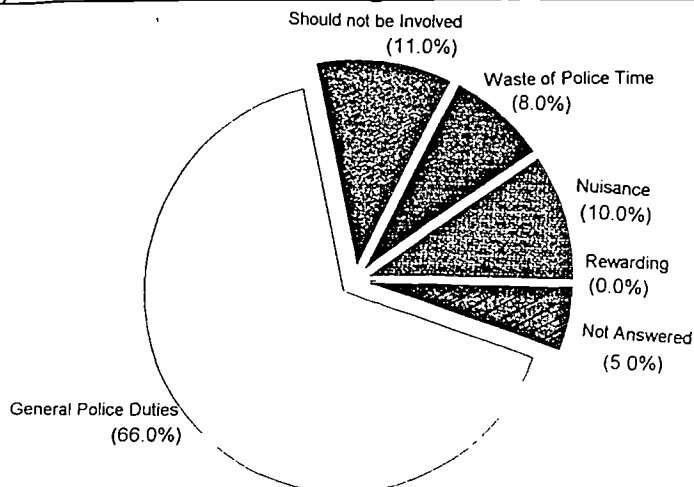
previous chapter identified the areas with the highest level of reported domestic violence as Easington Lane and Shiney Row, areas of high unemployment as well as high crime.

Officers' Perceptions

Having already touched upon the all important question of how police officers actually view dealing with domestic incidents, figure 6(4) outlines the most common held opinions.

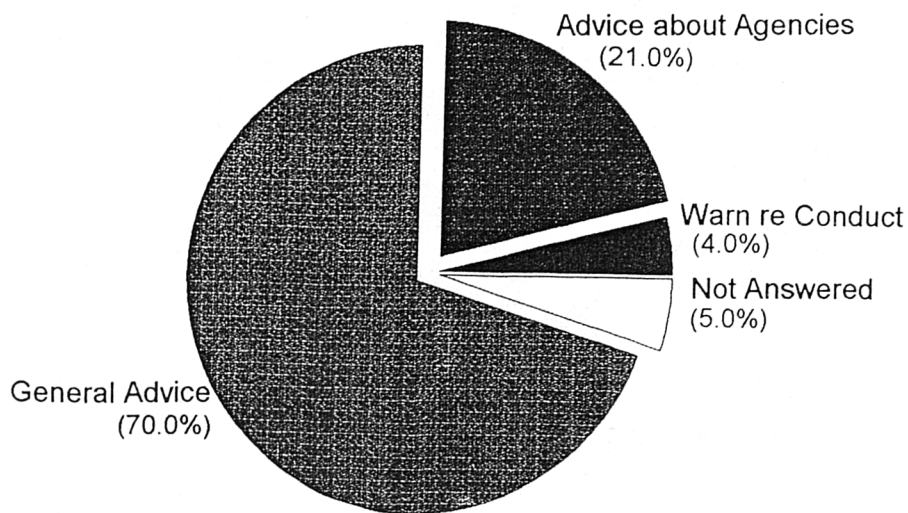
A significant number feel 'domestics' are either a waste of time, a nuisance or something the police ought not to become involved with, which is borne out by previous research carried out by Pahl (1982), Borkowski (1983) and Edwards (1986). However, as the majority of officers have previously indicated a preference not to attend domestic incidents alone but rather to be accompanied by a male colleague, such incidents are obviously considered as potentially violent. These officers are having to deal with disorder and possibly violence in someone's home and not in the street or other public place and consequently most of the officers (66 per cent) take the view that it is part of their general duties as a police officer. Not one single officer viewed dealing with domestic incidents as rewarding, because it is not seen as a real police problem, but more of a social problem. Of course if the police are unsuccessful in dealing with domestic violence, then there can be little reward in attending domestic incidents, bearing in mind the probably outcome.

Figure 6(4) How officers view dealing with domestic incidents



That may well account for the fact that the usual outcome of the majority of domestic incidents is the old cliché "advice given", but as Figure 6(5) illustrates one has to question what sort of advice is actually given in such cases.

Figure 6(5) Advice given at domestic incidents



A significant number of officers (21 per cent) regularly gave advice to both parties about the various agencies that could offer assistance but the majority of officers (70 per cent) said they gave general advice about behaviour and responsibilities. There are those who argue that the most usual police response to domestic violence is non intervention (Oppenlander 1982). Officers are giving what they consider to be appropriate advice when they readily admit to not having received adequate training in this particular area of competence. This is obviously not a satisfactory situation. Many officers, however, do spend considerable time talking and advising both parties involved, for it has already pointed out the average length of time individual police officers were engaged at each

domestic incident at Washington in May 1990 was 36 minutes. This does show that police officers do tend to spend a considerable amount of time at domestic incidents, albeit their role is usually one of arbiter or peace maker and not as law enforcers.

Nevertheless, domestic violence is not the only area of police work where mediation is the preferred option to enforcement. Whenever a road traffic accident occurs the normal police response to non injury accidents is to remove any damaged vehicles causing an obstruction and obtain some consensus so that the matter can be left in the hands of the insurance companies. It could well be argued that to be involved in an accident means that one or more parties involved have committed an offence of careless driving. The police rarely prosecute in such matters and certainly view that area of police work as unrewarding. The difficulty is that the large number of motorists caught up in an ensuing traffic jam simply want the police to move the vehicles and enable the traffic to flow freely again. There is no desire for the police to intervene and prosecute in minor accidents, unless there are substantial mitigating circumstances.

Domestic violence is a similar scenario where the inability and ineffectiveness of the police to tackle the problem, does not appear to be a cause for concern. This research has found no evidence of members of the public complaining about the police response to domestic violence, the only complaints appear to arise from the few occasions when arrests are made and the person arrested is the complainant.

Causes of Domestic Violence

The final item on the questionnaire presented the officers with nine possible triggers of domestic violence and asked them to rank those in order of importance. Alcohol appeared at the top of the list in almost all the questionnaires, as the main trigger of domestic violence. The highest number of reported domestic incidents occur between 11 pm and 1 am, this statistical link between alcohol and domestic violence is reinforced by the officers' own perceptions. Of course it is not just the perpetrators of domestic violence who are affected by drink, but in many cases the victims too. This may go some way to explaining the lack of sympathy and support some victims often feel they receive from police officers attending domestic incidents. The following list sets out the perceived triggers of domestic violence which the officers ranked in order of importance-

1. Alcohol
2. Money problems
3. Jealousy/extra-marital relationships
4. Unemployment
5. Unreasonable behaviour of husband
6. Unreasonable behaviour of wife
7. Class/social environment
8. Women working
9. Drugs

After alcohol, jealousy, extramarital relationships, money problems and unemployment were listed but these are very much ancillary to the main trigger - alcohol. Unemployment

and money problems are issues that are ever present in many families but the spark that ignites the touch paper is very often alcohol. In areas of high unemployment, one would expect money problems and unemployment itself to be considered at the top of the list when determining the main triggers of domestic violence, but that is not the case here. Further, if most police officers considered that domestic incidents were most prevalent amongst the unemployed, one would naturally expect those officers to list unemployment as a major trigger; this is obviously not the case. In the middle of the list of triggers of domestic violence, appears the unreasonable behaviour of husbands, followed closely by the unreasonable behaviour of wives and this reinforces the view held by the officers that both the male and female parties to the incident are equally to blame. At the bottom of this list of triggers are class/social environment, women working and drugs - issues not considered so relevant. This listing of the perceived main triggers of domestic violence does not really present any surprises and is generally in keeping with the information received in answers to the other preceding questions of the survey, although there has been in recent years a considerable increase since then in the use of drugs and the awareness by the police of the problems associated with illicit drug taking.

Views of the Women Police Officers

Women police officers were in the minority as they only account for 10 per cent of the officers stationed at Washington. All the policewomen in the survey group were of constable rank and, with the exception of one officer, were aged under 30 years and had less than five years service. Most were attached to the uniform branch on regular patrol duties and the replies given to the various questions were generally in line with the overall results with a few notable exceptions. There was unanimous agreement that the likelihood

of a successful prosecution in cases of domestic violence was generally frustrated by the victim withdrawing her complaint. This response was much stronger than that of their male colleagues, some of whom attributed other factors instead, as being more relevant. When asked whether the manner in which they dealt with domestic incidents would be influenced in any way if children were directly involved, only 60 per cent answered in the affirmative. Although this figure is virtually identical to that of their male colleagues, one would have expected a more sympathetic approach to be apparent here however, the answer may lie in the fact that most of the policewomen were relatively young in both age and service and also unmarried. Whilst 76 per cent of the overall survey group claimed not to be influenced by peer pressure, less than half the policewomen felt that way. In fact 56 per cent of policewomen considered they would be influenced sometimes, by either colleagues or supervisory officers; the corresponding percentage for the whole group was only 20 per cent. Of course it may not simply be that policewomen are more susceptible to pressure from male colleagues and supervisors but that they are more open to declare that view than their male colleagues.

With regard to the possible formation of a Domestic Violence Unit, 66 per cent of the policewomen were actively in favour of such a move, while the corresponding figure for the whole group was 38 per cent. Such strong support for a Domestic Violence Unit could be attributed to the fact that policewomen and not policemen would be expected to provide the personnel for such units, but even though such support for a Domestic Violence Unit was evident, the majority of policewomen admitted to having received no real training which would enable them to adequately cope with working in such a unit. This fact is rather disturbing because the majority of these policewomen have less than five years

service and are the product of modern, more enlightened police training methods. Whilst one might accept such a response from older, more senior officers, who received their initial training anything up to thirty years ago, the quality of training currently given in this field is regrettably considered by the officers to be inadequate. One final point worthy of mention relates to the apportioning of blame in domestic incidents, for most policewomen laid the blame at the feet of both parties, with only a minority blaming the male protagonists of the violence. These policewomen were certainly not overtly sympathetic towards the women involved in domestic violence, but as relatively young career-orientated women they do not seem to relate to women who do not share their values and ambitions.

The Views of Inspectors

The other distinctive group in the survey group that does bear looking at, are the police Inspectors. Although relatively small in number, these are the officers in middle management who were effectively in operational command of Washington sub division. Not surprisingly, all are men. Yet even these experienced senior policemen preferred to attend domestic incidents accompanied by another police officer, so regardless of rank or experience, "domestics" are seen as potentially a real problem that are best not tackled alone.

Unlike the policewomen, there was unanimous agreement that their approach to domestic incidents would be influenced in situations where children were involved. This may well be explained by considering the age of the Inspectors, all of whom were fathers, and some even grandfathers. In addition, under the Children and Young Persons Act, they do as Inspectors, from time to time, have to make decisions which affect the welfare and care of

children and young persons. There was overwhelming support among the Inspectors for the establishing of a Domestic Violence Unit, however as senior policemen, such a unit would be considered a valuable resource and management facility. Obviously as managers and supervisors, they are able to look beyond immediate problems and short term solutions to measures that are likely to be effective in the long term. Nevertheless all but one Inspector admitted to having received no real training in dealing with domestic violence. This view does reinforce the comments of the policewomen who maintained that very little training had actually been given to enable them to deal effectively with incidents of domestic violence. In fact 65 per cent of all officers surveyed considered that they either had received no real training or else the training received was insufficient.

Personal Interviews with Officers

Having evaluated the responses to these questionnaires, the need was identified to extend this information obtained by selecting a small number of these officers in order to interview them at length to elaborate upon some of the areas that have already been considered. Smith (1989), concluded that most of the research dealing with police attitudes towards domestic violence, relied upon information supplied by victims. She considered information needed to be obtained directly from interviews with serving police officers, so that comparisons could be made between male and female officers, different ranks and different age groups. During a period of two years, from 1991 to 1993, the researcher interviewed approximately 60 officers, mainly of constable rank stationed at Washington, at the time of their annual staff appraisal. During this interview the question of the police handling of domestic incidents was raised as an issue and the response to the questionnaire discussed in general and specific terms. Nothing of any significance emerged from these

interviews which would affect the findings of the response to the questionnaire to any great extent. If anything a more negative response to the handling of domestic incidents appeared to emerge, in all cases backed up by referring to specific incidents which the officers had personally dealt with.

The reluctance of victims of domestic violence to pursue a prosecution was cited by many of these officers as the reason for their reluctance to become involved in such domestic incidents. Stanko (1985) claims that "victim reluctance" is a myth, but that view is strongly challenged by many police officers.

Having initially sought the views of police officers stationed at Washington by way of questionnaire and then following this up by speaking to a large number of those officers informally over the next two years, this part of the research was concluded in 1993 by in depth interviews with four individual police officers. Two constables, a sergeant and an Inspector were seen, each interview lasting from about 45 minutes to 1½ hours in duration. The salient points were subsequently taken from each interview and the relevant extracts recorded verbatim.

Interviews with Police Officers

Interview 1. Bill (Constable - 15 years service)

"I feel sorry for some of the women who are victims of domestic violence, but very often the house is scruffy, the kids aren't that well looked after and both parties have been out drinking. There seems to be a lot of pressure on the police to make an arrest at domestics, but I've gone to houses where both parties have turned on me and I've had pots and pans thrown at me.Look it's like all confrontation situations. Somebody phones the police reporting a domestic and when you get there the wife tells you some horror story which makes you think she's married to some sort of psychopath. You then go into the kitchen where the other policeman who's

attended with you is speaking to the husband has got some equally horrendous story from him about what his wife has been doing. When you try to sort something out both then start shouting at you..... In most cases you can resolve a domestic by getting the husband to leave. If he doesn't agree then I would help him out of the house. If he started working himself in the street then I'd lock him up..... I certainly prefer to lock someone up in the street. If I locked him up in the house I'd be worried that the wife would turn on me or even come to court and give evidence against me.... Everybody's an expert these days. Everybody knows the answer. If those experts and womens' groups had to work night shift and deal with domestics at ---- they would soon change their minds..... There's no problem locking up everybody at domestics but when I have made an arrest, in almost every case the victim has withdrawn her complaint. I don't always blame the victim because very often solicitors have been wheeling and dealing in the matter."

Interview 2 - Andy (Constable - 2 yrs service)

"The first domestic I attended was with ----, he was an old fashioned 'polis' which meant that he didn't do much and hardly ever arrested anybody for anything..... when we got the call (to a domestic) he drove so slow, I thought we'd never get there. He walked in the house and completely ignored the woman who was shouting at us. He spoke to both of them - I would have locked the husband up for his language but he just told them to put the kettle on and calm down. He spent so much time talking to them and he took so much slaver from the husband that it got embarrassing - he just didn't want to know.... In the end it all calmed down and we left, we went to an Old Folks Home for a cup of tea. I wasn't happy - I think we should have locked him up..... I've finished my probation and I think I do have some sympathy for battered wives. I have dealt with a battered wife recently and got her straight into a refuge. I remember it was an awful night, torrential rain - she had two small children and they looked so pathetic as we took them to the refuge - but I think they got back together again."

Interview 3 - Steve (Sergeant - 11 yrs service)

"My father was in the Army so we moved around a lot. He used to drink a lot and go out with his mates so that always caused a problem..... I have vivid memories of domestic violence as I was growing up, nothing serious though - mainly shouting and arguing. I suppose the violence was probably my mother throwing things at dad when he'd been drinking too much..... I get annoyed when people try to tell us our job, because I've got personal experience....

I suppose it does effect how you deal with things - I am certainly more inclined to make an arrest when I go to domestics but it's not that simple. I go to quite a few domestics when I'm 'doubled up' often with a policewoman. There's no problem locking up the husband but honestly at most of the domestics, the woman's equally to blame. The number of women who go out for a good time and get drunk is quite high - I'm not just saying this but there are times when I'd be more justified in locking up the wife because she's more drunk than the husband. There are some though I feel sorry for - the real battered wives."

Interview 4 - Barry (Inspector - 28 yrs service)

"As the Duty Inspector I'm in charge of the busiest sub division in the Force and I've got less police than they have in the city centre. I can't afford to have policemen tied up at incidents, whether it's a domestic, a shoplifting or even a minor RTA (traffic accident). In an ideal world we could spend a lot longer at domestics, giving advice, talking to both parties but my priority is to ensure that resources deal with all incidents as expeditiously as possible..... Domestics are a problem because often they escalate and you find that neighbours join in. If you get a domestic in the --- Estate in Easington Lane, that can quickly escalate into a real public order situation and it ends up with the whole shift turning up to help..... Because we are always there none of the other public agencies want to get involved. We might not give a good service but I'll tell you this - we do a lot better than the Social Workers or the Probation Service - you don't see many of them around when it gets dark.... It really is a social problem, we're talking about families with problems who need advice and counselling. None of my lads are social workers but they seem to be doing that job -it's not really a core policing function is it?..... I'd like to see us arrest more men for domestic violence but in nearly 30 years as a policeman I've never known the courts to take a serious view of wife-battering. There are always plenty of solicitors willing to represent a husband whose beaten up his wife and then they criticise us for getting involved in private family matters."

Interview 5 - Jayne (Constable - 4 yrs service)

"I try to be sympathetic when I to domestics but a lot of the women are really obnoxious. I think they resent the fact that I'm a woman... I have been to domestics where the husband has been locked up. I remember one in particular where this poor woman got a real good hiding but she wouldn't complaint - she was really stupid. Her husband had been drinking and he was really working himself but we couldn't do much. He stood at the door as we left really working himself, mouthing off and that, so the lad I was with just arrested him for breach of the peace. When we got him down to the station he made a complaint against us.... He eventually got dealt with at court but all that happened was that he got bound over.... I can't feel that much sympathy for battered wives - I've got a boyfriend but there's no way I'd stay with him if he lifted a finger against me. I used to hear it said that some women enjoy violence, it turns them on - I've never come across that..... I've got no hesitation about locking people up at domestics - if somebody commits a criminal offence they get arrested - I can't see any problem with that."

All the officers interviewed appeared to have a high level of awareness about the problem of domestic violence. Each agreed that they would arrest offenders who had committed violence towards their partners but it did seem to be a subjective decision as to when an

arrest would be made. There was generally little confidence in the ability of the courts and the criminal justice system to deal with offenders who commit domestic violence and that did appear to have some bearing upon whether offenders were arrested or not. There was also a perception that domestics were in a category of incidents that had the potential to escalate into a public order situation and was therefore something that should be dealt with as expeditiously as possible.

Whilst talking with the officers they were each able to articulate various incidents of domestic violence they had somehow been involved in to highlight or substantiate their views on the matter, however there are difficulties in dealing with anecdotal evidence, particularly in relation to establishing the source of the information and its veracity. Steve, the sergeant interviewed, recounted a particular incident that had occurred in another sub-division where police officers had made an arrest for domestic violence, but the victim had declined to make a written statement or support the officers. The result was that a complaint was made against the officers and they were subsequently subject of civil proceedings. It was subsequently possible to locate and examine the files of evidence of that particular incident which may explain why Steve was subsequently reluctant to make an arrest at a domestic incident. The following is a summary of the incident referred to including details of the subsequent action taken.

"Just before teatime one Thursday afternoon on -- May 1991, police officers attended a reported disturbance at a house in Newcastle upon Tyne. Upon arrival two women were found, both in a distressed condition, the elder of the two had a facial injury, whilst the younger appeared heavily pregnant but very distressed. Her common law husband, who was alleged to have assaulted both women, was found in a rear bedroom at that address. When one of the officers tried to reason with him the man assaulted the officer and his colleague, so a police sergeant and another constable went to the assistance of their colleagues and the man was eventually

overpowered and arrested. The man concerned was subsequently charged with assaulting his common law wife and one of the police officers, and he was released on bail."

About four weeks later, a local firm of solicitors acting upon instructions of this man made a formal complaint against the officers, alleging that they had used unnecessary force during his arrest. A superintendent was appointed by the Deputy Chief Constable to carry out a full investigation into the allegation and the matter remained "sub judice" until the related criminal proceedings were finalised in March 1992. The charges against the man were dismissed as both women declined to give evidence in court against him. In April 1992, the Deputy Chief Constable received a letter from the man's solicitors stating that the complaint would be dropped if the police would admit liability and pay appropriate damages. This was obviously not acceptable and a full investigation was carried out into the allegations made against the officer. Unfortunately, the common law wife of the man concerned declined to provide a full written statement, which would have obviously vindicated the officers' actions. The sergeant and three constables involved were all interviewed under caution but denied using excessive force on the man or assaulting him. Medical evidence showed that whilst one of the officers and the common law wife involved had quite definite injuries, the injuries sustained by the man involved were relatively minor and consistent with having been involved in a violent struggle.

The view of the senior officer appointed to investigate the complaint was that there was no independent evidence to support the complaint of the man that police officers had used excessive force during this arrest and had assaulted him. A full file of evidence was forwarded to the Director of Public Prosecutions to consider the criminal allegations against

the officers and then to the Police Complaints Authority to consider any disciplinary matters against the officers. In both instances the decision was that no charges, whether criminal or discipline, should be brought against the officers. The solicitors then engaged in civil proceedings against the Chief Constable, claiming damages for assault. By this time the common law wife involved was apparently reluctantly supporting her husband and was prepared to give evidence against the police officers. Although it was the intention of the Chief Constable to contest this matter vigorously, legal advice from counsel was to move towards an "out of court" settlement, because of the substantial costs involved in defending such an action.

The man concerned subsequently accepted a sum in excess of £7,500 as an out of court settlement; it is therefore hardly surprising that the officers concerned now have a rather jaundiced view after having been penalised for simply taking a positive stand and arresting a violent man for an unprovoked and serious assault upon his common law wife. Unfortunately, this example does not stand alone, for many other officers are able to relate quite similar situations where they feel let down, in fact the criminal justice system appears to let everyone down, except the violent wife beater.

One cannot therefore dismiss such incidents as mere anecdotes as they have actually taken place and sadly do have an adverse bearing upon the way in which police officers view domestic incidents. The legal system is perceived as supporting the violent offender against the police officers who have taken positive action on behalf of the victim. It is hardly surprising that the constable interviewed felt that "in almost every case the victim has withdrawn the complaint. I don't always blame the victim because very often solicitors

have been wheeling and dealing in the matter." At least there is a recognition that there is a reason behind a victim withdrawing her complaint and if blame is to be apportioned it often lies elsewhere than with the victim.

Criminal Justice System

Whilst the officers interviewed directed considerable criticism at the failure of the criminal justice system to adequately deal with persons who commit domestic violence, the apparent leniency shown by courts towards such offenders indicates a much wider problem of magistrates' sentencing policy.

In a report "Unequal before the Law" (National Council for Civil Liberties - 1990) considerable disparity was found between the way magistrates deal with offenders in Britain. In view of the fact that Magistrates Courts deal with ninety per cent of all criminal cases the following list highlights this disparity, showing the percentage of males aged 21 years and over who were sent straight to prison from various Petty-Sessional Divisions:-

<u>Top 10 imprisoners</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
South Tameside	17.44
Clerkenwell	15.39
Hastings	15.30
Exeter	13.22
Plymouth	11.66
Folkestone and Hythe	11.46
Ashton-under-Lyne	10.78
Stourbridge	10.58
Maidstone	10.04
Tower Bridge	9.82

<u>Bottom 10 imprisoners</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Barnet	1.03
Lliw Valley	0.88
Maidenhead	0.85
Yeovil	0.81
Houghton-le-Spring	0.49
North Anglesey	0
Mold	0
Shepton Mallet	0
East Retford	0
Eastleigh	0

That report is relevant because Houghton-le-Spring Petty Sessional Division is featured at the bottom of the national list of courts in relation to imprisonment. In South Tameside, Manchester, almost one in five (17.44 per cent) of adult male offenders appearing before the magistrates there were sent to prison, whilst in the case of Houghton-le-Spring the figure was a minimal 0.49 per cent, well below the national average of one in twenty. As Houghton-le-Spring Petty Sessional Division covers Washington Sub-Division the officer's lack of faith in the effectiveness of the criminal justice system may be well founded. How can anyone really expect those who commit domestic violence to receive custodial sentences when that particular court appears generally reluctant to adopt that course of action?

Although the report in question failed to establish any statistical correlation between the level of reported crime and the use of imprisonment as a sentence in specific areas, there certainly appears to be a tendency for some magistrates to use prison as a means of punishment less frequently than others, which lead the authors to conclude that the power of magistrates to imprison should be abolished. Whilst that line of argument may be erroneous the fact that the average term of imprisonment imposed by Magistrates was of a mere 11 weeks duration, is hardly a deterrent for those who commit violence towards

their partners. It is pointless for campaigners to continually promulgate imprisonment as the answer to the problem, when many courts avoid such a course of action and where the average term of imprisonment is only a matter of a few weeks.

Pulling the Evidence Together

Having conducted a quite extensive survey to underpin subsequent in depth interviews with selected police officers, a number of factors have emerged:

- i) Police officers attend domestic incidents with the intention of mediation and calming the situation despite the awareness and acceptance that they have adequate powers of arrest. Arrests are not made because officers do not treat domestic violence sufficiently seriously to warrant such a course of action - it is considered to be a dispute that can be resolved.
- ii) The reluctance to arrest is "justified" by blaming victims who subsequently withdraw their allegations of assault and thereby thwart any prosecution, albeit the evidence for such a claim is largely anecdotal.
- iii) Police officers perceptions and opinions are affected by peer pressure and police culture although this is not readily accepted.
- iv) Alcohol is put forward as the main contributory factor leading to domestic violence, although a number of other considerations came into play here.
- v) The criminal justice system is perceived as being ineffective in dealing with the problem of domestic violence, but this may well be representative of a much wider problem of a general lack of faith by police officers in the overall ineffectiveness of the criminal justice system.

Individual police officers who join the police service enter into a police culture that has been the subject of much research over recent years, notably Chatterton (1985), Reiner (1985) and Hobbs & May (1993). Particularly when dealing with domestic violence one has to consider whether the views held by individual officers either reveal long held prejudices or have developed through experience of such matters or even whether they have developed to conform to the police culture. If a new recruit joins the police service and

is faced with a culture where police officers do not prioritise domestic violence, where there is a reluctance to arrest offenders and where domestic incidents are considered a nuisance is it little wonder that such an officer will take on those values? On the other hand is such an ambivalent attitude towards domestic violence merely a reflection of the society of which those police officers are members and their views present a microcosm of commonly held views and beliefs.

Chapter 7

THE POLICE RESPONSE -

POLICY STATEMENTS AND POLICE DISCRETION

When considering the police response to domestic violence it does need to be considered in the light of how the individual's discretion operates within the policy of the organisation. There needs to be an understanding of the importance of police policy in relation to domestic violence and how that fits in with the considerable discretion afforded to individual police officers. Whilst the police have a duty to uphold the law and must at all times operate within the law, in many diverse areas the police response is dictated to by policy, either from the Home Office or an individual Chief Officer. As far back as 1975 the House of Commons Select Committee on Violence took the view that a policy statement from Chief Officer level, about domestic violence was necessary, setting out clear instructions about the manner in which these incidents ought to be handled.

We do believe that assaults in the home are just as serious as assaults in other places and that citizens who call the police to their aid at a time when they are being assaulted are entitled to the full protection of the law. We recommend therefore that Chief Constables should review their policies about the police approach to domestic violence. Special instructions about this difficult and delicate subject should be given to all new recruits, and regular written guidance should be issued by the Chief Constable, in the form of advisory leaflets. (1975 Select Committee on Violence in Marriage).

This view was supported by Bourlet (1988) who concluded that a positive statement was needed from Chief Officers setting out the status of crimes of assault in cases of domestic violence. He warned that in the absence of a clear policy statement by chief officers

together with clear written advice about the handling of such incidents, police officers would continue to mediate and give advice in such matters rather than intervene and arrest the offender. What gives credence to Bourlet's comments is the fact that shortly after his research was published he took up the post as Assistant Chief Constable with South Wales Constabulary.

Home Office Circular 60.1990

Although welcomed and supported by women's organisations and other interested parties, neither the Select Committee nor Bourlet's comments resulted in any positive action by Chief Officers. It was only when the Home Office issued a directive on domestic violence (Home Office Circular 60/1990) as a comprehensive policy document directed specifically at Chief Offices of Police that any real action was taken. In essence the circular invited them to review and revise their policy on domestic violence and also the manner in which both victims and offenders are dealt with. At the outset the circular sought to take up the main proposals raised by the Select Committee of 1975, albeit some fifteen years later.

Chief Officers of Police will be aware of public concern about the incidence of domestic violence and the need to ensure the proper protection of victims from physical attacks which take place in the home. This concern has been reflected increasingly by the police themselves, in the establishment of Force policies and, in some cases, special units to deal with domestic violence.

The Home Secretary regards a violent assault or brutal and threatening behaviour over a period of time by a person to whom the victim is married, or with whom the victim lives, or had lived, as seriously as a violent assault by a stranger.

It is an established fact that when the Home Office advise or invite Chief Officers to undertake a certain course of action, usually by way of circular, this normally precipitates

some form of direct action. The reason for this is that all police forces are inspected by Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary who is required to determine whether any particular Force is running efficiently. As such persons are employed by the Home Office it would be foolish not to take some form of action in response to one of their directives. Of course, as mentioned previously, this circular resulted in a re-classification of domestic violence incidents within Northumbria Police so that positive action by government departments is not always entirely helpful.

The purpose of the circular was to offer guidance to the police on how to respond to the problem of domestic violence and to encourage individual police forces to develop and publicise both policy statements and strategies to deal with the problem of domestic violence. Although directed at Chief Officers there was a definite requirement for them to communicate to their officers, who were involved in investigating incidents of domestic violence, the need to place the protection of the victim and the apprehension of the offender as majority priorities.

An Invitation to Action

Whilst a considerable amount of material that emanates from the Home Office is indecisive and quite ambiguous this circular was so precise that it listed a total of thirty individual lines of activity to deal with the problem of domestic violence.

In the circular Chief Officers were **invited** to:-

- (i) Liaise with other agencies and voluntary bodies to establish arrangements for referring victims to sources of long term support.

- (ii) Consider the establishment of dedicated domestic violence units where this is practical and cost effective and the appointment of liaison officers, where it is not.
- (iii) Draw up a force policy statement on the response to domestic violence which emphasises the duty to protect victims from further attacks and the need to treat domestic violence as seriously as other forms of violence.
- (iv) Emphasise the need to respond to every incident with some sort of positive action.
- (v) Review recording policy to ensure all offences are properly recorded and not 'no crimed'.
- (vi) Recommend that officers ought not to attempt conciliation if the victim has been, or claims to have been, violently assaulted.
- (vii) Make arrangements for medical assistance to be provided for victims and for forensic examinations to be carried out.
- (viii) Ensure that in all cases their officers are aware of their powers of arrest in dealing with cases.
- (ix) Ensure that in all cases their officers consider bringing a charge against alleged assailants and explain to victims the need to give evidence.
- (x) Consider using bail in accordance with S.34 of Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 to provide protection for the victim where no charges are brought.
- (xi) Provide full background information to the Crown Prosecution Service.
- (xii) Make arrangements for continued support for the victim during the pre trial period and producing an information leaflet for victims.
- (xiii) Advise Crown Prosecution Service if the victim wishes to withdraw, after investigating her reasons and assessing them.

It was opportune that this document was circulated during the period of this research although there did not appear to be a great deal of interest both in Northumbria and further

afield. Obviously policy cannot be amended or introduced overnight and this circular was considered for some time by the department dealing with policy support matters. It was evident that here was a real opportunity to bring in an effective policy with little effort because all the obvious courses of action were clearly identified. The first course of action identified was for the police to liaise with other agencies and voluntary bodies, which is in other words to encourage a multi agency approach to the problem, albeit that it was restricted slightly to deal with long term support for victims.

Whilst the official response to this circular would take some time, it drew an almost immediate response by way of an editorial in the Police Review which is generally regarded as the 'official' weekly magazine of the police service:-

Police are given the same sort of advice on domestic violence as a driver backing into a confined space in a crowded car park. Everyone around knows how to do the job, but no one offers to take it over. It is doubtful if the new Home Office guidelines, filtered through 43 different Chief Constables, will improve the lot of the constable called to a bleeding woman or a bullying man. The police record on assisting battered women has been, and in some areas still is, appalling. Girlfriends, prostitutes, common law wives and long suffering mothers have all been treated as if their conduct has fully justified the beatings, kickings, wounding and attempted murders that are the everyday commerce of 'domestics'.

Poor training, and worse advice, have caused many a young officer to leave a battered woman to be battered again, convinced that this is not a matter for police concern. The reality of a woman refusing to give evidence against her attacker has rarely been balanced against the equally valid reality of asking a woman to imprison the man on whom she and her children depend for food and lodgings. A respect for tradition and a confusion over powers of arrest has caused many an officer, who would not hesitate to break up a pub brawl, to obey a man's injunction to 'stay out of this'. (Police Review 3 August 1990)

The editorial ended by suggesting that Parliament create a specific offence of domestic violence, as the writer believed it should not be a matter for individual police forces to

decide that a 'wife beater' in one area should be treated more harshly or more leniently than a 'wife beater' elsewhere in the country. A specific new statutory offence was advocated in place of the uncertainty where officers are encouraged to use their discretion.

Unfortunately the Police Review chose to centre around the provision of a specific offence of domestic violence which has not materialised. As previously mentioned there are substantial grounds for opposing such a specific offence because it would tend to trivialise the violence involved. In law cases of assault are generally categorised in relation to the level of injury sustained rather than the standing of the victim, the more serious the injury the more likely that a term of imprisonment will result. If magistrates are reluctant to imprison offenders for serious assaults what likelihood would there be of someone facing imprisonment for an offence of domestic violence?

Directed To Arrest

In order that police officers may be aware of the full powers, under the law, available to them when dealing with cases of domestic violence the Circular identified a further need for Chief Officers to ensure that their officers were aware of the powers of arrest that existed in such cases.

There are extensive police powers available:-

1. Section 17 (1)(b) Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 - A Constable may enter any premises for the purpose of arresting a person for an arrestable offence; which will include assaults occasioning actual or grievous bodily harm or wounding.
2. Section 17(1)(e) Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 - a constable may also enter premises for the purpose of saving life or limb or preventing serious damage to property.

3. Common Law - a Constable has power to enter premises to prevent or deal with a breach of the peace.
4. Section 24 Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 - a constable may arrest any person whom he suspects has committed an arrestable offence, or is about to commit one (ie an offence which attracts a maximum penalty of 5 years imprisonment or more; or a penalty fixed by law; or for certain other specified offences - (including indecent assault on a woman).
5. Section 25 Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 - a constable may arrest a person where he has reasonable grounds for believing it necessary to prevent him from causing physical injury to another person or to protect a child or other vulnerable person.
6. Common Law - a constable has a power of arrest to prevent a breach of the peace.
7. Civil Law - a constable may arrest a person who is in breach of an injunction or court order which has a power of arrest attached.
 - i) County Court injunctions may contain restraining orders (eg exclusion from the matrimonial home) and a power of arrest.
 - ii) Family Protection Order from the Magistrates' Court may contain similar restrictions and a power of arrest.

The Need to Arrest

When dealing with domestic incidents, police officers use their discretion as to which course of action is the most appropriate in the circumstances. The decision whether to arrest and thereby initiate court proceedings is a decision that an officer must personally make and be accountable for. Should a particular arrest by an officer be called into question, apart from any criminal offence, the Chief Constable is liable for damages and costs in the civil courts. Considering that Northumbria Police may be expected to pay out over fifty thousand pounds each year for such claims, it highlights that an arrest is a course of action that cannot be entered into lightly and can have quite severe consequences in cases of wrongful arrest. Very often a police officer must make that decision very soon after

arriving at a domestic incident at a time when both parties involved are making allegations and counter allegations. Obviously in cases of assault where visible injuries are evident, and the assault is admitted by the partner, there is no real problem, but many domestic incidents are not so straightforward.

Certainly a police officer's decision to arrest or conversely not to make an arrest will affect the way in which he is perceived to have handled the incident by both parties and could also have a considerable effect upon the future relationship between the persons involved in the incident. With the benefit of hindsight there are many instances when the officer's decision to arrest, or not to arrest can be shown to be the wrong decision, having regard to all the available evidence and attendant circumstances. Even though the Home Office may go to great lengths to point out the various powers of arrest available neither they nor any Chief Officer have decreed that police officers WILL arrest offenders in all cases of domestic violence.

The question of police discretion emerged in the previous chapter, where it was considered that in cases of domestic violence, officers still attend such incidents with the intention of mediating, rather than intervening; this being compounded by the acceptance of the officers that current legislation is generally adequate to sustain a policy of intervention and arrest.

