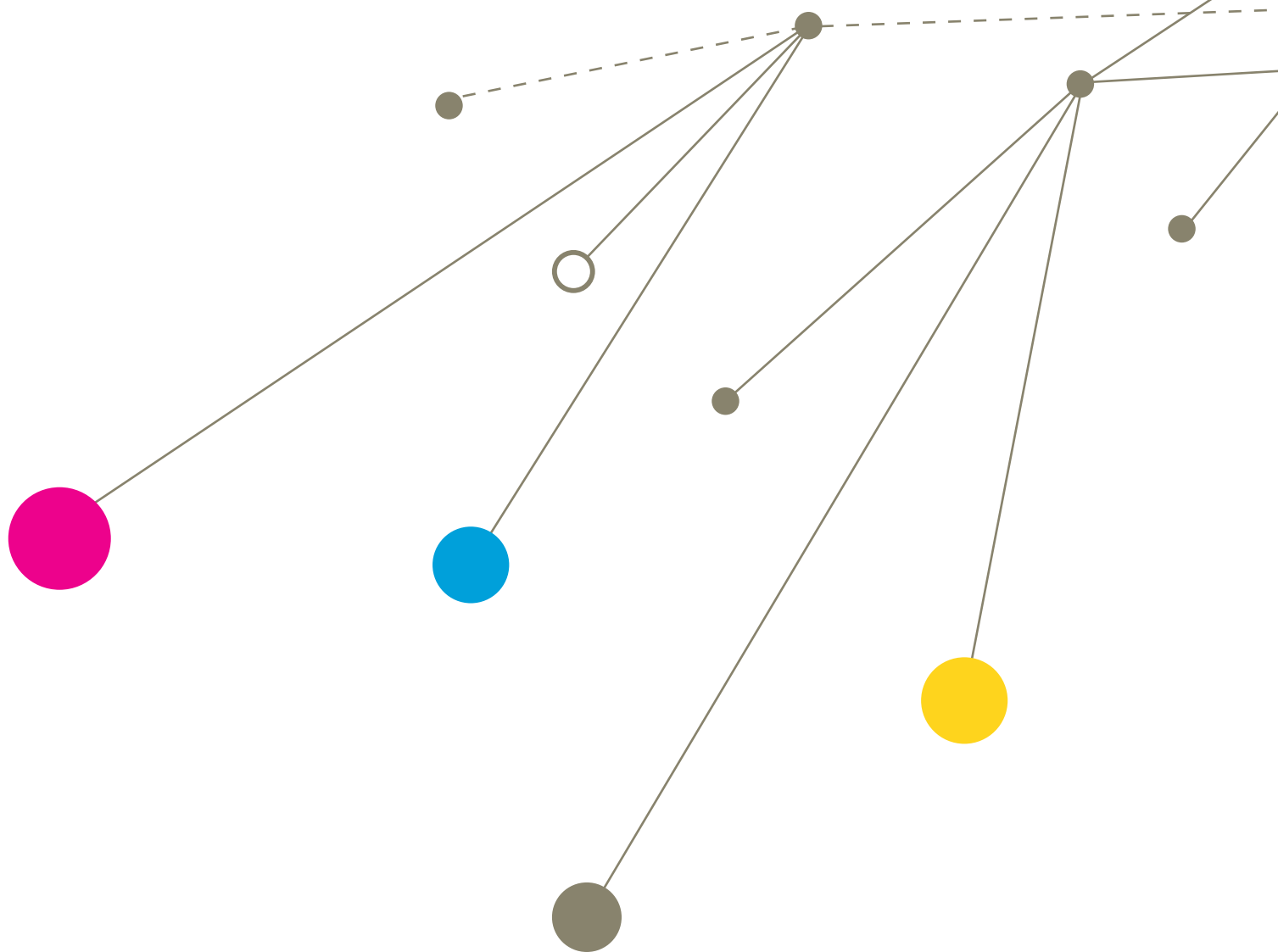
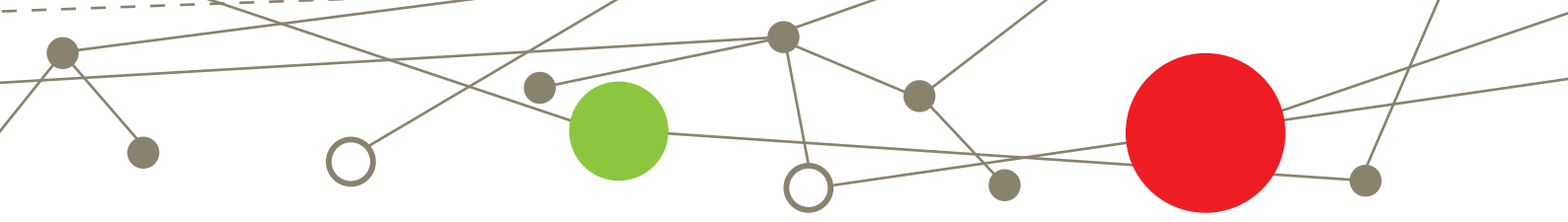


