

EALING'S STRATEGY TO TACKLE MALE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

(MVAWG)

2023 - 2027



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FOREWORD

We want to make an Ealing for everyone – a borough that actively fights the climate crisis, creates good jobs and tackles inequalities, creating a safe home for all our communities. The sad truth, however, is that far too many women and girls now feel unsafe going about their daily lives given the epidemic of misogyny and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) we have seen across London and the country in recent years.

In the UK, a violent man kills a woman every three days, while almost a quarter of women report having been a victim of sexual assault. Research by UN Women UK has also found that 71 % of women in the UK have experienced some form of sexual harassment in a public space, with this number rising sharply to 86 % among women aged 18–24¹. This is simply unacceptable, and it is men who have a responsibility to step up and do more to tackle this scourge. Of course, not all men are violent towards women. But when more than three-quarters of British women say men don't pull their weight in helping to keep women and girls safe, it is clear that more must be done to educate and inform men about the danger of misogynistic attitudes and behaviours.

The appalling murders of Bibaa Henry, Nicole Smallman, Sarah Everard, Maria Rawlings and Sabina Nessa by men in public spaces have sparked a national outpouring of grief and anger – grief for the women whose lives were so cruelly taken, and anger that violence remains a constant threat for women and girls.

Regrettably, this problem has only got worse.

Domestic abuse rates peaked during the first and third lockdowns of the pandemic. And public confidence and trust in the Metropolitan Police is at an all-time low with over a thousand officers' claims of sexual and domestic abuse involving 800 officers², and an embedded culture of violent misogyny - with 76 % of women and girls saying they have no faith in the system³.

This is simply not good enough. It must be changed. It must be tackled.

Everywhere and every day, we know that women and girls are actively modifying their behaviour across every aspect of their lives because of the threat of violence – from what they wear, to what they say, to where they go and when. This happens at home, at work, online or out in public spaces.

We have to be clear – these problems are caused by the unacceptable attitudes and behaviours of too many men. This is not just an issue with the minority of men who are violent, but also with men who are sexist; who continue to behave inappropriately around women; who perpetuate toxic forms of masculinity; or who just stand by silently when women feel threatened, or are being threatened.

It is our duty not to simply respond to Violence Against Women and Girls – we must actively prevent and end it. We want women to be and feel safe, knowing that they can fully participate in life without experiencing or fearing harassment, abuse, or violence from men.

Building on our Safer Ealing for Women listening exercise, we are continuing in this strategy, with a new emphasis on tackling all forms that Violence Against Women and Girls can take, including digital crimes such as cyber-flashing, 'revenge porn' and 'up-skirting' and reporting misogynistic behaviour following the rise of online personalities such as Andrew Tate and Incel community platforms.

Our role as a council is that of a facilitator; putting our communities and their needs at the centre of all we do. Our refreshed Strategy builds on the brave voices who engaged with us last year in our listening exercise and sets out our collaborative approach to reduce and stop Violence Against Women and Girls in Ealing once and for all.

We know that change will not happen overnight, but we believe that together we can help to stop the men who wish to do women harm and drive forward a lasting change so that women and girls can finally live their lives free from fear, harassment, or abuse.



**Councillor Peter Mason
Leader of Ealing Council**



**Councillor Aysha Raza
Cabinet Member
for Tackling Inequality**

¹ [APPG-UN-Women-Sexual-Harassment-Report_Updated.pdf \(unwomenuk.org\)](#)

² [Met chief says 800 officers investigated over sexual and domestic abuse claims - BBC News](#)

³ [APPG-UN-Women-Sexual-Harassment-Report_Updated.pdf \(unwomenuk.org\)](#)

INTRODUCTION

Male violence against women and girls has severe and widespread consequences for individuals, families, and communities

We know from hearing the lived experiences of women and girls both locally and nationally that it has broad social, health, and economic impacts. No single agency can tackle MVAWG alone, and this strategy sets out the role we can all play in tackling MVAWG as part of a comprehensive and partnership focussed approach.

The Council Plan sets out our mission to tackling inequality and crime, a key strand of which is the Council's commitment to continue to take tough action to prevent violence against women and girls. We know that to improve women's safety we must challenge and change male attitudes and behaviours, rather than asking women to alter theirs. We must look at the root causes and encourage a culture of respect through awareness and education - especially of young men - to ultimately foster the long-term positive changes that will stop MVAWG.

Our approach is framed within a MVAWG strategy. This is because we know that the majority of these crimes are gender-based and relate to violence disproportionately suffered by women. As well as tackling MVAWG, we must also support and empower survivors to gain independence with a range of specialist services whose offer reflects the needs and diversity of Ealing as a borough. Ealing's zero tolerance approach to MVAWG includes rehabilitating perpetrators and making sure that they are held accountable for their actions.

This strategy forms part of Ealing's call to action for all organisations, large or small, to join us in tackling inequality, challenging misogyny, and making Ealing a fair and inclusive place where everyone is welcome.



1.1 Purpose

This strategy encompasses Ealing's response to HM Government's Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy and sets out what Ealing intends to do as a partnership in this critical area of work. It is informed 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), and it builds on the work undertaken in Ealing's existing Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy. Insight in devising the strategy is enhanced by the results of the Safer Ealing for Women's listening exercise undertaken from December 2021 to February 2022.

The Council and its partners are committed to making Ealing a safer place to live, work and visit. Protecting and supporting vulnerable groups is a key priority in the Council's Corporate Plan, as is early identification and intervention to prevent problems escalating.

The purpose of this strategy is to set out a comprehensive, partnership focussed approach to reducing the prevalence and impact of violence against women and girls.

The strategy is underpinned by the following themes/priorities:

1. Prevention – preventing violence from happening and/or from recurring, through a combination of education, awareness raising, identification of those at risk, and intervention.
2. Support for victims/survivors – helping women and girls who experience all forms of violence, through appropriate, accessible and quality services.
3. Developing a Community Co-ordinated response – highlighting that it is everyone's responsibility to recognise and effectively respond to MVAWG.
4. Holding perpetrators to account – perpetrators need to know that their behaviour will not be tolerated and where they can seek support to address their abusive behaviour.

Why These Priorities?

- When it comes to prevention we know that through the use of education and community initiatives, behaviours that condone violence against women and girls can be challenged and changed.
- Ealing is a diverse borough and a one size fits all approach to supporting victim/survivors is not appropriate. As well as specialist services we need all services to be trained to identify and offer support to enable them to work with the goal of empowering victims to gain independence.
- Ealing will prepare a Community Response recognising that it is everyone's responsibility to identify and challenge MVAWG and support victims/survivors.
- Perpetrators must be held accountable for their actions.



