



# Violence Against Women and Girls

*A Report of the Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committee*  
**September 2020**

## **Members of the Task Group**

Cllr Fleur Donnelly-Jackson (Chair)  
Cllr Sandra Kabir  
Cllr Sonia Shah  
Cllr Anita Thakkar

**The task group was set up by members of Brent Council's Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee on 29 January 2020.**

### Committee Contacts:

Michael Carr, Senior Policy and Scrutiny Officer, Strategy and Partnerships, Brent Civic Centre Engineers Way, Wembley, Middlesex HA9 0FJ  
**020 8937 2855**, [Michael.Carr@brent.gov.uk](mailto:Michael.Carr@brent.gov.uk)

## Table of Contents

<b>Violence Against Women and Girls .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Members of the Task Group .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Committee Contacts:.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Chair’s Foreword.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Recommendations to the Cabinet.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Executive Summary .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Scope.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Methodology .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Definitions .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>The picture in Brent.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Feedback from Stakeholders.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>The Council’s commitment to an overarching narrative of gender equality.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Embedding Knowledge and Training .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Support to Individuals and Families .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Housing.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Processes, Data and Contract Monitoring .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Partnerships.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Communications and Engagement.....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Facilities.....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Conclusion.....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>APPENDICES .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>APPENDIX A .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Participants.....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Stakeholders .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>APPENDIX B: Terms of reference.....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>APPENDIX C: References.....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Relevant Legislation.....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Acronyms .....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Types of Domestic Abuse.....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Domestic abuse: Killers 'follow eight-stage pattern', study says .....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Who victim had told personally about the partner abuse experienced in the last 12 months, by sex, year ending March 2018 CSEW .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Why the victim did not tell the police about the partner abuse experienced in the last year, year ending March 2018 CSEW .....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>How data are captured and interlinked across the criminal justice system .....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Relevant Reports and Policy Documents.....</b>	<b>32</b>

## Chair's Foreword

Domestic abuse and violence against women are fundamental breaches of women and girl's rights to have the integrity of their bodies respected, and their right to feel safe within their homes, daily lives, and relationships. The physical injuries and mental health issues arising from violence against women and girls damage lives, cost our NHS, and can lead women to become isolated from socio-economic opportunities.

***Almost one in three women aged 16-59 will experience domestic abuse in her lifetime<sup>1</sup>***

***Two women a week are killed by a current or former partner in England and Wales alone<sup>2</sup>***

***In the year ending March 2019, 1.6 million women experienced domestic abuse<sup>3</sup>***

With this in mind, we need to make sure that tackling violence against women and girls is everybody's business. This means that our whole community needs to be alert to and feel confident to report violence against women and girls. It should not only be left to those in a desperate situation to make known their predicament, sometimes too late. We need to focus on prevention and early intervention as much as prosecution. This means looking not only at the services we provide for women and girls (including trans women within this definition<sup>4</sup>), but also at how we educate men and boys in our communities too.

It's of vital importance that we listen to women and girls with lived experience of domestic abuse and violence, so that we can learn how to better support them. The diversity of our communities presents specific challenges which we need to meet – for example ensuring we provide awareness materials and access to services in a range of languages. We should ensure we can also meet the different communication needs women may have, and that we uphold our obligations under

---

<sup>1</sup> [Office for National Statistics](#) (2019) *Domestic abuse in England and Wales overview: November 2019*

<sup>2</sup> [Office for National Statistics](#) (2019) *Homicide in England and Wales: year ending March 2018 (average taken over 10 years)*

<sup>3</sup> [Office for National Statistics](#) (2019) *Domestic abuse victim characteristics, England and Wales: year ending March 2019*

<sup>4</sup> Transgender people mustn't be excluded from separate or single sex services provided to people of their acquired gender, unless there's a good enough reason. This may include specific domestic abuse single sex services. However it's important to note that trans women may also be subject to domestic abuse and violence. To this end – Stonewall interviewed providers of services and produced the report '*Supporting trans women in domestic and sexual violence services – Interviews with Professionals in the Sector*', April 2018. They found that 'Domestic and sexual violence services in England and Wales have been supporting trans women in their single-sex women-only services for some time.'

the Equality Act 2010, in making sure our services are fully accessible to women who are d/Deaf or Disabled.

The Task Group is concerned that women experiencing violence can be isolated and feel that they have no one to turn to: 'On average high-risk victims live with domestic abuse for 2.3 years and medium risk victims for 3 years before getting help.'<sup>5</sup> Safe Lives state that: '85% of victims sought help on average five times from professionals in the year before they got effective help to stop the abuse' and 'on average victims experience 50 incidents of abuse before getting effective help.'<sup>6</sup> 'The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) showed that over four in five victims (83%) of partner abuse did not report the abuse to the police.'<sup>7</sup>

We value our professionals greatly and the lengths they go to, to provide support and safety for women and girls experiencing violence or abusive situations. It is of great concern that under his Government confidence in reporting rape has plummeted to an all-time low. Many women perceive that sexual assault and domestic abuse are not investigated or dealt with in the way they should be. As Dame Vera Baird (Victims' Commissioner for England and Wales) noted in her annual report for 2019/20:

'It is a shocking and unacceptable fact that in 2019 only three per cent of rape complaints result in a suspect being charged. What is even more shocking is that this figure is likely to fall even further in 2020'<sup>8</sup>.

The Task Group welcomes the passage through Parliament of the Domestic Abuse Bill 2020, which will strengthen the statutory definition of domestic abuse, 'emphasising that domestic abuse is not just physical violence, but can also be emotional, coercive or controlling, and economic abuse.'<sup>9</sup>

However, we are aware of the calls by many charities for the Government to do more to support migrant women who have no recourse to public funds. We abhor the placing at risk, and second class treatment of migrant women, where 'the result is that women face an impossible choice: stay with an abuser, or leave without having access to support.'<sup>10</sup>

This is not the first time that Brent's approach to domestic abuse and VAWG has been reviewed – and there will be an ongoing need to revisit this policy area, so that we can continually improve. A consistent message from reviews that have been undertaken is that 'staff need to be trained and existing policies and procedures

---

<sup>5</sup> <https://safelives.org.uk/policy-evidence/about-domestic-abuse/how-long-do-people-live-domestic-abuse-and-when-do-they-get>

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> ONS, 2018, Domestic abuse in England and Wales: year ending March 2018, <https://bit.ly/2BYEC7V>

<sup>8</sup> <https://victimscommissioner.org.uk/annual-reports/annual-report-of-the-victims-commissioner-2019-to-2020/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-abuse-bill-2020-factsheets/domestic-abuse-bill-2020-overarching-factsheet>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.politics.co.uk/comment-analysis/2020/07/14/the-domestic-abuse-bill-that-sacrifices-migrant-women>

followed'. Many of the Tasks Group's findings echo those of the Council's own Domestic Abuse Outcome Based Review<sup>11</sup>.

Domestic abuse reports rose during the lockdown 'by more than a tenth in [London](#)'<sup>12</sup>. However, 'the increase – which equated to about 380 more domestic abuse calls a week – was driven by third-party reports, such as neighbours, rather than the victims, researchers at the London School of Economics' [Centre for Economic Performance \(CEP\) found](#)'<sup>13</sup>.

