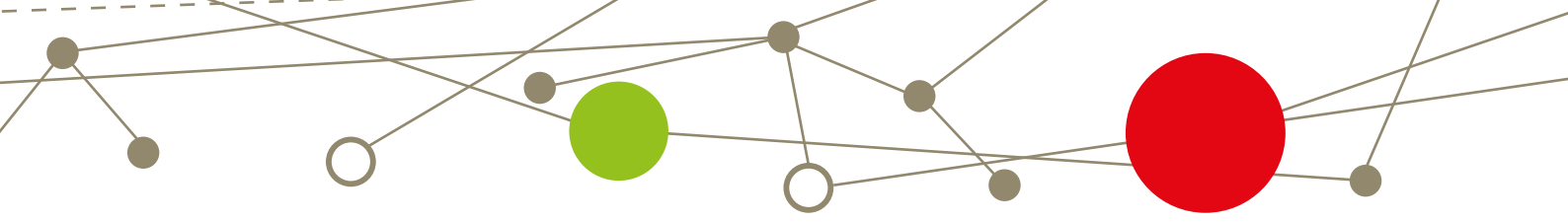


Violence against Women and Girls 2018-2021

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



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

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 November 2021.

The 2015-2018 VAWG Strategy has been extended. 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 alongside consultation 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 multiagency 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:

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

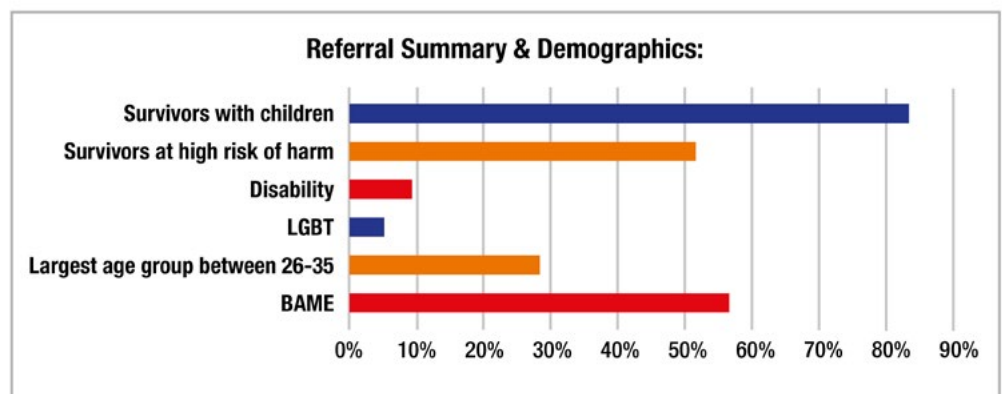
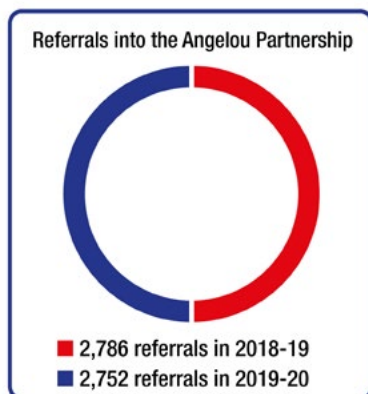
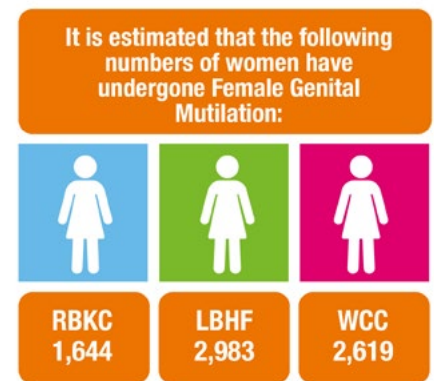
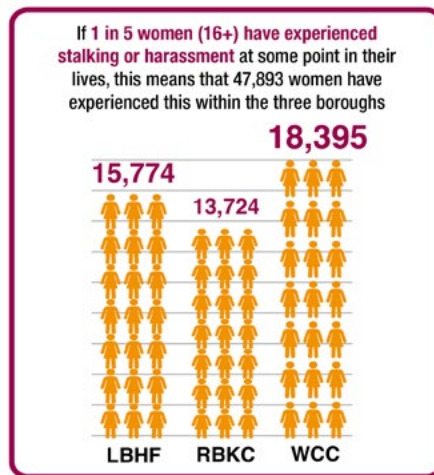
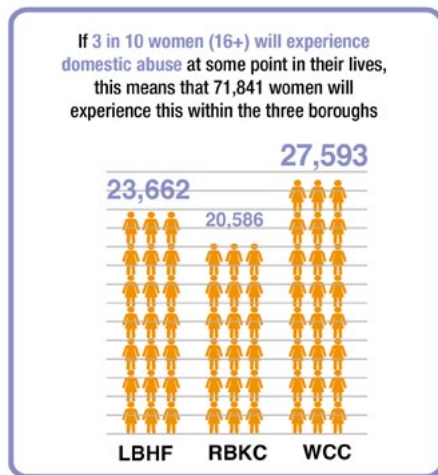
- Domestic violence and abuse (including coercive control)
- Sexual violence and abuse (including rape, exploitation and harassment)
- Stalking
- So called ‘honour’-based violence (HBV)
- Forced marriage
- Faith-based abuse
- Female genital mutilation (FGM)
- Modern Slavery & Exploitation