The key areas of violence against women and girls identified by the partnership which will be impacted by the responses outlined 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

The strategy also extends to emerging issues including breast ironing, forced gender-based terminations, and forced sexual health interventions. In Ealing, we know from our listening exercise that some of these issues are universal and affect nearly all women and girls in Ealing, while others may be most prevalent in a specific group or groups of women and girls who are disproportionately affected.

1.2 Definitions and scope

This strategy uses the UN definition of violence against women and girls, which is 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. MVAWG can take place at home, at work, or in public places, such as on the street or public transport.

MVAWG 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. It relates to our approaches to health and wellbeing, crime prevention and to mechanisms that provide support to all victims of crime. It is also relevant to work to tackle violent extremism undertaken by Ealing through the Prevent agenda for example, as sexual exploitation and grooming can occur in extremist groups.

It is recognised that boys and men also experience violence and abuse, and there is a need to provide them with support and appropriate services. However, research has shown that the majority of the crimes targeted are gender-based and this strategy focuses specifically on addressing violence against women and girls. Ealing will continue to work to ensure agencies develop clear pathways to specialist support for male victims of violence and sexual exploitation.

It is also recognised that there are examples of violence against women and girls that are perpetrated by women. These examples may include instances of interfamilial violence, forced marriage and female genital mutilation, in many cases perpetrated by women who have themselves been victims of such violence. This strategy sets out Ealing's clear commitment to tackle all violence against women and girls, in line with Ealing's Council Plan which sets out Ealing's pledge to 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.

Sexual violence, abuse and exploitation cover a wide range of abuses and include: child sexual exploitation; peer on peer sexual exploitation; sexual violence experienced by women engaged in sex working; women who have been sexually exploited into sex working; sexual violence and sexual violence linked to gangs as well as the wider spectrum of sexual violence experienced by women.

We recognise that, within the definition of domestic violence and abuse, there are a wide range of different abuses including: intimate partner violence; violence and abuse from family members; elder abuse; child to parent violence and adolescent to parent violence and our strategy acknowledges the provisions on abuse contained within the Care Act (2014) as well as adhering to the Pan-London Child and Adult Safeguarding Procedures.



This strategy additionally has important connections with (but does not duplicate the contents of) Ealing's strategy to tackle child sexual exploitation (CSE). Delivering both of these strategies involves:

- adopting an ethos that all forms of MVAWG and CSE in Ealing are unacceptable;
- working in partnership and developing multi-agency approaches;
- focusing on prevention, with education and awareness-raising activities for children, parents, and staff (which may cover both MVAWG and CSE);
- the creation and use of early identification systems;
- providing specialist support services for those who experience MVAWG and/or CSE;
- holding offenders to account, and helping them to address their behaviour;
- gathering, analysing, and sharing information.

Where applicable, items from the CSE action plan will also be referred to in the MVAWG action plan.

1.3 Context

National and London-wide context

Our strategy for tackling MVAWG is informed by, and aligns with national and pan-London strategies and action plans. These documents contain a number of common themes, and emphasise the importance of:

- **Preventing MVAWG from happening, by:**
 - challenging misogyny and the attitudes and behaviours that foster male violence against women and girls;
 - creating a culture based on equal rights and respect;
 - early identification and intervention;
- **Providing appropriate levels of support when violence occurs, through:**
 - good, consistent levels of service;
 - statutory and voluntary sector agencies that get the response right first time;
 - local commissioning that meets the needs of victims at a local level;
 - ensuring women and girls have access to protection, justice, and support to rebuild their lives;
- **Taking action to reduce the risk to victims of these crimes and ensure perpetrators are brought to justice, by:**
 - holding perpetrators to account;
 - increasing confidence in criminal justice systems;
 - increasing rates of rehabilitation;

- reducing rates of multiple incidents of violence, using appropriate risk management tools;

- **Co-ordinated community and partnership working** to enable effective delivery of all of the above elements, reduce the prevalence of MVAWG, and support victims and their families to achieve the best outcome.

It is made clear that addressing MVAWG requires a joint approach, with statutory and voluntary sector bodies working along with communities to provide support, share information, and agree practical actions. In London, there is an expectation that every borough will develop strategic approaches to MVAWG, which improve the quality and accessibility of specialist services, and have a local plan in place to address MVAWG in an integrated way.

In London and across the UK there are challenges around the trust and confidence in police following a number of high profile cases involving criminality and misogyny by serving police officers. As part of the Metropolitan Police Service's Turnaround Plan, robust action against a high number of serving police officers is anticipated. It is therefore more important than ever that Ealing and its partners continue their work as a critical friend to police, challenging them where needed and supporting them in recovering the trust and confidence of the public, in particular women and girls in Ealing.

Ealing's strategy has been developed in this context.

1.4 Ealing's Starting Point



National and pan-London documents recognise that local authorities have a significant role to play in developing, delivering, and commissioning services to address the needs of their communities. Local authorities have a leadership role across their boroughs, and are an integral part of local community safety partnerships, safeguarding children boards, and health and wellbeing boards. These are all mechanisms for addressing MVAWG and ensuring there is appropriate support for those who experience it.

Creating a safer and healthier borough are priorities for Ealing Council and its partners. The Council's Corporate Plan includes a commitment to work with partners to reduce crime and the fear of crime and, in particular, to protect and support vulnerable groups who are most at risk of being victims of crime. As MVAWG incorporates many cross-cutting health-related issues, it also falls within the remit of the borough's Health and Wellbeing Board.

