



**Gwent Police Headquarters  
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Llantarnam  
CWMBRÂN  
Torfaen  
NP44 3FW**

**VIA EMAIL**

**24<sup>th</sup> August 2022**

Dear Jenny Rathbone MS

**RE: Letter to DCC Amanda Blakeman: ESJ Committee inquiry into violence against women, domestic abuse, and sexual violence**

It was a pleasure to give evidence to the Committee on the 27<sup>th</sup> of June as part of your inquiry.

Please see below responses in relation to the questions raised in your letter dated 20<sup>th</sup> July 2022.

***We would like to know who receives this training and when they receive it, for example whether it is delivered as part of initial training or on a rolling basis?***

Officers receive training as part of their initial training before they are sent out on the front line. Further training is included on training days as part of a rolling programme especially when new information/legislation is received.

Forces are also undertaking the Live Fear Free training on Domestic Violence.

Officers who wish to specialise in CID (Criminal Investigation Department) will have additional training on all aspects of vulnerability on their training course.

SOLO (Sexual Offence Liaison Officers) also receives additional training to enable them to engage with victims of sexual offences and retrieve that initial forensic and first account evidence.

All four forces in Wales are part Operation Soteria - Operation Soteria was launched as a response to the government End-to-End Rape Review, and the Home Office pledge to increase the number of rape cases making it to court. The Operation Soteria Team will review working practices in forces and then provide recommendations for improvement.



***We would specifically like information on the training that frontline officers receive around:***

***language, particularly in relation to how police source interpretation for victims where English is not their first language***

All officers will receive training on the use of Language Line (which is the Telephone Interpreter Service) to assist in any language difficulties. With the rollout of mobile technology this can be done both at the location of the victim/offender and within the custody environment.

Forces will also utilise the services of BAWSO to facilitate communication if required.

***data, and data sharing, including how this is communicated to migrant victims of violence, domestic abuse, and sexual violence***

For those victims subject to Domestic Abuse/Sexual Violence and/or Modern-Day Slavery Offences a MARAC (Multi agency Risk Assessment Conference) will take place where information will be shared with partners to mitigate risk and put the relevant support mechanisms in place. At initial attendance a risk assessment is completed for domestic related incidents/offences, consent to share their information is obtained from the victim and this will be discussed at the time. For victims who are subject to Modern Day Slavery offences they will enter the National Referral Mechanism and again this will explain along with what information will be shared. If there are language barriers either Language Line or BAWSO are utilised to assist communication.

Officers receive training on all these aspects as detailed above at various points in their service

***cultural issues, such as forced marriage, and so-called honour-based violence***

Again, this is covered in officer's training throughout their service and further bespoke training by Karma Nirvana has been given to specialist officers to understand cultural issues and Honour based violence offences.

***referral, i.e., knowing when, how and where to refer once a case has been identified***

As above. In cases of Domestic Abuse and Domestic Sexual Violence the risk assessment will identify when, how, and where to refer. In cases of Modern-Day Slavery, officers receive bespoke training as detailed above on the National Referral Mechanism and Support services such as BAWSO.



During an engagement session we held in Swansea, we heard positive examples of how referrals to specialist services had worked. How are such examples of best practice shared to ensure a consistent approach across Wales?

For Modern Day Slavery Offences – Within the ROCU (Regional Organised Crime Unit) there is a co-ordinator. There are also several meetings chaired by either Police, CPS or Welsh Government to share learning.

There is a plethora of other forums where best practice can be shared inclusive of Safeguarding Boards, RASSO (Rape and Serious Sexual Offences) boards, formalised meeting with the Crown Prosecution Service regarding Domestic Abuse and Sexual Offences, VAWDASV Boards and also more locally in Police Forces Learning the Lessons Meetings.

Lastly, in relation to Organised Immigration Crime and repeat offenders trafficking migrant women, we do not currently have any cases in Wales and have not had any reported to the police over the last 12 months.

Kind Regards



**DCC Amanda Blakeman**