Protecting vulnerable people

IOPC Director General Michael Lockwood introduces the new look magazine

Outcomes for officers – should we include them in this magazine?

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www.policeconduct.gov.uk/learning-the-lessons

ASK YOURSELF:
Could it happen here?

Improving policing policy and practice
Welcome to the latest edition of Learning the Lessons, and my first as Director General of the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC). The Independent Police Complaints Commission became the IOPC on 8 January 2018 and I started on the same date. Since starting, I have been struck by the commitment across the policing landscape to embed a positive learning culture, to ensure that best practice can be followed, and that mistakes, where they do occur, are learnt from.

I have had discussions with all the organisations that contribute to this publication, and we all have a shared understanding of the importance of learning, and are keen to drive this further forward in the years to come.

This edition marks the start of a new magazine format. We hope that this new look, developed in response to feedback from readers, is more user friendly and allows you to dip in more easily to the areas where you may have a particular interest.

This issue includes a number of articles that relate to work undertaken by the IOPC and the College of Policing. In future issues we hope to build on this by incorporating user stories showing how people use the magazine to inspire others to think about how they can make use of it in their work.

As with previous editions, we are running a feedback survey, and would welcome your views on the new look, and your suggestions for topics you’d like to see covered in future.

I hope that you find this issue useful.

Michael Lockwood

Michael Lockwood

Director General

of the IOPC
The past few years have seen a range of laws introduced to address offending behaviour that has a serious effect on victims and can lead to serious harm and homicide. This includes coercive and controlling behaviour, stalking, and child sexual exploitation.

Police have been criticised in the media and in various HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspections. This is for failing to make use of these laws, particularly where pre-charge orders have been introduced to prevent harm.

Authorised Professional Practice for domestic abuse provides useful guidance on evidencing coercive controlling behaviour. There is a range of training materials on the Managed Learning Environment platform to address coercive control. The College change programme, Domestic Abuse Matters, is having a significant impact in this area with forces that have delivered the training.

More recently, the College has been working closely with the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and specialist sector services to address stalking. A revised National Police Chiefs’ Council (NPCC) and CPS protocol for the investigation of stalking and harassment, together with a checklist for evidence gathering, will shortly be published.

The College is developing advice to help officers differentiate between harassment and stalking and provide knowledge on specific activities for keeping victims safe both online and offline.

The College has been piloting, and is currently rolling out vulnerability training to 10,000 officers. This training considers the experiences of victims and helps officers to recognise and respond to vulnerable people. It encourages officers to:

- look beyond the obvious when dealing with vulnerability
- respond appropriately to safeguarding
- provide support and take steps to manage risks

The learning is delivered through case studies that include child sexual exploitation, radicalisation and modern slavery. This training will help officers to understand what early help is available through partner agencies to support the vulnerable and to prevent further harm to them. The aim is to reduce the demand on the service and keep people safe. This training will be available to all Home Office forces after March 2018.

Read more about the training on page six.
Learning the Lessons

The magazine is used by a wide range of people working in, or with an interest in, policing. They include:

- chief officers and senior police leaders
- force learning and development leads and trainers
- force subject matter experts and leads
- frontline police officers and police staff
- new recruits
- policy makers and managers
- heads of professional standards departments
- police and crime commissioners
- community and voluntary sector groups
- independent custody visitors
- independent advisory groups
- academics

WHO IS THIS MAGAZINE FOR?
A woman reported her ex-partner for a breach of his restraining order when he turned up at her property. She said he had also been messaging her repeatedly on social media.

A marker against the woman’s address noted that she was a high-risk victim of domestic abuse and that all calls should be treated as urgent. This call was graded as requiring a response within one hour.

A risk assessment by the specialist domestic abuse team of the force assessed the risk as medium, and found six previous incidents. The last was four months previously. The most recent incident was referred to a multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC), which graded the case as high risk. The risk assessment noted that the suspect’s last known address was in the jurisdiction of another force.