Of course discretion is not the sole prerogative of the police constable for, at a higher level, Chief Officers must decide which particular problems are to be regarded as priorities and therefore have police resources directed towards them. Areas such as public order, drug related crime, firearms related offences and race relations are all areas that come to mind, as having priority over domestic violence. In fact a policy statement published by

Northumbria Police entitled "Force Objectives for the 90s" listed the five main priorities as:-

Combat Drug Abuse
Public Order
Fight Crime
Road Safety
Good Public Relations

Since then the Home Secretary has issued his objectives for policing and now Police Authorities in consultation with Chief Officers are required to provide an Annual Policing Plan. Whilst the Chief Officer must take account of public feeling, the Court of Appeal (R v Metropolitan Police Commissioner ex parte Blackburn 1968) upheld a Chief Officer's right to use his discretion when deciding upon policing levels and police action in his particular area. Domestic violence has never been in the past an area that figured high on the list of priorities of any Chief Officer, but things are changing.

The Need for a Policy Statement

Bourlet (1988) considered that a strong policy from the Chief Officer or other authority, is an essential precursor to the building of a positive operational policy, if that policy is to stand any chance of working. This view was subsequently re-enforced by Section II of Circular 60.1990 which dealt with the subject of Force Policy Statements.

The Home Secretary recommends that Chief Officers should consider issuing a Force Policy Statement about their response to domestic violence, to provide guidance to their officers and ensure that they are fully aware of their Force's priorities, the response that is expected of them in assisting victims and the powers which are available to them. The use of Force Policy Statements can play a helpful role in influencing the attitudes and behaviour of officers who are called on to deal with cases of domestic violence.

The following were recognised as being an integral part of any Force Policy Statement:-

- * The duty to protect victims and children from further violence.
- * The need to treat domestic violence seriously.
- * The use of powers of arrest.
- * The dangers of attempting conciliation between parties.
- * The importance of accurate, comprehensive record keeping.
- * The need to monitor the effectiveness of the Policy.

In response to this circular and in line with most other Forces, the Chief Constable of Northumbria issued a Force Policy Statement which was circulated to all members of Northumbria Police, by way of Force Order on 31 October 1990.

Force Policy Statement - Domestic Violence

Following the publication of Home Office Circular 60/1990, the Chief Constable wishes all officers to be aware of his policy on this subject. The problems of domestic violence is not new but, in recent years, a greater awareness has developed of the constructive role the police can play in protecting and assisting victims of violence, in particular women and children. In dealing with complaints of domestic violence all officers should be aware of the overriding duty to protect victims, and children, from further attack. In order to achieve this, domestic violence should be treated as seriously as other forms of violence and should be the subject of positive and prompt action by thorough investigation. Full use should be made of the legal powers available and the use of powers of arrest and detention should always be seriously considered. Appropriate assistance should be given to victims and, where necessary, medical treatment may be arranged or contact made with relevant agencies and voluntary bodies. Victims may also be provided with practical assistance to leave the premises concerned, if they so request. Officers should not attempt conciliation where the victim has been, or claims to have been, violently assaulted. (Northumbria Police Force Order 48/1990)

Although a very precise and concise policy statement by a Chief Officer, framed in accordance with and in the spirit of, the Home Office Circular, one must question "What

effect has it had upon the policing of domestic violence?" The answer unfortunately is "Not a lot!" Referring to the previous chapter and considering some of the responses given by officers from Washington in June 1991, these were some eight months after the Chief Constable's Policy Statement was published. When asked about attendance at domestic incidents 90 per cent of officers stated their intention was to calm the situation; no one attended with the intention of making an arrest. When asked when they would consider making an arrest, 74 per cent would do so when they considered it appropriate, 21 per cent as a last resort and only 4 per cent would arrest when there was an assault. Therefore the publication of a policy statement by a chief officer directing officers away from mediation and conciliation towards positive intervention and arrest is not guaranteed to succeed for two reasons:- firstly, the difficulty of transforming policy into action; and secondly the exercise of discretion by police officers.

Inadequate Training

The Police Review editorial, in response to the Home Office circular, alluded to the fact that poor training just as much as inappropriate advice resulted in the police providing poor service delivery to victims of domestic violence. That necessitated consideration of what level of training police officers actually received, particularly as the officers subject of the Washington Study also felt they had received inadequate training.

All police officers undergo a period of intense initial training at a regional training centre, supplemented by further modules of training at Force level throughout their two year probationary period. All recruits work to a training manual which provides theoretical and practical advice upon a number of areas that will confront them whilst patrolling the beat.

Chapter 14 of the manual relates to domestic disputes and was amended in the light of the provisions of Home Office Circular 60/1990 and a copy is appended at Annex 8. The introduction reminds officers that they are the only agency to assist 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and that police officers are involved with the problems that exist within the community they are policing.

Domestic disputes are defined as being a break down in domestic family relationships that have reached a point where police attendance is required. Whilst pointing out that criminal offences are not usually involved the fact is highlighted that the most likely offences to arise from disputes are assaults and breach of the peace. There is some sound practical advice for dealing with disputes in general such as the need to remain calm, controlled, and patient.

Of concern, however, are the listed police objectives when dealing with disputes:-

- * To restore the peace and give advice
- * To understand the viewpoint of both parties
- * To separate the parties concerned
- * To advise each party out of the presence of the other
- * To give the appearance of being neutral
- * To be firm, fair and friendly
- * To make a written record of the incident

These objectives are ideal for a normal dispute between neighbours, motorists, customers arguing at a pub, shop etc, particularly when no violence is involved. These objectives are not considered appropriate for dealing with domestic violence, especially as the relevant chapter was revised at a date subsequent to the publication of the Home Office Circular that

advocated intervention and arrest rather than mediation and conciliation. Police Officers were during the period of this research being trained to mediate and domestic disputes are linked with general disputes and in my opinion thereby trivialised. Training is vital, yet the national training package, overseen by the Home Office did not reflect the intention of the Circular 60/1990.

At the very outset of their career in the Police Service recruits are provided with training that directs them to mediate in domestic disputes with the aim to restore peace and calm. It does not surprise me therefore that the majority of police officers interviewed saw this as their function in dealing with domestic incidents. Training needed to be revised to reflect the seriousness of the problem of domestic violence and make officers aware of the need for intervention and direct action when dealing with such matters. More recently this situation has been somewhat remedied with a more positive approach, highlighting the need to intervene rather than simply mediate, but such revision occurred after this research concluded.

Policy Statements at a Local Level

There is no doubt a need for Chief Officers to issue policy statements relating to the police response to domestic violence but there is a real problem to ensure this policy from the top permeates to the officers on the ground in order that it can be implemented. As already mentioned, when this research commenced in 1989 South Tyneside Division of Northumbria Police was unique in this region as domestic violence had been given priority status there well before the arrival of the aforementioned Home Office Circular.

From 1 May 1989 until 30 November 1989, Northumbria Police had initiated a forcewide campaign against violent crime. While most of the Force were solely targeting public disorder and violent crimes of robbery, Supt Brian Taylor, Deputy Divisional Commander of the South Tyneside Division, decided that a separate thrust of the campaign on South Tyneside would be to target incidents of domestic violence. One of the benefits of insider research was that the researcher knew the officer well and was able to speak to him and find out why he had acquired such an interest in the problem of domestic violence.

His research had shown that domestic violence accounted for 25 per cent of all reported incidents of "disorder" in that division; the problem was getting worse and he considered the prevailing police strategy was not addressing the long term problem of domestic violence.

Local Policy Statement - South Tyneside Division

The following local policy statement was issued by him in the form of a written Divisional Order in April 1989 to all officers in that division, in which he clearly outlined the strategy to be adopted.

Supervision will ensure that all cases of Domestic Violence are thoroughly investigated and where evidence is found to substantiate arrest and charge, this course of action is to be taken.

As part of this strategy the support of both the Crown Prosecution Service and the Magistrates' Court has been obtained and in particular:-

- a) Persons arrested for wounding or causing grievous bodily harm to a partner following a domestic incident will be detained overnight and placed before the first available court, in order that the Magistrates may be aware of the gravity of the offence and either order further detention or bail from the court.

- b) Any injured party who subsequently refuses to give evidence against the spouse or common law associate will be called as a witness to explain to the Magistrates their reason for refusal and even if proceedings are discontinued, the court may see fit to Bind Over the accused.

The Divisional Order then went on to outline the establishing of a Domestic Violence Unit staffed by two policewomen. Their role was to analyse all domestic incidents and make contact with the victims to offer advice, counselling and to refer them to other interested agencies. (South Tyneside Divisional Order 8/89).

Therefore, in May 1989, Northumbria Police became the first Police Force outside the Metropolitan Police area to set up a dedicated Domestic Violence Unit. On South Tyneside the police response to domestic violence was considerably improved to meet the following objectives:-

- * Reduce repeat calls
- * Promote confidence in the police response and in the work of the Domestic Violence Unit
- * Promote awareness of the problem through widespread media campaigning and publicity
- * Establish multi agency links to encourage interagency working practices
- * Provide a better, more comprehensive service to victims of domestic violence
- * Deal with the adverse effects of such incidents on police resources
- * Reduce the incidence of domestic violence

Evaluation of the Unit and The Policy

The strategies employed and the Domestic Violence Unit itself continued to operate, and remain in force well after the initiative against violent crime ended. The research and

evaluation of the effectiveness of the Domestic Violence Unit and the police response to domestic incidents on South Tyneside was the subject of a comprehensive research programme undertaken by the Centre for Crime, Policing and the Community at Newcastle University. The research was concerned primarily with the nature and extent of domestic violence on South Tyneside and the manner in which reported and referred incidents of 'spousal abuse' were handled by the police. The focus was on the experiences of victims themselves.

When subsequently published (Walker & McNicol 1994) the report listed a number of recommendations worthy of review by Northumbria Police relating specifically to methods of recording domestic incidents, operational response to domestic violence and the subsequent work of the Domestic Violence Unit. Although the recommendations are quite lengthy, and some relate specifically to policing problems in South Tyneside, there are some observations that are very relevant in as much as they relate to police discretion and arrest in particular;

i) **Police Discretion**

..... Circumstantial factors, the relationship between victim and offender and perceived character of the victim often form the basis for police action and the use of discretion. Analysis suggests that discretionary action is often based upon sparse information and pre-conception as to the nature of the crime, the perpetrator and the victim of crime.

ii) **Arrest**

..... The number of arrests made have not matched the increase in the number of referrals and incidents reported to the police. Arrest, and the pursuance of criminal prosecution is central to this campaign. Despite the commitment of South Tyneside Police to a policy which favours arrest, there are apparent barriers to its successful implementation and these need to be explored. Other research in this field has highlighted the tendency for

officers to avoid arrest by attempting to conciliate and refer cases on to other agencies, seeing the most appropriate response to these cases as one with a social work rather than law enforcement emphasis. Evidence from police incident logs suggest that the reluctance to arrest is linked to the perception of domestic violence as an extension of normal marital behaviour.

iii) **Advice**

We would suggest that the option to give advice needs to be used in conjunction with a strong law enforcement response and **NOT** as an alternative to it. Whilst giving advice is the standard response, arrest is not.

(Walker & McNicol 1994 p.148)

Bourlet (1988) warned that without a positive policy statement from Chief Officers on the police response to matrimonial violence, in addition to advice as to how such incidents should be handled, policemen may well continue to adopt a negative approach and finalise such incidents by giving advice rather than by arrest. Notwithstanding the Divisional Order issued by Superintendent Brian Taylor in April, 1989 followed by Home Office Circular 60/1990 and a Northumbria Police Policy Statement on Domestic Violence issued on 31 October 1990, officers attending domestic incidents on South Tyneside still gave advice rather than arrest, which prompted the observation:-

What is unhelpful is seeing an arrest policy as a measure of last resort..... Many officers seemed uncertain about what the law could do to tackle domestic violence, unsure of their own powers under various legislation, and too quick to advise victims to seek the advice of a lawyer. (Walker & McNicol 1994, p.154-5).

This confirms quite forcibly the fact that police officers will use their discretion and will make an arrest, not when there is an assault, but when, in the light of prevailing circumstances, they consider it appropriate. The police however do have traditionally a

formal policy of non-arrest in cases of domestic violence, a view expressed by the Association of Chief Police Offices (ACPO) in evidence before the 1975 Select Committee referred to earlier.

"We are, after all, dealing with persons 'bound in marriage' and it is important for a host of reasons, to maintain the unity of the spouses. Precipitate action by the police could aggravate the position to such an extent as to create a worse situation than the one they were summoned to deal with. The 'lesser of two evils' principle is often a good guidance in these situations ... Every effort should be made to reunite the family".

When considering making an arrest for domestic violence it was the view of ACPO that the decision should be made having regard to the following criteria:-

- * The seriousness of the assault
- * The availability of witnesses
- * The character of the alleged assailant
- * The age, infirmity etc of the complainant
- * Previous domestic history
- * The wishes of the complainant
- * Whether, if prosecution ensued against the wishes of the complainant, the domestic situation would be adversely affected.

Oppenlander (1982) claimed that the most common police response is non-intervention where officers maintain there is nothing they can do and leave the incident. Horley (1988, p.49) outlined the assistance a victim of domestic violence was likely to receive from the police:-

"Although your partner has committed a criminal offence, the police seldom arrest the violent man and when they do it is usually for another crime; for example, breach of the peace. Generally women who have approached the police for help have found them unhelpful. In some cases police have sympathised with the violent man and have actually taken his side".

Edwards (1989) considered that the only type of situation that resulted in arrest in her study, was one in which the violence continued after the police had arrived or the aggressor was 'stropky' with the police. She concluded that the use of police discretion in dealing with domestic violence leads to under-enforcement of the law. Therefore, whilst police officers may justify their unwillingness to arrest in cases of domestic violence, this use of police discretion is seen as unhelpful, ineffective and under enforcement of the law, not just by the victims of such violence but also by those researching the subject. Nevertheless in order to balance the above comments it should be pointed out that the majority of domestic incidents reported to the police do not involve serious assault and in cases of minor assault, where no injuries are evidence or visible, the police would not take action, whether it be a domestic assault or any other kind of assault.

Yet there is no excuse for a police officer failing to arrest a "wife beater" where there is clear evidence of an assault having occurred and the wife has sustained visible injuries. The law is able to adequately deal with, and pursue, such occurrences. A failure to arrest in such circumstances is indefensible. It is invariably in the area of minor "assaults" where criticism is made of the use of police discretion to trivialise such incidents. Although a firm policy on arrest ought to make it easier for operational police officers to deal with such incidents, there does seem to be a real problem in translating policy into action, even where such policy is supported by senior management at a local level. If one accepts that police officers' attitudes are shaped by those prevailing in society, is it too optimistic to expect officers to deal with domestic violence in a way that is not backed up by the rest of society? Or is the case that positive direct action by the police is the clearest sign to society that domestic violence is unacceptable? The former view would accord with a structuralist

perspective, whilst the latter would be in line with a symbolic interactionist approach; yet neither consensus within society nor social action by individuals appear to be addressing the problem of domestic violence.

The Role of the Crown Prosecution Service in Domestic Violence

The final area to consider in this chapter is the role of the Crown Prosecution Service. It is worthy to note that all research carried out until the mid 1980s was set against the background of a legal system, where the police were responsible for the arrest and prosecution of offenders. Since 1985 the Crown Prosecution Service has taken over the role of prosecuting authority in place of the police. Therefore, in situations where the police arrest offenders the question of the sufficiency of evidence and whether the matter should proceed through the courts rests with the Crown Prosecution Service. They have the right to discontinue proceedings at any time and there is no doubt, since its inception the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) has frequently exercised that right. Unfortunately there is still criticism of the police for failing to 'prosecute' offenders for domestic violence, by those who have not grasped the fact that the CPS now have been granted this responsibility by Statute.

When reviewing cases the Crown Prosecution Service operate within the principles laid out in the Code for Crown Prosecutors (Section 10, Prosecution of Offenders Act 1985). The CPS prosecutor has to satisfy himself that there is **"admissible substantial and reliable evidence, that a criminal offence known to the law has been committed by an identifiable person"**. Whilst the police will charge an individual with a criminal offence in situations where a prima facie case is revealed, the CPS apply the "50 per cent rule"

and will only prosecute the matter when there is a realistic prospect of a conviction (more than a 50 per cent chance of success) and where the public interest requires a prosecution.

CPS Policy Statement on Domestic Violence

In April 1993 the CPS issued a public statement of their prosecution policy regarding cases of domestic violence, that is **violence** between **partners** or **former partners**. (A statement of Prosecution Policy: Domestic Violence. CPS - April 1993). The term "violence" was given a precise definition as follows:-

1. All forms of assault.
2. Sexual offenses.
3. Threats to kill (S16 Offences Against the Person Act 1861).
4. Fear or provocation of violence (S4 Public Order Act 1986).

The policy is therefore concerned with actual violence or a real threat or substantial fear of violence which would preclude many of the more routine domestic incidents that police officers deal with. The term "partners" was defined thus: "...a relationship between two people which is more than merely fleeting and is likely to involve a reciprocal physical, mental or emotional commitment, bond or dependency..." Such partners need not have co-habited. Much of the policy centres around the problem of sufficiency of evidence, but because domestic violence usually occurs in private, where the victim is often the only prosecution witness, the victim will be required to attend court and give evidence, unless the offender pleads guilty. If the victim decides not to support the prosecution and withdraws her complaint, the CPS prosecutor has a duty to enquire into the reasons for such withdrawal. A comprehensive list of outlined procedures is set out in the policy to establish the veracity of the original allegation and the reasons behind the withdrawal of the

complaint. It is considered it may be appropriate to have the victim attend court and confirm that the initial allegations of violence are in fact true. Where there is a suspicion that a withdrawal has been made under duress, then the case should be adjourned in order that the police investigate. The prosecution should only be discontinued when all the available options have been exhausted.

Reluctant Complainants

The policy makes reference to Section 80 Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 which provides that the prosecution can compel a spouse to give evidence relating to violence committed against her or her children. It is recognised that the decision to compel an unwilling witness to attend court should always be carried out with discretion and sensitivity, albeit such a witness may often become hostile to the prosecution and therefore be of more benefit to the defence. Although witness support from agencies like Victim Support is referred to, no real practical solutions are put forward to aid the reluctant witness. This is considered to be one of the difficulties of dealing with an organisation whose members are all lawyers; it is very easy to state that victims of domestic violence should be compelled to give evidence but impracticable to carry out because of the extreme pressure placed upon such a witness.

....The victim often feels pressure as time goes on.... If you compel a witness you're never sure what they're going to say when in court... The whole thing could collapse and the Crown Prosecution Service would be reluctant to take a case if there's only a 50 per cent chance - it is an option that is fraught with danger....

This extract was taken from evidence given by Albert Pacey, Chief Constable of Gloucestershire Constabulary on behalf of ACPO to the House of Commons Affairs

Committee's enquiry into domestic violence (1992). He considered that the answer might lie in treating victims of domestic abuse in the same manner as victims of child abuse by allowing them to give evidence from behind screens in court or by means of closed circuit television. That might encourage more women to persevere with their complaints and actually give evidence in court against their partners. Whilst this may well be a very practical solution, this suggestion was not considered by the CPS Prosecution Policy Statement. Reference however is made in that statement to S23 Criminal Justice Act 1988 which provides that in certain cases that a statement made by a person who declines to attend court may be admissible as evidence, just as if that evidence were orally presented. Section 23(3)(a) & (b) states that for a statement to be admissible in evidence, it has to be proved that it was made to a police officer or some other person charged with the duty of investigating offences or charging offenders, and that the person who made it will not give evidence because of fear. The admission of such a written statement is subject to Sections 25 and 26 of the Act, which direct that the court must have regard to the extent to which it provides evidence not available elsewhere, the relevance of the evidence and the risk of unfairness that may attach to the accused persons, should such evidence be admitted. Bearing in mind that the witness would not attend court and the evidence could therefore not be directly challenged, the court would only allow such a statement to be admitted in the interests of justice. Although this would appear to have only limited relevance to cases of domestic violence, it does mean that the refusal of a victim to actually attend court need not be the end of the matter.

Where the Victim is Willing

The prosecution policy however, where the victim is willing to attend court is irrevocable; "if there is sufficient evidence to offer a realistic prospect of conviction, and the victim is willing to give evidence, it will be rare for the public interest not to require a prosecution for offences of domestic violence". As the public interest on the one hand condemns violence against individuals it also realises the benefit to be gained in preserving the family unit intact. When considering public interest, the seriousness of the offence is an important issue, particularly the nature of the injuries or threats to the victim, whether any weapons were used and whether any aggravating factors were present. In circumstances where criminal charges are being considered it is maintained within the policy that the charges would normally be the most serious that are made out by the evidence. "A domestic background is not regarded as a factor reducing the seriousness of the charge". Although one can applaud the fact that such a statement is made, it is nevertheless regretted that the courts all too often take no notice of that fact.

The question of violent men being released on bail within hours of an assault and being free to assault their partners again has always been a real problem. Unfortunately the advice that "it may well be appropriate" to apply for a remand in custody on conditional bail is rather weak. Whilst prosecutors have to operate within the framework of law that directs that bail is a right and can only be refused if there are very good grounds for so doing, this part of the policy is weak and certainly gives no comfort to victims of domestic violence.

Plea Bargaining

The fact that a policy statement has been issued by the CPS does not preclude individual prosecutors have considerable discretion whether to discontinue cases or enter into 'plea bargaining' with defence solicitors. The CPS don't like the term plea bargaining but in a criminal justice system where justice often has to give way to cost effectiveness such activities frequently occur. Usually defence solicitors approach the CPS prosecutor with the proposition that if a particular criminal charged is discontinued (dropped) the defendant would agree to be bound over to keep the peace, usually for a period of 12 months. Obviously a 'binding over' would not be appropriate in the more serious cases but as imprisonment is an extremely unlikely outcome in the less serious cases a 'binding over' does have some weight behind it. On the other hand if a prosecutor were to refuse to undertake such a course of action and a contested trial ensued resulting in the acquittal of the accused, that would create an even worse situation.

The researcher has benefitted from having considerable contact with the CPS both locally and at CPS Headquarters (Director of Public Prosecutions) and found that their concern is primarily a legal concern and not a social concern; whether the evidence would support a successful prosecution rather than taking a moral position in the matter. There is, however, a considerable variance between different CPS branch offices and indeed different prosecutors, some are more adventurous and determined to see justice gained whilst others are more conservative and stick rigidly to the "Fifty per cent" success rule regardless of the personalities or issues involved. We are therefore back in the area of individual discretion for whilst there is a CPS policy statement about domestic violence cases each individual prosecutor has to make decisions on individual cases on their merits. In the interests of

justice for individuals it is difficult to criticise such a stand and once again difficult to deal with the problem of discretion. It would be unacceptable to see discretion removed, but at the same time if the exercise of discretion tends to work against the victims of domestic violence it does give cause for concern.

Do Policy Statements Provide The Answer?

Policy statements have been considered dealing with domestic violence that have been issued by the Home Office, the Police and even the Crown Prosecution Service. Unfortunately in each case the dichotomy exists between the implementation of policy from those in authority and the application of discretion at grass roots level, which is the place where it matters. When this research commenced there was no real policy on domestic violence and the conclusion of Bourlet (1988) was that a positive policy statement by Chief Officers, together with clear instructions about dealing with domestic incidents would go some considerable way towards dealing with the problem of domestic violence. Unfortunately even a proliferation of policy statements from various sources has failed to address the problem and this is the problem that is central to this research. The police have statutory responsibility for dealing with the consequences of domestic violence and from time to time possible solutions are highlighted and subsequently implemented by the police. What is considered to be an answer to the problem often identifies other deficiencies in the police response, which is certainly the case when considering police policy.

The reality is that domestic violence is a complex societal problem to which there are no ready solutions and, without doubt, the police alone are ineffective in tackling the problem. The need for a clear decisive policy is evident, but it is only one of a number of issues and

initiatives that form part of a comprehensive response to a complex problem. Bearing in mind the systematic nature of society and the social structures and relationships that operate within, the concept of policy statements fit in well with such a perspective. The difficulty is that policy can be readily introduced but to be effectively implemented does require a degree of consensus. The individuals within society who have the means and ability to introduce policy in the first instance are reliant upon the individuals within their particular organisation or society in general to provide the consensus and support to ensure that such policy is indeed carried out. An individual's actions are to a large extent structured by that person's social environment because the attitudes and values that influence us do tend to effect both the organisation and structure of the society in which we live. There is evidence here of the police as agents of change but the real problem of introducing change into the policing of domestic violence in the face of ambivalence by the police themselves and society in general highlights the problem that exists.

Chapter 8

DEALING WITH THE PROBLEM OUTSIDE THE COURTS

Cautioning Offenders

Having already established the inability and the effectiveness of the legal system in dealing with the perpetrators of domestic violence this research progressed to consider what other measures were available to deal with such offenders.

Cautioning offenders is seen, particularly by the Home Office, as an effective means of diverting offenders from the criminal justice system. Initially cautioning was restricted by and large to juveniles and those over the age of 60, but increasingly it has been brought into use as an appropriate means of dealing with certain types of offences, regardless of the age of the offender.

Although a caution is not a conviction, the person does have to sign an official form on which he or she admits the offence. The person is warned by a Senior Police Officer regarding their behaviour and made aware that a record of the caution will be kept for three years and should he/she re-offend, details of the caution will be given to the relevant court. Whilst this information obviously cannot be cited as a previous conviction, details of the caution can be given as part of the antecedent history of the offender. There is no set manner or procedure for administering a caution which obviously varies according to the officer giving the caution or the offender concerned. In some instances the caution may take the form of an official verbal "short, sharp shock", while in other instances a sort of counselling session would be more appropriate. The effect a caution has upon an offender

is often down to the manner in which it was given by the Inspector concerned and obviously the way in which it is received.

Guidelines for Cautioning

The guidelines dealing with cautioning of offenders were initially set out in Home Office Circular 14/1985 which was published in response to the Royal Commission on Criminal Procedure. While the first part of these guidelines dealt with cautioning juvenile offenders, the second part of the guidelines related specifically with adult cautions. These guidelines were in line with the criteria set out in a previous circular (Home Office Circular 26/1983) which dealt specifically with procedures relating to the prosecution of offenders. Subsequent research carried out by the University of Birmingham into cautioning of offenders was highly critical of Home Office Circular 14/1985, claiming there was uncertainty about the meaning of parts of the circular, which lead to wide variations in its interpretation and caused considerable variation in cautioning rates between Forces.

The problems outlined were rectified when this circular was replaced by another Home Office Circular 59/1990, which sought to establish national standards for cautioning offenders and established the principle that cautioning was suitable for all age groups. Under the heading "Government Policy; the offender and the victim", the circular emphasised that cautioning was an increasingly affective means of diverting offenders from the criminal justice system and that cautioning policy ought to be based on a uniform set of principles. The Victim's Charter published in 1990, requires that the views and needs of victims of crime must receive more attention; however the general public interest, rather than the view of an individual victim, must prevail when deciding whether to caution or

charge an offender. The purpose of a caution therefore is to deal expeditiously with offenders who commit less serious criminal offences, direct them away from the courts and reduce the likelihood of them re-offending.

Before a person can be cautioned, certain conditions must first apply. There must be clear evidence of the offender's guilt, the offence must be admitted and the significance of a caution must be understood by the offender who must consent to be cautioned. If these conditions are met then consideration ought to be given whether a caution is in the public interest bearing in mind the nature of the offence, the likely penalty a court would impose, the offender's age and state of health, the previous criminal history and the offender's attitude towards the offence.

An interesting point raised in the circular related to the referral of persons cautioned to other agencies in order to make the caution more effective in certain cases. Whilst such referrals must be on a voluntary basis and usually, in the case of adults, would relate to persons with drug or alcohol related problems, there would seem to be considerable scope here for offenders in domestic violence cases to be referred to appropriate agencies (eg Relate, Marriage Guidance etc). This is an important consideration in making a caution more meaningful and effective especially as offenders are expected to display some practical demonstration of regret such as apologising to the victim or offering to put matters right. This of course raised the question with me whether offenders could be cautioned for domestic violence and how effective such a scheme would be.

Cost Effectiveness of Cautioning

In evidence to the House of Commons Affairs Committees enquiry into 'Domestic Violence' in 1992. Albert Pacey, Chief Constable of Gloucestershire Constabulary on behalf of ACPO (Association of Chief Police Officers) said; "But as Chief Officers we have to determine competing priorities. Domestic Violence Units have to be at the expense of something else. We have to work within existing resources and so we are stretched to provide this part of the service..... Police have changed their attitudes towards domestic violence but the real problem is one of resources, Financial constraints are the basis of the problem Domestic violence is an iceberg with the tip showing. The more it shows, the more we try to address the problem. But, by the same token, drugs and burglary are icebergs too". Also giving evidence to the Enquiry, the president of the Police Superintendent's Association, Eddie Day, commented, "We must take on board the fact we are the only 24 hour emergency social service in this country. We are there to provide immediate resolutions or the beginnings of resolutions... But we don't want to assume the role of social workers when there are other agencies equipped to deal with it. It is at the attendance of domestic incidents that we must take positive action - every officer has responsibility to take pro-active action if a criminal assault has taken place". (Reported 4.12.92 in the Police Review).

Although research is usually undertaken to evaluate the social or psychological effects of crime, there is not a great amount of research which considers the economic implications and effects of crime upon society, particularly in view of the previous comment for a representative from ACPO about financial constraints effecting the police. When considering a policy to caution offenders in a wider context, what are the economic benefits

to society of a policy which diverts suitable offenders away from the extremely costly Criminal Justice System. The fear of crime, emotional upset, stress or even loss of faith or trust are all dimensions to which one cannot really attach a monetary value, yet every crime reported to the police has a victim, possibly other witnesses and an allocation from police resources to respond to and investigate that crime.

Cost of Crime - Assaults

In March 1988, Northumbria Police published the results of research that had been carried out in this particular field of study, dealing specifically with the cost of crime; "Cost of Crime: Sir Stanley Bailey and Ian Lynch (Northumbria Police)". During this research contact was made with Ian Lynch and it was established that his research had some considerable relevance to my area of study. His findings presented an overview of the cost to society of various types of crime, but part of it dealt specifically with violence against the person; assaults (S47 Offences Against the Person Act 1861) and serious assaults (S 18/20 Offences Against the Person Act 1861). Of course this research was conducted over 10 years ago, so taking account of inflation and other rising costs, one would expect the comparative cost today to be between 20 - 30 per cent higher.

Table 8(1) sets out the minimum cost to the Police and Criminal Justice System in relation to assaults which occurred within the Northumbria Police area during 1986, but does not include the cost of any medical treatment or compensation. The total 'minimum' costs amount to over £1.7 million, which means that the average cost of a single assault was £442. (In 1986 there were 3,931 recorded assaults; the corresponding figure for 1995 is over 6,000).

Table 8(1)

Minimum cost of assaults in Northumbria Police area (1986)

Service Provided	Cost (£)
Reporting Costs	129,683
Investigation	12,377
Clerical/File Preparation	30,944
Custodial Costs (Police)	40,561
Magistrates Court Costs (Guilty)	91,350
(Contested)	596,355
(Committal)	19,500
Crown Court Costs (Guilty)	117,000
Legal Aid-Magistrates Court (Guilty)	136,513
(Contested)	322,103
(Committal)	114,039
- Crown Court (Guilty)	127,627
TOTAL =	1,738,052

Table 8(2) sets out the minimum cost of serious assaults (grievous bodily harm and wounding) which occurred within the Northumbria Police area during 1986 and also does not include the cost of any medical treatment or compensation. Because there are significantly less serious assaults the total minimum cost, comes to a little over £1/4 million. The average cost of a single serious assault is quite high at £1,167. (In 1986 there were 228 recorded serious assaults ; by 1995 that figure had doubled).

Table 8(2) Minimum cost of serious assaults in Northumbria Police area (1986)

Service Provided		Cost (£)
Reporting Costs		15,390
Investigation		963
Clerical/File Preparation		2,407
Custodial Costs (Police)		3,119
Magistrates Court Costs	(Guilty)	50
	(Contested)	7,470
	(Committal)	6,400
Crown Court Costs	(Guilty)	36,400
Legal Aid-Magistrates	(Guilty)	74
	(Contested)	4,034
	(Committal)	37,428
- Crown Court	(Guilty)	47,599
Criminal Injuries Compensation	(Minimum Payment)	102,850
TOTAL =		266,184

Closer examination of the information contained within the above tables reveals that, with regard to assaults, the cost of police involvement is **£213,565** whilst the cost involved at the Magistrates and Crown Court is a staggering **£1,524,487**. This represents 88 per cent of the total cost of just over 1.7 million pounds. In the case of serious assaults, the cost of police involvement is **£21,879**, while the costs involved at the Magistrates and Crown Courts is **£244,305**, which represents 92 per cent of the total cost of just over two hundred and sixty six thousand pounds. Taking a collective view of all assaults, 90 per cent of the costs outlined would be saved if the offender did not enter the courts and was cautioned instead. It therefore makes sound economic sense to caution offenders for all categories of assault.

However it would be neither equitable nor just to caution offenders for the more serious assaults where, because of the seriousness of the injuries caused, a custodial sentence would

be the usual and most appropriate means of dealing with those cases. Nevertheless a strong case is made out for a caution in minor assaults. Such offenders would normally be dealt with in the courts by imposing some monetary fine or even just a binding over which obviously is neither cost effective nor a great deal of help to the victim. The research however, looked at specific examples of offences of assault and serious assault and the overall cost of that crime was worked out including, this time, the cost of medical treatment, criminal injuries compensation and the cost of keeping the offenders in prison. The following list outlines the full costs involved, in one particular assault that occurred in 1986:-

<u>Service</u>	<u>Cost (£)</u>
Reported by 999	1.88
AOR Response (civilian)	0.30
2 Uniform Officers to scene	8.56
Travelling of Police vehicle (10 mile total journey)	2.10
Ambulance for victim - Gateshead Hospital	28.97
Travelling of ambulance (10 miles total journey)	19.90
Out Patient treatment	23.21
Follow up treatment by family doctor	23.21
Victim (1 day's loss of earnings)	24.08
Administration	3.32
Statement from victim	6.42
Statement from 2 witnesses	8.56
Travelling of police vehicle (20 miles total journey)	4.20
2 Uniform Officers Arresting	4.28
Statements from 3 police officers	12.84
Custody Officer	9.57
Police Surgeon - Examine Assailant	19.00
Police Surgeon - Statement	15.40
Family doctor - Statement	15.40
30 Minute interview by 2 uniform officers	4.28
Prisoner's meal	.55
Preparation of abbreviated file	12.87
Administration/submission	3.32
Preparation of committal file	1.96
Administration/Submission	3.32
Legal Aid (Not guilty at Magistrates)	224.15

Crown Prosecution Service	Not quantifiable
Court Costs (Contested - Magistrates)	415.00
Civilian witness costs (2 witnesses)	27.50
Witness travelling costs for 20 miles total journey	3.00
Police witness - 3 officers	25.68
Travelling	Nil
Prison Service (Escort 2 officers)	191.18
Travelling to/from Durham Prison/Gateshead Mags	18.20
Custodial Sentence - Secure prison 4 months	8,032.00
Criminal Injuries Compensation	550.00

TOTAL	£9,569.21

Whilst the cost to society for a fairly serious assault is quite substantial at just under **£10,000** a staggering 84 per cent of that cost is taken up with a relatively short term of imprisonment for the offender. The above table, however, does not reflect the true cost because the cost implication of the Crown Prosecution Service was not quantifiable. Obviously the CPS costs in such a case are substantial, but that does add weight to the argument that the cost involved in prosecuting and incarcerating offenders is very substantial and overall quite disproportionate. With regard to serious assaults, where the offender is likely to receive a substantial prison sentence, the full costs involved are quite staggering. The full cost of one serious assault where the offender was subsequently sentenced to 12 months imprisonment was in excess of £30,000.

The cost involved in sentencing offenders to a term of imprisonment is disproportionately high, nevertheless in respect of very serious violence a custodial sentence is more likely to be the most appropriate outcome, even if it is not at all cost effective. Although again not quantifiable the costs occurred by the CPS would be substantial and run into several thousand pounds.

Bearing in mind that these findings are now some ten years out of date and because of inflation and other rising costs, one could be looking at an overall 20 - 30 per cent increase in all the above costs to bring them in line with today's prices. Obviously the pain, suffering and trauma associated with any assault cannot be considered purely in monetary terms, but there is considerable benefit in considering the cost of violence. It is in such a context that one is more able and informed to make a valued judgement on the effectiveness of a cautioning policy that directs offenders in minor assault cases away from the courts.

Cautioning for Domestic Violence - The Streatham Project

Criticism of the police response to domestic violence is not usually directed at the handling of serious assaults, but rather at the inability of the police to deal adequately with minor assaults, a category which constitutes the majority of crimes that occur under the heading of domestic violence. Whilst researching this particular aspect in 1990, the researcher was made aware by the Home Office Police Requirements Support Unit (PRSU) that they had issued a grant to a senior police officer in the Metropolitan Police (Ch Supt Ian Buchan) who was the Divisional Commander of Streatham Division of the Metropolitan Police. The funding was provided to Ch Supt Buchan and Dr Susan Edwards (University of Buckingham) to carry out research into a scheme which he established in Streatham Division, known as the Streatham Project. This scheme was established to seek a more effective and positive police response to deal with domestic violence particularly in connection with minor assaults.

