

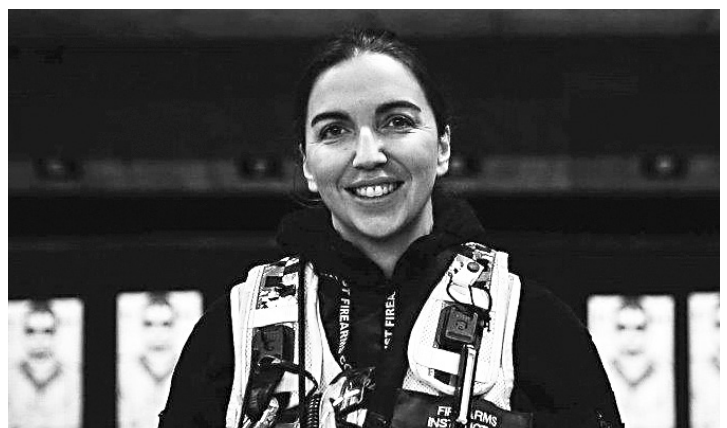
In support of



HeForShe

UN Women Solidarity Movement
for Gender Equality

www.heforeshe.org



Gender Equality in UK Policing



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ANNUAL
REPORT
2020

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This report brings together nationally reported data displaying the gender split at senior ranks within the police service together with sharing best practice across police forces in the UK

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Foreword Chief Constable of North Wales

Carl Foulkes

“ This year’s annual report focuses on the ongoing work in our police forces as we strive towards a goal of gender equality across our workforce ”



I have had the great honour of becoming the HeForShe Policing UK lead following on from the great work started by Chief Constable Giles York. It felt absolutely right that the incredibly important work that HeForShe has been undertaking should, moving forward, sit within the National Police Chief’s Council Gender Portfolio.

HeForShe is an inclusive worldwide movement that focuses on the needs of people across the gender spectrum. It seeks to create gender equality and equity throughout society so for policing that is both within the workplace and within our policing response.

The global pandemic has highlighted many issues experienced by police officers and staff and it is imperative that as a police service we learn from and embrace the opportunities that have emerged over the last period so that we can use them to make a positive difference in the area of gender equality. This year’s annual report focuses on the ongoing work in our police forces as we strive towards a goal of gender equality across our workforce. The report also includes details of some of the supportive and innovative work being undertaken by police forces to enable and support our staff

during the pandemic. This will better aid the people already vulnerable to crime in our communities who may be more at risk due to the impact of COVID-19.

This report is the only place that brings together nationally reported data displaying the gender split at senior ranks within the police service together with sharing best practice across police forces in the UK. It enables policing to hold ourselves accountable regarding the progression of women and provides a platform for forces to demonstrate the positive work they are doing to address gender equality issues, both within the workplace and the communities we serve.

I want to pay tribute to Giles for having the vision to take on this role and also to the outstanding work that Miles, Louise and Brooke from Sussex Police are undertaking as they drive this work forward. I look forward to the year ahead as the UN starts to evolve its approach in relation to HeForShe, which will enable us in British policing to influence nationally and internationally.

I hope that you find this report useful and I look forward to seeing the progress that we make over the coming twelve months.

Foreword

Global Head of HeForShe

Edward Wageni

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In spite of the hurdles faced since the emergency of COVID-19, Sussex Police was named as one of The Times Top 50 Employers for Women 2020

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Since the last annual report, our world as we know it has irreversibly changed and yet the need for a movement like HeForShe has never been more urgent. We are honoured to therefore continue our partnership with Sussex Police and UK police forces. I am delighted to welcome Chief Constable Carl Foulkes as the newest HeForShe Champion representing the UK police forces and look forward to accelerating the achievement of gender equality together.

Even in these trying times, it has been an impactful year for Sussex Police and the UK police forces. In spite of the hurdles faced since the emergence of COVID-19, Sussex Police was named as one of The Times Top 50 Employers for Women 2020. In addition, some of the more notable strides for me have been an increase in the number of women in senior leadership roles, increased flexibility for those experiencing maternity, parenthood, menopause or carer responsibility and the implementation of HeForShe workshops that directly engage male officers and staff in open discussions about gender.

Through working to uplift women and empower men to take action, it is clear that the collaboration between HeForShe and Sussex Police continues its successful path. In today's changing landscape, recognising gender issues is a top priority and the time to act is now.

It is only when work on diversity is done inside an institution dedicated to help communities across the world that police officers can concentrate on truly supporting the vulnerable people within society. The challenge to strive for parity for women is key to our journey ahead.

Executive Summary

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented police forces with an unprecedented challenge. In addition to the issues facing all organisations such as ensuring that they have a fit and healthy workforce, they have of course been at the forefront of enforcing lockdown rules while maintaining core policing functions to protect their communities from harm.

Coronavirus has been a global health emergency, and forces across the country declared a major incident as they tried to get to grips with what was a rapidly changing situation in the early spring. So what did this mean for gender equality? The tendency during 'emergency mode' is to put issues around diversity and inclusion lower on the list of priorities. But as we have navigated our way through, many of us realise that the pandemic may have had some significantly negative implications for our communities and for those who work for us. However, as you will see from this year's report, this has also been a time of incredible opportunity.