The incident was handled by two dispatchers over a ten-hour period. No units were dispatched to the incident during this time because there was a lack of resources. Neither dispatcher raised this with their supervisor.

The following day at around 2pm, two officers went to the woman’s address. One of the officers took a statement from her. In the statement she described her ex-partner’s visit to her address and the messages she received on social media. The other officer carried out a risk assessment. The suspect’s visit to the address was not noted on the risk assessment.

The risk assessment and statement were given to a specialist domestic abuse officer who approved the risk assessment as medium. This assessment downgraded the MARAC risk assessment, and should have been authorised by a supervisor. The officer who carried out the risk assessment was unaware that the specialist officer would not read the witness statement.

The following day, the crime file and the arrest pack were allocated to the neighbourhood crime team. The acting sergeant in the neighbourhood crime team accepted the crime file, but it was not allocated to an officer for another week. When asked about this later, the acting sergeant explained the shifts had been busier than usual and he had four rest days during that week.

About one week later, the acting sergeant allocated the case to an investigating officer. He handed the case over to another acting sergeant five days later, when he went on annual leave. None of these officers realised that the suspect lived in the area of another force.

The investigating officer had let the outgoing sergeant know that he was struggling with stress at work. The incoming sergeant did not know this. For almost three weeks from this point there was:

- no arrest attempt
- no contact with the victim
- no review

The incoming acting sergeant claimed he had not had training for the role, or on the reviews that should be carried out.

Three weeks after her original call, the woman reported more breaches of her ex-partner’s restraining order. This prompted the original acting sergeant and the investigating officer to look at the incident again. At this point they realised that the ex-partner lived in the area of another force. The other force was contacted and the ex-partner was arrested within three hours.

### Key questions for policy makers/managers

- How does your force ensure that officers deal with breaches of restraining orders at the earliest possible opportunity?
- What steps does your force take to safeguard officer welfare and wellbeing during investigations?
- Do you require dispatchers to notify their supervisor if no units have been deployed for a significant period of time?
- Does your force expect dispatchers to document reasons why they have been unable to deploy resources?
- How does your force expect officers to deal with conflicts in risk assessments by your force or other agencies?
- How do you ensure that staff in acting sergeant roles have sufficient knowledge and skills to perform the role properly?
- How does your force ensure that different individuals and teams involved in dealing with victims of domestic abuse understand each other’s roles and responsibilities?
- How does your force encourage officers to take responsibility for their own arrests and keep up-to-date with arrest attempts?
Key questions for police officers/staff

- Have you completed the College of Policing’s e-learning package on stalking and harassment?

**Action taken by these police forces**

- Processes in the control room have been changed to encourage staff to consider threat, harm, risk, investigation, vulnerability and engagement (THRIVE) as part of a risk assessment.
- All staff now attend a mandatory three-day course on public protection.
- A new policy on acting roles and temporary promotions has been implemented. A structured process is now in place to support acting and temporary ranks in the force. The process is used to authorise, approve, claim and monitor the deployment of acting and temporary ranks through line management and command teams.
- Safeguarding and investigation teams have been physically brought closer together to help them develop a better understanding of each other’s roles.

**Outcomes for the officers/staff involved**

- The investigating officer who made no attempt to arrest attended a misconduct meeting.
- The initial acting sergeant, the officer who carried out the risk assessment at the scene, and the dispatcher received management action.

Read more about the training at: [www.college.police.uk/News/College-news/Pages/police_transformation_fund.aspx](http://www.college.police.uk/News/College-news/Pages/police_transformation_fund.aspx)

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**College of Policing HOW DO YOU RESPOND TO VULNERABLE PEOPLE training package**

The College of Policing has developed a one-day vulnerability training package, supported by a self-assessment health check. The training package supports a culture change in forces, encouraging frontline officers and staff to look beyond the obvious and feel empowered to use their professional curiosity when dealing with those who are vulnerable.

