

**Report for:
ACTION**

Item Number:

Contains Confidential or Exempt Information	No
Title	Male Violence Against Women and Girls strategy
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Portfolio(s)	Tackling Inequality
For Consideration By	Cabinet
Date to be Considered	22 nd February 2023
Implementation Date if Not Called In	7 th March 2023
Affected Wards	All
Keywords/Index	MVAWG, Violence, Women, Girls, Community, Safety, Crime, ASB, Domestic Abuse

Purpose of Report:

The purpose of this report is to invite members to review the Council's renewed strategy for tackling male violence against women and girls.

1. Recommendations for DECISION

It is recommended that Cabinet approves the implementation of the Council's refreshed *Male Violence Against Women and Girls* strategy for the period 2023-2027.

2. Recommendations for NOTING

Cabinet is asked to note the priority areas highlighted within the strategy, along with the data analysis of national and local crime data, as well as the qualitative feedback received through the *Safer Ealing for Women* listening exercise in 2022.

3. Reason for Decision and Options Considered

Ealing and the Safer Ealing Partnership are committed to making the borough a safer place to live, work, and visit for everybody. A key part of this commitment is in recognising and responding effectively to violence against women and girls.

The Council's current plan also includes a strong commitment in relation to MVAWG issues and sets out an ambitious approach to making women safer:

'Continue to take tough action to prevent violence against women and girls, end female genital mutilation (FGM), and extend support through the Women's Wellness Zone network established in the borough. We will also remain committed to enforcing our public space protection order at Mattock Lane, ensuring women have access to family planning free from intimidation, and we will also invest more than £1m in making public spaces safer and well lit.'

The UN defines violence against women and girls as:

Any act of gender-based violence that is directed at a woman because she is a woman

or

Acts of violence that are suffered disproportionately by women

This includes physical, sexual, and psychological/emotional violence, economic abuse, and sexual exploitation. Violence against women and girls can take place at home, at work, or in public places.

Male violence against women and girls is a health and human rights issue, which cuts across all areas of work in Ealing and has links with a number of local strategies, including our approach to health and wellbeing, education, Prevent and community safety. Ealing's strategy is informed by the Government's *Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy* and by the Mayor of London's *Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy*, the work of the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) and the *Domestic Abuse Act (2021)*.

Ealing's existing Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy was devised in 2015. This refreshed strategy reflects the developed knowledge by professionals working with victims and survivors as well as with perpetrators; it also reflects the changes in insight and understanding of the issues among the broader public and our residents.

The latest available data from the crime survey of England and Wales, Metropolitan Police, and organisations working with victims and survivors has been used to inform the refreshed strategy. In Ealing, this learning is additionally underpinned by the feedback from over 2,800 women and girls who took part in the Council's listening exercise, *A Safer Ealing for Women (SEfW)* in early 2022.

The strategy has expanded to recognise misogyny, behaviours, and offences that were not explicitly identified in our previous strategy. Examples of this are the inclusion of stalking within the strategy, recognising the challenge posed by perpetrators and repeat perpetrators, and a sharper focus on women and girls' safety in public spaces.

The offences and challenges explored in the strategy are:

- Rape & sexual assault
- Stalking
- Honour-based violence
- Forced marriage
- Female genital mutilation
- Childhood exploitation & sexual exploitation (this will include gang-related crime and modern slavery etc)
- Trafficking
- Sex working
- The challenge posed by perpetrators and repeat perpetrators
- Women's safety in the public realm
- Domestic abuse
- Misogyny

We know from our listening exercise that some of these issues are universal and affect nearly all women and girls in Ealing, while others are more prevalent in a specific group who are disproportionately affected.

The refreshed strategy sets out four key priorities in response to these challenges:

- Prevention
- Support for victims/survivors
- Developing a Community Co-ordinated response
- Holding perpetrators to account

Another key consideration for Ealing's strategy has been around the label we apply when discussing the issue of violence against women and girls, and specifically to what extent we acknowledge the offender within this. We know violence against women and girls is an overwhelmingly gender-based crime, where the offender or offenders are male.

A number of professional, voluntary and advocacy groups have flagged the 'passive' nature of VAWG as a label, as it implies violence is something that happens but does not explicitly recognise who is committing the violence. For this reason, Ealing's VAWG strategic partnership and the Safer Ealing Partnership formerly recognise within the label we apply that the strategy is targeting those gender-based offences where the perpetrators are overwhelmingly male. A number of other local authorities, community safety partnerships and constabularies are beginning to adopt this term.