COVID-19 has compelled us all to look at issues differently and forces across the country have delivered change on a scale unimaginable twelve months ago. This is particularly the case in relation to how the police service protects those at risk from domestic abuse, or manage perpetrators. It is also evident that forces have embraced flexible and home working practices, possibly changing the whole culture and therefore the approach to flexible working forever.

This report is published at a time when police officer numbers are growing with the UK government committed to increasing the number of police officers by 20,000. It is vital that police leaders use this opportunity to ensure that they accelerate the growth in the proportion of women police officers



Superintendent Miles Ockwell
National lead for HeforShe

and all of the talent and strength they bring, while making sure that they have a proportionate representation of women in senior positions. The data within this report shows that the vast majority of forces still have a disproportionate over-representation of men in senior positions and they need to work harder to address this.

All of this has also, of course, been set to the backdrop of the Black Lives Matter movement. This raises the issues of racial inequality within the public discourse, how we police and how representative we are of the communities we serve. We cannot ignore that half of our BAME population are also women.

Our Report

Highlighting best practice across UK police forces to address gender inequality we are able to share learning and provide specific points of contact for people to progress ideas within their organisations. The majority of the work done this year has been undertaken within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic which is expected to provide ongoing challenges for policing in the coming year.

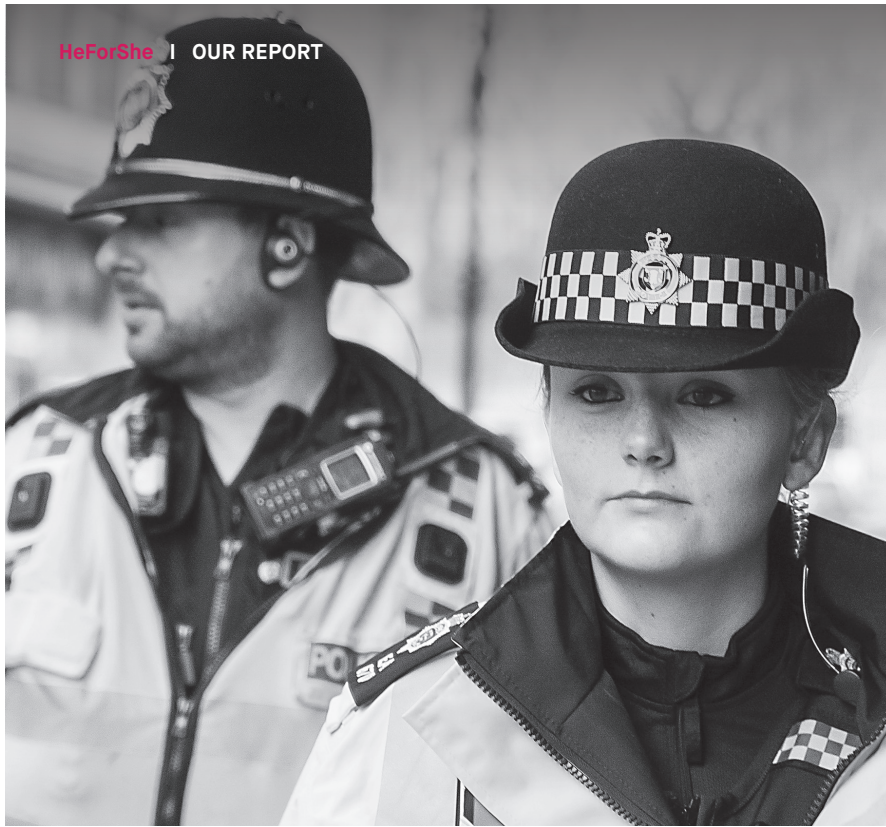
Adapting to cope with the impact of Covid on our workforce

Perhaps the most significant challenge faced by police forces as a result of the measures introduced to control the coronavirus was how they facilitated working from home whilst maintaining their operational capability. This has accelerated developments in flexible or agile working practices in a way unimaginable this time last year. Forces across the country have developed many initiatives and there appears to have been a significant change in attitudes towards people working from home. For example the UK's biggest police force, the Metropolitan Police, have developed a programme to support staff who were faced with childcare challenges during the lockdown and through their 'MetBaby' programme were able to provide additional support to officers and staff during this time. The Met quickly adapted to working within the virtual space as a means of targeting support for officers and staff who were out of the workplace on maternity leave. Derbyshire Constabulary also embraced the opportunity presented by the pandemic to deliver a wide-ranging flexible working approach which covered home working and technology while also being more innovative around the use of flexi-time and working hours to support their staff.

Technology has been a key enabler and many forces have used this to the benefit of those who have had to work at home,



because of health conditions or due to caring responsibilities. West Midlands Police has developed a 'Homeworking Taskforce' which included keeping people connected through a weekly podcast as well as utilising social media and virtual meeting technology to support the wellbeing of staff. Similarly, Avon and Somerset has set up a 'working from home virtual room' which enabled staff to support each other in a variety of ways, such as chatting about what is working for them and sharing hints and tips. Norfolk Constabulary developed a virtual platform, launching a 'lockdown life page' on their intranet, where staff could share photos and their experiences of lockdown. British Transport Police, City of London and Staffordshire have all also focused on enabling homeworking to better support their staff.



