

Shared Services Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy 2015-2018



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Mission of the Shared Services VAWG Strategic Partnership

The Shared Services Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategic Partnership is committed to delivering a coordinated community response to violence against women and girls in the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham, the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and the City of Westminster. This includes providing multi-agency support for people experiencing a range of issues including:

- domestic violence and abuse (including coercive control)
- sexual violence including rape
- sexual exploitation
- sexual harassment
- stalking
- 'honour'-based violence (HBV)
- forced marriage
- faith-based abuse
- female genital mutilation (FGM) or cutting
- prostitution and human trafficking

The coordinated community response to VAWG ensures that all relevant organisations effectively respond to these issues both within their own agencies and in collaboration with other partners to prevent harm, reduce risk and increase immediate and long-term safety for people living, studying, working and travelling to all three boroughs. VAWG affects all services across the three boroughs including children and adult services, housing, the police, health, probation, civil and criminal courts, voluntary and community organisations. We maintain that it is everyone's responsibility to address VAWG by identifying and supporting survivors and their children and holding perpetrators accountable, whilst offering opportunities to change their behaviour.

Our response to VAWG highlights the diversity and needs of people affected by these issues and the most significant priority of the Partnership is to keep survivors at the centre of our work. We recognise that violence and abuse affects people regardless of their age, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender, class and marital status. VAWG may have a range of consequences including homelessness, mental health, problematic substance misuse, child protection issues, physical injury and offending behaviour.

We acknowledge men and boys will also experience and be affected by the range of issues that encompass VAWG and our local response includes them as well. However, we also acknowledge that the above issues disproportionately affect women and girls, and our response must be tailored accordingly. We also recognise that people may be impacted by one more than one type of abuse and that the intersectional nature of each person's identity will frame their experience and how they access support. Therefore, we accept there is not a one size fits all solution for victims and survivors, but one that involves a bespoke, person-centred approach based on the principles of a multi-agency, partnership response to these issues.

The focus of the Shared VAWG Partnership's response is to understand and meet survivors' needs and aspirations, which may include risk management, safety planning, safe housing, emotional support, healthcare, education, legal support and access to justice. Primary prevention, crisis intervention, medium, long-term and follow-up support are all essential for achieving long-term sustainable outcomes in each area of VAWG.

This strategy highlights the objectives and commitments of the Partnership as we drive forward a multi-borough approach to VAWG. Over the next three years we will strengthen our response to issues we have previously focussed on, such as domestic abuse and sexual violence, and integrate effective responses to harmful practices (FGM, HBV and forced marriage), trafficking, stalking, sexual harassment and exploitation.

Prevalence of VAWG in the three boroughs

The difficulty of capturing an accurate statistical picture of VAWG is nationally recognised. Reasons for this are the hidden nature and consistent under-reporting of VAWG issues, alongside inconsistent approaches to data collection across organisations. The statistics available for the three boroughs can therefore only partially contribute to providing an accurate picture of the extent of VAWG in this area.

Criminal Justice and VAWG

Between January 2011 and December 2014 in RBKC/LBHF and WCC there were 12274 criminal offences of domestic abuse and 4374 sexual offences. 5% of sexual offences were recorded as domestic abuse (239 offences). In addition the police in the three boroughs responded to 52,753 domestic abuse incidents where a crime had not taken place.

During this same period, LBHF has had 1 domestic violence homicide, RBKC did not have any, although there was a murder of a woman working in prostitution in 2014, and WCC had 4 domestic homicides.

The three boroughs recorded 136 Trafficking Offences, 87 Stalking Offences, 10 FGM offences or crime related incidents, 14 Forced Marriage Offences and 66 Honour Based Violence Offences (some of these offences will also be counted within the domestic abuse offences).

LGBT and Domestic Abuse

In 2013/14 the LGBT Domestic Abuse Project and Galop saw 56 LGBT victims of domestic abuse in the three boroughs: about 10% of cases in London. In addition they saw 27 victims of hate crime and sexual violence.

MARAC October 2013-September 2014

INDICATOR As of 30/09/2014	RBKC MARAC	LBHF MARAC	Westminster MARAC	Metropolitan Police Average	National Average
Number of cases discussed (% of Safelives's recommended volume)	187 (69%)	253 (79%)	261 (70.5%)	67.5%	N/A
Number of children discussed	143	233	286	10,253	93,759
LGBT Referrals Safelives expect 5%	2%	3%	2%	1%	<1%
Referrals where the victim has a disability	25%	11%	4%	7%	4%
Referrals with a male victim Safelives expects 4-10%	5%	3%	2%	4%	4%

Harmful Practices

From February 2014-February 2015 in RBKC there were no recorded cases of child trafficking, 5 cases of FGM, 1 case of 'Honour' Based Violence and Forced Marriage (both issues present) and 1 potential case each of Spirit Possession/Witchcraft and faith based abuse identified by Children's Services.