The adoption of the term MVAWG does not mean the partnership does not recognise those instances of violence perpetrated on women by other women. Indeed, the partnership, the Council Plan, and the strategy itself recognise there are complex behaviours within the context of interfamilial and honour-based violence, as well as FGM and abuse within same sex relationships, where women do perpetrate violence on other women. However, we know from the evidence reviewed, from careful data analysis, and from feedback from a wide range of professional and voluntary sector partners that the majority of violence against women and girls is perpetrated by men, and that the complexities of interfamilial violence stem from patriarchal hierarchies that reinforce systems of abuse or control by men towards women and girls.

In London, the messaging from City Hall and from the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) refers to 'male violence' when discussing issues of violence against women and girls. The recent well-received media communications and awareness campaigns by MOPAC, including the '*Have a word with yourself, then with your mates*' awareness campaign targeting men, remind us that violence 'starts with words,' and that words matter.

We therefore believe it is appropriate to recognise male violence in the label we apply to our strategy and recognise the key role that men play in changing behaviours and attitudes towards women. We understand the fact that including these words in the naming of the strategy may create a wider debate and we welcome this dialogue and feel it is something that should be discussed and understood more. We also recognise that violence against women and girls is complex, and, for the avoidance of doubt, this strategy is clear that all instances of violence against women and girls are unacceptable and that it is our collective responsibility to protect women and girls and support them in feeling safe.

4. Key Implications

4.1 Trust and Confidence

The strategy will influence and direct the Safer Ealing Partnership (SEP)'s work to tackle male violence against women and girls over the coming five years. We know this period will bring a number of challenges, both in terms of tackling perpetrators' behaviours and in addressing cultural and institutional issues related to MVAWG within lead agencies.

That cultural context includes the significant challenges the Metropolitan Police Service is facing in relation to public trust and confidence in them, and in particular, of the trust and confidence women and girls in London have in the police. High profile and horrifying cases involving serving MPS officers has significantly damaged trust and confidence in the police to provide a safe and responsive service to report MVAWG incidents; this erosion of trust impacts the MPS as a whole.

The strategic approach highlighted within this strategy is, therefore, all the more important as a means to progress action and enable partners to act as critical friends, to constructively challenge policing colleagues and the policing service as a whole on the work they are now embarking on to root out those within their ranks who exhibit MVAWG behaviours, and to address vetting and other governance issues that have contributed to the current position. Through this approach, combined with the MPS *Turnaround Plan* and the wider support of agencies, Ealing can play its part in supporting the MPS to deliver their stated objective of creating a new culture within the organisation where MVAWG is not tolerated and, where it does occur, incidents are promptly reported and actioned swiftly as a means to restoring the trust of women and the wider public.

Key to this approach will equally be holding our MPS partners to account on their performance on MVAWG related offences, including setting clear and appropriately ambitious targets in Sanction and Detection rates for domestic abuse, given this is an area where performance has declined over a period of several years and where Ealing's performance is within the MPS lower quartile.

In addition to this role working with and supporting police colleagues, the wider partnership and the Council have a lead role in supporting our communities to regain and rebuild their trust in the police as the lead enforcement agencies in relation to MVAWG issues. Through building stronger and more resilient communities and helping to facilitate wider engagement with policing teams and Council services, we have a key role to play in developing the relationship and in helping residents take an active role in saying clearly that MVAWG behaviours are not welcome in our communities, and they will be challenged where they occur.

4.2 Key areas of delivery

As outlined above, this strategy is the second part of a new and ongoing dialogue for the Council and its partners in relation to our collective approach to MVAWG and the wider work in creating a safer borough for women. A Safer Ealing for Women was the starting point for this work, and it was important for us, prior to formulating a response or setting on a course of action, to listen to the views of women and girls in Ealing about how safe they felt, where they felt unsafe, and the type of behaviours and activities that make an area feel safe or unsafe.

That piece of work has already begun to yield important investment and outcomes. Some of the work and funding opportunities that have stemmed from the insights developed by the SEfW approach and dialogues with Members and senior leaders include:

- Funding for new high-definition CCTV cameras being funded by MOPAC/the Home Office at 14 locations across the borough where women told us they feel less safe

- Funding for new educational work within schools around misogyny and negative attitudes towards women, which works to reduce future instances of MVAWG
- The development of an Ealing specific MVAWG website for women and our wider community to learn more about MVAWG issues, how to report crime and other MVAWG related issues, and find links to local, regional, and national support frameworks and advice and advocacy
- Members and senior leaders have supported continued delivery of our Independent Domestic Violence Advocates by uplifting the total grant provision by £0.070m to both our BAME specific and universal commissions due to begin in October 2023. This uplift has safeguarded provision given the effects of inflation on services and the difficulty in recruiting IDVAs currently in London and take the total Council investment for IDVA's in the borough to £0.250m
- Members and senior leaders have also made available from April 2023 a set budget to cover the commission of Domestic Homicide Reviews, which the organisation is statutorily required to undertake in circumstances where an intimate partner or other family member is responsible for someone's death. Previously the funding of this work created significant pressures within existing budget provision
- We have also continued to have a strong commitment to the Women's Wellness Zone and will build on the offer to women with complex needs, and provide a one stop shop of support and assistance in key areas such as drug and alcohol support, mental health assistance, employment and housing opportunities, and other factors that are key to support women fleeing abusive settings to places of safety
- Utilising the provision identified in the Council Plan to makes spaces safer for women and girls, the Highways service is rolling out a significant street lighting scheme to increase lighting levels across the borough in spaces and at times identified through SEfW to help women feel safer and discourage MVAWG offending

Some of the above projects are still in the implementation stage and will be brought forward throughout 2023.