One of the biggest challenges faced by all employers during lockdown was the increased burden on working parents as a result of reduced childcare arrangements. As a result, many forces revisited their policies on supporting staff in this type of situation. Good practice includes the approach taken by South Yorkshire Police who extended pay to parents of shielding children for a full 12 weeks to match what was being offered to staff who were shielding themselves due to a health condition.

Rising to the challenge around domestic abuse during the pandemic

The impact of lockdown measures and subsequent increase in domestic abuse is considered to have been the most significant policing issue during the pandemic. As expected, police forces across the UK have been delivering new and innovative approaches in response, as they seek to maximise the safety of those vulnerable to abuse whilst also making it as easy as possible to contact the police to report abuse.

Gwent Police has introduced 'signs of life checks' for people they considered to be at increased risk during the lockdown, this proved to be highly effective and, in addition to proactively identifying people at risk, and implementing safety measures, they managed to have nine known domestic abuse perpetrators recalled to prison. Kent

Police has worked with partners to identify cohorts of people who were considered to be at increased risk and proactively worked to safeguard them. Lancashire developed 'Operation Provide' which focused on the proactive identification of, and interaction with, known victims of abuse whilst putting in additional safeguarding measures. Suffolk Police's proactive approach identified more than 3,000 people at risk of domestic abuse and a relentless focus on perpetrators resulted in a significant increase in the number of arrests made during the lockdown period. A number of forces, including Hertfordshire, have been provided with additional funding through their Police and Crime Commissioners to provide wraparound support to help sufferers of domestic abuse cope and recover.

Many forces have developed new ways of enabling domestic abuse sufferers to communicate with them during the pandemic. Warwickshire Police, for example, have developed a 'one voice, one message' approach which ensured that multiple agencies communicated via one route to prevent confusion and give consistency. West Yorkshire Police re-designed their online reporting tools to provide an easy reference point to support agencies for people reporting domestic abuse. Merseyside Police developed a multi-agency communication and media strategy using social media platforms to remind domestic abuse sufferers, in line with a national campaign, that 'you are not alone' whilst also producing a 'stay safe at home' leaflet which focused on domestic abuse and online safety. North Wales Police worked with Tesco to distribute 20,000 leaflets in support of domestic abuse sufferers via online shopping deliveries and click and collect. Many police forces ran similar campaigns, where material was distributed across supermarkets, food banks and other outlets.

Innovative approaches have been taken within command and control centres. For example, Dfyd-Powys Police developed a vulnerability desk within their command and control centre which ensured that calls relating to domestic abuse were dealt with by dedicated staff with specialist training who could then support officers assigned to responding by offering a risk-based plan. Leicestershire Police developed a communications plan to ensure that victims of abuse understood how to access support from partner agencies during the lockdown when they contacted police. In Greater Manchester, a significant amount of work was undertaken with partner agencies to produce and implement a comprehensive plan to tackle domestic abuse throughout the pandemic. This included addressing some of the challenges when progressing cases through the court system whilst lockdown measures were in place.

It was imperative that victims of domestic abuse knew the police were still working, still responding to calls for help, still arresting and still prosecuting offenders. Within a few days of lockdown Sussex Police had formed a new Local Resolution Team consisting of 33 dedicated specialist domestic abuse investigators to respond and resolve standard risk reports of domestic abuse. Officers were equipped with laptops and video calling capabilities so that a service could be offered remotely. This ensured that the spread of the virus was contained and safeguarding advice could still be given and evidence collected. A key challenge around domestic abuse during the pandemic has been on the Criminal Justice System and the impact that this has had in securing timely convictions. Police Scotland, recognising this, have adapted the way that they manage known perpetrators, seeking to reduce their risk of offending by working with partner agencies.

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It was imperative that victims of domestic abuse knew the police were still working, still responding to calls for help, still arresting and still prosecuting offenders”

One force which has focused on the domestic abuse risk to their own staff is Essex Police who have developed a domestic abuse workplace champion scheme which provides extra support and guidance to colleagues who are either victims of domestic abuse or are concerned that they are showing signs of becoming a perpetrator.

Delivering on HeforShe commitments

In parallel with coping with COVID-19 there is a significant amount of work going on across the country as police forces seek to meet their HeForShe commitments. One area of opportunity is the Government's commitment to recruiting 20,000 additional police officers and we know from Home





Office data that the proportion of women police officers is the highest that it has ever been. Northumbria Police are one of a number of forces who have specifically focused their recruitment campaign on increasing the number of women applying to join them by directly challenging gender stereotypes relating to policing. Meanwhile, Nottinghamshire Police were able to speed up their recruitment processes and have seen a significant increase in the number of women joining their force. Women represent 42% of all new recruits in Nottinghamshire Police this year.

South Wales Police has developed a network of HeForShe champions who provide coaching and mentoring to officers seeking promotion, as well as lateral development while also heavily focusing on engaging men to support staff across a range of issues which predominately affect women. Alongside their own male engagement work, Surrey Police and Sussex Police have developed a network of flexible working advocates who are able to deliver a strategic approach, enabling officers and staff at all levels of the organisation to be able to work flexibly whilst being operationally effective. This is considered to have had a positive impact on staff, enabling them to work in roles which had previously been considered to be unavailable due to personal circumstances.

