

 <b>Brent</b>	<b>Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee</b> 18 January 2022
	<b>Report of the Strategic Director, Regeneration &amp; Environment</b>
<b>VAWG: Scrutiny action plan updates</b>	

<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All
<b>Key or Non-Key Decision:</b>	Non Key Decision
<b>Open or Part/Fully Exempt:</b> <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
<b>No. of Appendices:</b>	none
<b>Background Papers:</b>	
<b>Contact Officer(s):</b> <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	Colin Wilderspin – Head of Community Protection <a href="mailto:Colin.wilderspin@brent.gov.uk">Colin.wilderspin@brent.gov.uk</a> Davina Smith – Community Safety Manager <a href="mailto:Davina.smith@brent.gov.uk">Davina.smith@brent.gov.uk</a>

**1.0 Purpose of the report**

**1.1** Brent Council is committed to tackling violence against women and girls, Domestic abuse and working in partnership to enable a targeted response and safeguard our community. This report is to provide an update and will highlight the actions the relevant partners have taken to ensure the issues are addressed in the borough.

**1.2** Below are the 10 recommendations provided by the Scrutiny committee and the relevant updates. This report aims to provide members with the assurance that Domestic abuse, violence against women and girls remains a key priority within Brent, which is being addressed collectively as a partnership.

**2.0 Detail**

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.

### **3.0 Recommendation**

This action plan sets out the agreed recommendations and the actions proposed in the Cabinet's response. The update outlines key progress to assure the committee that the scrutiny recommendations agreed by Cabinet on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2020 have been implemented.

#### 4.0 Action plan

Recommendation	Action	Agency	Date	Update
<b>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.</b>	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	<b>Implemented</b> VAWG training dates set for 2022 and on the learning hub.
	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	<b>Implemented</b> Further training and webinars have taken place including during the recent 16 Days of Activism (25 <sup>th</sup> Nov – 10 <sup>th</sup> Dec). More business training available via Night Time Economy Solutions for local pubs, bars, restaurants and local businesses around supporting vulnerable women and safeguarding.
	To continue developing a corporate domestic abuse champions program	Community Safety	April 2021	<b>Implemented</b> DA champions have been recruited, trained and embedded within the organisation, further review and training in 2022.
	Identify key wider community champions	Strategy and Partnership	April 2021	<b>Implemented</b> We have utilised our VAWG network of Voluntary and community sector partners as champions.
	Develop a Training plan to include a universal train the trainer program (See recommendation	Community Safety	April 2021	<b>Under review</b> Due to the impact of Covid, we will review this action in 2022 alongside our recommissioning.

	3) Training log / register maintained	Community Safety	October 2021	<b>Implemented</b> Training is coordinated and logged via the learning hub. This is also reviewed quarterly at the VAWG delivery board.
<b>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.</b>	Consultation with victim survivors in designing materials to raise awareness	Community Safety / DA Provider	April 2021	<b>Implemented</b> All materials have been shared with victim / survivors such as our Covid –DA reporting campaign. Including sharing leaflets in alternative languages. Advance and out voluntary and community sector partners have supported with this.
	Develop a bespoke communication strategy for VAWG aligned with the Safer Brent Strategy	Community Safety	April 2021	<b>Implemented</b> Worked extensively alongside Comms across our COVID recovery plans to modify our comms approach and revised following the concerns to women’s safety with was further highlighted during our 16 Days of Activism 25 <sup>th</sup> Nov – 10 <sup>th</sup> Dec. New Comms plan for 2022 – 25 being developed in line with the new strategy for Community Safety
	Include Key actions within current DA action plan	Community Safety	December 2021	<b>Implemented</b> The current plan has been revised and includes action and is shared with the Safer Brent Partnership Board
	Develop links with Community Stakeholders	Strategy and Partnership	April 2021	<b>Implemented</b> Links established and maintained through attendance at key boards and forums. Also support given to

				funding applications to strengthen service delivery.
	Source additional funding to enhance communication materials	Community Safety / VAWG Network	July 2021	<b>Implemented</b> Funding applications have been made for projects and included an aspect of promotional materials. This has been seen in our White Ribbon campaign also through our COVID response materials such as our till roll promotions
<b>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 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.</b>	Collate feedback from Departments to confirm frontline staff training	Learning and Development	January 2021	<b>Implemented</b> Training is coordinated and logged via the learning hub. This is also reviewed quarterly at the VAWG delivery board.
	Signpost staff and departments to available training sessions or key learning to rectify any insufficiency	Learning and Development	April 2021	<b>Implemented</b> Training is available on the Safeguarding Partnerships learning hub website. Training is also promoted via the monthly VAWG newsletter, which also provides additional reading and learning opportunities for staff and partners, and circulated widely. 2022 dates are on learning website. Other providers training has been promoted via Brent Council social media platforms, VAWG network and VAWG newsletter.
	Further training on specialist areas of VAWG for staff throughout the council could be developed with partners. Included in this could be	Learning and development / Community Safety	July 2021	<b>Implemented</b> Delivered in 2021 by Plias, Asian Women's Resource Centre, IKWRO, and Global Thinking.