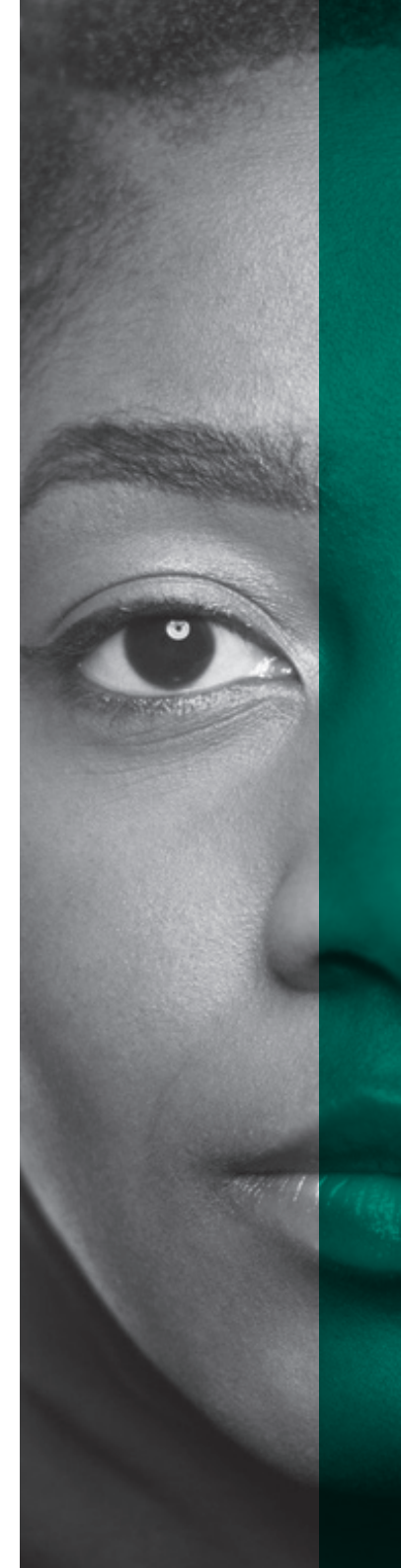
As part of the key objective of tackling inequality and crime, Ealing Council's current Corporate Plan includes the following ambition in relation to MVAWG:

'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'.

This strategy has been developed as a key tool to set out our collective approach and help partners to fulfil these commitments and achieve our priorities for Ealing.

Ealing has adopted some key statements to inform our response to MVAWG

- Violence against women and girls is an abuse of human rights.
- Perpetrators and abusers against women and girls are overwhelmingly men, but men and boys can also be victims of some of these forms of violence. In some cases, women can also be abusers of women.
- Women and girls are disproportionately victims of the forms of violence and crimes that are listed in the definition of violence against women and girls.
- Perpetrators are responsible for their behaviours.
- A co-ordinated community response where agencies and the community work together is the only effective way to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls.
- Abuse can take place regardless of ethnicity, faith, income levels, sexuality or age. However, some women and girls will be at greater risk of some forms of violence.
- Often women and girls are blamed for this form of abuse, the onus needs to be on our communities to create safe spaces where women and girls can disclose if they are experiencing abuse and seek support.
- The forms of violence against women and girls are not isolated strands: they are often connected in a continuum of abuse. Victims often experience more than one form of this violence at any one time or during their experience of abuse.
- Ealing is an extremely diverse borough and a one size fits all approach to supporting victim/survivors and holding perpetrators accountable will not be effective. A women-centred approach is needed to effect change in the borough.



PREVALENCE AND NEEDS ANALYSIS

This strategy has drawn on a range of data and evidence sources, including the national and pan-London documents referred to above, and our previous domestic violence strategy

It is important to note that there are limitations in the evidence base. There is a lack of data for many aspects of MVAWG, both nationally and at a borough level. The nature of MVAWG also means that many crimes are underreported, and many victims do not come to the attention of formal services. However, it is anticipated that delivering the strategy will help to put a greater focus on MVAWG, and encourage and support more women and girls to come forward, thus generating more evidence in the longer term.

2.1 National and London-wide Data

Domestic Abuse

National Picture

While there is no clear longer-term trend in the level of domestic abuse, there continues to be a significantly higher prevalence for female victims than males, and this is true across all categories of abusive behaviour.

A report from the Office for National Statistics published in November 2022⁴

showed that 7.9% of females aged 16-59 experienced domestic abuse of any form in the last twelve months (compared to 3.5% of males). This equates to an estimated 1.7 million adult females and 700,000 adult males experiencing domestic abuse of some form in this period. 29.3% of women had experienced domestic abuse during their adult life.

Of recorded crime in the year to March 2022, 17.1% was flagged as domestic abuse related (11.7% in London).

Personal and socio-economic factors which correlated with an increased likelihood of women being the victim of domestic abuse included: being divorced or separated or single, being a student, being ill or having a long-term sickness, being disabled, living in rented accommodation, and living in a household as the sole adult with dependent children.

The Domestic Abuse Report 2022 published by Women's Aid⁵ identified that 60% of their service users had children, while 5.9% of women in community-based services

and 7.3% of women in refuge services were pregnant.

88% of women accessing services had experienced emotional abuse, and 67% had experienced jealous or controlling behaviour. The average length of time that women accessing services had been experiencing domestic abuse was six years.

They also identified that 38% of their service users disclosed mental health issues, and for those in refuge services this proportion was higher (49%).

Data from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) in March 2018⁶ indicated that women are more likely than men to tell someone about domestic abuse that they are suffering, and that this is most likely to be either a friend/neighbour or a relative. Only 18.4% reported the abuse to the police.

⁴ Domestic abuse in England and Wales overview: November 2022 [Domestic abuse in England and Wales overview - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk/domestic-abuse)

⁵ Women's Aid (2022) The Domestic Abuse Report 2022: [The Annual Audit The-Domestic-Abuse-Report-2022-The-Annual-Audit.pdf \(womensaid.org.uk\)](https://www.womensaid.org.uk/the-annual-audit-the-domestic-abuse-report-2022-the-annual-audit.pdf)

⁶ CSEW March 2018 Crime in England and Wales - [Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk/crime-in-england-and-wales)