In terms of progression, Wiltshire Police has undertaken work to identify barriers for women seeking promotion in response to particularly low numbers of women at Inspector level. This has resulted in a significant increase in the number of women taking promotion exams.

A number of forces are focused on empowering women to achieve their potential. Examples include an initiative by Kent Police which has maximised



technology to host a series of events which seek to instil confidence within female officers and staff. Likewise Warwickshire Police, through their Gender Equality Network have delivered events which included a leadership team-building day specifically aimed at empowering women. A similar approach has been developed in Durham Police force where their STAR Network has delivered a number of initiatives aimed at removing barriers faced specifically by women around promotion and development.

Firearms remains an area of specialism whereby women remain significantly under-represented within police forces across the UK. West Mercia Police has done a significant amount of work in this area over the last twelve months, completely overhauling their approach by offering flexible training courses and working hours for the first time as well as buying new equipment which addresses the different physical traits of men and women. This has resulted in a significant increase in the number of women authorised to carry a firearm within the force.

Health conditions specific to men and women are also a focus of gender equality networks within many forces and the menopause remains a key issue for our staff. North Yorkshire Police has been focused on improving understanding of the effects that the menopause has on the lives of many, particularly among supervisors through their 'NYP Change' programme.

Next Steps

It is hard to know what the next twelve months will look like for police forces as they continue to deliver a public service during a global pandemic. It is clear though that although COVID-19 has been a challenge, it has also presented opportunities. It is hoped that over the

next 12 months forces will use this report to engage with each other and to learn about the work that they are all developing to meet their HeforShe commitments. Specifically focus should be placed on:

- Use the rapid development of flexible working practices to embed long-standing changes which will benefit many police employees, particularly those with caring responsibilities.
- Share best practice with each other around the positive initiatives developed around domestic abuse and, ultimately protect more people from harm.
- Make sure that the increasing numbers of police officers in the coming years results in further increase in the proportion of female police officers so that we can be more representative of the communities we serve.
- Continue to increase the proportion of women in senior positions ultimately leading to balance at all ranks of the police service. ■

“ It is clear though that although COVID-19 has been a challenge, it has also presented opportunities

Police Staff

Police staff provide an essential part of UK policing and undertake a wide range of roles from contact handlers and analysts to jobs within HR and finance.

The Home Office produce national data on an annual basis which presents the gender breakdown of police staff. This data includes all police staff roles, Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs), designated officers, special constables and police support volunteers.

When compared to March 2019 this year's data shows a very similar picture for police staff with the gender imbalance in favour of women in police staff roles at a ratio of 62% to 38%.

PCSOs, designated officers and police support volunteers are almost gender

balanced. The data for special constables is still more consistent with that of police officers with men outnumbering women.

National figures do not reflect how the gender balance varies according to grades and pay scales for police staff roles. The staff gender data for Surrey Police and Sussex Police, where grade and pay scales are taken into consideration, shows that although there is an over-representation of women as police staff, the highest number of women are still in the lowest paid roles.

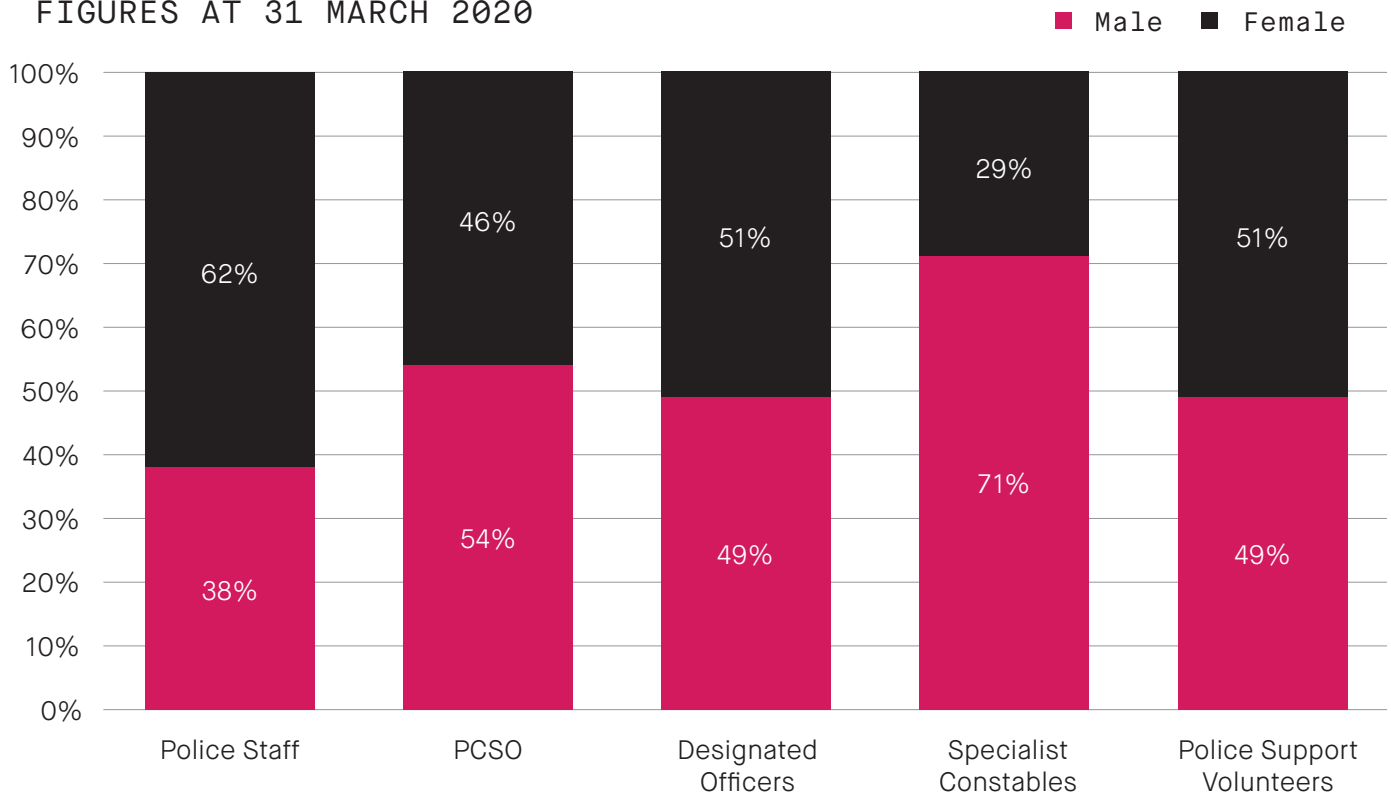
All forces are encouraged to review their police staff data, focusing on areas of gender imbalances and look to identify the reasons for this.