4.3 Future areas of focus

The strategy sets out some of the key areas of focus we propose to take forward as a partnership to improve the offer across the suite of MVAWG based issues. To support this there are a number of areas of focus for services to look to build on the success of a SEfW and support the ambition set out within the strategy. These include:

- Ealing has led on a consortium bid that has been submitted in the first week of February 2023 to the Home Office perpetrator fund which will see £1,176m worth of investment across Ealing, Hounslow, Hillingdon, and Harrow over two years, offering interventions with MVAWG perpetrators aged 12 and above to support them away from future offending and instances of VAWG. We currently are awaiting feedback on whether this approach will be funded and delivered

- There is a planned focus to further understand the context of MVAWG and specifically domestic abuse within our Council-managed housing provision and seek to both provide additional support and assistance to victims and families to report and exit abusive relationships, and also develop further the use of our powers as a landlord to challenge perpetrators' behaviours
- We will work with Children's and Adults' Social Care and partners to change the way the DV MARAC operates, moving from a three-weekly meeting to a daily meeting, to ensure that high-risk cases of domestic abuse are discussed with 48 hours of referral and safety plans put in place for victims and their children. In addition to a quicker response to manage risk, this also makes workflows and case management more manageable by dealing with those most at risk on a daily basis. We will also continue to build links between the DV and EC MARAC to ensure and link up enforcement actions via civil powers to tackle repeat perpetrators of MVAWG offences
- We will continue to develop a range of additional projects in advance of any short-term grant funding opportunities being offered via the GLA or central government that look to support victims through various service provisions, or develop additional services to support perpetrators away from re-offending
- As part of this strategy, Councillors and senior leaders have made a further commitment of £0.200m to fund a pilot project which will seek to focus on young women with a housing need who also are either victims of domestic abuse or other MVAWG incidents or have experience of domestic abuse growing up. The project will look to assist in sustaining tenancy and other accommodation provision, recognising that secure housing is a key aspect of resilience in relation to DA, and also to provide support to end abuse and access training and education provision to assist with sustaining housing, and reducing vulnerability to cohesive and controlling behaviours.

4.4 Moving the conversation forward and future engagement

As outlined earlier within this report, our conversation around this agenda started with the SEfW listening exercise in January 2022, which was then delivered in September 2022. This strategy is the next step in the ongoing dialogue on MVAWG with our communities, voluntary sector, agencies, and everyone else with a stake in delivering a borough safe for women.

Looking into the future, the next milestones in this journey include reviewing the SEfW action plan in September 2023 and the delivery of the various actions identified as part of the initial response to what women told us they felt would make them feel safer.

We then plan to create a new MVAWG Action Plan, to be delivered in January 2024, based on both the key objectives identified within this strategy but also based on the review of what worked as part of the SEfW response, and also to consider the emerging issues associated with trust and confidence as the police develop their approach. We will also benefit from the delivery of a number of next actions identified in this report including the changes to the DA MARAC process and the outcome of the perpetrator bid and other funding streams that are currently being developed.

5. Financial

a) Financial impact on the budget

The various spend detailed and activity identified within this report has been either funded via existing funding provisions or via grant funding secured from both the Mayor's Office and the Home Office, and other central government departments.

Any additional spend or growth provision will be developed and approved as part of Medium-Term Financial planning processes within the normal financial processes of the Council.

The current secured Council grant provision, which is commissioned as below to Southall Black Sisters and Advance, is currently out for recommissioning.

The other table contents outline the grant award and forecast spend on other initiatives from MOPCA and central government provisions. Where the total is set at £0, this means the funding provision is yet to be agreed or ended:

Funding	Recipient	Source	2022-23 £m	2023-24 £m	2024-25 £m	2025-26 £m	2026-27 £m
L.B.Ealing IDVA Commission	Southall Black Sisters	LBE	0.090	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125
L.B.Ealing IDVA Commission	Advance	LBE	0.090	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125
Home Office Safer Streets Fund	Community Safety	MOPAC/ Home Office	0.162	0.192	0	0	0
DLUHC funding implementation of the Housing Duty in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021	Men & Masculinities Programme (Adults Services)	DHUHC	0.035	0.037	0.038	0	0
Women's Wellness Zone	CGL and others	MOPAC	0.212	0.212	0	0	0
New project around housing and DA	TBC	LBE	0	0.200	0.200	0	0

6. Legal

6.1 Section 1(1) of the Localism Act 2011 provides the Council with a power to do anything that individuals generally do, subject to certain prohibitions not applicable in this case.