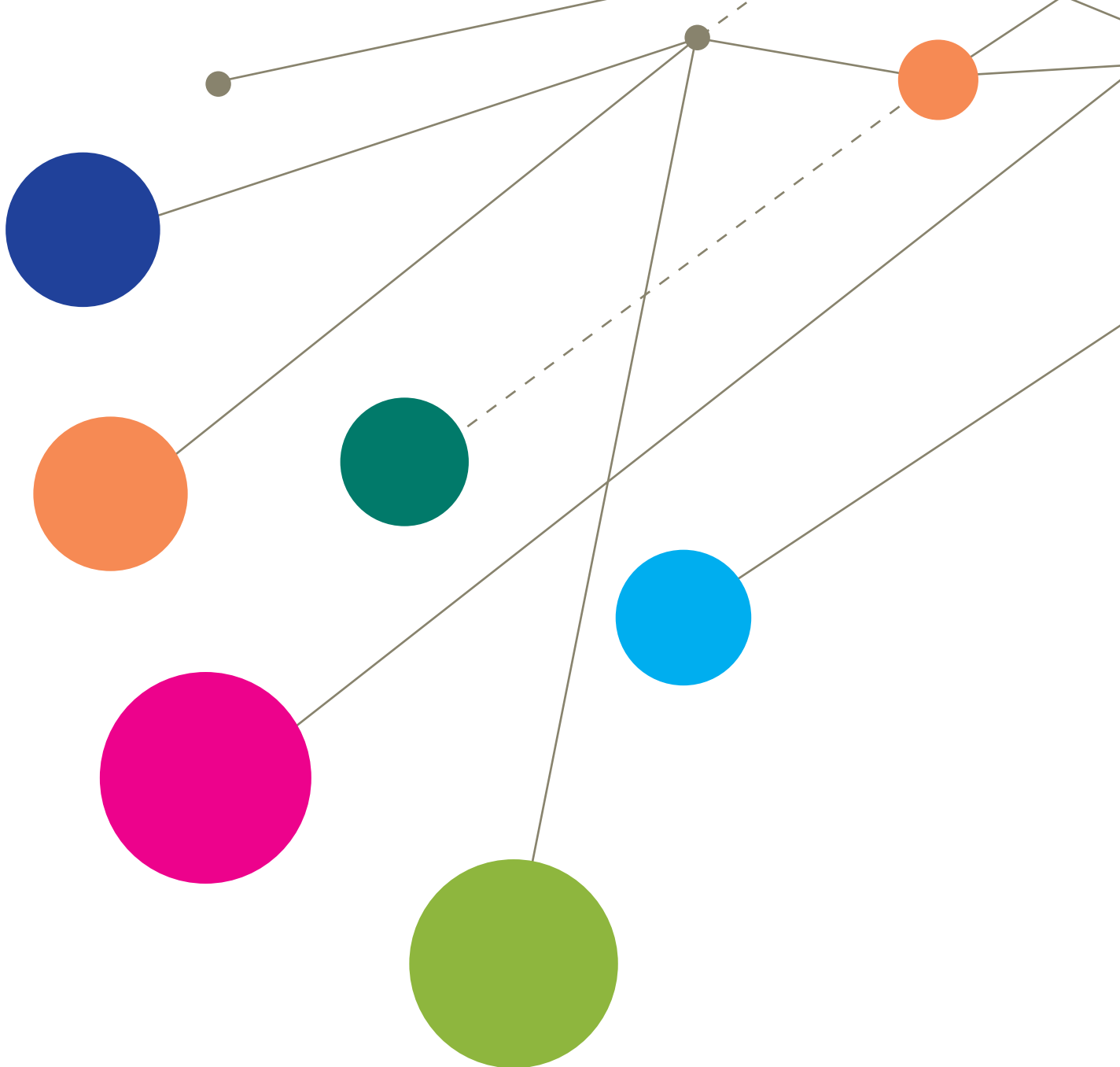
During the same period in Westminster there were 4 cases of child trafficking, 27 cases of FGM, 14 cases of Honour Based Violence, 3 cases of forced marriage and 13 cases of spirit possession and witchcraft identified by Children's Services.

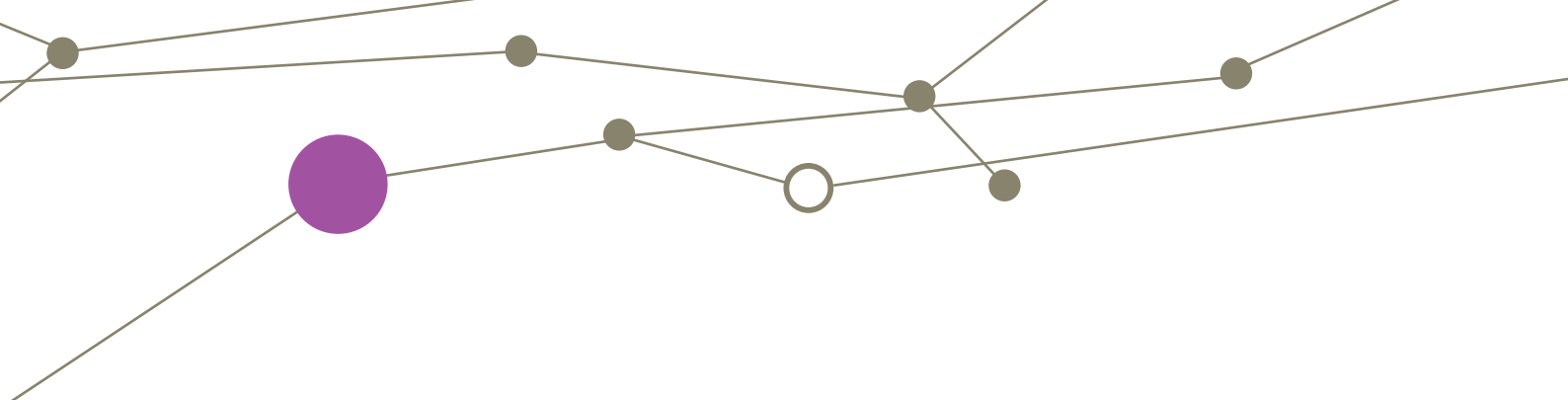
In LBHF there was 1 potential case of child trafficking, 4 potential cases of FGM, 1 case of Honour Based Violence and Forced Marriage and 1 potential case of Spirit Possession and Witchcraft.

Trafficking

Between March 2013 and December 2014 as part of the European Communities Against Trafficking (ECAT) Project in Westminster and Kensington and Chelsea, Rahab and SC07/1, the Metropolitan Police's Anti-trafficking Unit together have identified, engaged and de-briefed over 500 people, mostly women, 10% of whom had been trafficked for sexual exploitation. Of those engaged the top 10 nationalities were: British, Chinese, Estonian, Hungarian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish, Romanian, Russian, and Thai.

To date, each borough has developed its own processes for VAWG-related data collection and analysis. Through the delivery of this strategy, we will centralise and expand this process to include information from all mainstream and specialist partners on their response to VAWG issues.





The 7 Strategic Priorities of the Shared VAWG Partnership

The work of the Shared VAWG Partnership will be driven by the following seven strategic priority areas:

Access

Response

Community

Practitioners

Children and Young People

Perpetrators

Justice and Protection



Priority 1 Access

The Shared Services VAWG Partnership is committed to providing high quality services which are accessible, flexible and available in a timely way to a wide range of survivors. The Partnership will ensure that access to services is Easy, Early and Quick.

“I’m afraid of men because of what they’ve done to me. I’m afraid of their voices, their breathing, their power, their muscles. I need to be somewhere where I know I’m not going to be afraid, so I can heal.”

Objectives

Easy Access:

People experiencing VAWG should be able to easily identify which services are available to support them and the Shared VAWG Partnership has the responsibility to ensure that these services are available via appropriate and ongoing funding.

As a survivor:

- I know where to go if I need help, advice and support; it is easy to find the right service based on my needs and identity
- I can access information 24/7, including online and in different media for free

Early Access:

The VAWG Partnership will increase early interventions to people affected by VAWG via access to safety through both mainstream and specialist support services.

As a survivor:

- I get help as early as possible not just when I reach crisis or become high risk
- I get access or early help to prevent future violence and abuse occurring and the longer term consequences to me and my children

“As Asian women, we like to go somewhere where we are welcome, where we can talk openly, where people understand us.”