Having been made aware of the project, the researcher was able to make a personal visit to Streatham in late 1991 on the invitation of Ian Buchan. Streatham is one of the

Metropolitan Police Divisions that lies south of the River Thames and although relatively small in area it is quite densely populated. Whilst there Ian Buchan outlined the basic principals of the project.

At Streatham a positive policy, which promoted early intervention and arrest of offenders was encouraged by senior management. Those arrested were dealt with as criminals, taken to the police station, their fingerprints and photographs were taken and then, if set criteria were met, given an adult caution. This scheme deferred the decision to caution for two months. This period allowed police to make further enquiries about the circumstances of the assault and enabled time for the victim and offender to seek help, advice and guidance from other agencies. It was only after this process that a final decision was made about the outcome of the case.

He went on to say that an integral part of the project was the establishing of a Domestic Violence Unit at Streatham but this is considered later in more detail.

The policy adopted at Streatham was influenced by research in North America which tended to show that, in cases of domestic violence, not only did the arrest of the offender act as a deterrent but it appeared to be the essential first step towards breaking the cycle of violence in that domestic situation. Sherman and Berk (1984) carried out research in Minneapolis and found that where police intervened positively in domestic incidents, there was no recurrence of the violence during the following 24 hours, whilst persons arrested were less likely to repeat the violence in the following 6 months than offenders who were not arrested. The research produced the following conclusions:-

- * There was no evidence that deterrence works in general but the imposition of the sanction of arrest and temporary detention is likely to deter male offenders in cases of domestic violence.

- * Concern by police officers that arrests in cases of domestic violence could make the violence worse, were largely groundless.
- * Police officers felt that arresting an offender was pointless unless it was accompanied by some positive sanction by the courts.
- * It was unwise to base police policy upon the results of any single experiment.

These findings however have been criticised to some extent by subsequent research carried out by Smith (1989), Edwards (1989) and Horley (1988) although there is general acceptance that arrest by itself can act as a deterrent to further violence taking place. In fact when Sandra Horley, as Director of Chiswick Womens' Family Rescue, addressed the annual conference of the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) in 1989, she suggested that Chief Constables take note of the research undertaken in North America and create a national policy on arrest and prosecution for domestic violence. Her advice was obviously taken note of because that suggestion subsequently became one of the major recommendations contained within Home Office Circular 60/1990, which was discussed at length in the previous chapter.

The Streatham Project was concerned with more than just considering the arrest of persons for domestic violence. The aim of the policy adopted at Streatham was to influence the discretion exercised by police officers at each stage of the process (arrest, custody, caution) and to encourage a more positive approach by the police and a better service to victims of domestic violence. To start with, officers attending domestic incidents were encouraged to make an arrest for assault and reminded of the legal definition of assault.

Viz: An assault is any action in which 'A' intentionally or recklessly caused 'B' to apprehend immediate and personal violence.

(Fagan - v - Metropolitan Police, I QB 439 1968, 3 ALL ER at 455).

This was done to highlight to officers at Streatham that within the wide definition of assault there is no necessity to have evidence of actual physical injury or hurt having occurred to the victim but the statutory offences of actual bodily harm or grievous bodily harm do require evidence of such injury or hurt having actually occurred. In the case of minor 'assaults' which are not in themselves arrestable offences, officers at Streatham were reminded of their powers under Section 25(3)(e) Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 which gives a constable the power to arrest a person where he has reasonable grounds for believing it necessary to protect a child or other vulnerable person. In cases where there was no assault, officers were reminded of their powers under the Common Law viz:

At common law a breach of the peace can occur on private premises even if the only persons likely to be affected by the breach of the peace are inside the premises and no member of the public outside the premises is affected.

(McConnell - v - Chief Constable of Greater Manchester Police 1990, I ALL ER 423).

This common law power does give police officers the right to intervene in domestic incidents and arrest, even though no assault has taken place. In general terms officers were encouraged and persuaded to view and deal with domestic incidents from a legal and not from a moral standpoint.

Use of the Deferred Caution

Persons arrested at Streatham for domestic assaults were dealt with like any other person under the usual provisions of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, with the exception that the Duty Inspector supervised each case to ensure it came within the following guidelines set down for a deferred caution:

- i) The injury had to be of a minor nature. The decision, as to what constituted a minor injury, was left to the common sense and judgement of the Custody Officer. In making his decision, the Custody Officer would consult with the CID officer appointed to supervise the case. The only guidance given that such an injury would be confined to soreness, redness, slight bruising, nervous or hysterical tension.
- ii) The standard of evidence had to be the same as required by the code for Crown Prosecution eg the test for prosecution must be whether there was a realistic prospect of a conviction.
- iii) The offender must admit the offence and agree to the deferment procedure.
- iv) The victim must agree to the caution and be informed that such a caution could deprive him (or her) of a ready means of redress through a court compensation order.

A caution would not be considered however in situations where the victim disagreed, or where there was a real concern for the victim's safety, or where the offender had previously been charged or cautioned for assaulting that particular victim. Where a case was suitable for caution the offender was released on bail (Section 47(3) Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984) to return to Streatham Police Station usually within two months. During the interim period, the Investigating Officer completed his enquiries in liaison with an officer from the CID. In addition an officer from the Domestic Violence Unit was allocated to each case to ensure the victim received advice and support during the interim period and to refer the victim (or the offender) to any agency or institution for support, bearing in

mind also the welfare of any children involved. That officer from the DVU was also responsible to check for any previous record of the offender and to establish that no re-offending occurred during this period. If that person re-offended during this period, he would be charged with the original offence in addition to the more recent offence revealed. If that person did not re-offend, he would be cautioned by a Police Inspector when he returned to the police station in response to his bail requirement. In order not to place too much of a burden upon operational officers the Inspector administering the caution would usually be from the Community Liaison Department and therefore have considerable experience in administering cautions. The validity of this whole procedure was accepted by the local head of Crown Prosecution Service who advised that the deferred caution fell within Section 35(5)(b) Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984. It is obviously important that the process has the support of the CPS and that it is lawful, however this particular point is discussed later in the chapter.

An integral and important part of the Streatham project is the use of the deferred caution and although the use of a police caution as an alternative to court proceedings is now an increasing option available to the police for both adult and juvenile offenders, there is a particular problem with regard to the deferred caution. If an offender fails to respond to bail, unless any new evidence has materialised in the interim, the police have no power to arrest that person again and are obliged to either locate that person and administer that caution at the place where that person is later found or send out a written letter of caution. There are two further alternatives; to apply to a Magistrates Clerk for a summons to be issued for the original offence or take no further action in the matter. Whilst this might appear at first sight to be a problem, upon speaking to the officers, the vast majority of

men were more than willing to receive a caution, in view that the alternative was court proceedings, and that a small number who did not subsequently return to the police station were wanted in connection with other matters.

The Role of the DVU

The role of the DVU was central to the success of the Streatham Project. During the visit to Streatham one was able to see the unit in operation and talk to the two women police officers who were running it. Both were seconded to the unit for a period of 18 months which did indicate some form of permanence with a sound staff tenure policy. The unit undertook work with offenders since 1990 when a self help group was established by a local clergyman at Gypsy Hill, Streatham, where it was intended that domestic violence offenders would meet and discuss their problems and try to find some answers. Although the unit contacted all such offenders on their records, no one actually turned up at these sessions, as attendance was purely on a voluntary basis. One must question the value of such a voluntary scheme for unless there is some mandate or sanction made available to offenders they have nothing to gain by voluntarily turning up and participating in such sessions.

It is in the area of support and contact with victims of domestic violence that the unit comes into its own. They run a self help group for victims of domestic violence which is patently more successful for its bi-monthly meetings are well patronised with average numbers somewhere in the region of fifteen at each session. It is however, in the day to day contact with the victims of domestic violence that the worth of the unit is evident. Each day the officers scan the Computer Aided Despatch (CAD) log which gives details of all incidents that have occurred within Streatham Division and are able to identify and select recorded

domestic incidents. There is also a regular contact with local womens' refuges, some which specifically deal with the plight to Asian women. The officers initially make contact with victims either by sending a pro forma letter or in certain cases by telephoning the victims at home.

When questioned the officers of the unit stated that the response rate of victims actually making contact after receiving either the pro forma letter or telephone call was low, although no statistics were available to corroborate this. The officers felt sure that victims of domestic violence were aware of the existance of the unit but for whatever reason relatively few victims actually made contact with them. Nevertheless for those who did take that all important first step, there is no doubt the officers provided assistance, counselling and a ready means of referral to other agencies.

Did the Project Work?

Having examined the Streatham Project in some detail, the all important question is whether the policy actually worked and if it is actually effective in dealing with domestic incidents. The effectiveness of the policy adopted at Streatham was subsequently evaluated by a team of three independent researchers from the University of Buckingham, under the direction of Dr Susan Edwards. The evaluation was concerned with the extent and manner in which the policy had been implemented by police officers and also to consider the impact of the policy on police officers, offenders and victims alike. In order to obtain the information required for an accurate evaluation, the researchers issued short questionnaires to officers at Streatham Police Station, followed by interviews with selected officers. The arrest rate

for offences of domestic violence was analysed together with those incidents which were subsequently dealt with by way of a deferred caution.

The common practice of relying only on the actual increase or decrease in the number of repeat calls to the police was not considered to be the best means of determining the success or otherwise of this particular project. The evaluation of the Streatham Project relied upon a number of separate criteria in which the policy was examined within the overall policy on domestic violence; within the context of how its implementation accorded with official guidelines and individual officers' discretion. The assessment also relied upon interviews with both victims and offenders and the impact and effect of the arrest and deferred caution on them. In all, 47 offenders and 23 victims were interviewed. The research tended to show that cautioning is no less a deterrent than charging, as offenders were actually affected by the experience of being arrested and facing the possibility of prosecution. In fact 28 per cent of offenders claimed the process had made them change their behaviour and 69 per cent thought the deferred caution a good system. One could argue that such a high proportion in favour of the deferred caution process is to be expected when the alternative may well be a court appearance, nevertheless only 15 per cent of offenders actually came to the notice of the police again. With regard to victims, most of them were pleased with the deferred caution process to the extent that over half of them (52 per cent) agreed they would be willing to give evidence in court if the offenders were to be charged. About three quarters of all victims (74 per cent) believed the policy to arrest offenders was effective and would definitely call the police for help again.

Police officers in Streatham generally supported the new procedure and in fact most officers believed that policing domestic violence ought to be given more prominence and the procedures adopted at Streatham be promulgated throughout the Metropolitan Police area.

Evaluation

The evaluation of the research into the Streatham Project revealed that the number of domestic incidents reported to the police had actually doubled after the first year the project was established. Whilst at first sight an increase in domestic violence might be seen as a real problem, any increase in reported domestic violence means that the tip of the ice berg has become that little bit more visible. An increased confidence in the ability of the police to deal with the problem has resulted in more women being willing to report the violence they endure. The fact that arrests increased by 22 per cent and the number of persons charged with assault resulting from domestics increased by 8.5 per cent shows that the project was working. The evaluation showed me that when the police policy of early intervention and arrest is pursued, it has proved to have real benefits for the victim but proved to be more costly in terms of police resources and time.

Of course a great deal of the credit for the success of the Streatham Project must go to Chief Superintendent Buchan who reinforced the policy with his personal endorsement and commitment to ensure it was being fully implemented. Although initially there was some resistance towards a policy of cautioning offenders, this had become an established part of policing at Streatham and it was expected of all officers to arrest offenders for minor assaults of a domestic nature. Not only had a senior police officer introduced a policy but the whole project was underpinned by qualitative independent research.

Opposition to the Project

Not everyone however, is in favour of the cautioning of offenders for domestic violence. Sandra Horley, Director of Chiswick Family Rescue, believed that the £23,000 invested by the Home Office into the Streatham Project and its evaluation would have been better spent on improved training for police officers and more resources for domestic violence units in police stations (Horley 1990). She considered that the use of a caution for minor domestic assaults downgraded both the offence and the status of those involved to the extent that it trivialised the whole issue of domestic violence. This, she believed, would reinforce the perception of police officers that domestic violence was not an important issue in policing terms and therefore they would not bother taking any action in such situations.

While cautioning may increase the number of arrests and improve the clear up rate for such crimes, she is concerned that cautioning does not defend or protect women from serious assault and in fact giving violent man a second chance puts women in danger. She believes the only policy with an established level of success is arrest, charging and prosecution; for every violent man that escapes being charged and put before the courts, there is a woman somewhere who is at risk and therefore one cannot risk being side tracked by policy which deals with domestic violence by cautioning. This is a rather ill-founded view to believe that the criminal justice system is at all effective in the less serious cases of domestic violence. The flaw in Sandra Horley's argument is simply that the courts are neither successful nor capable of dealing effectively with the types of assault that the Streatham Project seek to identify as suitable for caution. If the belief is that a caution will have no effect upon a violent spouse, is it realistic to suppose that a monetary fine, binding over or conditional discharge have any greater effect upon an individual.

The officers from the Domestic Violence Unit at Streatham discount Sandra Horley's criticism and point out that they deal with victims each day and these women do not want to go to court and in fact very strongly support the policy to caution offenders. Upon speaking to the officers the following responses were made when putting the argument forward by Horley (1990) in opposition to the deferred caution policy.

Most women don't want to go to court, and see the caution system as benefiting women; they like it!

If they thought their husbands would have to go to court then the women would simply not talk to us.

Legal Opinion

The criticism of the policy to caution offenders by Sandra Horley, and the view that arrest ought to be mandatory for domestic violence offences, caused a response by legal expert Jack English, a former senior police officer and head of the Home Office Central Planning Unit, Pannal Ash, North Yorkshire. (Reported in Police Review 22.5.92). He brought into question the legality of such mandatory powers of arrest by reference to a decided case in which the Court of Appeal ruled that the legality of an arrest was doubtful where it was clear to the officer that a prosecution would not follow. The case in question is *Plange v Chief Constable of Humberside Police*, heard in the Court of Appeal (Reference: The Times Law Report: 22.3.92).

The facts of the case are that Plange assaulted another man, Richard Mann, who made a statement to the police naming Plange as his assailant. He subsequently withdrew the complaint but Plange was still arrested and detained at a police station for four hours before

being released without charge. An action brought by Plange against the Chief Constable, alleging false imprisonment, was unsuccessful when heard before Lincoln County Court. However, he took the matter on appeal to the Court of Appeal who allowed his appeal, finding in favour of Plange.

Where a police officer arrested a person on reasonable suspicion that he had committed an arrestable offence and the arrested person could prove that the arresting officer knew, at the time of arrest, that there was no possibility of a charge being made, then the arrest would be unlawful because the arresting officer had acted on some irrelevant consideration or for an improper purpose. (Plange v Chief Constable of Humberside Police, reported in The Times Law Report, 22.3.92).

The Court of Appeal ruled that if an arrested person can prove that the arresting officer knew there was no possibility that the offender would be charged, then the officer had acted upon an "irrelevant consideration" and the arrest was therefore unlawful.

However, Mr English rightly points out that just because a complaint is withdrawn, does not mean that an offender will not be charged, although this is usually the case. Further, an officer has power, under Common Law, to arrest someone if the officer has reason to believe that a renewal of the violence is likely to occur. There is, however, concern about the consequences of a senior police officer issuing memorandums directing policemen to make arrests in all cases of domestic assaults, because if it can be established that an arresting officer was aware that the Crown Prosecution Service would not proceed in such cases, without the evidence of the person assaulted, and nevertheless made an arrest as a result of the instructions, then the arrest would be declared unlawful.

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In cases of domestic violence where the victim withdraws her initial complaint of assault, this normally occurs well after the offender is arrested and in many instances, not until that person has appeared before the Magistrates. Notwithstanding where a police officer is called to a domestic assault and the victim declines to make a complaint, or withdraws her initial complaint; and where there is no likelihood of the violence re-occurring then any arrest made by the officer would be unlawful. Police officers who attend incidents of domestic violence are, therefore, faced with a dilemma with, on the one hand, the moral argument that dictates all offenders should be arrested and, the other hand, the legal argument that guards against arrest. The officer has somehow to steer a course through the middle, looking for practical solutions and inevitably resorting to the use of discretion. This also demonstrates that when a new policy is introduced by the police to tackle domestic violence, it will be closely scrutinised and inevitably criticised. Nevertheless that should not deter anyone being innovative or dissuade them from presenting a possible solution to the problem of domestic violence.

Although the Streatham Project was held up as part of the solution to a very complex problem it seemed to move out of the limelight over a period of time. A decision was made to revisit Streatham in 1994 and it was established that the project had ceased to operate within two years of its inception. The DVU was still in operation in Streatham and working effectively, having established effective inter-agency links and cooperation over a period of time. Unfortunately the corner stone of the project which involved cautioning offenders for domestic violence had ceased to operate. The official reason given was that the CPS were opposed to cautioning offenders for legal reasons, replicating the argument put forward by Jack English.

One can be sceptical about this and it is possible to suggest a number of other reasons why the project appears to have folded. Chief Superintendent Ian Bucham who was the driving force behind the Streatham Project, moved from Streatham and subsequently retired from the Metropolitan Police. Those who replaced him had obviously different policing priorities and obviously that does inevitably happen with a change of senior command.

In the absence of someone to champion the moral argument a legalistic view, predominantly from the CPS, appears to have prevailed. This opposition to cautioning offenders has unfortunately not received the support of a number of respected and knowledgeable practitioners who feel, quite wrongly, that cautioning offenders lets them off the hook. Such an idealistic yet naive view of domestic violence has only succeeded in marginalising a problem once it had been brought into the public domain.

The Streatham Project also highlights the problem of trying to maintain both media and public interest in a problem once the initial blaze of publicity and attention has died down. Indeed to keep the project alive for some two years is to be applauded, notwithstanding that the DVU is still functioning there some four years later. Having spent some time looking at the Streatham Project it is still considered that cautioning is the best means of dealing with the less serious cases of domestic violence, particularly as the courts are ineffective in such matters. Unfortunately a local arrangement by a police commander with an interest in domestic violence will invariably only be a priority as long as that individual remains in office. It would be relatively simple for the Home Office to release a directive that cautioning for minor domestic assaults will be the established policy nationwide and without such a directive local Commanders will outline their own priorities and generally domestic

violence is not high on the list. There is no evidence to show that cautioning does not work neither does there appear to be any other legal alternative which is more effective.

Summary

This is the point in the research where the links between the police and other agencies, as outlined in the previous chapter, began to really emerge. The criminal justice system is an 'umbrella' organisation that incorporates the police, the courts, Crown Prosecution Service, Probation Service, defence solicitors and even voluntary organisations such as Victim Support. This chapter highlights the fact that the police cannot act in isolation, even when implementing a police driven initiative, such as the cautioning of domestic violence offenders at Streatham. Without the support of other statutory agencies, in this case the Crown Prosecution Service, there is little chance of any initiative being successful.

Chief Superintendent Ian Buchan has demonstrated the fact that an individual within society has the capacity to renegotiate the specific order in which that person is structured. His approach was both innovative and original and involved changing the way in which police officers viewed and dealt with domestic violence and also changing the rather rigid structures and parameters contained within the criminal justice system by means of a policy change. Ultimately he failed to maintain the support of that very legal system, having at the outset failed to satisfy the practitioners in the field of the benefits of such a system. From the perspectives of symbolic interaction Chief Superintendent Buchan is a classic example of how individuals can renegotiate their order and implement changes in society but that such change or influence ends when that individual moves on. It also demonstrates that society is an integrated system of interdependent parts and that through consensus on

basic values it is held together and kept in order. Without the agreement and support of the other agencies and agents operating within society the police alone are incapable of dealing with any social problem and this is particularly true in the case of domestic violence.

The fact that the Streatham Project relating to adult cautioning of offenders eventually folded again demonstrates the central theme of this research that the police can only be effective when an integral part of a wider multi agency approach. It also shows that adult cautioning of offenders is one of a number of possible solutions that emerged during the course of this research, which at the time appeared to hold a possible answer to the problem of policing domestic violence. It also proved not to be the answer and never could be if considered in isolation. Nevertheless as one of a number of disparate initiatives, which could be made to inter relate and interact to form a combined response to the complex problem of domestic violence, it has considerable merit.

Chapter 9

PRO-ACTIVE POLICE INITIATIVES

Police Initiatives

As this research progressed during the nineteen nineties, the problem of domestic violence appeared to have gained a higher profile and it became apparent that both the statutory and voluntary agencies operating within the criminal justice system were beginning to take a real interest in this problem. There also developed a growing realisation by the police that domestic violence was indeed a very real policing problem, but one which the police alone had failed to adequately address over the years. As domestic violence was a problem that affected the whole of society, then a wider response was needed in order to really come to terms with the problem. It became apparent that a number of forces had developed a variety of initiatives that would be relevant to this research project, which is primarily concerned with the police response to domestic violence, and for that reason it was important to give careful consideration to any such initiatives.

The Police Research Group

It was quite difficult to establish what individual forces were doing, for although some initiatives were inovative others merely replicated initiatives that had succeeded elsewhere. This is particularly true in the case of domestic violence units, which were established in a number of police forces following the advice contained within the Home Office Circular 60/1990. Fortunately a central source of information was found in the form of Police Requirements Support Group (PRSU), a department of the Home Office whose role is to commission and oversee research into problems that are relevant to policing in Britain

today. This department has recently undergone some restructuring and is now known as the Police Research Group (PRG). Although a source of information, there is a problem in that they only recorded information about initiatives that individual forces had made them aware they were undertaking. Obviously they were unable to present an accurate picture of what was occurring simply because they were not always informed of all initiatives, particularly if such initiatives had been prematurely terminated or found not to be successful.

Nevertheless from the information obtained it became apparent that generally these initiatives could be placed into one of three quite distinct categories:

1. Surveys and analyses of domestic violence within Forces.
2. Community linked pro-active projects to tackle domestic violence.
3. One off initiatives within Forces to deal with a particular aspect of domestic violence.

There would be little value merely listing or describing all the various initiatives recorded, particularly as some of them appear to have replicated previous initiatives and were not particularly innovative. A number of initiatives that developed during the course of this research did appear to be of particular interest and, as such, necessitated a personal visit by the researcher in order to gain more in-depth information about that particular initiative. It was particularly important to establish the aims and intentions of those involved and whether or not the initiative had been successful. For that reason it was important to

consider carefully those initiatives which had not been successful in order to establish what lessons could be gained for future study.

1. SURVEYS AND ANALYSIS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE WITHIN FORCES

Domestic Violence Survey - West Yorkshire Police (1990)

West Yorkshire Police was initially one of a small number of Forces leading the way in this field, by placing domestic violence as a priority issue since 1987. A precise policy statement from the Chief Constable in 1988 was issued to every officer directing that effective, early intervention ought to be the police response in such instances. Domestic Violence Liaison Committees were then established throughout the Force with a multi agency membership, whilst a 'Womens' Advice Line' was set up at Force Control Room operating 24 hours each day and staffed by women officers. Victims of domestic violence were able to use this freephone telephone line for advice and assistance. In addition a computerised 'Domestic Index' was created which provided officers attending domestic incidents with valuable information about the risk involved to themselves and also the vulnerability of the victim concerned. Above all else police officers dealing with incidents of domestic violence were made aware that their role was very clearly defined.

- * To protect the victim from further attack.
- * To seek to eliminate any prevailing risk to the victim or her children.
- * To take firm and positive action against the offender and to properly investigate any alleged offences.

In spite of the fact that positive action had been taken management information about incidents of domestic violence was poor because existing statistical information, retrieved

for Home Office recording purposes, failed to identify, segregate or provide sufficient information to evaluate the effectiveness of the Forces' response to the problem of domestic violence.

A Forcewide survey was, therefore, conducted and a clear definition of what constituted domestic violence was published.

"Any incident involving an assault, disturbance, or potential breach of the peace between parties who could generally be described as married or having a family 'relationship' and including cohabiters or lovers (relationship includes separated or divorced). (West Yorkshire Police - Domestic Violence Survey Report, 1990).

A Domestic Violence notification form was specifically designed for this survey and the results analysed with the aid of a computer programme, specifically set up for the survey. Officers were required to complete this form in respect of every domestic incident they attended during a three month period from 1 June 1990 until 31 August 1990. The completed forms were forwarded to the co-ordinator of the initiative who was based at Force Headquarters, Wakefield, where the information from these pro-formas was fed into the relevant database. In addition to supplying information about the circumstances of the domestic incident, including details of all parties involved, information about the police response and service offered was also required. Officers were also required to supply information for the Domestic Index kept in each Sub Division, not just about the incident, but also details about the relationship between the parties involved, particularly concerning ethnicity and gender. Response times were evaluated in order to provide some indication about the priority afforded to such calls and the seriousness, or otherwise, with which they were perceived by police officers dealing with them. Officers were also required to

comment upon whether alcohol was a contributory factor and whether any injunctions were in force at the time. In instances where officers were regularly attending domestic incidents at certain households, these repeat calls were required to be clearly identified on the form. Although a brief narrative outlining the circumstances of the incident was required for the Domestic Index, the reverse of the form presented officers with the opportunity of detailing just how they actually dealt with that particular incident. In addition to outlining the action taken, officers were required to detail what sort of advice they actually gave to such victims and to outline, in cases where arrests were made, the offence for which that person was arrested and how the offender was eventually disposed of.

The survey, which was of 3 months duration, was adopted universally across the West Yorkshire Force area and at the conclusion all information was evaluated. During the three months a total of 2,700 domestic violence incidents were attended by officers of West Yorkshire Police, this representing about 29 incidents each day. The population in each of the Divisions was calculated as a percentage of the total population within the West Yorkshire Police area. Similarly the overall number of domestic incidents recorded in each of the divisions was also calculated as a percentage of the overall force total. Table 9(1) presents a breakdown of the comparison of domestic incidents to population, for each of the eight divisions in West Yorkshire:-

Table 9(1) Incidence of domestic violence/population by division

Division	Percentage of total population	Percentage of total domestic incidents
Aire Valley	15.2	19.6
Bradford South	7.1	14.4
Calderdale	9.9	4.2
Kirklees	18.3	17.5
Wakefield	15.2	12.4
Leeds South	12.4	18.2
Leeds East	9.7	9.3
Leeds North	12.2	4.4

It will be seen that it does not necessarily follow that the divisions with the greatest density of population will attract the highest number of domestic incidents. In order for this information to be meaningful it should be pointed out that Bradford South and Leeds South are areas of high crime with a high proportion of local authority and rented accommodation whilst Leeds North and Calderdale are a mixture of rural and private housing developments, very much at the other end of the social scale. Whilst the survey was wide ranging a number of specific points are very relevant to this research.

Only 453 incidents (16.7 per cent) came into the category of repeat calls, although the period of the survey was of a relative short duration. Nevertheless, over 80 per cent of all calls were disputes of first incidence and it may well be that a low incidence of repeat calls is indicative of such calls being dealt with effectively. This is in line with the findings of research at Washington where hardly any repeat calls were recorded when looking at a particular period of one month's duration. Almost half of the domestic incidents (46.5 per cent) occurred within a six hour period between 9 pm and 3 am, whilst 29 per cent of all domestic incidents occurred between 11 pm and 2 am. This supports the findings of this

research that the peak period for domestic violence is in the hours just following the end of normal licensing hours. In about half of all domestic violence incidents (48 per cent) police officers reported that alcohol had been consumed by the offender.

Whilst the majority of victims were female (85 per cent), there was a tendency in relation to male victims for the offender to be of the same gender. A total of 132 Asian women and 83 Afro-Caribbean women were identified as victims of domestic violence but this still left 83.5 per cent of all female victims as white. Further, although the predominant age group of female victims was between 20 - 30 years, (40.5 per cent), there was still a significant number of middle aged women in evidence. The survey considered the number of victims of domestic violence in relation to the ethnic make-up of each division. The ethnic population within each division was calculated as a percentage of the total ethnic population in West Yorkshire Police area as a whole and the number of victims in each division were calculated as a similar percentage. Table 9(2) shows the ethnic population in each division as a percentage of the total population and also the total number of victims in each division that were of ethnic origin:-

Table 9(2) Victims of domestic violence from ethnic minorities in each division

Division	Percentage of total ethnic population	Percentage of total victims
Aire Valley	31.8	15.6
Bradford South	10.8	40.6
Calderdale	5.5	0.0
Kirklees	26.0	23.8
Wakefield	2.7	0.4
Leeds South	4.4	9.8
Leeds East	5.9	6.1
Leeds North	12.9	3.7

Once again this table shows that just because an area has a high ethnic population, it does not follow that it will have a high level of reported domestic violence from within those communities. Although Bradford South has an ethnic population just 2 per cent below that of Leeds North, it has more than ten times the number of victims of domestic violence from within those communities. Having seen the relevant affluence of Leeds North as compared to the relative decadence of Bradford South the reasons for such disparity become clearer, for matters of class, education, housing and poverty have a considerable bearing upon the level of domestic violence reported.

In the vast majority of reported domestic violence incidents, the offender was male (88.2 per cent) and white European (83.3 per cent). In 36 per cent of incidents the offender was the husband of the victim; in 25 per cent a male cohabitee and in 17 per cent a boyfriend. This is very much in line with the findings of the research at Washington. The offender was identified as female in only 11 per cent of all incidents but the subject of male victims of domestic violence is discussed later in my research. In just under 4 per cent of all domestic violence incidents an injunction was currently in force, but out of the total number

of 104 injunctions, only 28 contained a power of arrest. However, on only five occasions was this power of arrest actually invoked by officers at the scene, which does again demonstrate a reluctance to arrest even when that course of action is appropriate.

Some difficulty was experienced in actually analysing the advice given by police officers to victims of domestic violence, for while many officers claimed to have given advice the research did not tease out from them what advice they actually gave. With regard to referrals to other agencies, 53 per cent were referred to solicitors, 9.5 per cent to Social Services, 3.5 per cent to Womens' Aid or similar organisations.

During the three month period of the survey 469 persons were arrested as a result of the 2,700 domestic violence related offences reported, which is a relatively high figure and well above the normal arrest rate for such matters. Of all those arrested, 2 were charged with murder, 56 with grievous bodily harm/unlawful wounding, whilst the remainder was evenly distributed between assault occasioning actual bodily harm and breach of the peace. With regard to persons arrested 40 per cent were charged and detained for court, 23 per cent were charged and bailed, whilst the rest were dealt with by other means or not proceeded against.

In over half of all domestic incidents (57 per cent) police officers attended the scene within 10 minutes, but in just over a third of all such calls (35 per cent) they arrived within 5 minutes. Police were able to respond to the majority of domestic violence incidents (81 per cent) within 30 minutes which indicates the high priority given to domestic violence incidents during the period of this survey.

Conclusions

Not only was the survey quite positive and highlighted areas where the police had been successful, but it also identified a number of areas where the service provided by the police was called into question. A number of conclusions can be drawn by means of analysing the survey:-

- * Officers were not always carrying out effective early intervention in line with Force policy.
- * The majority of assailants (72 per cent) were not detained by the police when dealing with allegations of domestic violence.
- * Even though officers advised victims to obtain injunctions against their assailants, police officers failed to make use of the powers contained in injunctions that were in force.
- * An apparent lack of information concerning the services and resources available to the victims of domestic violence was evident. Less than 3 per cent of victims were supplied with details of the services provided by the Domestic Violence Unit and Child Abuse Unit.
- * There was a real need for some form of advice sheet or leaflet to be provided to all victims of domestic violence, outlining the various services available to them and sources of assistance.
- * On a considerable number of occasions officers failed to take firm, positive action, even when the victims had sustained quite serious injuries.
- * Force policy was not being complied with as officers had, on occasions, declined to take action when there was no immediate complaint of assault by the victim.
- * Although the value of the Domestic Index was evident, in particular where a history of violence had existed previously, only a small number of the overall total of domestic incidents were actually inputted by officers into the computerised Domestic Index.
- * A need was identified to study police officers' attitudes regarding their response to the problem of domestic violence and look towards improvement in the future.

This survey does indicate the ineffectiveness of police policy, when it is not carried out by individual officers detailed to deal with domestic incidents. The dichotomy that exists between the implementation of policy and the application of discretion is all too apparent here. Despite the fact that officers were failing to effect early intervention they appeared to be unable to properly give advice to victims of domestic violence, for the advice simply to obtain an injunction against a violent partner puts the onus very much upon the victim and is pointless if officers subsequently fail to make use of their powers contained within such injunctions. Whilst there was a recognition of the need to make victims aware of the various agencies that could provide support and assistance, officers generally failed to make them aware of the existence of their own Domestic Violence Units.

Although a need was identified to study officers' attitudes and look towards improvement in the future, that indicated an acceptance that the police response to domestic violence was not good enough and the problem was not being addressed. There still seemed to be a perception that the police, in isolation, could be effective if improvements were made and an unwillingness to grasp the fact that domestic violence is a societal problem and required the police response to be seen as part of a much wider response. This survey clearly demonstrated shortcomings in the police response but, more importantly, outlined the need for a coordinated multi agency response to tackle a societal problem.

The particular value of the survey, however, was that it tended to show the extent of the problem of domestic violence and provided the clearest information for the way ahead. Of course it could be argued that because the police are ineffective in dealing with domestic violence, an easy option would be to declare the problem as societal and pass responsibility

on to other agencies. This survey does show domestic violence to be a societal problem and a commitment by the police to continue addressing the matter as a policing problem that can be addressed by improving performance is not the answer. It is the information that emerges from the survey that identifies the need for a multi agency response.

Domestic Violence Research - Northern Ireland

A criticism that could be levelled at the West Yorkshire Police research was that it was carried out "in house", which could cause the objectivity of such research to be questioned. In 1986 the Royal Ulster Constabulary were involved in a research project which considered the police response to domestic violence, but this research was funded by the European Community and was carried out by independent researchers, (Montgomery and Bell). This particular survey was topical at the time this research commenced and was being continually reviewed by the Royal Ulster Constabulary over the ensuing period.

The survey looked at the police handling of domestic violence defining "Wife assault" as "The intentional physical abuse of a woman in a way that causes pain or injury or the threat of physical abuse by the male partner with whom she lives or has lived" but, on reflection, this definition to be too narrow particularly as it relates only to "intentional physical abuse".

Because of the difficulty in actually finding women who were prepared to talk about their experiences of domestic violence, the survey focused upon all the women living at that time in the four Womens' Aid refuges in Northern Ireland during August and September 1986. In all a total of 67 women from these refuges and associated hostels were interviewed, the criteria for interview that they had been the victims of assault by their matrimonial partner.

Of these 64 per cent were married, 15 per cent cohabitating, 12 per cent separated, 7 per cent divorced and the remaining 2 per cent were single. A number of interesting results emerged upon analysis of the data obtained through these interviews. The interviews were restricted to incidents that had occurred since December 1980, this being the commencement date of the Domestic Proceedings (NI) Order 1980. The result can be summarised as follows:-

Number of times police contacted

Just over half of the women interviewed (57 per cent) had reason to contact or involve the police on more than one occasion, whilst 21 per cent had reason to contact the police on six or more occasions. One particular woman actually contacted the police on at least 30 occasions and, whilst this might appear excessive a staggering 95 per cent agreed there were occasions when they ought to have contacted the police but thought better of it. This last comment is a cause for concern because, for whatever reason, the vast majority of these women failed to contact the police when they really ought to have done so.

Reasons why women did not call the police

Just under half (48 per cent) had no confidence in the ability of the police to deal effectively with domestic incidents and therefore did not contact them. Whilst the majority of them formed this opinion of the police through past experience some based their opinion upon what they had been told by friends and relations. About 25 per cent declined to involve the police either because they wished to deal with the problem themselves or they did not wish to involve outsiders and 22 per cent claimed to have been prevented from contacting the police by their violent partners. A surprisingly small number (4 per cent) claimed to

live in a politically sensitive area where the police were unwelcome and therefore not to be contacted. One would expect a lot more women to use this as a reason for not contacting the police. Obviously the police would be less welcome in republican areas, but without knowing the exact make-up of the sample group it would be difficult to pass any firm judgement in this area.

Methods of contacting police

Of those who did contact the police only 10 per cent of victims telephoned the police from their own homes, 39 per cent telephoned from a neighbour's or friend's house and 14 per cent actually attended the police station in person to report the matter. The low percentage of victims reporting the violence from their own home, can be attributed to the fact that very few of the women interviewed actually had telephones in their homes. In the majority of cases (68 per cent) the police arrived within half an hour and generally two or more officers attended. As most of the telephone calls to the police were not made from the victim's home, most of the men were not aware the police had been informed. This was a very good overall response time particularly in view of the dangers faced daily by the officer of the Royal Ulster Constabulary.