The fact that during a pandemic, neighbours were perhaps looking out for each other is a positive sign. We should build on this and consolidate people's instincts to support women and girls at risk of abuse or violence – with further awareness raising measures within our communities.

A strength of our multi-agency approach should be that our officers are in a position to note how women can be attempting to cope with multiple issues, which are 'reinforcing and interrelated'. We must continue to engage with women and girls holistically to make sure that no woman or girl falls through the safety net when it comes to domestic abuse or other forms of violence against women and girls.

**Councillor Fleur Donnelly-Jackson**  
**Chair of the Scrutiny Task Group**

---

<sup>11</sup> <http://democracy.brent.gov.uk/documents/s69757/Appendix%201%20-%20OBR%20round%202%20final%20report.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/jul/15/domestic-abuse-calls-to-london-police-rise-by-a-tenth-during-lockdown>

<sup>13</sup> <https://cep.lse.ac.uk/pubs/download/cp578.pdf>

## **Recommendations to the Cabinet**

- 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.**
- 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.**
- 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.**
- 4. That a plan be developed for how the Council supports the training needs of its partners in the community and voluntary sector.**
- 5. That the Council gain Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation and embed best practice.**
- 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.**
- 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.**
- 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.**
- 9. That safety audits be carried out to identify risks for premises where women need to access support for Violence Against Women and Girls.**
- 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 Summary**

### **Scope**

1. The Violence Against Women Scrutiny Task Group was tasked to consider the Safer Brent Partnership's approach and progress in reducing violence against women in Brent and make a report and recommendations for the Partnership in addressing this issue. Specifically, the approach and progress in:
  - i. raising awareness and providing protection from domestic abuse and violence
  - ii. supporting victims of violence against women and bringing the perpetrators to justice
  - iii. raising awareness of Female Genital Mutilation and strengthening pathways for support
  - iv. supporting exiting sexual exploitation (including Human Trafficking & Prostitution).

### **Methodology**

The Violence Against Women Scrutiny Task Group was established by the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee on 29 January 2020. The membership of the Task Group was appointed on 12 March 2020, not long before the UK Government imposed the lockdown on the evening of Monday 23 March, due to COVID19.

It was anticipated that the Task Group would convene between March 2020 to May 2020 to receive oral and written evidence and report back to the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee with a report and recommendations to the Council and Cabinet. This process was interrupted due to the COVID19 pandemic and Government restrictions on movement, therefore the task group met online.

The task group gathered qualitative and quantitative evidence to complete the report and develop its recommendations, including a document review and an online survey to organisations who provide support to those experiencing domestic abuse and/or violence against women. All data was anonymised so there was no risk of identification.

Members of the task group took part in the following online sessions:

Tuesday 18 February - meet Scrutiny officer  
Tuesday 14 April - Online Task group meeting  
Tuesday 28 April - Online Task group meeting  
Weds 3 June - Chair's briefing meeting  
Friday 11 Sept - Chair's briefing meeting  
Friday 11 Sept - Online Task group meeting

## Definitions

2. The Government [definition of domestic violence](#) (as of April 1, 2013) is:

"Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse: psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional."

Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) comprises of crimes that have been identified as being committed primarily but not exclusively by men against women including: domestic abuse, rape, sexual offences, stalking, harassment, so-called 'honour-based' violence including forced marriage, female genital mutilation, child abuse, human trafficking focusing on sexual exploitation, prostitution, pornography and obscenity.

## The picture in Brent

3. In 2018/19, Brent saw 5269 Domestic Abuse incidents reported to the police. The actual number of incidents will be much higher as domestic abuse is a hidden crime which is vastly under-reported.<sup>14</sup>

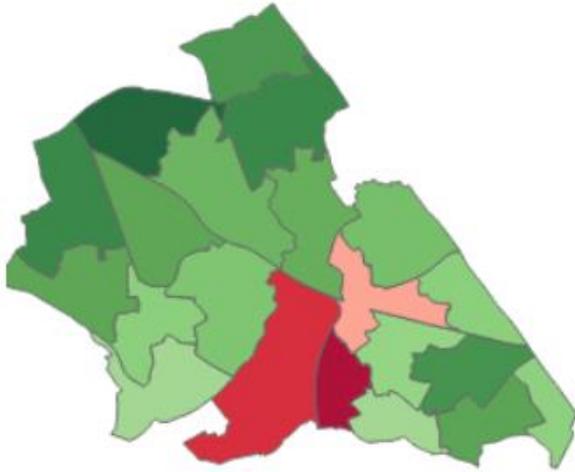
The Mayor of London's Domestic and Sexual Violence Dashboard reveals higher concentrations of offences in Stonebridge, Harlesden, and Dudden Hill wards. With the overall trend on offences rising between July 2016 to July 2020<sup>15</sup>.

---

<sup>14</sup> Cited in Overview report from the Community Safety Team, Brent Council - April 2020

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/mayors-office-policing-and-crime-mopac/data-and-statistics/domestic-and-sexual-violence-dashboard>

## Ward Volume



However, Council officers have stated that ‘an increase in recorded offences is in line with the rest of London and not necessarily a negative, as it can indicate an increased awareness and trust in services from the public thus increased reporting. Additionally, this increase could indicate that professionals in the borough are better equipped to ask the right questions, respond to disclosures, signpost and refer appropriately.’

Brent Council introduced a scheme involving trained domestic workers specialising in – ‘non-crime’ reports to tackle domestic abuse. In 2019, this helped to achieve 9% drop in domestic violence injuries in Brent and an increase of 7% in the number of people reporting crimes.

The task group noted the high satisfaction rates of those who have received support from Advance – the charity the Council commissions to deliver front line domestic abuse support within the borough (as set out in the March 2020 briefing).

**98.5%** of survivors who feel safer after using the service compared with intake.  
**99%** of survivors who feel confident in knowing how and when to access help and support in the future.  
**96%** of survivors who feel that their quality of life has improved after using the service compared with intake.

However, with many offences remaining under-reported, (which may also correlate with there being less awareness that coercive control and financial abuse are also forms of domestic abuse), it will be a continuing concern that not all who need this support will be receiving it.

## Feedback from Stakeholders

**We undertook an online survey of key stakeholders and asked what do you see as the main barriers to accessing support and services in Brent, and what gaps are there in service provision in Brent?**

'Inadequate provision of support for VAWG in Brent: Main support option is Advance but only provides DV support and mainly IDVA level. Need services for a) **all types of VAWG** and b) for low- medium practical support and c) **longer term support** than short term support IDVA (for example) provides. Need funding for further **ISVA and counselling provision** in Brent. Need funding for Ascent Advice Casework provision. Main issue we see through our advice line for Brent is **barriers for women to access safe housing via the council**. Brent LA housing department has consistently been problematic for survivors to access safe accommodation and often creates many barriers and does not follow basic practice (let alone good practice) when assessing survivors for housing and often does not follow housing guidance etc. we have had many issues for survivors trying to access **safe accommodation via Brent local authority housing**.'

