

**Executive Response
to the Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny
Committee Report
on Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)**

9th December 2020

Contents

1. Introduction.....	2
2. Executive Decisions and Action.....	3
The Council’s commitment to an overarching narrative of gender equality.....	3
2.1 Recommendation: 1.....	3
2.2 Recommendation: 2.....	4
Embedding Knowledge and Training.....	5
2.3 Recommendation: 3.....	5
2.4 Recommendation: 4.....	7
Housing.....	8
2.5 Recommendation: 5.....	8
2.6 Recommendation: 6.....	9
2.7 Recommendation: 7.....	9
Processes, Data and Contract Monitoring.....	10
2.8 Recommendation: 8.....	10
Facilities.....	11
2.9 Recommendation: 9.....	11
2.10 Recommendation: 10.....	12
3. Additional responses.....	14
No further individual actions are required for these items.	14

1. Introduction

- 1.1. On 1st October 2020, the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee made a report and recommendations to the Cabinet on Violence Against Women. Section 9Fe of the Local Government Act 2000 provides a duty of the executive to respond to overview and scrutiny committee, requires that the executive respond to the overview and scrutiny committee indicating what (if any) action the authority, or the executive, proposes to take,
- 1.2. The Cabinet's Executive Response and decisions against those recommendations are provided here below, under the thematic headers of the scrutiny report, with the Cabinet's decisions and actions summarised at section 10; - *Executive Decisions and Actions*.
- 1.3. In addition to the ten main scrutiny recommendations, the Cabinet would like to offer a response to the additional issues and proposals within the report, to provide reassurance to members that these items are part of our core service delivery and remain on our agenda.

2. Executive Decisions and Action

The Council's commitment to an overarching narrative of gender equality

2.1 Recommendation: 1

That the approach taken by the Council and its officers should align with our contextual safeguarding work and encourage the whole community to play a part – initiatives to raise awareness should not only to be directed at perpetrators or victims.

Executive Response:

The council and its officers believe in a contextual safeguarding approach, which recognises that vulnerable people are at risk from influences outside the home, this approach requires professionals to look beyond the family to the wider community, associations, neighbourhoods, schools, colleges, workspaces and public spaces when safeguarding against VAWG. These spaces play a significant role in forming the culture, attitudes and behaviours that normalise and reinforce violence against women and girls. The attitudes that tolerate gender-based violence must be challenged at every level, in every setting in order to see a reduction in these crimes.

Education and awareness raising on domestic abuse, healthy relationships and gender inequality must be embedded across the community so it is a consistent message. Only with this kind of societal shift will we see communities playing a larger part in challenging perpetrators, supporting victims and protecting young people from becoming the next generations of victims and perpetrators of VAWG.

The corporate domestic abuse champion's programme was established to make a significant step towards this culture shift within the council. Alongside the 1-1 support offered, part of the champion role is to advocate and raise awareness about domestic abuse within their teams and across the council.

Training and awareness raising opportunities offered across the community to those in positions which enable them to disseminate learning within their neighbourhoods, e.g. business owners, community leaders, faith leaders, pub landlords, clubs and residents associations. This would equip individuals to become informal domestic abuse advocates within their community and help facilitate the much needed culture shift.

Decision: Agreed

Actions:

N.o	Action	Agency	By When
1.1	Training and awareness raising could also be offered across the community to those in positions, which enable them to disseminate learning within their neighbourhoods, social and family networks, and work places.	VAWG Network / Community Safety	October 2021
1.2	Further training to staff across the organisation and elected members on the dynamics and root causes of domestic abuse and VAWG, this will equip people with the knowledge to advocate both within the council and local communities	Community Safety	July 2021
1.3	To continue developing a corporate domestic abuse champions program	Community Safety	April 2021
1.4	Identify key wider community champions	Strategy and Partnership	April 2021
1.5	Develop a Training plan to include a universal train the trainer program (See recommendation 3)	Community Safety	April 2021
1.6	Training log / register maintained	Community Safety	October 2021

2.2 Recommendation: 2

That a comprehensive engagement and communications strategy be devised and materials developed to use with a diverse range of different community stakeholders, developed by considering feedback from those with lived experience of domestic abuse and violence against women. The Safer Brent Partnership to share this with elected members.