Forms of violence used

The women interviewed supplied information about a total of 62 incidents of domestic violence in which they were directly involved. Only one of those incidents related to verbal threats for the rest all involved instances of violence which were quite serious in some instances as outlined in the following table.

Table 9(3) Domestic violence in Northern Ireland - forms of violence used

Violence used	Percentage
Kicked, headbutted	18
Hit with fist or punched	18
Man smashed up property	13
Woman beaten up	9
Pushed, slapped or dragged by hair	9
Assaults upon or threats to children	8
Objects thrown at woman	5
Threats with object or weapon	5
Hit with object/weapon	5
Choked	3
Others	7

TOTAL =	100

The severity of the violence used is alarming and yet only half the women had resorted at some stage to seeking the grant of some form of court order. Whilst the reasons for not obtaining such orders varied from poor advice from solicitors to lack of knowledge there was a general lack of confidence in the effectiveness of the criminal justice system to be of any support to them. The majority of incidents occurred in the home although some were more public, with one woman reporting how her husband beat her in the middle of a busy street with the traffic trying to avoid them and no one at all stopping to help.

Police action at the scene

The following are examples of the police action or rather inaction when dealing with these incidents:-

They took him into the kitchen and asked me if I wanted him out. I said "Yes" so they took him and promised I'd have no more trouble. They dropped him at the bottom of the road. I went to bed. If I'd known they'd

only dropped him off, I would never have slept. They're just a taxi service...

They told him to leave and he refused so they took him away by force. They said they'd come back next day for a statement. He was back inside half an hour. He put the front door in and beat me up again and made me swear I'd never call the police again. The police never came back....

They had to force their way in because he wouldn't let them in. They forced their way in because the kids were screaming. They asked if we were hurt. I said "No", but we're terrified. They told him to go to bed and behave himself and they left. (Montgomery & Bell 1986, p.31).

In spite of these examples the police were perceived to have adopted a strategy of 'intervention' in 47 per cent of the reported incidents and a strategy of mediation in 33 per cent of incidents. In the remaining incidents the police merely provided some form of assistance or intervention only when all else failed. Of course the question arises of what specific kind of response those women expected from the police. Most simply wanted their violent partner arrested (42 per cent) or removing from the house (32 per cent) and even though an arrest rate of 15 per cent, would seem quite high, it certainly did not meet the expectations of these women. No action at all was taken in half the recorded incidents (56 per cent) which is quite surprising when two thirds of the women claimed they would have been willing to give evidence against their violent partners if required so to do.

Conclusions

Generally the police attitude was regarded as negative and their approach viewed as uncooperative, unsympathetic and even indifferent. Only one in ten of the women expressed any level of satisfaction at all with the police response to their problem. Whichever strategy was adopted by the police, whether intervention or non intervention, the rationale behind adopting that particular strategy appears to have been quite arbitrarily

adopted. The perception was that the decision about which strategy to adopt depended more upon the individual officer's arbitrary view of the situation than the actual circumstances and seriousness of the incident. Not only was the police action considered ineffective but in just under a third of these incidents (32 per cent) the violence actually became worse as a result of the police attendance.

The survey was certainly critical of the police response and resulted in a complete review by the Royal Ulster Constabulary of the way in which they ought to respond to domestic violence. The result was that in 1991 specific guidelines were issued by the RUC which indicated considerable change in the police approach to domestic violence "... a new and more robust policing geared towards arrest and prosecution of offenders, rather than one which smooths over the dispute and seeks reconciliation between the partners".

The principles that underpinned these new guidelines were quite straightforward:-

- * The police have the authority of law enforcement.
- * Assaults that are domestic by nature are nevertheless criminal offences.
- * The cycle of abuse and injury can be broken by effective intervention by the police.
- * A positive policy of effective intervention can actually save police time and resources.

It was recognised that victims of domestic violence call upon the police for help when the level of violence has increased to the extent that the woman fears for her safety and/or the safety of her children. Whilst such victims do need protection they do not necessarily want

to end the relationship but want the violence to stop and realise that the police are one of the few agencies that are always available. The police response to calls for assistance may very well determine how the parties involved view the seriousness or acceptability of what has happened.

The following is extracted from a summary of these guidelines which are contained within a policy document on domestic violence issued by the Chief Constable of the RUC in March 1991:-

Police officers are frequently tasked to domestic disputes, many of which result in physical harm being sustained by one or other of the parties involved. Whilst this is not a new phenomena, public awareness of domestic violence has greatly increased in recent years and the attitude of society is hardening. It is therefore imperative that the Royal Ulster Constabulary reflects public opinion by responding positive to such crime..... Persons assaulted within the home must be afforded the same degree of protection as those harmed elsewhere....It is therefore essential that the police response to incidents of domestic violence is positive, thorough and professional from the outset.

This was intended as a clear commitment to adopt a positive policy on domestic violence, moving away from the traditional response of reconciliation towards a response of arrest and prosecution. The main objective of the new policy was to protect the victims from further physical violence, ensure the victim and any children do not remain at risk and to take positive action against offenders. In order to ensure this policy was properly implemented and effectively monitored, a Domestic Violence Liaison Inspector was appointed in each Sub Division of the Royal Ulster Constabulary to monitor and review the police response, liaise with the courts in appropriate cases and maintain a dialogue and liaison with relevant agencies, especially local Womens' Aid groups. This was the

beginning of a multi agency initiative that developed as a result of the experience of such initiatives in Northumbria and elsewhere in Britain. It demonstrates that a survey is of value when direct action is seen to be occurring in consequence of such research.

2. COMMUNITY LINKED PRO-ACTIVE PROJECTS

Easterhouse Project - Strathclyde Police (1991)

In an area with high levels of unemployment, alcohol and drug abuse and high crime levels, the senior police officer of Easterhouse Sub Division, Chief Inspector Harry Hickinson, decided to make domestic violence a priority for his officers. In conversation with the researcher he referred to the traditional West Scotland attitude to domestic violence, together with the reputation that the Easterhouse area of Glasgow had acquired over the years as a problem area with a propensity for violence. Because of these factors he had been unable to accurately establish the extent of the problem of domestic violence in his sub division because many victims were reluctant to report domestic assaults to the police or indeed to any of the other agencies involved.

The police practice of recording domestic violence in Strathclyde dictated that such matters were not usually made subject of a crime report, unless an arrest was made. This was true even if the allegation was one of assault and obviously supports the view of Smith (1989) et al concerning the under reporting of cases of domestic violence by the police. Chief Inspector Hickinson was aware that where assaults had occurred within the privacy of the marital home, his officers were generally unwilling to pursue a criminal investigation, choosing instead to give 'advice' to the victims. This was due to the perceived reluctance of the courts to deal with such matters and also because of the views of the officers

concerned, who seemed to have the 'West Scotland' attitude when it came to dealing with domestic violence.

A definite policy in relation to domestic violence was needed and in consequence the following policy was established which instructed officers to take account of the following when attending such incidents:-

1. Establish immediately whether the victim is in need of medical attention.
2. Consider the victims safety. Is there a possibility of the assault being repeated? Can referral be made to another Agency or Organisation.
3. Assess the likelihood of risk to any children within the home and, if necessary, make contact with Social Work Department and report to the Childrens Panel (NB This terminology is peculiar to Scotland).

Having established a policy within which his officers were required to operate, Chief Inspector Hickinson realised that the police alone were unable to tackle the problem of domestic violence and decided to foster close liaison and cooperation with other interested agencies both statutory and voluntary. A Multi Agency Working Group was established, which obviously was one of the first of its kind in Great Britain being made up of representatives from the various interested agencies. The Working Group decided to set up a pilot scheme in May 1991 for a limited period of six months duration. At the outset the following measures were agreed upon:-

- * Complaints of domestic assault to be properly recorded and a crime report completed where appropriate.

- * A 'domestic violence' register to be established at Easterhouse Police Station and completed in every instance where police are called to domestic incidents.
- * The Investigating Officer to advise the victim concerned of the various agencies that are able to provide assistance and make any necessary referrals.
- * If available, police transport to be used to take any woman to a refuge or a place of safety.
- * Police officers to accompany victims of domestic violence to their home address to collect any personal effects or property.
- * Follow up enquiries to be made, whenever possible, in order to ensure that victims are being provided with appropriate assistance by the relevant agencies.
- * Police Control Room staff to ensure that all 'domestic' incidents are properly logged and recorded, and the Administrative Sergeant to be responsible for retrieving statistical information relating to domestic assaults on a 24 hour basis.
- * Persons accused of domestic assaults should be arrested and detained in custody, if appropriate. The Senior Procurator Fiscal at the District Court agreed to accept custody cases on the evidence of one witness together with circumstantial evidence - (This is a particular problem relating to Scottish Law).
- * Information retained by police in their Domestic Violence Register to be made available to the Social Services, Housing Department and Health Centre. Information only to be given to voluntary agencies (Womens' Aid, Victim Support Group) with the permission of the victims.
- * A training programme to be established in Easterhouse Sub Division for the benefit of all police officers stationed there.

To reinforce the above, funding was obtained from the Safer Cities Project to print two types of laminated 'Aid memoir' cards. The first card, Illustration 9(1), was designed to be given to the victims of domestic violence by police officers attending domestic incidents

and simply contained information relating to the telephone numbers of the various agencies who were considered to be able to provide help and assistance to victims.

Illustration 9(1) Strathclyde Police: aid memoir card for victims

DO YOU NEED HELP?...
Are you the victim of violence or threats by another member of your household or family?
...HELP IS AT HAND
Don't delay contact one of the numbers on the back.
The telephone numbers printed are for your use, don't be afraid to use them.
Remember if you would like to see a solicitor usually the first visit is free

SAFE
GREATER EASTERHOUSE


SOCIAL WORK DEPARTMENT TEL: 774 6105
(Outwith office hours contact FREEPHONE 0800 811505)

HOUSING DEPARTMENT TEL: 771 5717 (ext 134)
(Outwith office hours contact 429 6454)

WOMENS AID TEL: 248 2989


EASTERHOUSE HEALTH VISITOR TEL: 771 0781 (ext 228)

POLICE TEL: 771 9311
(In an emergency - dial 999)


CONFIDENTIALITY ASSURED

The second laminated card, Illustration 9(2), was designed to be used by police officers as a check list in order that they might obtain the necessary information about each incident to ensure that the matter could be properly investigated. It also acted as a reminder to ensure that sufficient detail about the incident was obtained by the officer to enable a complete entry to be made in the domestic violence register.

Illustration 9(2) Strathclyde Police - aid memoir card for officers

<p style="text-align: center;">STRATHCLYDE POLICE SAFE GREATER EASTERHOUSE</p> <p style="text-align: center;">DOMESTIC VIOLENCE POLICE CHECK LIST ✓</p> <p>1. VICTIM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) <i>Name, date of birth, occupation, home address, telephone number.</i>b) <i>Locus of assault time/day/date.</i>c) <i>Method of reporting - telephone/self/ neighbour/other agency etc.</i>d) <i>M.O./injuries where treated/treatment.</i>e) <i>Alcohol present yes/no.</i> <p>2. FAMILY BACKGROUND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) <i>History of assault.</i>b) <i>Other members of family present.</i>c) <i>Children.</i> <p style="text-align: right;">.../</p>	<p>3. OFFICERS OBSERVATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) <i>Welfare of children.</i>b) <i>Victim co-operation.</i> <p>4. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) <i>Social Worker - details.</i>b) <i>Solicitor - details.</i>c) <i>Doctor/health visitor - details.</i>d) <i>Interdict yes/no - type.</i>e) <i>Property damaged.</i> <p>5. ADVICE/AID MEMOIRE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) <i>Housing/Social Work referrals.</i>c) <i>Victim Support etc.</i> <p>6. ACCUSED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) <i>Name, date of birth, occupation, relationship, address (if different), telephone number.</i>c) <i>Action taken - report, warning, arrest etc.</i> <p style="text-align: center;"></p>
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During the pilot scheme in excess of 200 laminated cards were given by officers to the victims of domestic violence. At the end of the six month trial Chief Inspector Hickinson believed the scheme had met with some considerable success although there appeared to have been no in depth evaluation carried out. Whilst the various agencies, including the press, had given much support it appeared that there was an increasing reluctance to support the project as the police began to take more of a lead in tackling the problem of domestic violence there.

Although Chief Inspector Hickinson has long since moved on from Easterhouse, follow up enquiries some four years later in 1995 revealed that the scheme was still going well. This does indicate that where multi agency initiatives are firmly established at the outset, they can still be maintained, even if one or two of the main players subsequently move on.

Newcastle Domestic Violence Unit (1992)

Although many police forces established domestic violence during the course of this research, the one thing they had in common was that they were predominantly staffed by police officers. Whilst no doubt those officers would see their primary role as providing a service for victims of domestic violence, evaluation of their role has in the past tended to level criticism of their reluctance to investigate and arrest offenders, because they are, after all, police officers. The value of Domestic Violence Units is generally accepted, but one has to question whether such units need to be staffed by police officers. The work undertaken by Washington Women the Need (WWIN) at their office in Washington is operated on similar lines to work undertaken by Domestic Violence Units elsewhere in the country, except that WWIN is staffed by non police personnel who are, in the main, volunteers. To follow on from this concept the Social Services Department at Newcastle upon Tyne proposed setting up a Domestic Violence Unit in Newcastle with funding for a three year period from the Programme Development Unit of the Home Office. The grant would provide the salaries for a coordinator and two support staff with an additional clerk/typist provided by Northumberland Police under the Urban Programme Scheme.

The Unit was not intended to cover the whole of Newcastle, but rather centre its resources upon two distinct areas within the city; the Western Riverside (Scotswood and Elswick) and

Newcastle North (Kenton and Cowgate) and operate alongside other interested agencies working from the same office. In those particular areas the DVU was to have three levels of activity:-

* Community Information and Liaison

Working together with existing interested agencies and developing others in the area of domestic violence. It would also seek to build upon the correct understanding and knowledge of the problem of domestic violence that already exists in those communities.

* Self Help Group Activities

Working predominantly with women who are, or who have been, victims of domestic violence and also separately with groups of male offenders. The increasing problem of teenage sons who are violent towards their mothers is another area that was to be looked at.

* Inter-Agency Policy, Development and Research

Assessing the effect of the various groups and practices of the relevant statutory agencies and developing proposals to enable them to address and reduce the problem of domestic violence.

Although recognising the fact that a number of agencies were dealing with domestic violence in Newcastle, none of them were able to take on board the developmental and long term commitment that was required to change personal, community and inter-agency understanding of domestic violence in a real way. The DVU was to work closely with the

two Womens' Refuges, located in the target area, Panah (Asian Women Refuge) and Womens' Aid. In each of the three years of the operation of the Unit the costs were assessed as just under £100,000 per annum, with just over 90 per cent of this being funded by Home Office grant. Although initially a time limited project of three years duration, it was hoped that the scheme would prove to be a success and therefore extended to other parts of Newcastle. The project was innovative, although it was build upon experience learnt from the South Tyneside Domestic Violence Unit. The line management was to be through the Social Services, Area Director, whilst issues of development and liaison with other agencies would be through an Advisory Group of multi-agency representatives, (Police, Womens' Aid, Panah and Community Organisations). The DVU was due to commence operating in April 1992 and progress in three distinct stages. Unfortunately the funding for this project did not materialise and so at quite a late stage the plug was pulled on the Newcastle Domestic Violence Unit.

This project is a classic example of a good initiative that was not implemented purely through lack of funding, although eventually a Newcastle Domestic Violence Inter-Agency Steering Group was established in Newcastle. This initiative has been included because it failed to get off the ground purely through lack of funding and not through lack of interest by those involved. It was not strictly a 'police' initiative and indeed very much a multi-agency initiative with considerable police involvement but nevertheless it failed. During the course of this research what has emerged is a great reluctance on the part of any interested party to openly discuss initiatives and projects that have failed. This case is slightly different because it failed through lack of funding but that in itself demonstrates that

domestic violence is not high on the agenda, both at national and to a large extent at local levels.

3. ONE-OFF INITIATIVES

Safelink - South Yorkshire Police (1991-2)

Safelink was a scheme devised by South Yorkshire Police and sponsored for a trial period of 12 months by one of the largest cellular telephone operators in the country - Vodafone. This was a very simple scheme where vulnerable victims of crime, particularly those in fear of domestic violence or racial attacks, were issued with a mobile telephone which was pre-programmed so that the police could be contacted very quickly. It was launched in November 1991, by an Assistant Chief Constable of South Yorkshire Police, and became so successful that the scheme was adopted into other police areas.

Vodafone agreed to meet the full cost of the scheme. They supplied mobile telephones, batteries, chargers, connection fees, monthly rental and even the cost of maintenance and insurance. The mobile phones were distributed throughout the South Yorkshire Police area and issued at the discretion of the Duty Inspector at Sub Divisional level. The phones were available 24 hours a day with no limitations placed on the issue or use of these phones by the sponsor. When these phones were issued the recipient was given instruction as there were three ways in which to contact the police:-

- * The caller dials 999 and the call is treated as a normal 999 call requiring a quick response.

- * The caller dials a pre set number (133) which puts that person directly in touch with Vodafones 'Safelink' line, at their Central Control Room. The person is able to explain exactly what assistance is required and Vodafone contact the relevant Police Control Room immediately.
- * The caller dials the pre set number, as above, but for some reason is unable to speak or the telephone is snatched from the caller by an attacker or intruder. In such a situation the Vodafone operator is able to establish from records which of their 'phones has been activated to the Safelink line and can pass on this information straight to the relevant Police Control Room. The actual user of that Vodafone is quickly identified from records kept by the police and a police resource is immediately despatched to that particular address.

In order to prevent any misuse of the system, all Vodafones supplied through this scheme were adapted to receive incoming calls as usual, but only outgoing calls via '999' to the Emergency Operator or via the pre set number (133) to the Vodafone 'Safelink' exchange. This system had obvious advantages over the usual Home Office 'Beeper' alarms, which are available in Police Forces and are currently used to protect vulnerable persons in their own homes. The Vodafone is portable and can be taken by a domestic violence victim outside her home and thus provide her with comfort and security that she will otherwise not have. It also allows that person to summon police assistance covertly without the need to actually speak into the telephone, by pressing the digits '133' on the phone. Obviously a limited number of these phones were available and allocation to victims or potential victims had to be prioritised, but the scheme is successful.

This is a straightforward one off initiative that does not cost a great deal but is of immense benefit and comfort to any victim of domestic violence living in fear of further violence. Similar initiatives were undertaken in other forces where portable personal attack alarms were given to victims of domestic violence. Whilst not as effective as mobile phones such

devices are quite cheap and in terms of reassurance and support have considerable merit. These one off initiatives have attracted much media attention and are more newsworthy than setting up a Domestic Violence Unit or publishing the results of some in-depth force survey into domestic violence. Unfortunately the benefits and importance of one off initiatives are often exaggerated by those involved and in particular the police do appear to obtain much credit for relatively limited commitment in such cases.

Summary

Taken in isolation, each specific police initiative undertaken by any police force will have some benefit when addressing particular problems associated with domestic violence. The problem facing victims of domestic violence is that they could benefit from such initiatives only if they lived within the particular police area where such initiatives are undertaken. The approach is very piecemeal and very often depend for success upon the dedication and enthusiasm of the senior police officer in that area. Further there does seem limited scope for initiating any scheme without first establishing the extent of the problem and for that reason in depth surveys and research is a pre-requisite to the success of any pro-active initiative. The survey, however, is of little benefit if the information that emerges is not considered and acted upon to improve the police response.

Without doubt the successful initiatives are those where the police do not operate in isolation but work in partnership with other agencies and organisations. In such cases the continued success is not the sole prerogative of the police or any individual police officer if it is firmly established at the outset. These initiatives confirm what this research sought to prove at the outset that a multi agency response would be the best means of finding a

solution to the problem of domestic violence. As time has passed, however, the need to prove the effectiveness of multi agency cooperation and initiatives no longer exists, because they are now well established and do work to address a variety of crime related and societal problems. It should be pointed out that, without the benefit of hindsight, when the initiatives described in this chapter were researched, they were innovative and no one could foretell the success of multi agency working.

These initiatives also demonstrate that when any initiative is seen as a possible solution to the problem of domestic violence, other aspects of the problem are evident which require a quite different solution. In time these various solutions merge and tend to compliment each other by providing a clearer picture of the extent of the problem and combining to create a more cohesive response.

Chapter 10

PLACES OF REFUGE AND THE VICTIM'S PERSPECTIVE

Womens' Refuges

In any study of domestic violence the role of the womens' movement as a social movement is important, because the Womens' Aid organisation and refuges for "battered wives" have their roots in this social movement. Whilst the police have a statutory responsibility for dealing with the consequences of domestic violence, the Womens' Refuges are the only place of refuge available to victims of domestic violence to which police officers could refer such victims throughout the day and night. During the period of this research a number of Womens' Refuges around the country were visited, the majority of which were run and staffed by a number of very dedicated individuals with a real desire to serve the needs of the victims of domestic violence.

Sadly a small number of individuals with extreme views were encountered whose conversations very quickly conveyed an extreme distrust and dislike of all men to the point that any opinions expressed were lacking in objectivity. This is the response of one worker in a Womens' Refuge when the research being undertaken was outlined and she was asked for assistance in detailing more fully the way that particular refuge operated:-

There's no point in you or any other man doing any research into domestic violence because you're a man and it follows that you are biased ... I'm sorry but I cannot become involved in any research because all that it does is provide excuses for why men use violence towards women.... The only thing that works is heavy prison sentences.

Although initially stunned by such a response one can nevertheless appreciate the suspicion that exists within some refuges, even though some of the stances adopted are quite amusing. A worker in one particular refuge enforced a very strict rule that no men were allowed in the refuge, as it might upset the women and children there. When the utility men came to read the gas and electric metres they were obliged to stand outside an open ground floor window while the worker in question strategically placed a mirror so that the man could shine his torch on to it and thereby read the meter. At the same time both the workers and women in refuges are at times in fear of violent male partners turning up and committing further violence. In some cases, as the following article highlights, the violence can be quite frightening.

Illustration 10(1) Article from 'City Limits' March 24 - 31 1988

**REFUGES
UNDER SIEGE**

BOB GANNON

STEVE SMITH LOOKS AT THE SPATE OF ATTACKS AGAINST WOMEN'S REFUGES IN LONDON.

Counsellors at women's refuges believe that the discovery of a woman's severed limbs in plastic bags outside a battered wives' hostel in the East End could be linked to a recent spate of violent attacks on other centres.

Workers closed the Tower Hamlets shelter last week after its address was published during media coverage of the macabre find. Now they are contacting the National Union of Journalists to lodge a complaint with the Press Council.

On the day it emerged that the body had been found, a brick was hurled through the window of a refuge in west London, narrowly missing a child. It was only the latest in a series of attacks over the past two months in the district, where three refuges operate. The incidents have been so serious that police mounted a night-time surveillance operation to protect battered wives, who have been terrorised by home-made petrol bombs and rags soaked in fuel, following threatening telephone calls.

Roofings have been used as missiles, and laminated glass has now been fitted at refuge windows to reduce the hazard of flying debris. Sandra Horley of Chiswick Family Rescue said the refuges had considered hiring a private security firm, but found that it would have been too costly. She praised local police for the 'exemplary manner' in which they responded to the threats.

'The women staying in the house are terrified.'

'We thought that one particular man was involved at first, but his wife moved out of the area, and yet the trouble didn't stop,' she said. 'The calls indicated that more than one person might be involved. We asked the police if these attacks could be connected to the discovery in Tower Hamlets. They said no, but how can anyone be sure?'

The police told *City Limits* that they were not prepared to speculate about links between the woman's remains and refuges, though they believe that the victim may have been a former resident of the East End hostel.

The incidents at refuges, which have included several break-ins, come after a woman was stabbed to death in front of her children at a hostel in Brent last year. Other women were forced to leave after the address was published.

Deidre Ridley, from the management committee of the Tower Hamlets Women's Aid refuge, blamed the decision to close the centre on clips transmitted by London Weekend Television, which showed the front of the refuge and local road signs.

'The Press also gave out the address, but I suppose they could argue that LWT had it first,'

she added. 'We're moving as a precaution. The women staying in the house are terrified that their husbands will find them.' A spokesman for LWT said, 'I understand the fears of women in refuges, but I feel that we behaved responsibly, and I think the wider public interest is for the information to be published. The killer plainly knew the address, so it can't be suggested that it was secret. We're not in the business of producing mystery stories. Residents are entitled to know when a murder has been committed in their area.' ●

An Underfunded Vital Resource

Womens' Refuges are, however, places of tremendous help and support to the victims of domestic violence and are established throughout Great Britain. The purpose of such refuges is to provide safe accommodation for women and their children to escape from both physical and emotional violence and also to receive the benefit of the support of other women, who understand the problem of domestic violence, from the victim's viewpoint. Unfortunately because of the great demand placed upon them, refuges are always overcrowded, but the lack of privacy is counter balanced by the comfort and support offered to victims of domestic violence by the staff and other residents.

Some refuges are funded and managed by Local Authorities, where staffing and support is provided by qualified 'Social Workers', but these are relatively few in number. More numerous than Local Authority Refuges are the Womens' Aid Refuges, which rely on government funding. The Womens' Aid Federation (England) was founded in 1975 and is the only national organisation that deals exclusively with the victims of domestic violence. The Federation was founded from a number of local groups, the most famous of which is the WP Womens' Refuge, formed in 1971. The National Womens' Aid Federation of England currently run just over 100 refuges, with a similar number of independent refuges being affiliated to the organisation. In Scotland there are 37 groups affiliated to Scottish Womens' Aid; 35 refuges are connected with Welsh Womens' Aid, whilst the Northern Ireland Womens' Aid Federation have 9 refuges, of which 3 are located in Belfast.

In addition to the Local Authority and Womens' Aid Refuges, a considerable number of refuges have been established which are neither connected nor affiliated to Womens' Aid. They are run on very similar lines however, but are only readily distinguishable by their source and funding. Whilst funding by central government would provide security for all refuges, many of the independent refuges operate on charity funding which could dry up at a moment's notice.

Washington Women in Need - An Independent Refuge

Shortly after taking up post as Deputy Commander at Washington in March 1990, the researcher became aware of the good relationship that existed between the operational police officers at Washington and the volunteers associated with the local independent Womens' Refuge located there. There was also a growing realisation that the police acting alone were ineffective in getting to grips with the problem of domestic violence and that the Womens' Refuge provided a valuable service both to victims of domestic violence and the police. Although a liaison developed between the police at Washington and the local Refuge, consideration was given to the way in which the police approach towards domestic violence could be improved. All recruits to the police are now obliged to spend a short period of 4 weeks in their local police area before attending an initial training course at the District Police Training Centre. This is intended to be an introduction into policing, where new recruits have the opportunity to look at contemporary policing issues and also make contact with some of the community agencies associated with policing in their particular area. This provided an ideal opportunity for newly appointed police officers who will subsequently be based at Washington to experience at first hand the operation of the Refuge and the problems experienced there. The Refuge there was run by an organisation called

Washington Women in Need (WWIN) which also ran a drop-in advice centre located within one of the busy shopping centres in Washington.

Since Mid 1990 newly appointed officers have been attached to this organisation for a short period of 3 days duration and, without exception, have found the experience invaluable. This contact has cemented relationships between the local police at Washington and WWIN with additional benefit that these officers are able to relate their experience with WWIN to other police officers from other police areas when undergoing their basic training at the District Police Training Centre. At the outset of their police careers officers at Washington hopefully see the residents of Womens' Refuge as victims of crime and not individuals whose relationships have failed. This ought to make them more aware of the overall problem of domestic violence and more able and capable of dealing effectively with such situations when they begin to patrol the streets of Washington after their period of initial training.

The situation at Washington may be somewhat different to the norm as there is an independent advice centre linked to the refuge which can best be described as a sort of non-police 'Domestic Violence Unit'. It operates within the community but to a large extent outside the remit of the statutory agencies. It would therefore be prudent to look a little closer at WWIN which provides the following:-

- * A confidential service for all women facing domestic problems to discuss their concerns before crisis situations arise.
- * A 24 hour advice support and safe refuge accommodation for women and children experiencing domestic violence and for homeless teenage women.

- * A counselling service for women who are experiencing sexual abuse and support for women and children through difficult times.
- * Facilities where 'self help' women groups can meet in a comfortable environment and act as coordinating point for interested groups.
- * Training and education for the community and encouragement for women to take advantage of training opportunities.
- * A means of working closely with statutory and other voluntary agencies to promote the interest of women and children.

Washington Women In Need (WWIN) was established in 1982 for the purpose of providing safe accommodation in Washington for victims of domestic violence. The make-up of the group originally consisted of women from a local community group and advice centre and past 'inmates' of womens' refuges. Subsequently, a steering group was established with representation from Social Services, Probation Service, Police and Local Authority in addition to a grant from Social Services, which enabled staff to be employed and the Refuge to become fully operational in Washington.

The Refuge, which is in a 'secret' location in Washington, consists of three bed sits, a communal flat, playroom, sitting room and office, and although it can accommodate up to eight families, any more than five families results in real overcrowding. Whilst the grant received from the Local Authority of around £26,000 per annum might appear generous, with annual running costs in excess of £45,000 the residue has to be found through fund raising or from other sources (BBC Children in Need, National Consortium of Volunteering Opportunities). It would be an accurate assessment to say that WWIN operates on a shoestring, which does restrict the level of service that can be provided to victims of domestic violence in Washington and the surrounding area.

The conflict approach which was very much a hallmark of the womens' movement approach, to bring the issue of domestic violence into the public arena, does not fit in with the practicalities of actually running a Womens' Refuge. The situation at Washington is no doubt replicated throughout the country where those involved in running the refuge have to conform to the criteria and system of the funding agency. In this particular situation WWIN together with a large number of other good causes, all apply for local authority funding and there needs to be a certain amount of lobbying, even compromise, to ensure their organisation is not seen as too radical or undeserving a cause. In such situations conflict must give way to consensus to the point that those involved in the refuge are too busy actually running and seeking funding for the Womens' Refuge that pragmatism often takes the place of idealism. The danger of this approach, however, is that through assisting a minority of women at the refuge, the opportunity diminishes to support the wider aims of women in society. The need to make beds outweighs the need to make banners.

The Drop-in Advice Centre

To compliment the work of the Refuge, WWIN opened an office in the main street of one of the 'village centres' in Washington. The purpose of the office at The Elms, Concord, Washington, which was opened in October 1989, was to provide a 'shop front' in the High Street, where women could simply drop in to talk about domestic problems or from where they could be referred to the Refuge or other agency. It was felt there was a need for such a public location to highlight to the whole community the problem of domestic violence, in marked contrast to the Refuge, whose location has to be kept secret for obvious reasons.

The reason for setting up such an office was outlined to me by a full time worker there:-

We hope to alleviate the shame and stigma of being in a refuge by encouraging the public to see women and children in refuges as victims of crime rather than people whose relationships have failed.

WWIN have certainly been able to diversify and expand since opening their office at the Elms, which benefits from being in the same building as the Citizens Advice Bureau. The office is definitely a busy place, where women from all walks of life are continually to be found, with a variety of problems, that are dealt with through a counselling service and through a number of self help groups for victims of domestic violence, sexual violence and, more lately, homeless teenagers. Because of the secrecy attached to the location of refuges, women are usually obliged to go through a third party (Police, Social Services, Samaritans, etc) in order to be referred. This inaccessibility has often deterred women from seeking help, very often because of their distrust of agencies such as the Police and Social Service. The ability to telephone the WWIN office at Washington, on a telephone number that is well publicised is considered to have been of tremendous benefit to women. This may account for the fact that a considerable number of referrals are from women residing outside the Washington area. Apart from self referrals, women are usually referred to the refuge by the Police, Social Service, Citizens Advice Bureau and even the Samaritans. Although the refuge was established in 1982 accurate records of all referrals were not kept during the early years. Upon checking the referrals for 1989 a total of 56 women and 102 children were accepted into the refuge during the preceding twelve months, while 85 women and 159 children were turned away because of a lack of suitable accommodation. Upon checking two years later, in 1991, accommodation had been provided for 72 women and 104 children during the preceding twelve months with 132 women and 270 children turned away. Therefore while the number of women and children to whom refuge could

be provided had increased slightly, there was a considerable increase in the numbers who had to be turned away. This was an overall increase of over sixty per cent which highlights the scale of the problem - not the people who are taken in by the refuge but the numbers who are actually turned away because there is no accommodation for them.

The following list identifies the agencies which referred women to the refuge in 1991:-

<u>Agency</u>	<u>Referrals</u>
Social Services	75
Other Refuges	63
Self	16
Police	9
Housing Agencies Centres	5
Accommodation Project	5
Housing Department	5
Citizens Advice Bureau	4
Samaritans	3
Advice Centres	2
Friends	2
Probation	2
YMCA	2
Others	11

<u>Total</u>	204

It is evident that most referrals are made by Social Services and relocations from other refuges, who normally refer women to Washington when they are full. The numbers referred by other agencies, particularly the police, are relatively quite small but as 2/3 of all referrals are made during normal office hours on weekdays, the Social Services Department would appear to be the most appropriate channel to go through.

Whilst talking to the workers at the Refuge it emerged that there were obvious seasonal variations in the numbers of referrals. The peak periods were June - August and December - January which is very much in line with the findings of this research in previous chapters, which indicated these periods as exceptionally busy in relation to the level of domestic violence reported to the police. Generally the staff appeared to be very dedicated whilst performing a role that was both challenging and demanding, but the obvious frustration of having to operate within a framework of extremely limited resources meant the staff being obliged to work many hours of unpaid work. The organisation has a published mission statement:-

WWIN believes domestic violence is ultimately created by the structure of a society, that the unequal status of women in our society and the way men and women are expected to behave is what makes it possible for domestic violence to occur. Until the whole community ceases to see domestic violence as a private problem, and instead sees domestic violence as the crime it is, we will continue to see an increase in the problem.

Their mission statement highlights the real problem; until the whole community realises that domestic violence is a crime and not a private problem, it will never be adequately dealt with. The following are the views of some of the workers:-

Mary - (Part time Worker)

You have to build up relationships and gain their trust quickly as very often new women have arrived during the week and women that you have built up a good relationship with may have left. At weekends usually the womens' finances tend to be low, and as a lot of time is spent with the children, nerves can become frayed and minor problems tend to get blown out of proportion. These situations can be dealt with but must be attended to promptly ...

If there have been no evening 'call outs' and the women in the refuge are settled, the weekend provides a great opportunity to get to know the women and children

really well, and you can build up really good relationships. One weekend may be quite stressful, while another weekend may be fun and work becomes really enjoyable.

Joan - (Playworker)

When new children arrive at the refuge it is a very stressful and upsetting time for them. I try to let them see the refuge as a fun loving place, but also safe and secure. Generally the playroom is the first room the children will see, so the impression is very important - keeping it bright and cheerful is always on the agenda. In order for children to lead any kind of normal life in a refuge, education is always top of the list no matter what age. A wide range of activities are available, either indoors or outdoors for them. School holiday times are fun, we can let our hair down and have a real good time...

Claire - (Coordinator)

My role encompasses many different responsibilities, from doing the finances of WWIN to publicity, fund raising, organising training courses, community development work....

Sometimes I end the day feeling as though I've been several different people meeting such a variety of demands. It's a fascinating job, however, and I'm lucky to be able to say that I've never been bored at work.

There is no doubt that the workers are enthusiastic despite all the problems they encounter but what about the women who were obliged to reside at the hostel, did they take the same view of the situation?

The following are accounts given by three women who were resident at the hostel then:-

Pat

I was living with a man for 3 years. At the beginning everything was going great, up until our daughter was born. Bill used to go out drinking every night he would come in at 12 and start throwing things around the house, smashing the ornaments and shouting abusive words at me then he would go to bed. The next day he would be full of apologies, but he would do the same thing again that night, and I would just sit there as I was afraid of him. Then one day he bashed me in the face and hit the baby, but there was nothing I could do because if I said anything to him it just

made things worse. I was so afraid of him, I did not know what to do, so I put up with this for about 6 months and could not stand it any more so I left him and went into a hostel. It was good there, I got on with the staff okay, and the other women, but he found out where I was. He was pestering me all the time, I could not go to the shops without him seeing me, so I went and got my hair cut short thinking he would not recognise me from the back and he did not, but one day I got a phone call it was him. He wanted to see Tracey, I agreed to this. I had to meet him in the town, so when I got there he was great with me and Lucy and Tracey and he said that he had learned his lesson and would never do anything to harm us again.

So I went back to him, this happened 4 times, and I finally realised that Bill would never change so I left him again but this time for good. I love it where we are, and Tracey has settled okay and the staff are very helpful. I think I can speak for all the women in here, we are very grateful for all the help the staff have given us while we have been here.