The training focuses on early intervention by equipping frontline officers and staff to identify signs of vulnerability and take effective action at the earliest possible opportunity. The shift in demand towards safeguarding and public protective services has driven this essential piece of work. The College hopes it will lead to consistency across all forces. To promote consistency, the College has adopted the threat, harm, risk, investigation opportunities, vulnerability of the victim and engagement (THRIVE) definition of vulnerability, which is being shared with all forces that are taking this training.

Read full learning report
Around 11.30pm, police had a report of a man dragging a woman down the road and punching her in the face. Two officers were dispatched and arrived in minutes. The man was arrested and taken into custody at around 11.45pm.

One officer tried to complete a risk assessment with the woman, but was unable to do this because the woman was unco-operative. The officer offered to get medical assistance for the woman but she refused. The officer completed the risk assessment when she returned to the police station, and recorded the risk as ‘standard’ on the basis that the man was in custody. This decision was made without considering the domestic abuse, stalking and harassment and honour-based violence (DASH) risk assessment model. The risk assessment was then passed to the investigating officers.

The next day, an officer visited the woman’s home to speak with her. There was significant damage to the front of the property and the door was ajar. He searched the property and was unable to find the woman.

The investigating officer came on duty that day was given a verbal handover by the outgoing sergeant, but was not given information about actions carried out in the case.

The investigating officer carried out intelligence checks on the man and the woman. She found two incidents. There was a verbal argument two years ago and an allegation of assault with actual bodily harm made by the woman against the man a year before.

This officer interviewed the man. He claimed that the house he shared with the woman belonged to him. Police records established that the woman had been linked to the address for three years longer than the man.

The investigating officer and the acting detective sergeant visited the property. They found the front of the property significantly damaged. They stepped into the hallway and called the woman’s name, but did not enter any of the rooms.

The investigating officer later expressed concerns to the inspector that the period of time the suspect could be held in custody had almost run out.

The inspector advised the investigating officer to grant the suspect pre-charge bail, which would allow officers to continue with enquiries after the suspect was released. The suspect was pre-charge bailed to the address he shared with the woman. This was at around 10pm, and on condition that he did not contact the woman.

Five hours later, the suspect called 999 to report the woman missing. The call handler graded the call as an ‘extended response’. These calls should be responded to within 48 hours. When making this decision, the call handler did not see the address marker which stated all calls should be graded as ‘immediate response’.

The man called the police again 40 minutes later to say that he had found the woman dead in the bath. Police and ambulance staff went to the address immediately and the woman was pronounced dead.

A pathologist concluded that the woman’s death had been caused by drowning while under the influence of alcohol. He stated that there was, “no doubt an assault to the face has occurred”, but could not give a definite time when this had happened. The inquest found that the woman’s death was the result of unlawful killing.

### Key questions for policy makers/Managers

- What steps has your force taken to ensure officers consider domestic abuse, stalking and harassment and honour-based violence (DASH) risk assessment questions in relevant cases?
- What guidance does your force give to officers on setting pre-charge bail conditions to help safeguard vulnerable victims at risk of abuse?

### Key questions for police officers/staff

- What bail conditions would you have set in these circumstances to avoid bailing the man back to the house he shared with the woman?

### Action taken by this police force

- A professional development day was delivered to all frontline officers. The foundation course delivered to new police recruits was substantially modified. In particular, domestic abuse training at foundation level has been improved with an emphasis on the use of the DASH questions.
The local five-day course now includes new material on evidence-led prosecutions and extra management of victims for unsupported cases. The Community Safety Unit (CSU) course has become mandatory for all officers who work in CSU departments.

Outcomes for the officers/staff involved

The officers who dealt with the initial report of alleged assault and were responsible for the initial risk assessment received management action.

The investigating officer, acting detective sergeant, custody sergeant and the inspector were all found to have a case to answer for misconduct. This was for their part in the missed opportunities to ensure appropriate safeguarding and risk assessment measures were taken.

The call handler was found to have a case to answer for misconduct for the failure to grade the 999 call appropriately after the suspect had been released on pre-charge bail.