Executive Response:

The Community Safety Team work alongside the Communications team at Brent Council to deliver a communication and promotion campaign across the year at key periods to highlight Domestic Abuse and VAWG. Included in this are key events for International Women’s Day, White Ribbon Day and the 16 Days of Activism to eliminate violence against women and girls. There has also been a range of publicity and campaigns at other times in the year including a very extensive campaign during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic “lockdown is no excuse for domestic abuse” which was rolled out to over 100 pharmacies and local retailers across Brent.

With additional resources and support from the VAWG network, we can further enhance the engagement and communications approach beyond the activities already being undertaken. The ultimate aim is to make the council and its services more accessible for victims / survivors and perpetrators especially those from “harder to reach communities”.

Decision: Agreed

Actions:

N.o	Action	Agency	By When
2.1	Consultation with victim survivors in designing materials to raise awareness	Community Safety / DA Provider	April 2021
2.2	Develop a bespoke communication strategy for VAWG aligned with the Safer Brent Strategy	Community Safety	April 2021
2.3	Include Key actions within current DA action plan	Community Safety	December 2021
2.4	Develop links with Community Stakeholders	Strategy and Partnership	April 2021
2.5	Source additional funding to enhance communication materials	Community Safety / VAWG Network	July 2021

Embedding Knowledge and Training

2.3 Recommendation: 3

That a training and development plan is put in place to improve staff knowledge and skills across staff teams and departments. That an audit be carried out what training specialist staff have had and how up to date their knowledge of best practice is, identifying any critical gaps in training and rectify and training insufficiencies within six to nine months.

Executive Response:

Within the current contract, ADVANCE are commissioned to deliver 24 multi-agency training sessions per year on Domestic Abuse and MARAC. These sessions are either offered to all Brent staff via the safeguarding partnership website or delivered directly to specific services, e.g. Housing, Metropolitan Police, and GPs.

The domestic abuse and MARAC sessions are advertised via 'The Brent Safeguarding Partnership learning network', which provides free multi-agency safeguarding training to professionals and volunteers who work with vulnerable adults/ adults at risk and children. Through this multi-agency platform we currently offer x4 sessions a year for up to 100 delegates in total (this number may change due to transition to virtual sessions)

Each delegate is encouraged to complete pre course questionnaire to establish their knowledge and understanding on the subject followed by a post evaluation to ascertain an increase in knowledge and key learning points they have taken away that will be cascaded throughout teams.

The learning management system is an intelligent learning data system that stores all attendance records and can breakdown evaluation forms. This data is provided at Forum meetings and available in annual reports.

In the response to Recommendation 1, we suggest training being offered to community members as part of the contextual safeguarding approach. In the current contract, there is limited capacity to offer more sessions than what is already being delivered. However, Brent Council will be re-commissioning this service in the coming year, with the new service commencing in September 2021 and a larger training offer could be included in the new service specification, if additional funding to supporting an increase in delivery can be identified.

Alongside general training on domestic abuse, further training on specialist areas of VAWG for staff throughout the council could be developed with partners or sourced. Included in this could be training around supporting Eastern European Communities (a recommendation from the DHR into the death of Elena), Harmful Practices (FGM, Faith Based Abuse, and Forced Marriage), and Domestic Abuse within LGBT communities and child/adolescent to parent violence. The recommendation would be dependent on sourcing additional funding for an additional training budget, or if third sector specialist partners, with selected staff having access to additional training sessions free, can attend and disseminate learning.

An annual performance and quality audit is undertaken by the commissioner as well as quarterly monitoring meetings. In addition, the commissioned services are contractually responsible for ensuring appropriate training for all their staff as stated within the contract:

'The Provider will be responsible for ensuring all of its staff employed in the Brent Services are appropriately trained, multi-skilled and experienced in domestic abuse interventions. Staff employed as IDVAs will have either completed the SafeLives IDVA training or be committed to do so.'

Regarding staff within different council departments, it is the responsibility of the individual departments to identify key training and development for the role and post holder, to ensure their customer facing staff are appropriately trained. Therefore, we would recommend a slight amendment to this action, as there is no statutory or legal requirement to mandate.

Decision: Amended as;

That a training and development plan is put in place to improve staff knowledge and skills across staff teams and departments. That an audit be carried out **to identify when and what** training specialist staff have had **and offering a range of courses and learning opportunities to rectify any training insufficiencies** within six to nine months.

