

The Op Leven Review: Overhauling the Parliamentary and Diplomatic Protection Command

The new mission of the Metropolitan Police is to bring More Trust, Less Crime, High Standards. Following high profile cases involving officers in the Parliamentary and Diplomatic Protection Command, we are taking comprehensive action to overhaul it. Officers' service to protect people and places remains vital. But it requires a complete reset in leadership, staffing, training, culture and standards. A comprehensive reform programme is underway. We are making rapid progress. We know there is more to do. New leadership, new people and better supervision to embed good behaviour and root out the bad will ensure the Command can earn the trust of those we serve.

After the arrest, charge and eventual conviction of Wayne Couzens and David Carrick, two serving officers in the specialist Parliamentary and Diplomatic Protection (PaDP) Command, in October 2021 the then Metropolitan Police Commissioner announced an internal review – the Leven Review – of culture, standards and supervision in PaDP. This was completed with the cooperation of colleagues in the command who wanted to see changes following the events of 2021. As outlined further below, this has also had significant external oversight by the Home Office, Mayor's Office and others to provide important independent scrutiny of this work.

We gave the core findings of the Review to Baroness Casey to inform her wider independent review into the standards of behaviour and internal culture of the Metropolitan Police Service, published in March 2023. Baroness Casey found in her Review, including through the voices of officers and staff who spoke to her, that some of the worst cultures, behaviours and practices could be found in armed policing, including PaDP. She recommended that the Commissioner introduce immediate changes. The Leven Review team undertook to publish the Review and to respond to Baroness Casey's call to action.

We are now publishing the Review findings and setting out the action we have taken, are taking, and will take to deliver a complete overhaul of the Command. That will ensure high standards for those in the Command and their leaders, continued service to protecting people and places, and more trust from those we serve. Our actions are reflected in the final Review document and summarised here.

A complete overhaul and absolute reset, with new leaders, people and stricter standards

PaDP provides policing and armed protection to Parliament, Downing Street and diplomatic embassies in London. As events have shown, most clearly in the 2017 Westminster terror attack, there is an essential requirement for armed guarding and a police presence around key sites in London. This is delivered by a command of almost 1,000 specialist armed and unarmed officers and staff. In a predominantly unarmed police service, it takes up to 18 months to train armed officers. The close protection of senior Ministers, the armed police response, and the public order and local policing response to incidents in and around Westminster requires close collaboration and this protective function is delivered safely by the Metropolitan Police 24/7 365 days a year.

But what is also vital is to ensure the Command's leadership, structures, supervision and training all deliver the highest standards for those who serve in it. We have started sweeping reforms to PaDP in a way that delivers on the priorities of security, the New Met for London principles, and meets Baroness Casey's call to action. We are clear that PaDP needs better leadership and supervision, vetting and scrutiny to bring meaningful change in culture and working practices, diversity is enhanced, high calibre people have confidence to work there, and we earn the public's trust.

Since the critical events of 2021, in the last two years we have brought in new people so that a third of the Command are new. By the end of 2025, over two thirds will be new. We have completely replaced PaDP's senior leadership. We have strengthened how we approach vetting, complaints and conduct. We have improved supervision and carried out checks on all PaDP officers. We have put in place an independent professional standards team. The changes we set out here will deliver the fundamental overhaul needed to address the issues identified in the Leven Review and the Casey Report, in the most ambitious reset possible while delivering the critical service of a 24/7 protective security command.

Our vision for change

By December 2024, PaDP will have been completely overhauled through a series of structural and cultural changes, with ongoing work to be delivered by the firearms programme running to March 2026. We are committing now that the new command will be:

- Made up of different people to those present in 2021: Since the events of 2021, we have brought in new people so that one third (34%) of people are new. We will be looking to continue this rate of turnover, accelerated by the policy of fixed terms (tenure), so that in the next two years, over two thirds (70%) of the Command will be new people.
- Closer oversight and supervision of officers with a ratio of 1 Sergeant to 6 PCs – who are actively leading, delivering 100% compliance on performance and career development plans.
- Better led, better trained and better equipped.
- An inclusive place where people are encouraged and supported to speak out as a matter of course and raise any issues without fear.
- A visibly diverse command with at least 20% female representation, and at least 20% Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic representation by March 2026.
- Able to demonstrate an exemplary level of professional standards.
- Recognised as having a community policing mind-set – both in terms of how current services are provided and through adding new ones.
- Showing significant improvements through quantitative and qualitative data including against prior staff surveys, with personnel reporting that they work in a safe, supportive environment where everyone is valued, heard and treated with respect.
- Collaborative, transparent and accountable – working well with an Independent Advisory Group and an Independent Advisory Panel to the Senior Leadership Team. Those independent advisors will be made up of partner organisations and community representatives to provide challenge and support.

Changes so far and more on their way

To date, we have:

- Uplifted leadership capacity and replaced the entirety of PaDP senior leadership with experienced, highly specialised officers in senior command. The new Commander has a background in local policing and brings significant experience to the role following leadership roles in the private sector.
- Improved supervision ratios by appointing 12 additional Sergeants and 5 Inspectors. One third of PaDP's supervisors are newly posted to the role having been recruited specifically with experience of addressing standards and performance.
- Since the events of 2021, brought in new people so that one third (34%) of people are new.
- Relentlessly focussed on professional standards to assure the public they can have confidence in us – reviewing previous misconduct cases and applying higher standards to current misconduct cases.
- Put in place an amalgamated professional standards team made up of other Met Operational Command Units so that professional standards issues are no longer investigated internally by a PaDP unit.
- Started work on the PaDP operating model looking at work patterns including overtime working and leave to improve resilience in the command with the result that more time is available for training and to attract a wider range of people to the command.
- Recruited more female officers into PaDP: 11% of personnel are female (a rise of 2% in the last 6 months) and 18% of personnel are from ethnic minority backgrounds (a rise of 1% in the last 12 months).
- Refurbished two bases and some workplace areas to meet significant concerns about the quality of the facilities officers were expected to use. The physical environment is now more suitable and comfortable for staff. Work is also underway in Parliament to accommodate the increased numbers of women in significantly better accommodation than has previously existed.