Read full learning report

DEATHS DURING OR FOLLOWING POLICE CONTACT
Annual statistics for England and Wales 2016/17

In 2016/17, the IPCC (which is now the IOPC) investigated 21 domestic-related deaths. These were cases where the police were either responding to domestic incidents, or where the circumstances of the contact involved a history of domestic violence, or threats made against the deceased and/or family members.

In 13 instances, the classification of death was an alleged murder – 11 of these were women.

6 deaths were apparently self-inflicted.

1 classification is not currently known.

There were three incidents that each resulted in two deaths. In all these cases, a person was apparently murdered and the suspected perpetrator then died by a self-inflicted act.

The most common age groups were 21 to 30, 31 to 40 and 41 to 50 – each age group had six people. Eighteen people were aged between 21 and 50. The average age was 34.

18 & 3

You can view the full report on the IOPC website: www.policeconduct.gov.uk/research-and-learning/statistics/annual-deaths-during-or-following-police-contact-statistics
GOOD PRACTICE: evidence-led prosecutions

The officer in charge successfully presented a well-argued case that led to the authorisation of a charge for coercive and controlling behaviour.

Sharon Stratton is a former detective with the Metropolitan Police Service. She now works as the Policing Standards Manager for vulnerability and public protection in the Crime and Criminal Justice Faculty at the College of Policing. Sharon makes sure that the College provides training, advice and guidance. She also shares best practice and evaluated initiatives on domestic abuse, stalking and harassment, child abuse and exploitation, and modern slavery.

Man arrested for coercive and controlling behaviour

Steven Saunders manipulated and controlled his pregnant partner, removing her from the safety of her supported living accommodation and making her live with him on the streets. He spent her benefits, held her bank card, and forced her to shoplift. He also sold her mobile phone and made threats to kill himself if she left him.

Over a period of time, those in contact with the couple such as hospital staff, social workers, and police officers built up a picture to show how Saunders was placing his partner and unborn child in grave danger.

The victim felt unable to support the police and did not feel that she could make a statement because she was fearful and worn down by the relationship.

Saunders was arrested for coercive and controlling behaviour and the officer in charge (OIC) and the CPS were at first reluctant to authorise a charge in the absence of a victim statement. The CPS suggested that this had not previously been done and was untested territory. The OIC successfully presented a well-argued case that led to the authorisation of a charge for coercive and controlling behaviour.

Saunders was remanded in custody and during his trial, evidence was given by police officers, hospital staff and social workers who had witnessed the controlling behaviour of Saunders first hand. They were also able to describe the change in the victim’s demeanour and behaviour when she was in the presence of Saunders.

Saunders was sentenced to 18-months imprisonment with an indefinite restraining order. The judge refused to amend the order to allow the man contact with his child, citing that the risk he posed was too high.
A woman called police because her ex-partner would not leave her flat and was refusing to return her keys. She had left the flat, was staying with a friend, and was too scared to return.

The woman said she wanted the police to remove the man and was scared about what he would do if he found out that she had called the police. At first, she did not want to provide details about herself, her ex-partner, or her address. Eventually, the woman agreed to provide her ex-partner’s name, on condition that officers did not attend the address straight away.

After carrying out background checks, another call handler called the woman back and told her that the case would be dealt with as a domestic incident. They reached an agreement that officers would not be sent to the address if the woman spoke to officers at the police station the following day.

The next day, the woman went to the police station and explained that a few days earlier, the man had come into her property, demanded money, threatened to stab her, and taken her keys. The woman also reported receiving threatening text messages from the man, but was unable to show these to the officers because her phone battery was dead. The officer who took this statement recorded the risk to the woman as ‘high’.

The man was arrested for public order, blackmail and theft offences, the latter of which was unrelated to this case. The detective sergeant (DS) who took responsibility for this case allocated it to an investigating officer (IO) to carry out further enquiries. When interviewed, the man denied having been in a relationship with the woman and taking her keys.

An officer looked at the text messages received by the woman, and decided that:

- they were not abusive
- contained no threats to kill
- were about meeting to talk

Another officer spoke with one of the woman’s neighbours who said that they had not heard any arguments between the woman and the man.