Police Recorded Data for Ealing⁷

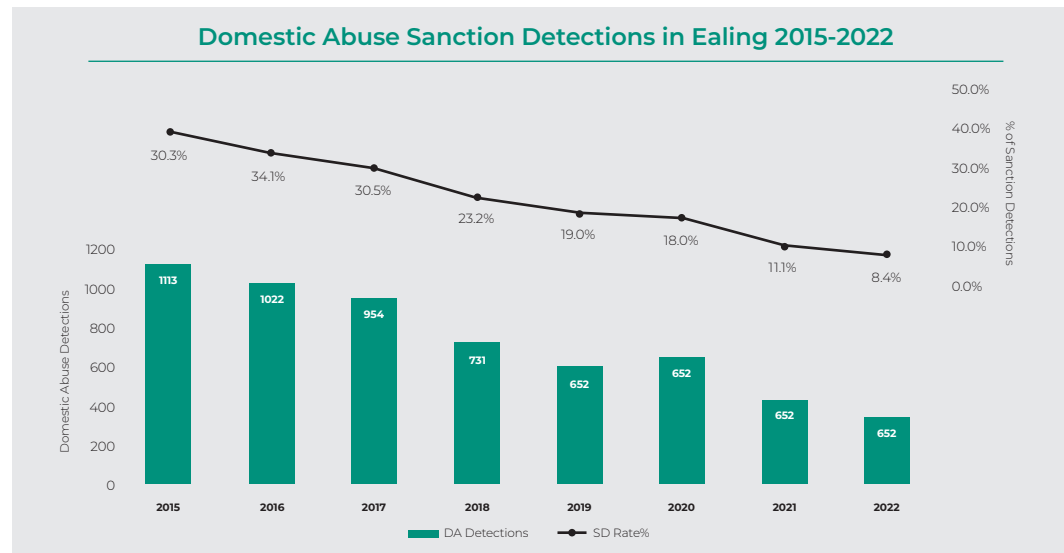
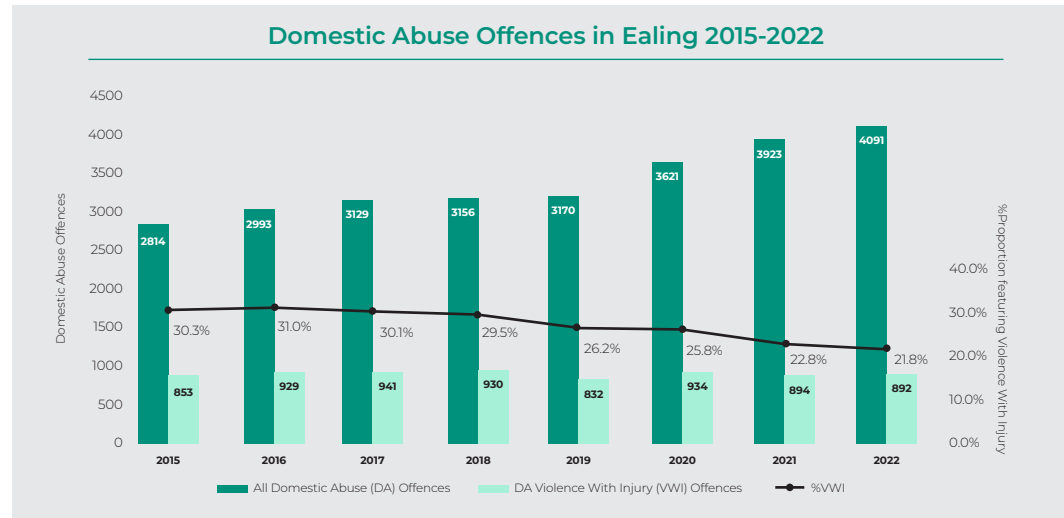
In common with the national picture, there is a clear rising trend in the level of domestic abuse offences being recorded by the police in Ealing over recent years.

Over the same period, there is no directional trend in the number of offences which feature violence with injury, these figures being relatively stable in absolute terms.

In the context of CSEW findings, this trend suggests there may be improved recording procedures and an increased awareness and confidence by victims in reporting offences, driving the growing overall level of offences that do not feature violence.

Domestic abuse detections have fallen dramatically year-on-year in Ealing, in absolute terms and as a detection rate (which was almost 40% in 2015, and 8.4% in 2022).

Ealing had the 4th lowest detection rate (of 32 boroughs) in 2022. This may be part of a wider policing trend or policy but is concerning nonetheless.



⁷ Metropolitan Police 'Stats and Data' Domestic Abuse Dashboard [Stats and data | Metropolitan Police](#)



Sexual Offences

Looking at police-recorded sexual offences, the Office for National Statistics⁸ report that for the year ending March 2020, there were almost four times as many female victims (618,000) as male victims (155,000).

They note that the volume of sexual offences recorded by police is trending upwards year-on-year, but that the prevalence indicated by the Crime Survey for England and Wales is showing relatively stable figures over the same period. However, the volume recorded by police remains well below the number of victims estimated by the survey. Recent CSEW (March 2022)⁹ findings show that 3.9% of females aged 16-59 experienced a sexual assault in the last 12 months.

A breakdown within the CSEW findings for the year ending March 2020¹⁰ showed that the highest category of sexual assault was 'unwanted sexual touching' affecting 2.7% of all females aged 16-59, with 0.8% being victims of rape or attempted rape.

Fewer than one in six (16%) female victims of sexual assault by rape or penetration reported it to the police.

In Ealing in 2022, the police recorded 360 offences of rape which was an increase of 16.5% compared to the previous year. There were 574 'other' sexual offences recorded, which was 1.5% lower than the figure for 2021.¹¹

Child Abuse

The ONS published a report into the extent and nature of child abuse in England and Wales in January 2020¹² which included findings relating to the prevalence of abuse before the age of 16, based on the experiences of adult respondents aged 18 to 74 years.

Females were more likely than males to have experienced some form of abuse as a child, with 24.8% reporting having experienced any abuse (compared to 16.5% of males).

Looking at some of the different categories of child abuse experienced by females:

1. 11.8% had experienced emotional abuse
2. 7.5% had experienced physical abuse
3. 11.5% had experienced any form of sexual abuse
4. 3.4% had experienced assault by rape or penetration (including attempts).

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

There is limited information relating to FGM but Trust For London published a report in 2015¹³ which estimated that 2.1% of women in London are affected by female genital mutilation and that this was the highest rate for any UK city. They indicated that their assessment was that no local authority area is likely to be free from the harm of FGM.

Forced Marriage

The UK Forced Marriage Unit¹⁴ provided advice and support in relation to 337 cases during 2021, of which 18 related to female genital mutilation only. Due to a change in counting procedure, direct comparison with previous years is not possible.

Forced marriage is an issue which affects male victims as well (74% of victims were female and 26% male), but disproportionately impacts women and girls.

Two-thirds of cases were referred by professionals working for social services, the police, the Home Office and those in the education, legal and health sectors.

Over 70% of victims were aged 30 or under, with 22% aged under 15 and a further 31% aged between 16 and 21 years.

On assessment, there were mental capacity concerns identified for over 40% of the female victims and over half of the male victims.

⁸ Sexual offences in England and Wales overview: year ending March 2020 [Sexual offences in England and Wales overview - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)

⁹ CSEW March 2022 Crime in England and Wales - [Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)

¹⁰ CSEW March 2020 Crime in England and Wales - [Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)

¹¹ Metropolitan Police 'Stats and Data' Crime Dashboard [Stats and data | Metropolitan Police](#)

¹² Child abuse extent and nature, England and Wales: year ending March 2019 [Child abuse extent and nature, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)

¹³ Trust For London [Updating and improving estimates of the prevalence female genital mutilation in England and Wales \(fral.cdn.digitaloceanspaces.com\)](#)

¹⁴ [Forced Marriage Unit statistics 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)



Modern Slavery

The Home Office reported that 12,727 potential victims were referred to them during 2021, representing an increase of 20% on the previous year¹⁵. Most of the potential victims (69%) reported being exploited within the UK, and over 30% of all referrals made to the Home Office were from the Metropolitan Police Service.