'...lack of **services for girls and young women** to where the focus is solely on supporting and guiding them with their development.'

### Gaps:

'I believe it would be beneficial if **Neighbourhood Managers/ Housing was included in MARAC meetings** when they have referred a resident to MARAC.'  
'Delay to make an appointment with housing.'

'...need practical support for survivors of sexual violence who are not involved in CJS (i.e. those that fall out of ISVA remit)'

'Lack of deaf awareness. No video relay service for deaf customers'

'24 hour IDVA service 7 days a week within the acute hospital setting'

**Thinking about Brent's current provision of domestic abuse services, what is working well in Brent?**

'That there is a multi-agency approach that everyone is working towards.'

'Brent has many partnership meetings which is good for services to be aware of Brent's needs'

### And what is not working well?

Main areas to focus on: 1) support services for all types of VAWG (not just DV). 2) increased funding/ capacity for existing VAWG provision in the borough (ISVA, counselling, Advice casework support Young women support) 3) **survivors being able to access safe accommodation and good practice around this in LA housing department. May be a good idea to have an in-house IDVA in the**

**housing department to address this?** 4) better partnership working in Brent for VAWG services and those services that work with people experiencing VAWG. Better referral pathways between services so survivors can access support quickly and efficiently and not have to repeat their experiences multiple times/ re-traumatised.

'Brent provides plenty of support to victims of domestic abuse. However, what is not working will be the communication between Brent and Housing providers when a resident has been referred.'

'We had some bad experience with Brent Housing as lot of delays and poor response.'

'IDVA services but need as they really support professionals within the acute setting. The lack of IDVA's and not lack immediate support out of hours. This has a major impact on services when emergency acute settings are very challenged.'

'Lack of domestic abuse with deaf awareness...'

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

Brent Council needs to develop an overarching narrative on the importance of gender equality that it can promote to all parts of its diverse communities. We need to restore the women and girls and their stories, hopes and aspirations to the conversation about gender equality in our borough.

In light of COVID19, we should be working to develop sufficient mental health services to deal with the economic impacts of lockdown and furlough, and people losing their jobs or homes. Job losses may well lead to a rise in financial insecurity for families, which could in turn drive an increase in domestic abuse.

We should clarify the underlying model of interpretation being used by our professionals for domestic abuse and VAWG, for example using the 'Social Ecology model of social change.'<sup>16</sup>

'The ultimate goal is to stop violence before it begins. Prevention requires understanding the factors that influence violence. CDC uses a four-level social-ecological model to better understand violence and the effect of potential prevention strategies. This model considers the complex interplay between individual, relationship, community, and societal factors. It allows us to understand the range of factors that put people at risk for violence or protect them from experiencing or perpetrating violence.'<sup>17</sup>

---

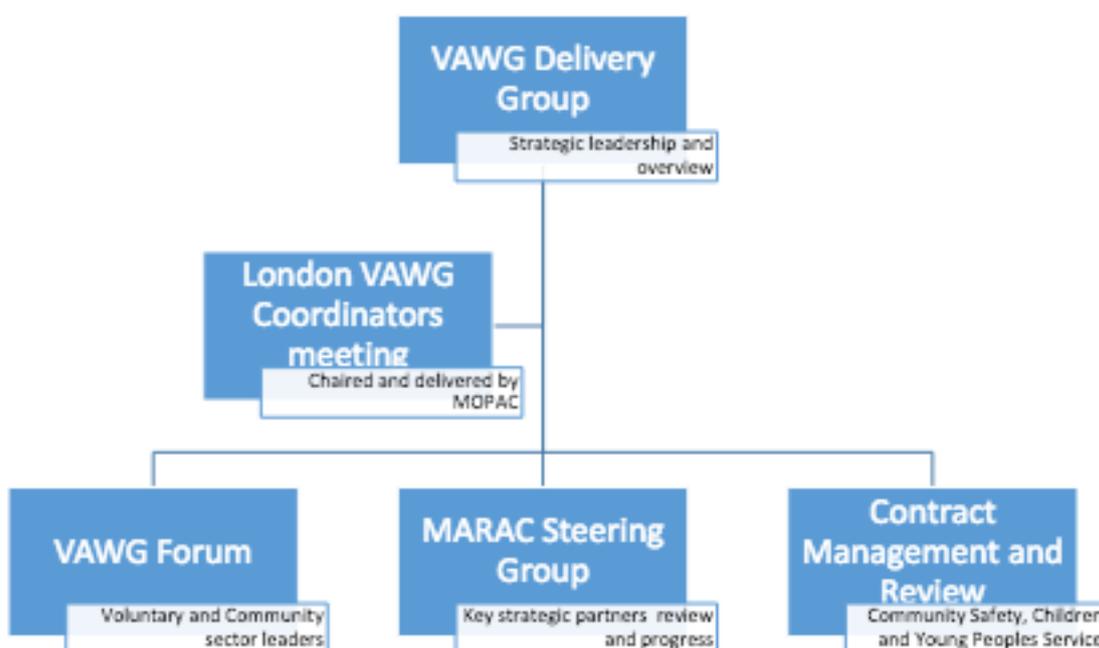
<sup>16</sup> <https://www2.gov.scot/resource/doc/925/0063072.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/publichealthissue/social-ecologicalmodel.html>

The approach to domestic abuse should mirror and align with our approach to contextual safeguarding – that it is a problem not only for families, but where we expect communities and society to play a part, whether in reporting it, or supporting those who need to seek help.

**Recommendation 1: 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.**

Diagram of Governance structure and coordinated community response;



The Council should seek to:

- 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.
- Ensure staff are aware of the Domestic Abuse staff champions scheme and who the champions are, and consider extending this to councillors – to be ‘community champions’ to advocate within the Council and local communities about domestic abuse and violence against women and girls.
- Ensure action plans, strategies and policies are informed by those with lived experience of the issues.
- Enhance awareness for the public of the measures we are taking and develop a community reporting tool for suspected domestic abuse and or VAWG.

**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.**

## **Embedding Knowledge and Training**

What do partners, staff need to know - employee training and keeping best practice up to date.

It was noted that:

- There is a mandatory corporate induction on Domestic Abuse for all staff, and that training on domestic abuse is part of the Housing teams inductions.
- The Head of Safeguarding and Adult Social Care delivers some training on disability and domestic abuse.
- The Borough Commander has confirmed that during lockdown 'all frontline police officers... continue to receive refresher training through online sessions'
- Due to COVID19 online training has been devised for the staff online learning hub.
- Brent has representation at the Mayor of London's quarterly VAWG Coordinators meeting which acts as a platform to share and disseminate work that is being done in each London borough to address VAWG including domestic abuse – and to ensure we can work in partnership/ across boundaries where this may become necessary.

**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.**

The Council should monitor the take up of the mandatory training on domestic abuse, to ensure all staff are familiar with the indicators of domestic abuse and how to record repeat victimisation.

Audit what training specialist staff have had and how up to date their knowledge of best practice is. Identify any critical gaps in training and aim to rectify within next 6-9 months, for example on the issues of coercive control/ behaviour, economic abuse, identifying and assessing risks, Gender identity, LGBTQ+, and disability awareness training. Specialist training should be mandatory (and therefore uptake monitored) for all front-line practitioners within social care, housing, healthcare, substance misuse, mental health, criminal justice and education settings. 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.

