

Introduction

Section 1 briefly reviews the issues facing police forces, the background and recommendations of the first edition and the contents of the second.

Violence against women and children is a common problem in all regions of the Commonwealth. This violence takes various forms – physical, sexual and psychological. The resulting crimes, such as assault, wounding, rape, incest, homicide, are more likely to be inflicted by men known to women and children than by strangers. The most frequent offenders are men with whom women and children should have their most trusting relationships – members of their family, husbands or cohabitants, fathers, brothers, uncles, grandfathers, cousins – and other known adults, such as family friends and professional contacts. Commonly described as domestic or family violence and child abuse or protection, these terms can obscure the gendered nature of these crimes, their repetition, frequency and the seriousness of the offences.

The police have a crucial role to play in curtailing violence against women and children and ensuring justice is done, thus protecting the human rights of women and children. This role is both a result of state mandated responsibilities and it is facilitated by the organisational base of the police. The police are often the only 24-hour, seven days a week emergency service available to battered or otherwise abused women and children, other than emergency medical care. Unlike other social services, the police may be the only service that offers comprehensive geographical cover through its stations and telephone access. As a frontline service in the criminal justice system, policing can combine the application of the coercive power of the state with crime prevention strategies. These can include inter-agency liaison and coordination in the delivery of social and welfare services to victims of violence and sexual abuse.

Issues for policing

Research into the causes and consequences of this violence began in the 1960s, particularly in Australia, Britain, Canada, New Zealand and later on in other Commonwealth countries. Women and children's experiences were recorded and studies were made of the prevalence and incidence of violence and the response to these crimes of various agencies, including the criminal justice system. Finally, records were kept of occurrences of repeat victimisation and the effectiveness of interventions with men. The research reveals that violence against women and children is a major problem, and addresses important questions such as who is most at risk, the allocation of resources, and the effectiveness of intervention.

Although the role of the police is critical, research suggests that police response to domestic and other forms of violence against women and child sexual assault is often inadequate. The reasons for this are varied. Firstly, the police often under-estimate the incidence of these abuses. Secondly, police are often reluctant to intervene in what they regard as 'domestic or family problems'. This can be for various reasons: out of respect of the privacy of the family; because of a mistaken vision of marital rights; because they believe the victim has 'provoked' the violence; because they do not foresee a successful prosecution; and because the police tend to treat domestic violence differently from other crimes. The preference is to respond by mediation rather than by law enforcement. These ways of thinking are based on stereotypes, beliefs about gender roles and relations between men and women and they act to obscure a recognition of criminal behaviour and crime.

The management of domestic violence and child sexual assault is a difficult task. Its occurrence primarily within the family, the traditional status of men as 'heads of households', the social and, in some countries the legal, inferior position of women, creates ambiguities for policing. Police officers

are members of their societies and, like others, they experience the difficulties that arise from conflicts between the application of the rule of law and cultural support for the informal power held by men within the family group. These conflicts combine to under-estimate and trivialise the abuses, to remove them from the preview of the criminal justice system, and to relegate them to a ragbag of 'social problems'.

Ultimately, these ambiguities and difficulties will be removed only when all societies totally condemn spouse abuse, particularly the more prevalent abuse of wives and children. While this may appear to be an unachievable goal, improved policing is an important element. The determination shown by police forces to impartially enforce the law has been and remains crucial to saving lives and improving the quality of life of women and children. While progress in policing violence against women and children is uneven within and between countries of the Commonwealth, this past decade has seen major improvements. Policing interpersonal violence requires well-defined policies and policing objectives, the support of senior officers, sound management and adequate legal powers to provide the individual operational officer with clear protocols to govern his or her response in individual situations requiring police attendance or response.

However, police response will not be adequate in the absence of proper training. Although domestic assault, sexual abuse and other forms of violence against women and children make up a large proportion of police work and, even though the work can be unpleasant, difficult, sometimes dangerous and always stressful for officers, very few Commonwealth jurisdictions provide the training necessary to equip them for this task. Every officer requires training in the law and its application, Force policy, protocol and its application, and knowledge of the work of other agencies offering support to the victims. However, training also needs to include general information on violence against women and children, and to provide an opportunity for officers to air and review their values and beliefs.