2,923 (23%) potential victims were female, with 1,145 of these being aged 17 or under.

The most common categories of exploitation identified included criminal, labour, domestic and sexual exploitation, and often potential victims are subjected to more than one type.

More than 54% of the female potential victims experienced sexual exploitation, and this rose to 62% for females aged 17 or under.

Violent Crime and Homicide

The Crime Survey for England and Wales for the year to March 2022¹⁶ - and a breakdown of police-recorded data published alongside it¹⁷ - provided some insight into the violent crime picture nationally. The commentary observed that while there was no recent significant trend in the overall prevalence of violent crime, victimisation rates as indicated by the survey had generally been falling since a peak at the end of 1995, while recording practices have improved recently with more violent crime officially recorded by the police between 2013 and 2022.

Domestic abuse contributes significantly to the overall level of violent crime, with 34.4% of violent offences in the last year flagged as being domestic abuse related (32.5% in London). For violent crimes with female victims, this proportion was higher with 50.5% marked as being domestic abuse offences.

Female victims of violence were most likely to be assaulted by an intimate partner (43%), by acquaintances (24%) or family members (23%). Stranger offences accounted for 9%. Those aged between 15 and 44 years were proportionally more likely to be victims of violence.

During the year to March 2022, 30% of homicide victims were female. Of the 573 females killed, 269 (47%) were victims of domestic homicide aged 16 and older, and almost all of these offences (260) featured male suspects. In London, the proportion of domestic homicides was 50 of 91 female victims (55%).

Where there was a known suspect, two-thirds of female homicide victims were killed by a partner or ex-partner.

¹⁵ [Modern Slavery: National Referral Mechanism and Duty to Notify statistics UK, end of year summary 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

¹⁶ [CSEW March 2022 Crime in England and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)

¹⁷ [All data related to Crime in England and Wales: year ending June 2022 - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)



Stalking

The Crime Survey for England and Wales for the year to March 2022¹⁸ estimated that 23.3% of women have been the victim of stalking since the age of 16, with the most common forms experienced being by a partner or ex-partner and cyber stalking.

The data equates to an estimated 5.6 million women having been the victim of stalking at some point in their adult life, and 1.2 million women having been stalked in the last 12 months, including 203,000 female victims of partner/ex-partner stalking and 510,000 female victims of cyber stalking.

Harassment

The ONS published a bulletin in May 2022, drawing on the findings of an Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (GB) in February and March of 2022 which collected views and experiences relating to harassment for the previous year.¹⁹

This found that, in the last 12 months:

- 11% of women felt that they had been followed
- 13% of women had been insulted or shouted at by a stranger in public
- 15% of women had experienced catcalls, whistles, unwanted sexual comments/jokes from a stranger in public

Women aged 16-34 years reported a significantly higher prevalence of feeling they had been followed (25%) and of experiencing catcalls, whistles, etc (38%).

A Safer Ealing for Women – local survey and perceptions

At the beginning of 2022 Ealing undertook a ground-breaking listening exercise with the aim of understanding experiences and perceptions of women across the borough²⁰. It was open from 10 December 2021 to 28 February 2022 and was primarily an online survey with an interactive map element and some complementary focus groups. Over 3,500 people started the survey with over 2,800 completing most or all of the questions. 45 participants took part in the focus groups and over 2,100 pin locations were added to the interactive map. Among the key findings were:

Women felt least safe when using car parks, parks/playgrounds and bus stops; they felt most safe in town centres and shopping areas and in bars and restaurants. Across all areas of the borough, women felt significantly less safe at night.

The factors that contributed most to feeling unsafe in particular areas were: secluded and poorly lit locations (73% of respondents), groups of people loitering (72%), being approached or harassed (66%), and a lack of other people around (61%).

The factors that were most cited as making women feel safer in locations were good lighting (93%) and other people using the area (81%).

Over half (57%) of respondents said that they had at some time experienced inappropriate or sexual harassment, comments or behaviour in a public space in Ealing. Of these, only 14% had reported it to the police or an authority of any kind. For younger people (aged 24 or under), a higher proportion had experienced something inappropriate (71%) and a lower proportion had reported it (8.5%).

Of the women who had reported an incident, 58% said that they felt somewhat or very dissatisfied with the reporting experience and response, and for BAME respondents this proportion was higher still (70%).

¹⁸ [Stalking: findings from the Crime Survey for England and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)

¹⁹ [Perceptions of personal safety and experiences of harassment, Great Britain - Office for National Statistics](#)

²⁰ https://www.ealing.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/18033/findings_report.pdf



Only 10% of women said that they knew of any organisation that supported women and girls who had experienced violent or abusive incidents.

When asked to identify one or two locations where they felt most unsafe, the most frequently highlighted areas were around or close to the borough's largest town centre areas and transport hubs, with Acton, Ealing, West Ealing, Hanwell Broadway and Southall Broadway all featuring.

Recommendations from Ealing domestic violence homicide reviews

Since 2012, there have been four domestic violence homicide reviews in Ealing. Recommendations included the development of:

1. clearer pathways to support services;
2. an information sharing process between partners;
3. an audit of referral processes, to ensure effective referrals and safeguarding systems;
4. a borough-wide publicity campaign, publicising access to support services;
5. a review of the funding for support services for non-crime incidents.

