



## **Full Council – 22 November 2021**

### **Motion for Non Cabinet Member debate**

#### **Tackling violence against Women and Girls in Brent**

##### **This Council notes:**

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) is an unacceptable and preventable issue which needlessly blights millions of lives. Crimes of violence against women and girls are many and varied. They include rape, sexual assault, stalking, domestic abuse, 'honour based' abuse (including female genital mutilation and forced marriage and 'honour' killings), 'revenge porn' and 'upskirting', as well as many other heinous acts. While different types of violence against women and girls have their own distinct causes and impacts on victims and survivors, what these crimes share in common is the way that they cut across society regardless of background or circumstance.

The crimes committed in Fryent Park are appalling beyond comprehension. We send our thoughts, prayers and solidarity to Mina Smallman. We will keep Bibaa and Nicole at the forefront of all our work to redress the injustices this tragedy has cruelly exposed.

VAWG must be an urgent priority for this government and institutions of all kind.

To this end, Brent Council believes in meeting words, with action.

##### **We have:**

- Incorporated the VAWG strategy into the safer Brent Community Safety Partnership Strategy. This strategy (for all agencies in Brent) will focus on tackling all forms of violence and abuse that disproportionately affect women in Brent.
- Signed the Mayor of London's Women's Night Safety Charter, and continue to work alongside local night-time economy venues to improve the safety of female customers and staff within their premises. We are developing and commissioning bespoke vulnerability training for businesses in Brent to help identify and support women as a result.
- Developed and continue to develop various services and projects to support victims of VAWG and their families. These include the Brent Chrysalis Centre, Advance, NIA, Global thinking and the Brent domestic abuse housing team.
- Coordinated the IRIS project – which offers direct support to GPs for identification and referral of patients who may be victims of abuse and trafficking. In

consultation with specialist support organisations, Brent Council has developed guidance on appropriate VAWG language, encouraging its use whenever there are discussions or communications regarding those impacted by VAWG.

- Provided additional funding and investment into independent domestic violence advisor (IDVA) services and the Brent perpetrator program in partnership with Barnet and Enfield. The Council is liaising with the Home Office to increase local support to address gaps in culturally appropriate services for perpetrators of domestic abuse in minorities and/or marginalised groups.
- Commissioned three Women's Refuges of 19 units, with work underway to procure further spaces as soon as possible.

In light of the deeply disturbing figures showing that in 2020, only 1.5% of all rape cases led to charge or summons this Council believes that much more urgent work is needed to eradicate violence against women in all its forms.

**With this in mind, we ask the Council to pledge to:**

- Make the safety and support of victims of any form of gender-based violence a priority at every level and with every partner in this borough.
- Work alongside stakeholders, in particular the Metropolitan Police to improve safety for women and girls in Brent. Where they fail to do so, we will not hesitate to call for changes to the model of policing in this borough.
- Work with all our partners to continue raising awareness for victims of VAWG including everyday sexism that precipitates into the most aggressive forms of violence.
- Secure further wrap-around support for women escaping domestic abuse – and to undertake steps to publicise this help available to anyone in need.

Councillor Anita Thakkar  
Preston Ward