The DS decided that no further action could be taken against the man because the evidence did not meet the threshold for referral to the CPS. The man would therefore be released. The DS wrote in her note book: “No threats on phone, inconsistent account, states she just wanted suspect to leave and she wasn’t kept there”. She also noted: “False imprisonment,” and, “Keys theft?” which refer to the offences alleged. The DS subsequently asked for a domestic violence protection notice (DVPN) application to be made. A DVPN would place restrictions on the suspect to protect the woman and would need to be approved by a superintendent.

One of the officers completed a DVPN and attached it to Niche, the police records management system, before calling the superintendent responsible for authorising DVPNs.

The superintendent felt that it was not an appropriate time to consider a DVPN because there were still lines of enquiry to be pursued, and that bail conditions would be preferable. The superintendent stated that the IO seemed to agree with this and he expected the IO to get back in contact if anything changed. The application was never followed up and the DVPN application was, therefore, not made. The man was later released with no further action.

The IPCC (now the IOPC) investigation concluded that there was likely to have been miscommunication by the superintendent and the IO about the process for applying for a DVPN. In particular, there was a misunderstanding about when initial considerations for applying for a DVPN should be made. The IO appeared to have interpreted what the superintendent said as a firm rejection of the suitability of a DVPN, rather than as an instruction to come back later after more enquiries had been carried out.

Three days after the man was released, the woman left her home to go shopping. The man approached her in the street and physically assaulted her before taking her back to her property and continuing to assault her.

The woman convinced the man to let her leave the following day. She went to her friend who called the police. The man was arrested for false imprisonment and grievous bodily harm.
Key questions for policy makers/managers

- What steps has your force taken to ensure all officers understand the process for requesting Domestic Violence Protection Notices (DVPNs)?

- How does your force ensure that officers record relevant decision-making and rationales in investigation note books (INBs) or on Niche?

Action taken by this police force:

- Dip sampling has been done to monitor compliance with training, CPS guidance and Authorised Professional Practice (APP).

- The process for requesting DVPN was simplified and new guidance was issued to officers.

Outcomes for the officers/staff involved:

- The detective sergeant who made the decision to release the man without taking any further action received feedback.

Using Domestic Violence Protection Notices (DVPNs) and Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPOs) to make victims safer, Authorised Professional Practice (APP) September 2015

"Officers have a duty to take or initiate steps to make a victim as safe as possible. Officers should consider DVPN and DVPO at an early stage following a domestic abuse incident, as part of this duty."

A woman went to see her mental health care co-ordinator, after taking an overdose of paracetamol tablets, and asked to be sectioned. Staff refused to section her, instead inviting her to attend as a voluntary patient. Police were called after the woman ran away and claimed she was going to kill herself.

Some time later, the woman visited a local chemist and tried to buy ten packets of paracetamol and some aspirin. Staff in the shop refused to serve her, and when she started to remove the tablets from the packets, staff called the police.

On arrival at the shop, two officers spoke to the woman and asked if she had taken any tablets. She said she had not. When the woman told the officers that she had jumped off a cliff the day before, they decided to detain her under s.136 of the Mental Health Act.

The woman tried to run away, and one of the officers took her to the ground and restrained her. The officer patted down her trouser pockets, but did not find any medication. He said he did not do a full search because he was a man and a full search required the presence of a woman officer. The woman was then handcuffed and taken to a police car.

In the police car the woman told the officers that she had taken an overdose of paracetamol tablets. The officers told her that they didn’t believe her.

The officers transferred the woman to the mental health suite at a local hospital. On arriving, the woman told a member of staff that she had taken an overdose of paracetamol tablets. Staff responded by refusing to accept her until she was medically cleared.

The woman was then taken by police to the accident and emergency unit at a neighbouring hospital. When she arrived, she repeated that she had taken an overdose of paracetamol tablets.

 Officers did not fully search the woman at any point because there were no women officers present, and none were available to assist. The woman was admitted onto a ward and had her handcuffs removed. Officers remained with her in the room for the duration of her time there.