More than **2,800** women completed the online survey and **45** women and girls participated in focus groups

Nearly **6,000** free text comments were submitted providing valuable information and personal insight

Over **2,100** pins were added to an interactive map showing where women felt least safe in Ealing

Across all areas of the borough women told us they felt significantly less safe at night

The public spaces where women felt least safe included car parks, bus stops and parks & playgrounds

Secluded and dark spaces, people loitering in groups, and being harassed or approached made women feel less safe

Factors with the most positive impact on safety in public spaces were good lighting and other people using the area

A SAFER EALING FOR WOMEN

90% of women did not know of any local support organisations for women and girls who had suffered violence or abuse

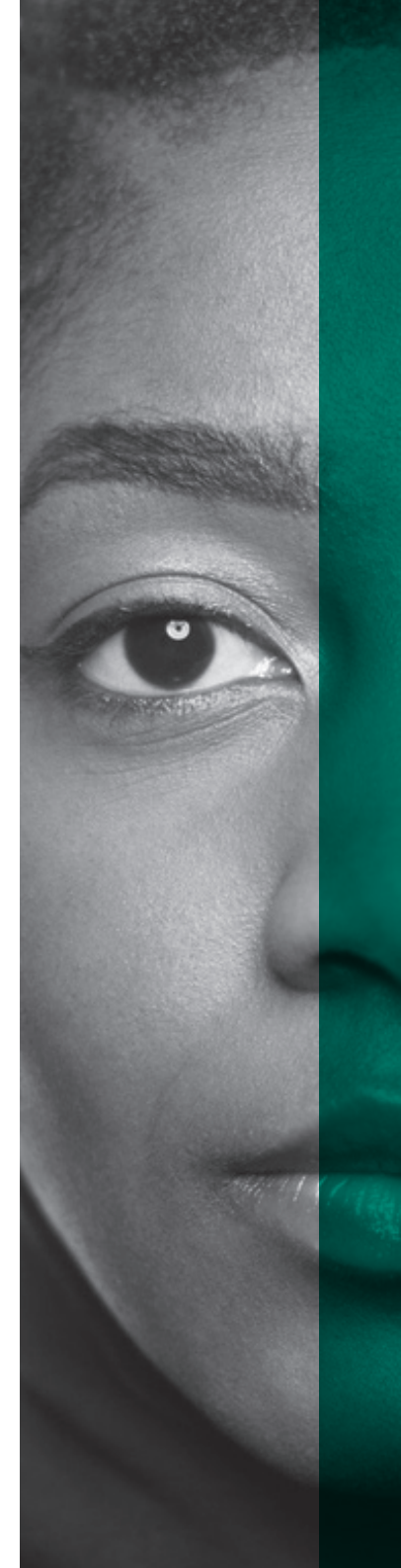
57% of women had experienced inappropriate behaviour towards them in a public space in Ealing

86% of women who experienced an incident did not report it to the police or any other authority

58% of women who made a report were dissatisfied with the reporting experience and response

Women said they wanted to see environmental improvements like lighting and CCTV, better policing & enforcement, and more education & engagement

Respondents described increasing respect and making men take responsibility for changing their behaviour as the key themes for improving the safety of women and girls



KEY PRIORITIES

The priorities and objectives that follow provide a summary of what partners want to achieve in relation to MVAWG, and why. They have been developed following consideration of the evidence base, key issues we are seeking to address in Ealing, and work that is already underway across London and within the borough

3.1 Prevention

What we know

- Violence against women and girls is a continuum of abuse (from sexual harassment through to homicide) defined by power and control which reinforces gender inequality
- Prevention is fundamental in challenging and changing views and behaviours that perpetuate violence against women and girls and we should encourage healthy ways of relating
- Forms of controlling behaviour eg financial control, stalking and online abuse are often a sign or a flag for more violent behaviour in the future
- Abusive behaviour should not be normalised which in some contexts it may have been. We need to support the whole community to prevent violence in the future
- Witnessing or experiencing violence in their home or within their own relationships can significantly impact on a young person's ability to fully participate in school and achieve their full potential
- Professionals need to speak consistently and with one voice and share information and collaborate to deliver prevention initiatives

The Partnership Response

1. Building on current programmes ensure the implementation of high quality relationship education in schools and other youth settings. Develop information/resources for parents, carers and guardians. Recognising that young people often disclose to other young people, we should look to facilitate youth champions and peer support to provide them with the knowledge and skills to respond.
2. Work with communities across Ealing to ensure a common understanding and language to describe a healthy relationship. Ensure that everyone is conveying the same message in condemning violence against women and girls.
3. Ensure that there is good quality, consistent training across the borough for professionals so they are able to identify and effectively respond to violence against women and girls and refer to specialist support.
4. Develop campaigns via a range of communication channels to deliver clear and consistent messaging about misogyny and unacceptable attitudes and behaviours, as well as information on how to disclose incidents..
5. Work with partners across the borough to ensure that violence against women and girls is taken seriously, ensuring that victim/survivors receive a good response and partners have the understanding that it is not about one-off incidents but patterns of behaviour.
6. Ensure that violence against women and girls is integrated into wider initiatives including Ealing's response to serious youth violence and anti-social behaviour in public places.



3.2 Support for Victims/Survivors

What we know

- Women and girls are disproportionately victims of the abuse and crimes listed in the definition of violence against women and girls. Men and boys can also be victim/survivors of some forms of violence
- To ensure an improvement in a victim/survivor's life we need to build up their resources including their social networks and skills so they can go on and live independent lives
- Raising awareness of violence against women and girls and creating more safe spaces to disclose will increase the number of disclosures and the number of victims needing protection and support
- Professional agencies need to deliver high quality joined up services
- Victims/survivors are often required to recount their experience to different agencies, sometimes numerous times before they are listened to and get the support they need. A more personalised targeted approach early on in the victim's journey means an improved experience for the victim, improved outcomes and potential resource efficiency for agencies
- Victims can face a range of barriers including practical and multiple disadvantages so in order to support reporting of abuse we need to support victims to overcome these barriers
- Women and girls often experience more than one form of abuse and these different experiences will have an impact on how support is accessed. We need to ensure that our approach is women-centred

The Partnership Response

1. Ensure that the development of support services is informed by survivors' experiences of those services
2. Ensure that women have a choice of support services that suit their needs, ensuring that specialist organisations that support particular groups, for example LGBT clients, older clients and BAME women, are included.
3. Ensure professionals and victims/survivors understand safeguarding pathways and know how to access support.
4. Increase communication between services, ensuring that all professionals know what to do in the case of a disclosure and how to refer appropriately.
5. Work with other agencies including community and faith organisations to ensure that in cases where translators are needed, these are not family members or from the community to enable victims to feel more confident reporting.
6. Ensure all services have a clear understanding of how to support victim/survivors.
7. Create safe spaces for survivors to disclose across Ealing.
8. Ensure that the partnership between statutory services and specialist violence against women and girls services has strong, clear and sustainable communication and pathways.