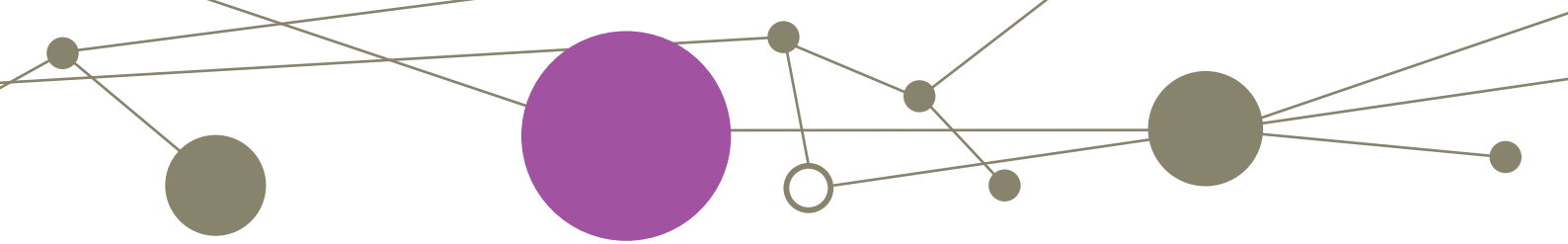
Quick Access:

Survivors should feel confident that they can find out where to go for support, who to contact and begin receiving support quickly in an efficient way.

As a survivor:

- As a (potentially vulnerable) person, I have safe, swift access to specialist support services (when I need it)
- If I need urgent support and assistance, I’m able to get it and get out of my situation
- I get quick access to specialist independent support at any stage of my journey
- I am confident that I will get the support I need when I need it from any service I approach

“Not all women have had the same experiences, not all of their journeys will be the same. Some people will take longer than others, some will be ready to take different steps at different times, and that has to be OK.”

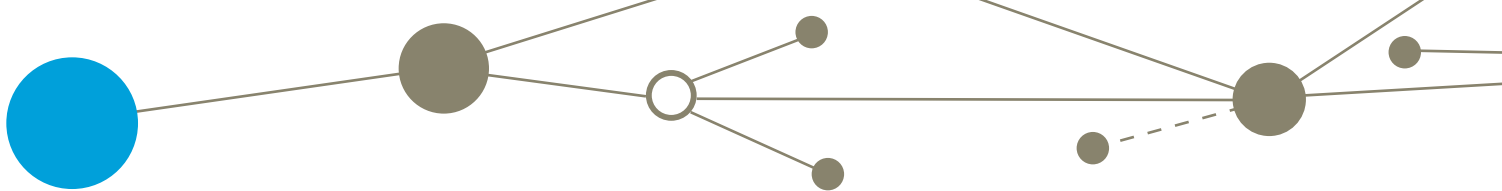


Actions

- 1.1 Improve awareness amongst victims / survivors about the range of services they can access and help them to navigate these services by producing and maintaining a directory of services and publicising this in a variety of ways.
- 1.2 Map VAWG related-funding sources in the three boroughs alongside commissioning timescales in order to support more effective commissioning across the three boroughs.
- 1.3 Monitor performance of both specialist and mainstream services and collect the following types of data:
 - Numbers of referrals (and where from) to services
 - Characteristics of those the service is working with
 - Outcomes
 - Waiting lists
 - Cost of the services
 - Any evidence of impact the service is having on outcomes
- 1.4 Publicise specialist local, pan-London and national services, including national helplines, and increase access points through co-location of specialist and mainstream services.
- 1.5 Increase access locations through outreach workers available at various community and mainstream settings.
- 1.6 Strengthen working relationships and improve referral pathways between providers by increasing publicity about services and train frontline statutory and voluntary sector (outside of VAWG sector) professionals delivered by VAWG sector specialists and survivors.
- 1.7 Ensure continued provision of women-only and BME women only spaces and face to face multi-lingual support. Offer access to LGBT-only space.
- 1.8 Ensure that sufficient services are available with flexible access pathways ways to survivors with a range of needs.

“I was just supported over the phone for that week I was homeless. It was amazing support, but afterwards, I was like, well, what now? There were still a lot of things that I needed help with.”

“Why should we have to do it all off our own backs? The council[s] should be working to make sure that everyone knows where to go, what to do.”



Priority 2 Response

The Shared Services VAWG Partnership will ensure that survivors are believed and not judged and that services are consistent, personalised, confidential and lead to survivors feeling and being safer in both the short and long-term. Provision from specialist, non-specialist and statutory partners will be reviewed and the effectiveness of the VAWG multi-agency response will be measured via sector based data and performance monitoring across all partners.

Objectives

During the response, as a survivor I should feel:

- Believed
- Listened to and respected
- Not blamed
- Empowered and in control
- That the person responsible for the violence is being held accountable, not me as the victim
- Confident and informed about what is going to happen to me and my family both in the short term and long term, because it has been explained to me
- I will get expert, independent advice
- Supported in the short and long-term
- I am treated with equality, regardless of my life choices, culture, age, gender identity, sexuality, immigration status, language, housing, mental health and/or substance misuse

“Refuge is like your nest, your safety blanket. But without that support afterwards, without someone checking in, we could all end up back at square one again.”

The response itself is:

- Co-ordinated
- Consistent
- Confidential
- Safe
- Holistic
- Personalised

“I’m not being funny but services need to speak to each other more, that’s what a good service is. I’ve told the same story so many times, again and again. And it’s not an easy story to tell.”

As a result of the multi-agency coordinated community response, as a survivor, I should:

- Receive a response that protects me and my children and other family members from the perpetrator(s) and makes me feel safer and less at risk as a result
- Be safer because the perpetrator has ceased to be abusive as a result of interventions
- Feel confident that different services I need are working together so that I don’t have to tell my story repeatedly
- Know relevant and proportionate information will be shared between agencies
- Know I will be helped confidentially and the limits to any confidentiality agreements
- Feel services are consistent
- Have a safe way of getting help and communicating with people who can help me
- Know about holistic services that can support not just me but my family as well (abusers, children, extended family), have our needs assessed and understood comprehensively and receive support for all of our support needs
- Have access to specialist, independent VAWG services, including for BME and LGBT groups, within my local community
- Receive services for whatever type(s) of VAWG I have experienced
- Receive a response that secures my health, social and economic wellbeing for the short and long-term

Quotes: Turning Points, Standing Together Against Domestic Violence, 2013. Independent Consultation, Imkaan Women’s Aid Partnership, 2014.