Debbie

I was referred here in March as I was fleeing violence. I hadn't realised there were such places. I realise now what help there is for people in the same situation. This is a clean respectable home, the staff are absolutely fantastic, they help you in every possible way. While I was here I received the best possible help from all the staff and residents. I felt I was safe and the staff gave me the confidence that I didn't have.

Even now that I have now left the Refuge I keep in touch with the staff on a friendly basis. I get help still when I ask for it. I can honestly say if there were more places like this there would be less women and children getting hurt.

Julie

Living at home with my husband was really bad from day to day, I didn't know how he was going to react, some days he would be really nice and do anything I asked him to do, but most days I would be frightened to even speak to him. I left him and went to my sister in laws' but her house was so overcrowded and her children could do no wrong, so I went back home. Then things got better for about 5 weeks he never hit me, he just walked around the house as though me and the children weren't there ...

At Christmas when I was pregnant with my second child, he came in drunk and started to argue with me then the next thing I know I was waking up on the floor with bruising all around my neck. He kept saying he was sorry and it would never happen again. Then when I had my baby, things started getting worse, he never stopped hitting me....

At Christmas 1989, things got to the stage where the children were going to bed crying so we waited until he went to the pub, then left again. This time I went to this place and they sent me to a place called..... it was not a very nice place to be, so I went back home after a couple of weeks, it was Christmas Eve. Things were

not that bad for a while, but he started hitting me even worse, so I got the kids ready and left the house. I went to ... they phoned around and said they had room at Washington. I said I would go, and two women came over and took me home for some things, then they brought me to the Refuge. It was a lot different to what I was expecting, it was very clean and the other women were very friendly....

The staff are all very nice and understanding and are always there if you need to talk, even if it is not important they will make you a cup of coffee and listen to you.

Because of the good liaison and close links with the local police the good practices adopted there are seen at first hand by young police officers, who hopefully will take that experience with them and be more able to understand the problems faced by the victims of domestic violence. The continual level of violence suffered by some of these women is appalling and even in the comparative safety of the refuge there is still a real fear of the potential for further violence by the men who have abused them in the past. There is also a general lack of awareness by some of these women, even to the point of the existence of such refuges. Above all there is a recognition of the value and worth of Womens' Refuges.

Victim Support

There are a number of organisations that have been established to help those who feel victimised but the only organisation set up to deal exclusively with victims of crime is Victim Support. Whilst there was an overwhelming movement from within Victim Support to extend support for victims of crime to victims of assault and violence there was an equal reticence to become involved in domestic violence. Certainly when discussing this in 1989 the main objection to becoming involved in assaults that were related to domestic incidents was the fact that specialist training would be required, although there appeared a real reluctance 'from the top' to become involved with victims of domestic violence.

Victim Support is the only organisation specifically established to provide support and comfort to the victims of crime and exists to give advice, support and practical assistance to victims of crime, through an 'army' of trained volunteers taken from all walks of life. The 12,000 volunteers nationally now offer help and support to over half a million victims of crime each year, but the growing number of victims 'referred' to Victim Support has outstripped the growth in funding and volunteers. This has resulted in more victims having to be contacted by letter or telephone, to keep pace with the increase.

Victim Support is now an essential component of the criminal justice system. Victims of crime are usually automatically referred by the local police to Victim Support, but there are still a number of self referrals and referrals from other agencies. In the early years Victim Support dealt with victims of burglary and theft, before extending their acceptance of automatic referrals to victims of crimes of violence, particularly assault. In fact, the organisation has built up considerable expertise in dealing with victims of violence and is able to deal with claims for compensation through the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board. Specialist training has, for a number of years, been afforded to volunteers who deal with victims of sexual assault and families who are victims of homicide. Victims of domestic violence however did not, until very recently figure very high on the agenda.

Working Party on Domestic Violence

In April 1990, Victim Support convened a National Inter-Agency Working Party to look into domestic violence. Its exact terms of reference were to "review the type and extent of service provision currently available to victims of domestic violence and to produce recommendations as to how these should be coordinated and extended throughout England,

Wales and Northern Ireland". In consequence a report containing a number of recommendations was finally published in July 1992. The nine chapters of the report considered the experience of women; the role of the police and legal system; housing issues, responsibilities of agencies, inter-agency work; long term issues and an agenda for action at a national level. The working Party considered domestic violence to be part of a far wider problem prevalent in society:-

The issue of domestic violence is a problem of the health of our whole society: Domestic violence affects the future, through its effects on children and the home. Women and children have the right to live unthreatened by violent personal assault. Unless we can construct a society in which they can do so the problem of violence in our society will reproduce themselves for the foreseeable future.

There is always therefore a problem in actually defining domestic violence or at least setting the parameters for study. The Working Party narrowed the definition to 'physical, sexual, emotional and mental abuse of women by men who are their partners or ex partners'. It was decided not to involve violence between family members within this definition, but to focus the attention on 'partners'. The role of the police was considered in depth because of their important role within the criminal justice system. The working party viewed the police as 'a male dominated, action orientated organisation, who like decisions to be clear cut and problems to have a solution'. This is not a rash generalisation but really quite an accurate description of the police role by an organisation (Victim Support) that has a regular contact and an established working relationship with the police. The description of the police is understandably quite an accurate description of an organisation that operates within the constraints of the criminal law, in particular the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 and associated Codes of Practice.

The report very adequately points out the problem of domestic violence but does point out that all relevant agencies, both statutory and voluntary, need to become actively involved in order to provide an effective response to the problem. No one particular agency can provide a complete service to victims of domestic violence nor can it work in isolation but all agencies need to be aware of their limitations and the actual area of service provided by other relevant agencies. The obvious question to ask here is what about the role of the Victim Support? For a report of some ninety pages in length, the first hint of this does not appear until as late as page sixty seven. Having very comprehensively outlined the problems of domestic violence and the failings and deficiencies of the participant agencies and organisations, the response of Victim Support is summarised in just two and a half pages! There are a considerable number of agencies which deal with the welfare and rehabilitation of offenders, yet Victim Support is the main and, in many instances, the only organisation that deals exclusively with the victims of crime. One would therefore have expected Victim Support to have had a much larger impact and offer a more comprehensive service to victims of domestic violence than is currently the case.

The Working Party listed five basic principles which underpin and actually summarise the various recommendations:-

1. Domestic violence is an extremely serious matter that causes pain, suffering and distress to women and children, sometimes over very long periods of time. Whilst it now has a higher public profile and is better placed on the political agenda, domestic violence is an issue that has long been neglected. There is a general need for greater awareness of the problems associated with domestic violence.
2. Initiatives should aim to provide services that are appropriate, effective and adequately resourced. Priority should be given to improving funding for refuge services for without them, no other strategies can work. There is also a need for secure funding for the Womens' Aid national helpline.

3. Domestic violence should be treated by all agencies with the same degree of seriousness as other forms of violence. Criminal law should be used and civil law should be improved and simplified to provide better protection for women and children from violence occurring in their own homes.
4. Statutory agencies and voluntary organisations should develop their own formal policies and working practices on domestic violence.
5. Inter-agency understanding and cooperation is crucial in working towards comprehensive and integrated services which protect and help women as well as leading to strategies which prevent domestic violence. Local forums need to be set up and there should also be a national structure for coordination to combat the fragmentation of effort between agencies and government departments.

Victim Support, like a number of other agencies, have accurately defined the problem of domestic violence and outlined the steps and actions that needs to be taken by all the interested agencies and organisations. Unfortunately Victim Support has found difficulty in actually defining its involvement and role in dealing with the victims of domestic violence. This appears to be a problem that is not peculiar to Victim Support, as most agencies are well able to identify the problem and show where the deficiencies are but apparently unable to provide any realistic attempt to solve the problem. The report has also highlighted the fact that there are no simple solutions to what is a complex problem affecting the whole of society.

Victims Support Now

It is now over 5 years since that report was published and its impact and effectiveness would appear limited in view of subsequent inactivity of Victim Support in this area generally. In fairness to that organisation it should be pointed out however that in response to a change in attitude within Victim Support, victims of domestic violence were

subsequently included in the Victim Support referral policy, but generally by means of self referral.

Where schemes deal with referrals for domestic assault the volunteers consider a very valuable service is being offered to women but not all schemes are involved with victims of domestic violence and this is very disappointing. Victim Support does offer a comprehensive service to victims of crime and therefore has a duty to help victims of domestic violence either directly or indirectly, by putting him in touch with other agencies and sources of help that are currently available.

There has however been some progress, especially in the North East, where an effective Domestic Violence Forum has been established at Sunderland and although a multi agency initiative, it is very much driven by Victim Support who have taken forward the more positive aspects emanating from the 1990 report. Otherwise there has not been a great deal of progress and it is considered Victim Support missed a golden opportunity to grasp the initiative and establish itself as the lead agency in dealing with domestic violence.

The Victim's View

The police response to domestic violence has been considered and generally criticised by those who have carried out such research and even police officers, particularly at senior level have been at times all too aware of the shortcomings of the police response (Bourlet 1988). Obviously the other group within society who have a real interest in how the police respond to domestic violence are the victims themselves. There are a number of benefits of insider research when the researcher is a police officer looking at how the police respond

to a particular problem. One of the drawbacks, however, is to see victims of violence through the eyes of a police officer, rather than considering how the victims view the police officers responding to such situations. No matter what initiative the police undertake to respond to the problem of domestic violence, if the victims of such violence do not seem to benefit or do not consider the police are getting to grips with the problem, then the effectiveness of the police response must be brought into question.

Although this research has predominantly considered the role of the various practitioners operating in the field of domestic violence, there has been a positive attempt to keep the role of victims of such violence in centre focus, through regular meetings at a number of Womens' Refuges. It is imperative to speak to victims of domestic violence to find out from them how they view the problem and how they assess the input of various statutory and voluntary agencies who claim to support them. Because many of the women were a little uneasy speaking to a senior policeman about the problem and their predicament, it was decided, in the first instance, to contact a local refuge and through the coordinator it was agreed that she would arrange for questionnaires to be completed by women using the refuge over a six month period from September 1992 to March 1993. The completion of such questionnaires was to be purely on a voluntary basis and under the supervision of a member of staff, to ensure the integrity of the responses.

The Questionnaire

A questionnaire was designed that was divided into three distinct parts, that generally required a 'tick in the box' response and would only take a few minutes to complete. The first group of questions dealt in particular with the violence suffered by the women in

question, as it was safe to assume that simply because that person was resident in a Womens' Refuge she would have been the victim of some form of violence, most likely of a physical nature. The intention was to establish the extent and duration of the violence used and also to establish whether the violence appertained to one particular man or if it involved a number of relationships. As it is apparent that the instances of domestic violence only represent the tip of the iceberg one could expect responses indicating a high proportion of violence having been used over a prolonged period of time.

The second part of the questionnaire asked certain questions about the offender, such as height, build and eye colouring, as one could expect that violent partners would come in all different shapes and sizes, even with different coloured eyes. The final part of the questionnaire concerned the various groups, both statutory and voluntary, who might be expected to help victims of domestic violence and required a brief assessment of the support and effectiveness of a number of organisations. The final question, in fact, was a 'catch-all' request seeking comment upon any area not specifically covered by the questionnaire.

The Response

Initially there was a good response and 12 questionnaires were received within the first two to three months. The responses then dried up and, upon investigation, it was established that whilst the coordinator had given full support one or two members of staff and volunteers had reservations. Whilst trying to explain the value of this questionnaire to one volunteer by telephone the researcher received the following response:-

"There's no point in you or any other man doing any research into domestic violence, because you're a man and it follows that you are biased.... I'm sorry but

I cannot become involved in any research because all that it does is provide excuses for why men use violence towards women;... The only thing that works is heavy prison sentences."

Obviously there is a need to respect the wishes and also the views of the workers and volunteers who look after the interests of women in the various refuges, but twelve responses was not a particularly large sample from which one could form any firm conclusions, particularly as over 22,000 reported domestic incidents had been considered during the early stages of this research and over 80 questionnaires had been obtained from police officers alone. Consequently a Womens' Refuge was visited in Northumberland in October 1994 and support received from the full time workers there who were left with about 30 questionnaires to complete at their leisure. When no responses were received the refuge was contacted and it emerged that the women to whom the workers had spoken were reluctant to commit their thoughts on paper and were not keen to complete the questionnaire. It appeared that a number of individuals studying for professional qualifications in the field of social studies/probation services had visited this and other refuges with their own questionnaires, relating to their area of research. The end result was that a decision was made not to encourage this practice and consequently no questionnaires were completed. It was also pointed out that this questionnaire consisted of thirteen questions and a number of women would not complete it for that reason. Whilst one cannot legislate or rationalise in the area of superstition, one does need to take note of that fact.

The researcher then tried a different approach and sought the assistance of a woman police officer, Lynn McCowie who is a specialist in the field of social crime prevention in Northumbria Police. Having discussed the matter at length she took these questionnaires

to a Womens' Refuge in Tyneside and was assured there was a greater likelihood of this approach being successful. Subsequently a total of 8 completed questionnaires from that refuge were received, resulting in a total of 20 completed questionnaires, after a great deal of toil and effort.

Analysis of Questionnaires

It was relatively straightforward to collate, analyse and evaluate the information obtained from the completed questionnaires. Of the women who responded 50 per cent agreed that this was not their first time in a Womens' Refuge and a similar percentage agreed that they were staying in a Womens' Refuge in consequence of further acts of violence against them. This indicates that even though just under half the women surveyed claimed this was their first experience of such violence, many women are subject to repeat victimisation in respect of domestic violence. When asked why they had decided to stay at a Womens' Refuge, the following were some of the reasons given:-

"To make sure he would not find me"

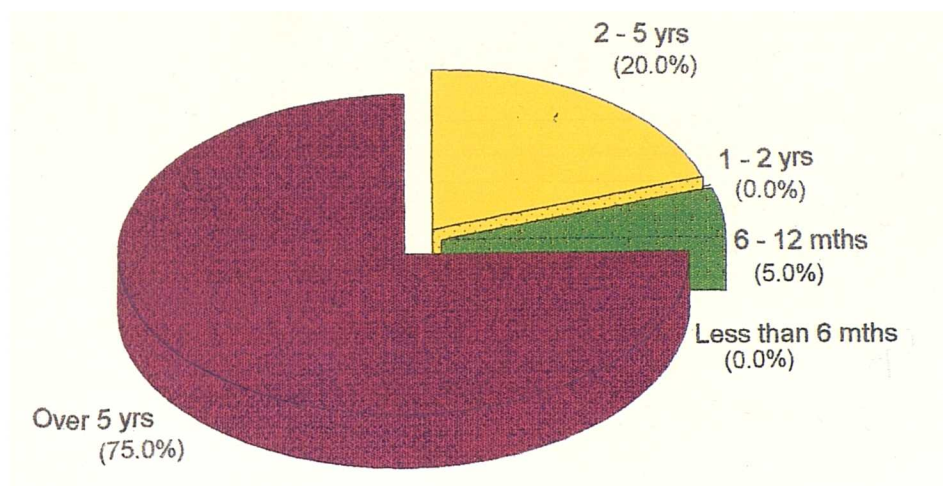
"Because of the violence"

"Had enough! Didn't feel could go to family because of what partner would do"

Obviously the Womens' Refuge is viewed as a place of safety, but it also indicated that the refuge rather than the criminal justice system gave these women the safety and protection they so very much desired.

Giving consideration to how long they had known their current 'violent' partner 75 per cent claimed to have known that partner for over 5 years. Indeed the evidence from these women was that the violence has been quite prolonged, in view of the fact that half the women admitted this was not their first time in the refuge. Figure 10(1) outlines the length of time the current violent partner has been known to the woman concerned and, apart from only one woman who had been in that relationship for only a matter of months, the vast majority of women (95 per cent) had been with their partner for considerably longer than that.

Figure 10(1) Length of time involved in relationship with current 'violent' partner

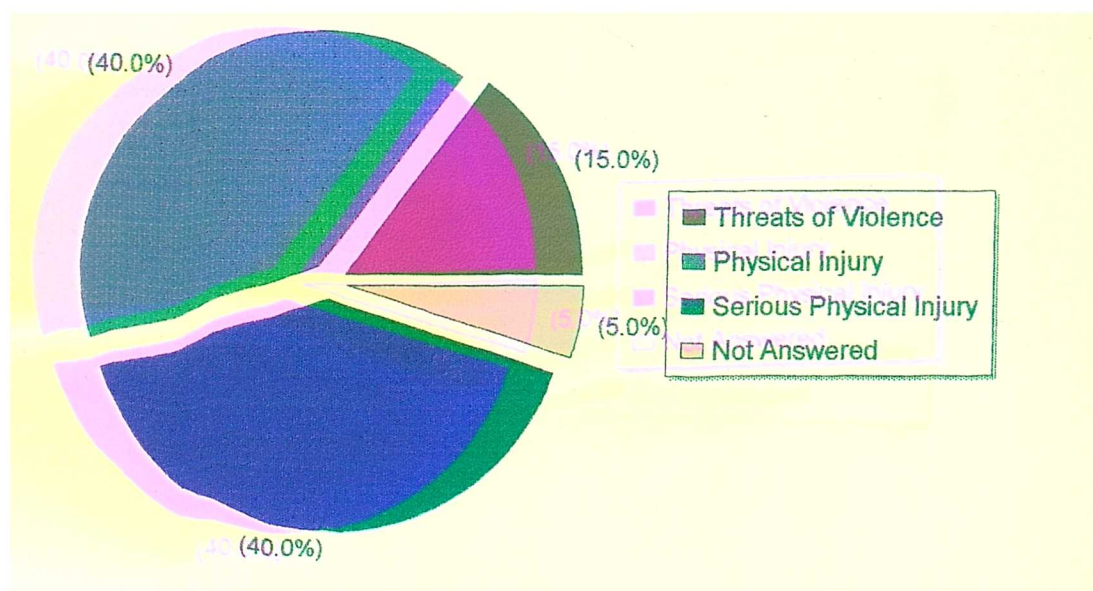


It could be argued, of course, that because these women were staying in a refuge they were not a representative group of society as a whole. That may well be true but conversely because of their situation in the refuge they are certainly more open and more likely to admit being victims of domestic violence. When asked how many of their relationships

have involved violence most answered in the affirmative and recorded either two or three such relationships. Sadly two of the women answered "everyone" but did not elaborate further upon exact numbers.

With regard to the extent of the violence, suffered by these women this is clearly portrayed in Figure 10(2) which highlights the fact that the vast majority of the women (80 per cent) suffered some form of physical injury as a result of domestic violence and 40 per cent actually suffered serious physical injury. Only 3 women entered the refuge before suffering physical injury, which indicates to me that most women will endure the threat of violence to a large extent, but only take direct action when they are physically assaulted and aware of the reality of an escalation in the level of violence.

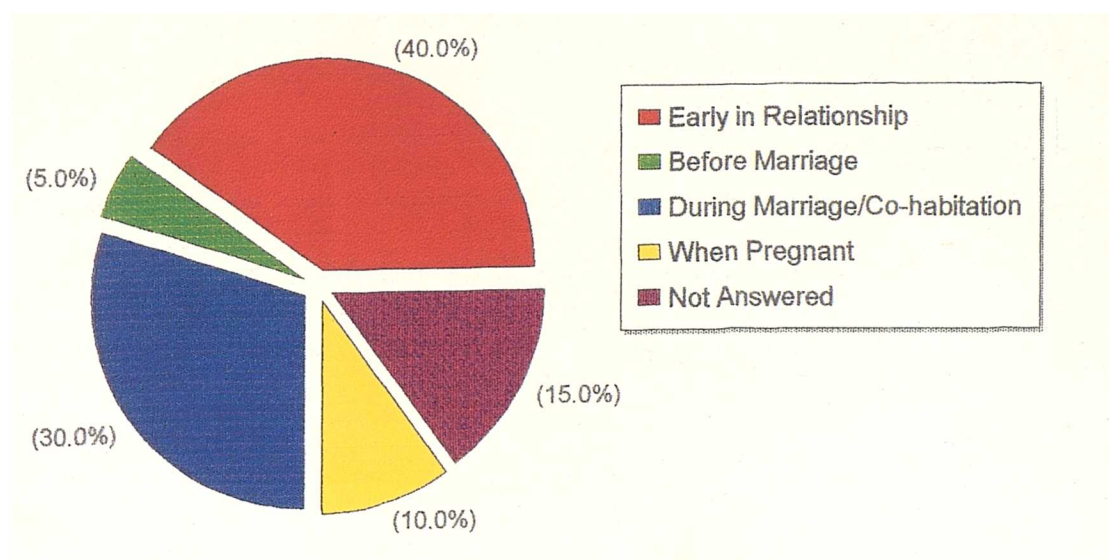
Figure 10(2) Most serious form of violence experienced



It could be said that this is just the this response one would expect from women who have been driven to a Womens' Refuge because of domestic violence. The situation obviously has to be serious to precipitate this course of action, because the small number of women in the refuge who did not suffer physical injury were certainly in fear of such violence and adamant that it was only the fact that they were placed in a refuge with saved them from actual violence.

Having considered the nature of the violence suffered by the women surveyed it was significant to establish at what stage of the current relationship the violence, or threat of violence, actually commenced. This is clearly set out in the following chart, Figure 10(3).

Figure 10(3) Point at which violence commenced



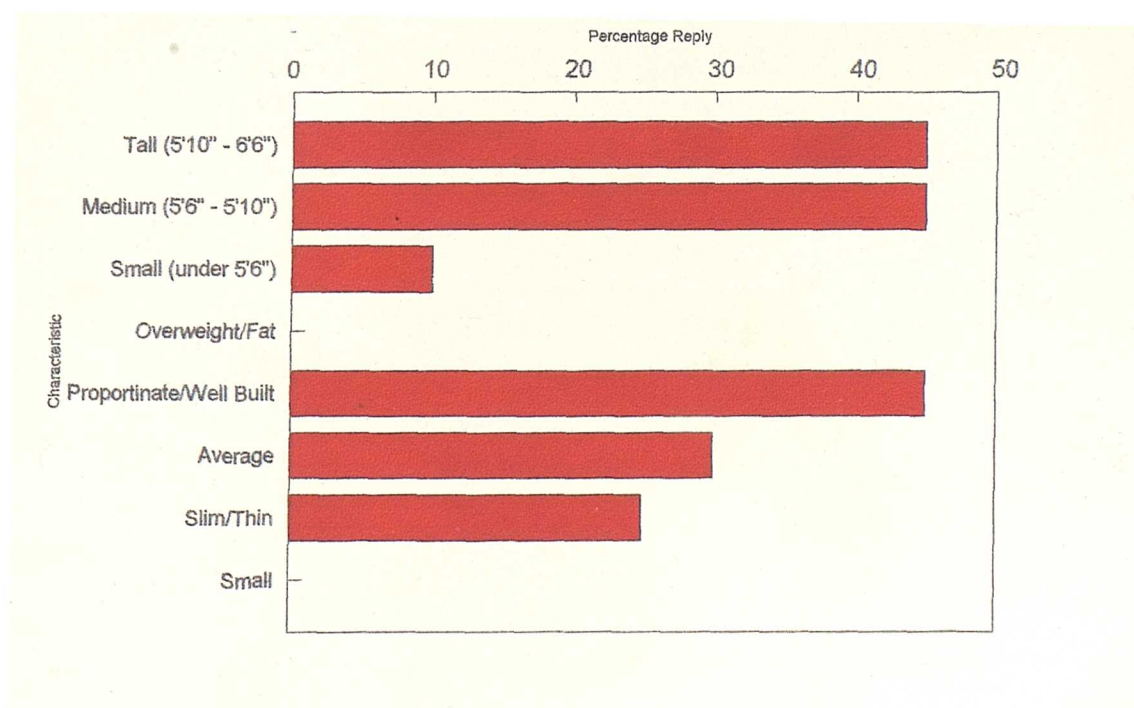
The fact that 40 per cent of the women indicated that the violence commenced at an early stage of the relationship is really quite significant. For almost half of the women

interviewed the violence commenced at a very early stage and obviously the situation failed to improve. Although in many instances the violence was evident from the beginning, in some cases it did not commence until the woman was pregnant and obviously very vulnerable. This is very much in line with similar studies, particularly research by Horley (1988) connected with the Foley Refuge and Walker & McNicol (1994) in connection with research into the South Tyneside Domestic Violence Unit. By this stage the information obtained from the questionnaire had presented a clear picture of the nature of the violence suffered by these victims. The next step was to look closely at the men who are the perpetrators of such violence.

The Violent Partner

Violent men come in all shapes and sizes. This is evident from the information displayed in Figure 10(4) which considers the height and build of the violent partners involved.

Figure 10(4) Physical characteristics of violent partner



Whilst almost half the violent partners were described as tall (45 per cent) and well built (45 per cent) a significant number were slim (25 per cent) and some small (10 per cent). Unfortunately information was not available about the height and build of the victim in order to work out some type of comparison, but it did come across quite clearly that some of these men could be considered "small and puny", yet were still able to inflict considerable violence upon their partners.

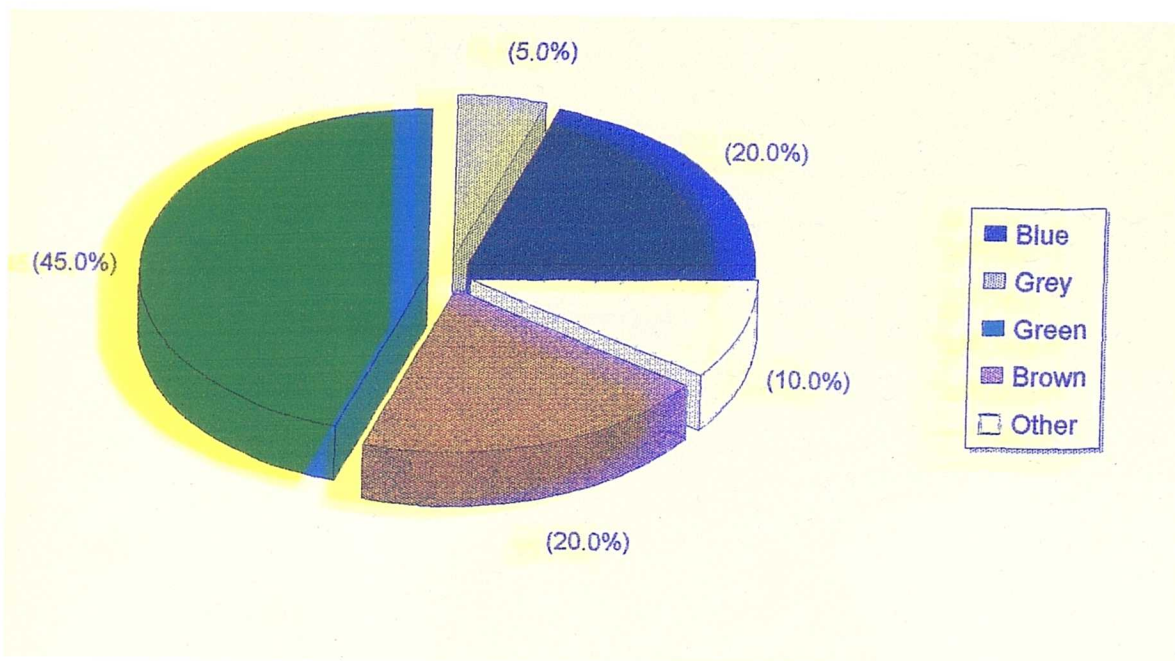
The particular question about eye colouring brought out an unexpected response. It was established from enquiries with the Department of Health that the majority of men in Britain had either blue or brown eyes, these colours representing about 80 per cent of the male population. The remaining 20 per cent is generally made up of 15 per cent green and 5 per cent grey. A small number of men have mixed eye colours, but the tendency is to record the most prominent colour. Being aware of regional variations research was carried out looking at a large group of almost 4,000 men aged between 18 and 60 years all employed by Northumbria Police and resident within the North East of England. The Personnel Department involved, being aware of confidentiality and the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1984, were able to outline the numbers of male employees with specific eye colouring which was very much in line with the above figures.

The research then considered the records of some 8,000 men arrested in the Northumbria area for criminal offences with some degree of violence attached thereto with the following results:-

Blue eyes	-	54 per cent
Brown/hazel eyes	-	33 per cent
Green eyes	-	10 per cent
Grey eyes	-	2 per cent
Other	-	1 per cent

It could not be established just how many of these men had been convicted of a domestic violence related offence, but those findings presented a fairly universal set of figures. From the information supplied by the women surveyed a pie chart was compiled, Figure 10(5) which shows the various eye colourings of the current 'violent' partner of those women and which one would expect to reflect the results of the information already outlined.

Figure 10(5) Eye colour of 'violent' partner



The results were certainly a cause for concern, because almost half (45 per cent) the violent partner had green eyes. In the sample group from the first refuge 50 per cent of the men

had green eyes whilst in the second group interviewed the number was somewhat lower and related to some men of Asian origin. This poses a real problem because it presented a situation where a disproportionate number of men with green eyes appeared to be perpetrators of domestic violence. One would have expected a figure somewhere in the region of 20 per cent but certainly not as high as 45 per cent. It has to be accepted that this is a relatively small group here and that it would be more accurate if one had information about a thousand offenders rather than a mere twenty, but this is without doubt an interesting and unexpected result that has emerged from this research.

The relevance of such a finding is twofold:-

- i) The inherent problem of making assumptions based upon a relatively small sample survey where trends can more easily be accentuated and consequent results appear much more pronounced.
- ii) The realisation that statistics do not in themselves provide the answer or solution to problems but highlight the information presented in such a way that very often more questions are raised than there are possible solutions proffered.

The relevance of this particular finding in relation to this research is that the police service now have an advanced computerised system of offender custody recording which ensures that a considerable amount of information about offenders is now stored on computer. Certain information about frequent offenders is made available to operational officers which may influence their response to particular situations eg warnings about offenders who use violence towards police officers or who are known to carry certain types of weapon. As the information held by the police is evaluated and used to assist officers to make a more informed response when dealing with certain offenders, is it not possible to look more

closely at certain types of offenders, particularly violent offenders and consider whether there are any common traits evident. It may well be that there indeed are certain physical characteristics which make men more likely to use violence towards their partners. This research simply points to the possibility of that piece of information having some significance when considering domestic violence. ;

The question of occupation was considered for most of the men were either unemployed or in receipt of some other benefit, only 20 per cent were in some form of employment. One would not expect to see professional men amongst the listed occupations, quite simply because their partners would normally have sufficient means to avoid resorting to the Womens' Refuge, or else be less likely to report the matter and risk having to forfeit a relatively comfortable life style and ending up in a refuge.

Support for Victims

Most of the women (70 per cent) contacted the police because of violence by their partner. When asked to give a reason for not reporting the matter, those who had responded in the negative explained they were too frightened to contact the police. One woman claimed she was concerned about what her husband would do when the police left, which indicates she had little faith in the police actually arresting her husband. Once again this highlights the problem of what happens to the victims of domestic violence if the police fail to make an arrest and leave both the victim and the alleged offender together in the house 'to sort things out'. When asked to comment upon the attitude of the officers who respond to domestic incidents the response was quite mixed; about half of those who gave a positive

response felt the police were unhelpful whilst the other half considered the police to be helpful or were themselves indifferent about the matter.

When asked whether the statutory agencies (police, probation, social service etc) were doing enough to help victims of domestic violence, the response again highlighted the plight of these women as only 15 per cent felt these agencies were doing enough. As there was not a great depth of feeling in this response, it does show that these women do not expect a great deal of support and consequently they are generally proved right. Whilst they value and appreciate any help given, there seems to be a stark realisation that domestic violence is not high on the agenda with the statutory agencies in spite of what their mission statements might say.

To conclude the questionnaire a league table was compiled of the various agencies who could be reasonably expected to support the victims of domestic violence. The women completing the questionnaires were asked to mark each organisation accordingly by giving marks on a sliding scale from one point to the organisation that was very helpful to five points to the organisation that was the most unhelpful. Obviously the organisation with the lowest score would be considered the most helpful to victims and the one with the highest score, the most unhelpful. Unfortunately some of the women gave no marks at all to some of the agencies involved, so in those cases it was decided to award 6 points to that organisation taking the view that they were either not becoming involved in helping victims of domestic violence or not considered to have a relevant input. The total 'scores' of each organisation was then divided by the number of women who had answered that question and an average was obtained which made it possible to place them quite neatly on the scale

from (1) most helpful to (5) most unhelpful, as demonstrated in Table 10(1) which shows the effectiveness of the various agencies and organisation.

Table 10(1) Effectiveness or otherwise of the various agencies and organisations

Organisation	Score
Womens' Refuge	1.1
Solicitor	2.7
Social Services	2.9
Citizens Advice Bureau	3.6
Police	3.7
Doctor	3.7
Housing Department	3.8
Church	4.3
Victim Support	4.4
Health Visitor	4.4
Probation Service	4.5

1	Very Helpful
2	Helped a Little
3	Played no Part
4	Unhelpful
5	Very Unhelpful

It is not surprising to find the Womens' Refuge at the top of the list, followed by Solicitors because all refuges have formed close associations with solicitors who have an interest in domestic violence and thereby provide tangible legal advice and support. Social Services were also included within the top group, because of their involvement with the children involved and because they also provide the financial assistance required by these women in need. The other groups were regarded as either having played no part (Citizens Advice, Police, Doctor, Housing Department) or as being unhelpful (Probation, Church, Victim Support, Health Visitor). Although the Health Visitor comes at the bottom of the list, they

would normally only have contact with the women during and immediately after pregnancy and would be perceived as being more concerned with the welfare of the baby than the mother. This points out quite clearly that outside the refuge there is not perceived to be a great deal of support for the victims of domestic violence and yet Womens' Refuges are constantly underfunded and overcrowded. To a large extent this mirrors the views of the research carried out into the effectiveness of the Domestic Violence Unit at South Tyneside (Walker & McNicol 1994).

The police are a lead agency with statutory responsibility for tackling domestic violence, but the evidence is that domestic violence is not a priority policing activity and regarded by many officers as a waste of time or a nuisance to deal with. The ineffectiveness of the police to support the victims of domestic violence is readily apparent by analysing the results of this questionnaire which also highlights the fact that none of the other agencies fare much better. What stands out is the need for a determined, coordinated response by all the statutory and voluntary organisations in the form of a multi agency response.

During the course of this research two specific types of victim emerged who were significantly different to the 'normal' victims of domestic violence. They are certainly worthy of mention here, particularly as a different type of police response is required to meet the specific problems they face in their rather unique situations. The two specific types were victims who were caught up in sectarian violence and victims who were male rather than female.

Victims in a Sectarian Society

There is a real problem in the staunch republican areas of the Province, where women who are victims of domestic violence face a real dilemma. If they contact the police, they are likely to be ostracised by the rest of the community at the very least and quite probably face direct physical violence by seeking such help from the security forces. Alternatively, the police are certainly going to treat with suspicion, any call from such areas until the information has been verified and obviously cannot promise an immediate response in such cases. One has to have considerable sympathy with the plight of women in such situations. The paramilitary organisations in such areas are concerned about domestic violence and have their 'marriage guidance' counsellors, who will drop in and counsel violent husbands - this will often take the form of giving the man 'a good hiding' at the very least. The concern of the paramilitaries is not for the well-being of such battered wives, for they do not want the police and security forces in their stronghold areas where they are likely to discover caches of weapons and explosives or by their very presence likely to pose a threat to the insidious activities of such groups. The violence however, is not limited to the republican areas but now also loyalist areas of the Province, so that the above scenario is in many instances also applicable to the loyalist factions involved in the conflict. The sectarian violence cannot be attributed to any one factor and in many respects there is little difference between the activities of all the paramilitary organisations, whether republican or loyalist. With the situation that exists in Northern Ireland it could be argued that the mere fact that the police actually respond to calls of domestic violence is, in itself, highly commendable.

With a commitment to deploy foot patrols, even in problem areas, in order to bring some sense of normality to the situation in Northern Ireland, it is quite common to see police officers on foot patrol even in staunch republican areas of the Province. These officers however, are protected by a large contingent of police and army personnel and before attending any such call, the veracity and genuineness of the caller needs to be established and the proposed route and means of transport carefully worked out. Nevertheless the RUC can usually respond to such calls, even in such sensitive areas, in less time than it takes their colleagues in many Forces on the mainland! Because of the logistical problems in having to return to a domestic incident, should it flare up again, officers working in problem areas would be more likely to err on the side of arrest, should there be any likelihood of the violence continuing after their departure. On mainland Britain, if the violence re-occurs once the police officers have left the scene it is relatively simple to despatch a panda car back to a particular location. Obviously this is not possible in most areas of Northern Ireland.