#### **Recommendation 4: That a plan be developed for how the Council supports the training needs of its partners in the community and voluntary sector.**

We should set out a plan for how we update and support the training needs of our partners in the community and voluntary sector, and organisations such as Residents Associations. There appears to be a patchwork of training provision to different audiences, and this may need tracking by the VAWG Delivery Group across our commissioned service providers.

Councillors should receive specific member training on how to make a MARAC referral and who our lead agencies are to support women (or people reporting on their behalf) about domestic abuse or violence. Training should cover: Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPOs) and the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS) and FGM Protection Orders and the FGM mandatory reporting duty – and any new duties that will arise once the Domestic Abuse Bill 2020 passes into law.

### **Support to Individuals and Families**

The Task Group is concerned that service users who do not speak English may not be able to access the services they need. They should be offered professional interpretation and not expected to rely on family members, who could be perpetrators – both in house and commissioned services should have access to reliable interpretation services. We are additionally concerned about the situation for women who have no recourse to public funds and who would not qualify for legal aid.<sup>18</sup>

We commission Advance<sup>19</sup> to provide support domestic abuse support services for all of those living in Brent who have experienced domestic abuse (male and female, including teenagers) and their children. We are pleased to see that Brent Council commissions [Rise Mutual](#) to provide support to perpetrators of domestic abuse who want to stop being abusive to their partners/ex-partners.

The Task Group believes that survivors should be able to receive counselling if required.

#### **Recommendations:**

- 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.

---

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.politics.co.uk/comment-analysis/2020/07/14/the-domestic-abuse-bill-that-sacrifices-migrant-women>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.advancecharity.org.uk/what-we-do/domestic-abuse-services/> and: <https://www.brent.gov.uk/media/16409420/advance-poster.pdf>

- Where individuals have complex needs – a proposal for how we will meet these needs to be developed, e.g. substance misuse and or mental health. Victims may face additional barriers to seeking redress from the criminal justice system. In addition to their sex, they may be affected by factors (which are not mutually exclusive) including: age, disability, gender identity, gender reassignment (transgender), sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, religion, belief, cultural background or immigration status, marital/civil partnership status, whether they have caring responsibilities (including children or other relatives), whether they are pregnant, or are dependent on the suspect/defendant (for example emotionally or economically dependent).
- 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.

## Housing

A particular risk for individuals experiencing domestic abuse is whether they feel safe within their own homes. Women may be reluctant to leave their home, but their personal safety should be paramount. The use of B&B's as emergency or temporary accommodation will not assist women to return to a sense of normality, or encourage feelings of safety and security for them and their children.

We note that in relation to housing, the Domestic Abuse Bill 2020<sup>20</sup> currently in Parliament, if enacted, will:

- Place a duty on local authorities in England to provide support to victims of domestic abuse and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation.
- Provide that all eligible homeless victims of domestic abuse automatically have 'priority need' for homelessness assistance.
- Ensure that where a local authority, for reasons connected with domestic abuse, grants a new secure tenancy to a social tenant who had or has a secure lifetime or assured tenancy (other than an assured shorthold tenancy) this must be a secure lifetime tenancy.

Safe Lives have welcomed the Bill but have called for the duty on council's to be fully funded:

'We welcomed the formal introduction of the bill but called for a fully funded duty on local authorities to assess all the needs of domestic abuse victims and survivors and provide services accordingly, as part of our #Invest2EndAbuse campaign.'<sup>21</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-abuse-bill-2020-factsheets/domestic-abuse-bill-2020-overarching-factsheet>

<sup>21</sup> [https://safelives.org.uk/further-domestic-abuse-bill-briefings-resources?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIh8C5ofX86wIVgentCh2wxwLnEAAYAiAAEgJIGPD\\_BwE](https://safelives.org.uk/further-domestic-abuse-bill-briefings-resources?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIh8C5ofX86wIVgentCh2wxwLnEAAYAiAAEgJIGPD_BwE)

The Council funds in-house all of our commissioned services, and MOPAC funds pan-London services. Against the backdrop of cuts to funding of Local Authorities, we are aware of good practice demonstrated in Brent Housing teams, for example the move by the Housing Management team to consider moving perpetrators (who are joint tenants with their victims), rather than always displacing women experiencing domestic abuse (and potentially their children too). However not all domestic abuse and violence will take place between individuals who have a joint tenancy. We welcome that all those staff who come into contact with someone experiencing domestic abuse or violence should have training, e.g. not only Housing Officers, but also staff carrying out repairs for example.

Demand for social housing in Brent is very high and there can be long wait times for a house<sup>22</sup>. In this challenging context, it's welcome that the Housing Needs team have been monitoring demand during the COVID-19 lockdown, and that they have developed good relationships with Women's Refuges across London, and Brent Council's I4B. We're pleased to also see that Brent Housing teams are looking to gain DAHA accreditation for their good practice; and the post that has been:

'created in the Housing Needs structure which will take the lead on DA cases, drive up improvements in service to customers presenting with DA across Housing Needs, share knowledge across the service and attend key multi-agency groups e.g. MARAC to improve understanding of and response to people reporting DA and improve multi-agency working. The key purpose of the Domestic Abuse Housing Officer role is to provide a specialist service to survivors of domestic abuse seeking housing assistance. The role also manages the Sanctuary Scheme which helps survivors of domestic abuse to remain in their homes. The role also offers housing assistance in the community, such as in refuges and Community Hubs in Brent.'<sup>23</sup>

However, one of our stakeholders reported:

'Main issue we see through our advice line for Brent is **barriers for women to access safe housing via the council**. Brent LA housing department has consistently been problematic for survivors to access safe accommodation and often creates many barriers and does not follow basic practice (let alone good practice) when assessing survivors for housing and often does not follow housing guidance etc. we have had many issues for survivors trying to access **safe accommodation via Brent local authority housing**.'

**Recommendation 5: That the Council gain Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation and embed best practice.**

**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.**

---

<sup>22</sup> [https://www.brent.gov.uk/media/16415909/eb\\_h\\_05-inclusive-growth-strategy-housing.pdf](https://www.brent.gov.uk/media/16415909/eb_h_05-inclusive-growth-strategy-housing.pdf)

<sup>23</sup> <http://democracy.brent.gov.uk/documents/s69757/Appendix%201%20-%20OBR%20round%202%20final%20report.pdf>

**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.**

In addition, we recommend that:

- Void properties be prioritised for those in greatest need.
- Consideration should be given to the especial need for refuges that will accept women with older teenaged children.
- Where a Housing Association Neighbourhood Manager has referred a resident to MARAC, they should be included in MARAC meetings.
- The role of the Domestic Abuse Housing Team should be further publicised to Housing Associations, Advice 4 Renters, CAB, Neighbourhood Managers.
- The MARAC Steering Group to audit MARAC case files to ensure that victims’ housing situations, particularly homelessness, are being identified within the MARAC meeting and that appropriate actions are being taken. This will have renewed significance if due to the lifting of the eviction ban (imposed during COVID19), we find more cases of families becoming homeless due to eviction.
- The Housing teams pursue their plans to become members of ‘House Proud’. ‘HouseProud was set up in 2014 as the network group for LGBT people working in social housing’<sup>24</sup>.