Actions

- 2.1 Promote coordinated, needs led (in addition to risk led) provision and service modelling in both specialist and mainstream services. This incorporates risk and safety as a primary need of women and children experiencing violence and abuse, but will also encompass longer-term holistic provision and other forms of support including but not limited to safe housing (including refuge, sanctuary and target hardening), advocacy around immigration issues, employment and benefit support, child custody, criminal cases, civil justice measures, support for historical experiences of sexual violence, resettlement support, therapeutic services, group work and peer mentoring. This type of response will be joined-up, specialist and bespoke, supporting women who may face additional barriers to accessing services. Organisations will work together to provide seamless support for people experiencing VAWG.
- 2.2 Identify and support high-risk domestic abuse cases and provide bespoke support for those most at risk, including via a continued commitment to MARAC coordination, reviewing the impact of MARAC+ and maintaining a robust MARAC Steering Group.
- 2.3 Develop a multi-agency approach that reflects the needs of the continuum of individuals involved with prostitution, which is separate but related to partnership approaches to human trafficking for sexual exploitation. This requires investment in specialist provision and the development of smoother referral pathways. Police and NGOs to work together to encourage sex workers to report crime and develop welfare visit protocols via the ECAT model.
- 2.4 Ensure that victims and survivors can influence service development by including survivors' voices in all consultation for commissioned services and through conducting service-user satisfaction surveys, which will be periodically shared with the Partnership to determine if they are responding effectively with respect, knowledge and humanity. The Partnership will adopt a 'you said, we did' model to survivors and report back findings and changes to service to survivors.
- 2.5 Utilise cross sector recognised specialist quality standards and outcomes frameworks to ensure quality provision within commissioning processes including Women's Aid standards, Rape Crisis standards, Respect accreditation, Core, Imkaan standards and Safelives standards to ensure a level of quality assurance. Encourage adoption of standards for mainstream services such as the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation for housing providers.
- "If you have that one person, someone who comes and says that it's ok, that they believe you, that can make the whole difference for you to get the help you need."**
- 2.6 Establish and manage the MOPAC Harmful Practices Pilot across the three boroughs from Jan 2015-March 2016, which will form the basis for a multi-agency response to FGM, honour based violence and forced marriage. Ensure that the Pilot is linked into pre-existing specialist and mainstream services and form a Harmful Practices Operational Group to coordinate and embed the response across the Partnership within communities and for children and young people.
- 2.7 Ensure the provision of proportional, specialist support and improved referral pathways for male and LGBT survivors and an improved response from specialist and mainstream services by:
- Incorporating LGBT specialist-led training into the VAWG Partnership's training programme;
 - Increasing publicity for LGBT services in the three boroughs;
 - Piloting a specific LGBT checklist which picks up on specific needs not identified by other risk assessment tools in our specialist services;
 - Ensure swift & simple referral pathways for male survivors; and
 - Identifying gaps in current services and working with specialist LGBT providers and local authorities to meet these needs.
- 2.8 Work with Clinical Commissioning Groups to promote a consistent response in GP practices via the use of the IRIS model around domestic violence and abuse.
- 2.9 Integrate the response between the Safeguarding Adults Partnership, Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and the VAWG Partnership by implementing Statutory Guidance released under the 2014 Care Act, which lists domestic violence and modern slavery as specific forms of abuse and:
- Delivering training around changes to practice, including statutory recording of domestic abuse in safeguarding cases, which could represent up to a third of safeguarding cases in future (by the workforce development subgroup of the Safeguarding Adults Board);
 - Conducting a review of the links between domestic abuse, elder abuse and carers (either as victims or perpetrators), high risk domestic abuse and domestic homicide in order to improve local practice;



- Developing operational procedures for carrying out Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHR), Serious Case Reviews (SCR) and Safeguarding Adults review (SAR), which will clarify thresholds and decision making processes. These procedures will specify how Reviews can be managed in parallel in the most effective manner possible so that organisations and professionals can learn from the case. Procedures will include guidance on considering whether some aspects of the reviews can be commissioned jointly so as to reduce duplication of work for the organisations involved. We will disseminate learning from these reviews via the Risk and Review Operational Group and Case Review subgroups of the Safeguarding Boards.

2.10 Ongoing delivery of a coordinated community response to VAWG via the Partnership's Governance Structure; The Strategic Board holds overall responsibility for the strategy and the operational groups are well-coordinated and maintained.

2.11 Risk and Review Operational Group to conduct at least one deep dive review into an area of practice annually and produce report to improve practice across the three boroughs.

“I am in contact with a group called MINERVA [in Hammersmith] and they are literally saving my life. I just needed help with all the practical stuff that I don't have a clue about what to do. But they do. They have been a lot of help, just giving you anything that you can think about. And if they don't know it, they will actually find it out for you....I really just need someone in one place, in one go. If you have children, you can't just run around. It's just impossible. If you're trying to work and you're trying to take care of your children, and do everything yourself, you just really need one person to call.”



Priority 3 Community

The Shared Services VAWG Partnership is committed to making the three boroughs safer places for women and girls to live, work and travel. We will support residents, especially non-violent/abusive members, to take responsibility and proactively respond if they encounter abuse and to know how to help family, friends, colleagues and neighbours. The Partnership prioritises ongoing communication, community engagement, prevention and awareness-raising activities around VAWG issues.

Objectives

Survivors, residents and professionals working in the borough should:

- Be confident that they live/work in a community that does not tolerate VAWG and know where to access assistance if they are experiencing these issues
- Be confident that tackling VAWG is a top priority across the borough
- Know their councils/councillors take a lead in challenging the community to tackle VAWG
- Know the Partnership is committed to ensuring healthy, safe, equal and violence free relationships for children, young people and adults.
- Be educated about VAWG issues and want to help end violence against women and girls
- Have access to services that are 'best practice' and sustainable
- Take responsibility for abuse they encounter and take action
- Understand how to help family/friends/neighbours

Women and girls working, living in or travelling to the three boroughs should feel:

- That as a female they are not at risk of being sexualised
- Safe when they are out socialising
- Safe in their house
- Safe and secure in open spaces, i.e. towpaths, parks, streets etc.

“It is very encouraging that after so many years of abuse and manipulation I finally believe things can be different for me and my baby...I can again become the strong, professional woman I was before my relationship.”

Actions

- 3.1 Develop a three year communications plan to ensure coverage of priority VAWG areas and deliver a series of campaigns and community engagement events, including one annual activity in partnership with the Blooming Strong brand. These will include locally designed public awareness campaigns about topics such as domestic abuse, sexual consent and harmful practices and evolving the Get Home Safe campaign to include a stronger community focus. Embed and publicise national campaigns and work with survivors and practitioners to make our local messages relevant and raise awareness of VAWG services.
- 3.2 Create local safer spaces/places by developing City Safe Havens as safe places for women to go when in fear and work with local business to respond appropriately and by engaging British Transport Police, the night-time economy (including door supervisors) and community policing teams to hold perpetrators to account and counter sexual harassment on transport, our streets and in public and private spaces.
- 3.3 Highlight the role of local councillors, community leaders and community champions to tackle VAWG and promote VAWG provision at local community events. Engage with community leaders and prioritise community empowerment including workshops around VAWG issues in religious and community groups and encourage employers to have positive policies and procedures around VAWG to staff and customers. Utilise existing engagement fora to consult and disseminate messages to foster increased trust in the VAWG response and improve reporting/access to services.