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.

Prevalence and Experience 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:





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:

“My favourite part was being able to talk to someone who understands where I am coming from.”

“There should be no cut-off for support – it should be flexible.”

“More training is needed for police, health, social services - all statutory agencies.”

“A big campaign is needed to educate about reality of abuse.”

Consultation with survivors also found that:

- The local response is primarily focused on domestic abuse and there needs to be a wider recognition of all forms of VAWG
- Services need to support women experiencing multiple disadvantage, addressing the intersecting issues of VAWG, substance use and mental health needs.
- There needs to be more awareness of how coercive control and economic abuse is experienced – the focus is still too often on physical abuse.
- Support needs to be offered on a needs-led basis. This means recognising that each survivor has a different journey and that responses need to be trauma informed, victim-centred and offered over longer periods of time.
- Services and support must be accessible for survivors from minoritised backgrounds, recognising their intersecting needs.
- Work in ending VAWG must be the role of the coordinated community response where everyone understands the role they play.

Progress in the three boroughs over the last three years:

- As part of our coordinated community response, our partnership created a rapid response to the challenges of COVID-19. This included guidance on our websites, briefings for professionals, extraordinary meetings to respond to emerging need, a poster campaign to raise awareness in the community and activities and events planned across the 16 Days of Activism to mark the United Nations day of Elimination of Violence against Women.
- Our partnership has delivered a number of projects aimed at creating ‘systems change’ in identifying and responding to VAWG. These include the Whole Health Project, the Whole Housing Project, the Safe & Together Model working with social workers and Standing Together’s ‘In Search of Excellence’ report into best practice approaches to VAWG. These projects have focused on change on a strategic and operational level where everyone understands the role they play in ending VAWG.
- 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 improving our response to Harmful Practices, while in previous years the focus was on responding to perpetrators of VAWG, creating a trauma informed approach to supporting survivors and on understanding intersectionality and VAWG.
- To ensure we are meeting the needs of survivors and the impact of our work is being felt, we successfully undertook an impact measurement of our strategic and operational response which resulted in developments of theory of change models to support us to achieve our long-term aims.



Upcoming challenges and opportunities

Challenges:

COVID-19

The end of the 2019-20 period saw the outbreak of the coronavirus. This has had a major impact on survivors' experiences of abuse and on the capacity of services to provide support as the country went into lockdown. The pandemic has increased need and the complexity of cases, putting additional strain on services already working beyond capacity. COVID-19 poses a significant risk to the VAWG sector and 2020-21 will see a number of associated challenges which the VAWG Partnership will need to address.

Funding for services

Funding for VAWG provision needs to be consistent and sustainable. Pre-COVID-19, frontline services highlighted gaps in provision, which have been compounded by the pandemic. There is a need for statutory services to pool resources to better respond to existing and new need.

Wider VAWG response

The response to VAWG is still primarily focused on domestic abuse. There is a need to do more work across the different strands, such as sexual violence and harmful practices.

Opportunities:

The CCR Model:

The three boroughs work as part of a coordinated community response which highlights that ending VAWG is everyone's responsibility. The CCR brings services together to ensure local systems keep survivors safe, hold abusers to account, and prevent abuse. This model focuses on the role played by statutory and specialist services, businesses, neighbours, family and friends in ending VAWG. Continuing to operate under this model will provide the VAWG partnership with a robust framework to respond to, and end VAWG.