Later, two different officers arrived and were given a handover about the incident. During this time, the woman was brought some jelly to eat. One of the officers began taking pictures of the jelly to send to a colleague as part of a joke. The woman told him to stop, but he ignored her.

The same officer later recorded his voice on his phone, asking the woman to have a blood test and then began repeatedly playing the message to the woman after she had refused to have one. At first, the woman and the officers were all laughing at this. However, the officer began playing messages which included a derogatory word that rhymed with the woman’s surname. The officer said the woman had told him this was her nickname at school, and he did not mean it in a derogatory way.

Unsupervised, the woman changed into her pyjamas in the toilet. The message with the derogatory word was still playing at this time. The woman said she asked the officer to stop, but he refused. The woman told the officers she would take an overdose. They told her she could not do this as she did not have any tablets. The woman claimed both officers were playing on their phones and one was listening to music through his earphones.

The woman began taking the tablets from a pouch in her pyjama bottoms, by putting her head under the blanket in the bed. She took 120 tablets in one hour. After feeling confused, she told officers and staff that she had done this before falling unconscious. One of the officers arranged for women staff to carry out a full search of the woman, but no more medication was found.

The woman was monitored by hospital staff for the remainder of that day. At one point, they moved her to the intensive care unit and put her into a medically induced coma. She was searched again the following day before being discharged and taken back to the mental health unit.

Mental Health Act – Code of Practice – Chapter 16: local policies on use of police powers and places of safety

People taken to a health-based place of safety should be transported there by an ambulance or other health transport arranged by the police who should, in the case of section 136, also escort them in order to facilitate hand-over to healthcare staff.

Key questions for policy makers/managers

- Does your force have a mobile phone usage at work policy?
- How does your force ensure that conveyance of people detained under the Mental Health Act is done by ambulance wherever possible?

Key questions for police officers/staff:

- What would you have done if you found yourself in the same situation, and there were no female officers available, to carry out a more thorough search of the woman?
- What would you have done if the woman had told you that she had taken tablets?

Action taken by this police force:

- The force updated its s.136 policy to reflect the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE).

Outcomes for the officers/staff involved:

- The officer who made derogatory comments referencing the woman’s surname was found to have a case to answer for misconduct. This was for breaching the standards of professional behaviour. He received management action and re-training.

TALKING POINT: outcomes for officers

In August 2012, at the request of readers, we started including information on the outcomes for each of the officers and staff involved in the cases featured in the magazine.

We ran a survey. The majority of respondents were police officers. 90% of respondents told us that outcome information was useful and helped them to understand the consequences of actions taken and decisions made.

79% of respondents said outcome information should be in the magazine and not just in the learning reports that link to the case summaries.

When we added this information, we committed to seeking feedback from users on whether it should be included in the longer term – for some people its inclusion shifts the focus from learning to blame, but for others it is a key part of the picture, which they need to fully understand the impact of the case.

In the feedback survey we ask you a series of questions about outcome information. We welcome your feedback to help inform the content of future issues.

Read full learning report
Learning the Lessons

5 SEARCHING IN CUSTODY

Staff of a mental health in-patient ward called police to say that a woman was causing damage following her discharge. Officers went to the ward and arrested her. The woman struggled and was abusive. An officer used a leg sweep to take her to the ground to handcuff her.

The officers asked for the help of more officers to take the woman to custody. They carried out a search under section 32 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE), searching the pockets of her outer coat. One reason why they did not search her more thoroughly was that they were men, and were reluctant to search a woman. Section 32 of PACE does not explicitly prohibit searches of the opposite sex.

Two more officers arrived to help take the woman to custody and were told that she had not been searched properly.

During the booking in process, the woman told the custody sergeant that she had tried to cut herself two days earlier. She asked to use the toilet and the custody sergeant asked the escorting female officer to quickly search her, and gave the officer a metal detector wand.