Priority 4 Practitioners

The Shared Services VAWG Partnership will continue to lead on the development of good practice for professionals working in the three boroughs and will concentrate on providing a package of VAWG training and sector based support for practitioners alongside encouraging innovation in service delivery within a multi-agency context.

“In my experience, you have to speak up for yourself, you have to want to be helped, you need to be at a turning point in your life. I spent ages not knowing what to do, who to go, to where to turn, but once I opened up to someone it was the best thing I could have done.”

Objectives

In terms of training, tools and support, practitioners should:

- Have the tools to identify and respond early before situations of violence and abuse escalate to crisis point/high risk levels (universal services)
- Receive comprehensive training in a consistent shared approach across all teams
- Feel that all agencies within the Partnership are professional and knowledgeable
- Work together effectively and consistently and be able to share information appropriately
- Be able to utilise risk and need assessment tools appropriately to support victims, survivors and their families
- Challenge and change the attitudes that condone violence against women and girls, to prevent it happening
- Have clear tools and training to respond well beyond domestic violence to other VAWG issues
- Understand how to identify and ask about abuse and then clearly know who to refer to
- Be appropriately supported within their organisation and have management support them when they get disclosures

“If they don’t understand about the abuse, it’s worse than useless. Like going to a vet instead of your GP. They don’t know what they’re looking at.”

In terms of promoting a feedback culture and innovation in practice, practitioners should:

- Feel they are part of a learning organisation that reviews its response to VAWG and takes action to improve
- Incorporate learning from domestic violence homicide reviews and other serious case reviews into their practice and the response of their organisation, leading to improved practice
- Receive feedback on which of their actions are effective/safe or not



Actions

- 4.1 Hold an annual VAWG Strategic Partnership conference and one professional-focussed activity in partnership with the Blooming Strong brand.
- 4.2 Centralise and improve VAWG training across the three boroughs to increase workforce confidence in identifying and responding to VAWG-related issues especially in risk assessment and safety planning around domestic abuse, working with and engaging perpetrators, dealing with younger victims and child sexual exploitation, harmful practices, prostitution and trafficking. Develop and promote access to a centralised VAWG training portal via a website on the RBKC Council's Learning Centre, which will include both commissioned/funded and for cost trainings. Occupational standards guidance will be developed for practitioners and will be listed with each of the courses advertised on the VAWG training portal. Feedback and evaluation of VAWG training will be collated centrally and will feed into commissioning of future training courses. Referral pathways to specialist, local or regional services will be part of every training and the directory of services will be disseminated and referred to in training, along with including a question about referral pathways in every training evaluation.
- 4.3 Develop clear accountability structures for mainstream providers to identify and improve negative working practices and cultures. The operational groups within the VAWG Partnership will have training on their meeting agendas and as part of their action plans, and will report biannually to the Strategic Board as part of their monitoring/data capture.

“You might have one person who knows a lot about prison, one who knows a lot about what it’s like to be raped, one who knows about domestic abuse. But they have to understand all the different pieces of a woman’s experience to be able to help.”

“For so long I was in this terrible relationship and inside I didn’t think that this was really abuse. It took a long time and the support of professionals to make me open my eyes to what was really going on with me.”



Priority 5 Children and Young People

The VAWG Partnership will prioritise both prevention of violence and abuse and provision of support for Children and Young People. The VAWG Partnership will ensure that children and young people are supported if they witness or are subject to violence and abuse. We will support young people to understand what VAWG and healthy relationships are, in order to prevent future abuse. We will develop and disseminate a Young Person's version of this strategy and work closely with the Local Safeguarding Children's Board to implement a multi-agency holistic response that reflects the needs of children and young people across the three boroughs.

“Now because I realise that it was domestic violence – I didn't realise it was for many years – I'm being a bit cautious now and not as accepting. But it's gone on for long enough...I was denying it. I was living with that shame and guilt of not destroying my family. That's what it was that really kept me, maybe for too long I put a cover on it, which is what all of us do. And then it got out in the open and when it's out in the open there's nowhere to hide.”

Objectives

Violence against women and girls has a significant impact on children and young people. In terms of domestic violence alone, children are affected by witnessing incidents and being present when they occur. Domestic violence is a key issue for safeguarding and Children's Social Care.

In order to prevent future abuse and violence, young people should:

- Be confident that we know what a healthy relationship is and how to help their friends (whole school approach)
- Understand they can say no and are an equal partner in their relationships.
- Be supported to make positive choices
- Know what VAWG and gender inequality is
- Know the risks of violence and sexual violence associated with gang affiliation and the local resources available to exit these associations and stay safe

If they have experienced or perpetrated violence or abuse, young people should receive support for that experience.

Young people should:

- Feel confident to speak up if they experience (or perpetrate) inappropriate behaviour in an intimate relationship
- Understand what abuse looks like within the family and who to call for help when they or someone in my family needs it
- Expect professionals to understand what it is like to be a child and provide the right services at the right time to their family
- Get support to deal with and come to terms with violence and abuse



Actions

- 5.1 Promote a 'whole school' approach via preventative and education programmes that improve attitudes towards conducting healthy relationships and VAWG from primary school to adult education. Work with Public Health to embed VAWG and other safeguarding issues in the Healthy Schools Partnership. Framework Promote specialist education in non-formal, community settings. Ensure that interventions are not heteronormative and do not further bi/homo/transphobia via the inclusion of LGBT healthy relationship work in schools curriculum.
- 5.2 Promote a 'whole family' approach by supporting children and their non-abusive parent/guardian whilst identifying and working with perpetrators to be accountable for their behaviour:
- Strengthen pathways and knowledge-sharing between specialist VAWG services and children/family services to support high risk families in the short term but also to provide longer term work to prevent future abuse and increase safety in families. including through the development and promotion of joint training on domestic violent risk assessment tools such as the Barnardo's DVRIM and the DASH;
 - Create a network of lead professionals across agencies (including universal services, early intervention through to social care) with a shared understanding of risk and VAWG to increase workforce confidence in identifying and addressing VAWG at the earliest possible opportunity;
 - Focus on Practice (FoP) to use a systemic approach to work with families and support the work of practitioners working with families, which involves taking a family approach to VAWG and thinking and intervening with all adults involved. This systemic approach to be rolled out to practitioners through the FoP training/skills development programme. RBKC to work actively with DVIP to ensure a coherent approach to assessment and intervention. In H&F FOP to fund specialist staff to work with each partner and increase the knowledge & skill base within the team;
 - Develop parenting programmes that support wider relationships and their impact on child wellbeing, not just parent/child relationships in addition to developing additional components to early intervention parenting programmes that offer VAWG support
 - Implement co-location of specialist VAWG services within family service settings.
- 5.3 Address current gap in services by developing specialist support, advocacy and therapeutic services to children and young people who are experiencing violence, harassment, bullying, exploitation and/or abuse in family, relationships or social situations to reduce vulnerability to on-going and future violence and abuse. Promote these services so that young people know about and feel comfortable accessing them. Consult with young people regularly on effective services and dissemination of information.
- 5.4 Develop a shared response with the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB), Early Help Board and the VAWG Partnership by:
- The Children and Health Operational Group (CHOG) and the LSCB Quality Assurance Group agreeing a dataset and reporting channels to monitor improvement in practice around domestic abuse (and other forms of VAWG) in children's services, VAWG services performance on safeguarding issues, and provision and outcomes for children exposed to violence and abuse;
 - Developing processes and conduct joint audits and reviews (for example adult perpetrators, child and young perpetrators (towards parents/family members) and peer to peer abuse);
 - Supporting and monitoring the implementation of the LSCB FGM and Child Sexual Exploitation strategies alongside the FGM Pilot;
 - Making joint recommendations on the safe commissioning of specialist VAWG services for adults and children and work with commissioners of other services to ensure VAWG is part of both procurement and monitoring processes and move away from having tokenistic leads within services;
 - Other Operational Groups within VAWG Partnership incorporating Children and Young People as annual priority; and
 - Share learning between Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) and Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) via the Risk and Review Operational and Case Review Groups
 - Responding to findings from the 2015 VAWG Young Person's Consultation and disseminating the young person's version of this.