"If you are in England and someone says there is a burglar or whatever at an address you just send a police unit there. Here, we cannot afford to send a unit because we don't know if it is a set up and this is now happening all the time. In a way this affects the attitude of the people seeking police help." (Sir Hugh Annesley, former Chief Constable, Royal Ulster Constabulary, quoted in an article, "We are on the road to internment", in Police Magazine, November 1991, p.24-26).

There exists also the problem of women who have married men of the 'opposite' religion and reside in what would be regarded as 'sensitive' neighbourhoods, where there was considerable hostility towards the police. In such situations victims of domestic violence could not contact the police for fear of reprisals from neighbours and relatives. Other victims lived in sectarian areas where police officers and soldiers were likely to be attacked

or ambushed by terrorists and consequently the police policy was to wait for a given period in order to check the authenticity of the call for assistance before dispatching any officer to respond to such calls. Of course this delay does not help the victim, particularly in the case of violent assault.

One officer interviewed spoke of the victims of domestic violence whose partners were very active in the paramilitaries and warned the women that the IRA would 'blow them away' if they reported the violence to the police. The fear was that the police would use the reported domestic violence as a means of interrogating their partners about other matters or that the police would use these women as informers. It is not surprising that members of the paramilitaries who deal out punishment beatings throughout the community in an arbitrary fashion will also resort to violence against their partners should the mood take them. One has to feel considerable sympathy for such women who are trapped in such violent relationships, with no way out. As one officer said, "They know the lengths of violence the IRA will go to maintain their authority. You can hardly tell them to go to a Womens' Refuge and everything will be OK. They are quite likely to blow the whole refuge up, some of those guys - it would not concern them that innocent women and children were inside".

The actual police response to domestic violence there does appear somewhat different from the official policy that was made very public at that time:-

"There is one very, very simple philosophy here that is that we will police and be seen to police on the streets, wherever it is necessary to do so."

(Sir Hugh Annesley, former Chief Constable, Royal Ulster Constabulary quoted in Police Magazine, November 1991, p.24-26).

The other distinct group of victims that this research has come across are a relatively small number of male victims of domestic violence.

Battered Husbands: A Problem that Really Exists?

Most research and contemporary studies into domestic violence focuses almost entirely upon battered wives, for the term domestic violence is still seen as being synonymous with male violence and the problem analysed in terms of dealing with violence inflicted by men upon women. To ignore or dismiss the problem of male victims of domestic violence, is to deny the existence of this particular form of violence. Any attempt to analyse the problem of battered husbands is viewed by many as a red herring, which diverts attention away from the very real problem of battered wives and as such is counterproductive. There is now in society a heightened awareness of the reality of domestic violence and, no matter how tempting to ignore the problem of battered husbands, it is an area of increasing concern.

The battered husband syndrome was reported upon in depth by Steinmetz in the United States in 1978 and then considered again by the same researcher when working with a male colleague Joseph Lucca in 1988. It is suggested by Steinmetz (1988) that this phenomenon receives very little attention because of the great reluctance of men to report such abuse and because they have more resources and sources of assistance available to them to avoid reporting such victimisation. In view of the dominant position that males have over females, it is difficult for a man to report any form of abuse by women because of the

stigma attached thereto. Earlier research by Gelles (1974), Curtis (1974) and Wolfgang (1958) indicated that men and women both have the potential for violence in marriage; whilst men react with direct physical force, women are obliged to resort to the use of some form of weapon. In Korea an increasing number of men are reporting having been assaulted by their wives. From information supplied by the Supreme Court in Seoul, South Korea, a total of 286 men filed for divorce in 1990, claiming their wives 'batter' them. (Police Review 31.5.91).

The problem of battered husbands has surfaced in Britain because of the work currently being undertaken by Jenni Manners, who is coordinator of the Womens' Aid Centre in Swindon, Wiltshire. The centre was established in 1975 and has been at the forefront in establishing a place of refuge for women who are victims of domestic violence - currently about 350 families annually are provided with safe accommodation at the Womens' Refuge and a figure estimated at double that amount actually receive advice and support each year. A telephone 'help line' was established there for battered wives, which has proved to be a well used and valuable service. However, a number of male callers, claiming to be battered husbands, have used this help line from the early days - currently about 100 men contact this help line annually. This has aroused some considerable media attention, which has resulted each year in an increasing number of men contacting the refuge. Men who seek help are counselled and in appropriate cases afforded the facility of emergency accommodation in a local hostel which presented the likelihood of a refuge for battered husbands being established by Jenni Manners and her team at Swindon, to be run on similar lines to the Womens' Refuge. Although the proposal aroused considerable media attention, it failed to attract the necessary funding and support required.

If this is happening with such frequency in the Swindon area, then I would imagine it is happening all over the country. Domestic life can be quite violent, as we see every day. Men obviously suffer just as women do.

(Jenni Manners - Swindon Womens Aid, reported in the Daily Telegraph 30.6.86).

But what sort of men become the victims of domestic violence? Jenni explains "People have the idea of a wimp of 5'2" being bashed by his 16 stone wife. Nothing could be further from the truth". (The Times: Wednesday 27.8.86) ... "They're nice, normal guys, teachers, firemen, milkmen - with one thing in common - they live with violent women". (You Magazine - 21.9.86). Calls are received from managing directors, solicitors, managers, policemen; the majority are over 5'10" and by no means weaklings. There is a danger in stereotyping battered men but the only real generalisation one can make is that these men appear to be non-violent, non-aggressive. It cuts across class boundaries, just as violence against women does but the level of violence is often alarming.

"The violence ranges from kicking and scratching to stabbings with potato peelers and kitchen knives. Kitchen implements and boiling water are favoured. But then I have seen a couple of men with fractured skulls. One was coshed with a brick while he was building a patio and the other got whacked with a piece of wood after suggesting to his wife that they should see a Marriage Guidance Counsellor".

(Jenni Manners - The Times - 27.8.86).

The following are just three examples of such violence:-

1. "The violence started six months after the couple married. The attacks seemed to come suddenly without warning and became more frequent. There were kicks and blows, bites and scratches. Then came the day when the children watched in horror as one of their parents was scalded by boiling water and threatened with a carving knife. Terrified, the husband decided his wife had gone too far. Bill (not his real name) left home taking the children with him."

2. "A 60 year old lorry driver had a wife who was violent on and off for the previous five years of their 35 years of marriage. He tried to talk to her about saving for his retirement and about counselling for her violence. She threw the chopping board at him and fractured his skull."
3. "A policeman, 10 years married and with two children, came to us for help. There had been violence from the start. He thought that it was common to all marriages but was afraid to mention it to anyone, fearing it would affect his promotion. The woman had stabbed him, broken his nose, poured boiling water over him."

(From an article 'Battered husbands come out of the closet: Helen Connolly - The Times 5.9.86).

Whilst some might be surprised at the above accounts, the phenomenon of the battered husband has been around for some time. In France in the eighteenth century, husbands who allowed their wives to beat them were subject to public humiliation; being dressed in outlandish clothes and made to ride backwards on a donkey in the sight of the whole village or even being strapped to dog carts and paraded through city streets to the derision of gazing crowds. The offending wife did not escape punishment - "being forced to ride backwards on a donkey, drink wine and wipe her mouth with the animal's tail". (Steinmetz and Lucca 1988).

However, the truth is that it is 'real men' who can be the victims of domestic violence and not the 8 stone weaklings as so often stereotyped.

Tim is a tough looking young man. He stands nearly six feet, has dark curly hair and candid grey eyes and weighs around 11 stone. You'd like to have him on your side if there was any trouble about. But there is no one on Tim's side when he's hit trouble. No one to help him withstand the blows that rained on him when he was attacked, sometimes as often as two or three nights a week. No one to help him understand what was happening or why it was happening. Because, you see, the attacks came from his wife. In the privacy of his home Tim became a battered husband. And a real man couldn't admit that he was being beaten up by a women, could he?

(From an article: Real men don't let this happen, Family Circle, August 1988).

Bernard Ellis is 12 stone and six feet tall. He's fit, 40, successful and enjoys playing football for a local Sunday team. He's also a battered husband and quite a typical victim of a phenomenon which, until recently, has been little more than a night club joke.

(From an article: Would you batter your husband? Womens Own 24.5.86).

Adam, a 36 year old 6' fireman endured his wife's violence for 13 years before doing anything about it... "I would certainly hit back if a man attacked me", he says, "but I let her chuck bottles and plates, boiling water and hot dinners at me".

(From an article: Please help, my wife is beating me. The Times 27.8.86).

The above victims of domestic violence have no connection at all with the Swindon Aid Centre. What they have in common, is that they are men who are willing to be identified as battered husbands and that their stories are generally in magazines, whose readers are women. Nevertheless, the evidence is clear, that there are male victims of domestic violence, who are in increasing numbers willing to be identified as such. However, the vast majority of victims of domestic violence are still women who suffer at the hands of violent, male partners. It would not be right for their plight to be overshadowed merely on the grounds that the concept of the battered husband is more newsworthy and novel. Having thus said it would be dishonest to ignore the fact that there are some violent partners who are violent women and there are indeed victims who are men.

It is relevant to include the problem of male victims of domestic violence in this research because that aspect does form an integral part of the overall problem of domestic violence, albeit a rather small part. As a researcher, it would be inappropriate to ignore the plight of male victims of domestic violence, yet one could not justify focusing an inordinate amount of attention away from the main problem which is that in the vast majority of cases

women are the victims of domestic violence and men the perpetrators. Attention has been drawn here to male victims to highlight the fact that there appears to be even less concern and interest within society for battered men than there is for battered women. It is difficult for a minority of men to seek to draw attention to their cause, when in the majority of cases of domestic violence the victims are women.

This does highlight the fact that domestic violence is a complex societal problem to which there are no simple solutions and even an analysis of the victims of such violence highlights the complexity of even considering one aspect of the problem. The police appear to have very little interest in this particular group of victims, albeit they are relatively small in number. This does tend to indicate that it is the concept of domestic violence rather than the gender of the majority of victims that causes domestic violence not to be regarded as a high priority, certainly by the police and also by the other agencies who have some responsibility in this area.

The way forward

Notwithstanding the limitations of institutional change, the police service and other agencies operating within the criminal justice system are now obliged to take note of the plight of victims of domestic violence. Most police forces in Britain have improved the level of support and assistance provided for victims of such violence, but the Womens' Refuge maintains its precedence as the place of support and refuge for victims of domestic violence. Generally victims are supportive of any positive response by the police but specifically highlight the need for a prompt call out and understanding and appreciation that

they are victims of violence. Any further action such as arresting the offender or enlisting the support of other agencies is seen as a bonus.

Having considered the victims' views the following response is required from police officers dealing with domestic violence:-

- * Closer links need to be established between senior police officers and Womens' Refuges based within their area.
- * All recruits to the police service should undergo a short attachment to a local Womens' Refuge at an early stage of their training.
- * Victim Support are an established organisation that is well placed to champion the cause of victims of domestic violence and ought to make domestic violence a priority area of operation.
- * Most victims report having been involved in a violent relationship for some time and having suffered some form of physical injury.
- * Only a very small number of women seek help from a Womens' Refuge before physical violence has occurred.
- * Most violence occurs at an early stage in a relationship with a violent partner which highlights the need for a positive response by the police to prevent the violence escalating.
- * Police officers need to be aware of the serious consequences to victims of domestic violence when they fail to respond positively to incidents of domestic violence.
- * There is a problem in relation to men who are victims of domestic violence and, although the existence of such a problem needs to be acknowledged, they are proportionately very few in number and ought not to deflect attention away from the reality that the vast majority of victims are women and perpetrators men.
- * The social or political setting within which some victims of domestic violence find themselves places them in jeopardy should they turn to the police for help and they are therefore trapped in violent relationships.
- * Police officers need to take more account of the views of victims of domestic violence when establishing policy or identifying policing priorities.

Previous research has pointed out that gradually the plight of victims of domestic violence is beginning to be recognised within society and some response is beginning to be made:-

For the women who have been physically abused in the home by the men with whom they live, the past two decades have seen both radical change and no change at all. The lives of some have been touched by an ever expanding, worldwide movement to support women who have been battered and to challenge male violence. Some legal and social institutions have begun to respond, while others remain in a nexus of traditional tolerance of male violence and indifference to those who suffer from such violence. This is a time marked by social change and resistance to change, by innovation and reassertion of tradition. Both the new and the old responses are used, challenged and defended by those with differing views about the nature of this problem and how best to confront it. (Dobash & Dobash 1992, p.1)

Chapter 11

THE NEED FOR A MULTI AGENCY RESPONSE

Multi-agency Cooperation

Domestic violence is a problem to which there is not a single all-embracing solution. Domestic violence, even though it occurs in the privacy of an individual's home, is nevertheless a criminal activity, but as such, it is not a problem that can simply be addressed by the police in the initial stages and the courts in the long term. There is no simple answer or single solution because these problems are the responsibility of a number of diverse agencies operating within our society. The traditional response of not just the police, but of social workers, voluntary agencies and even the medical profession has been a determined reluctance to become involved in domestic violence. The police view domestic violence as a social rather than a criminal problem, whilst social workers see it as criminal and not just a social problem. Blaming the victim in both instances is an effective way of marginalising the problem.

In their perceived role as gatekeepers to the criminal justice system, it is the police service that has a statutory responsibility to respond to incidents of disorder and crime. Even though the police had formulated policies and strategies to respond to the problem of domestic violence there was a gathering view that the police were ineffective when dealing with the problem in isolation of the various other agencies within society that had a vested interest. Multi agency initiatives were not invented by the police service but during the nineteen eighties there was a growing realisation by the police of their effectiveness in tackling societal problems and, more importantly, crime orientated problems. At the same

time the benefits of multi agency cooperation were recognised by the other leading statutory agencies, particularly the Probation Service, Social Service and various departments operating within local authorities.

Obviously if each organisation tackled the problem in isolation, there would be no consistency and probably a great deal of duplication of effort and wasted energy. It is imperative therefore that there is liaison between various agencies where an integrated and coordinated approach can be established at a local level to address particular needs. No individual agency ought to claim the primacy in dealing with the problem of domestic violence, for whilst one particular agency may take the lead in one locality, that agency may very well be inappropriate to do likewise in another area. Someone needs to take the initiative and unfortunately domestic violence has tended, traditionally, to be viewed as a criminal problem and therefore within the area of responsibility of the police. The difficulty is that the police have neither the expertise nor the resources to deal with any criminal problem in isolation as their primary function is law enforcement. This is particularly the case with domestic violence, for it is a problem that effects society as a whole and therefore requires a response that involves the problem being addressed by as many interested and disparate organisations and groups as possible. It does not matter who takes the lead, whether it be the police, social services, probation service, local authority or any other group, so long as some agency does, and thereby brings together representatives from different agencies.

Therefore multi agency cooperation needs to be viewed in the light of the mode of analysis in sociology, developed by Durkheim, (Cuff and Payne, 1984) which is generally called

functionalism. This development of the consensus variation of the structuralist perspective views societies as systems consisting of inter related social elements where these particular social systems are "moral entities". Durkheim stressed the moral nature of society, pointing out that in all human relationships and associations there is a certain expectation of an acceptable pattern of conduct and behaviour, which results in a "collective consciousness" that places certain constraints and obligations upon the way people behave. When considering therefore the moral nature of society, Durkheim viewed it as a moral entity that exists over and above the individual within society and considered that any particular group needed to have some agreement of what their common aims and goals were and how they ought to behave and relate to one another. Multi agency cooperation to tackle any social problem is in line with Durkheim's emphasis upon the moral nature of social relationships. When the various agencies and organisations come together as the perceived guardians of society and have a shared interest to tackle a specific societal problem then the effect is much greater than any number of agencies simply acting alone to deal with any problem in isolation of each other.

The Role of the Church

When considering Durkheim's emphasis upon the moral nature of society, one is obliged therefore to question the effect and influence the Church has in dealing with domestic violence. The victims interviewed in the previous chapter, placed the Church near the bottom of the list in terms of interest and effectiveness in the subject of domestic violence.

One would expect the Church to be the one organisation with an interest in the needs of individuals within society and supporters of the concept of marriage. It was decided

therefore to personally interviewed 10 Ministers based in the North East of England and who were from a wide range of denominations; Anglican, Methodist, Baptist, Catholic, Independent Evangelical and Pentecostal. Their congregations ranged in size from being quite small (under 50) to some with several hundred members, whilst their social make up was either predominantly working class, predominantly middle class or a mixture of both and surprisingly the age range was predominantly young and middle aged. All the Ministers spoken to claimed to provide a counselling service but only one minister provided such a service in relation to domestic violence. They were each asked the following three questions:-

- * Are there any women in your church you know or suspect are victims of domestic violence?
- * Are there any men in your church you know or suspect have committed domestic violence?
- * Have you ever dealt with domestic violence within your church?

All but two of the Ministers interviewed admitted to knowing or suspecting that there were both victims and perpetrators of domestic violence within their congregations. The two who replied in the negative did have rather small congregations and appeared during conversation to have a very traditional view of their role and indeed the role of the church in society. The actual number of women known or suspected of being victims of domestic violence was between 1 and 6; the smaller churches having either one or two such women with the largest churches having five or six such women. Comparing these figures with the sizes of the relevant congregations involved, it would appear from this information that about 3 women in every 100 members of a congregation are either known or suspected as

being victims of domestic violence. Obviously the real figure may well be higher than this, but this is quite a startling statistic, accepting that women represent just over half of most congregations. This would mean that about one in eighteen women who attend church are known or suspected by their Ministers to be victims of domestic violence, but in most cases the Ministers did not regard it as a sufficiently serious problem for them to deal with. They certainly gave the impression that, domestic violence, was rather like a 'can of worms' that was best left unopened.

With regard to suspected offenders the number reported was quite low. Within the largest church there were two men; two other churches each had one such man and the rest had none. Such a low number of suspected offenders in church congregations is hardly surprising as one did not detect a willingness amongst the ministers to identify such men. This was at times justified by claiming it was not the role of the Church to be judgemental or become too involved in the private lives of its members.

When these Ministers were asked if they had ever been called upon to deal with the problem of domestic violence inside their church, only three of them answered in the affirmative:-

1. One Minister counselled the couple involved with a strong warning as to the seriousness of the situation.
2. Another gave advice and support to the women but the husband had no contact with the church and was not seen.
3. An Anglican Vicar gave support to a Womens' Refuge in his parish and consequently was able to advise and direct the women involved to the agencies where they could obtain continued support and assistance.

Apart from the last example, it appears that the Ministers involved adopted the approach of many police officers; "All quite - Advice given". One has to question whether they could and should do more, even though the role and influence of the Church within society has diminished considerably in recent times. Generally all the other Ministers felt that domestic violence was a problem for the whole of society and whilst the Church had a role to play, it was felt that the police and the other statutory agencies had more resources and were better equipped to confront the problem. There was, however, a general willingness to become involved in any proposed multi agency initiative, should one be set up.

Community Safety

In a multi-agency initiative, each participant ought to be aware of the service provided and limitation of each of the agencies involved. In order for a multi-agency initiative to be successful it cannot afford to be seen as a mere 'talking shop' neither can it afford to be seen as some substitute for proper resources being directed towards the problem. Although the policy makers of the various agencies need to be involved, those individuals who work at grass roots level, the practitioners, must also be brought in. Any multi-agency approach that seeks to be successful cannot afford merely to respond to incidents of domestic violence that have occurred but must look towards ways of preventing the problem. That is basic crime prevention.

When this research commenced multi agencies were in their infancy and there seemed to be a need to prove the worth and value of such an approach to tackle the problem of domestic violence. It is therefore difficult to argue the case for a multi agency approach to domestic violence when this research has seen the benefits of such an approach develop

over the years to the point that multi agency cooperation in response to social and crime related problem is universally accepted. The difficulty now is that the term multi agency working has to a large extent been replaced by the term partnership approach. Whilst this is a change in semantics, the concept remains the same and such an approach is fully endorsed by this research.

The Home Office Standing Conference on Crime Prevention - Independent Working Group on Safer Communities (1991) considered 'crime prevention' in its more wider application as 'community safety' taking the view that 'community safety' was open to a much wider interpretation and involved the whole community in the fight against crime, whilst 'crime prevention' had a much narrower perspective and gave the impression of being the sole responsibility of the police. Crime prevention does however inter-relate both with local government initiatives and the criminal justice system, nevertheless it has not in the past been regarded as a high priority for any of the statutory agencies involved. Indeed none of them appear to have regarded it as one of their primary core functions. The traditional view of crime prevention is one where the police have a dominant role dealing with locks and bolts, burglar alarms and security lights - situational crime prevention. It is however, in the area of social crime prevention that the police need to adopt a partnership approach when introducing measures to reduce the fear of crime and attempt to win hearts and minds rather than resorting merely to physical security measures.

The Police Service cannot be held solely responsible for community safety or for tackling crime or fear of crime in their Force area in isolation: The factors which lead to offending or which offer the opportunity for crime are not within their direct control. Nor can any other single agency or organisation be held solely responsible. The growing complexity of society requires a multi faceted response.... the contribution which all these agencies can make will inevitably be enhanced by working in a multi-agency

setting to tackle common problems as part of a comprehensive community safety package. (Home Office Standing Conference on Crime Prevention - 1991)

A successful multi-agency approach to community safety does require that a crime reduction strategy be adopted and formulated within a structure that allows all the interested agencies to operate and make a meaningful contribution. In a practical sense multi-agency initiatives are difficult to operate as the various agencies have different philosophies and tend to tackle the same problem from different perspectives. There is always the danger that one of the statutory agencies will take the lead and attempt to dominate and not only set but also control the agenda. This is a criticism often levelled at the police who have in the past taken the lead in a number of such initiatives. The other agencies involved may justly feel marginalised in such situations and instead of a better understanding being created between the various agencies involved their attitudes may become polarised.

Certainly no particular agency can claim to have the monopoly of ideas or interests in the area of domestic violence and for that reason, if a better understanding between the various agencies can be developed that does lead to a shared acceptance of a united responsibility for tackling the problem of domestic violence. There is a danger that any meeting involving members of various agencies becomes merely a talking shop and any progress is thwarted by the fact that some of the participants of the agencies represented do not have the delegated power to make decisions that affect policy. The result is that many important issues are simply deferred in order to be discussed at a higher level and no real progress is made.

As the various agencies involved have different philosophies under which they operate and different views about how best the problem can be addressed it will obviously take time for a shared vision to develop as to the best way to deal with the problem of domestic violence. Nevertheless the benefits and rewards from effective multi agency cooperation are evident, particularly from the results of some of the initiatives that were evaluated.

An Early Multi-Agency Success Story:

Nottinghamshire County Council - Domestic Violence Panel and Forum

As this research progressed, multi-agency cooperation and joint initiatives were beginning to be seen as the answer to many problems, especially in the prevention of crime. Whilst much inter agency liaison was at that time piecemeal by nature, information became available of one particular multi-agency initiative that had been successfully established well before publication of the Home Office Standing Conference on Crime Prevention produced their report on Safer Communities. This initiative in Nottinghamshire ultimately led to an inter agency Domestic Violence Forum being established there and it appeared the reason for the success of that multi-agency initiative was that the local authority had taken the lead role and provided the organisation and administration required, to ensure the scheme functioned efficiently.

The Nottinghamshire County Council Domestic Violence Panel, formed in 1987, was established to consider the problem of domestic violence in Nottinghamshire. In consultation with the various agencies (Police, Social Services, Probation, etc) it was apparent that approaches to domestic violence and departmental practices varied both between and within these organisations and these variations had, over the years, adversely

affected the service offered to victims of domestic violence. In 1988 a report was produced by the Panel with a number of recommendations which was followed by a one day conference on Inter Agency Cooperation. The conference succeeded in drawing together delegates from a variety of organisations, to consider instigating an inter agency response to domestic violence. As a direct result of this conference an Interim Steering Group was set up with a view to establishing a County Forum, which first met in October 1990.

The Forum was made up of representatives from a variety of agencies and interested groups, the members attending on behalf of their organisations and not merely as interested individuals. Its aim was to consolidate and improve upon inter agency cooperation to maximise the choices and services available to women who are subjected to violence within their relationships, and by changing public attitudes and awareness to attempt to reduce the overall level of domestic violence. To achieve this the following areas of responsibility were established:-

- * To promote inter agency cooperation.
- * To increase agency awareness of the roles of others involved in responding to domestic violence, in both statutory and voluntary sectors.
- * To encourage each agency to develop or revise their agency policies and procedures for responding to domestic violence to maximise the protection available to women.
- * To promote inter agency training relating to domestic violence.
- * To raise public and professional awareness of the needs of women and children experiencing domestic violence including the specific needs of black women, and women with disabilities.

- * To make available to women in the County and to professional advisers information about the protection and services available for women in situations of domestic violence.
- * To propose changes in current services and where necessary promote the development of new services and facilities.
- * To change public and professional attitudes towards domestic violence through publicity, information and training.
- * To examine the connections between domestic violence and the abuse and violence to women in society as a whole.
- * To explore the connections between violence to women, and violence to children, and to liaise with the Nottinghamshire Area Child Protection Committee to bring together the separate needs of women and children for protection from violence.
- * To encourage initiatives aimed at the prevention of domestic violence.
- * To explore the scope for establishing local district based Forums on domestic violence.

Because of its large membership, the forum had adopted a very business like and efficient means of operating, while at the same time being able to draw upon its varied, disparate membership to provide practical and alternative solutions to many of the problems with which it was presented. Obviously there is considerable benefit in inter agency cooperation which offers an effective way of dealing with problems and progressing important issues. However, a lot of time and effort has gone into the planning, establishing and administration of this multi-agency Forum, not to mention the commitment and goodwill of the various members. This has resulted in expertise and knowledge being used in an atmosphere of understanding and tolerance to produce collective resolutions and responses to deal with issues of importance relating to domestic violence. Above all, it demonstrates that when attempting to get to grips with the problem of domestic violence any such Forum

needs to be made up, not just of interested statutory agencies, but also of various women's groups who actually represent those women who are the victims of domestic violence. What is important is that the victims of domestic violence in Nottinghamshire believed they benefited because of the Forum.

This Forum appeared to be successful because it was not the Police, Social Service or some voluntary group who were spearheading the initiative, but rather the local County Council acting on behalf of the whole community whom they represent. The Administration Department of the Local Authority do have an anonymous, neutral image in respect of domestic violence and for that reason are an excellent enabling organisation, and can be perceived as the centre of a wheel with each individual spoke being one of the interested organisations. The coordinator was able to assist victims of domestic violence by being able to put them in touch with the relevant person or organisation for their particular need and was also ideally placed to coordinate meetings and events.

In consequence a number of initiatives developed from the Forum which collectively had more of an impact upon domestic violence than would have been the case if each separate agency or organisation acted in isolation:-

- * **The Police** issued a new policy on Domestic Violence to all officers; invited Womens' Aid to have an input into their training courses; improved statistical reporting of incidents of domestic violence; appointed Domestic Violence Liaison Officers at all local stations; set up a Family Support Unit to focus upon domestic violence and child abuse and also prepared leaflets

for victims of domestic violence outlining the various agencies there were there to assist them.

- * **The Social Services** Department produced advice leaflets; a 'guidance' document to staff on how to deal with problems relating to domestic violence; initiated a public awareness campaign; arranged training courses for the staff of Womens' Refuges, provided grant aid to help fund some of the refuges and appointed a Refuge Liaison Officer.

- * **The Health Authority** arranged a series of training days on domestic violence for their staff; produced 'good practice' guidelines on how to deal with domestic violence for their staff and undertook responsibility for improved health care at the refuges.

- * **The Education Authority** adopted policy guidelines for teachers in respect of children who were resident in refuges and undertook to produce an overall training package on domestic violence.

A number of other initiatives were undertaken by the Housing Department, other local authority departments and a number of voluntary organisations to address specific or localised problems relating to domestic violence. A great deal was achieved by the Domestic Violence Forum, which clearly had the full support of the county council, who really acted as the 'broker' coordinating the various initiatives and ensuring that inter agency cooperation and consultation underpinned all its operations. The Forum was able

to raise the awareness level of the various agencies as to what services were available for victims of domestic violence and to encourage the fullest use of all such facilities. Obviously increased contact by members of the Forum has led to increased understanding of the operation of each of the organisations represented and the particular problems and restrictions placed upon them and resulted in the breaking down of barriers between the various agencies.

Unfortunately the funding for this project eventually ran out, the coordinator moved on and consequently the Domestic Violence Forum fell apart. Of course it could be argued that to blame lack of funding for its demise is an easy option, when the answer could lie in the fact that the Forum was simply not working. However, there is no evidence to counter the allegation that it failed because it was starved of necessary funding. This fate seems to befall a number of the initiatives considered throughout the period of this research. At the time when they appear to be operating successfully someone pulls the plug on the funding and the initiatives simply dies. What is annoying is that this failure impacts more upon the victims who feel very suspicious about any future attempts to reintroduce similar initiatives and quite rightly so. When an initiative like the Nottinghamshire Domestic Violence Forum appears to be performing well it appears everyone wants some of the credit. The demise of such initiatives is only really brought to notice when someone subsequently asks pertinent questions.

A Local Response - Sunderland Domestic Violence Forum

In 1992, a major conference on domestic violence was held in Washington with a number of notable speakers attending, together with local representatives from most of the statutory

and voluntary agencies, which resulted in the subsequent launch of the Sunderland Domestic Violence Forum. At its inaugural meeting in June 1993, it was agreed to develop a multi-agency strategy to tackle the problem of domestic violence at a local level and a simple philosophy underpinned the working of the Forum in that they did not seek to reinvent the wheel whilst at the same time learning from the experience of others.

One of the first initiatives established was to develop a group work programme for men who were the perpetrators of domestic violence. The aim of the programme was to 'advance the protection of women and children by assisting men to accept responsibility for their violent behaviour, to understand and challenge the belief systems from which it operates, to effect change and to stop the violence'. These aims were to be achieved by increasing awareness and challenging attitudes of the association between violence and the need for power and control and thereby to develop in those men alternative negotiating strategies.

A pilot project was established in Sunderland between February and June 1995 when initially 16 men were referred (9 by Probation Service, 2 by social Workers and 5 by means of self referral) to the programme which consisted of 16 weekly sessions each of 3 hours duration. The result was that half the men referred withdrew from the programme at a very early stage, and by the end of the programme only 7 men remained. Although regarded as a success by the various agencies involved, at the conclusion of the programme 3 of the remaining 7 men were still unwilling to accept responsibility for their abuse of power and control both emotionally and physically over their partners. Whilst there were 16 separate sessions, the men did not all attend each session but were required to make up

for lost time at their next appearance. When the attendance was as low as two on some occasions and when on two occasions participants were asked to leave because they had consumed alcohol prior to attendance, one has to question the value of such schemes. This scheme was well planned, the content was good and those running it were practitioners who had previously been involved in similar types of programmes with problem people.

As there was no real sanction which could be employed to ensure that these perpetrators fully cooperated one is left with the view that they were doing the programme a favour by becoming part of it, rather than seeing the programme as a means of them coming to terms with and controlling their violent actions towards their partners.

Realising the need for some sort of sanction to ensure that the men involved go through with the programme, the situation is now that most of the men referred to the programme are referred by the Probation Service, following a court appearance as a result of domestic violence to their partners. The court has imposed probation orders upon those men and a condition of the order is that they successfully participate in this programme. Failure to attend or cooperate is now a breach of the probation order and will result in that person appearing back in court should he fail to turn up or fail to cooperate throughout the programme. There is still the opportunity for self referral and voluntary referrals but this programme has more credibility and acceptability because of the changes made.

A Wider Multi-Agency Approach

In October 1993 a Working Party on Domestic Violence was set up by Northumbria Police in response to an evaluation by Newcastle University on the Domestic Violence Unit

established in South Tyneside (Walker & McNicol 1994). Whilst the evaluation found that a fair amount of success had been achieved by the unit, in the way the police were responding to domestic violence, the core issues and problems generally relating to domestic violence had not really been addressed. The working party was tasked to "reconsider Force Policy on domestic violence, address the training needs of officers in this area, considering specifically the future role of the Domestic Violence Unit at South Tyneside and finally look to future cooperative work with other agencies to ensure a multi-agency approach to the issues". (Northumbria Police Working Party Report on Domestic Violence 1994).

The Working Party Report recognised the need for some sort of Forum which would involve regular meetings, exchange of information, establishing strategies and developing a coordinated response whilst at the same time consisting of members of sufficient standing within their organisations who had the authority to make decisions and implement policy. The Forum was required to develop and implement an inter agency strategy on domestic violence which would:-

- * Promote and ensure cooperation
- * Increase awareness both within the community and amongst the relevant agencies and organisations
- * Improve the response and service to victims of domestic violence
- * Ensure positive action was taken against perpetrators
- * Maximise and ensure effective use of all available resources.

Because Northumbria Police had moved from a two tier divisional structure to a single tier Area Command structure, it followed that a Domestic Violence Forum ought to be set up in each of the fifteen area commands across the Force area with direct representation by the senior command team at either Superintendent or Chief Inspector level. It was realised that the following statutory agencies should be represented on the Forum with specific responsibilities in line with their areas of responsibility generally:-

- * Social Services - Counselling and referral response
- * Probation Service - Offender programmes
- * Crown Prosecution Service, Magistrates' Courts - Positive prosecution policy of overnight detention and putting offenders before the next available court
- * Local Authority/ Housing Department - Sensitive and speedy re-housing of victims together with the need to have tenancy agreements with clauses that forbid violence to co-habiting family members
- * Health Authority - Promote greater awareness amongst doctors and health workers
- * Education Department - Awareness training for teachers in connection with domestic violence

It is obviously not a simple task to obtain statutory agency agreement overnight but Area Commanders were encouraged to seek such agreements and at the same time obtain the support and involvement of the various voluntary agencies involved. As each area command had a police inspector specifically designated as Local Authority Liaison Officer a time limit was set requiring each Area Commander to establish a Domestic Violence Forum within 6 months of the Working Party Report being published.

Although a total of 8 individual Domestic Violence Forums were eventually established there is little doubt that some are more successful than others. Newcastle and Sunderland are the most effective and well established, but because they both cover a cluster of Area Commands and, in the case of Sunderland, had the benefit of an established Forum already being in existence, it would not be prudent to make too many comparisons. It should be pointed out that there is no direct funding for these fora, which rely upon administrative and secretarial support from whichever statutory agency has a particular interest in that area. For an effective police response to domestic violence there needs to be a strong law enforcement strategy that supports victims, together with a supportive criminal justice system that delivers appropriate punishments and programmes for the perpetrators. Obviously the police cannot achieve an effective response working in isolation and there needs to be a partnership and association with both voluntary and statutory organisations to offer a complete 24 hour service to those affected by domestic violence.

A National Inter Agency Response to Domestic Violence

The Home Office Affairs Select Committee published a report in 1993 containing a number of recommendations on how the problem of domestic violence could be better dealt with. In consequence the Government established at both Official and Ministerial level a number of inter departmental working groups to consider the Committee's recommendations and promote a coordinated response to the problem of domestic violence at both national and local level. The result was that the Home Office published an inter departmental circular in August 1995, entitled "Inter Agency Coordination to tackle Domestic Violence", which sought to encourage both local statutory and voluntary agencies to coordinate responses to

domestic violence in a consistent and informed manner while at the same time clearly outlining the roles and responsibilities of both the statutory and voluntary agencies involved.

The opening introduction to the circular clearly set out these aims:-

This circular is primarily designed to encourage greater inter agency cooperation between local agencies working to tackle the problems associated with domestic violence. It is of particular use to those intending to establish local domestic violence fora in order to create a more coordinated approach in their area. Although various forms of cooperation between the various statutory and voluntary agencies working with domestic violence already exist in many parts of the country, this circular provides information on the particular issues which should be addressed when translating existing types of contact into the more established form of cooperation that can be achieved through the setting up of a domestic violence forum.

Recognising that liaison between various agencies has often been piecemeal and fragmented the value of inter agency work as a means of addressing the problem of domestic violence through an integrated approach by providing direct services is promoted in the circular as being the way forward. The setting up of a local Domestic Violence Forum is seen as an effective means of coordinating inter agency effort to support the victims of domestic violence whilst at the same time seeking to stop men causing violence. A Domestic Violence Forum is not a vehicle by which individual agencies can abrogate their individual responsibilities to respond to the problem, but rather a means to coordinate and plan joint agency action.

Based upon the experience of existing inter agency initiatives the circular highlighted 6 key principles required to establish such a Forum-

1. The development of a shared commitment and outlook on how best to respond to domestic violence.
2. The establishment of satisfactory arrangements for servicing and covering the Forum, which recognises the different resource base between the statutory and voluntary agencies involved, but enable full participation in the control and direction of the Forum's work by all the key agencies involved.
3. Clarity about expected outcomes - the Forum must have explicit aims, objectives, tangible outputs and evaluative mechanisms by which to measure its success.
4. Ownership of the work and outcomes of the Forum amongst its participants.
5. Clear links and reporting arrangements between the Forum, working groups and other key bodies.
6. Good communications with those who make resource allocation decisions aimed at tackling domestic violence.