- Put in place new policies and governance, including new People and Equality Strategies, which clearly indicate the priorities for the command, the support and the standards.
- Ensured that teams are supported to feel free to speak up and challenge bad behaviour, testing this through listening groups, survey data and line management conversations.
- Regular listening circles are in place for most protected characteristics, which will bring personnel together in communities with a collective strength of voice to advocate for change. Almost all staff have a personal development plan in place enabling us to closely monitor performance and continually increase standards.

Next we will:

- Deliver the Met-wide firearms programme with key milestones from April 2024. It will bring positive change on training, role profiles, professional standards and culture as well as changing the operating model for all armed commands.
- Ensure every Sergeant attends the First Line Leaders Programme, with days dedicated to leadership training that includes learning how to develop an inclusive work culture and challenge discrimination and inappropriate behaviour. By December 2023, we will revise supervision ratios with an ambition of 1 supervisor to 6 officers/staff. By April 2024 we will deliver (direct from the Commander) a bespoke line manager input on supervision expectations, career development and coaching.
- Deliver our diversity aims including through the Women in Firearms Attachment programme, now operating across all armed commands. We are working towards a command with at least 20% female representation, and at least 20% Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic representation by March 2026.
- By December 2023, introduce restricted tenure i.e. the amount of time people can stay in posts, rotating out supervisors first, to ensure there is an injection of fresh and objective oversight and leadership. Officers with experience in local policing and accountability to diverse communities will be brought into PaDP.
- Continue programmes of work on staff engagement, career development, leadership development and overtime management.
- Model the services provided in the command on neighbourhood policing principles so we can be more directly responsive to communities and partners, who will see teams that are more accessible and engaged.
- Deliver professional development sessions to increase standards to every officer and staff member. Between now and April 2024 everyone will attend training sessions covering the principles of a New Met for London, how to increase standards and values and their role as active bystander if they see behaviour they are uncomfortable with.
- Reflect the change that will be achieved through a new identity for the Command to signal internally and externally the Command has been overhauled and is entering a new phase.

Setting high standards of behaviour and supporting strict vetting practices

In line with the New Met for London Plan, we are changing our culture and fixing our foundations. That includes the need in PaDP for proactive, continuous and thorough work on professional standards and vetting so that the Command is able to provide assurance that it is staffed by the right people. As with our wider work across the Met to improve standards, we are focused on removing those who should not be in the service, and ensuring the right culture to allow the highest professional and cultural standards to flourish so that officers and staff can be proud of their command's integrity and standing, and can earn the trust of the public.

Removing those who should not be in the service

- Now, in almost every gross misconduct case and some misconduct cases, authorisation for firearms and access to sensitive premises is revoked when an allegation is made.
- Police National Database checks have been carried out on all PaDP officers. The review of data to date has resulted in thirteen matters being looked at further. While no further action was needed in eleven cases, two are being followed up. Where no further action was needed this was for various reasons including that the officer was on the Database as a victim or witness.

- One member of PaDP is subject of an Operation Assure review, where changes may be needed to vetting status based on a matter of concern that has come to light.
- PaDP, alongside our Department of Professional Standards, is doing more to root out officers and staff who should not be in the command and in policing. Currently there are 49 cases ongoing (12 misconduct, 33 gross misconduct and 4 public complaints).
- 24 PaDP officers are subject to restrictions and since October 2021, 11 people have been suspended. Over 30 people have had firearms authorisation removed and 2 people have been removed from the command due to a loss of confidence.

Ensuring the right culture for the future

- Full complaints and conduct history is now interrogated at entry point into PaDP.
- The PaDP Professional Standards Unit makes clear to all new joiners what is expected of them.
- One to one support is offered to supervisors dealing with misconduct issues and PaDP holds supervisor training workshops.
- 95% of PaDP personnel have completed specialist Signa training which equips individuals with the confidence to actively challenge inappropriate behaviours including reporting sexual harassment. New joiners to the Command are given this training in their first week and all in the Command attend training days which have regular professional standards updates.
- Regular listening circles are held for officers and staff to share their experience and concerns in a safe space.
- The leadership team in PaDP spend at least 20% of their time with teams each week to hear views and take action.
- Almost all misconduct being reported in PaDP is coming from colleagues or supervisors with only a small minority that come from intelligence reports or other disclosures.

Scrutiny and oversight

We know that the public and those who PaDP protect are watching to see progress. Officers and staff in the Met want to see these improvements too so that we can deliver our mission to bring More Trust, Less Crime, and High Standards. There are a number of reporting mechanisms in place to provide assurance on our progress. These include a Home Office Ministerial Oversight Group (with a sub-group focussed on the Casey Review) and oversight by the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC), His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services and the Police Performance Oversight Group, plus consideration of these issues with partners in Parliament. City Hall's new London Policing Board will also provide scrutiny of the Metropolitan Police overall, including on culture and standards.

Robust re-examination of progress towards a command with a new ethos, where inappropriate behaviour is rooted out will be undertaken, with external leadership and involvement of the College of Policing, NPCC and subject matter experts on both armed policing and cultural change. This will be completed by December 2024. With the actions we have taken, are taking, and will be taking, we will see a Command that delivers its essential protective function while having overhauled its leadership, culture, standards, supervision, training – and in so doing, will earn the public's trust.