Priority 6 Perpetrators

The Shared Services VAWG Partnership will ensure that perpetrators of all forms of VAWG are held to account and given opportunities to reform.

Objectives

Perpetrators of all forms of VAWG should be identified and held to account for their actions:

- Survivors know they will not be held responsible for the abuse; rather the perpetrator is engaged and held responsible
- Perpetrators know that they will be held accountable and also presented with the impact of their actions

Perpetrators will be supported to reform and should:

- Have a social worker/professional listening to them and do not just assume they are a bad person
- Be offered help to address and stop their abusive behaviour and to recognise it, including outside of the criminal justice system and at the earliest available opportunities
- Receive help when they ask for it (behavioural or practical)
- Have vulnerabilities and needs taken into consideration

“If I had one message to the police, it would be just ‘never assume’. Never take sides or assume that he is telling the truth. Ask carefully, listen properly.”

Actions

- 6.1 Work to prevent and challenge abusive behaviours and reduce the level of offences of VAWG via:
- A focus on education and provision to influence young people via a whole school approach to ensure the prevention of future violence and abuse; and
 - Addressing gender inequality and male privilege and increasing the implementation of this principle via the delivery of this strategy.
- 6.2 Maximise opportunities to engage with, challenge and give perpetrators opportunity to change their behaviours whilst holding them accountable for their actions by developing a comprehensive programme for perpetrators reflecting the continuum of their individual needs during the life of this strategy. We will:
- Conduct a review of the response to perpetrators work across the three boroughs via the Risk and Review group which examines and makes recommendations on:
 - 1 The enforcement/criminal justice response to perpetrators (not just of DV but other forms of VAWG including sexual violence, trafficking and Harmful practices);
 - 2 Specialist support for perpetrators to encourage them to reform and change behaviour to prevent further and repeat victimisation; to include domestic violence perpetrator programmes (DVPP), an overview of resources, outcomes and capacity, Mirabal recommendations, and national developments in perpetrator work;
 - 3 The response to perpetrators in non-specialist services and confidence levels of professionals to identify and challenge perpetrators at the earliest available opportunity, whilst keeping the safety of survivors and children at the centre of any response; and
 - Link up reducing reoffending and children’s services work with perpetrators more effectively.



Priority 7

Justice and Protection

The Shared Services VAWG Partnership will deliver justice and protection for survivors and their families according to their needs within a criminal and civil justice framework and also within a wider social context.

Objectives

Survivors should:

- Know that the police and criminal justice services are effective in protecting them and their family and deterring their abuser(s)
- Be confident they can obtain justice and believe reporting to the police would be beneficial to them
- Be able to access justice through specialist courts where possible

Actions

- 7.1 Seek justice for victims and develop services which are victim-centred to empower victim-survivors and improve their experience of the criminal justice system.
- 7.2 Implement locally developed and Metropolitan Police led initiatives that develop during the life of this strategy to improve the local police response such as:
 - IMPACT: Monitor the delivery of the project in Hammersmith & Fulham as it tracks the journey of cases through the criminal justice system more efficiently including scrutiny of outcomes, feedback from survivors via the IDVA Service; If successful the Partnership will look to identify funding to expand IMPACT project after the pilot period ends in 2016.
 - Operation Dauntless
 - Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPOs) and Domestic Violence Disclosure Notices (DVDNs)
 - Put into practice lessons learned from the Metropolitan Police's Rape Reference group
 - Put into practice lessons learned from the Children's Commissioner.

“The Police didn’t just call you back when they were supposed to, they emailed you back and helped you understand and input into the process. Like I said, I think the police in my case were absolutely amazing, especially alongside ADVANCE. During the case they were in contact with me and they were actually with me at the trial, which was really, really helpful because I had never been in court before. Just being in a court is scary enough, but being a witness is even more scary, so having someone there with me, I was very grateful.”

- 7.3 Work closely with local family courts to report on their response to VAWG-related issues in order to improve survivors' experience of the civil justice system.
- 7.4 Increase police training via regular updates, not just about domestic abuse and coercive control but to include other VAWG issues. With support of local Community Safety Partnerships, embed this into each borough's police training schedule, with the aim of developing links within local policing clusters to identify VAWG leads within each area. Partnership inspectors to lead on this and work with the VAWG Strategic Lead to identify appropriate trainers.

“I had brilliant help. I just hope other women are brave enough to report what is happening to them. I want women to know that if you need help, it’s available. You don’t have to put up with the abuse.”

Implementation of the Shared Services VAWG Strategy

Management of the Strategy

The Shared Services VAWG Strategy 2015-2018 will be subject to regular review and consideration by the VAWG Strategic Board, which was set up in 2014 with senior representation from voluntary, statutory and community organisations working to tackle VAWG across the three boroughs. The Board will:

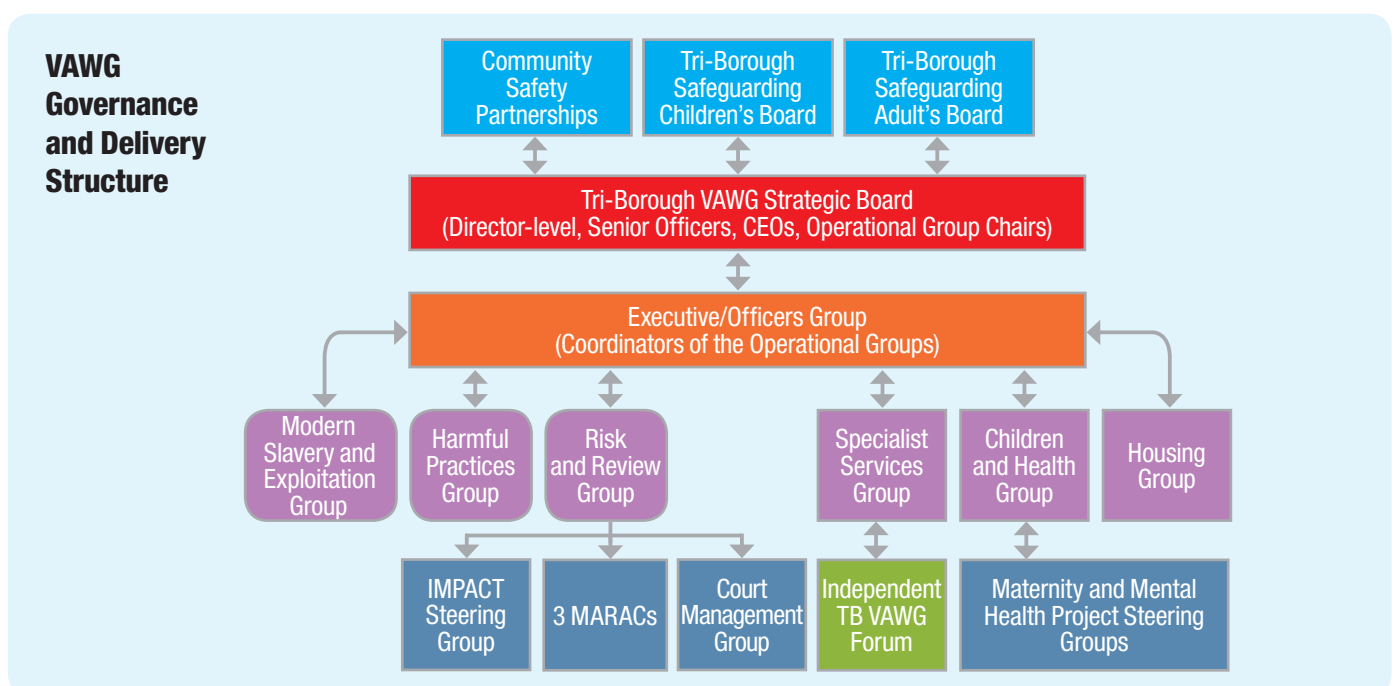
- Ensure the voices and experiences of survivors of VAWG are reflected throughout the Strategy and Action Plan via regular consultation and feedback;
- Monitor progress of targets and objectives against the Shared VAWG Action Plan and assess whether actions and activities, including of the 6 VAWG Operational Groups, are achieving the required outcomes;
- Establish the overall impact of the strategy via quality assurance and performance monitoring frameworks;
- Promote effective links with the work other Strategic Partnerships including the Adult and Children's Safeguarding Boards and Health and Well-Being Boards;
- Incorporate new legislation, policy and guidance alongside ongoing understanding and assessment of local need and recommendations from Domestic Homicide Reviews and serious case reviews; and
- Report regularly on the progress of the Strategy to each of the three sovereign borough Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships, for which VAWG is a priority area of business.

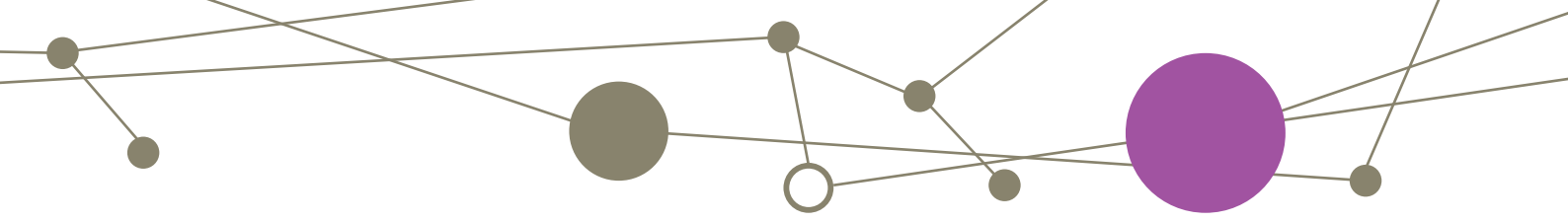
The Board is chaired by a local authority Executive Director and includes senior officers from the police, children's services, public health, adult services, housing, probation, chairs of 6 operational groups, specialist VAWG services and additional voluntary organisations.

The Board will be influenced by 6 Operational groups that each have a coordinator and a chair and work to detailed action plans based on the 7 strategic commitments. The groups are:

- Housing
- Specialist Services
- Children and Health
- Risk and Review
- Harmful Practices
- Modern Slavery and Exploitation

These groups provide detailed feedback via coordinators to an Executive group, which meets regularly to monitor the action plans, share information across the Partnership and raise issues and trends to the Strategic Board which have developed in the three boroughs.





Action Plan

A rolling three year action plan monitored by the VAWG Strategic Board supports this strategy. This will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Board and will incorporate elements of the individual action plans from the seven operational groups that form the governance and delivery structure of the Partnership.

Measuring Success of the Shared Services VAWG Strategy

The VAWG Partnership's performance and effectiveness will be monitored via robust data collection and quality assurance processes. Outcomes are determined in line with the overall action plan and the more detailed plans of the seven operational groups. These are monitored on a quarterly basis via the following methods:

Whole system monitoring approach and information sharing:

The VAWG Partnership will take a robust and systematic approach to capturing, collating and analysing data across the whole system. Collecting monitoring data is a part of service level agreements and contracts. Collecting data on VAWG should not only be a condition of service level agreements and contracts, it should also be the business of mainstreamed services.

Monitoring and outcomes is about synergising reporting not having a single system of collation and inputting:

The VAWG Partnership will specify a core data set that commissioned services and mainstream services are expected to report on in order to build a more 'complete' picture. The core data will be aligned with Ministry of Justice, London Councils and MOPAC reporting requirements where possible so services are not having to ask the same question in three different ways. Data will be collected on both an operational and a strategic group level.

A nominated and appropriately skilled officer will be responsible for data collection and management information:

To ensure consistency in collection, analysis and interpretation, data will be collected centrally - with a nominated and appropriately skilled officer, funded through a pooled budget, to take responsibility for data collection and analysis - and analysed effectively and systematically to provide management information to further inform intelligent commissioning processes.

Ongoing assessment of need and prevalence: The Partnership will use national, regional and local evidence to assess trends to inform its commissioning processes and strategic decision making.

Reporting and Accountability: Some elements of delivery will be reported quarterly to the VAWG Strategic Board by the Chairs of the Operational Group and/or the VAWG Strategic Lead; Some will be monitored by Operational groups and discussed at the Executive group level and reported up to the Strategic Board by exception; Some will be included in an annual report to the Board written by the Coordinators of the Operational groups and the VAWG Strategic Lead.