## **Processes, Data and Contract Monitoring**

The Task Group acknowledges that ‘statistics on domestic abuse are produced separately by a number of different organisations in England and Wales. When taken in isolation, these statistics may not provide the context required by users to enable them to understand the national and local picture of domestic abuse.’<sup>25</sup>

Data captured by the Metropolitan Police is collated across London and shared on publicly available MOPAC dashboards. Domestic and sexual violence is separated out with its own dashboard<sup>26</sup>.

The quality of our evidence base will inform the actions we need to take to tackle violence against women and domestic abuse. We should ensure that our CRM / information management systems are joined up across our commissioned services, and external partners, and our own internal reporting/monitoring. More granular performance, and service outcomes should be shared with members, for example how many DVPOs - Domestic Violence Protection Orders or FGMPOs - FGM Protection Orders there are in force in Brent. We should also ensure that our

---

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.houseproud-lgbt.com/about-us>

<sup>25</sup>

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/domesticabuseinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2018>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/mayors-office-policing-and-crime-mopac/data-and-statistics/domestic-and-sexual-violence-dashboard>

commissioned services collect demographic data on ethnicity, languages spoken – so that we can more accurately assess needs.

**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.**

Additionally, we recommend that Council Officers should ensure:

- Referrals take place in a timely manner and monitor service agreements – in particular, delays around housing referrals have been raised by stakeholders.
- Individuals requesting support receive an action plan that is accurately recorded on our systems.
- 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.
- Community and Voluntary Sector contracts have KPIs for the delivery of satisfactory performance, for example: clear deliverables for the awareness raising work to deliver community engagement and training for a variety of front-line agencies by Asian Women’s Resource Centre (who were recently awarded funding of £1.3m to lead a Pan-London Ending Harmful Practices Partnership).
- That we continue to monitor satisfaction ratings of services to ensure that people are receiving a service that supports them. Potentially introduce a qualitative or 360 system of feedback, to capture details about why women or girls may have dropped out of using a service.
- At least 3 different formats are available for feedback to meet the broadest range of needs/ accessibility requirements. We note that the Domestic Abuse Housing Team only supply a telephone number on their webpage, which would exclude deaf women from seeking their help.
- That commissioned service providers have the opportunity ‘to express any barriers to delivery or successful outcomes’; and that any concerns are logged, and what some of those barriers have been, and how they have been rectified.
- Teams have a reflective practice to embed a culture of continuous improvement, and ensure that we are following up on where barriers to accessing services have been raised, and innovating to remove or adjust them.

## Partnerships

The task group notes that ‘ADVANCE have been building links with education services within Brent via the designated safeguarding network. They are planning to provide training to professionals within education settings to understand the dynamics of abusive relationships both with children witnessing abuse of a family member and those who are victims of partner abuse within their own relationships.’

We also note that 'The Department for Education is introducing compulsory [Relationships Education for primary pupils and Relationships and Sex Education \(RSE\)](#) for secondary pupils from September 2020.'<sup>27</sup>

We have a VAWG Forum, chaired by Asian Women's Resource Centre – who also lead on the Ascent Ending Harmful Practices project, and provide support services in the following languages: Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Hinko, Konkani, Marathi, Pashto, Patwari, Punjabi, Urdu, Farsi, Portuguese, Italian, Kurdish, Turkish & Azerbaijan<sup>28</sup>.

All Brent Councillors will be aware of the consultation to merge 8 CCGs to form an Integrated Care System. We are concerned that VAWG and Domestic Abuse referral routes should still be clear. All NHS GP practices within the CCG should have a domestic abuse policy and procedure for all staff, along with accessing domestic abuse training to develop the skills for proactive enquiry around domestic abuse with all women and particularly those presenting with mental health issues, alcohol/drug issues, pre-natal, and following separation'.

The Council should keep a watching brief to ensure that within our Schools and Colleges they are delivering the compulsory Relationships education to our pupils and that appropriate resources are developed for young people to understand what a healthy relationship is and to understand what controlling behaviour is, and the implications of sexting, pornography, revenge porn, violence, abuse, sexual abuse and consent. This should sit hand in hand with mental health and awareness raising initiatives on VAWG for boys and young men, not only young women.

### **Recommendations to foster partnership working include:**

- 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
- 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.
- 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

---

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education-faqs>

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.asianwomencentre.org.uk/>

and there are known histories of domestic abuse or VAWG, that risks are appropriately assessed and followed up.

- 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.
- 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<sup>29</sup>, 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<sup>30</sup>. '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.

## Communications and Engagement

(I.e. Marketing - website, social media, posters, communications with partners, internal employee updates, languages and formats of communications, awareness raising events)

Whilst specific awareness raising dates can provide a convenient marketing hook to build an audience e.g. International Women's Day, or White Ribbon Day – the work of informing our communities and building awareness should be considered a year-long task, and a comms plan should reflect this. We should identify key audiences and communities to reach – for example those wards with highest rates of violent offending should be targeted, but equally those areas where there is deemed to be significant under-reporting of coercive control or financial abuse (which may be more to the North of the Borough).

## Recommendations

The Safer Brent Partnership to share with elected members its comprehensive engagement and communications strategy – referred to in Key Recommendation 2.

This should identify the actions the partnership are taking to deliver both a sustained awareness raising campaign and community outreach, including developing resources to meet the needs of Eastern European communities<sup>31</sup> and ensuring access to interpretation where appropriate; and for the Somalian community in Brent.

---

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.lloydsbankinggroup.com/our-purpose/helping-people/supporting-victims-of-domestic-and-financial-abuse/>

<https://www.hsbc.co.uk/help/money-worries/financial-abuse/>

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.hestia.org/news/hestia-launches-free-domestic-abuse-advice-line-for-businesses>

<sup>31</sup> As per the recommendations of the Domestic Homicide Review of Elena, June 2018 – recommendation 8

These communities have been highlighted to Task Group members in the course of our discussions with officers, and stakeholders.

Additionally, we recommend that the Council:

- 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.
- Put in place in place comms materials for the third sector to disseminate through Brent CVS. During COVID19 new community groups sprang up such as Mutual Aid – who may not have been immediately signposted to resources on safeguarding and spotting the signs of domestic abuse, and where to refer or report cases they may have spotted when visiting people’s homes to deliver care or food packages.
- Ensure our content/ materials are accessible to as many women as possible, i.e., provide services that meet the communication needs of d/Deaf and disabled women e.g. British Sign Language interpreters can be made available, use of captioning for online meetings, video relay service, Easy Read, and accessible formats for blind and partially sighted people.
- Give consideration to diversity, and show a range of women and girls (and/ or perpetrators) and take care to avoid stereotypes, in any public information campaigns. The LGA has noted that ‘There are different themes of domestic abuse which are being increasingly reported during the COVID-19 pandemic, for example abuse of young people (18 years old to 24 years old) living at home with parents, LGBTQ+ phobic issues, parents abused by adult children, people contacting services about housemates who are not family or partners behaving in abusive ways for the first time.’<sup>32</sup>
- Take account of the needs of Romanian (and more broadly, Eastern European), and Somalian victims and survivors. This includes awareness raising, as well as access to training for staff and the provision of specialist services for victims.
- Ensure web content is up to date and contact details are routinely audited for accuracy.
- Ensure partners can deliver services remotely and have necessary tech in place, as part of contract management conversations/ future commissioning – due to the impact of COVID-19 and lockdowns/ advice to work from home where possible.