First edition

The first edition of the *Guidelines for Police Training* was published by the Gender Affairs Department, previously known as Women and Development Programme (WDP) of the Commonwealth Secretariat. At their meetings in 1985 and 1987, Commonwealth Ministers for Women's Affairs identified violence against women as a priority area for action. In June 1988, they mandated the WDP to bring together senior police officers, mainly Commissioners of Police and Senior Assistant Commissioners, from 16 Commonwealth countries representing the four regions of the Commonwealth to address the question of police training on violence against women and child sexual abuse. The first edition of this manual compiled the deliberations of this Workshop in the hope that this would assist police forces throughout the Commonwealth with their training programmes and techniques.

The first edition presented the following six issues discussed at the meeting: police attitudes and sensitisation; perspectives on offender profiling; evidence and investigation techniques; medical and forensic evidence procedures; liaison with non-police organisations and referral agencies; and statistics, data collection and case management. The discussion of these issues resulted in specific recommendations that remain relevant today. The publication also provided training modules and background papers that gave examples that other jurisdictions could consider when preparing their own training packages. Country reports highlighting the commonality of problems, in the context of differing concerns and constraints, were also included.

Although progress has been made by Commonwealth countries, the recommendations of the first edition remain largely unfulfilled. These are reproduced here as a reminder of the point of departure 10 years ago and as a standard against which current aims and interventions can be measured.

Recommendations from the first edition: a continuing agenda for implementation

- The issues of domestic violence, sexual assaults on women and child sexual abuse should be acknowledged as serious problems that require priority attention.
- Sensitisation of police in dealing with these crimes is essential and must include an assessment of stereotypical attitudes to women and children, particularly with regard to sexual activity.
- The crucial role of the police in dealing with the crimes of domestic violence, sexual assaults on women and child sexual abuse must be acknowledged both by the police themselves and by society in general.
- The police must be provided with clear legal powers in order to provide them with an appropriate base for action. Countries need to reassess their laws in order to determine whether they provide the police with adequate powers.
- Laws in all their forms and legal procedures must be assessed and reviewed in order to achieve systemisation and coherence.
- The importance of inter-disciplinary cooperation in dealing with reports of violence in the family, sexual abuse of women and child sexual abuse must be emphasised. This approach can be achieved in a number of ways, appropriate to each country's socio-economic and cultural contexts. An inter-disciplinary approach could:
 - be established as committees functioning at varying levels
 - consist of committees typically comprising: senior police; welfare officers; psychiatrists; medically qualified persons; and legal individuals
 and aim to:
 - monitor the legal system
 - initiate reform where appropriate
 - suggest establishment of such committees at lower/higher levels.
- Clear lines of responsibility and accountability must exist within the structure of a multi-disciplinary approach.
- The mass media, in all its forms, must be fully utilised both in public education of the issues and in shaping social attitudes.
- The protection of women and children who are at risk from family violence and from sexual and other abuses must be ensured. This should include the provision of safety, security and basic human needs.
- The exchange of information on police methods and technological know-how should be encouraged between police stations within a country, and between police forces at Pan-Commonwealth level. Training exchange programmes within and between Commonwealth regions need to be promoted.
- A reporting system needs to be established which will enable health, welfare and education sectors to report on sexual abuses cases (especially child sexual abuse).
- All agencies should keep the victim as a primary focus of concern, especially bearing in mind the victim's physical and mental needs. A victim-centred approach:
 - will ensure that the victim's privacy is maintained
 - might consider in-camera trials in order to minimise trauma to victims during court trials
 - will ensure that the press is made accountable
 - will ensure the protection of and maximum security for victims from any confrontation with offenders, be it at court or at an identification parade.
- Public education is an integral part of any strategy to confront violence against women and child sexual abuse. It must be promoted in all possible ways. Public education is critical to close the gap between legal provision and practice.

- It is important that the police be involved in the promotion of public education programmes. This involvement could take the form of:
 - talks to interest groups at various levels
 - talks to schools and other educational institutions
 - inter-disciplinary seminars and colloquia.