The under-representation of men within particular teams may also require action. ■

“...the highest number of women are still in the lowest paid roles”



FIGURES AT 31 MARCH 2020



Supporting Organisations

A number of s organisations support us in delivering policing and they are key to the development and progression of Police Officers and staff. They play a critical role in enabling police forces to deliver on their HeforShe commitments and we are delighted to share a summary of what some of those organisations have been doing over the last twelve months.

Police Superintendents' Association

The Police Superintendents Association (PSA) is committed to valuing difference in everything it does. A third of its National Executive Committee (NEC), the association's policy-making body, is female and its valuing difference drive remains core to the President's action plan for the next two years. It continues to promote equality and fairness through communications and its *'Together we're different, as one we serve'* video has now attracted more than 80,000 views.

Initiatives have therefore been developed to support gender equality in policing, which have been continued, and in some cases, enhanced, during the COVID-19 crisis.

The PSA's Coaching and Mentoring Scheme, launched in conjunction with the College of Policing in 2018, aims to provide bespoke, flexible support to anyone in policing, but is specifically targeted at under-represented groups. It has been clearly identified that females are under-represented at all ranks, so the scheme was designed to provide a new, informal way to support people with their professional development.

1047 leaders have now been trained in coaching skills at workshops hosted by the PSA and College of Policing, and to date, 61% of beneficiaries identify as female. Peer support is particularly important when facing the challenges of a national emergency, so PSA members have been

encouraged to continue reaching out to colleagues to offer support at this time.

The PSA President hosts a regular dial-in session on valuing difference, attended by colleagues from the Home Office and College of Policing, along with representatives from staff associations and under-represented groups. This has continued during the COVID-19 crisis, providing all attendees with the opportunity to share and learn evidence and insight. The PSA has long fought for flexibility and recognition for serving officers with caring responsibilities and has continually asked the Government to define the working hours of Superintendents, to enable members with a real need to go part time or work more flexibly, without getting penalised by their pension or pay. In April 2020, in the midst of the COVID-19 response, and after lengthy negotiations by the PSA, the Home Secretary agreed changes to regulations, providing flexible working opportunities for Superintendent ranks.

Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW)


Creating a welcoming and inclusive culture for both staff and representatives is a key priority for PFEW. It has been included in the overarching strategy as a specific aim and has been a consistent feature of conversation at the top level of the organisation. A communications plan has been put in place to cater for all stakeholders – particularly ensuring women in the organisation are properly considered and represented.

We have had challenges addressed to us, that issues specifically relating to women have not been as robustly addressed as other policing interests, however it is because we have improved on our strategic recognition of equality and inclusion as a whole that those challenges have been recognised and acted upon.

Our self-organised Women's Network was formed last year. It has elected members to drive and inform the direction and aims. It holds CPD events for women in the organisation, which are open to any gender to attend to ensure that the issues women face in the workplace are understood at all levels and allows for allies to champion the wider workforce.

We have continued to be pivotal in supporting and informing the conversation regarding menopause in the workplace. Our resources were drawn on to undertake research in this area and we continue to look for opportunities to support managers and women in the workplace.