3.3 Developing a Community Co-ordinated Approach

What we know

- Where we have resilient communities, with residents better connected into a broader support network, with stronger links to others and are less isolated, they are more likely to have the tools and resilience required to report instances of MVAWG and see these through to an outcome. Stronger communities will help deliver the ambition of this strategy.
- No single agency can be responsible for ending violence against women and girls. Working in partnership across services and communities will provide the best response and outcomes for victims/survivors.
- Ealing has a strong community with networks already in place.
- There are still those in communities who may condone abuse or be perpetrators of abuse which is not challenged by others in their community. There are institutions, societal and cultural norms that mean that abuse goes unchallenged. Ealing's challenge will be to challenge and alter the acceptance and response to abuse within individuals and communities.

The Partnership Response

1. Ensure that the model that Ealing designs means any disclosure of violence against women and girls triggers immediate support, and where appropriate, connecting victims and survivors to community initiatives to reduce isolation and increase confidence and provide them with a supportive network.
2. Ensuring that community initiatives have peer networks of survivors as well as generic community groups that have been identified as safe spaces and who work with the specialist services to design suitable approaches.
3. Working with community groups to co-design the guidance and support they need to create safe spaces, deal with disclosures and refer victim/survivors to support.
4. Developing third party reporting centres where victim/survivors can disclose and be linked to specialist services.
5. Support the development of a network of peer support initiatives and confirmed safe community groups.
6. Develop tailored communications and awareness raising that speak to all communities ensuring that any materials are visible in relevant spaces.
7. Create a community response that fosters a culture of collective responsibility and accountability, where everyone has a role to play and everyone holds themselves and others to account.



3.4 Holding Perpetrators to Account

What We Know

- Perpetrators of violence against women and girls are overwhelmingly men.
- A multi-faceted approach with programmes addressing behavioural and attitudinal change alongside support for the non-abusing partner has proved to be effective with perpetrators and reduces rates of violence against women and girls.
- In the wider context of violence against women and girls, perpetrators can be intimate partners but also wider family members.
- Domestic abuse perpetrators often tend to be younger, further evidencing the need for prevention programmes.

The Partnership Response

1. Commission preventative/early intervention programmes targeting boys and men.
2. Commission accredited perpetrator programmes which are integrated into the wider response to violence against girls in the borough.
3. Work with criminal justice partners to increase the percentage of successful outcomes for victims/survivors and increase accountability for perpetrators across all areas of MVAWG.
4. Develop stronger links between Integrated Youth Services and wider Children and Families' services to strengthen multi-agency working to tackle younger perpetrators of violence against women and girls.
5. Utilise existing anti-social behaviour and civil enforcement powers to overcome instances where managing perpetrators via the more traditional criminal justice route has proven challenging.



LOOKING FORWARD

What Does the Approach Mean for Ealing Victims/Survivors and Communities in Ealing?

The commitments made in this strategy are intended to have a positive impact on the lives of not only victims and survivors of violence against women and girls, but more broadly on the lived experience of women and girls' safety in general in the borough. If this approach is successful:

1. Women and girls are empowered to disclose what is happening, knowing where to go for help and that support will be available.
2. Residents and professionals will have strong knowledge of how to support people within their communities who are experiencing abuse.
3. Individuals and communities will feel confident to challenge attitudes that can lead to violence against women and girls and have the knowledge to respond safely.
4. Relevant support that meets individual needs will be available.
5. Abusive practices that target women and girls will be recognised and challenged.
6. Residents, communities, victims/survivors and professionals will be working together to tackle abuse in Ealing.
7. Women and girls will feel safer in public spaces in the borough and feel confident in reporting incidents should they occur and receive an appropriate response.
8. Focus future project and funding opportunities that support and assist victims in the criminal justice process, see through allegations to outcome, and support consequences and sanction for perpetrators.
9. Perpetrators of violence against women and girls will know that Ealing takes a zero tolerance approach to violence against women and girls and they will be held to account.
10. It must be recognised that over the past three years there has been a number of high profile incidents within statutory authorities, including the Met Police and LFB, that have directly impacted the levels of trust and confidence communities, and in particular women, have in these services. Hence a key focus for our partnership is a commitment to calling out inappropriate behaviours within services and holding each other to account. Further to this, as these behaviours are addressed and rooted out, we must support the community and work to rebuild trust and confidence within our key public services to ensure the delivery of many strands of this strategy.



Key areas of focus to deliver the objectives set out in this strategy

As we work to consider and implement the findings and recommendations of this strategy, in addition to taking forward the identified areas of action already committed to as part of the Safer Ealing for Women report and action plan, we will also look to explore the following key considerations to assist in developing our organisational and partnership-based approach to MVAWG in Ealing:

- The Council has committed to providing additional funding via the Housing Revenue Account to support the commissioning grant for Independent Domestic Abuse Advocates which is due to be taken forward in Autumn 2023. This will see continued levels of service and ensure victims are supported to escape MVAWG.
- We will work with partners to consider further the link between housing and domestic abuse. As a landlord we have additional support and funding opportunities in addition to further interventions and enforcement options to seek to deliver better outcomes for tenants that are victims of MVAWG.
- We will also seek to better understand the effects of MVAWG on homelessness and work to address these and enable victims to access safe, secure housing.
- Work with partners within Adults' and Children's Services to further develop and update our DA MARAC process, creating better links and integration between services to support vulnerable victims and provide a route out of violence and abuse.
- We will focus on finding new or previously unrealised funding provision to build services that will primarily seek to:
 - Support victims to access and develop support networks, actively report and take forward MVAWG offences and successfully exit abusive relationship and circumstances.
 - Continue to build a perpetrator focussed response, including preventative opportunities in educational settings and support work to reduce recidivism, with targeted enforcement actions against repeat and predatory abusers.
 - As part of this approach, we will build and grow the offer made available via the Women's Wellness Zone, our one stop shop for women with complex needs. This will include additional provision for high risk victims as well as developing our offer for lower risk groups and those who are on a risk pathway to higher need.