Spotlight on VAWG:

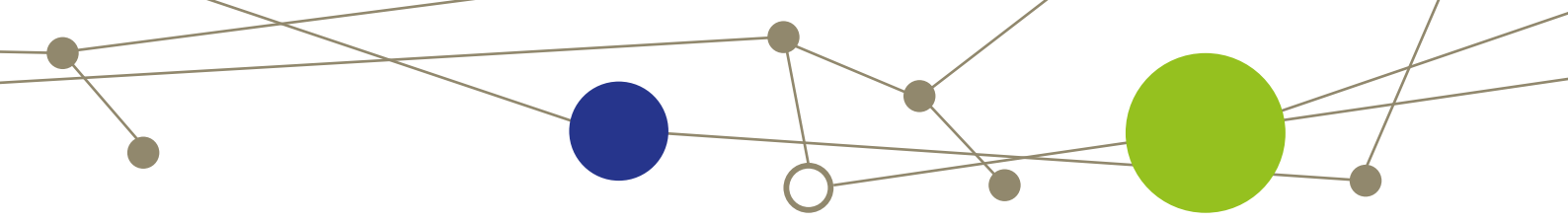
COVID-19 has placed a national and local spotlight on VAWG resulting in an increase in awareness and highlighting the need for a CCR response. An emphasis will be placed on sustaining the increase in professional and community interest to strengthen the work of the VAWG partnership going forward.

VAWG Strategy:

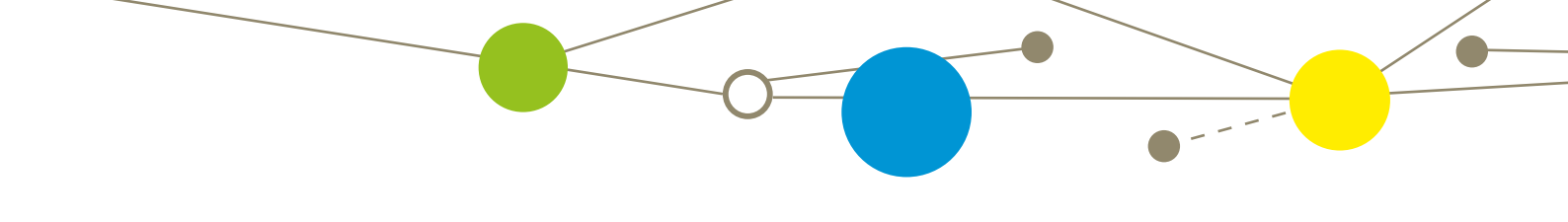
The current VAWG strategy and addendum is coming to an end and a new strategic approach is being developed collaboratively with partners. This will provide an opportunity to create VAWG and strengthen our CCR approach.

VAWG Addendum 2020-2021 Agreed priorities and Actions going forward:

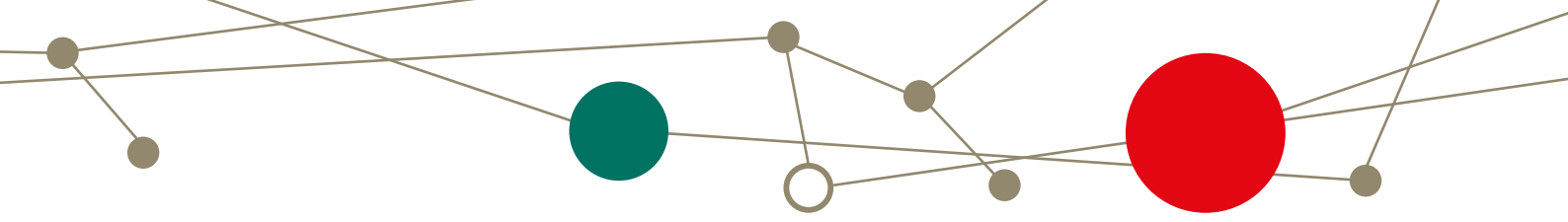
Priority	Agreed Action	Action Update	Action Impact	RAG
Access	Monitor performance of both specialist and statutory services and data collection.	Contract monitoring meetings held with specialist services with targets being met. A VAWG data dashboard to be developed.	Evidence has been gathered measuring the impact of VAWG work and plans are underway to better collect and measure data.	Yellow
	Increase access locations through outreach workers available at various community and mainstream settings.	Work underway to streamline Pan-London provision with local pathways. The Community Safety Teams to put the VAWG services out for tender. Develop a commissioning strategy	Emphasis is placed on not duplicating services, ensuring appropriate services are commissioned and gaps in provision picked up from Pan-London and National services.	Yellow
	Ensure services are available and accessible in light of COVID-19.	Identify additional funding for services Coordinate briefings and communication strategies to highlight support services.	Survivors and professionals are aware of support available during lockdown and services are accessible.	Green