Actions:

N.o	Action	Agency	By When
3.1	Collate feedback from Departments to confirm frontline staff training	Learning and Development	January 2021
3.2	Signpost staff and departments to available training sessions or key learning to rectify any insufficiency	Learning and Development	April 2021
3.3	Further training on specialist areas of VAWG for staff throughout the council could be developed with partners. Included in this could be training around supporting Eastern European Communities	Learning and development / Community Safety	July 2021
3.4	Develop an annual training and development plan	Community Safety / Commissioner	August 2021

2.4 Recommendation: 4

That a plan be developed for how the Council supports the training needs of its partners in the community and voluntary sector.

Executive Response:

The council currently promote and advertise all VAWG and domestic abuse related training online through the independent safeguarding partnership. Our Voluntary sector partners can access all training and all attendees complete a course evaluation form upon completion.

In addition, the council has designed and produce a monthly information and learning newsletter, which is circulated to all key partners to disseminate and utilise. This offers partners the opportunity to obtain key relevant updates to support professional learning

Decision: Agreed

Actions:

N.o	Action	Agency	By When
4.1	Maintain the monthly DA / VAWG newsletter review after 12 months	Community Safety	Ongoing
4.2	Seek feedback from partners on their use and views of the newsletter	Community Safety	June 2021
4.3	Include training needs of partners and community within the annual training and development plan (Action 3.4)	Community Safety / Commissioner	August 2021
4.4	To continue advertising sessions via Brent safeguarding partnerships and other platforms.	Learning & Development	Ongoing

Housing

2.5 Recommendation: 5

That the Council gain Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation and embed best practice.

Executive Response:

Housing as a whole service is committed to achieving the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation and embed best practice. This assessment is split into two parts, Housing Needs and Brent Housing Management. On 6th October 2020, Brent Housing Needs completed the assessment and successfully met all criteria required for the accreditation. Within the feedback, DAHA stated, “*We feel assured that survivors approaching Brent Council will always get the support they need and the DA team are fantastic advocates for so many women.*” This is a reflection of the high standard of service delivered by the dedicated Domestic Abuse team in Housing Needs and shows the difference they make to women and girls who reach out to the Council for help. Brent Housing Management are scheduled to be assessed in January 2021, and the service is confident will also demonstrate the services adoption of DAHA standards. Once awarded, Brent Council will be the first Local Authority to achieve the DAHA accreditation for both Housing Needs and Housing Management.

Decision: Agreed

Actions:

N.o	Action	Agency	By When
5.1	Continue to review the recommendations from DAHA and embed within BHM	BHM	December 2020

5.2	Continue to roll out training on domestic abuse to all areas of BHM	BHM	December 2020
5.3	Develop a briefing for external contractors on how to report concerns	BHM	December 2020
5.4	Complete the assessment from DAHA	BHM	January 2021

2.6 Recommendation: 6

That a strategic alliance with at least one other borough be sought, either outside of London or through the Pan London scheme, to facilitate housing for those who need to move for their safety.

Executive Response:

The Housing Service will explore this recommendation however; any alliance would be dependent on being able to reciprocate accommodation for the partnering authority. Brent is an active member of the Pan-London scheme and utilises this to facilitate moves for those who cannot safely remain in the borough.

Decision: Agreed

Actions:

N.o	Action	Agency	By When
1.1	Review a sample of cases which have used the Pan London scheme to assess effectiveness / identify any opportunities for improvement	Housing Needs	January 2021

2.7 Recommendation: 7

That the Council consider building its own women's refuge that can take older teenaged male children, who may not be accepted in a refuge currently - through our council house-building programme.

Executive Response:

Where possible, the service avoids using B&B for Domestic clients, and are currently leasing properties for women fleeing Domestic Abuse.

One was procured in January 2020 and is a six-bedded home, with two kitchens, three bathrooms (including large ensuite), large garden and communal lounge with space to conduct one-to-one sessions. The unit is of a very high standard compared to a B&B. It is females only from both outside and within the Brent area into this property. Through funding via MHCLG, this home also have a dedicated support worker.

The service is delivered by our existing DA service providers (DePaul and EACH), who deliver 19 units of accommodation across 3 refuge services for women fleeing Domestic Abuse, as well as a service for single complex women.

Another achieve was procured in August 2020. This is a five-bedded property, with 1 kitchen, 2 bathrooms, no communal lounge and large garden. This unit is also of a very high standard. It is females only from both outside and within the Brent area into this property however, only Brent Residents that are high risk are placed at this unit.

There is not a support worker at Booth Road but an alternative of weekly surgeries is being developed.

The Housing Supply and Partnership service has started to explore potential locations and costings for the development of a refuge, owned by the Council.