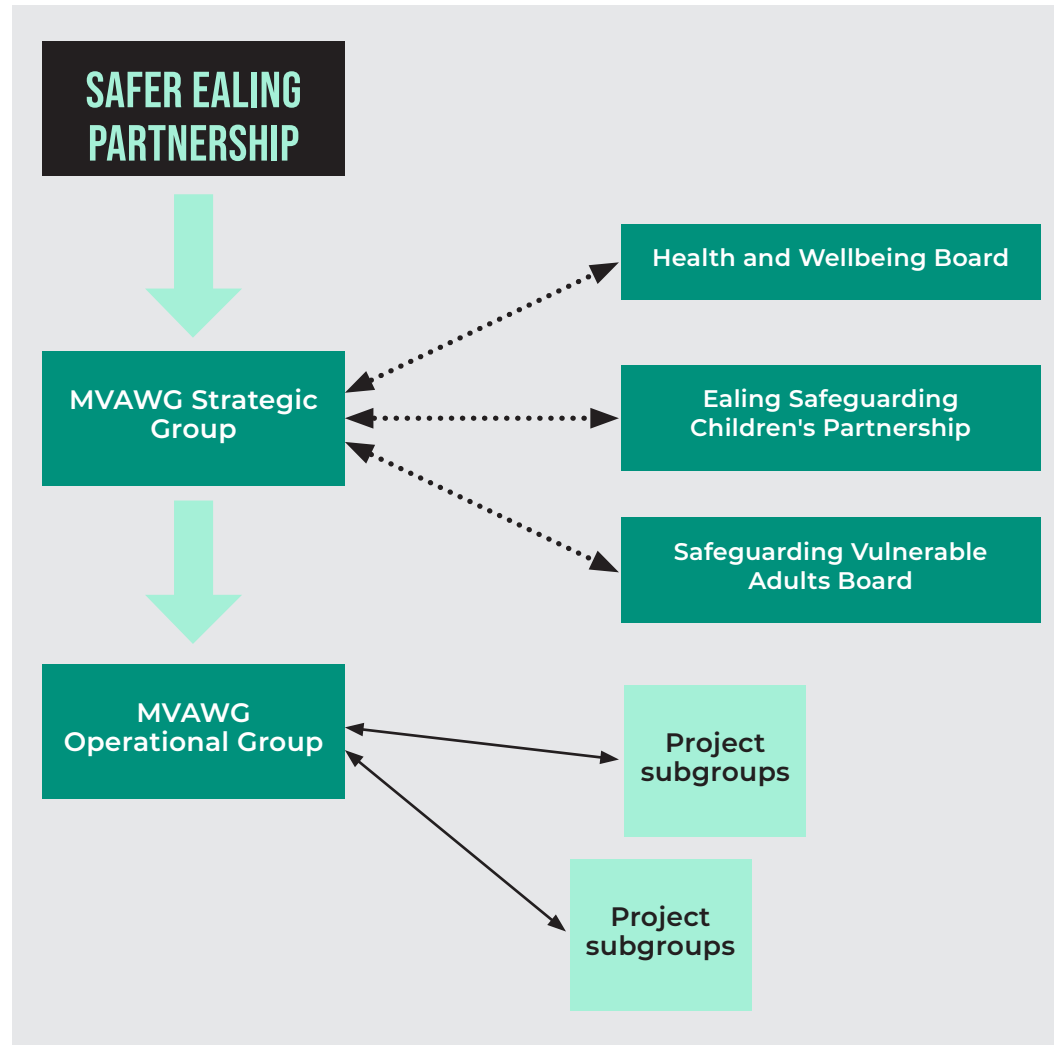


Governance Arrangements

The Safer Ealing Partnership owns this strategy and is ultimately responsible for ensuring its delivery. The MVAWG Strategic Group will oversee delivery of the strategy. This Group comprises senior officers representing a range of agencies and sectors, including Ealing Council, the police, and the health, probation, courts, and voluntary sectors.

The MVAWG Task Group will provide operational support, supplemented by time limited, task and finish, project subgroups. Membership of the Task Group aligns with the Strategic Group, but from an operational and service delivery perspective.

These arrangements are summarised in the diagram below. Responsibilities for specific objectives and pieces of work will be explained in the detailed Action Plan associated with the strategy.



Measuring the impact of the strategy

It will be important to monitor the impact of the strategy and keep track of progress with specific items in the Action Plan. In addition to considering this, during meetings of the Strategic Group, partners will deliver a joint annual report on MVAWG progress to the Safer Ealing Partnership.

Outlined below are some of the key performance measures relating to the priority areas in this strategy. More detailed measures and indicators will be specified in the Action Plan.

Although some measures have been identified, it should be noted that the true impact of this strategy will not be felt in the short term. It is likely to take years, if not decades, to fully achieve the kinds of changes needed to eradicate MVAWG. The 'hidden' nature of MVAWG also makes it difficult to understand the size and nature of the problem and measure the impact of interventions.

As well as there being limited data and evidence for many aspects of MVAWG, there are other difficulties associated with quantitative measurement. An increase in reporting across those priorities we have identified could indicate that the strategy is achieving its objectives. For example, in the short term, an increase in referrals to MARAC

would be a good way of measuring whether victims are aware of MVAWG and feel supported to seek help. In the longer term, though, we would expect to see a reduction in this number, as the combined prevention-related activities take effect.

Furthermore, victims and perpetrators will have different experiences, which cannot be measured simply as a number or statistic. As part of the ongoing review of the strategy, it will be important to seek feedback from the people we come into contact with. Members of the MVAWG Strategic Group and Operational Group will have a key role to play in this.

Performance indicators

Priority 1: Preventing Violence Against Women and Girls

To be measured by:

- An increase in awareness of MVAWG, including how to report and where to seek advice;
- A long-term reduction in MVAWG-related crime – as indicated by crime survey data and local police data analysis;
- An increase in appropriate referrals – as indicated by MARAC referral numbers and quality assurance feedback.

Priority 2: Improving Support for Victims and Survivors

To be measured by:

- Improvements in the user experience – as indicated by feedback to MVAWG groups and agencies.

Priority 3: Developing a Community Response

To be measured by:

- Improvements in the user experience – as indicated by feedback to MVAWG groups and agencies;
- Communities actively support tackling violence against women and girls by promoting campaigns, work in partnership to tackle issues within their communities.

Priority 4: Perpetrators

To be measured by:

- An increase in detection sanction rates – as indicated by police data;
- A reduction in the number of repeat victims – as indicated by police data and MARAC cases;
- The percentage of perpetrators engaged in and successfully completing programmes addressing their offending.



CONCLUSION

Ealing and its wider partnership have, over the past four years, delivered significant outcomes in areas relating to MVAWG, establishing the Women's Wellness Zone and taking ground-breaking action to protect women accessing abortion services from intimidation and interference in the UK's first Safe Zone.

More recently, the Safer Ealing for Women listening exercise provided unique insight from women living in and visiting our borough around their perceptions of safety and what they expect us as a community safety partnership to do about it. The challenge is now to build on this and to ensure tackling male violence against women in all of its forms is at the heart of the Safer Ealing Partnership's operational work.

There is clearly still much to do to end male violence towards women and girls. We believe this strategy sets out the ambition of the partnership, providing the approach and direction needed.