6.2 The Council has duties under Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 to provide support for victims of domestic abuse. In particular, under section 57, the Council must publish a strategy in relation to the provision of accommodation-based support to victims of domestic violence. The Council's strategy will influence and direct the local partnership board required under section 58.

6.3 Under section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, the Council must exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect on and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in its area. The strategy set out in this report for ending violence against women and girls contributes to the Council complying with its duties under these provisions.

6.4 The Council has a range of statutory responsibilities that are expected to increase and strengthen its response to violence against women and girls. The Council's strategy responds directly to these requirements. The range of statutory duties relating to safeguarding include:

- The Children Act 1989
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003
- The Children Act 2004
- The Care Act 2014
- Forced Marriage Act 2014
- Serious Crime Act 2015

7. Value For Money

There are no specific VFM implications contained in this report, and the MVAWG strategy does not impact on this area. The existing process for monitoring the effectiveness of the commissioned services remains. Additional options for improving VFM will be explored in the MVAWG Action Plan.

8. Sustainability Impact Appraisal

The contents of the MVAWG strategy do not have any tangible impact on environment or sustainability issues.

9. Risk Management

There are no significant risks within the MVAWG strategy. As an issue that is of significant public interest and focus, any published material relating to male violence against women is likely to draw attention and interest from the public and from people with differing views.

10. Community Safety

The MVAWG strategy and Action Plan form a key part of the Council's community safety strategy. The strategy sets out clear priorities to preventing violence against women and girls, improving support, building resilience within communities, and robustly targeting and tackling perpetrators.

11. Links to the 3 Key Priorities for the Borough

In setting out the strategy for responding to gender-based violence over the coming 5 years, Ealing's MVAWG strategy underpins Ealing's commitment to fighting inequality.

12. Equalities, Human Rights and Community Cohesion

The listening exercise and design of the proposed strategy has been undertaken having regard to the requirement of the Equality Act 2010, in particular section 149 of the Public Sector Equality Duty ("PSED"). All actions delivered under the strategy and associated Action Plans will be implemented having regard to this duty.

Cabinet is not being asked to make any decision that adversely impacts any protected group or characteristic. The contents of this report do not relate to any action that will engage rights protected under the ECHR.

MVAWG is a health and human rights issue, which cuts across all areas of work in Ealing, particularly in relation to our approaches to health and wellbeing, and crime prevention, and to mechanisms to provide support to all victims of crime.

13. Staffing/Workforce and Accommodation implications

There are no implications for staffing, workforce, or accommodation within the strategy beyond the commitment to retain existing services and to explore options to grow the borough's offer and the broader community support network.

14. Property and Assets

There are no property implications.

15. Any other implications

There are no implications that have not already been set out within the existing body of this report.

16. Consultation

The strategy was informed by a wide range of partners via the Safer Ealing Partnership, Prevent Partnership, VAWG Operational Group and VAWG Strategic Group, and by the views of over 2,800 women.

17. Timetable for Implementation

If Cabinet is minded to approve the refreshed MVAWG strategy, the Council will adopt the refreshed strategy with effect from the expiration of the call-in period.

18. Appendices

Appendix 1: Ealing's Male Violence Against Women and Girls strategy, 2023-2027.

Appendix 2: Report on the outcome of 2022's *A Safer Ealing for Women* listening exercise.

19. Background Information

All of the key information referred to within this report is included in Appendices 1 and 2.

Consultation (Mandatory)

Name of consultee	Post held	Date sent to consultee	Date response received	Comments appear in paragraph:
Internal				
Superintendent Sharon Brookes	Head of Safeguarding, Metropolitan Police West Area BCU	10/01/23	06/01/23	Throughout
Justin Morley	Head of Legal Services (Litigation)	19/01/23	06/01/23	Throughout
Emily Hill	Chief Finance Officer		08/01/23	
Cllr Peter Mason	Leader	17/01/23	30/01/2023	
Cllr Aysha Raza	Cabinet Member for Tackling Inequalities	16/01/23	30/01/2023	Throughout
External				
All members of VAWG Strategic Group	VAWG leads from each service	10/01/23	31/01/2023	Throughout

Report History

Decision type:	Urgency item?
Key decision	No
Report no.:	Report author and contact for queries:
	Joyce Parker, Community Safety Team Leader & Paul Murphy, Safer Communities Operations Manager

ⁱ Metropolitan Police Turnaround Plan 2023-2025