The officer interpreted a quick search to mean that she could allow the woman to go to the toilet, after she had been searched with the metal detector. The officer asked the woman if she had anything in her pockets. She did not search the pockets on the cardigan, and only briefly lifted the bottom of the woman’s cardigan and inspected the collar of her shirt. She also used the metal detector to search her.

The woman went into the toilet. The officer left the toilet door ajar and remained outside. The woman came out after about a minute. The officer noted that the woman was wearing her trousers and socks differently and asked her to remove her socks.

As booking in continued, the woman disclosed that she felt suicidal. She asked to see her social worker. She saw the healthcare professional (HCP) approximately an hour and a half later. The HCP assessed her as at medium risk.

After speaking to the HCP, the custody sergeant decided that the woman should wear anti-tear clothing and be placed on 30-minute observational visits. The custody sergeant spoke to colleagues who said the woman had become distressed by the suggestion to put on anti-tear clothing because of fears about revealing scars of previous self-harm, and that she had behaved properly when last in custody.

On this basis, the custody sergeant allowed the woman to remain in her own clothing.

Officers continued to check on the woman. During a series of checks, officers found the woman distressed and crying. She started to hit herself. The custody sergeant decided to put her in anti-tear clothing.

When he began to clear the cell, she became erratic. While restrained on the floor of the cell, she used a razor blade to injure her neck. The officer did not know this.

When officers noticed the blood, they called for medical assistance from the HCP, and an ambulance.

In addition to the razor blade, a shard of glass was later also found in the woman’s cardigan and the woman told officers that she had taken the razor blade from the hospital before she was detained. These were not detected when she was searched.

Key questions for policy makers/managers:

- Has your force explored the extent to which male officers can be reluctant to search female detainees, and how this affects operations and resources?
- Does your force provide male officers with specific guidance or training on searching female detainees?
- How does your force make sure information is passed accurately from arresting officers to escorting officers, and then on to custody staff?

Key questions for police officers/staff:

- When someone is anxious about removing clothes to put on anti-tear clothing, what action do you take?

Action taken by this police force:

- Information was sent to all local policing units to highlight the handover procedure and to make sure officers comply with it.
- The force training is to reiterate that male officers can search women detainees. However,
they should make sure that, where possible, two officers are present during the search, and that they know that best practice is for women officers to search women detainees.

Outcomes for the officers/staff involved:

- The officer who failed to search the woman to a satisfactory standard in custody received management action for misconduct.

> Read full learning report

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**Learning the Lessons**

**SOCIETY FOR EVIDENCE-BASED POLICING CONFERENCE**

Evidence-based champions from forces around the country heard the latest thinking on body-worn video, Taser, behavioural science and the influence of the digital revolution at the Society for Evidence-Based Policing (SEBP) Conference in March.

The conference was hosted by The Open University’s Centre for Policing Research in Milton Keynes. SEBP members are police officers, police staff, and research professionals who want to make evidence-based research part of everyday policing.

▲ IOPC’s Connor Naismith meeting delegates.

▲ Delegates could join our mailing list at the IOPC stand.

▲ Some of the publications from the conference.
Reflections on issue 31
December 2017

These lessons are often learnt at high cost. I think there is an ethical and moral obligation for police leaders to ensure their teams are aware of the bulletin, have access to it and are familiar with the issues presented. If we don’t acknowledge and learn from our mistakes we will lose the confidence of those we serve. I think the distribution and accessibility is about right, but I’m not sure the service as a whole values the bulletin as it should. This necessitates a degree of cultural change.

Local area commander

Forces should ensure that the bulletin reaches all operational officers, particularly young in service officers. It would help them to consider scenarios they have yet to encounter.

Custody sergeant

96% of respondents told us that the key questions helped them to identify key learning in the cases featured.

99% of respondents told us the case summaries are clear and easy to understand.

90% of respondents told us that case studies play an active role in looking at how their organisations take forward the learning that the bulletin contains.

94% of respondents told us the case summaries contained enough detail to help them understand what happened.

Contacting us
Please email learning@policeconduct.gov.uk with any queries or to join our mailing list.