Violence against Women and Girls 2018-2019

Addendum to the 2015-18 Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy





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Background

In March 2015, the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham, the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and the City of Westminster launched the Shared Services Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy. The strategy outlined a bold and ambitious coordinated community response to VAWG through 7 strategic priorities.

This three-year strategy has now come to an end and the Shared VAWG Strategic Partnership have pledged to publish a refreshed strategy to build on the progress made over the last three years. This will be launched in April 2019.

The 2015-2018 VAWG Strategy has been extended by a year to March 2019. This document is an addendum to, and should be read in conjunction with, the current VAWG Strategy.



The 7 Strategic Priorities of the Shared VAWG Partnership

This document has been developed further to a 3-month consultation between December 2017 – February 2018 with stakeholders and survivors. This consultation process has confirmed that the vision, approach and seven strategic priorities of the current strategy are relevant and important:

Priority 1: Access

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.

Priority 2: Response

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.

Priority 3: Community

A commitment 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.

Priority 4: Practitioners

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.

Priority 5: Children and Young People

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.

Priority 6: Perpetrators

Ensure that perpetrators of all forms of VAWG are held to account and given opportunities to reform.

Priority 7: Justice and Protection

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.

What is Violence Against Women and Girls?

The United Nations 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.”¹ VAWG can take place at home, work or in public places such as on the street or public transport. This strategy covers the following forms of VAWG:

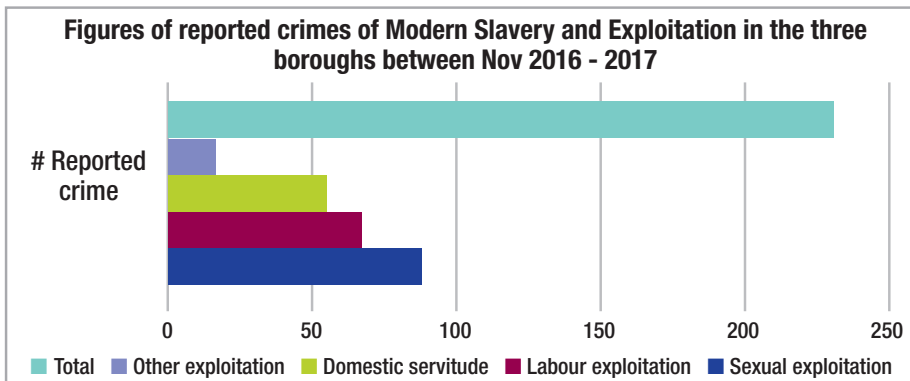
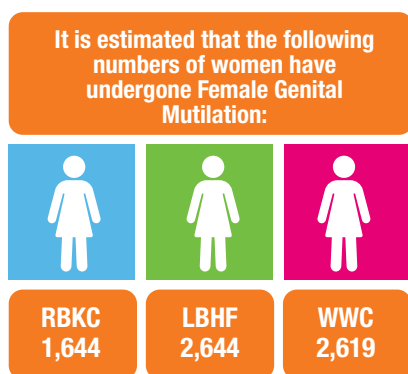
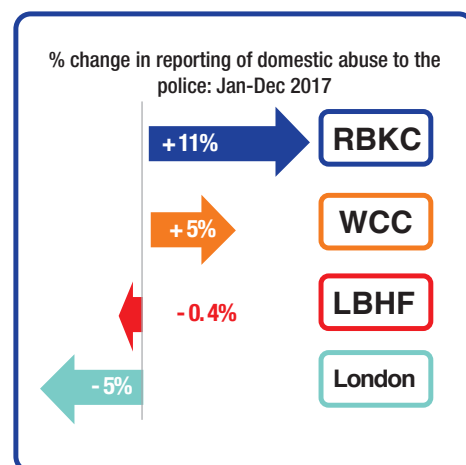
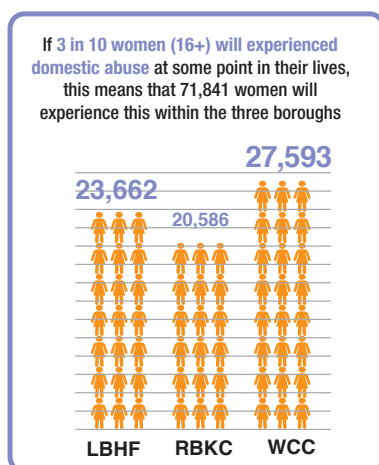
- Domestic violence and abuse (including coercive control)
- Sexual violence including rape
- Sexual exploitation
- Sexual harassment
- Stalking
- So called ‘honour’-based violence (HBV)
- Forced marriage
- Faith-based abuse
- Female genital mutilation (FGM) or cutting
- Prostitution and human trafficking

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 within our response. 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.

¹ United Nations, 2006, Secretary General's Report on Violence against women, Para 28 and 104

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. However, we do know that:



Progress in the three boroughs over the last three years

The three boroughs have worked closely with partners over the last three years to deliver and implement the commitments set out in the strategy. Key successes include:

- The three boroughs were chosen to be a Women's Aid 'Ask Me' location and 74 number of local community champions recruited and trained to break the silence about domestic abuse so that people experiencing it can get the help they need, when they need it.
- Three annual multi-agency conferences were held to coincide with the United Nations International Elimination of Violence Against Women 16 Days of Action. Over 70 professionals attended to learn about a trauma informed approach to supporting survivors, while in previous years the focus was on understanding intersectionality and VAWG and young people.
- The three boroughs were selected as a pilot site for the Mayor's Office for Police and Crime Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Early Intervention Model to implement and refine an effective strategy to reduce (and ultimately end) new cases of FGM. This pilot has led training for staff, establishing FGM clinics, specialist support for victim/survivors and to the setting up of a Harmful Practices Operational Group
- The delivery of two European projects focusing on coordinating a European response to VAWG; the Europeans Communities Against Trafficking Project with Italian and Greek partners, and the Domestic Violence: Coordinating the Intervention Project with Romanian, Spanish and Greek partners.



Agreed priorities and actions going forward:

From the 2015-2018 action plan, feedback from stakeholders highlighted the following actions being prioritised for April 2018-March 2019:

Access	Monitor performance of both specialist and mainstream services and data collection
	Increase access locations through outreach workers available at various community and mainstream settings
Response	Promote coordinated, needs led (in addition to risk led) provision and service modelling in both specialist and mainstream services.
	Ensure that victims and survivors can influence service development by including survivors' voices in all consultation for commissioned services
Community	Develop a communications plan to ensure coverage of priority VAWG areas and deliver a series of campaigns and community engagement events
	Work with local business, British Transport Police, the night-time economy, and community policing teams to respond appropriately, hold perpetrators to account and, counter sexual harassment on transport, streets and in public/private spaces.
Practitioners	Centralise and improve VAWG training across the three boroughs to increase workforce confidence in identifying and responding to VAWG-related issues.
Children and Young People	Promote a 'whole family' approach by supporting children and their non- abusive parent/guardian
	Address current gap in services by developing specialist support, advocacy and therapeutic services to children and young people who are experiencing abuse
Perpetrators	Maximise opportunities to engage with, challenge and give perpetrators opportunity to change their behaviours whilst holding them accountable for their actions
Justice and Protection	Seek justice for victims and develop services which are victim-centred to empower victim-survivors and improve their experience of the criminal justice system.