Decision: Agreed

Actions:

N.o	Action	Agency	By When
1.1	Explore possible locations	Housing Supply and Partnerships	January 2021
1.2	Develop a specification for a refuge	Housing Needs Housing Management	January 2021
1.3	Develop feasibility study and gain approval for development	Housing Supply and Partnerships	2021

Processes, Data and Contract Monitoring

2.8 Recommendation: 8

Ensure that our commissioned services collect feedback from victims and survivors to use to improve services; and demographic data on ethnicity, languages spoken –to inform Joint Strategic Needs Assessments, and so that we can more accurately assess needs and prioritise resources.

Executive Response:

The commissioned providers, ADVANCE and RISE collect and report information on the demographics of the service users with regards to all nine protected characteristics as well as the addresses, support plans and needs, risk levels and feedback of the victims/survivors and perpetrators. This information is reported back quarterly and monitored against agreed KPIs to Community Protection, Children, and Young People’s Service as well as to partners at the VAWG Delivery Group.

The VAWG delivery board and quarterly monitoring meetings also provide an opportunity for providers raise any issues and challenges with the commissioners and partner agencies. The dataset would be greatly improved if it also contained information held by non-commissioned / voluntary sector services, however the information shared with the council from external partners is limited. Each external agency has their own reporting mechanisms and information is mainly shared within their commissioning structure.

The Community Protection Team also have access to data regarding police reports and will regularly analyse and report back to VAWG partners on the demographics of victims and perpetrators within Brent. This level of analytics is limited, firstly because it only reflects those who have reported to the police and secondly because police reporting is limited; e.g. ethnicities are broken down into six IC Codes that does not allow any detail on specific nationalities and ethnicities.

Decision: Agreed

Actions:

N.o	Action	Agency	By When
8.1	Continued monitoring of performance including key data sets	Commissioned provider	quarterly
8.2	Share relevant data for the JSNA	Community Safety	As required
8.3	To improve data sharing of victim / survivors supported by voluntary community sector	VAWG network	Quarterly
8.4	When recommissioning services, ensure current service demand and relevant data set information is used to project demand	Commissioner	August 2021

Facilities

2.9 Recommendation: 9

That safety audits be carried out to identify risks for premises where women need to access support for Violence Against Women and Girls.

Executive Response:

Currently where all IDVA and Advance Minerva delivery takes place, the practitioner will ensure a risk assessment for safety is completed. The current delivery of our Chrysalis one stop shop also included a comprehensive risk assessment to ensure appropriate safeguards were in place for victim / survivors.

The council does not own external partner agency buildings, therefore is limited to making any significant changes if required. Therefore, we recommend a slight amendment to this action to reflect council owned facilities as this will enable us to have additional control to influence changes to increase safety and minimise risk.

The safety of those who come forward to seek support after disclosing Domestic abuse is a high priority and our services are focused on supporting victim / survivors to feel safe. As highlighted within the scrutiny report page 10, Advance satisfaction rates ‘98.5% of survivors who feel safer after using the service...’

The report also states ‘On average high-risk victims live with domestic abuse for 2.3 years and medium risk victims for 3 years before getting help.’¹With this knowledge, every location is a potential opportunity where a woman may disclose her abuse, therefore amending this recommendation will give assurance that we have considered places of safety for victims / survivors.

Decision: Amended as

That safety audits be carried out to identify risks for **council** premises where women need to access support for Violence Against Women and Girls.

Actions:

N.o	Action	Agency	By When
9.1	IDVA co located locations in council premises - ensure risk assessments are reviewed	Community safety	October 2021
9.2	Any risks identified are shared immediately through escalation	Commissioned provider	October 2021
9.3			

2.10 Recommendation: 10

That it be ensured that all facilities and services are accessible to disabled women) and that the communications material and websites provide different accessible formats of information for women and girls from all sections of the community and with hearing or visual impairments to contact support services.

Executive Response:

As a service provider, Brent Council is required to make anticipatory reasonable adjustments to ensure that disabled service users have equitable access to all services.

To make our website easier to use, the site uses a tool called ‘Browse aloud, a piece of software which includes text to speech functionality, dyslexia software and a

¹ <https://safelives.org.uk/policy-evidence/about-domestic-abuse/how-long-do-people-live-domestic-abuse-and-when-do-they-get>

translation tool with over 100 languages. You can also use it to change colour schemes, font sizes and style. British Sign Language (BSL) users can also contact us using their webcam from home with the Sign Video BSL Live service.

