



Pictured, left to right, Chief Inspector David Brewster, Detective Sergeant Robert Richards, Inspector Stuart Kohring and Deputy Assistant Commissioner Laurence Taylor, who was chief lead for Op Hampshire.

Jul 21, 2021 11:20 BST

Met team helping assaulted officers wins national award

A team of Met Police officers who support colleagues who have been assaulted or abused while on duty has received a national award recognising their important work.

The Operation Hampshire team has helped thousands of police officers subjected to physical and hate abuse while trying to protect the public, since it was set up in 2016.

At least 25 officers a day on average are subject to abuse including being hit, spat at and stabbed. A quarter of these are verbally abused about their race, religion, gender and sexual orientation.

It's believed that the actual number of assaults on officers is far greater but the crime is underreported by officers, who mistakenly see it as "part of the Job". Since Operation Hampshire launched, reports of assaults against police have increased and it believed that this is in part because the team has raised awareness that the assaults and hate abuse are crimes and should be treated as such.

The Operation Hampshire team helps ensure that officers who do report assaults or hate abuse receive welfare support, and that the culprits are identified and prosecuted wherever possible.

On Monday 5 July, the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) presented the team with the Protecting the Workforce Award 2021, on behalf of national police wellbeing service Oscar Kilo.

The team's work was also recognised by Met Assistant Commissioner Louisa Rolfe, who on Friday, 9 July, awarded them an Assistant Commissioner's commendation for their work supporting officers and staff assaulted on duty.

Inspector Stuart Kohring, who leads the Met's Operation Hampshire team, was one of a number of officers who collected the Oscar Kilo award.

He said: "Every day police officers put on the uniform and put themselves in the line of fire to protect others yet they are attacked by some for doing so. Police officers are human beings with loved ones like anyone else, and like everyone, they deserve to be safe and supported. The Operation Hampshire team is honoured to play a part in helping its brave colleagues get the support and justice they deserve, like they do for others."

Assaults on police officers are treated extremely seriously by police and the Crown Prosecution Service. In the 12 months ending 30 June 2021, there were 4,242 charges for assaulting on-duty Met Police officers, and there were 977 charges for hate abuse offences where the victims were Met Police officers.

The Deputy Commissioner, Sir Stephen House, provides an impact statement for every case as part of the Met and CPS' quest to ensure culprits receive sentences that reflect the seriousness of the offences committed.

The Met provides all officers and staff with a range of welfare services. In response to hate abuse officers have received particularly while policing protests, the Met has ensured that a welfare team is in place for the majority of pre-planned public order events it polices. Officers in challenging policing positions during protests are encouraged to maintain their resilience and wellbeing by seeking time out from abuse, even being substituted by another officer if required.

Such has been the success of Operation Hampshire, the concept is in the process of being adopted by police forces nationally - a project being led by the Met's Chief Inspector Dave Brewster.

Inspector Kohring said: "Being a police officer can be challenging and dangerous but you receive safety training and welfare support from the moment you start to the day you retire. I've been a police officer for eighteen years and I've been on the receiving end of abuse while on duty but there's no other job I'd want to do because there is no other job that would provide me with the same excitement and sense of satisfaction when I hang up my uniform each night."

Deputy Assistant Commissioner Laurence Taylor, said: "Abuse and violence is never acceptable. Officers should never have to face being attacked when they are simply trying to protect others, but when it does happen, perpetrators should be brought to justice."

"The Met is extremely proud of the Operation Hampshire team's achievements, which have included raising awareness of the abuse of officers, ensuring that offenders face their day in court and helping give officers the support they deserve, like any other victim of crime."