(Home Office Inter Agency Circular: Inter Agency Coordination to tackle Domestic Violence 1995).

In order to be effective a Domestic Violence Forum needs to be a partnership between the agencies involved with specific aims and objectives:-

Aims

- Develop a joint strategic approach.
- Help the agencies involved to plan joint actions and provide a comprehensive range of services for victims.
- Encourage agencies towards early intervention measures.
- Seek to change public attitudes to domestic violence and encourage any preventative measures.

Objectives

- Identify the services offered by each of the various agencies involved.

- Establish the services required and rationalise existing responses to ensure more effective use of resources.
- Promote inter agency cooperation and training.
- Encourage agencies to develop or revise their response to domestic violence.
- Raise awareness of the needs of victims of domestic violence, particularly amongst minority groups.
- Initiate measures aimed at preventing domestic violence.
- Monitor the problem more efficiently through an increased use of the statistical information that is currently available.

The benefit of this circular is that it is not left to individual local authorities or police forces to develop their Forum from scratch, as there is now an official model presented by the Home Office with the benefit of past experience. The circular even goes to the lengths of listing the various statutory agencies that should be considered for the Forum together with a list of voluntary agencies and other groups that ought to be included. It sets out very clearly the roles and responsibilities of some of the key statutory and voluntary agencies involved in tackling domestic violence. The role of the police is defined in the terms of Home Office Circular 60/1990 but more generally the following responsibility is outlined:-

It is the immediate duty of police officers who are called to a domestic violence incident to secure the immediate protection of the victim and any children from further abuse and then to consider what action should be taken against the offender. The immediate protection of the victim may involve the police in referring or taking her to a refuge or liaising with statutory or voluntary agencies who can supply longer term help and support. Such action should not however be seen as a substitute for any other action to enforce the law, such as arrest or further investigation of the crime. (Paragraph 7:2.4).

Each agency or voluntary organisation is dealt with in similar fashion and it is certainly not before time that an official government document has been published which outlines just what they all ought to be doing to tackle the problem of domestic violence. This circular can be seen as the definitive document in relation to a multi-agency response to domestic violence in the same way that Lorna Smith's research papers in 1989 was the definitive document which for the first time produced an overview of the problem of domestic violence.

Unfortunately the one area where this inter agency circular remains unusually silent, is in the area of funding and does not outline who will pay for the setting up and running of these fora and the other inter agency measures involved. As clearly outlined in the case of the Nottinghamshire Domestic Violence Forum and countless other initiatives, when the initial funding runs out the initiative involved comes to an abrupt end.

The Way Forward - Zero Tolerance?

In common with a number of Forces, Northumbria Police have recently adopted a community safety strategy which brings together the local authorities and other agencies including the private sector to form a multi-agency partnership. The aim is for each of the partners working with the community to tackle crime and defeat crime but the overall objective is to see an improvement in the quality of life for those living in the area covered by the strategy, for it realises that community safety activities and initiatives combining together will tackle community safety related matters.

During the first year of the strategy in 1995, a Drugs Accord was established with the aim of involving all members of the community in tackling the problem of drugs by adopting a multi-agency partnership approach. The intention for the second year of the strategy is to tackle the fear of crime. Funding from central government amounting to £10.6M over a seven year period has been divided amongst the six local authorities within the area covered by Northumbria Police and they in turn will be meeting that contribution with an equivalent amount from their resources. Whilst tackling the fear of crime might appear all embracing, this can be achieved by creating a safer environment, reducing the crime rates and supporting victims of crime. The Community Safety Strategy has identified a number of key issues amongst which is a category 'Vulnerable Groups' and victims of domestic violence come within that group. Obviously there are a number of vulnerable groups apart from victims of domestic violence but at least the plight of victims of domestic violence is being recognised and funding and resources to some extent are being made available.

In particular as part of the Community Safety Strategy Northumbria Police have adopted the "Zero Tolerance Campaign", which is an initiative that replicated a campaign initially launched in December 1992 by Edinburgh District Council Womens' Committee, with the aim of raising public awareness about the problem of domestic violence. It was originally developed through consultation of the various agencies and individual groups who had an interest in or were working with victims of domestic violence and drawing upon the experience of initiatives undertaken in Britain and abroad. The campaign sought to publish facts about domestic violence with the intention of impressing upon the public the fact that personal violence against women ought not to be tolerated. Advertising played a significant part in this campaign with eye catching posters being designed and displayed at prominent

sites throughout Edinburgh City Centre on billboards, ad-shell display sites (bus stops) and indoors (public houses, recreation centres, libraries, etc).

These posters were supported by the distribution of some 2,000 leaflets and bookmarks, each bearing the 'Zero Tolerance' corporate logo, into libraries, community centres and public buildings. In addition local newspapers carried articles relating to the Zero Tolerance Campaign, particularly addressing the information highlighted in the posters. The effect of the advertising was that throughout the city centre of Edinburgh residents and visitors were confronted with a repetitive visual presentation of the problem of violence against women. The result was to create an awareness of the prevalence of violence against women making it quite clear that such violence was criminal and would not be tolerated.

Illustration 11(1): Zero Tolerance campaign posters



While it is very commendable to undertake any sort of campaign to highlight the problem of domestic violence, there is some concern about how effective this campaign has been in meeting its objectives. A street survey was carried out in Edinburgh during the campaign which revealed that 64 per cent of those surveyed were aware to some extent of the campaign. This figure rose to 85 per cent for those who regularly visited the city centre where the "Z" and phrase "Zero Tolerance" had a high recognition value. Of course there is a real danger that by publishing the problem of domestic violence the image of Edinburgh would be tarnished or else stigmatised and not enhance its cultural image as Scotland's capital city. In fact only 11 per cent of those surveyed felt that the display of such posters in Princess Street as part of the Zero Tolerance Campaign was bad for the image of Edinburgh.

There was general support for the campaign, however, it was not restricted purely to physical acts of domestic violence but also dealt with rape and child abuse and therefore it did have quite a wide remit. The long term aims of the campaign were to:-

- * Generate debate and focus on strategies to prevent crimes of violence against women and children.
- * Highlight the need for adequate support services.
- * Demonstrate the need for appropriate legal protection for women and children who are the victims of such violence.

Whilst this campaign can be regarded as a successful means of advertising and highlighting the problem of domestic violence and other similar abuse, it does not offer any real solutions or answers. As a means of educating people the evidence obtained from the

evaluation would view the campaign as successful but it does need to be part of an overall strategy to combat domestic violence. This campaign compares with the annual 'drink driving' campaigns that appear around Christmas time. Very effective posters and television adverts are promulgated warning drivers not to drink and drive, but the main difference there is that those campaigns are underpinned by a commitment by the police to stop and breathalyse drivers who are believed to be drinking and driving. The educational element of the campaign is re-enforced by the enforcement element with the result that the media publish details of the numbers of offenders caught and the courts do appear to deal more harshly with such cases during the campaign. This information then re-enforces the preventative nature of the initial advertising by making drivers aware of the consequence of ignoring the advice given and it is this vital element that is missing in the Zero Tolerance Campaign, imagine the impact if one of the posters said "During the past month 30 men have been arrested for causing violence towards their partners and 10 of these are now in prison".

This campaign is a very effective means of highlighting the problem of domestic violence but it needs to be seen as one of a number of initiatives that need to be carried out simultaneously in order to present a holistic response to the problem. It has since extended from Edinburgh and has been adopted by Northumbria Police as part of its Community Safety Strategy to support vulnerable groups. It will obviously form part of an overall strategy but whilst a community safety strategy does go a long way towards tackling a number of real problems affecting society as a whole, including domestic violence, maintaining funding for any initiatives is always a problem. The concept of a partnership approach has not been challenged, but rather the various agencies have been reluctant to

take up the challenge. Whilst acting independently each organisation can make a significant contribution towards tackling any particular problem that affects the local community as a whole, however, the contribution any single agency can make would be greatly enhanced if it worked in a multi-agency setting to deal with the problem.

The provision of funding

We are now moving towards a situation where funding will be provided as multi-agency or partnership working is considered as a statutory responsibility of the agencies involved.

Sir John Cassels, Chairman of the independent Committee of Enquiry into the role and responsibility of the police has made it quite clear he believes that Local Authorities should be obliged to submit draft community safety plans to police authorities in order to assist them in drawing up their annual policing plans. His committee of inquiry firmly takes the view that there should be a statutory duty on local authorities so to do. This view has considerable support because the Audit Commission in one of their latest reports 'Streetwise - Effective Police Patrol' (1996) recommend that partnership (multi-agency) work between police, local authorities and other public sector bodies should be a statutory requirement so that coordination between different agencies is improved and a greater emphasis placed upon community safety. This will resolve the real stumbling block of the problem of the need for continued funding for multi agency initiatives.

Which initiatives actually work?

Without a national statutory framework within which a multi-agency initiative on domestic violence can operate most strategies are a framework for policy to be adopted at local level.

Unfortunately the success or even the implementation of a local strategy depends upon the interest and funding that each of the various statutory agencies are willing to direct towards such an initiative at a local level. Lack of appropriate funding will result in a piecemeal approach to the problem of domestic violence where the quality of service that is available to victims is dictated by where that person lives. The need for a multi-agency approach to domestic violence is quite clearly set out and had been for a number of years now. At a time when budgets in all local authority and governmental departments are under attack one has to present a very strong case for money and resources to be directed at any particular problem. Because of its very nature domestic violence, whilst it is always an issue, rarely appears to raise enough public interest to render it a real concern, and the only time interest seems to be heightened occurs when some particularly nasty murder or serious assault is reported with domestic violence overtones.

Certainly the availability of funding, particularly in the long term, is the one vital ingredient that determines the success or otherwise of any multi agency or partnership initiative. In addition the various statutory agencies do need to endorse and support such initiatives at an appropriately high level - a multi agency initiative made up of senior executives from each of the agencies is certainly more likely to succeed. There is a need for practitioners to be involved as advisors but an initiative made up simply of interested practitioners in the field of domestic violence, does not carry any real weight. Once established there does need to be a continuing commitment and dialogue from all members, but evidence has shown it is lack of funding rather than lack of commitment that has been the problem.

Domestic violence is not sufficiently high enough on the list of social problems that require priority action. In order to consider how to raise the awareness of the problem, one has to appreciate the pivotal role of the media who are an agency operating within society, but rarely thought of as being crucial to the success of any multi agency initiative. The Zero Tolerance Campaign demonstrated the effectiveness of media advertising to raise the profile of domestic violence within society, for there is a need to recognise that unless domestic violence, as a social concern, is taken on board by the media and given the same attention as other pressing social problems, very little real success within society will be achieved.

For the majority of people who have no direct contact with domestic violence their information comes from the media, predominantly the press and television. It is however the manner in which domestic violence is reported in the media that has considerable bearing upon the way in which society views the victims of domestic violence.

Press Reporting of Domestic Violence

Generally the reporting of domestic violence in the press is restricted to the facts, but this is not surprising because acts of violence generally and any associated proceedings are very newsworthy, particularly in the tabloid and local newspapers.

DOMESTIC ROW LED TO BREAD-KNIFE ATTACK

By GEORGE OLIVER

A YOUNG mum stabbed her common-law husband with a bread knife, during a late-night domestic row.

But the victim, Robert Gillespie, had "goaded" 26-year-old Wendy Pallister into striking out with the weapon, David Gatherer, defending, told Durham magistrates. "It is a matter in which Mr Gillespie was, to a certain extent, the author of his own misfortune."

"He goaded my client into doing what she did," said Mr Gatherer.

Prosecutor Christopher Williamson said Gillespie and Pallister had been together for ten years and lived at Laurel Drive, Sherburn Road Estate, Durham, with their two children aged five and four.

The attack, he said, occurred at their home at 11.30pm on the night of November 2, after an argument.

The defendant attacked Mr Gillespie with an eight-inch bread knife and he suffered two stab wounds to his upper arm, which resulted in a small hospital operation and stitching," said Mr Williamson.

Pallister was originally accused of causing grievous bodily harm with intent, but the prosecution substituted a lesser charge of wounding with intent, after Mr Gillespie refused to press the complaint.

She admitted the amended charge. But the magistrates adjourned the hearing until January 13, for social inquiry reports to be prepared by the probation service.

CHRISTMAS PORRIDGE FOR WIFE PESTERER

A SUNDERLAND man will have to spend Christmas in prison, for breaching a court order not to pester his wife.

Terence Lane had been committed to prison for three months on November 25 by Sunderland County Court.

But at Durham Crown Court, Lane of Netherburn Road, Sunderland appealed to be released, on the grounds that he had purged his contempt.

He told Judge Angus Macdonald: "I am very sorry for all the trouble I have caused. I won't ever get into trouble again. I have never been to prison before."

But Judge Macdonald said: "This court is not going to release you. It seems that this sentence was well justified."

The court had heard that on September 20, Sunderland County Court had made an order forbidding Lane to use violence towards Elizabeth Medlock and also forbidding him to threaten, pester or harass her or enter or attempt to enter her home in Frank Street, Southwick, Sunderland.

That address had been the former matrimonial home.

But at a hearing at the County Court on November 25 found that on November 9, Lane had

gone to the house in Frank Street, punched in a glass panel, so that a piece of glass struck Miss Medlock and he had also shouted abuse.

The county court had committed him to prison for one month and brought into effect a three months suspended sentence, imposed for a similar breach, but made the sentences concurrent, making three months in all.

The suspended sentence had been imposed after Lane had gone to Miss Medlock's home, smashed up the contents, threw paint around, slashed materials and cut up all her clothes.

12-pint attacker sent to prison

A 22-year-old County Durham man was in a drunken stupor when he punched and threatened to kill his common-law wife, a court heard.

Robert Langdan had drunk 12 pints of beer before returning to the Ashion Rise, Peterlee, home, he then shared with the 22-

year-old woman.

And when an argument started between them he grabbed her by the hair and hit her in the face with his fist, David Scutt, prosecuting, told Peterlee magistrates.

Langdan, of Johnson Close, Peterlee, admitted assaulting the mother-of-

two, causing her actual bodily harm on November 6 this year.

He also admitted assaulting a woman police officer and resisting a policeman, both on the same date.

Langdan was jailed for a total of six months.

MAYOR'S BIG DAY ENDS IN THE DOCK

A night of civic ceremony ended with a newly-installed mayor under arrest accused of punching his wife.

Tory Bill Woodhead, 62, was charged with assault after his wife Doreen, 60, claimed he had punched

her following the mayor-making ceremony at Stockton.

The case was adjourned until May 14 by Teesside magistrates yesterday when Mrs Woodhead asked for the charge to be dropped, a

request being considered by the Crown Prosecution Service.

Mr Woodhead, a former ICI buyer of Gwynn Close, Fairfield, Stockton, who has been a councillor for 13 years, said last night: "I am upset by the whole

thing. It was a domestic tiff which was blown out of all proportion."

Mrs Woodhead said: "I don't want to comment for obvious reasons but I am happy with what my husband says."

There are however occasions when domestic violence makes the headlines, not because of the gravity of the violence inflicted but because of the personalities involved. In some cases the offender is well known, whether that person is a respected actor with an easily recognisable face or an even more well known footballer and celebrity. Certainly the age of the victim or more particularly the offender is irrelevant when considering the problem of domestic violence, even if the person involved appears to be the most unlikely wife batterer imaginable.

Illustration 11(3): Press coverage where the offender is well known

Daily Mail, Friday, July 12, 1996

M*A*S*H STAR'S NIGHT IN THE CELLS

Actor, 81 'beat up his wife'

From GEORGE GORDON
in New York

MILLIONS know him as mild-mannered Colonel Potter of TV's M*A*S*H. Behind closed doors, however, Harry Morgan was a drunken wife-beater, it was claimed yesterday.

The 81-year-old actor denies hitting his wife Barbara, 70. But he said: 'There's no fool like an old fool.'

'Unfortunately, this is the second time in a year police have been called to our house because of drunken fights. I love my wife very much but sometimes we drink too much.'

Mrs Morgan spent a night in a Los Angeles hospital with bruises, a cut near her eye and a swollen foot. She is refusing to co-operate with a prosecution but police say the case will go ahead. The actor spent a night in the cells and was granted £3,000 bail. If convicted, he could face a year in jail.

He said: 'We were at home and started drinking. Life gets boring when you're used to being a TV star then have nothing to do. I don't even remember what the fight was about.'



Harry Morgan as Colonel Potter

Gascoigne 'beat up wife'

TYNESIDE-BORN soccer star Paul Gascoigne beat up his wife Sheryl after a drinking session, it was reported last night.

Sheryl, the mother of Gascoigne's young son Regan, suffered bruises and was left with her arm in a sling, it was claimed.

The attack is said to have taken place at the luxury Gleneagles Hotel in Perthshire.

Staff there confirmed the Glasgow Rangers star, who last night was sent off while playing in the European Champions League against Ajax for kicking out at an opponent, had stayed with them this week.

Duty manager Bruce Ritchie said Gascoigne spent Monday and Tuesday night at the famous hotel and golf complex with his wife Sheryl, her two children and Regan. But he denied hearing of any disturbance involving the controversial player and cast doubt on the report.

Mr Ritchie said: "I have no information of anything happening between them and I know nothing about any incident or what is being said about Mr Gascoigne assault-



■ Far apart?: Paul and Sheryl Gascoigne reportedly argued.

ing his wife." Doctors at Glasgow's private Ross Hall Hospital, where Sheryl is reported to have been taken after the attack, refused to give any details as to whether Sheryl was or had been a patient.

Gascoigne was believed to be flying back to Glasgow from Amsterdam today with the rest of the Rangers team. A London-based national newspaper quoted wit-

nesses saying that Gascoigne had been drinking whisky all day before hurling abuse at Sheryl over dinner in the hotel's restaurant.

The argument is said to have continued after the couple returned to their suite.

Gascoigne has admitted in the past to beating his wife.

► Ajax nightmare: Page 55 ►

The reported assault by Paul Gascoigne upon his partner led to a considerable amount of animosity towards him, but did not hinder the man being chosen to play football for

England within a few days of the incident. Regrettably to choose a man to represent his country, who openly admitted to being a perpetrator of domestic violence, does highlight the real problem that our society does not appear to be really concerned about domestic violence. Although subject to considerable media coverage, there was a reluctance on the part of all those in authority, who were interviewed, to condemn the actions of this man. I believe a golden opportunity was missed to take a stand against domestic violence.

Illustration 11(4): Press coverage where the victim is well known

The Mail on Sunday July 18, 1993

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- JOE AND CLARA HAVE TEA WITH THE QUEEN: Pages 26 & 27
- SEX AND THE MALE PILL: Page 28

femail
ON SUNDAY

Liz Taylor was battered by three of her husbands

From SHARON CHURCHER in New York

ELIZABETH Taylor was the victim of violent physical abuse from three of her husbands, according to a remarkable new biography.

The actress, who has been married eight times, was once dragged by the hair across a dining room in front of other guests, before being pummelled in the face and body.

In another incident, she was punched in the stomach as she took a shower.

Taylor was beaten by her first husband, hotelier Nicky Hilton, her third husband, producer Mike Todd, and, most surprising of all, by Richard Burton, the man she loved more than all the others and married twice.

Burton would rape at her with torrents of verbal abuse that sometimes became physical. His temper became so bad that at one point, when the couple were dining out, he suddenly slammed the table into her stomach, causing her tremendous pain.

The remarkable inside story is told by author C David Heymann, whose biography of Taylor will be released in Britain next spring.

HIS BOOK promises to reveal the violent and colourful private life of the actress whose marriages and divorces have overshadowed her screen achievements.

Heymann, speaking in New York last night, criticised that controversial passage in the



KEEPING UP APPEARANCES. Elizabeth Taylor with husbands Hilton, left, Todd and Burton

ALLURING: But the star was a battered wife
Picture: FIROOZ ZAHEDI

be given a massive publicity launch next year. Heymann has a track record of producing sensational books on the world's most famous women. The subject of his most recent bestseller, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, is still livid at what she considers his unfair treatment of her as a cold-hearted gold-digger.

MOST notable among his writers for the

In other cases the victim is even more well known. The fact that someone as famous and successful as Liz Taylor admitted being a victim of domestic violence at the hands of three of her husbands is quite remarkable. What is more surprising is that film stars Michael Todd and Richard Burton, two "perfect English gentlemen", were two of the assailants. That one account simply shows that even the most successful women who receive considerable public acclaim can still become victims of domestic violence and at times the most unlikely men are the batterers. Of course this article was printed in 1993, long after both men involved had died and well after the events have occurred.

There are other times however, when domestic violence is not represented for the crime that it really is, for in some instances quite serious assaults are reported with a touch of humour that detracts from the seriousness of the actual assault or violence used.

Illustration 11(5): Domestic violence reported with a touch of humour

Wife in frozen squirrel horror

A HUSBAND in New York beat his wife unconscious with six frozen squirrels, according to a report in the *Sun*.

Khae Saephom attacked her after coming home drunk in the early hours, grabbing the squirrels from a freezer and using them as clubs.

Officers arrived after being alerted by neighbours and Khae was charged with 'spousal abuse by a squirrel'. Khae, a refugee, planned to eat the squirrels for dinner. They are a delicacy in his homeland of Laos.

He may face more charges if the squirrels are found to be a protected species, or if they suffered undue cruelty.

His wife Muong, now suing for divorce, is quoted as saying: 'No man should hit his wife — especially with a squirrel.'

Fatal crush

A 300-pound woman who fatally crushed her husband when she sat on him may have been the victim of abuse and might not be charged, U.S. authorities said today.

Gene Williams, of the Milwaukee County medical examiner's office, said it understood "there was some sort of family quarrel, where the wife and the two children were involved" in restraining Charles Walker.

Mr Williams said he died 11 days later without regaining consciousness.

Domestic Violence on Television

The success of soap operas like *Coronation Street*, *Brookside* and *Eastenders* is generally attributed to the fact that they present ordinary characters living out ordinary lives to which most people can usually relate. Domestic violence has previously formed part of the story line in *Eastenders* and *Brookside* but in February 1996 over 20 million viewers were glued to their screens watching "*Coronation Street*" as Jim McDonald battered his wife leaving her bruised and shaken. The violence and the drama continued, subsequently involving the police and resulting in Jim McDonald spending a brief period in prison. Although very realistic, it was well written and very accurately covered the reality of the problem of domestic violence in families. Whilst it was realistic the following article, which commented upon that episode, concluded that whilst actress Bev Callard would have her black eye and bruises removed in the make up room at Granada Studios, the reality for real victims of domestic violence is far different:-

THE SUNDAY POST / March 3, 1996 37 +

Illustration 11(6): Domestic violence on television



Lessons we can learn from Liz McDonald

MORE THAN 20 million *Coronation Street* viewers watched horrified as Jim McDonald battered his wife Liz in a jealous fury in last Wednesday's dramatic episode.

One of them was Sunday Post reader Julie Mackay (27) from Glasgow. She has been the victim of domestic violence for seven years and this is her story.

THE recent events in *Coronation Street* will no doubt have been painful viewing for victims of domestic violence.

Those of us who have suffered this traumatic experience watched in morbid fascination — possibly hoping that Liz McDonald (Bev Callard) could tell us what to do.

Liz admitted to husband Jim that she cheated on him 20 years ago with his best friend. So he hit her.

Fair punishment? Justifiable? I don't think so. Dramatic viewing from *The Street* perhaps, but no excuse.

Any woman who has experienced violence at the hands of a husband or partner will know that he doesn't have, need or even want an excuse.

The very core of his being is power. Acting and even looking at him the wrong

way can spark a bearing. It is so easy for those who haven't experienced this situation to judge. To comment. To be shocked. To think, "I wouldn't put up with it."

But what if it happens out of the blue? What if the man you're in love with suddenly changes from one mood to another like the flick of a switch?

In my case, we'd be laughing together at a shared joke one minute, and the next he'd suddenly cast up something or someone I'd mentioned weeks before. Then the violence would start.

Bruises

He was always careful to hit me where the bruises wouldn't show, so no-one ever noticed.

I started to watch what I said. I'd think before I spoke, cautiously omitting anything that would start an argument.

I'd wonder when it all started. What happened to the man I met? What happened to the sense of humour that attracted me to him in the first place? When was the last time we laughed together? I bottled it up for a long time



■ Liz has to explain her bruises to son Andy.

It wasn't until I tentatively confided in someone else that I realised it was wrong.

So what was I to do? Stay, because I knew our relationship

could be good, or go, because deep down I knew the bad times would never end?

The doubt and guilt inevitably surfaced. Maybe I was wrong —

things weren't that bad. But if one of my friends was experiencing this, I know I'd tell her to get out. Now.

I left him — and the nightmare continued.

The phone calls, the unexpected visits to my workplace and home day and night. Being followed. Always looking over my shoulder.

I'd dread going home, worrying he would be there. Waiting. I got to the stage I'd sit in darkness hoping he'd think I was out. But it never worked.

Although an everyday occurrence violence in the home is still swept under the carpet.

Violence

Undoubtedly, Women's Aid will have an increase in their calls from women relating to the *Coronation Street* storyline, just as the charity did when *Brookside* highlighted domestic violence.

Isn't it sad that we read these stories daily in our newspapers, but it takes a soap opera to help people become more aware?

Liz McDonald can remove her black eye and bruises in the make-up room at Granada's TV studios.

But many women will have acquired them for real — just for watching her.

● If you're living with a violent partner, phone Virginia Ironside's Helpline on 0891 318 178.

Although one can take comfort in the fact that dramatised television although realistic is not actually real violence inflicted upon real people, there are occasions, however, when television documentaries do record real situations involving ordinary people. This was the case with the Channel 4 News Team, mentioned previously, who came to Washington to film the police dealing with domestic violence in 1992. In that situation the narrative and commentary was quite accurate and sensitive to the problems facing women who are victims of domestic violence. Unfortunately domestic violence is usually only newsworthy when some woman react to the violence and ends up facing a murder charge.

Domestic Violence on the Radio

Radio is not normally a part of the media where domestic violence figures very much, apart from the odd documentary on Womens' Hour or some similar programme. BBC Radio 2 however, have recently published a very well written, colourful booklet entitled "When home is where the hurt is".

The booklet seeks to define domestic violence, explain the effect the violence has upon women and children involved and sets out clearly a woman's rights in law. It deals specifically with the problems facing black, Asian and ethnic minority women, explains the role and working of Womens' Refuges and gives advice on how women can take control of the situation they are in.

In the foreword by Radio 2 presenter Gloria Hunniford she explains:-

"In this magazine, we'll be exploring exactly what domestic violence is and destroying some of the myths surrounding it. We'll also be offering practical advice and information on your rights, on refuges and how to go about taking control of your own life if you're in a relationship with an abusive man. And if you think you may know someone suffering abuse, this booklet is invaluable if you want to help...."

This is a strange situation where a Radio Station produces a booklet outlining the problem of domestic violence, rather than transmitting a series of programmes or documentaries. It is simply a guide to women on how to deal with domestic violence and where to turn to for help. It clearly points out that certain forms of behaviour amounts to domestic violence even though they may not have suffered direct physical violence at the hands of their partner.

Do you think you might be abused. Just because you don't have a broken nose or black eye doesn't mean you're not being abused.

Have you been:

- * Regularly humiliated in front of friends or family?
- * Deprived of food, money or sleep?
- * Threatened verbally or sexually?
- * Made a prisoner in your own home?
- * Emotionally blackmailed?
- * Forbidden from seeing family or friends?

Have you felt:

- * In fear of your life?
- * There's no way out?
- * Like you are going mad?

- * Too scared to talk to anyone?
- * You may lose your children if you leave?
- * You are to blame?

If so, then it's time to consider that perhaps you're being abused.

(BBC Radio 2's Guide to Dealing with Domestic Violence)

The media appear to have replaced the Church as the moral guardians of society and certainly have the power within society to point out human relationships and associations that fall short of an acceptable pattern of conduct and behaviour within society. Probably more than any other agency the police are the subject of media attention, at times quite adverse, and appreciate the benefit of media support to any initiative as well as realising the damage media criticism can create. Domestic violence does need to be marketed by the media in such a way that the violence is not sensationalised but presented to challenge offenders to accept responsibility for their actions whilst at the same time highlighting the relative successes of the various agents within society who are seeking to deal with the problem successfully. Whether or not any multi agency initiative is successful is largely in the hands of the media and for that reason they have a vital role in any multi agency response within society.

Summary

- * Multi agency cooperation is not the sole responsibility of the police, but a coordinated response by statutory organisations and voluntary bodies is the way forward to tackling the problem of domestic violence.
- * The media rather than the church appear to have taken over the role as moral guardians of society and therefore have a vital role in communicating to society the seriousness of domestic violence and the benefits of a multi agency response.

- * Multi agency initiative requires adequate, prolonged funding if they are to work successfully and also need both the endorsement and support of the policy makers of the various organisations rather than the practitioners operating at a lower level.
- * Local Authorities should have statutory responsibility for tackling domestic violence and other crime related problems within society. Until such time multi agency cooperation and initiatives are obliged to rely upon goodwill and long term initiatives are therefore vulnerable to external pressure and financial restraint.
- * The police at senior level must have direct involvement in any multi agency initiative but are not required to be the lead agency.
- * Multi agency initiatives are more successful when combined with a positive police response which seeks to arrest and process the men who commit such violence.
- * Whilst multi agency cooperation is an effective response to a complex societal problem of domestic violence, it is only part of the solution, in the same way that arresting offenders, implementing positive policy, establishing Domestic Violence Units and cautioning offenders for minor assaults are not, in themselves, the answer. It does however provide the best means of dealing with the problem, in both the short term and long term.

Chapter 12

BRINGING THE EVIDENCE TOGETHER

Policing Domestic Violence

Domestic violence has the potential to be a very serious problem but because it usually occurs in private, what does actually emerge is only the tip of the iceberg. The roots of domestic violence go back through centuries and even millennia, yet it is only in quite recent times that it has become socially unacceptable and the offenders legally accountable. Victims feel their plight is ignored, trivialised and at best not understood, even by those who ought to provide support and assistance. It is about twenty years since the first real attempts to research the problem of domestic violence were made and even then the studies emanated from North America long before any real research was carried out in Britain.

Of course it is difficult to tackle a problem when there is such disparity in defining what actually constitutes domestic violence. Early definitions confined it to acts of physical violence within the matrimonial home, but it is now accepted as domestic rather than matrimonial and the violence is not restricted to physical injury but also includes emotional violence or the threat or potential for violence. There is however a reluctance on the part of victims to regard it as a form of abuse as this immediately stigmatises the victim, yet however it is viewed the victims do seem to get a raw deal. They do not expect much, particularly from those to whom they ought to be able to call upon to assist and regrettably they are often not proved wrong for in many instances they fail to receive any real assistance at all.

The police have been the focus of a considerable amount of interest as a result of previous research into domestic violence. As the gatekeepers to the criminal justice system who provide a 24 hour service, it is not unreasonable to expect them to help victims of domestic violence at their time of greatest need. Sadly the service provided by the police appears to have fallen short of what was expected and consequently this research has sought to establish the reasons for this failure.

The central research problem surrounds the police response to domestic violence, the starting point being the realisation that domestic violence is a societal problem upon which police policy and practices need to be focused. Traditionally the police have been regarded as the one agency with statutory responsibility for dealing with the effects of domestic violence, but the police response over the years has not addressed the problem. During the nineteen eighties there was a growing realisation from within the police service that domestic violence was in fact a real policing problem and, at the same time, a gathering realisation that the police were unable to deal with the problem of domestic violence alone. At the commencement of this research in 1989 it was recognised that the answer was to be found in a multi agency response and that became the focal point of this research. As is often the case, there have been considerable developments since then in the way society was beginning to view and respond to domestic violence and in particular a number of multi agency initiatives emerged and proved to be quite successful. The situation now is that the hypothesis put forward at the commencement of this research that multi agency cooperation and initiatives go some considerable way to providing a response to the problem of domestic violence, has been proved. Multi agency initiatives or partnership schemes are now a recognised effective response to societal problems and also those which are

particularly crime orientated. There is no longer the need to prove that a particular response may provide the answer if such schemes have been seen to be successful and are generally so recognised. The apparent lack of success of any multi agency initiative is due to either a lack of commitment by the various agencies or, more likely, a lack of sustained funding.

When considering the police response to domestic violence and the need for a multi agency response the importance of a positive police policy that supports intervention rather than mediation and is endorsed by senior police officers is central to an effective police response. Such an organisational response is set against the discretion that individual police officers have at their disposal and usually results in any firm policy being undermined by police officers exercising discretion which usually results in an approach that is more towards mediation and expediency rather than effective direct intervention. This discretion allows those police officers who view domestic violence incidents as a nuisance or a waste of police time to respond by providing no real response to the problem of domestic violence.

During the course of this research many changes have taken place in the way domestic violence is both viewed and dealt with by the police and a number of solutions have emerged (eg domestic violence units, cautioning offenders), but each time an apparent solution is found other problems emerge and that solution is superseded by other new solutions. The result is that there is no single solution to a very complex societal problem, but taken together, these various solutions go some way towards dealing with the problem of domestic violence. This research has considered how domestic violence is being

addressed by the police and comes to the conclusion that it is still not being addressed by the police and given the priority it requires as both a societal and a policing problem.

Recording Domestic Violence

The inability of the police to accurately keep records of domestic incidents is viewed as a reflection of their general apathetic response to the problem of domestic violence. Edwards (1986) went so far as to suggest that domestic violence was the biggest blind spot in official statistics, while Smith (1989) pointed out the inadequacy of simply recording such matters on the station message pad. The advent of computerised command and control systems to deal with the recording of incidents reported to the police was adopted by Northumbria Police and a number of other prominent Forces in the mid nineteen eighties and by now has been extended to almost every Police Force in the country. Therefore advances in technology alone have alleviated the fundamental problem of actually recording incidents of domestic violence while at the same time providing ready means of retrieval of such information once stored.

The fact that this research has shown that only 4 per cent of all recorded incidents dealt with by Northumbria Police during 1989 were domestic incidents and that the arrest rate resulting from these incidents was only 3 percent does not provide a great deal of information about the police response to domestic violence. However, together with all the other information available, (times, locations, duration, outcome) a much wider picture emerges which highlights the police response more fully and provides the basis upon which informed conclusions can be made.

During 1989 out of a total of 594,726 incidents reported to Northumbria Police requiring some form of response, 22,555 of these were domestic violence incidents. This figure represents just under 4 per cent of the overall total and is much lower than has been revealed in previous research. As a simple percentage of the overall total domestic violence does not present itself as a significant policing problem, but it is a real problem as it occurs most prominently at times when police resources are stretched to the limit dealing with general incidents of disorder. Out of 22,555 reported domestic violence incidents in 1989, a total of 618 arrests were made which represents an arrest rate of under 3 per cent. This is obviously a very low arrest rate, especially as both the victim and offender are generally present upon the arrival of the police, but it does highlight the fact that a policy of mediation rather than direct intervention was in operation at that time.

The problem now is not that the police are failing to adequately keep records of domestic violence incidents, but that in many instances they are not making full use of the vast amount of information that is available to them. This research has benefitted from the vast amount of information that can be retrieved from computerised command and control systems, which provided a firm starting point. Of course simply recording incidents of domestic violence is of no real value unless some analysis is made of the considerable amount of information gathered.

- * The police must analyse the information they hold about domestic violence in the same way they analyse information about other crimes, eg burglary.
- * The purpose of analysing information is to become pro active rather than simply responding to such incidents when they have occurred.

- * The information is available to ensure that adequate research is carried out before any specific project or initiative is undertaken.
- * There is a need to promote confidence in the way police respond to domestic violence and the starting point must be an improved police response at the outset.

Attitudes Towards Domestic Violence

The attitude of police officers has been described by previous research as being somewhere on a sliding scale between ambivalence and unhelpfulness. Information gathered during the course of this research does reinforce the view that police officers do not consider domestic incidents as a real policing problem and consequently do not display much enthusiasm in dealing with such matters. Police officers attend domestic incidents with the intention of mediation and calming the situation despite the awareness that they do have adequate powers of arrest. The reluctance to arrest is justified by blaming victims who subsequently withdraw their allegations of assault and thereby thwart any prosecution, albeit the evidence for that is largely anecdotal. Police officers' perceptions and opinions are effected by peer pressure and police culture although this is not readily accepted by the officers themselves. There is without doubt a universally held view that the criminal justice system is ineffective in dealing with the problem of domestic violence.

This research has found substantial evidence that senior officers and supervisory officers, particularly of Inspector rank, are aware of the shortcomings of the police response to domestic violence and committed to a more pro active response and a determination to confront domestic violence. Sadly the more junior officers, particularly at constable rank,

do not share the same commitment and still do not see domestic violence as real police work and certainly not an area of high priority.

