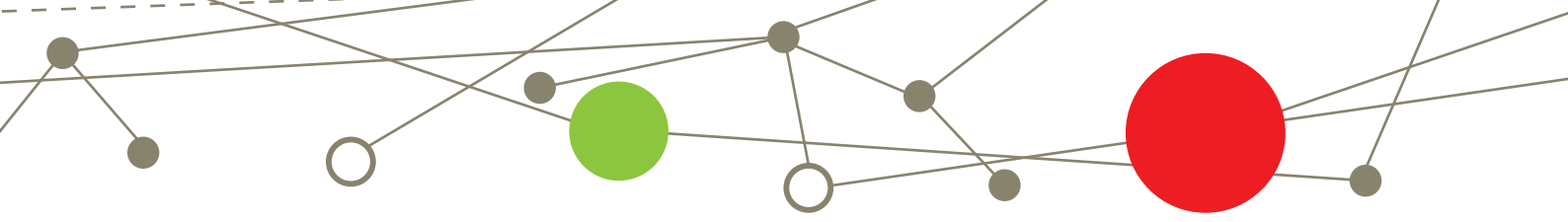


Violence against Women and Girls 2018-2020

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 2020.

The 2015-2018 VAWG Strategy has been extended until March 2020. This document is an addendum to, and should be read in conjunction with, the current VAWG Strategy.



The seven 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:

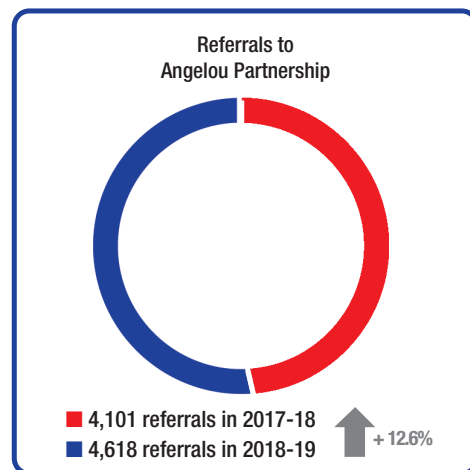
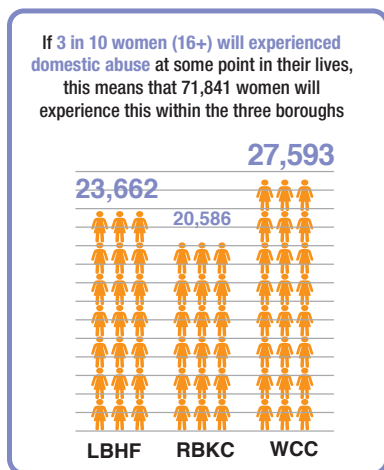
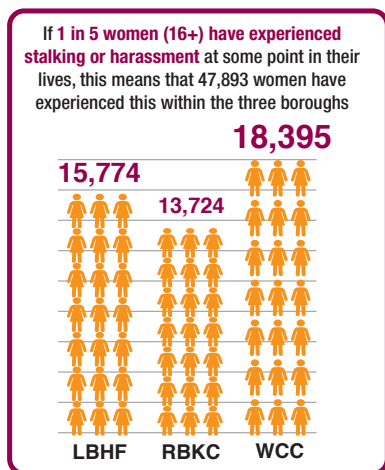
- Domestic violence and abuse (including coercive control)
- Sexual violence including rape
- Sexual exploitation
- Sexual harassment
- Stalking
- So called 'honour'-based violence (HBV)
- Forced marriage
- Faith-based abuse
- Female genital mutilation (FGM) or cutting
- Prostitution and human trafficking

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.

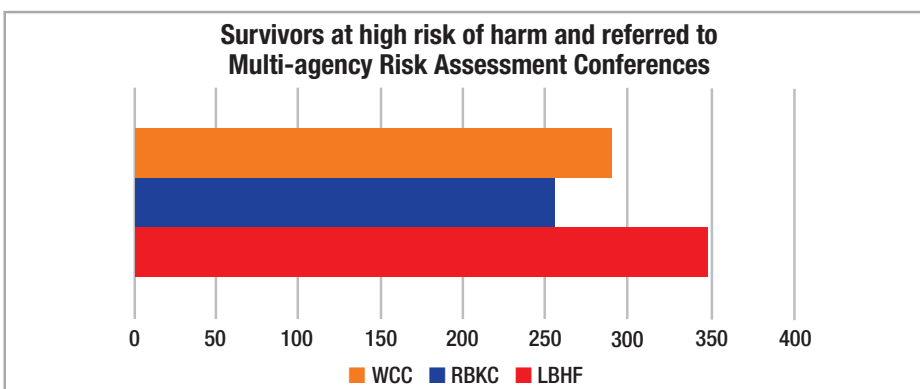
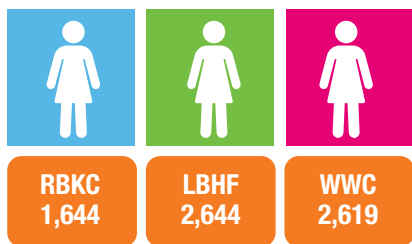
¹ United Nations, 2006, Secretary General's Report on Violence against women, Para 28 and 104

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:



It is estimated that the following numbers of women have undergone Female Genital Mutilation:



Progress in the three boroughs over the last three years

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

- The three boroughs have been successfully selected to be a pilot site for the Pathfinder project. The project looks to create a 'whole health approach' to domestic abuse, ensuring that victims and survivors of abuse receive the support they need and deserve, through a robust health response.
- We have continued to hold our annual multi-agency conferences to coincide with the United Nations International Elimination of Violence Against Women 16 Days of Action. Over 70 professionals attended to learn about appropriately responding to perpetrators of VAWG, while in previous years the focus was on creating a trauma informed approach to supporting survivors and on understanding intersectionality and VAWG.
- We are excited to be delivering a new 'Whole Housing Approach' which looks to improve housing options for families affected by domestic abuse. Funded from MHCLG, this project looks to develop and model Whole Housing approaches in terms of reducing homelessness, increasing tenancy sustainment, and providing move on options for families affected by domestic abuse.
- We have also secured funding from the Home Office to deliver 'Meeting Survivors Where They Are.' This project aims to meet the needs of families who experience multiple disadvantage through a new team of professionals embedded in the Angelou Partnership to support them more effectively, based on their individual needs and over longer periods of time. This project also involves an independent evaluation which looks at the impact of the service and the wider VAWG partnership. This evaluation will be used to inform future commissioning of services.

VAWG Addendum 2019-2020 Agreed priorities and Actions going forward:

| Priority | Agreed Action | Action Update | RAG |
|----------------------------------|--|--|-----|
| Access | Monitor performance of both specialist and mainstream services and data collection. | Annual review completed which outlined impact of work of the wider VAWG partnership; Independent evaluation focusing on VAWG partnership and impact readiness; Contract monitoring meetings held with specialist services. | RAG |
| | Increase access locations through outreach workers available at various community and mainstream settings. | Additional funding secured through the Home Office and MHCLG for outreach workers to be based in different locations; Work underway to streamline Pan-London provision with local pathways. | |
| Response | Promote coordinated, needs led (in addition to risk led) provision and service modelling in both specialist and mainstream services. | Successful 'Pathfinder' bid to create a 'whole health' approach to domestic abuse; SafeLives independent review into long term, needs led support through MSWTA. MHCLG funded Homelessness Project (Advance, STADV and Green Room). | RAG |
| | Ensure that victims and survivors can influence service development by including survivors' voices in all consultation for commissioned services. | Survivors to be consulted for commissioning of future of VAWG provision beyond 2020. Plans to create an ongoing expert through experience. | |
| Community | Develop a communications plan to ensure coverage of priority VAWG areas and deliver a series of campaigns and community engagement events. | A series of events and campaigns held over 2018-19. A communications plan drawn up for 2019-20. | RAG |
| | 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. | Signed up to the Pan-London Night Time Economy Charter. | |
| Practitioners | Centralise and improve VAWG training across the three boroughs to increase workforce confidence in identifying and responding to VAWG-related issues. | VAWG Partnership Training Task and Finish group created; Training brochure developed. | RAG |
| Children and Young People | Promote a 'whole family' approach by supporting children and their non-abusive parent/guardian. | Home Office funding applied for but unsuccessful; EU funding applied for to undertake this work (awaiting response); Joint Working Protocol developed with LSCB; Need assessment to be undertaken as part commissioning; Transformation funding to improve practice by use of Safe & together principles in Children's Safeguarding. | RAG |
| | 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. | VAWG conference held on work with perpetrators Dec 2018. STADV, DVIP and Advance project in LBHF. | RAG |
| 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. | Feeding into DA Bill consultation; Ongoing work through Impact (LBHF) and SDVCs. | RAG |



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 and opportunities:

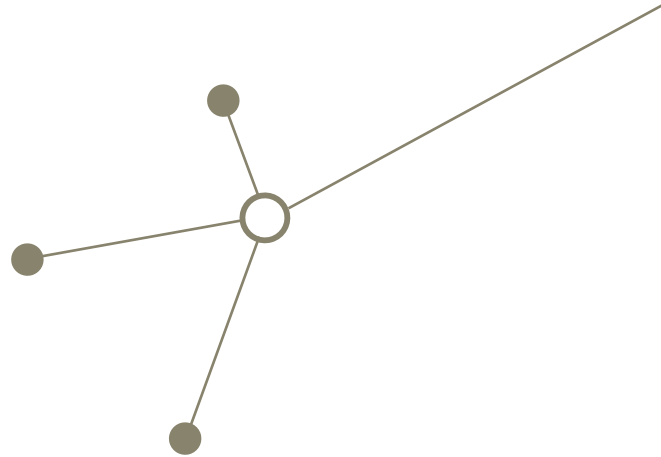
From March 2018-2019 there are a number of local and Pan-London challenges that the Three Borough VAWG Partnership is preparing for as it develops its future strategic response beyond March 2019. These include:

- **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. Funding from the Mayor’s Office has reduced by over 50% and can only be guaranteed until March 2021. This presents a significant challenge to the sustainability of the financial model 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 work with partners to review the funding model for specialist services over the coming year.

- **Demand of services:** Much work is happening across the three boroughs in supporting survivors. As awareness of services increases and referral pathways are strengthened, we are seeing an increase in people accessing services. This is a positive reflection on the work that is being done to raise the profile of VAWG, but it also means that there are increasing demands and strain on services. Going forward, work will be undertaken to ensure that demand of services is adequately met with resources.
- **Basic Command Unit (BCU):** The Metropolitan Police have rolled out the BCU model across London which means that the current 32 borough model has been condensed to 12 Basic Command Units. Policing in Kensington and Chelsea, Hammersmith and Fulham, and Westminster have now been 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 currently continuing on a shared service basis, however local political changes may affect this arrangement going forward.
- **Introduction of the new Domestic Abuse Bill:** The Government has drafted a domestic abuse bill which will introduce a number measures including providing a statutory definition of domestic abuse and establishing the office of a Domestic Abuse Commissioner. We will be using the measures to support and strengthen our local response to domestic abuse.

Violence against women and girls is a strategic priority for the Community Safety Partnerships of the three boroughs. Our seven 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 2020, 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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