Over the past 12 months, we have been working to make our web services compliant with the **Web Content Accessibility Guidelines version 2.1** AA standards. We know some parts of our website that are not fully accessible, for example some of our older videos don't have captions and most older PDF documents are not fully accessible to screen reader software.

We are in the process of redeveloping our website and upgrading the content management system. We expect this to fix the majority of the known technical issues. The new website is expected to launch in spring 2021. Before it launches, we will conduct another audit to ensure that the website and any new content meets accessibility standards. We also plan to carry out testing on the new website with assistive technology.

In the meantime, we will work to resolve as many of the accessibility issues that are within our control and will release them to the website as soon as possible.

Where we use third-party applications, we cannot always guarantee that these will conform to the same levels of accessibility as the main website because they are partly or wholly out of our control. We monitor the accessibility of these sites and where it is within our control, we will make every reasonable effort to work towards meeting accessibility requirements.

Our commissioned providers are contractually responsible for ensuring the accessibility of their services and facilities. As stated in the contract; *'The Provider will ensure the needs of victims/survivors who consider themselves to have a disability are met and linked into other appropriate agencies for support'*.

The current key locations delivering IDVA support to women and girls are; Advance head office, women's centre, civic centre and Wembley Police station are accessible and wheel-chair-friendly venues.

Decision: Agreed

Actions:

N.o	Action	Agency	By When
10.1	Any newly published VAWG documents uploaded to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines version 2.1	Community Safety	October 2020
10.2	Ensure we seek feedback and advice from Disability awareness experts in the design of materials and in communication	Community Safety	October 2020
10.3			

3. Additional responses

The council would like to offer an additional response to the supplementary items proposed within the scrutiny report, although outside of the **core 10 recommendations**, we would like to provide reassurance to members that these items are part of our core service delivery and remain on our agenda.

No further individual actions are required for these items.

The scrutiny report also proposes that the Council should seek to:

The Council's commitment to an overarching narrative of gender equality

- ***Ensure everyone in the organisation is aware of how to refer individuals or families experiencing domestic abuse of violence against women and girls, to the appropriate services.***

Response:

The Brent Website is regularly updated with local and national support agencies last updated in September 2020. The monthly partnership newsletter is circulated along with an updated directory to all key staff.

- ***Ensure action plans, strategies and policies are informed by those with lived experience of the issues.***

Response:

Consultation is ongoing with VAWG Delivery Group and VAWG Forum partners on the development of future strategy and action plans ensuring experts by experience have a voice in its production. All previous actions plans and strategies were consulted with victim survivors.

- ***Enhance awareness for the public of the measures we are taking and develop a community reporting tool for suspected domestic abuse and or VAWG.***

Response:

The community are encouraged to report incidents of domestic abuse directly to the police via 999 in emergencies, 101 for non-emergency or to crime stoppers.

Embedding Knowledge and Training

- ***Embed knowledge in case staff move on (especially at risk due to public finances since Covid-19) – ensure there is a handbook or manual specifically for welfare teams e.g. Family Front Door, Domestic Abuse Housing Team, Debt Advisors.***

Response:

Domestic Abuse Corporate E-Learning is available to all staff and all training and information sources will be included in the annual training and development plan

- ***Councillors should receive specific member training on how to make a MARAC referral and who our lead agencies are to support women***

Response:

Councillors are invited to attend the multi-agency DA and MARAC training provided by ADVANCE. Training dates will be circulated to all members.

Support to Individuals and Families

- ***We should ensure that those receiving support are asked for the feedback on their experiences of our services, to find out whether the services are person-centred to their needs, if they could access the services at the time they need them and any gaps or barriers they faced.***

Response:

ADVANCE and RISE collect service user feedback at the point of case closure for all those who want to engage. Service user interviews will be conducted during the audit of commissioned services, which are carried out by community safety.

- ***Where individuals have complex needs – a proposal for how we will meet these needs to be developed***

Response:

The commissioned provider ADVANCE provides a person centred, tailor made support plan for each victim/survivor. This encompasses additional complex needs the victim/survivor may have.

- ***The move to one stop shops (Chrysalis programme) for accessing services to support those experiencing domestic abuse or violence should be monitored for take up, especially given the recent lockdown.***

Response:

Chrysalis is being monitored through quarterly reports and contract review meetings between Community Safety, Children and young people service and ADVANCE (the provider).