Attitudes need to change, especially as the less experienced uniformed constables are the officers most likely to respond to reported incidents of domestic violence. Training needs to be more focused and senior officers need to confront a police culture that belittles the victim to the point that many officers appear to categorise victims as being the authors of their own misfortune.

- * The police response to domestic violence will only improve when attitudes change and police officers view domestic violence as a real policing problem.
- * There is a need for improved training, particularly at constable level, so that officers are made aware of their responsibilities towards victims of domestic violence. Violence by a man towards his partner should be treated just as seriously as if the violence were towards a child in the same family.
- * Senior officers, who are generally more aware and supportive of the need for a positive proactive police response towards domestic violence, are best placed to impact upon police culture and destroy the myth that domestic violence is not a real police problem.

Police Policy and Discretion

Although it is a simple task to draft and introduce new policy the difficulty comes in translating policy into practice. The problem is that prior to the publication of a Home Office Circular in 1990 which, amongst other suggestions, invited Chief Officers to "draw up a Force Policy statement on the response to domestic violence" there appeared little desire on the part of Chief Officers to contemplate issuing policy statements on the matter.

Whilst the proliferation of policy statements in numerous Police Forces throughout the country is commendable, the policy only has impact when Senior Officers utilised the policy as a basis for particular initiatives to tackle domestic violence. The Domestic Violence Unit in South Tyneside and the Cautioning Policy in Streatham, London were both introduced and became successful as a result of the personal involvement and commitment of the Chief Officer in post in those police areas at that time. When those particular Senior Officers move on the initiatives tend to lose their impetus quite rapidly.

The difficulty with issuing a policy of intervention rather than mediation, which instructs officers to arrest persons who inflict violence upon their partners, is that the decision whether to arrest and thereby initiate court proceedings is a personal decision and one that an individual police officer must personally make and be accountable for. If the arrest is found to be unlawful or in certain circumstances unnecessary then both the individual officer and his Chief Constable are likely to face proceedings in the civil court and, if the matter is proved, the "arrested" person can expect to receive considerable damages. The whole system of British Justice is underpinned by the fact that police officers use their discretion as to when and whether to make an arrest and no policy can force a policeman to arrest unless he believes there are grounds to arrest and justification also.

It is generally recognised that there is no real problem with the more serious assaults where the officer would be failing in his duty if he refused to arrest someone in such circumstances. The problem emerges with the more minor types of assault where there is an absence of visible physical injuries and an absence of independent evidence to give

grounds for making an arrest. It is in such areas where the use of an individual officer's discretion can be more readily justified that the problems emerge.

A strong policy from a Chief Officer is an essential precursor to the building of a positive operational policy, if that policy is to stand any chance of working. It is not good enough for a Chief Officer just to issue a policy statement, but it needs to be clearly demonstrated that any policy statement is personally endorsed by and actively supported by the Senior Officer concerned. That policy needs to be communicated effectively to every officer under the command of that particular senior officer to ensure the policy is carried out. It is also recognised that police officers lack comprehensive training in how to deal with domestic violence and that poor training rather than the lack of strong policy results in the police providing poor service delivery to victims of domestic violence.

This research has identified the importance of having a clear policy on domestic violence.

- * It is a precursor to the building of positive operational policy.
- * It must be endorsed and supported at senior level and effectively communicated to operational officers.
- * The level of training provided to officers in dealing with domestic violence needs to be reviewed and directed towards positive intervention.
- * Senior officers who have instigated policy must ensure that the initiative is maintained when they subsequently move on and no longer have responsibility.
- * Administrative and operational procedures must be identified and established to translate policy into practice.

A Multi Agency Approach

The case for a coordinated, well structured multi agency approach is well set out. In a multi agency initiative each participant ought to be aware of the service provided and limitation of each of the agencies involved. It cannot be perceived as a mere "talking shop", nor can it be used as a substitute for proper resources being directed at the problem. Both policy makers of the various agencies and practitioners working in the field need to become involved to ensure that initiatives receive the required support and also that projected aims are achievable. There is a difficulty in that the various agencies have different philosophies and tend to tackle the problem from different perspectives with varying degrees of commitment and success.

The one stumbling block to an effective inter agency response is lack of funding both locally and at national level. It does not cost a great deal to set up a Domestic Violence Forum to meet and discuss the problem of domestic violence. Once the talking, however, gives way to action with the intention of setting up, or providing continued support for a particular initiative, then the problems start. All the statutory agencies and voluntary organisations are operating within very tight budgets and restraints and generally domestic violence is not a priority area. If the choice exists for the police to set up a Domestic Violence Unit or a pro active Crime Team to deal with burglaries and car crime, then the Domestic Violence Unit would be shelved. Likewise if there were a choice between establishing a Womens' Refuge or closing down a hospital ward, then the hospital ward would probably remain open. Domestic violence is simply not sufficiently high on the political or social agenda to attract sufficient funding and with ever increasing cut backs in

local authority services, funding will not be directed to any source where the obligation to provide a service does not exist.

Government bodies such as the Audit Commission and the independent Committee of Enquiry into the Role and Responsibility of the Police have come out in favour of placing multi agency working on a statutory basis. That would result in a requirement upon the various agencies and particularly the local authorities to provide funding for such inter agency working but, until something on those lines is introduced, the approach to domestic violence will continue to be piecemeal and consist of responding to particular problems that have occurred rather than instigating effective pro active measures to deal with the underlying causes of the problem. What is needed therefore is a general change in emphasis and change in attitude within society generally to place domestic violence firmly at the top of the agenda.

There has been a considerable amount of progress over the past 6 years, covering the period of this research. A multi agency or partnership approach is now accepted without question as the best way forward to effectively confront and deal with the problem of domestic violence. What was considered a radical response six years ago has been tried and tested and found to work, so long as the funding and interest is maintained, and that is the problem.

- * An effective police response needs to be part of a well structured multi agency approach.
- * Any response needs to be consistent and not dependant upon success by the geographical location of where it is centred.

- * Operational police officers must realise the value of a multi agency response and give full support to any such initiative.
- * Adequate funding must be identified and maintained to support all such initiatives.
- * The establishment and continuing success of multi agency initiatives ought to be an indicator used by her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary in assessing the effectiveness of any particular police force.

Conclusions

This research is different to the substantial amount of research material that already exists as it is a police officer who is the researcher investigating the police response to domestic violence and it is not simply the police response that has been investigated but rather the nature of the organisation in which that response takes place. Discretion is a component part of police culture and so often used as an excuse for inaction when it simply does no more than disguise the fact that a police officer's negative response to domestic violence stems from personal prejudices, peer pressure and questionable anecdotal evidence.

There is no longer a need to put forward a strong argument for a multi agency response when the hypothesis that multi agency initiatives are effective has been well proved and is now accepted practice. In addition, there has during the final stages of this research been a change in government with a government minister being given specific responsibility for looking at domestic violence.

Societal attitudes need to change and in particular, all statutory agencies need to address the problem of domestic violence. Above all the police service needs to consider domestic violence as a real policing problem and a priority as such, for the police are ideally placed

to take a lead role in any coordinated response together with all the interested parties and agencies operating within society. Social structure is a web of changing relationships where individuals create, change, plan and foretell the future at the same time as being mindful of the past. Social change, however, does not take place by chance but rather occurs within a framework of obligations, rights, expectations and even traditions, some of which need to diminish in order to allow others to develop. Although the familiar, ordered patterns seem to persist unchanged, there is always within society a gradual change which appears unnoticed. The problem is that victims of domestic violence need to see change now, because their plight often leaves them vulnerable to socially determined personal disasters such as homelessness, poor housing, poverty and deprivation in addition to the violence or threat of violence that is always there.

To view the police as agents of change would conclude this research on an optimistic note however, police officers are members of a society that does not yet view domestic violence as a priority area and accordingly the police response will not see rapid improvement and change until such time as there is consensus within society of the importance of improving the general response within society to victims of domestic violence.

ANNEX 1
BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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ANNEX 2

INCIDENT LOG PRINT OUT

05.89	1913	4224	03	K5	070	H	1	DOMESTIC DISPUTE	HAWTHORN WALK, FLSW	36	82	3
05.89	2001	1297	02	K5	082	L	2	DOMESTIC DISPUTE	THORNHURTH, FLLIN	36	92	93
05.89	2005	1294	05	03	072	L	2	ROBBIY NEIGHBOURS	HOLLY AVENUE, FESMOND	36	92	8
05.89	2022	1323	02	F7	065	L	1	DOMESTIC DISPUTE	BENTON ROAD, NEWCAS	36	08	92
05.89	2030	1338	C3	L1	051	L	2	TRouble WITH CHILDREN	HALL DRIVE, CAMPERD	36	92	3
05.89	2043	1358	B3	G4	083	L	2	DOMESTIC DISPUTE	WARRINGTON ROAD, NE	36	92	25
05.89	2050	1375	B5	V4	077	L	1	TRouble WITH NEIGHBOUR	GRAHVILLE ROAD, GOS	36	92	0
05.89	2056	1386	F2	H6	057	L	2	THREATS RECEIVED	HYLTON ROAD, SUNDE	36	93	0
05.89	2101	1401	B3	G4	076	L	1	DISPUTE WITH NEIGHBOUR	JASPER AVENUE, GREE	36	92	0
05.89	2105	1406	C3	K2	054	H	2	TRouble WITH FORMER BOYF	WEST FARM AVENUE, L	36	92	3
05.89	2118	1424	F4	08	046	L	2	THREATS RECEIVED	WHARFEDALE AVENUE	36	92	12
05.89	2122	1431	F4	S4	047	H	1	WOMAN SCREAMING	WASKERLEY ROAD, BAR	36	92	8
05.89	2130	1449	A6	B3	030	L	2	DISPUTE WITH NEIGHBOUR	MOORHOUSE ESTATE	36	92	8
05.89	2145	1472	B3	G6	094	L	2	DOMESTIC DISPUTE	THE SYCAMORES, NEWC	36	92	1
05.89	2159	1491	F2	H3	069	L	2	DOMESTIC	HOBART AVENUE, SOBY	36	92	3
05.89	2200	1492	F3	O2	060	H	1	VIOLENT DOMESTIC	SOUTH VIEW, SUNDERL	32	36	82
05.89	2214	1514	B2	C1	077	L	2	DOMESTIC DISPUTE	LAVEROCK COURT, NEW	36	92	2
05.89	2236	1548	C5	T6	036	L	2	DOMESTIC DISPUTE	ROSS GROVE, NELSON	36	92	1
05.89	2238	1550	B4	O2	102	L	2	DOMESTIC DISPUTE	HARTLEYS FURNISHINGS, AS	36	92	3
05.89	2239	1552	F1	B1	057	L	1	REQUEST SEE PC	MORTIMER ROAD, SOUTH SHIE	36	92	2
05.89	2205	1603	B2	C5	084	H	1	VIOLENT DOMESTIC	CARDIGAN TERRACE, H	36	92	2
05.89	2312	1620	F4	U9	053	H	1	INTRUDERS	ICES TERRACE, CONCO	36	92	1
05.89	2322	1641	B1	B1	090	L	2	DOMESTIC DISPUTE	HYDE PARK STREET, GATE	36	92	2
05.89	2323	1644	D2	G6	079	L	1	DISPUTE WITH NEIGHBOURS	GOWER WALK, FELLING GATES	36	92	2
05.89	2337	1678	C5	S2	039	L	2	DOMESTIC DISPUTE	AXMINSTER CLOSE, CR	36	92	2
05.89	2338	1683	F2	J1	075	H	2	VIOLENT DOMESTIC	PRIMATE ROAD, SUNDERLAND	36	92	3
05.89	2339	1684	C5	R1	040	L	1	DOMESTIC DISPUTE	WHEATRIDGE, SEATON	36	16	92
05.89	2346	1695	B4	O1	116	L	2	DOMESTIC DISPUTE	BOBBY SHAFTOE INN, RAMMER	36	92	1
05.89	2350	1703	A6	B1	036	L	2	DISORDERLY YOUTHS IN CAR	HAWTHORN ROAD, ASH	36	92	3
05.89	2351	1708	C5	O3	033	L	1	TRouble WITH SON	NEWSHAM ROAD, BLYT	36	92	1
05.89	2358	1727	B2	D4	088	L	1	DOMESTIC DISPUTE	BERNARD STREET, WAL	36	92	3
05.89	2359	1728	F2	H3	078	L	1	DOMESTIC DISTURBANCE	OBAN STREET, JARROW, SOUTH	36	92	3
05.89	0	3	F1	C1	001	L	3	POSS DOMESTIC	DUNLOP CRESCENT, SOUTH OH	36	92	3
05.89	4	15	C5	O7	001	L	1	DOMESTIC DISPUTE	CRAWFORD STREET, B	36	92	1
05.89	15	43	B5	T2	003	L	1	DOMESTIC WITH NEIGHBOUR	ROSE TERRACE, NEWCA	36	92	3
05.89	18	54	B5	Y2	005	H	1	VIOLENT DOMESTIC	BUDLEIGH ROAD, KENT	36	92	3
05.89	18	55	B2	O5	002	H	1	TWO DRUNKS FIGHTING OUTS	KINGSMERE GARDENS, NEW	36	92	3
05.89	26	69	C3	L3	003	L	1	DOMESTIC DISPUTE	ROOKWOOD DRIVE, SEATON	36	92	0
05.89	37	87	F4	T7	004	H	1	DOMESTIC	HAWTHORN CRESCENT	36	92	0
05.89	45	102	D2	H4	005	H	2	DOMESTIC WITH WIFE	TAYLOR GARDENS, PEL	36	92	0
05.89	46	103	F4	V4	002	H	2	VIOLENT DOMESTIC	NORTH STREET, HOUGHTON	36	92	0
05.89	48	109	F2	H1	005	H	1	DOMESTIC	FEAMEL GROVE, SOUTH	36	92	3
05.89	49	110	B2	D6	008	H	5	REPORT OF ASSAULT	CRAWFORD TERRACE, N	36	92	1
05.89	50	112	F2	I2	008	L	2	DOMESTIC DISPUTE	FORDFIELD ROAD, SU	36	13	3
05.89	60	125	B3	H4	007	H	2	DRUNK REFUSING TO LEAV	ARMSTRONG ROAD, NEW	36	92	3
05.89	105	129	B4	O2	010	L	2	MAN ASSAULTED	ARMSTRONG ROAD, NEW	36	92	1
05.89	117	149	B5	T1	010	L	1	DOMESTIC DISPUTE	WYELLYN AVENUE, EE	36	92	1
05.89	133	170	B2	D1	014	L	1	DOMESTIC DISPUTE	FISSEBURY AVENUE, NE	36	92	4
05.89	203	191	C3	P2	002	L	1	DISTURBANCE OUTSIDE	RIMLEY AVENUE, BELY	36	92	1
05.89	210	199	D3	O9	014	H	1	FIGHT IN THE STREET	EDMUNDILL STATE, D3	36	92	1
05.89	212	202	F3	B2	007	L	1	DOMESTIC DISPUTE	WATINGATE SQUARE, S5	36	92	3
05.89	220	209	B4	A2	014	H	1	VIOLENT DOMESTIC WOMAN	HARTSIDE, LEMINGTON	36	92	1
05.89	226	215	F1	B2	008	L	3	NOISE FROM NEIGHBOURS	GREY STREET, NORTH	36	92	1
05.89	233	219	D1	C5	012	L	1	WOMAN ASSAULTED	SHINGLOVE TERRACE, O	36	92	1
05.89	249	226	F1	B2	011	L	2	DOMESTIC DISPUTE	SEA VIEW PARK, WHIT	36	92	1
05.89	350	260	F3	O2	009	L	1	DOMESTIC	SEDC STREET, SUNDE	36	09	92
05.89	526	304	B5	T2	025	L	1	DOMESTIC WITH HUSBAND	WHITTHORN CRESCENT	36	92	1
05.89	354	367	B3	G4	025	L	2	DISPUTE WITH NEIGHBOUR	JASPER AVENUE, GREE	36	92	1
05.89	330	425	B2	H3	014	L	2	TRouble WITH NEIGHBOUR	AUSTEN AVENUE, SOBY	36	92	1
05.89	053	464	B5	Y2	033	L	2	DISPUTE WITH NEIGHBOUR	KENTON LAYL, KENTON	36	92	1
05.89	1054	532	B4	B2	035	L	2	DOMESTIC SITUATION	CURTOR STREET, GATE	36	92	93
05.89	1055	541	F2	L3	034	H	2	THREATS BY 3 MEN	THE CRESCENT, SUNDE	36	92	1

ANNEX 3

**PRO FORMA EXTRACTS
FROM DOMESTIC INCIDENTS**

(11) NATURE OF INCIDENT REPORTED

Domestic

Disturbance

Violent Domestic

Damage

34 - 37

Assault

Threats

38 - 41

Violent Assault

other (specify)

.....

.....

(12) PERSON INVOLVED IN INCIDENT

Husband

Wife

42 - 45

Ex Husband

Ex Wife

CL Husband

CL Wife

46 - 49

Boyfriend

Girlfriend

Son

Daughter

50 - 53

Father

Mother

Grandparent

Grandchild

54 - 57

other relative

other

.....

.....

(13) OFFENCE OUTLINED

G.B.H.

Assault (sec 47)

5 - 8

Common Assault

Criminal Damage

Theft/Burglary

Breach of the Peace

9 - 12

Drunk & Disorderly

Assault Police

Breach of Injunction

Breach of Bail

13 - 16

Resisting Arrest

Indecent assault

Rape

other

17 - 19

None

.....

(14) OUTCOME

Advice given

Arrested

20 - 22

Ejected

Warned

NFA

Left prior arrival

24 - 2

Malicious call

Resolved prior arrival

No offences disclosed

Warrent executed

28 - 3

Referred to dvu

other

.....

(15) PREVIOUS OFFENCES

Y

N

Not Known

32

(16) PREVIOUS CALL OUTS

Y

N

Not Known

33

(17) SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES (if known)

Alcohol

Smashing up house

Injunction

Young (under 18)

Elderly (55-70)

Elderly (70+)

Person with mental health problems

Person requires medical attention

other

34 - 38

39 - 42

1 - 3

(18) OFFICER DETAILS

RANK	SEX	FUNCTION	TIME	ALONE-1
pc-1 sg-2 as-3	M-1	u-1 f-2 m-3	(mins)	ACC -2
ins-4 ai-5 pl-6	F-2	z-4 k-5 d-6		
p2-7 sc-8		t-7		

4

1

5 - 11

2

12 - 1

3

19 - 2

4

26 - 3

5

33 - 4

6

40 - 5

7

47 - 6

8

54 - 7

9

61 - 8

10

68 - 9

(17) SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES (if known)

Alcohol

Smashing up house

Injunction

Young (under 18)

Elderly (55-70)

Elderly (70+)

Person with mental health problems

Person requires medical attention

other

34 - 38

39 - 42

1 - 3

(18) OFFICER DETAILS

RANK	SEX	FUNCTION	TIME (mins)	ALONE-1 ACC -2
pc-1 sg-2 as-3	M-1	u-1 f-2 m-3		4
lns-4 ai-5 pl-6	F-2	z-4 k-5 d-6		
p2-7 sc-8		t-7		

1

5 - 11

2

12 - 1

3

19 - 2

4

26 - 3

5

33 -

6

40 -

7

47 -

8

54 -

9

61 -

10

68 -

ANNEX 4

QUESTIONNAIRE - POLICE OFFICERS RESPONSE

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Please tick only one box for each question, except for question 22 where you are asked to rank the nine answers in order of importance.

1. RANK

- 1. Constable
- 2. Sergeant
- 3. Inspector

1-3

2. LENGTH OF SERVICE

- 1. 0-2 yrs.
- 2. 2-5 yrs.
- 3. 5-10 yrs.
- 4. 10-20 yrs.
- 5. 20-30 yrs.

4

3. GENDER

- 1. Male
- 2. Female

5

4. AGE

- 1. Under 21
- 2. 21-30
- 3. 31-40
- 4. 41-50
- 5. Over 50

6

5. DUTY

- 1. Uniform
- 2. C.I.D.
- 3. Traffic
- 4. Other (Specify)

7

6. At what time do you believe 'domestics' are more prevalent

- 1. Lunchtime
- 2. Teatime
- 3. Night-time

8

7. Is it easier dealing with 'domestics' when you are

- 1. Alone
- 2. Accompanied by another Officer
- 3. Accompanied by a female officer

9

10

- | | | |
|---|--|-----------------|
| <p>8. Would it benefit you to be given some background information about the family or persons involved before attending 'domestics'</p> <p>1. Yes
2. No
3. Not really</p> | <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> | <hr/> <p>11</p> |
| <p>9. At 'domestics' is it usually your primary intention to</p> <p>1. Arrest
2. Calm the situation
3. Deal with the incident as quickly as possible</p> | <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> | <hr/> <p>12</p> |
| <p>10. When would you consider making an arrest</p> <p>1. When there was an assault
2. When you considered it appropriate
3. Only as a last resort</p> | <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> | <hr/> <p>13</p> |
| <p>11. If you make an arrest at a 'domestic' do you feel the likelihood of successful prosecution is frustrated by</p> <p>1. The victim withdrawing her complaint
2. The policy of the Crown Prosecution Service
3. Lack of evidence
4. None of the above</p> | <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> | <hr/> <p>14</p> |
| <p>12. Is the present legislation relating to offences of assault/public order/breach of the peace</p> <p>1. Effective when dealing with 'domestics'
2. Not relevant to 'domestics' generally
3. Something to fall back upon</p> | <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> | <hr/> <p>15</p> |
| <p>13. Are matrimonial injunctions of benefit to you</p> <p>1. Yes
2. No
3. Only if a power of arrest is attached</p> | <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> | <hr/> <p>16</p> |
| <p>14. Is the manner in which you deal with 'domestics' influenced, in any way, when children are directly involved</p> <p>1. Yes
2. No
3. Possibly in certain circumstances</p> | <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> | <hr/> <p>17</p> |
| <p>15. Is the manner in which you deal with 'domestics' affected by the views of your colleagues or supervisors</p> <p>1. Yes
2. No
3. Possibly sometimes</p> | <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> | <hr/> <p>18</p> |

16. What sort of 'advice' do you most often give at 'domestics'
1. Warning re conduct
 2. Advice about agencies that can assist
 3. General advice about behaviour and responsibility
17. Would there be any value in forming a Divisional Domestic Violence Unit
1. Yes
 2. No
 3. No definite views for or against
18. Is the training you have been given sufficient to allow you to deal with 'domestics' effectively
1. Yes
 2. No
 3. Have received no real training
19. In which of the following social groups do you consider 'domestics' to be more prevalent
1. Middle Class
 2. Working Class
 3. Unemployed
20. From your experience, which of the following parties have you found to be principally to blame in 'domestic' disputes
1. Wife/girlfriend
 2. Husband/boyfriend
 3. Both parties
21. Which one of the following most accurately describe your views about 'domestics'
1. Rewarding
 2. Nuisance
 3. Waste of police time
 4. Something the police should not get involved with
 5. Part of your general duties as a policeman
- * 22. In your view what are the main causes of 'domestic' violence
1. Alcohol
 2. Drugs
 3. Money problems
 4. Unemployment
 5. Jealousy/extra-marital relationships
 6. Women working
 7. Unreasonable behaviour of wives
 8. Unreasonable behaviour of husbands
 9. Class/Social environment.

19

20

21

22

23

24

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

25 - 27

28 - 30

31 - 33

* (Rank these in order of importance from 1-9 i.e. write '1' in the box of what you consider the main cause; '2' in the one you feel comes next; then '3' and so on, right through to number '9').

ANNEX 5

QUESTIONNAIRE - VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Questionnaire: Victims of Violence

This questionnaire is divided into three parts, the first group of questions deal with violence that you have suffered; the second part asks certain questions about the offender and the last section is concerned with the various groups/agencies that may have helped you.

The questionnaire is completely confidential and you will not be identified in any way. Thank you very much for agreeing to complete the questionnaire.

PART 1

1. Is this your first time in a Womans Refuge?

YES

NO

If 'YES' why did you decide to come to the Refuge?

1-2

3

4

2. How long have you known your current 'violent' partner?

Less than 6 months

6 - 12 months

1 - 2 years

2 - 5 years

Over 5 years

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

5

3. Is this your first experience of domestic violence?

YES

NO

If 'NO' how many relationships have involved 'violence'?

6

7

4. What is the most serious form of 'violence' that you have experienced?

Threats of violence
Physical injury
Serious physical injury

8

5. When did the violence start in your present relationship?

Was it a very early stage of the relationship? Before or after marriage/cohabitation? When pregnant? etc. Briefly outline when?

9

PART TWO

6. Would you describe your present 'violent' partner as:

Tall (5'10" - 6'6")
Medium (5'6" - 5'10")
Small (Under 5'6")

10

7. Would you describe your 'violent' partner's build as:

Overweight/fat
Proportionate/well built
Average
Slim/thin
Small

11

8. What colour eyes does your 'violent' partner have?

Blue

Grey

Green

Brown

Other

Don't
know

12

9. What is your 'violent' partner's occupation?
(If 'unemployed' please enter that as occupation).

13

PART 3

10. Have you ever called the police because of violence
by your partner?

YES

NO

14

If 'NO' please give reasons:

If 'YES' did you find the police were:

Helpful

Not helpful

No views either
way

15

16

11. Do you think the statutory agencies (Police, Probation,
Social Services, etc) are doing enough to help victims
of domestic violence?)

YES

NO

DON'T KNOW

17

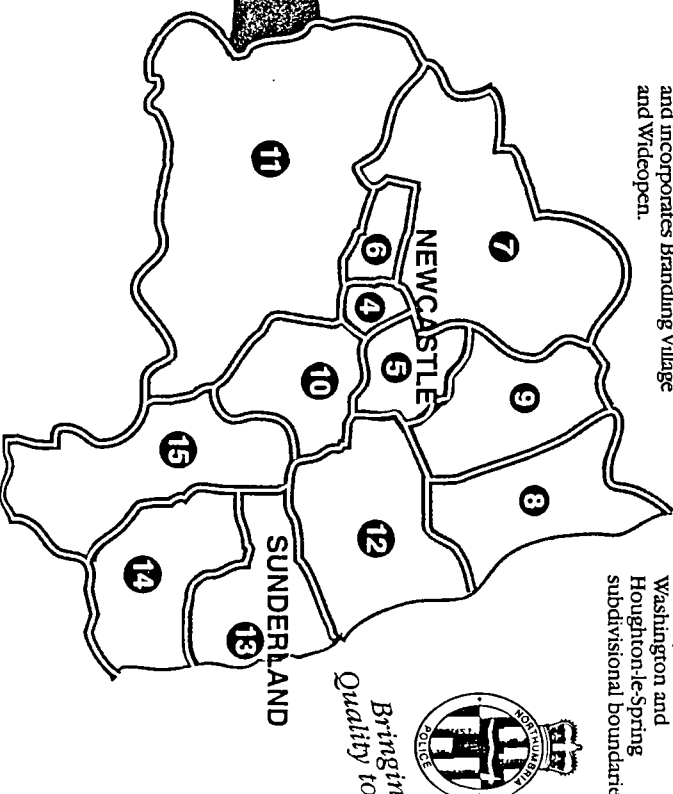
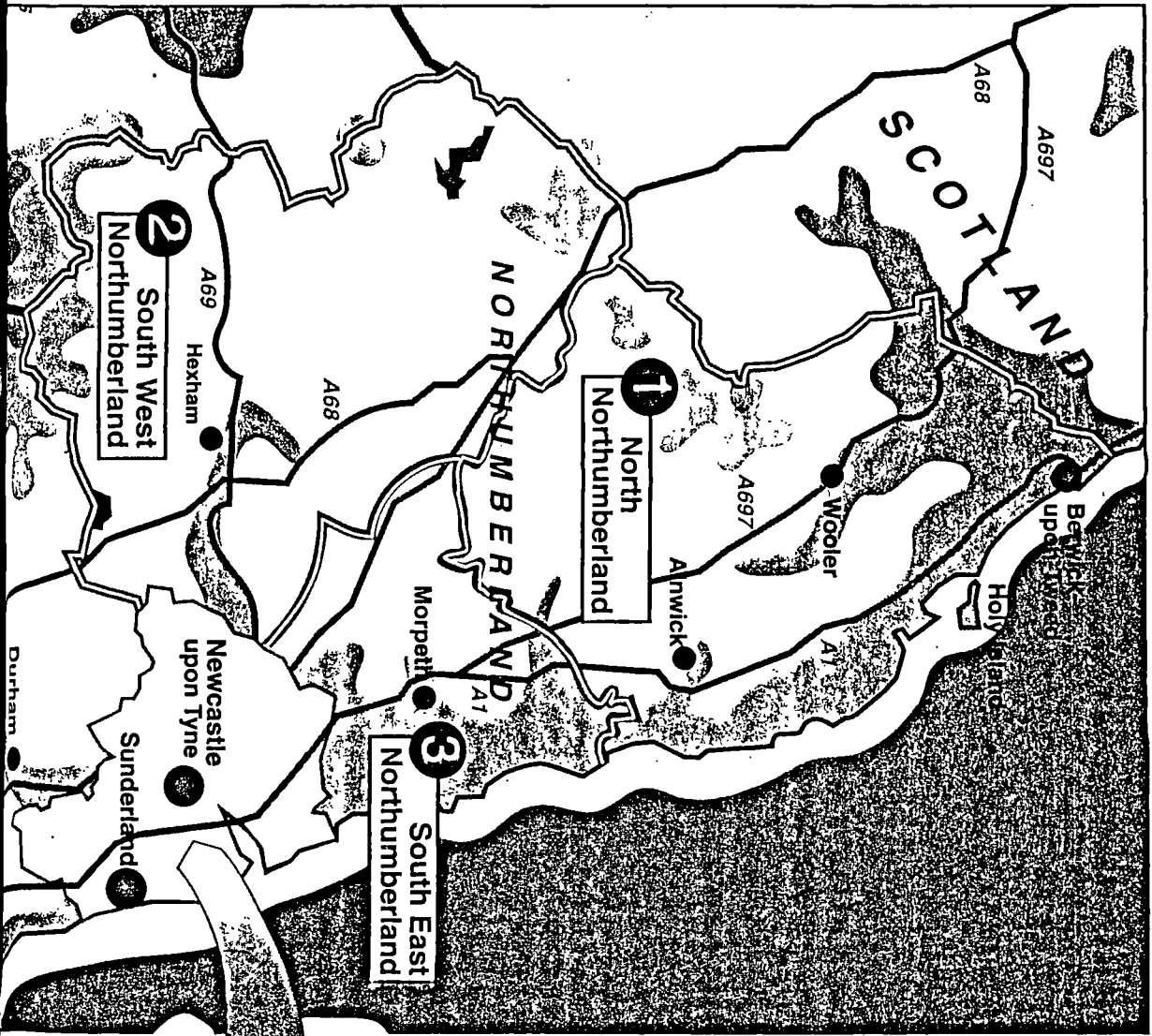
ANNEX 6

AREA COMMANDS WITHIN NORTHUMBRIA POLICE (POST 1994)

PROGRESS

THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME - 15 COMMAND UNITS

These are the 15 command units which will replace the present six divisions and 22 subdivisions of Northumbria Police. They have been given working titles but permanent names will only be decided upon following further consultation with you and with the public. So why not make *your* views known?



- 1 North Northumberland command unit retains the boundary of the existing Berwick/Amwick subdivision.
- 2 South West Northumberland command unit similarly retains the Hexham subdivisional boundary.
- 3 South East Northumberland command unit combines the existing Ashington, Blyth and Morpeth subdivisions.
- 4 Newcastle Central command unit is the existing City Centre subdivision, minus Shieldfield and Brandling Village and with the addition of the commercial area of City West up to Rye Hill.
- 5 Newcastle East command unit is the existing City East subdivision plus Shieldfield.
- 6 Newcastle West command unit incorporates all of Scotswood with the boundary redrawn along the A1 western by-pass.
- 7 Newcastle North command unit combines the remainder of Newburn subdivision with Gosforth subdivision and incorporates Brandling Village and Wideopen.
- 8 Tynemouth command unit combines Whitley Bay and North Shields subdivisions.
- 9 Wallsend command unit retains boundaries of the existing Wallsend/Forest Hall subdivision minus Wideopen.
- 10 Gateshead East command unit comprises Felling and Gateshead subdivisions, minus Birtley and Team Valley.
- 11 Gateshead West command unit incorporates Whickham plus Birtley and the Team Valley.
- 12 South Tyneside command unit covers the present South Tyneside division.
- 13 Sunderland City command unit combines the existing north and central subdivisions.
- 14 Sunderland West command unit retains the existing subdivisional boundary.
- 15 Washington command unit similarly retains the existing Washington and Houghton-le-Spring subdivisional boundary.



ANNEX 7

**DIVISIONAL STRUCTURE OF
NORTHUMBRIA POLICE (1989 - 1993)**

ANNEX 8

**EXTRACT FROM PROBATIONARY CONSTABLE'S
TRAINING MANUAL**

Domestic Disputes

Contents

Introduction

Domestic Disputes

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Disputes Generally

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DOMESTIC DISPUTES

In conjunction with these notes it is important that you are also aware of the contents of the following topics as they significantly complement this one.

- ◆ Non Verbal Communication
- ◆ Effective Communication
- ◆ Social Aspects of Policing
- ◆ Role of Police in Society
- ◆ Community and Race Relations
- ◆ Victim Support
- ◆ Discretion
- ◆ Stress
- ◆ Personal Safety.

INTRODUCTION

This point is frequently made that we are operational 24 hours a day 7 days a week continually facing a multitude of social problems of varying kinds.

Other agencies are also available to help e.g. Social Services, Citizens Advice. Think of who else may be able to assist?

Police officers are involved with the problems of the community wherever they work their beat, being sympathetic to those who have problems, being positive when action is needed and being present to reassure those who have a direct contact with them. You must recognise that this is part of your job and that it must be performed with the same professionalism that we expect when you arrest a thief.

The streets are not a battlefield with the enemy on every corner, they are populated by people who are prey to an ever-increasing number of social ills. The only agency available to assist 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, is the police. This 'social work' aspect of your role takes up the major part of your working day; it is equally as important as fighting crime and, if neglected, can result in the disaffection of whole communities.

Within this 'social work' aspect a surprising amount of police time is spent dealing with disputes. It is an area in which it is very easy for police officers to upset members of the public without intending to do so.

Disputes can generally be divided into two main areas - Domestic Disputes and Civil Disputes.

DOMESTIC DISPUTES

A domestic dispute is generally a breakdown in day-to day domestic family relationships, which have reached the stage where police attendance is required.

e.g. husband and wife disputes, neighbour disputes.

There is usually not criminal offence involved and although the dispute may be an isolated incident, it is common for some disputes to occur regularly over a long period.

THE MOST LIKELY OFFENCES TO ARISE FROM DISPUTES ARE ASSAULTS OR BREACHES OF THE PEACE, THOUGH OF COURSE THERE MAY BE OTHERS

CIVIL DISPUTES

We attach the name 'Civil Disputes' to incidents in which there is a disagreement between people over some matter and no crime is involved.

e.g. Dispute over lawful debt.

DISPUTES GENERALLY

All disputes arise because the parties have a standpoint that is incompatible with the others. Police are called because the parties have been unable to reconcile their differences for themselves.

It is very important to the persons concerned, or you would not have been called. They will usually be upset, nervous or angry.

Both parties will be sure they are in the right.

Each expects you to support THEIR view.

The fact that this is not so and that you have no immediate solution must come out tactfully.

The more excited they are the more necessary it is that you stay calm, controlled and patient. Show that you are interested and ready to help.

Police Objectives

The object of police attendance at the scene of a dispute is to restore the peace giving advice where, and when it is appropriate.

With experience you will be able to understand the viewpoint of BOTH parties, but sympathise with either in the presence of the other will look as if you are taking sides.

It helps to separate the two parties, in most cases. This can be achieved initially, by standing between the two parties. It may then be possible to move then into separate rooms in order to assist in resolving the dispute.

In most cases it is a good thing to advise each party out of the presence of the other.

Be careful, it can aggravate the situation if the officer seems to be helping one party to take action against the other.

Try to be firm, fair and friendly. Be aware of how events are unfolding.

It is essential that you make a pocket book entry of ALL domestic disputes attended. You may subsequently be required to give evidence in civil or domestic proceedings.

If a civil action does result, the Court will value your evidence as the independent observer. Make sure that your notes are full and accurate.



Revision

Before leaving your study of these notes you should be able to answer the following questions. Check your answers and revise as necessary.

What is your role in 'social policing'?

Why do the police become involved in disputes?

Because the parties involved in a dispute will usually be excited, how must you react?

If it is purely a civil matter and you have no power, what must you avoid?

Why must a full not book entry be made?