COVID-19 has allowed us to see just how agile our workforce is able to be and where we can extend this to allow for more flexibility in the location of our staff and representatives. We have established regional training hubs to allow for those with caring responsibilities (still overwhelmingly women in the UK) the opportunity to attend without having to spend nights away from home. We have also allowed for carers to attend with women who have to attend training away from home and continue to prioritise applications from part-time officers. We have identified a need to refresh the College of Policing Flexible Working Guidance and look to incorporate any such good practice that comes from the stakeholder group subsequently formed. ■



“ 65% of forces did increase the number of women in senior roles within their forces over the last twelve months, while 13% remained at the same level ”

National Workforce Representation Data

	% CHANGE IN NUMBER OF WOMEN OFFICERS	% CHANGE IN NUMBER OF WOMEN IN SENIOR ROLES	% WOMEN OVERALL	% WOMEN IN SENIOR POSITIONS	% DIFFERENCE
Avon and Somerset	9.20%	18.75%	32.25%	28.60%	-3.64%
Bedfordshire	16.56%	25.00%	35.90%	34.88%	-1.02%
Cambridgeshire	9.53%	0.00%	30.85%	20.73%	-10.12%
Cheshire	6.81%	0.00%	33.92%	34.69%	0.77%
Cleveland	18.07%	20.00%	27.26%	23.08%	-4.18%
Cumbria	6.75%	12.50%	40.28%	28.13%	-12.15%
Derbyshire	10.56%	-7.69%	34.52%	25.00%	-9.52%
Devon and Cornwall	4.42%	-4.55%	31.01%	28.77%	-2.24%
Dorset	4.75%	11.11%	29.38%	20.75%	-8.63%
Durham	5.05%	-9.09%	31.28%	26.32%	-4.96%
Essex	12.57%	17.65%	32.59%	24.10%	-8.49%
Gloucestershire	11.80%	28.57%	32.72%	26.47%	-6.25%
Greater Manchester	9.31%	5.66%	31.43%	30.23%	-1.20%
Hampshire	-1.45%	4.55%	32.13%	27.71%	-4.42%
Hertfordshire	6.98%	-10.53%	33.16%	28.21%	-4.95%
Humberside	6.29%	0.00%	34.75%	24.00%	-10.75%
Kent	10.60%	14.29%	30.25%	26.97%	-3.28%
Lancashire	5.66%	0.00%	33.66%	29.94%	-3.72%
Leicestershire	14.61%	12.50%	30.35%	19.15%	-11.20%
Lincolnshire	-0.91%	16.67%	30.26%	18.92%	-11.34%
City of London	1.09%	-15.38%	22.56%	22.40%	-0.16%
Merseyside	9.48%	8.33%	30.15%	27.37%	-2.78%
Metropolitan Police	8.67%	3.05%	27.88%	22.65%	-5.23%

	% CHANGE IN NUMBER OF WOMEN OFFICERS	% CHANGE IN NUMBER OF WOMEN IN SENIOR ROLES	% WOMEN OVERALL	% WOMEN IN SENIOR POSTIONS	% DIFFERENCE
Norfolk	6.26%	8.33%	29.78%	30.75%	0.97%
Northamptonshire	3.57%	-12.50%	32.30%	17.50%	-14.80%
Northumbria	7.26%	11.54%	31.94%	35.80%	3.86%
North Yorkshire	9.70%	54.55%	34.80%	45.95%	11.15%
Nottinghamshire	9.44%	0.00%	31.25%	24.95%	-6.30%
South Yorkshire	7.66%	15.00%	33.43%	32.86%	-0.57%
Staffordshire	14.56%	-18.75%	29.64%	25.49%	-4.15%
Suffolk	7.18%	16.67%	31.52%	20.59%	-10.93%
Surrey	5.82%	-29.41%	33.50%	25.53%	-7.97%
Sussex	3.54%	9.52%	32.38%	35.94%	3.56%
Thames Valley	6.72%	3.45%	33.57%	26.55%	-7.02%
Warwickshire	34.60%	100.00%	33.28%	16.67%	-16.61%
West Mercia	11.56%	21.43%	31.64%	29.31%	-2.33%
West Midlands	1.92%	0.00%	31.59%	35.00%	3.41%
West Yorkshire	7.62%	-9.38%	34.85%	24.87%	-9.98%
Wiltshire	4.29%	33.33%	35.40%	18.27%	-17.13%
Dyfd Powys	7.54%	20.00%	33.91%	25.00%	-8.91%
Gwent	2.73%	20.00%	34.57%	25.53%	-9.04%
North Wales	8.13%	33.33%	36.80%	19.51%	-17.29%
South Wales	3.33%	14.29%	31.73%	24.74%	-6.99%
BTP	5.18%	-21.25%	20.88%	19.81%	-1.07%
Police Scotland	3.91%	11.46%	32.27%	25.48%	-6.79%
Police Northern Ireland	1.93%	2.38%	29.59%	25.00%	-4.59%

Note

Data for the 43 forces in England and Wales and the British Transport Police was obtained from the Home Office report Police Workforce, England and Wales 31 March 2020.

Police Scotland provided their own data as of 31 March 2020.

Police Service of Northern Ireland provided their own data as of 30 September 2020.

Best Practice

Warwickshire Police

Women of Warwickshire (WOW) was launched in October 2019 and focuses on supporting women in all roles across our policing family.

Gender equality should not just be a women's issue, it is a human rights issue. Men are now championing the cause and recognise the advantages to society as a whole. WOW wants to ensure that women and men feel empowered to discuss and address the important issues to them. WOW Chair, Superintendent Bastone, states "our goal is to support women of Warwickshire with a series of thought-provoking articles, news and opportunities for all to lean in and support each other to create a network where everyone benefits".

WOW held two women's leadership and team building days in February 2020,

with more than 70 female employees heading to the Swynnerton Army Training Camp in Staffordshire. Participants had a range of backgrounds from a 19 year old apprentice to a 66 year old Police Community Support Officer.