---

<sup>32</sup><https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Domestic%20Abuse%20Guide%20UPDAT ED%20as%20of%2011%20May%20%28PM%29.pdf>

## Facilities

It's a key consideration that services and refuges should be located in safe places. We should continue to work with Mayor of London and partners across London to gain accreditation to the UN Women's Safer Cities and Safe Public Spaces initiative<sup>33</sup>.

The need for greater hygiene due to COVID19, means that we should ensure that any facilities such as refuges or emergency accommodation have enough Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

Where ASB is identified in close proximity to services, the Council should put in place provisions to use ASB/ public space protection orders (so long as this does not needlessly identify secure services). For example, the Asian Women's Resource Centre in Harlesden can sometimes have 12-15 men outside drinking and taking drugs, less than 100 metres away. Stronger safety measures should be considered.

**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.**

**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.**

## Conclusion

The Task Group notes that UK wide data for 2018 shows that whereas 53.3 of women personally told a friend or neighbour about the abuse they were experiencing, only 4.7% of women told a council officer. Outside of family, friends and neighbours, the most trusted organisations for women to relate their experiences to, appear to be health professionals, counsellors, or therapists.<sup>34</sup>

For this reason, it's crucial that we spread the word about the services that we commission to support women and girls experiencing domestic abuse or violence; and that we work with our partners to ensure that the 8 CCGs merging to form an Integrated Care System, continue to have clear referral pathways that align with the services we provide. For this reason, we would also like to refer the Council's Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee to our findings, for reference.

---

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/creating-safe-public-spaces>

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/domesticabuseinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2018>

During lockdown The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, announced a £1.5million emergency response fund<sup>35</sup> to provide victims of domestic abuse with safe accommodation and support if they need to flee their homes during the coronavirus pandemic'. It's vital that our efforts in Brent work in tandem with the other schemes and services operating in the capital.

Due to the impact of COVID-19 on the work of the Task Group, we would recommend that there is clearly further follow up work which should take place to engage our community and voluntary sector stakeholders, to find out how they have been impacted by lockdown (whether financially or practically), and any rise in reporting of domestic abuse or violence against women and girls.

This scrutiny report is by no means the last word on domestic abuse and VAWG. We would encourage the Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committee to track the key actions we have set out, to hold the Executive to account on their implementation – so that as a council we can continuously improve the services we deliver for women and girls in Brent.

---

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.solacewomensaid.org/news/mayor-invests-further-ps15m-safe-accommodation-victims-domestic-abuse-during-coronavirus>

## **APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX A**

#### **Participants**

The task group would like to thank Cllr Tom Miller, former Cabinet lead for Community Safety and Engagement and Cllr Mili Patel, Cabinet lead for Children's Safeguarding, Early Help and Social Care, as well as the following members of staff who contributed to the report, took part in the themed discussion or advised it on policy:

Colin Wilderspin, Interim Head of Community Protection

Laurence Coaker, Head of Housing Needs,

Emily-Rae Maxwell, Head of Housing and Neighbourhoods

Cathy Hickey, Violence and Vulnerability (VAWG) Coordinator

#### **Stakeholders**

Advance (Independent, client-led charity for all of those living in Brent who have experienced domestic abuse (male and female, including teenagers) and their children)

Asian Women's Resource Centre (Chair the VAWG Stakeholder Group – Provide support for women experiencing domestic abuse, including women with no recourse to public funds)

Brent Borough Commander – Metropolitan Police

Brent CCG

Brent Family Front Door (Brent's Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub)

Brent Independent Advisory Panel to Metropolitan Police

Brent Housing Needs Domestic Abuse Housing Team

Brent Housing Management

Brent Safer Neighbourhood Board

Chrysalis one stop shop (commissioned by Brent Council)

CouRAGEus Project

EACH (121 Counselling, refuges, floating support and life therapies for women and families affected by abuse)

Forward (Support for women and girls affected by any form of violence including FGM and other Harmful Practices)

GALOP LGBTQ+ Domestic Abuse Helpline

London Victim and Witness Service

NIA Project (Support for women involved in sex work)

Notting Hill Genesis Housing

Peabody Housing

PLIAS Resettlement (Support for Black, Asian and minority ethnic women experiencing violence and harmful practices)

Refuge East European Advocacy Service

Respond (Support for people with learning disabilities and autism)

Rise Mutual (Domestic Abuse Perpetrator programmes and integrated victim support service)

Safer Brent Partnership (Brent's Community Safety Partnership)

Sexual Assault Referral Centre  
SignHealth (Support for deaf victims/survivors of abuse)  
Solace Women's Aid  
West London Victim Support  
West London Rape Crisis  
Women and Girls Network (Counselling and Advocacy)  
Young Brent Foundation

## **APPENDIX B: Terms of reference**

The terms of reference for the task group were to:

To consider the Safer Brent Partnership's approach and progress in reducing violence against women in Brent and make a report and recommendations for the Partnership in addressing this issue. Specifically, the approach and progress in:

- i. raising awareness and providing protection from domestic abuse and violence
- ii. supporting victims of violence against women and bringing the perpetrators to justice
- iii. raising awareness of Female Genital Mutilation and strengthening pathways for support
- iv. supporting exiting sexual exploitation (including Human Trafficking & Prostitution).

## **APPENDIX C: References**

### **Relevant Legislation**

The Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act amended 2012  
The Care Act 2014  
The Children Act 1989 and 2004  
The Serious Crime Act 2015  
The Sexual Offences Act 2003  
Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003  
Home Office 'Domestic Violence & Abuse' (<https://www.gov.uk/domesticviolence-and-abuse>)  
Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act 2007  
Human Rights Act 1998  
Modern Slavery Act 2015

### **Acronyms**

This policy area seems to be particularly beset with acronyms and initials. To assist readers of this report, ones which are commonly used in this policy area, are set out here:

DAHA – Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance  
DHRs – Domestic Homicide Reviews  
DV – Domestic Violence  
DVDS - The Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme

DVPOs - Domestic Violence Protection Orders  
FGM – Female Genital Mutilation  
FGMPOs - FGM Protection Orders  
ISVA - Independent Sexual Violence Advocacy  
IDVA - Independent Domestic Violence Advisors  
MARAC - A Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference  
MASH - Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub  
MOPAC - Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime  
SARCs - Sexual Assault Referral Centres  
SOP - Safeguarding Standard Operating Procedure  
VAWG - Violence Against Women and Girls

### **Types of Domestic Abuse<sup>36</sup>**

**Domestic abuse** is categorised by any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse:

- physical
- emotional
- psychological
- sexual
- financial

### **Controlling behaviour**

Controlling behaviour is a range of acts performed by the abuser and designed to make their victim subordinate and/or dependent. These acts include but are not limited to:

- isolating the victim from sources of support
- exploiting the victim's resources and capacities for personal gain
- depriving the victim of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape
- regulating the victim's everyday behaviour

### **Coercive behaviour**

Coercive behaviour is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used by the abuser to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

---

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.met.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/daa/domestic-abuse/what-is-domestic-abuse/>

## **Physical abuse and sexual abuse**

Physical abuse is the use of physical force against someone in a way that injures or endangers that person. The police have the power and authority to protect you from physical attack.