The overall performance and ability of the Partnership to provide a coordinated community response will also be monitored through reviewing regular attendance at meetings, maintenance of the operational and executive groups, attendance at Partnership sponsored events and trainings. Impact on community members and general awareness-raising will also be assessed using a variety of methods.

Survivor feedback will be regularly collected from mainstream and specialist services and survivors will be consulted with by the VAWG Strategic Lead on a bi-annual basis.



Violence Against Women & Girls Definitions

Home Office Definition of Domestic Abuse

“Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional

Controlling behaviour is: a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour is: an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.”

MOPAC Definition of VAWG

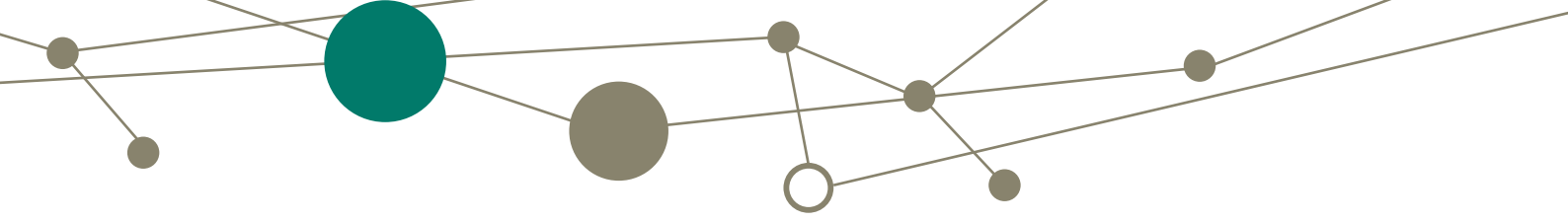
MOPAC use the following definition concerning Violence Against Women and Girls:

“The UN defines violence against women ‘as any act of gender-based violence that is directed at a woman because she is a woman or acts of violence which are suffered disproportionately by women’. This includes physical, sexual, and psychological / emotional violence, economic abuse and sexual exploitation. VAWG can take place at home, work or in public places such as on the street or public transport.”

The MOPAC strategy covers the following forms of violence against women and girls:

Type of VAWG	Definition
Domestic Violence and Abuse	1 A pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass, but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional abuse. In extreme cases this includes murder. Controlling behaviour is: a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour. Coercive behaviour is: an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.
Female Genital Mutilation	2 Involves the complete or partial removal or alteration of external genitalia for non-medical reasons. It is mostly carried out on young girls at some time between infancy and the age of 15. Unlike male circumcision, which is legal in many countries, it is now illegal across much of the globe, and its extensive harmful health consequences are widely recognised.
Forced Marriage	3 A marriage conducted without valid consent of one or both parties, where duress is a factor.
“Honour” based violence	4 Violence committed to protect or defend the ‘honour’ of a family and/or community. Women, especially young women, are the most common targets, often where they have acted outside community boundaries of perceived acceptable feminine/sexual behaviour. In extreme cases, the woman may be killed.
Prostitution and trafficking	5 Women and girls are forced, coerced or deceived to enter into prostitution and/or to keep them there. Trafficking involves the recruitment, transportation and exploitation of women and children for the purposes of prostitution and domestic servitude across international borders and within countries (‘internal trafficking’).

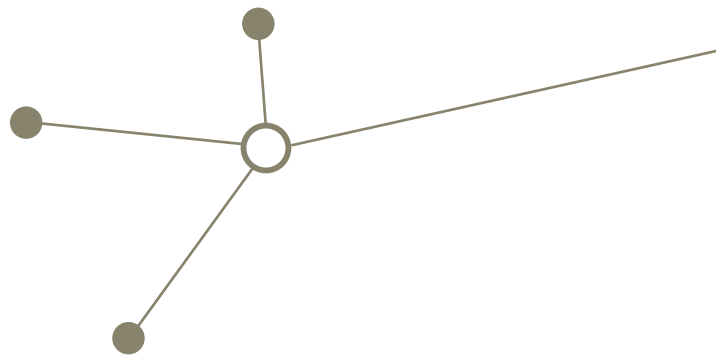
Quotes: Turning Points, Standing Together Against Domestic Violence, 2013. Independent Consultation, Imkaan Women’s Aid Partnership, 2014.



Type of VAWG	Definition
Sexual violence including rape	6 Sexual contact without the consent of the woman/girl. Perpetrators range from total strangers to relatives and intimate partners, but most are known in some way. It can happen anywhere – in the family/household, workplace, public spaces, social settings, during war/conflict situations.
Sexual exploitation	7 Involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where someone receives ‘something’ (e.g. food, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, protection money) as a result of them performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the person’s limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability. Girls involved in or connected to gangs are at risk of sexual exploitation by gang members.
Sexual harassment	8 Unwanted verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. It can take place anywhere, including the workplace, schools, streets, public transport and social situations. It includes flashing, obscene and threatening calls, and online harassment.
Stalking	9 Repeated (i.e. on at least two occasions) harassment causing fear, alarm or distress. It can include threatening phone calls, texts or letters; damaging property; spying on and following the victim.
Faith-based abuse	10 Child abuse linked to faith or belief. This includes a belief in concepts of witchcraft and spirit possession, demons or the devil acting through children or leading them astray (traditionally seen in some Christian beliefs), the evil eye or djinns (traditionally known in some Islamic faith contexts) and dakini (in the Hindu context); ritual or muti murders where the killing of children is believed to bring supernatural benefits or the use of their body parts is believed to produce potent magical remedies; and use of belief in magic or witchcraft to create fear in children to make them more compliant when they are being trafficked for domestic slavery or sexual exploitation. This is not an exhaustive list.

Glossary of Terms

BME	Black and Minority Ethnic	HBV	‘Honour’ Based Violence
CCR	Community Co-ordinated Response	IDVA	Independent Domestic Violence Advisor
CHOG	Children and Health Operational Group	LBHF	London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham
CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation	LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender
CSP	Community Safety Partnership	LSCB	Local Safeguarding Adults Board
DAHA	Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance	MARAC	Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference
DASH	Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Harassment and Honour Based Violence	MOPAC	Mayor’s Office for Policing and Crime
DHR	Domestic Homicide Review	NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
DV	Domestic Violence	RBKC	Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea
DVDN	Domestic Violence Disclosure Notice	SAR	Safeguarding Adults Review
DVPO	Domestic Violence Protection Order	SAEB	Safeguarding Adults Executive Board
DVRIM	DVRIM Domestic Violence Risk Indicator Matrix	SC07/1	Metropolitan Police’s Trafficking and Kidnap Unit
ECAT	European Communities Against Trafficking	SCR	Serious Case Review
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation	VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls
FOP	Focus On Practice	WCC	Westminster City Council



For further information please contact:
Shared Services VAWG Strategic Lead