After being divided into teams, they were allocated army and police mentors who gave feedback and plenty of encouragement throughout the day. The confidence course involved navigating various obstacles in order to get to a 'casualty', medical supplies had to be collected on the way.

A practical planning exercise then asked the teams to calculate which route would allow them to achieve their aims as efficiently as possible. As part of a battlefield communications task, everyone was shown how to use a radio before a timed task saw the groups attempt to connect up radio equipment, decipher a Greek code and deliver a key message.

At lunchtime soldiers spent time with the teams whilst all enjoying a 24 hour ration pack!

Teams then took part in a laser firing range before ending the day with a 'rifle relay', where they had to race to take apart and reassemble a rifle in the fastest time.

Although there was plenty of competitive spirit on display, the activities were packed full of useful tips and techniques and aimed at developing leadership skills and team dynamics with each individual challenged to achieve their personal best. ■



West Mercia Police

West Mercia Police launched its commitment to HeForShe in October 2019, and despite the challenges of COVID-19 has continued to make strides forward. In late 2019, the chair of the Women's Network in West Mercia, Inspector Liz Warner, and the tactical lead for HeForShe, Chief Inspector Edward Hancox, briefed Chief Officers in the force and began to promote HeForShe to all ranks, roles and departments.

As a highlight of best practice, Inspector Darren Heyes, Chief Firearms Instructor, recognised the significant lack of women Authorised Firearms Officers (AFOs) across the force and commenced work to rectify this, taking best practice from other forces and the Women in Armed Policing Conference. This work has included offering flexible working hours and training for the first time, a female fitness instructor/trainer to help female applicants to the role and to further assist AFOs meet and maintain the required standards, including mentoring and nutritional advice.

The force has undertaken a review of all weapons and equipment leading to the purchase of new Gen 5 handguns which have a range of different grip sizes. The force no longer issues coveralls after identifying that female AFOs were concerned about using the toilet whilst wearing them and for the first time, female body armour is issued which is specifically designed to fit the female body comfortably.

Inspector Heyes has also commenced women-only AFO taster days across the force working with the Women's



Network to promote them and has also commenced a 'buddy scheme' to support and retain women AFOs once in their roles.

Following feedback from the Women's Network, advertisements for AFO roles and any promotional literature now feature women AFOs, not exclusively men and there are ambassadors within the department for each protected characteristic.

As a result of this work, there are now six women AFOs across the force and West Mercia Police hope to increase this number further as part of the force's newly launched People Strategy. ■



Kent Police

Kent Police is working extremely hard to enhance workforce representation across the organisation, from the recruitment process through to progression and retention for officers and staff. As well as a dedicated People Development team, a Positive Action Team was introduced in 2019 who have worked with HR, departments and support groups to develop a number of new measures. These measures encourage the progression and retention of under-represented groups, including officers and staff with protected characteristics. Recruitment initiatives include a Graduate Programme and Investigate First Programme which attracts a significant proportion of female recruits.

In July 2020 the proportion of female officer workforce had increased to 31.3%. The greatest increase is in the Chief Officer ranks which currently stands at 33.33%, followed by Chief Inspector rank, which has increased from 23.40% to 31.91%.

The force developed a succession planning process a number of years ago to ensure that progression and development for all officers and staff is considered regularly, in addition

to the PDR process. This enables timely support, development and encouragement. The force introduced a fast track Inspector to Superintendent scheme in 2019 where 50% of successful candidates were women. Other supportive activities and measures include:

- Development and introduction of a new programme of Positive Action activities to support retention and progression. The team and support groups have supported the recent promotion boards at all ranks, exam preparation and the succession planning process.
- Introduction of Positive Action leads at SLT level across the force.
- Review of mentorship programmes to ensure diversity amongst mentors.
- Regular leadership events – senior and junior – incorporating inspirational speakers to motivate and encourage.
- Positive Action Progression and Retention focus groups have taken place across the workforce to understand barriers, opportunities and ideas.
- Confidence workshops and locally led progression events,

The Positive Action Team and the Kent Network of Women have collaborated throughout the year to develop a series of events to inspire female development – under the message ‘Together we can – inspire, encourage, and support’. Despite the challenges of lockdown, the first event took place in May 2020, with over 60 participants dialling in to hear the inspirational career journeys of three female officers and staff. The feedback was excellent and three further events have since been held reaching over 200 staff during challenging times. ■



“The vast majority of forces have been making positive progress towards their HeForShe commitments”