Sexual abuse is a form of physical abuse. Forced sex, even by a spouse or intimate partner with whom you also have consensual sex, is an act of aggression and violence.

## **Emotional or psychological abuse**

Just because you're not battered and bruised doesn't mean you're not being abused. Unfortunately, emotional abuse is often minimised or overlooked – even by the person being abused.

Emotional abuse includes verbal abuse such as yelling, name-calling, blaming, and shaming. Isolation, intimidation, and controlling behaviour also fall under emotional abuse.

## **Honour-based abuse**

There's no honour in threatening or harming vulnerable people with violence. However, a small minority of both women and men experience violence and threats at the hands of their family or community in order to protect their perceived 'honour'. (Family members are defined as mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister and grandparents, whether directly related, in-laws or step-family.)

## **Forced marriage**

Forced marriage is when one party is threatened or bullied into making a marriage.

## **Domestic abuse: Killers 'follow eight-stage pattern', study says<sup>37</sup>**

'Men who kill their partners follow a "homicide timeline" that could be tracked by police to help prevent deaths, new research suggests.

Criminology expert Dr Jane Monckton Smith found an eight-stage pattern in 372 killings in the UK.'

Dr Monckton Smith's study looked at 'all cases on the [Counting Dead Women](#) website where the woman had had a relationship with the perpetrator - as well as several extra cases such as those of male victims killed by their male partners...'

---

<sup>37</sup> Eight stage pattern of domestic abuse: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-49481998>

'The eight steps she discovered in almost all of the 372 killings she studied were:

- A pre-relationship **history** of stalking or abuse by the perpetrator
- The romance **developing quickly** into a serious relationship
- The relationship becoming dominated by **coercive control**
- A **trigger** to threaten the perpetrator's control - for example, the relationship ends or the perpetrator gets into financial difficulty
- **Escalation** - an increase in the intensity or frequency of the partner's control tactics, such as by stalking or threatening suicide
- The perpetrator has a **change in thinking** - choosing to move on, either through revenge or by homicide
- **Planning** - the perpetrator might buy weapons or seek opportunities to get the victim alone
- **Homicide** - the perpetrator kills his or her partner, and possibly hurts others such as the victim's children.'

## Who victim had told personally about the partner abuse experienced in the last 12 months, by sex, year ending March 2018 CSEW

Appendix Table 24: Who victim had told personally about the partner abuse experienced in the last 12 months, by sex, year ending March 2018 CSEW<sup>1,2</sup>

England and Wales	Adults aged 16 to 59		
	Men	Women	All
	Percentage		
<b>Told anyone</b>	<b>50.8</b>	<b>81.3</b>	<b>72.4</b>
<b>Told someone known personally</b>	<b>43.7</b>	<b>73.5</b>	<b>64.8</b>
Family or a relative	25.3	46.2	40.1
Friend or a neighbour	31.6	53.3	47.0
Work colleague	13.6	11.0	11.8
<b>Told someone in an official position</b>	<b>26.1</b>	<b>33.4</b>	<b>31.2</b>
Police	14.7	18.4	17.3
Health professionals	10.7	20.8	17.7
Lawyer, solicitor or other legal professional	5.5	6.9	6.5
Local council department	6.6	4.7	5.3
Other government agency	0.6	1.8	1.5
<b>Told other support professional or organisation</b>	<b>24.1</b>	<b>34.2</b>	<b>31.1</b>
Counsellor or therapist	19.6	24.2	22.8
Victim support	2.5	10.8	8.3
Helpline	4.7	5.9	5.5
Specialist support service	1.2	7.3	5.5

<b>Told somebody else or another organisation</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>4.5</b>
Unweighted base - number of adults <sup>3</sup>	101	283	384

Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics

1. This question was asked of abuse experienced in the last 12 months.
2. Due to changes in questionnaire structure, estimates on these questions are not comparable with data prior to year ending March 2011.
3. Unweighted base refers to question on whether victim told someone known personally. Other bases are similar.

## **Why the victim did not tell the police about the partner abuse experienced in the last year, year ending March 2018 CSEW**

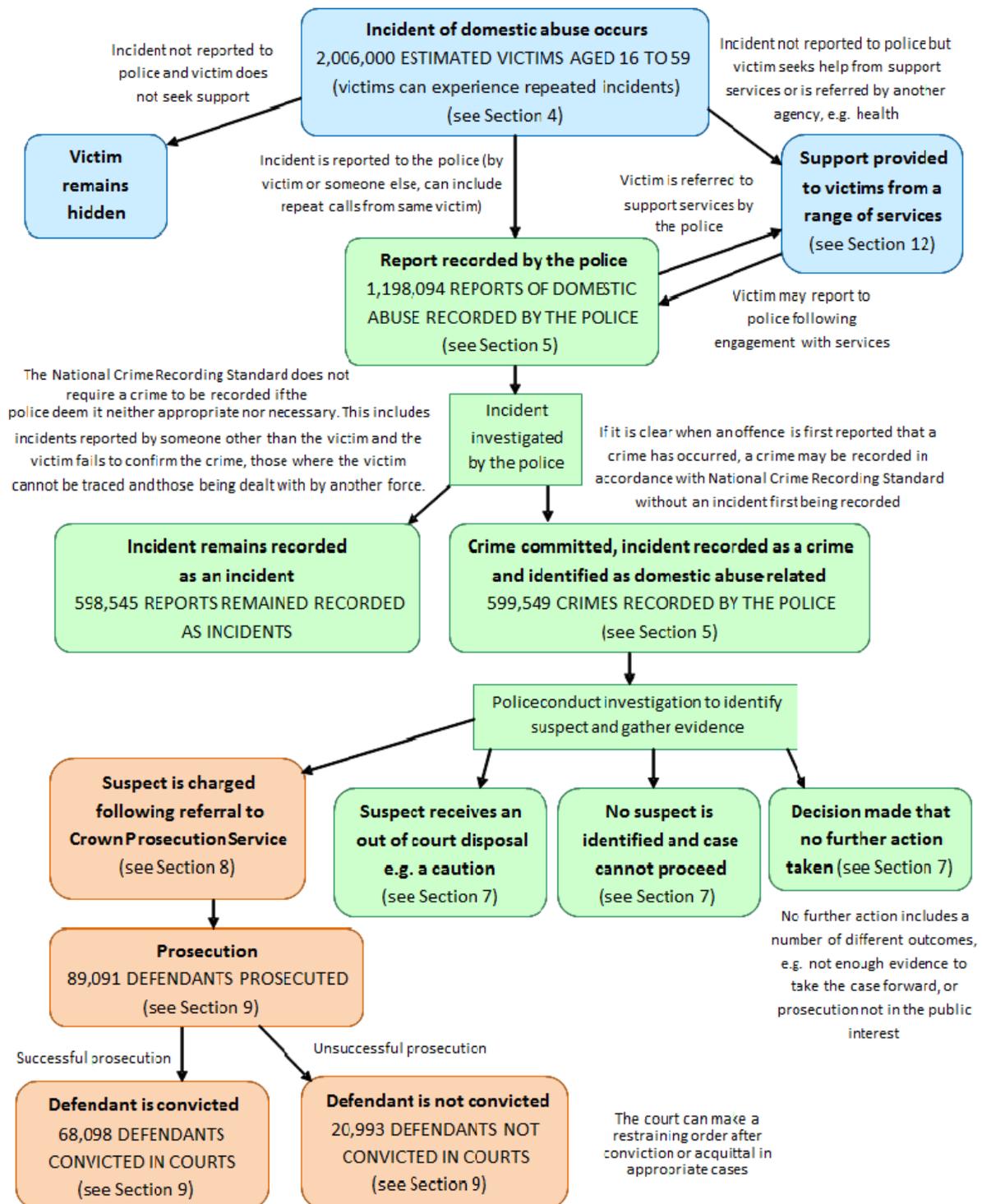
### **Appendix Table 25: Why the victim did not tell the police about the partner abuse experienced in the last year, year ending March 2018 CSEW<sup>1</sup>**