Second edition

This new, second edition of *Guidelines for Police Training* revises and extends the discussion of the six previously identified issues. It includes two new sections – one focuses on gender, human rights and the law, the other on crime prevention approaches to repeated victimisation. It also includes a new overview paper on violence against women and child sexual exploitation and abuse. As with the first edition, this second edition does not claim to be exhaustive and is to be viewed in the context of each particular jurisdiction.

Commonwealth jurisdictions contributed training modules for the second edition from: Australia, Canada, Cyprus, Dominica, India, Malta, Mauritius, New Zealand, Singapore, South Africa, Trinidad and Tobago and Britain. Their examples illustrate the content, issues and factors included in police training on violence against women and children. They also illustrate training at different levels and for different groups of officers using a range of teaching strategies. In general, training on violence to women and children includes:

- information designed to convey correct knowledge on human rights and to sensitise and alter police attitudes to women victimised by violence, eg, to challenge victim-blaming (unfortunately, the same attention is yet to be given to altering attitudes and increasing understanding of the violence involved for many girl child victims, for example, under-age prostitution, genital mutilation, under-age marriage and sexual relations)
- the relevant criminal and civil laws, and their inter-relationship in achieving prosecution, crime prevention strategies and the safety of victims
- the role and powers of the police in general and more specifically in relation to crime that challenges the power of the male head of household over women and children, for example, the right of entry by police.
- the actions officers should take at the scene of the incident, during investigation, after arrest, with court appearances, and recording practices
- the role of other agencies, multi-agency or inter-agency approaches and what this means for police work
- these inputs can use a variety of teaching strategies, written, visual material (videos, overhead projection, cartoons), and follow-up activities such as, questions on the text and presentations, the use of teaching objectives, and further reading.

Generalised training and specialist training occurs in many jurisdictions as officers have differing responsibilities. The amount of direct training officers receive varies between jurisdictions, but at most officers are given limited initial training, which is followed up after a year or so. Further training is offered to specialised officers, to those in Criminal Investigation Departments, to specialised units responding to crimes against women and children, to women officers, and by rank, ie, sergeants, senior officers, and through inter-agency training.

The examples from Britain are specific modules for officers with one year's police experience in child protection, rape and other sexual offences. The example from Malta illustrates the early stages of training and the resulting development of guidelines. The example from India is of training on gender relations, the law, skills and support services in relation to violence against women.

The South African example draws attention to the human rights of vulnerable persons and illustrates new methods to convey messages through an information workbook with a colour photo story. Another innovation is training in inter-agency groups. This training can be restricted to criminal justice system personnel or extended to include social and welfare agency professionals, both statutory and voluntary. An example of inter-agency training on violence against women and children is provided by Canada. The New Zealand example provides the outline of the family violence policy and police training.

Section 12 includes five country reports – from South Africa, New Zealand, Singapore, Canada and Australia – which illustrate some of the different approaches currently being adopted in the Commonwealth. Different strategies are either to train both men and women officers to respond to the full range of offences against women and children or else to train only women officers to do so. The training and setting up of domestic and family violence units can be a response to policy in which the aim is to respond to family members and strangers in the same way or, alternatively, in different ways, for example, as crime or as a combination of crime, mediation and reconciliation. Whatever the approach, the focus is on responding to violence to women and children in the household or family as crime.

Some jurisdictions are establishing national crime prevention strategies in which violence is a violation of the human rights of women and children. The South African country report provides an example of this type of initiative. The example from New Zealand illustrates family violence issues and action plans associated with domestic violence legislation with simultaneous attention to criminal investigation and the use of protection orders for victim protection. Singapore provides an example of sexual offences training for women officers in investigative techniques and the rape trauma syndrome, while the Canadian report describes both the amount of time devoted to training and the integration of training across the criminal justice system. The Australian National Committee on Violence Against Women has produced an overview of police initiated training and university education for police officers. These examples all illustrate important developments in policy as well as training for operational policing over the past decade. In particular there is a growing focus on:

- the achievement of women's human rights through the curtailment of gender specific violence to the girl child and adult women
- a more integrated approach to work with other agencies in the criminal justice system and with social and welfare agencies, including the voluntary sector (NGOs)
- the relationship between the criminal and civil law in providing protection to women and children
- the development of specific legislation on domestic violence and multi-agency action plans
- the adoption of crime prevention strategies as well as improvements in crime detection and investigation of domestic based crime.