UK Specific Points of Contact for HeForShe

Force	Name	Email
Surrey and Sussex Police	Brooke Jarvis	Brooke.jarvis@sussex.pnn.police.uk
Avon and Somerset	Sgt Paula Donnelly	Paula.Donnelly@avonandsomerset.pnn.police.uk
Bedfordshire Police	Supt Nick Lyall	Nicholas.lyall@bedfordshire.pnn.police.uk
Bedfordshire Police	D/Supt Julie Henderson	Julie.Henderson@bedfordshire.pnn.police.uk
Cambridgeshire	Paul Ormerod	Paul.Ormerod@cambs.pnn.police.uk
Cheshire	Katrina Igbinovia	Katrina.Igbinovia@cheshire.pnn.police.uk
City of London	Supt Alison Jackson	alison.jackson3@cleveland.pnn.police.uk
Cleveland	Emma Berry	emma.berry@cumbria.pnn.police.uk
Cumbria	Suzanne Sweeten	suzanne.sweeten@cumbria.pnn.police.uk
Derbyshire	Helen Ham	Helen.Ham.4865@Derbyshire.PNN.Police.UK
Dorset	Insp Andy Keel	Andy.Keel@dorset.pnn.police.uk
Devon and Cornwall	Positive Action Team	PositiveAction@devonandcornwall.pnn.police.uk
Durham	Sgt Barry Evans	Barry.Evans@durham.pnn.police.uk
Essex	Angela Mack	Angela.Mack@essex.pnn.police.uk
Gloucestershire	Insp Nick Cook	Nicholas.Cook@gloucestershire.pnn.police.uk
Greater Manchester	Chris Allsop	Chris.Allsop@gmp.pnn.police.uk
Hampshire	Pete Jones	peter.jones@hampshire.pnn.police.uk
Hertfordshire	Supt Geoff Camp	Geoffrey.CAMP@herts.pnn.police.uk
Humberside	Sarah Wilson	Sarah.Wilson@humberside.pnn.police.uk
Kent	Supt Tracey Quiller	tracey.quiller@kent.pnn.police.uk
Leicestershire	Jacqueline Newcombe	Jacqueline.Newcombe@leicestershire.pnn.police.uk
Lincolnshire	Mel Cowell	Melanie.Cowell@lincs.pnn.police.uk
Merseyside	Sue McTaggart	Susan.McTaggart@merseyside.police.uk
Metropolitan	DCI James Fox	James.T.Fox@met.pnn.police.uk
Northamptonshire	Sarah Johnson	Sarah.Johnson@northants.pnn.police.uk
Northumbria	Insp Andy Liddell	Andrew.Liddell.7009@northumbria.pnn.police.uk
Norfolk	DS Christopher Banks	Christopher.banks@norfolk.pnn.police.uk

Force	Name	Email
North Yorkshire	Supt Mark Khan	Mark.khan@northyorkshire.pnn.police.uk
Nottinghamshire	Claire Salter	claire.salter@nottinghamshire.pnn.police.uk
South Yorkshire	Insp Simon Mellors	Simon.Mellors@southyorks.pnn.police.uk
Suffolk	Veronica Egan	Veronica.EGAN@suffolk.police.uk
Staffordshire	Dionne Johnson	Dionne.Johnson@staffordshire.pnn.police.uk
Lancashire	Jonathan Clegg	Jonathan.Clegg@lancashire.pnn.police.
Thames Valley	Supt Joe Kidman	joe.kidman@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk
Warwickshire	T/CI Steve Beard	Steve.Beard@warwickshire.pnn.police.uk
West Mercia	CI Ed Hancox	edward.hancox@westmercia.pnn.police.uk
West Midlands	Insp Khizra Dhindsa	k.dhindsa@west-midlands.pnn.police.uk
West Yorkshire	ACC Tim Kingsman	timothy.kingsman@westyorkshire.pnn.police.uk
Wiltshire	DI Ben Huggins	Benjamin.Huggins@wiltshire.pnn.police.uk
Dyfed-Powys	DCS Steve Cockwell	steve.cockwell@dyfed-powys.pnn.police.uk
Gwent	Supt Nicholas McLain	nicholas.mclain@gwent.pnn.police.uk
North Wales	Gareth Evans	Gareth.Evans@nthwales.pnn.police.uk
South Wales	Supt Esyr Jones	Esyr.Jones@south-wales.pnn.police.uk
British Transport Police	Barry Boffy	Barry.Boffy@btp.pnn.police.uk
College of Policing	Supt Elliot Foskett	elliot.foskett@college.pnn.police.uk
Superintendents Association	C/Supt Ian Wylie	ian.wylie@policesupers.com
Police Federation	Belinda Goodwin	BGoodwin@polfed.org
Police Federation Northern Ireland	Liam Kelly	Secretary@policefedni.com
Police Scotland	ACC Mark Williams	colin.robson@scotland.pnn.police.uk
Police Service of Northern Ireland	David Johnston	DAVID.JOHNSTON@psni.pnn.police.uk
National Crime Agency	Russell Tipton	Russ.Tipton@nca.pnn.police.uk
Civil Nuclear Constabulary	T/Insp Stuart Rodgers	stuart.rodgers@cnc.pnn.police.uk
South East Regional Organised Crime	Katy Harris	katherine.harris@serocu.pnn.police.uk
Ministry of Defence	Christine Cameron	christine.cameron847@mod.gov.uk



“ The challenge to
strive for parity
for women is key to
our journey ahead ”

We commit to the HeForShe movement for gender equality.

COMMITMENT ONE

To engage with the workforce to discuss gender equality within the workplace to aspire to improve the gender imbalances at senior levels within policing.

COMMITMENT TWO

Continue to work to combat domestic abuse and sexual abuse in society to create communities free from such abuse.

COMMITMENT THREE

Support the annual reporting of gender equality information.

This report is inspired by the UN Women HeForShe Annual Impact Reports.

Brooke Jarvis

Programme Manager HeForShe
Surrey Police and Sussex Police

Mobile: +44 (0)7795 332269

Email: Brooke.Jarvis@sussex.pnn.police.uk