<b>England and Wales</b>	<b>Adults aged 16 to 59</b>
	Percentage
<b>Told the police</b>	<b>17.3</b>
Unweighted base - number of adults	358
<b>Why not told the police</b>	
Too trivial/not worth reporting	45.5
Private/family matter/not police business	39.5
Didn't think they could help	34.2
Embarrassment	27.5
Didn't want the person who did it to be punished	16.6
Didn't think the police would do anything about it	15.0
Thought it would be humiliating	11.5
Didn't want to go to court	7.4
Feared more violence as a result of involving the police	11.4
Didn't think the police would be sympathetic	8.1
Didn't think they would believe me	8.3
Dislike/Fear of police	2.5
Police did not come when called	2.1
Some other reason	15.7
Unweighted base - number of adults	252

Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics

1. This question was asked of abuse experienced in the last 12 months.

## How data are captured and interlinked across the criminal justice system



## Relevant Reports and Policy Documents

### Brent Council

- Tackling Violence against Women & Girls in Brent An Overview & Scrutiny Task Group Report, March 2014
- Violence Against Women and Girls April 2020 - Overview report from the Community Safety Team
- The Brent Council Domestic Abuse Policy, January 2020
- Domestic and Sexual Abuse Action Plan, November 2019
- Brent Community Safety Partnership Domestic Homicide Review June 2018 – Elena: <https://www.brent.gov.uk/media/16416878/brent-dhr-elena-executive-summary-access.pdf>
- Brent Council, Domestic Abuse Joint Strategic Assessment of Needs, 19/20 <https://data.brent.gov.uk/dataset/emkj5/domestic-abuse-jsna-201920>
- Brent Council, Brent 2020 - Outcome Based Reviews Round 2 – Final Report <http://democracy.brent.gov.uk/documents/s69757/Appendix%201%20-%20OBR%20round%202%20final%20report.pdf>
- Safer Brent Strategic priorities for 2018/21
- Safer Brent Partnership Annual Report, July 2019 <http://democracy.brent.gov.uk/documents/s85705/06.%20Scrutiny%20Report%20-%20SBP%20Annual%20Report%202018-119%20FINAL%20Report%20V3%2024.6.2019.pdf>

### CPS

- CPS Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy 2017–2020 [https://www.cps.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/legal\\_guidance/VAWG-Strategy-2017-2020-R01.pdf](https://www.cps.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/legal_guidance/VAWG-Strategy-2017-2020-R01.pdf)

### Central Government

- Domestic Abuse Bill stages in Parliament: <https://services.parliament.uk/bills/2019-21/domesticabuse.html>
- Domestic Abuse Bill 2020 – Overarching factsheet: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-abuse-bill-2020-factsheets/domestic-abuse-bill-2020-overarching-factsheet>
- 
- Dame Vera Baird QC Victims' Commissioner for England and Wales: 2019/20 Annual Report: <https://victimscommissioner.org.uk/annual-reports/annual-report-of-the-victims-commissioner-2019-to-2020/>
- Ending Violence against Women and Girls the cross-Government VAWG 2016–2020 strategy and action plan [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/522166/VAWG\\_Strategy\\_FINAL\\_PUBLICATION\\_MASTER\\_vR\\_B.PDF](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/522166/VAWG_Strategy_FINAL_PUBLICATION_MASTER_vR_B.PDF)
- Government advice on applying for a Domestic Abuse injunction <https://www.gov.uk/injunction-domestic-violence>
- ONS: Domestic Abuse in England and Wales: year ending March 2018 <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/domesticabuseinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2018>

## Housing

- Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance – accreditation: <https://www.dahalliance.org.uk/what-we-do/accreditation-for-housing-providers/>
- <https://homefinderuk.org/domestic-abuse-relocation-service-revive>

## LGBTQ+

- Safe Lives: Spotlight #6: LGBTQ+ people and domestic abuse: <https://safelives.org.uk/knowledge-hub/spotlights/spotlight-6-lgbt-people-and-domestic-abuse>
- House Proud: <https://www.houseproud-lgbt.com/about-us>

## Local Government Association

- LGA - Tackling domestic abuse during the COVID-19 pandemic: Resource for councils  
<https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Domestic%20Abuse%20Guide%20UPDATED%20as%20of%2011%20May%20%28PM%29.pdf>

## Mayor of London

- Mayor's Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2018-2021, March 2018  
<https://www.london.gov.uk/mopac-publications/mayors-violence-against-women-and-girls-strategy-2018-2021>
- COVID19 Emergency Response Victims of Violence Against Women and Girls, Deputy Mayor, Policing and Crime, May 2020  
<https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/mayors-office-policing-and-crime-mopac/governance-and-decision-making/mopac-decisions-0/covid19-emergency-response-victims-violence-against-women-and-girls>

## NHS and Brent CCG

- NHS England: Domestic abuse during COVID-19: a reminder of advice for NHS staff  
<https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2020/05/C0376-domestic-abuse-duringpcovid-19-letter.pdf>
- West London CCG Domestic Violence/ Abuse policy:  
[https://www.westlondonccg.nhs.uk/application/files/5115/9861/2430/DVA\\_policy\\_2018\\_V\\_4\\_2.pdf](https://www.westlondonccg.nhs.uk/application/files/5115/9861/2430/DVA_policy_2018_V_4_2.pdf)

## Other studies

- Eight stage pattern of domestic abuse: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-49481998>
- Counting Dead Women: <https://kareningalasmith.com/counting-dead-women/>
- Women's Budget Group: <https://wbg.org.uk/blog/we-need-a-way-out-for-migrant-women-experiencing-domestic-abuse-in-lockdown/>