Priority	Agreed Action	Action Update	Action Impact	RAG
Response	Promote coordinated, needs led (in addition to risk led) provision and service modelling in both specialist and mainstream services.	All three boroughs have signed up to DAHA (Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance) accreditation. SafeLives independent report into long term, needs led support through MSWTA to be published.	Work is focusing on 'system wide change' ensuring mainstreaming of VAWG work across the partnership.	
	Ensure that victims and survivors can influence service development by including survivors' voices in all consultation for commissioned services and strategic processes.	Survivors to be consulted for commissioning of VAWG provision Plans to create an ongoing expert through experience steering group.	Survivors voices and experiences shape the direction of VAWG work.	
	Develop a VAWG Strategy setting out the strategic priorities for the VAWG Partnership.	Development of the strategy paused and to be picked up once lockdown eases.	A VAWG strategy which sets out the VAWG Partnership's strategic approach to ending VAWG as part as a CCR.	

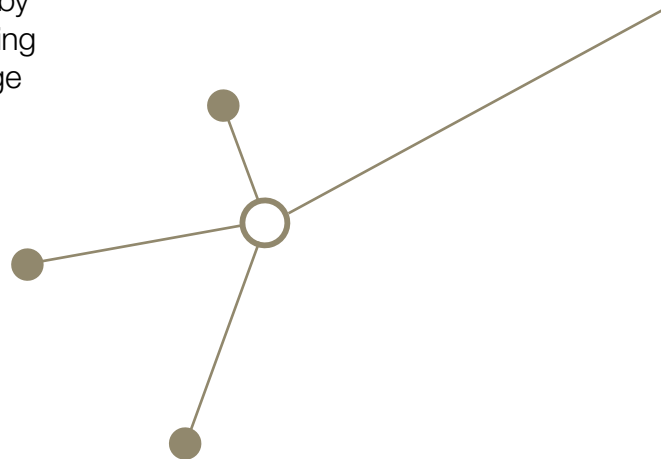


Priority	Agreed Action	Action Update	Action Impact	RAG
Community	Develop a communications plan to ensure coverage of priority VAWG areas and deliver a series of campaigns and community engagement events.	A series of events and campaigns to be held over 2020-21. A campaign to be run to raise awareness of support during COVID-19.	Ending VAWG being 'everyone's business' is clearly communicated, and awareness is raised.	Green
	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.	Sign up to the Pan-London Night Time Economy Charter. Work with businesses and local partners to raise awareness of VAWG as part of the CCR.	The three boroughs are linked in with Pan-London best practice. The three boroughs are safer for residents.	Yellow
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; Developed a training brochure.	Professionals are trained in understanding and responding to VAWG.	Green



Priority	Agreed Action	Action Update	Action Impact	RAG
Children and Young People	Promote a 'whole family' approach by supporting children and their non-abusive parent/guardian.	Safe & Together Model adopted by all three boroughs improving responses in FCS.	Professionals 'partner' with the non-abusive parent and hold perpetrators to account.	Green
	Address current gap in services by developing specialist support, advocacy and therapeutic services to children and young people who are experiencing abuse.	Embed Joint Working Protocol developed with LSCP; Schools working with specialist services in a preventative capacity. Operation Encompass taking place in schools.	Children and young people experiencing VAWG are better supported. Continued partnership working with FCS.	Yellow
Perpetrators	Maximise opportunities to engage with, challenge and give perpetrators opportunity to change their behaviours whilst holding them accountable.	Create a working group to develop a local position on perpetrator response. Identify funding for perpetrator work.	Work is being developed to better coordinate a response to perpetrators of VAWG.	Yellow
Justice & 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.	The Impact project in H&F Specialist working taking place in SDVCs.	Survivors are supported to access justice through the CJS.	Green

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 November 2021, 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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