What have Survivors told us?

Consultation with survivors have shown that there was general agreement that the VAWG strategic priorities were good ones and useful to survivors. Specific feedback included:

‘When housing is uncertain it’s very hard to start again’.

‘It’s only having experienced [therapeutic support] workshops...that I have been able to identify the link between mental health and domestic abuse.’

‘Please give [professionals] more training - they don’t understand the nuances of domestic abuse.’

Consultation with survivors also found:

- The perpetrator’s version of events can often be accepted as facts whilst their own questioned by professionals. They were aware that perpetrators knew how to manipulate the system and professionals need to be aware of collusion.
- Survivors highlighted their preference to speak to female staff.
- More is needed to understanding coercive control and economic abuse – the focus is still too often on physical abuse.
- Survivors also spoke of needing some help and guidance about how to talk to children about what has happened with one asking; ‘How do you explain to two toddlers why their daddy has been arrested?’
- There was concern about legal aid and more support was needed about knowing what civil options were available and how they could be accessed.

Upcoming challenges:

From March 2018-2019 there are a number of local and Pan-London challenges that the Three

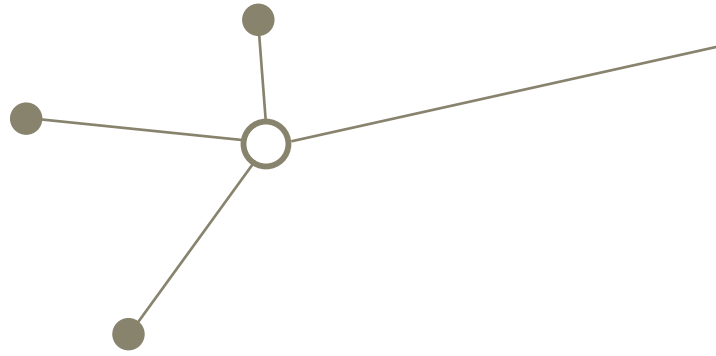
Borough VAWG Partnership is preparing for as it develops its future strategic response beyond March 2019. These include:

- **Funding:** Across the three boroughs we spend over £1m on specialist services to tackle VAWG with over 60% of this coming from external grants with funding from the Mayor’s Office for Policing & Crime (MOPAC) making up the majority. This presents a significant challenge to the sustainability of our current specialist service offer as MOPAC funding is forecast to reduce by over 50% next year, and there is uncertainty surrounding other funding streams. Direct contributions from the three Boroughs may also be affected due to the savings Councils need to make in

coming years. So far we have had significant success in applying for additional funding either directly e.g. Home Office Transformation Fund, or through partners (e.g. Tampon Tax) and we will need to continue to look to these in future. We will be lobbying for contributions from statutory partners who benefit from these services and for more sustained funding for “core” specialist provision in the Government consultation on tackling Domestic Abuse.

- **Basic Command Unit (BCU):** The Metropolitan Police are rolling out the BCU model across London which means that the current 32 borough model will be condensed to 12 Basic Command Units. This means that policing in Kensington and Chelsea, Hammersmith and Fulham, and Westminster will be bought together to form the Area West BCU which will share current officers, buildings and resources.
- **Tri-Borough:** The London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham has left the Tri-borough arrangements with the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and City of Westminster. The VAWG Partnership is continuing on a shared service basis until March 2019, however local political changes may affect this arrangement going forward.

Violence against women and girls is a strategic priority for the Community Safety Partnerships of the three boroughs. Our 7 strategic priorities ensure that we are led by the needs of survivors and work towards creating a coordinated community response. From April 2018 to March 2019, we will continue to ensure that all relevant organisations effectively respond to VAWG 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. We believe 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.



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