Processes, Data and Contract Monitoring

- ***Council Officers should ensure provisions are in place in case a charity partner struggles financially due to Covid-19. The patchwork of grant funding that we receive and disburse through commissioning services, means that there could be a worry about the financial soundness of charities delivering services.***

Response:

The Covid-19 Domestic Abuse Recovery Board provided £163,000 in additional funding for ADVANCE and RISE to support services with increased demand because of the impact of Covid-19.

Partnership

- **Ensuring the our VAWG delivery group and VAWG forum ensure have adequate representation from:**
 - **Champions or Advocates with lived experience of the issues at stake.**
 - **Lead commissioned domestic violence service provider for Brent e.g. Advance**
 - **Brent safeguarding lead/ Family Front Door**
 - **GP or representative for local midwifery services/ healthcare services**
 - **Local police tasked with responsibility for response to domestic abuse**
 - **Local law centre / welfare or debt advice services**
 - **Criminal court based victim support worker**
 - **Housing providers/ our Domestic Abuse Housing Team**

Response:

All the groups and agencies listed have active representation and participation across the VAWG Delivery Group and VAWG Forum. As noted in the scrutiny report governance structure page 13.

- **Produce an organogram of which officers in the council work on domestic abuse and VAWG policies (which is to be maintained up to date) – should also form part of handbook. Should set out referral pathways, e.g. housing referrals.**

Response:

Domestic Abuse Recovery Board have been mapping out domestic abuse support within the council and external partners. This map can be shared with stakeholders once completed.

- **Ensure that women being released from prison or on probation have adequate support and sign posting, as they may be particularly vulnerable groups. Ensure that where men are on probation/ due for release from prison and there are known histories of domestic abuse or VAWG, that risks are appropriately assessed and followed up.**

Response:

The ADVANCE Minerva Wraparound service can provide through the gate support to women being released from prison to ensure their smooth reintegration into the community. The Brent IOM Scheme monitors perpetrators of domestic abuse on probation or due for release from prison. There is also the MAPPA process, which monitors those of serious concern

Both these services require partnership work/referrals from the police, prisons and probation services

- **Social prescribers/ navigators attached to GPs surgeries, health and social care coordinators, and mental health practitioners, should have**

training on domestic abuse and our services, as well as essential safeguarding training.

Response:

The Violence Reduction Unit have commissioned IRISi to deliver a blended programme of support to GP surgeries in Brent for 12 months. During this project, Brent will have access to 2 Advocate Educators and 2 Clinical Leads to bridge the gap between health and domestic abuse provision

- ***Work with those businesses who are developing initiatives to support women facing financial abuse, e.g. banks who have introduced policies or teams to support, or the Hestia scheme in collaboration with Royal Mail. Hestia have launched a new advice line for businesses supporting employees experiencing or at risk of domestic abuse called ‘the everyone’s Business Advice Line’. ‘It will be a point of contact for businesses, supporting them on how to approach disclosures of domestic abuse by their employees, particularly in light of Covid-19. They will also receive advice so that they can signpost staff to specialist domestic abuse services.’ We should ensure that these schemes where offered are being advertised locally and details shared with teams and debt advice services.***

Response:

‘The Everyone’s Business Advice Line’ was shared with partners via the October VAWG Newsletter and will be promoted through local networks.

Communications and Engagement

- ***Make use of all available channels to maximise reach for our campaigns, including digital, text, app-based, web-based, using advocates and community organisations. The lockdown may have led to closure of some channels for communication and support e.g. libraries/ hubs- and so we need to ensure our online activity has as wide a reach as possible, whilst recognising that some women and girls we need to reach may experience digital poverty and not have computer access: Consider use of local radio; posters and leaflets at food banks or local shops; publicising at pharmacies, general practitioners, hospitals, sexual health clinics and sexual assault referral centres; public notice boards –available at parks, outside council buildings etc., housing, homelessness, welfare and public health services.***

Response:

As we all adapt to the shifting government requirements during this pandemic, we are too are ensuring that there is flexibility to our methods of communications to increase our reach. The communication strategy – see 2.2 will reflect this and the current Covid-19 Domestic Abuse recovery group are closely monitoring and supporting organisations.

Implementation by: December 2021

Cabinet Member: Councillor Promise Knight – Lead Member for Community Protection

Lead Department: Regeneration and Environment

Lead Officer: Alan Lunt (Director of Regeneration and Environment).