	training around supporting Eastern European Communities			
	Develop an annual training and development plan	Community Safety / Commissioner	August 2021	<b>Implemented</b> Advance dates confirmed. Other partner dates are also added and reviewed quarterly.
<b>4 That a plan be developed for how the Council supports the training needs of its partners in the community and voluntary sector.</b>	Maintain the monthly DA / VAWG newsletter review after 12 months	Community Safety	Ongoing	<b>Implemented</b> This is circulated widely each month
	Seek feedback from partners on their use and views of the newsletter	Community Safety	June 2021	<b>Implemented</b> Ongoing feedback is sought from the network and helps in identifying key topics to raise in the next issue.
	Include training needs of partners and community within the annual training and development plan (Action 3.4)	Community Safety / Commissioner	August 2021	<b>Implemented</b> Training needs are discussed quarterly at key VAWG partnership meetings to ensure we revise training to meet any emerging needs of gaps.
	To continue advertising sessions via Brent safeguarding partnerships and other platforms.	Learning & Development	Ongoing	<b>Implemented</b> As highlighted above
<b>5 That the Council gain Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation and embed best practice.</b>	Continue to review the recommendations from DAHA and embed within BHM	Housing	March 2022	<b>Under review</b> BHM are committed to embedding good practice from DAHA into working processes but are re-considering the separate application for DAHA status following the dedicated Domestic Abuse team already gaining the accreditation and leading on all cases where there is Domestic Abuse is identified. A review of all processes is being completed and BHM are launching a new 'spot the signs' campaign

				dedicated to helping front line officers in Housing to recognise concerns within someone's home and holistically know the types of refers to make. This includes Domestic Abuse.
	Continue to roll out training on domestic abuse to all areas of BHM	Housing	December 2020	<b>Implemented</b> In line with corporate training offers as highlighted above.
	Develop a briefing for external contractors on how to report concerns	Housing	December 2020	<b>Implemented</b> Operatives receive this training at toolbox talks. Where contractors are concerned this is currently escalated to the relevant housing officer and investigated.  Further work to streamline this process is being carried out by BHM through the development of a 'concern card' this will automate the process and provide prompts to operatives to capture what they saw and why it raised a concern.
	Complete the assessment from DAHA	Housing	March 2022	<b>Under review</b> A review of all processes is being completed and BHM are launching a new 'spot the signs' campaign dedicated to helping front line officers in Housing to recognise concerns within someone's home and holistically know the types of refers to make. This includes Domestic Abuse.

<p><b>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.</b></p>	<p>Review a sample of cases which have used the Pan London scheme to assess effectiveness / identify any opportunities for improvement</p>	<p>Housing Needs</p>	<p>January 2021</p>	<p><b>Implemented</b> Pan London schemes are managed through MOPAC who maintain oversight of delivery. Brent Housing Needs has been successful and continues to seek additional accommodation to support women fleeing DA. 2021 we have recommissioned DA Refuge support services.</p>
<p><b>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.</b></p>	<p>Explore possible locations</p>	<p>Housing Supply and Partnerships</p>	<p>January 2021</p>	<p><b>Implemented</b> Locations suitable for women with older male children are sought through our housing team; this may include temporary accommodation or private sector renting.</p>
	<p>Develop a specification for a refuge</p>	<p>Housing Needs Housing Management</p>	<p>January 2021</p>	<p><b>Implemented</b> We have recommissioned services for refuge support and this included a comprehensive specification for procurement purposes. Further housing facilities have been purchased to support women fleeing DA.</p>
	<p>Develop feasibility study and gain approval for development</p>	<p>Housing Supply and Partnerships</p>	<p>2021</p>	<p><b>Implemented</b> Development has been incorporated within the purchase of units as stated above.</p>
<p><b>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</b></p>	<p>Continued monitoring of performance including key data sets</p>	<p>Commissioned provider</p>	<p>quarterly</p>	<p><b>Implemented</b> Completed and reviewed quarterly at delivery group and monitoring meetings. Data is shared and discussed, also plans agreed to improve any gaps identified</p>



<b>Joint Strategic Needs assessments, and so that we can more accurately assess needs and prioritise resources.</b>	Share relevant data for the JSNA	Community Safety	As required	<b>Implemented</b> As requested this has been shared
	To improve data sharing of victim / survivors supported by voluntary community sector	VAWG network	Quarterly	<b>Implemented</b> Guidance followed by DPO as and when required. Case Studies are used which have been anonymised and key representation is in attendance at all data and performance meetings
	When recommissioning services, ensure current service demand and relevant data set information is used to project demand	Commissioner	August 2021	<b>Under review</b> Consultation and review of data is informing the recommissioning of services due August 2022
<b>9 That safety audits be carried out to identify risks for council premises where women need to access support for Violence Against Women and Girls.</b>	IDVA co located locations in council premises - ensure risk assessments are reviewed	Community safety	October 2021	<b>Implemented</b> Colocation has been successfully embedded and reviewed with all starters and leavers as part of induction.
	Any risks identified are shared immediately through escalation	Commissioned provider	October 2021	<b>Implemented</b> Processes are in place to risk manage and mitigate
<b>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.</b>	Any newly published VAWG documents uploaded to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines version 2.1	Community Safety	October 2020	<b>Implemented</b> This is now a requirement for all documents published on the website and is checked corporately before being published.
	Ensure we seek feedback and advice from Disability awareness experts in the design of materials and in communication	Community Safety	October 2020	<b>Implemented</b> In line with seeking the views of DA victim survivors we work with comms and specialist disability awareness groups to ensure materials are accessible.

**5.0 Financial Implications**

5.1 None

**6.0 Legal Implications**

6.1 None

**7.0 Equality Implications**

7.1 None

**8.0 Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders**

8.1 Through key delivery and partnership boards, the voice of the user is reflected in case studies and in review / audits of interventions.

8.2 The Lead Member for Community Protection and Engagement is aware and has been briefed. She continues to monitor this line of work alongside the strategic oversight from the Safer Brent Partnership board.

**9.0 Human Resources/Property Implications (if appropriate)**

9.1 None, as a result of this updated report

**Report sign off:**

***Alan Lunt***

***Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment***