

**MAYORAL  
STRATEGY ON  
VIOLENCE  
AGAINST WOMEN  
AND GIRLS**  
2013-17

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# FOREWORD



The first duty of the Mayor is to protect Londoners, and I'm determined to do just that. Crime has fallen by 11 per cent since I was elected in 2008, and we are working hard to ensure the capital is one of the safest cities in the world to work and live in. In 2012 I made a commitment to Londoners that we would make London a safer city for women and girls. I believe everyone in London, regardless of age, sex or background, has the right to live free of violence and abuse. In 2010, London became the first major city in the world to launch a comprehensive Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) strategy, which has drawn together a coalition of those committed to combatting all forms of violence against women and received positive recognition by the United Nations. **The Way Forward: Taking Action to End Violence against Women** set out a bold and ambitious approach to making London a national and global leader in preventing and eliminating violence against women and girls. And I am proud of our achievements and the progress made in tackling VAWG over the last three years. But there is still much more to do. Female victims in this city are still too common and we need to do more to tackle the scourge of domestic violence, and forms of prostitution and human trafficking. We also need plans both to prevent and prosecute those who commit horrendous crimes like female genital mutilation. The 2013-2017 VAWG Strategy will therefore maintain the commitments I made in **The Way Forward**; and set an ambitious agenda for London over the next three years. It emphasises the importance I place on collaborative work with partners across London to support efforts to tackle VAWG; developing pan-London services in response to specific crimes; and preventative planning. I am confident that this strategy will make a real difference to women and girls living with the fear and reality of violence. My mission is to make London the safest and greatest big city on earth, and we will do this by preventing violence against women and girls. **Boris Johnson** Mayor of London



Tackling violence against women and girls is a key Mayoral priority and the Mayor's Office for Policing And Crime (MOPAC) is dedicated to working with partners across London to address VAWG. This refreshed strategy confirms our commitments to a bold approach to tackling violence against women and girls across London. Cases of abuse, whether physical or sexual, can be some of the worst crimes. Victims, sometimes very young, can often find it hard to talk about their experiences and repeat victimisation is common. Our first ambition is to prevent these crimes happening in the first place. Where violence does occur, we want to ensure that victims have the confidence to report cases. In addition, we want to support victims and their children and relatives to have access to appropriate support, helping them rebuild their lives and protecting them from further harm. Finally, we want to bear down on perpetrators to stop violence, by bringing more of them to justice, more swiftly. MOPAC has consulted widely to refresh this strategy and we have been reassured that the objectives and priorities set in 2010 remain the right ones. In my role as Deputy Mayor and Co-Chair of the London VAWG Panel, I will personally ensure that key partners work together to fulfil the ambitions set out in this strategy. Further work by MOPAC and the VAWG Panel will help to develop a performance framework so we can be confident that we are making progress. **Stephen Greenhalgh** Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime

# THE MAYOR'S MISSION AND PRIORITIES

The first duty of the Mayor is to protect Londoners. As part of his manifesto when he was re-elected in 2012, the Mayor pledged to create a safer London for women by tackling violence against women and girls.

In his Police and Crime plan launched in March 2013, the Mayor set out his mission and priorities for policing and crime reduction in London over the next four years. Tackling violence against women and girls (VAWG) is a key priority within that plan.

# INTRODUCTION

In March 2010, the Mayor launched London's first ever strategy to tackle VAWG, **The Way Forward: taking action to end violence against women.**

**The Way Forward** strategy outlined a bold and ambitious approach, making London a national and global leader in seeking to end VAWG. The strategy has been hailed by the women's voluntary and community sector as a beacon of excellence for other cities and countries and was highlighted as an example of good practice at the United Nations (UN) Commission on the Status of Women in February 2013.

**The Way Forward** strategy was a three year strategy which ended in April 2013. The Mayor pledged to publish a refreshed strategy to build on the progress made over the last three years in addressing VAWG in London to respond to key national policy developments, changes in resources allocated at a regional and local level

and to respond to the challenge where reporting and prosecutions remain low, even though evidence is clear that this issue affects a large number of women and girls across the capital. The way London identifies and responds to VAWG has improved but many of the systemic problems still need to be tackled.

Through the Police and Crime Plan and delivery of this strategy, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor are committed to reducing the prevalence of VAWG over time and improving confidence of victims by working with partners to:

- Focus on prevention and create a culture based on equal rights and respect.
- Hold perpetrators of VAWG to account.
- Ensure that women and girls have access to protection, justice and support to rebuild their lives.

# OBJECTIVES

Stakeholders have confirmed that the vision, approach and five key objectives of **The Way Forward** strategy are still as valid today as they were in 2010 and should therefore remain as the pillars of a refreshed VAWG strategy for London. The five key objectives and overarching commitments are:

## 1. London taking a global lead to prevent and eliminate VAWG

**Work with partners to significantly reduce the prevalence of VAWG over time through the following commitments:**

- Political leadership to support boroughs to develop strategic approaches to VAWG which improve the quality and accessibility of specialist services.
- Challenging schools in London to tackle VAWG through a 'whole school approach' focused on prevention, education and safeguarding.
- Co-ordinate an assertive new programme to combat the evils of female genital mutilation (FGM).
- Formulate a preventative plan for so-called 'witchcraft' killings and 'honour' crimes.
- Pave the way for successful prosecutions for FGM by improving the level and quality of cases being referred to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS).
- Work with the Public Health Minister to ensure cross agency sharing of information/cases in relation to VAWG with a focus on harmful practices.
- Improve the identification and safeguarding of young women and girls at risk of FGM by piloting new ways of identification and engagement in pilot sites across London.
- Encourage proactive identification, risk and needs assessment of gang-associated young women and girls and develop safe exit strategies.

## 2. Improving access to support

**Work with partners to ensure the safety, wellbeing and freedom of women and children through improving access to high quality services through:**

- Delivering high quality sexual violence service provision including four Rape Crisis Centres and three Havens (Sexual Assault Referral Centres).
- Use the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) Victims Fund to commission VAWG services in London with a focus on service gaps and innovation.
- Commission and fund pan-London domestic violence provision.
- Maintain the number of Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVAs).

## 3. Addressing health, social and economic consequences of violence

**Work with partners to reduce the long-term consequences of violence and improve the life chances of the women and girls who experience it, and support them to rebuild their lives:**

- Address the health impact of VAWG.
- Work with commissioners and providers to build a picture of the future suitability of housing provision in the capital for women and girls experiencing VAWG.
- Develop pan-London provision to address the needs of women involved in trafficking and prostitution and to support them to exit.
- Develop a pan-London protocol in line with the Mayor's objectives which will inform the way all London partners respond to prostitution.
- Improve the identification of and response to victims of trafficking.
- Implement any learning and good practice developed by the Human Trafficking and London 2012 Network.

## 4. Protecting women and girls at risk

**Work with partners to ensure that the whole criminal justice system deters crimes of violence against women and provides full, effective and timely protection and justice for women:**

- Work with the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) to improve the identification of and response to victims of VAWG to improve confidence levels.
- Publish MPS and CPS data on sanction detection rates of VAWG offences as well as court outcomes.
- Improve the way the criminal justice system responds to domestic and sexual violence through specialist courts and special measures for victims.
- Improve young women's access to protection and support.

## 5. Getting tougher with perpetrators

**Work with partners to intervene with perpetrators of violence against women in order to stop the violence, hold them to account, change their behaviour and deter others:**

- Challenge criminal justice partners to increase the number of convictions for VAWG offences with appropriate sentencing.

## What is VAWG?

The UN defines violence against women as “any act of gender-based violence that is directed at a woman because she is a woman or acts of violence which are suffered disproportionately by women.”<sup>1</sup> This includes physical, sexual and psychological/emotional violence, economic abuse and sexual exploitation. VAWG can take place at home, work or in public places such as on the street or public transport.

This strategy covers the following forms of violence against women and girls:

- Domestic violence and abuse
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Forced marriage
- ‘Honour’-based violence
- Prostitution and trafficking
- Sexual violence including rape
- Sexual exploitation
- Sexual harassment
- Stalking
- Faith-based abuse.

Full definitions can be found in Appendix 1.

This strategy is focused on the needs of women and girls and is a deliberate response to the disproportionate impact of VAWG crimes on women and girls. This does not mean that men are never victims of, for example, rape, forced marriage, or domestic violence, or even that women are not sometimes perpetrators. The Mayor is committed to tackling the needs of men and to addressing all forms of exploitation and abuse across the capital. He wants to drive protection and legal redress for all victims of crime.

## Key national developments

Since the publication of **The Way Forward**, the landscape in which VAWG is tackled has changed considerably. Some of the most significant changes are set out in Appendix 2. The refreshed strategy takes into account these changes and also reflects the change in the Mayor's role. The creation of MOPAC has given the Mayor greater responsibility for oversight of the MPS and the wider criminal justice system (CJS) and a duty to bring together partners working in the field of community safety to deliver and commission initiatives to prevent and respond to crime.

The government published its “Call to end violence against women and girls” strategic narrative in November 2010 followed by annual action plans in 2011, 2012 and 2013. This strategy supports the vision and the principles set out by the government.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> United Nations, 2006, Secretary General's Report on Violence against women, Para 28 and 104

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/ending-violence-against-women-and-girls-in-the-uk>

# PROGRESS IN LONDON OVER THE LAST FOUR YEARS

Both the Greater London Authority (GLA) and the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) have worked closely with partners over the last four years to deliver and implement the commitments set out in **The Way Forward** strategy. Key successes include:

- **An improved understanding of the nature and extent of VAWG in London** and of the solutions, policies and services required to address this. The commissioning and publication of independent research into forced marriage, FGM and 'honour'-based violence ("**The Missing Link**" report), domestic violence refuge provision, trafficking and prostitution ("**Capital Exploits**" report) have been of particular importance.
- **A shift towards a more preventative approach** including a sexual violence prevention campaign, work with young people in out-of-school settings such as youth clubs and the funding of a pan-London prevention initiative by London Councils.
- **Improved access to support** by quadrupling Rape Crisis provision, opening three new centres and expanding the only centre in south London. Greater focus on VAWG across London with the development of local VAWG strategies in boroughs<sup>3</sup> and London Councils' development of new pan-London VAWG provision focused on prevention, specialist provision for victims of trafficking and specialist provision to tackle harmful practices (female genital mutilation, forced marriage and 'honour'-based violence).
- **Improvements to the MPS response to VAWG** through the formation of a specialist command to respond to rape and sexual assault which has now merged with the child abuse command to create an integrated "Sexual Offences, Exploitation and Child Abuse Investigation Command" and the formation of a new specialist unit to tackle trafficking and prostitution which has established itself as a centre of excellence renowned for its victim-centred approach.

- **Multi-agency responses to VAWG** including the creation of a multi-agency Human Trafficking and London 2012 Network and delivery of an ambitious action plan including training for all front line police officers and single points of contact for child trafficking in each London borough. The Network was highlighted as a model of good practice by the Institute for Public Policy Research<sup>4</sup> and the Cambridge Centre for Applied Research in Human Trafficking.<sup>5</sup>

- **Scrutiny and support** to all London boroughs through the Domestic and Sexual Violence Board to improve the way the MPS responds to incidents of domestic and sexual violence. A report outlining the pan-London issues identified and subsequent recommendations was published in 2011<sup>6</sup>. The Board was highlighted as a model of good practice by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.<sup>7</sup>

## Consultation

This document has been developed further to a two month consultation between June – August 2013 to which approximately eighty organisations and individuals responded.

MOPAC also commissioned Imkaan to consult survivors of VAWG to inform the development of the Mayor's second VAWG strategy for London. The survivor consultation report 'Beyond the Labels' is available online. Both consultations have informed the development of this strategy and will drive delivery of many of the commitments.

## Community Impact Assessment

A community impact assessment has been undertaken in conjunction with the development of this strategy which is available on the MOPAC website.

<sup>3</sup> MOPAC survey into local VAWG responses (17 April- 3 May 2013)

<sup>4</sup> The UK's response to human trafficking: Fit for purpose? IPPR (July 2012)

<sup>5</sup> Human Trafficking, Sporting Mega-Events, and the London Olympics of 2012, Cambridge Centre for Applied Research in Human Trafficking (September 2012)

<sup>6</sup> <http://policeauthority.org/metropolitan/dsvb/index.html>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.endvawnow.org/en/articles/1104-oversight-by-independent-bodies.html>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs08/hosb0308.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> NSPCC (2009) Partner Exploitation & Violence in teenage intimate relationships

<sup>10</sup> Statistical Bulletin Focus on: Violent Crime and Sexual Offences, 2011/12 Office for National Statistics (Feb 2013)

# VAWG IN LONDON

## Domestic violence

- In 2012/13 there were 48,873 domestic violence crimes reported to the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) in London.
- In London, 33 per cent of violence with injury occurs within the home.
- Nationally the police remain unaware of 81 per cent of domestic abuse victims.<sup>8</sup>
- 25 per cent of girls experienced some form of physical abuse at least once in their lifetime.<sup>9</sup>

## Rape & other sexual offences

- In 2012/13, there were 3,043 rape offences, 7,982 serious sexual assaults and 1,780 other sexual offences reported to the MPS in London.
- In the 2011/12 Crime Survey for England & Wales, 13 per cent of victims of serious sexual assault reported the incident to the police.<sup>10</sup>
- 31 per cent of girls reported experiencing some form of sexual violence at least once in their lifetime.<sup>11</sup>

## Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), Forced Marriage & 'Honour'-based violence

- The MPS investigated 46 allegations of FGM in 2008/09 and 58 in 2009/10.<sup>12</sup> However, no prosecutions have been brought under the legislation prohibiting FGM which has been in place since 1985.
- A report published by FORWARD in 2007 estimated that in 2001, 4.5 per cent of maternities in Greater London were to women who were born in FGM practising countries and had some form of FGM.<sup>13</sup>
- The Forced Marriage Unit recorded 1,485 cases of forced marriage across the UK in 2012. Of these cases, 21 per cent were identified in London.<sup>14</sup>
- In 2012/13 there were 50 forced marriage offences and 180 'honour'-based violence offences reported to the MPS.

## Trafficking and prostitution

- There were 447 trafficking for sexual exploitation offences reported to the MPS in 2012/13, a significant increase from 32 offences five years ago (2007-08).
- In 2012, 1,186 potential victims of trafficking were referred to the National Referral Mechanism of whom 786 were female. London remains the single largest region for referrals with 315 referrals in 2012 and 258 referrals in 2011.<sup>15</sup>
- Project Acumen identified 2,600 female victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation in England and Wales and 9,600 who are considered to be vulnerable.<sup>16</sup>
- Women in street prostitution are 12 times more likely to be murdered than the rate for all women in same age group in the UK.<sup>17</sup>
- More than half of women in prostitution have been raped and at least 75 per cent have been physically assaulted at the hands of the pimps and punters.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>11</sup> NSPCC (2009) Partner Exploitation & Violence in teenage intimate relationships

<sup>12</sup> Metropolitan Police Service (2010) Female Genital Mutilation Report: 8. 4 November 2010. Project Azure

<sup>13</sup> Efua Dorkenoo, Linda Morrison and Alison Macfarlane (2007) A Statistical Study to Estimate the Prevalence of Female Genital Mutilation in England and Wales, London: FORWARD with The London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and City University

<sup>14</sup> Forced Marriage Unit, Statistics January-December 2012, [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/141823/Stats\\_2012.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/141823/Stats_2012.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> HM Government (October 2013) Second report of the Inter-Departmental Ministerial Group on Human Trafficking.

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.acpo.police.uk/documents/crime/2010/201008CRITMW01.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> Home Office (October 2011) A review of effective practice in responding to prostitution

<sup>18</sup> Home Office (2004) Solutions and Strategies: Drug Problems and Street Sex Markets: London: UK Government



# OBJECTIVE ONE: LONDON TAKING A GLOBAL LEAD TO ELIMINATE AND PREVENT VAWG

Work with partners to significantly reduce the prevalence of violence against women and girls over time. London will be a leader in developing and implementing a range of measures to achieve this.

# OBJECTIVE ONE: PRIORITIES

As a global city, London faces the full spectrum of violence against women and girls (VAWG). The Mayor believes that VAWG is neither natural nor inevitable. VAWG can and should be prevented and our long-term vision is of a society free of such violence.

The Mayor is committed to ensuring that London takes a global lead to eliminate and prevent VAWG.

## 1. Promote an integrated approach to VAWG across London

VAWG is a multi-faceted issue that links to, and impacts on, a range of other social issues including poverty, unemployment, youth crime, homelessness, child abuse, health, and problematic substance use. A multi-agency, integrated approach to tackling these issues is therefore required.

Building on the first strategy this means:

- Recognising the links and similarities between the different forms of violence e.g. victims of domestic violence often experience sexual violence. A significant proportion of women involved in prostitution have experienced childhood sexual abuse and domestic violence.
- Tackling all forms of VAWG in a joined up way, linking different forms of violence and addressing their underlying causes.
- Acknowledging the links between VAWG and other issues, and mainstreaming VAWG into other policies and strategies.
- A multi-agency approach that makes the best use of resources.
- Targeting perpetrators and holding them to account.
- Creating a culture in which VAWG is neither tolerated nor condoned and women are encouraged to report it and seek support.

Whilst the Mayor has many levers at his disposal to provide strategic and political leadership across London, tackling VAWG is not something the Mayor

can achieve alone. For example, local authorities have a significant role to play in developing, delivering and commissioning services and initiatives to address the needs of their local communities. They also have a leadership role in the areas they serve, including within local Community Safety Partnerships, local Safeguarding Children Boards and Health and Wellbeing Boards.

Through the VAWG Panel, MOPAC will:

- Work with local authorities and partners to ensure that every London borough has local plans in place to address VAWG in an integrated way.
- Develop VAWG commissioning guidance to drive quality and consistency of service provision across London focused on the needs of women, girls and children.<sup>19</sup>

## 2. Addressing harmful attitudes and behaviour at an early age to prevent VAWG

VAWG is preventable if the root causes including the attitudes and beliefs that condone or tolerate it are tackled. Myths that normalise VAWG, make excuses for perpetrators, and blame victims are too common and should be challenged.

To ensure that harmful behaviour and attitudes are addressed at an early age, it is critical that there is a significant improvement in the consistency and quality of education related to VAWG within schools across the capital. The End Violence Against Women (EVAW) Coalition and Against Violence & Abuse (AVA) have called for a 'whole-school approach to VAWG'.<sup>20</sup> The Mayor wants London to show leadership in tackling these issues through schools.

Research indicates that the sexualisation and sexist stereotyping of women and girls has become prevalent across all forms of media from films, TV programmes, music videos, young women's magazines, 'lads' mags' and advertising and an increase in sexualised products being targeted at children and young people.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>19</sup> This will be informed by the minimum standards and accreditation framework that is being developed by the new VAWG working group consisting of Caada, Imkaan, Rape Crisis, Respect, and Women's Aid.

<sup>20</sup> A 'whole school approach' addresses the needs of pupils, staff and the wider community within a school. It aims to develop an ethos and environment in a school that supports learning and promotes the health, well-being and safety of all. Dimensions include: staff leadership, school policies, good behaviour, child protection, anti-bullying and social inclusion; working directly with students through input to the curriculum, peer-led advocacy and mentoring; researching and consulting with young people, staff and parents to gather data and achieve universal 'buy in'; staff training. (Womankind Worldwide, Freedom to achieve. Preventing violence, promoting equality: A whole-school approach(2010). Taken from EVAW Coalition(2011) A Different World is Possible: A call for long-term and targeted action to prevent VAWG.)

<sup>21</sup> Object (2009) Joining up the dots: why urgent action is needed to tackle the sexualisation of women and girls in the media and popular culture.

# FOR THE NEXT THREE YEARS

Pornography is also more readily available on the internet. An investigation by the London School of Economics found that 90 per cent of youngsters between eight and 16 have accessed porn online, many without meaning to find it and most while doing their homework.<sup>22</sup> The nature of pornography has changed and it has become increasingly dominated by themes of aggression, power and control, blurring the lines between consent, pleasure and violence.<sup>23</sup> Schools have a fundamental role to play in helping children and young people understand the dangers of pornography as well as empowering them to question and challenge the sexualised nature of media and popular culture.

An NSPCC study<sup>24</sup> highlighted the emergence of 'sexting' as another area of concern for young people, linking technology, social media and abuse.<sup>25</sup> They found that between 15 per cent and 40 per cent of young people were involved in sexting, and many were coerced into doing so.

A recent report by Ofsted reviewing PSHE in 50 schools found that sessions did not adequately focus on the influence of pornography on students' understanding of healthy relationships and that sex education required improvement in over a third of schools. The report also stated that a lack of high-quality, age-appropriate sex and relationships education was of concern due to the risk that it may leave children and young people vulnerable to inappropriate sexual behaviours and sexual exploitation.<sup>26</sup>

Schools not only play a critical role in supporting prevention of VAWG in London but also, through their statutory duty of care, offer a key opportunity for the identification and support of victims of sexual violence at school. A YouGov poll commissioned by the EVAW Coalition highlighted that close to one in three 16-18 year old girls had experienced unwanted sexual touching at school and 71 per cent had heard sexual name-calling towards girls at school daily or a few times per week.<sup>27a</sup>

VAWG can place the educational attainment of girls at serious risk and can lead to behavioural problems, absenteeism and school drop-out. In order to meet their obligations under the Equality Act and child protection laws, schools and other educational institutions need to ensure that the school environment is a safe and supportive space for both boys and girls.

This is a significant challenge for London, requiring schools and partners to drive forward a different approach.

Through the VAWG Panel, MOPAC will:

- Work with schools in London to develop and implement a "whole school" approach to VAWG and promote and disseminate learning.
- Work with OFSTED to integrate VAWG into their assessment framework to understand how schools are responding to and preventing VAWG.
- Bring the MPS and the London Safeguarding Children Board together to explore the changing landscape of social media to improve our understanding of the links between technology, social media and VAWG.
- Work with the London Safeguarding Children Board to identify points of early intervention and improve referral pathways for those at risk of sexual exploitation, teenage relationship abuse, sexual violence and harmful practices and for those who display harmful attitudes or behaviours.
- Increase awareness of VAWG by using days such as the International Day for the Elimination of VAWG (25 November) and the sixteen days of action as a platform for publicly communicating on VAWG issues.

<sup>22</sup> Lizi Patch (31 March 2013) The day my 11-year-old son found violent porn on the web. The Independent (Last accessed on 1 May 2013)

<sup>23</sup> Papadopoulus, L. (2010) Sexualisation of Young People Review.

<sup>24</sup> A Qualitative Study of Children, Young People, and 'Sexting' NSPCC, 2012

<sup>25</sup> Sexting has been defined in the report as the 'exchange of sexual messages or images' and 'creating, sharing and forwarding sexually suggestive nude or nearly nude images'.

<sup>26</sup> Ofsted (May 2013) Not yet good enough: personal, social, health and economic education in schools.

<sup>27a</sup> EVAW (October 2010) Sexual harassment in schools, <http://www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk/2010-poll-on-sexual-harassment-in-schools>

# OBJECTIVE ONE: PRIORITIES

## 3. Tackle harmful practices

The Mayor has established a Harmful Practices (HP) Taskforce to confront female genital mutilation (FGM) and other harmful practices including forced marriages, so-called witchcraft killings and 'honour' crimes.

In 2011, Imkaan were commissioned to undertake a study examining harmful practices in London to improve knowledge on the needs of black and minority ethnic (BME) women experiencing HP. The **Missing Link** report highlighted a number of issues with current policy and practice around HP in London. The research has helped shape the work of the HP Taskforce.

Key issues include:

- High levels of under-reporting and few cases coming to the attention of the police or other statutory agencies due to multiple barriers that BME women and girls experience.
- No FGM prosecutions in the UK even though there has been specific legislation since 1985.
- A lack of understanding and awareness of harmful practices and a reluctance to intervene due to cultural sensitivity and concerns about being seen as racist. Professionals are missing opportunities to identify girls at risk and prevent harmful practices.
- FGM and other harmful practices are not systematically integrated within local authority and local NHS policies, strategic plans and child protection policies leading to inconsistent approaches and responses across London.
- Safeguarding procedures and frameworks are not consistently being used to protect girls at risk.
- Training of staff in education, health, safeguarding, criminal justice agencies, housing and voluntary sector is inadequate in relation to harmful practices.
- Hospitals that come into contact with women/girls who have undergone FGM (through for instance maternity services) do not routinely record this information or share it with agencies such as the police or social services.
- Currently very few specialist services are available to prevent or respond to harmful practices in London and those that do exist are under pressure.

Through the VAWG Panel, MOPAC will:

- Work with the Public Health Minister to overcome barriers to information sharing by health services and to promote solutions for an effective inter-agency response to end violence and abuse against women and girls. This will include a focus on FGM and other harmful practices. It will support future safeguarding of children or siblings and investigation and prosecution of these crimes in the future.

In addition, MOPAC will work with partners on the HP Taskforce to develop and implement a pilot initiative focusing on four key strands:

### Early identification and prevention

- Integrating education on harmful practices into schools and youth-based settings.
- Developing and delivering quality training of professionals across sectors likely to come into contact with those at risk (health, education, police, social services, voluntary sector).
- Developing clear processes and mechanisms to enable practitioners (particularly health and education professionals) to assess and flag risk and to facilitate information-sharing and referrals.

### Safeguarding and access to support

- Embedding harmful practices into safeguarding policies and interventions including the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and Multi-agency safeguarding hubs (MASH).
- Improving access to specialist support services for victims and those at risk of FGM/harmful practices.

# FOR THE NEXT THREE YEARS

## Enforcement and prosecutions

- Securing prosecutions around FGM and forced marriage to hold perpetrators to account and deter them from perpetrating these crimes.
- Monitoring the effectiveness of CJS responses to forced marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM)

## Community engagement

- Working with specialist VAWG voluntary and community sector organisations on these issues to develop effective outreach work and awareness raising activities with affected communities to ensure that the voices of women and girls are heard; to work with men and boys to challenge the acceptability of harmful practices within affected communities.

## 4. Tackling issues associated with girls and gangs

As in all global cities, a proportion of crimes committed in our capital are gang-related. Eliminating gangs and serious youth violence has been a key Mayoral priority since 2008. Key activities include the **Time for Action** programme; the launch of the first pan-London Partnership Anti Gangs strategy and providing over £3 million of London Crime Prevention Funding to gang programmes in London boroughs.

**The Way Forward** strategy highlighted the key challenges and impact of gang violence on young women and girls including:

- Young women and girls occupying roles within gangs.
- Young women and girls directly involved in offending (often under coercion) including hiding weapons and drugs for partners, brothers or associates fraud, "honey traps", set ups, violence, robbery, shoplifting etc.
- Young women involved in or associated with gangs experiencing domestic and sexual violence from gang members.
- Sexual violence being used as a weapon between rival gangs.

The Race on the Agenda (ROTA) Female Voice in Violence Programme and the Office of the Children's Commissioner's (OCC) Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups (CSEGG), have led to a much greater focus on the experiences and needs of gang-associated women and girls.<sup>27</sup> Examples include the cross-government action plan to tackle VAWG, the Ending Gang and Youth Violence strategy and the Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation Action Plan.

<sup>27</sup> Female Voice in Violence: A study into the impact of serious youth and gang violence on women and girls Race on the Agenda, 2010

**The Way Forward** strategy made a commitment to improve the response to young women and girls affected by gang violence. Over the last few years London has seen a rise in specialist service provision for young women and girls affected by gangs including Young People's Advocates funded by the Home Office. Although provision is still patchy across London, there are new initiatives that have emerged focused on prevention and diversion. However, provision for young women and girls who want to exit gangs remains a significant gap.

Young men and boys who commit VAWG offences will come into contact with dozens of professionals whose role it is to help them change their behaviour. However, the Female Voice in Violence report raised concerns about practitioners working to address gang-related issues without materials which address the needs of young women and girls and which were suitable for safely challenging male attitudes and behaviour towards women and girls. A joint inspection by the probation, police, prison, education, health, care and social services inspectorates recently highlighted that the early indicators of sexually abusive behaviour by young men and boys often against their peers or younger children, are too often disbelieved, denied or minimised and treated as a 'one off' by both professionals and families.<sup>28</sup> Professionals should identify and address these problems at an early stage to avoid more serious, longer-term implications for both offenders and victims.

Through the VAWG Panel, MOPAC will:

- Publish a strategic framework to support London boroughs in devising their strategic and operational responses to young women and girls involved in or associated to criminal gangs.
- Work with the MPS, London boroughs and the "MsUnderstood Partnership"<sup>29</sup> to encourage the proactive identification, risk and needs assessment of gang-associated young women and girls.
- Work with commissioners across London to ensure that interventions for gang associated men and boys address VAWG developing standards that promote positive role models, and respect for women and girls.
- Work in partnership with the London Safeguarding Children Board to address the findings and recommendations of the OCC Inquiry into child sexual exploitation in gangs and groups.
- Review lessons from the MsUnderstood Partnership case review and use these to inform gang exit strategies for young women and girls
- Work with the Youth Justice Board to develop a resettlement model for London promoting London as a leader in the resettlement of young offenders ensuring there is a focus on the needs of young women offenders.

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<sup>28</sup> Criminal Justice Joint Inspection (February 2013) Examining Multi-Agency Responses to Children and Young People who Sexually Offend. A joint inspection of the effectiveness of multi-agency work with children and young people in England and Wales who have committed sexual offences and were supervised in the community

<sup>29</sup> The MsUnderstood Partnership has been founded by Carlene Firmin, the author of the Female Voice in Violence reports. It brings together the University of Bedfordshire, Imkaan, and the Girls Against Gangs Project to address young people's experiences of gender inequality by influences the development of policy, practice and research. Building on analysis of MPS and CPS case files, and the broader research into VAWG, gang-associated and serious youth violence, and child sexual exploitation, the partnership will improve local and national responses to peer-on-peer abuse through free strategic and operational support to three local areas for three years to improve the prevention, identification and handling of peer-on-peer abuse cases and a national assessment of provision for boys and young men

## OBJECTIVE TWO: IMPROVING ACCESS TO SUPPORT

Work with partners to ensure the safety, wellbeing and freedom of women and children by improving access to, and take-up of, high quality services that meet the needs of London's diverse communities.

# OBJECTIVE TWO: PRIORITIES

Women and girls need access to high quality services to enable them to escape violence and to support them to deal with the impact. Independent, specialist women-only VAWG services play an important role in improving the outcomes for women and children affected by violence and abuse. These services empower women by enabling them to talk about and make sense of the violence, find safety, seek justice, rebuild their lives and recover from the long-term consequences of violence.

Over the next three years, MOPAC will work with London boroughs and other agencies to ensure that women and girls have access to appropriate support.

## 1. Address domestic violence and abuse through the development of pan-London provision

Domestic violence remains the highest volume component of VAWG offences. In addition, domestic homicide is increasing, with 22 homicides in London since April this year, the same number as the whole of 2012/13 already. A third of violence with injury offences (a key MOPAC priority crime type) are also domestic violence cases. However, as with all forms of VAWG, domestic violence is under-reported. A renewed focus on tackling domestic violence is therefore critically needed. Supporting women to have the confidence to report and to access appropriate support is critical.

Since the first strategy was launched, there have been a number of welcome developments to address domestic violence. Most significantly, the government has amended the domestic violence and abuse definition to include those aged 16-17 years, in recognition that young people experience relationship abuse to the same extent as adults. The new definition also includes "coercive control" which recognises patterns of acts or behaviours, assaults, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish or frighten a victim.<sup>30</sup>

Levels of domestic violence service provision for women are patchy and inconsistent across London. The Mayor wants to ensure that wherever they live, victims of domestic violence have access to a high quality, professional and specialist support service. In his manifesto, he pledged to work with partners to commission and fund a pan-London domestic violence service, and to maintain the number of Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVAs).

He has committed to bring together key partners and funders to develop a more coordinated and consistent pan-London approach to delivery to end the postcode lottery for access to high quality VAWG provision.

Consultation for this strategy with stakeholders and victim-survivors has provided insights into current arrangements and highlighted gaps in service provision. These will be taken into account when developing plans for pan-London domestic violence provision.

As of 1 October 2014, funding for victims' services transfers to Police and Crime Commissioners from the Ministry of Justice. The current government proposal is disappointing with regards to the funding allocation that MOPAC will receive for London. However, as part of a victims' review being led by Baroness Newlove, MOPAC will consider how this funding can be utilised to support improvements and changes to VAWG services through co-commissioning and shared funding arrangements with partners across London.

MOPAC will:

- Work with partners to commission and fund domestic violence provision across London informed by consultation for this strategy refresh, existing good practice across London and the findings of the Victims Review.
- Maintain the number of Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVAs).

In developing an approach for commissioning pan-London domestic violence provision MOPAC will ensure that:

- Good practice is identified and applied to a wider London model.
- Gaps are addressed and existing forms of provision are not duplicated.
- The commissioning framework at a pan-London level does not impact negatively on smaller or specialist VAWG and BME organisations which are valued.
- Consideration is given to the development of a commissioning alliance for London where specialist providers, commissioners and practitioners are engaged in the development of a pan-London model.

<sup>30</sup> Home Office (March 2013) Information for local areas on the change to the definition of domestic violence and abuse.

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## 2. Deliver high quality, specialist sexual violence service provision

As set out in the Mayor's Police and Crime Plan, the Mayor has committed to funding four London Rape Crisis Centres throughout the duration of his Mayoral term. The demand for services at all four centres continues to increase and 91 per cent of women and girls surveyed through MOPAC's survivor consultation spoke about the value and benefit of being directly supported by a specialist women-only service.

The Mayor has allocated a total of £2.48 million (over four years 2012-2016) towards Rape Crisis provision, an increase from £1.4 million during his first Mayoral term. MOPAC has joined forces with the Ministry of Justice to jointly commission rape support provision in London in 2014/15 and 2015/16. The Police and Crime plan sets out a commitment to establishing a sustainable funding model for the Rape Crisis Centres in London beyond 2016.

The Mayor recognises that Sexual Assault Referral Centres (The Havens) provide crucial medical care and support to victims of rape and serious sexual assault and that these services are complementary to those of the Rape Crisis Centres. The London Havens offer high-quality victim care and clinical services such as forensic examinations in the immediate aftermath of rape and serious sexual assault. The Mayor contributes £2.165m towards the cost of the Havens with an equal amount funded by NHS England (London).

Although women and girls are disproportionately affected by sexual violence, the Mayor also recognises that men and boys may also be victims of sexual violence and should be offered appropriate support. The London Havens offer a service to all victims of rape and serious sexual assault including men and boys.

Further plans for supporting male victims of sexual violence in London will be developed over the next year following the completion of the review into victims' services currently being led by Baroness Newlove.

Alongside this, MOPAC has also commenced mapping work to better understand the commissioning and funding landscape of sexual violence provision in London. The longer-term ambition is to move to a model whereby the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), MOPAC, MPS, NHS England (London) and boroughs work together to co-commission all sexual violence service provision.

MOPAC will:

- Work with the MoJ and London boroughs to commission four Rape Support services in London offering support to women and girls who have experienced sexual violence in London.
- Ensure continued MPS funding for London's three Havens (Sexual Assault Referral Centres) in partnership with NHS England (London).
- Ensure that the needs of sexual violence victims are fed into MOPAC's victims review and use the findings to inform the future commissioning of services for both male and female victims.
- Work with NHS England (London), the MPS and boroughs to develop a collaborative, outcome based commissioning approach for sexual violence service provision across the capital.

# OBJECTIVE TWO: PRIORITIES

## 3. Continuing to innovate and invest in specialist support services

The Mayor is committed to driving new and innovative services that tackle VAWG in an integrated manner at the local level.

Through the London Crime Prevention Fund (LCPF)<sup>[1]</sup> over £3.5 million per year has been

allocated to 37 VAWG initiatives over a four year period. This represents an increase in funding for VAWG projects from the previous Community Safety Funding arrangements.

Through the VAWG Panel, MOPAC will:

- Monitor and review the outcomes being delivered through these projects and share learning across London.

### VAWG commissioning: an example of promising practice

The London boroughs of Hammersmith & Fulham, Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster have pooled their resources together with funding from the LCPF to deliver a Tri-borough Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Service. This new service will build upon their existing successful Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy (IDVA) service, which was commissioned across two of the boroughs and provides additional frontline capacity so that more women can access support.

The first stage of the Tri-borough service is a domestic abuse and sexual violence needs

assessment. This will be followed by the commissioning of a new, improved service, which aims to provide robust, consistent, targeted services across the three boroughs and easier access and appropriate referral of domestic abuse and sexual violence victims/ survivors at the earliest possible opportunity through introducing a single point of contact.

It is anticipated that the new and enhanced service for victims/survivors and their families will be delivered through a mix of providers, but with consistency across boroughs and through a single, more flexible service framework, which will deliver better value for money. This ultimately benefits victims/survivors, as it will enable more frontline specialist support staff to increase safety of women and girls and reduce repeat victimisation.

[1] MOPAC worked with London Councils to develop London's new commissioning arrangements for community safety and crime reduction funding. The London Crime Prevention fund replaces previous funding streams from the Home Office.

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## 4. Raise awareness of VAWG amongst friends and family members and the general public to improve access to support and encourage reporting

Domestic violence homicide reviews have highlighted that in many cases, victims were not known to any support services or statutory agencies such as the police. They have highlighted the issue of child to parent violence and the fact that neighbours often know about domestic violence but do not report it.

Evidence indicates that young women and girls often face additional barriers in seeking support and reporting VAWG. Research by Race on the Agenda highlighted that fear amongst young people that professionals cannot keep them safe frequently prevented them from reporting or seeking support.<sup>31</sup> This is an issue that was also stressed in MOPAC's survivor consultation. Barriers to reporting VAWG included not feeling confident about whom to disclose to, a lack of information about support options and fear that their experiences would not be taken seriously or lead to the successful prosecution of the perpetrator.<sup>32</sup>

This highlights the crucial role that friends and family members can play in preventing and responding to VAWG. MOPAC has published a series of Friends and Family publications (developed in collaboration with Against Violence and Abuse – AVA). These provide guidance and help for friends and family members of victims of VAWG to enable them to

provide a supportive response to friends or family members experiencing violence and abuse. The existing series comprises a leaflet for friends and family of victims of VAWG; for parents of an adolescent who has experienced VAWG; for young people on how to help their friends and for non-abusive partners of previous victims of VAWG.<sup>33</sup> These have been well received by partners across London.

New ways of encouraging reporting VAWG need to be explored. Through the London Crime Prevention Fund, MOPAC has funded an innovative pilot in Southwark and Enfield to enhance women's access to support and to encourage reporting of VAWG through the use of technology and social media. A women's safety app will assist women to identify the early signs of an abusive relationship to facilitate earlier take-up of support services.

Through the VAWG Panel, MOPAC will:

- Develop and distribute literature e.g. friends and family leaflets to raise awareness of VAWG and the protection and support available in London.
- Work with partners to develop a pan-London directory of VAWG service provision for victims and professionals.
- Work with the MPS and partners to explore the use of new technology to report crime and access support.
- Work with the London Safeguarding Children Board to explore innovative options to encourage young people to report domestic violence and seek support and to create appropriate referral pathways as a result.

<sup>31</sup> Female Voice in Violence. Final report on the impact of serious youth violence and criminal gangs on women and girls across the country. (Race on the Agenda). London

<sup>32</sup> Imkaan (2013) Beyond the Labels: Women and girls views on the 2013 Mayoral strategy on VAWG

<sup>33</sup> These leaflets were developed in collaboration with AVA and are available on the MOPAC website.

<http://www.london.gov.uk/priorities/policing-crime/mission-priorities/violence-against-women-girls/know-where-to-go/about-the-directory>



# OBJECTIVE THREE: ADDRESSING HEALTH, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLENCE

Work with partners to reduce the long-term consequences of violence, improving the life chances of the women and girls who experience it, supporting them to rebuild their lives.

# OBJECTIVE THREE: PRIORITIES

VAWG can have serious long-term health, social and economic consequences. These include mental health problems such as depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD); attempted and successful suicide; low self-esteem, isolation and social exclusion; alcohol and drug misuse; disability; unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases; negative impacts on attainment in education and employment.<sup>34</sup>

To support women and girls to rebuild their lives and improve the life chances, the long-term consequences of VAWG need to be addressed.

## 1. Address the health impact of VAWG

The health impact of VAWG is varied. The impact of abuse on mental health and wellbeing for example, is well-documented. Between 50 and 60 per cent of women mental health service users have experienced domestic violence.<sup>35</sup> 76 per cent of rape victims experienced post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms in the year following the assault.<sup>36</sup>

Research has also demonstrated the links between child sexual abuse and teenage pregnancy.<sup>37</sup> In one study, over a third of pregnant teenagers had been sexually abused or exploited, and girls from minority ethnic communities were more likely to experience a pregnancy in adolescence.<sup>38</sup> Health services are often the first point of contact for victims of VAWG. Women and girls present with different issues that stem from VAWG. For instance, victims may present in Accident and Emergency with injuries following assault, maternity services following FGM complications, GPs or mental health services with on-going depression.

The use of 'routine enquiry' in maternity settings has been found to increase the identification of domestic violence.<sup>39</sup> Enquiry in other health settings such as GP practices through the IRIS model has demonstrated improved identification and referral of victims to specialist services.<sup>40</sup> Similar routine enquiry practices would help the health service identify and address harmful practices and indeed other forms of VAWG.

In addition, the inquiry into gang and group-associated child sexual exploitation conducted by the Office of the Children's Commissioner recommended in its interim report<sup>41</sup> that all health agencies receive guidance to ensure effective information sharing on the issue of child sexual exploitation.

MOPAC is currently working with NHS England (London region) to develop a strategy focused on health in the justice system. This will set out key priorities and intentions to co-commission health provision across the justice system in support of Police and Crime Plan objectives.

Through the VAWG Panel MOPAC will:

- Work with partners including NHS England (London), Clinical Commissioning Groups and the London Health Board<sup>42</sup> to ensure that the needs of victims of VAWG and women offenders are built into the commissioning of health provision.
- Integrate VAWG into the emerging strategy focused on health in the justice system
- Work with partners to enable health professionals to receive training and guidance on VAWG.

## 2. Safe and secure housing options for those fleeing abuse

Many women who experience VAWG want to remain in their own homes safely. The development of local Sanctuary schemes, injunctions and interventions with perpetrators has enabled more women to achieve better security so that they do not have to flee violence. However, for many women leaving their home or even their local area to make a new start is the only option.

<sup>34</sup> See The Way Forward strategy (2010) Mayor of London, p.45

<sup>35</sup> Department of Health, 2003, cited in Statistics: health and domestic violence, Women's Aid, 2008

<sup>36</sup> Resnick et al, 1987, cited in A prospective examination of post-traumatic stress disorder in rape victims Journal of Traumatic Stress July 1992, Volume 5, Issue 3, pp 455-475

<sup>37</sup> Childhood Sexual Abuse and Adolescent Pregnancy: A Meta-analytic Update, Oxford Journal of Pediatric Psychology, Volume 34, Issue 4, Pp 366 – 378. First published online: September 2008.

<sup>38</sup> Ethnic differences in childhood and adolescent sexual abuse and teenage pregnancy, Journal of Adolescent Health, Volume 21, Issue 1, July 1997, Pages 3–10

<sup>39</sup> Does routine antenatal enquiry lead to an increased rate of disclosure of domestic abuse? Findings from the Bristol Pregnancy and Domestic Violence Programme. Price S, Baird K, Salmon D. (2007) Evidence Based Midwifery 5(3): 100-6

<sup>40</sup> Identification and Referral to Improve Safety (IRIS) of women experiencing domestic violence with a primary care training and support programme: a cluster randomised controlled trial, The Lancet Volume 378, 19 November 2011

<sup>41</sup> The Office of the Children's Commissioner's Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation In Gangs and Groups, Interim report (November 2012)

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Research has highlighted that VAWG is a significant cause of homelessness, and fear of losing their home can often trap women in violent situations. Around 40 per cent of young homeless women have left home because of sexual abuse.<sup>43</sup> 14 per cent of homeless women left their last settled home as a result of abuse from a partner.<sup>44</sup> 60 per cent of all homeless women surveyed by Crisis had experienced domestic violence at some point, and 49 per cent other abuse.<sup>45</sup> Insecure housing or homelessness can be both a route into prostitution and a barrier to exit. In one study, 77 per cent of women identified housing as a barrier to exit.<sup>46</sup>

Some women fleeing violence and abuse will go into refuge accommodation which is generally funded by local authorities and London Councils. However, this is not suitable for all women and there is a significant gap in terms of provision for young women and girls fleeing violence and abuse. As highlighted in the accelerated report of the Office of the Children's Commissioner's (OCC) Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs & Groups, identifying appropriate housing for children at risk of sexual exploitation remains a challenge. New models of housing support are required for young women and girls fleeing violence and abuse.

Through the VAWG Panel MOPAC will:

- Work with partners to develop a more joined up and needs-led approach for future refuge commissioning.
- Work with local authorities and housing providers to encourage training and guidance on all forms of VAWG to be delivered to frontline housing staff.
- Work with local authorities, London Councils and the VAWG sector to explore new housing and financial solutions for women fleeing VAWG in London.
- Work with the London Safeguarding Children Board and boroughs to explore new housing support models and referral pathways for 16 and 17 year olds fleeing violence and abuse.

## 3. Transforming our approach to women offenders

Baroness Corston's 2007 review identified the complex needs and histories of victimisation of women offenders. The Corston review called for "a radical new approach.....a woman-centred approach", based around the development of specialist community-based centres for women as an alternative to prison. Despite some progress since the review was published, recent reports by Women in Prison and the Prison Reform Trust demonstrate that a lot more needs to be achieved.

Offenders and those at risk of offending experience significant health inequalities compared to the general population. Around 46 per cent of women who were assessed by Together's women-specific Court Liaison & Diversion Services in 2012-13 had some form of mental health diagnosis at the time of assessment and around 60 per cent identified with some level of mental health/wellbeing need which is often due to domestic violence, sexual exploitation, trafficking or other forms of VAWG.<sup>47</sup>

Of young women offenders in custody, 40 per cent have suffered violence at home and 30 per cent have experienced sexual abuse at home.<sup>48</sup> The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Women in the Penal System's Inquiry on girls found that young women and girls are being criminalised in courts when they could be diverted to other services. The Inquiry also found that, once sentenced the needs of girls are overlooked because of the small number of girls in the penal system.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>42</sup> The London Health Board, chaired by the Mayor, provides leadership on health issues of pan-London significance.

<sup>43</sup> Hendessi, 1992, 4 in 10, CHAR cited in The Way Forward Strategy (2010) Taking Action to end violence against women and girls

<sup>44</sup> Reeve, K, Casey, R, Goudie, R, CRESR, (2006), Homeless Women: Still being failed yet struggling to survive

<sup>45</sup> Reeve, K, Casey, R, Goudie, R, CRESR, (2006), Homeless Women: Still being failed yet struggling to survive

<sup>46</sup> London Southbank University & Eaves (2012) Breaking down the barriers. A study of how women exit prostitution

<sup>47</sup> Data from Together's women-specific Court Liaison & Diversion Services delivered in three London Magistrates Courts, in partnership with local NHS Trusts and St Mungo's (July 2012 to July 2013)

<sup>48</sup> Old Enough to Know Better? A briefing on young adults in the criminal justice system in England & Wales. January 2012.

<sup>49</sup> All-Party Parliamentary Group on Women in the Penal System (2012) Inquiry on girls: from court to custody

<sup>50</sup> The Bradley Report: Lord Bradley's review of people with mental health problems or learning disabilities in the criminal justice system. (April 2009)

# OBJECTIVE THREE: PRIORITIES

The need for early identification and diversion of offenders into healthcare and social care services is well documented in the Bradley Report.<sup>50</sup> However, there are currently only three women specific Liaison and Diversion schemes in London.

In relation to sentencing, the Prison Reform Trust's analysis of data for London shows an increase in the use of custodial sentences for women offenders. Between 2009 and 2011 there was an 11 per cent increase in custodial sentences given to women in the Metropolitan Police force area, despite a fall in the number of custodial sentences given to women nationally over the same period.<sup>51</sup> Of these prison sentences, 88 per cent were for non-violent offences, with theft and handling alone accounting for more than four in ten.<sup>52</sup>

In response to this, the Mayor wants London to demonstrate leadership in reforming the way the criminal justice system responds to female offenders, particularly in recognition of the fact that a disproportionate number of women in the criminal justice system have been victims of VAWG. There is an opportunity to explore alternatives to custody.

As part of Integrated Offender Management (IOM) work across London, MOPAC will work with partners to ensure that the needs of women and girls are appropriately addressed. Through the London Crime Prevention Fund, MOPAC has funded the London Borough of Lambeth to deliver an innovative new community-based project working with women offenders.

Through the VAWG Panel, MOPAC will:

- Work with the Youth Justice Board to undertake a strategic needs assessment of young female offenders across London to inform future policy, practice and commissioning.
- Monitor and review the outcomes of Lambeth's new community-based initiative working with women offenders (see box, right) and explore new and innovative alternatives to custody and to divert women away from the criminal justice system.

- Include a work stream for women in MOPAC's work on Integrated Offender Management (IOM) to address the specific needs of women in the criminal justice system to reduce the likelihood of reoffending.

- Work with partners to ensure the needs of women are reflected and prioritised as part of the work of both the National Probation Service and Community Rehabilitation Company under the Transforming Rehabilitation (TR) reforms.

## Beth Centre: a service for women offenders

LB Lambeth has commissioned Women in Prison and Eaves to deliver a brand new service for women at risk of and/or involved in the CJS. The service builds on the Corston recommendations (into female offending), the women's centre model and the Gaia Centre (Lambeth's integrated VAWG service).

This is an innovative service that combines the work of Probation, YOS, prison in-reach and IOM and will deliver one referral pathway and one service from point of contact with the CJS until the end of contact. The service will start on 1 January 2014. It aims to reduce reoffending amongst women; to divert women from the criminal justice system and from custody; to prevent family breakdowns through custody or offending and; to offer holistic support which addresses the needs that often drive offending including domestic and sexual violence/VAWG.

The service will include a women-only space to foster safety and a sense of community; pro-active case management including psycho-social interventions to increase empowerment and self-esteem and promote problem solving/motivation; prison in-reach and through the gate service; peer mentoring and full service user involvement in service development; childcare and crèche arrangements to promote engagement; links to specialist treatment services to develop women only provision; effective links to courts to improve diversion; and prostitution outreach.

<sup>51</sup> Prison Reform Trust consultation response to MOPAC VAWG consultation – August 2013

<sup>52</sup> Prison Reform Trust consultation response to MOPAC VAWG consultation – August 2013

<sup>53</sup> Only 19 per cent of women working in prostitution in flats, parlours and saunas in London are originally from the UK. The Poppy Project (2004) Sex in the City: Mapping Commercial Sex Across London. Around 6,000 of the estimated 8,000 women involved in off-street prostitution in London's brothels, saunas and massage parlours are

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## 4. Develop a more holistic response to trafficking and prostitution to support women to exit

In **The Way Forward** strategy, the Mayor adopted a bold new approach to tackle prostitution in the capital. This recognised that women involved in prostitution are some of the most vulnerable in our communities and that most women and girls enter prostitution through a lack of choice.

The VAWG consultation has highlighted widespread support for the Mayor's approach to prostitution as set out in **The Way Forward** strategy. This focused on:

- The provision of holistic support to address the physical, sexual, substance use, mental health and housing needs of women to support women to exit prostitution.
- Addressing the demand side of trafficking and prostitution.
- Focusing enforcement on those that pay for sex e.g. kerb-crawlers and not women involved in prostitution.
- Facilitating the reporting of sexual offences and other crimes against women involved in prostitution through third party reporting schemes.
- Clamping down on those who control women in prostitution e.g. pimps and traffickers.

In January 2012, MOPAC commissioned a study into prostitution to improve understanding of the changing nature of the sex industry in London, routes into prostitution and women's needs, indicators of trafficking and exploitation and examples of good practice in responding to prostitution.

The **Capital Exploits** report highlighted evidence of an active sex industry (both on and off street i.e. in brothels and other indoor locations such as private flats and "massage parlours") in the majority of London boroughs. Previous research suggested that the majority of women involved in street-based prostitution were British and women involved in off street prostitution are foreign national women, a significant number of whom are believed to have been trafficked.<sup>53</sup>

However, the **Capital Exploits** study identified an increase in the number of non-British women selling sex on-street, many of whom are understood to be from Romania. There is also evidence to suggest that women are now being exploited and controlled in on-street prostitution as well as off-street and that girls and young women under the age of 18 are being trafficked internally for sexual exploitation.<sup>54</sup>

The **Capital Exploits** study also highlighted the emergence of a transient group of women – those operating both on and off-street in London. Whether this group of women should be categorised as being 'on' or 'off-street' is unclear as they appear to be shifting between the two.<sup>55</sup>

Women involved in prostitution have a range of complex needs. The widely held assumption that women who operate off-street are safer and have fewer health problems and substance misuse issues has, in recent years, been challenged. The **Breaking Down the Barriers** research found that women involved in on-street and off-street prostitution often share similar life histories, routes into prostitution and, despite assumptions to the contrary, similar needs and experiences.<sup>56</sup>

foreign nationals. House of Commons, Home Affairs Committee (May 2009) *The Trade in Human Beings: Human Trafficking in the UK*. Sixth Report of Session 2008-09

<sup>54</sup> *Capital Exploits: A Study of Prostitution and Trafficking in London*. (2013) Forthcoming study by Julie Bindel, Ruth Breslin and Laura Brown (Eaves for Women)

<sup>55</sup> London Southbank University & Eaves (2012) *Breaking down the barriers*. A study of how women exit prostitution

<sup>56</sup> London Southbank University & Eaves (2012) *Breaking down the barriers*. A study of how women exit prostitution

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Studies show that between 32 per cent<sup>57</sup> and 75 per cent<sup>58</sup> of women involved in prostitution entered before the age of 18 and that 70 per cent of women involved in prostitution have spent time in care.<sup>59</sup> Up to 72 per cent of women involved in prostitution in the UK have experienced some form of childhood violence including emotional, physical, sexual and verbal.<sup>60</sup> 79 per cent suffer from physical or mental health problems<sup>61</sup> and 68 per cent meet the criteria for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.<sup>62</sup> 83 per cent have current or former problematic drug or alcohol use.<sup>63</sup>

In trying to respond to this, it is clear that across London approaches to prostitution and to the provision of specialist services are inconsistent. Many boroughs do not have any specialist services and where provision does exist it tends to be focused on harm-minimisation.<sup>64</sup>

Research suggests that 9 out of 10 women involved in prostitution wish to exit<sup>65</sup> but there are a number of barriers that need to be addressed. It is recognised that exit does not occur overnight but is a long-term process that can take many years. Services and support delivered through the pan-London exit service (see below) will not be dependent on a woman's willingness to exit. Recent research has stressed the need for all services working with women involved in prostitution to proactively talk to them about their desire to exit rather than waiting for women to request this.<sup>66</sup> There was widespread support for this approach through the VAWG consultation.

More work is required to join up the approaches of London boroughs, the MPS and the criminal justice system in support of the Mayor's objectives around prostitution.

Through the VAWG Panel, MOPAC will:

- Develop a pan-London protocol in line with the Mayor's objectives which will inform the way all London partners respond to prostitution, setting out the policing and criminal justice approach and the roles of health, local authorities and the voluntary sector. This will focus on women's safety, diverting women away from the CJS;
- Develop a pan-London exit model providing holistic support to address the physical, sexual, substance use, mental health, housing and employment needs of women involved in prostitution who wish to exit;
- Develop good practice guidance for professionals across relevant sectors including health, drug and alcohol agencies, housing and criminal justice agencies on working with victims of trafficking and those involved in prostitution who are at risk of harm.

## 5. Improving the identification of and response to victims of human trafficking

The hidden nature of trafficking makes it difficult to gain an accurate picture of its true scale and nature. The UK Human Trafficking Centre (UKHTC) Strategic Assessment for 2012 estimated that there are up to 2,255 possible victims of human trafficking in the UK. Sexual exploitation was the most common form of exploitation recorded in the UK, particularly affecting women and children.<sup>67</sup> A study by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), Project Acumen, estimated that there are at least 2,600 female adult victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation in England and Wales. In London this equates to estimates of 766 trafficked women and a further 2,860 vulnerable women respectively.<sup>68</sup>

However, research shows that a large proportion of cases are never recognised or reported and do not appear in any statistics.<sup>69</sup> The **Capital Exploits** study highlighted a lack of awareness and an understanding of what constitutes trafficking amongst professionals

<sup>57</sup> London Southbank University & Eaves (2012) Breaking down the barriers. A study of how women exit prostitution

<sup>58</sup> Benson, C. and Matthews, R. (1995), Street prostitution: Ten facts in search of a policy in International Journal of Sociology of the Law, Vol. 23, pp395-415

<sup>59</sup> Home Office (2004), Paying the price

<sup>60</sup> London Southbank University & Eaves (2012) Breaking down the barriers. A study of how women exit prostitution

<sup>61</sup> London Southbank University & Eaves (2012) Breaking down the barriers. A study of how women exit prostitution

<sup>62</sup> Farley, M. (ed) (2003). Prostitution, Trafficking and Traumatic Stress. New York: Howarth Press

<sup>63</sup> London Southbank University & Eaves (2012) Breaking down the barriers. A study of how women exit prostitution

<sup>64</sup> Capital Exploits: A Study of Prostitution and Trafficking in London. (2013) Forthcoming study by Julie Bindel, Ruth Breslin and Laura Brown (Eaves for Women)

<sup>65</sup> Farley, M (2003) Prostitution and Trafficking in Nine countries: An update on Violence and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Journal of Trauma Practice, Vol.2, No.3/4, 2003

<sup>66</sup> London Southbank University & Eaves (2012) Breaking down the barriers. A study of how women exit prostitution

<sup>67</sup> HM Government (October 2013) Second report of the Inter-Departmental Ministerial Group on Human Trafficking

<sup>68</sup> <http://www.acpo.police.uk/documents/crime/2010/201008CRITMW01.pdf>

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in both the statutory and voluntary sector in London. In particular, there was little recognition that trafficking does not only occur across international borders but also takes places internally within the UK amongst British nationals.

To tackle this, frontline professionals across agencies need to be equipped with the training, skills and knowledge to identify victims of trafficking and to ensure that they are protected and supported appropriately.

Through the VAWG panel, MOPAC will:

- Work with the MPS, NHS England (London) and local authorities to develop plans to ensure that frontline agencies receive training on human trafficking so that staff have the knowledge and skills to identify victims, provide an appropriate response and refer on to specialist support.
- Implement any learning and good practice developed by the Human Trafficking and London 2012 Network.
- Support the European Communities against Trafficking (ECAT) Project (see box, right) and monitor and review the outcomes of this project, pulling together learning and good practice and sharing across London to drive improvements.
- Work with the Home Office to ensure the provisions of the new Modern Slavery Bill are implemented and monitor MPS enforcement of associated offences and the learning that arises from intelligence on individual cases.
- Support campaigns that raise awareness of trafficking and modern day slavery among third parties like taxi companies and the wider services sector in London.

## European Communities Against Trafficking Project

The European Communities Against Trafficking (ECAT) Project's mission is to establish a multi-agency, best practice approach to whole community engagement in the prevention of human trafficking alongside victim-centred intervention and aftercare, which can be replicated transnationally.

The ECAT project is funded by the European Commission and is delivered in partnership by the Metropolitan Police Anti-Trafficking Unit, Rahab, STOP THE TRAFFIK, Borgorete, Caritas Lithuania and is supported by the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, City of Westminster, the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime and the Institution of the Ombudsperson for Children in Lithuania.

A multi-agency police and NGO team will establish a model of victim identification, rescue, support and reintegration in London alongside enforcement activities including dismantling criminal networks and prosecuting traffickers. Each European Union UK-based Embassy will be supported to develop effective victim support responses. The programme of work is founded upon collaboration, learning, sharing best practice and creating a range of tools, products and systems that will extend the impact of the project far beyond its 24 month period.

For further information please visit the following link:

<http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/communityandlocalife/againsthumantrafficking.aspx>

<sup>69</sup> Centre for Social Justice (March 2013) It Happens Here: Equipping the UK to fight modern slavery



# OBJECTIVE FOUR: PROTECTING WOMEN AND GIRLS AT RISK OF VIOLENCE

Work with partners to ensure that the whole criminal justice system deters crimes of violence against women and provides full, effective and timely protection and justice for women.

# OBJECTIVE FOUR: PRIORITIES

It is well documented that many women and girls do not report VAWG crimes to the police<sup>70</sup> and, that a significant proportion of those who do withdraw their complaints.<sup>71</sup> To increase reporting across all forms of VAWG and as a result, increase women and girls' access to safety, support and justice and reduce the risk of re-victimisation, there needs to be greater confidence in the criminal justice system (CJS).

A number of studies have shown that in the policing context perceptions of fairness and decent treatment were at times more important than effectiveness and outcomes in determining satisfaction and confidence. Victims want to be treated with respect and dignity. Research also highlights that the outcomes and sentence are highly influential on victims' views of the CJS.<sup>72</sup>

Steps have been taken to improve the CJS responses to VAWG crimes over recent years with the introduction of specialist teams at the MPS, special measures for victims in court and sexual assault referral centres have all attempted to improve the victims' experience as well as support investigations and prosecutions.

Specialist Domestic Violence Courts (SDVC) aim to fast track domestic violence cases where appropriate, provide prosecutors with a domestic violence specialism for cases and ensure that victims are supported with an Independent Domestic Violence Advocate at court. An evaluation of the West London SDVC between 2002 and 2011 found an increase in the proportion of defendants entering an early guilty plea and decreases in the average numbers of hearings per case and days between arrival and completion at the court, indicating improved efficiency. Whilst some SDVCs continue to ensure that victims have significantly enhanced support whilst going through the court process, others have ceased operating in London, due to closure of the court itself or lack of a coordinator to keep partner agencies in touch and engaged. There is an opportunity to revitalise the London Mainstream Model<sup>73</sup> brought in to provide minimum standards and ensure this good practice is happening consistently across London.

Recent research<sup>74</sup> into domestic violence victims' experience of the criminal justice system highlighted that around three-quarters found the police and the CPS either very helpful or fairly helpful.

The same proportion were either very satisfied or fairly satisfied with the outcome they got from going to the police. While these findings are promising, there is more to be done to improve reporting and to provide effective and timely protection and justice to women.

## 1. Improving confidence in reporting VAWG crimes

In order to instil confidence in the criminal justice process, the initial response to victims must be consistent, and a professional initial response is more likely to lead to a better investigation and continued victim engagement with the process.<sup>75</sup>

The MPS has established specialist commands to tackle VAWG crimes such as trafficking and sexual offences, exploitation and child abuse. However, in most cases the specialist teams and officers are not the first point of contact for victims. It is therefore crucial that all frontline officers are trained on VAWG issues so they can better identify victims and provide an appropriate and sensitive response, referring on to the relevant specialist team.

In order to ensure that there is a high quality victim response at the core of service provision, MOPAC will work with the MPS to:

- Outline plans to ensure that every frontline police officer including first responders are trained on how to identify and respond to reports of VAWG including trafficking and prostitution.
- Develop clear plans outlining how the MPS intends to improve the support they give victims. This will include targeted programmes aimed at reducing victimisation in key areas such as VAWG.
- Monitor the levels of repeat victimisation, the frequency of victimisation and provide assurance that the MPS is offering effective, targeted support to repeat victims. This will be particularly pertinent to domestic violence cases which have a high proportion of repeat victimisation.
- Work with partners to develop new and innovative ways to report VAWG.
- Prepare a yearly problem profile that sets out key VAWG issues in London, whether the victim and offender profiles have changed over time and how the MPS will respond.

<sup>70</sup> Statistical bulletin: Crime in England and Wales, Year Ending December 2012, Office for National Statistics

<sup>71</sup> CEDAW Thematic Shadow Report on Violence Against Women in the UK, Sen and Kelly (2007)

<sup>72</sup> Victims' views of court and sentencing (October 2011). Commissioner for Victims and Witnesses in England and Wales

<sup>73</sup> The London Mainstream Model is aligned with the national specialist domestic violence court model and is a set of operating standards for domestic violence cases based on identified current best practice.

<sup>74</sup> Homicides, Firearm Offences and Intimate Violence 2010/11: Supplementary Volume 2 to Crime in England and Wales 2010/11 Home Office Statistical Bulletin (January 2012)

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MOPAC will:

- Launch a new, confidential online survey which all victims of domestic and sexual violence that report to the MPS will be invited to complete to provide feedback on their experience of reporting to the police and the treatment by the police and other services such as health and support services.

## 2. Improve the way the Criminal Justice System (CJS) responds to domestic and sexual violence

The recent sexual violence bulletin<sup>76</sup> showed that whilst the criminal justice system response has improved, much more is yet to be done to ensure that those who have experienced sexual violence and other forms of VAWG are supported to seek justice.

The average length from report to completion of case for all sexual offence cases was 496 days (for rape cases this increases to 675 days). The lengthiest time periods were 295 days between report and date of summons to court, and 181 days between first listing in magistrates court and completion of case (sentence or acquittal). For all criminal cases overall, the average time to complete a case is 154 days.<sup>77</sup>

In order to drive confidence and to improve the swifter and surer justice objectives set out in the Police and Crime Plan, MOPAC is determined to find innovative solutions to reducing court delays and improving the way the CJS responds to sexual violence.

The MoJ is currently piloting approaches to providing evidence in cases of sexual exploitation and abuse in order to address inappropriate levels of cross examination. There are examples from other countries that are promising. In South Africa for example, specialist sexual violence courts have increased conviction rates and reduced delays.

Through the VAWG Panel, MOPAC will:

- Work with the CPS and partners to reduce court delays for cases associated with VAWG.
- Work with the CPS and partners to explore the feasibility of developing a pilot specialist sexual violence court in London.

- Review the availability of Specialist Domestic Violence Courts in London and the implementation of the London mainstream model to ensure minimum standards and consistent good practice across London

- Work with partners to help 'de-mystify' the criminal justice process through information on what to expect and case studies, made available online.

- Encourage the MPS and CPS to utilise methods of capturing evidence that do not rely on the victim, for instance, the use of body worn cameras to capture strong evidence in domestic violence cases so that the onus is not always on victims to support prosecutions.

- Ensure the MPS fully implements the recommendations from the Independent Police Complaints Commission as a result of historic failures to record crimes reported to the MPS, with a particular focus on the recommendations of the 2013 Sapphire report.

- Review the findings of the MoJ pilot exploring different approaches to evidence in child sexual exploitation cases and ensure good practice and lessons learned are applied across London.

## 3. Improve young women's access to appropriate protection and support

As of April 2013, the Government and ACPO definition of domestic violence changed to include 16-17 year olds. This now places a duty on statutory agencies to recognise the risk posed towards young people and address teenage relationship abuse. Research conducted by the NSPCC<sup>78</sup> found that 25 per cent of girls reported physical violence from their partners, 75 per cent of girls reported some form of emotional abuse and 33 per cent of girls reported sexual violence. Coordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse (CAADA) reviewed cases which went through the multi-agency risk assessment conference process and found that 67 per cent of teenage victims are classified as high risk, 70 per cent had reported to police (on average twice), 42 per cent had visited their GP and 27 per cent had attended A&E as a result of the abuse.<sup>79</sup>

<sup>75</sup> Policing Domestic Violence, Richards, Letchford and Stratton, Blackstone's Practical Policing, Oxford University Press (2008)

<sup>76</sup> An Overview of Sexual Offending in England & Wales: Statistics Bulletin Ministry of Justice, Home Office & the Office for National Statistics (January 2013)

<sup>77</sup> An Overview of Sexual Offending in England & Wales: Statistics Bulletin Ministry of Justice, Home Office & the Office for National Statistics (January 2013)

<sup>78</sup> Partner exploitation and violence in teenage intimate relationships, NSPCC/ University of Bristol (September 2009)

<sup>79</sup> CAADA Insights Factsheet: Teenage victims of Domestic Abuse CAADA (2012)

# OBJECTIVE FOUR: PRIORITIES

The London Rape Crisis Centres have also found that a notable proportion (just over a quarter) of their referrals are younger women under 25 years of age. The North London Rape Crisis Centre received referrals for thirteen young women under the age of sixteen in the year 2011/12. The West London Rape Crisis Centre found that a very high proportion (72 per cent) of young women under the age of 25 used their advocacy service.<sup>80</sup>

To ensure that London agencies are implementing the new definition of domestic violence and abuse and to improve young women's access to appropriate protection and support, MOPAC will:

- Work with the London Safeguarding Children Board to ensure that VAWG is mainstreamed into the London Child Protection Procedures and to develop supplementary practice guidance covering all forms of VAWG.
- Work with the London Safeguarding Children Board and local authorities to ensure that VAWG is firmly embedded within local safeguarding policy and practice and to map how boroughs are responding to young women and girls affected by VAWG including specialist services that are available to under-18 year olds.
- Work with Rape Crisis England & Wales and the four London Rape Crisis Centres to develop guidance on working with young victims of sexual violence to inform the future work of London's Rape Crisis Centres.

## The London MASH (Multi-agency Safeguarding Hubs) Project

The London MASH Project is a pan-London programme to improve the way that local safeguarding partnerships deal with child protection referrals, bringing a range of partners together into a single multi-agency safeguarding hub to share information quickly and efficiently. Steered by a high level strategic partnership of local government, health, police, probation and the GLA, the ambition is for every borough in London to implement MASH in their own area by the end of the 2013/14 financial year.

Through the VAWG Panel, MOPAC will:

- Work with the London Safeguarding Children Board to explore opportunities to enhance the awareness of MASH practitioners around VAWG crimes experienced by young women and girls particularly child sexual abuse and exploitation, teenage relationship abuse, harmful practices such as FGM, forced marriage and 'honour'-based violence.
- Ensure that the findings and knowledge base on local challenges and solutions developed by the MsUnderstood Partnership are utilised more widely to support London boroughs in responding to violence against young women and girls.

## 4. Ensure learning from domestic violence homicide reviews and domestic violence protection orders drives service improvements

In April 2011, the government enacted section 9 of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act (2004). This requires local authorities to undertake a multi-agency Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) following a domestic violence homicide.

To ensure that London learns from past homicides and to support agencies to improve services accordingly, MOPAC will:

- Publish an overview of the findings, outcomes and lessons learnt from DV homicide reviews in London and use this to encourage partners to put in place measures to improve agency responses to prevent future DV homicides.
- Undertake a review of homicides related to other forms of VAWG, in particular 'honour'-based violence and trafficking and prostitution to inform future practice.

Changes in civil protections have also taken place. Domestic violence protection notices and orders (DVPO) allows a period of time for the victim to decide what steps to take following a violent incident, by stopping the perpetrator from contacting the victim or returning home for up to 28 days. An evaluation of the government pilot of DVPOs is due by the end of 2013.

<sup>80</sup> Forthcoming evaluation of the London Rape Crisis Centres by Women's Resource Centre.

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Through the VAWG Panel, MOPAC will:

- Review the DVPO evaluation to consider and inform a possible rollout of DVPOs across London.

## 5. Improve women's safety on public transport

While travelling in London at night is safe for most people, there are serious concerns about the dangers of unbooked minicabs picked up off the street. Unbooked minicabs have been linked to serious crimes in London, including rape and sexual assault.

In May 2012, the EAW Coalition commissioned a YouGov opinion poll asking women in London about their experience of sexual harassment on the transport system and in other public places such as the street/parks/shops. The survey found that 43 per cent of young women in London (aged 18-34) experienced sexual harassment in public spaces over the last year and 41 per cent of women aged 18-34 have experienced unwanted sexual attention.<sup>81</sup> 28 per cent of women (almost double the number of men) say they do not feel safe using London public transport at all times of day and night.

Transport for London's (TfL's) commissioned research found that 15 per cent of women had experienced some form of unwelcome sexual behaviour on public transport, and that 90 per cent of respondents had not reported the incident to the police or any other authority.

Partners are working together to tackle all forms of unwanted sexual behaviour on the transport system. The Mayor through TfL has increased the number of dedicated officers policing the transport system and to enforce laws around cabs to help improve women's safety when travelling home at night. A dedicated Cab Enforcement Unit in the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) and in City of London Police (CoLP) means that there are 68 officers working full-time to keep women safe when they use cabs.

One of the Mayor's key initiatives to improve women's safety is the Safer Travel at Night (STAN) initiative. STAN is a partnership between the Mayor, TfL, the MPS and CoLP which aims to improve the safety of women travelling at night by focusing primarily on cab safety. This remains a priority. STAN includes industry regulation and licensing, enforcement and education. Considerable progress has been made in reducing the number of cab-related sexual offences since 2002. In 2012/13, official crime figures from the MPS showed that cab-related sexual offences were over 30 per cent lower than they were in 2002/3 (55 fewer offences). The number of rape offences almost halved over the same period. Year to date figures for 2013/14 are showing further reductions.

To continue this success, TfL and MOPAC will work together to:

- Continue to run the STAN campaign to raise awareness of the dangers of using unbooked minicabs, and provide information on safer travel alternatives. The STAN campaign will be supported by targeted police action and problem-solving activities to reduce cab-related sexual offences and improve women's safety when travelling at night.
- Work with TfL, the MPS and British Transport Police (BTP) and CoLP on Project Guardian, a partnership initiative to tackle sexual offences on the transport network and create an environment which is free from harassment and accessible to everyone. Project Guardian reinforces acceptable standards of behaviour, supported by clear rules and robust enforcement action. Project Guardian aims to increase the confidence and willingness of people to come forward and report sexual offences. TfL, with its police partners, will provide avenues for reporting, training for staff and commit to provide the best care and support. The Everyday Sexism Project, End Violence against Women Coalition and Hollaback London have been key advisers to the project.

<sup>81</sup> YouGov opinion poll on sexual harassment (May 2012) EAW Coalition. <http://www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk/sexual-harassment>



# OBJECTIVE FIVE: GETTING TOUGHER WITH PERPETRATORS

Work with partners to intervene with perpetrators of violence against women in order to stop the violence, hold them to account, change their behaviour and deter others.

# OBJECTIVE FIVE: PRIORITIES

The overwhelming majority of perpetrators of VAWG are men and boys. As most cases of VAWG never come to the attention of the criminal justice system, there are few sanctions for their behaviour. In 2011-12, some 91,466 defendants were prosecuted for VAWG offences in England and Wales and the proportion of successful prosecutions rose to 73 per cent, delivering the lowest recorded attrition<sup>82</sup> rates ever. However, in London, a total of 13,405 VAWG cases were prosecuted; a reduction of almost 12 per cent. Attrition for rape cases in London was 45 per cent, whilst for domestic violence it was 38.3 per cent of cases.

The Mayor is committed to ensuring that the criminal justice system improves its service to Londoners ensuring a renewed focus on prosecuting and convicting perpetrators driving victim and wider public confidence.

## 1. Challenge the MPS and partners to improve the criminal justice response to enforcement and prosecutions of VAWG

Over the last five years, the number of rape cases referred to the CPS for a pre-charge decision has decreased nationally. In London, despite a 15.7 per cent increase in the number of reported rapes over the last 12 months<sup>83</sup>, the number of cases referred to the CPS has decreased from a peak of 1,481 in 2010/11 to 844 in 2012/13.<sup>84</sup>

Despite attempts to improve the CJS response to VAWG crimes, nationally the attrition rate in rape cases has worsened over the past ten years.<sup>85</sup> This is due to a range of issues that need to be understood in a London context and tackled accordingly.

MOPAC will:

- Ask the MPS to report to the London VAWG Panel on the cause of the decrease in rape referrals to the CPS and work with the London VAWG Panel to identify solutions.
- Work with criminal justice partners to better understand attrition across VAWG crimes and to identify solutions to address this.

In London, the Mayor is committed to ensuring that sentences are not only proportionate and justified, but act as a deterrent and demonstrate that violence against women and girls is unacceptable.

To achieve this, MOPAC will:

- Establish a sentencing unit to monitor sentencing across a range of offence types, including VAWG cases, and (where appropriate) appeal.
- Work with criminal justice partners to improve the enforcement of community orders.

## 2. Gearing interventions and funding to 'what works' with perpetrators of VAWG

The majority of perpetrators of VAWG never come to the attention of the CJS; but when they do, it is crucial that the right interventions are put in place to stop their offending, reduce repeat victimisation and increase confidence in the CJS. Given that the overwhelming majority of perpetrators remain outside of the CJS, we also need to ensure that there are appropriate and adequate perpetrator interventions outside of the CJS which do not rely upon a conviction.

Research has shown that most men who take part in well established domestic violence perpetrator programmes that meet national service standards, stop using violence.<sup>86</sup> Perpetrator programmes

<sup>82</sup> Attrition is the process by which complaints of rape, domestic violence or other crimes fail to successfully progress through the criminal justice system.

<sup>83</sup> MPS crime figures <http://www.met.police.uk/crimefigures/index.php> (Accessed on 06/11/2013)

<sup>84</sup> <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmhansrd/cm131022/text/131022w0003.htm#13102291002097> (Accessed on 6/11/13)

<sup>85</sup> Forthcoming paper by Hohl, K. & Stanko, E.A. (2013) The attrition of rape allegations in England and Wales.

<sup>86</sup> Gondolf (2002), Dobash et al (2000) & Rajagopalan, V., Price, P and Donaghy, P. (2008) Cited in Respect briefing paper: evidence of effects of domestic violence perpetrator programmes on women's safety. 2010

<sup>87</sup> Dobash et al (2000) & Rajagopalan, V., Price, P and Donaghy, P. (2008) Cited in Respect briefing paper: evidence of effects of domestic violence perpetrator programmes on women's safety. 2010

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have also demonstrated success in providing support to victims (partners or ex-partners) who may not otherwise have been in contact or received support from any other organisation.<sup>87</sup> Furthermore, women whose partners and ex-partners take part in programmes have reported feeling much safer.<sup>88</sup> Respect, the national Umbrella organisation for perpetrator programmes has commissioned a multi-site research programme on the outcomes of men's participation in UK community based domestic violence intervention programmes. Preliminary findings suggest that 'success' means far more than just 'ending the violence', as it would be possible for physical violence to stop but for women and children to continue living in a threatening and unhealthy atmosphere.<sup>89</sup>

Through the London Crime Prevention Fund, the Mayor is funding a number of projects in London boroughs to address the behaviour of domestic violence perpetrators, and these will be subject to monitoring and review processes. MOPAC will continue to ensure that any interventions developed, funded or commissioned by MOPAC are based on 'what works', and use existing service standards and accreditation frameworks (e.g. Respect service standards for domestic violence perpetrator programmes). The development of the response to perpetrators both within and outside of the criminal justice system has been overwhelmingly directed towards perpetrators of domestic violence (DV). There are a number of good reasons for this. However, this now needs to be widened.

There are some examples of perpetrator interventions across other VAWG crime types: "The Change Course", for example, which targets kerb crawlers, or those who pay for sex with exploited individuals. In other areas, community sector organisations such as the Lucy Faithfull Foundation are at the forefront of working with offenders to address their sexually abusive behaviour towards children.

The change in definition of domestic violence to include 16-18 year olds will not just have an impact on younger victims of Domestic Violence but also on those using violence and abuse in relationships with under 18's. The Youth Justice Board has developed a list of tools and resources for working with young

people who use abuse in relationships.<sup>90</sup> The Home Office in partnership with AVA has developed guidance for local areas to support implementation of the new definition.<sup>91</sup>

Whilst this work is promising, more work is needed to ascertain what approaches work best with young offenders.

Through the VAWG Panel, MOPAC will:

- Review 'what works' to address VAWG offending behaviour including domestic violence and abuse perpetrated by young men and boys to inform future commissioning.

## 3. Clamp down on traffickers, pimps and those who sexually exploit women and girls

The Police and Crime Plan 2013-16 outlines the Mayor's commitment to target the demand side of trafficking and prostitution. The Capital Exploits study found that local residents across London are increasingly calling on police and local authorities to switch tactics and to target pimps, traffickers and those who sexually exploit women and girls instead of targeting and criminalising the women being exploited. However, in the majority of boroughs examined, women selling sex remained the main target of enforcement.<sup>92</sup>

MPS data shows that prostitution-related offences relating to exploitation (such as paying for sex with a child, controlling a prostitute for gain, keeping a brothel or arranging or facilitating child prostitution) have decreased significantly. However, this is still an issue across London and partners are committed to targeting perpetrators and further reducing prostitution related offences.

MOPAC will:

- Ask the MPS to work with local authorities and other agencies to proactively target and develop strategies to tackle perpetrators of child sexual exploitation and those who sexually exploit women involved in prostitution and victims of trafficking.

<sup>88</sup> Gondolf (2002), Dobash et al (2000) & Rajagopalan, V., Price, P and Donaghy, P. (2008) Cited in Respect briefing paper: evidence of effects of domestic violence perpetrator programmes on women's safety. 2010

<sup>89</sup> Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programmes. What counts as success? (August 2010)

<sup>90</sup> [www.justice.gov.uk/youth-justice/reducing-re-offending/domestic-abuse](https://www.justice.gov.uk/youth-justice/reducing-re-offending/domestic-abuse)

<sup>91</sup> Home Office (March 2013) Information for local areas on the change to the definition of domestic violence and abuse. [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/142701/guide-on-definition-of-dv.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/142701/guide-on-definition-of-dv.pdf)

<sup>92</sup> Capital Exploits: A Study of Prostitution and Trafficking in London.(2013) Forthcoming study by Julie Bindel, Ruth Breslin and Laura Brown (Eaves for Women)

## 4. Understand the impact of stalking and harassment

Since **The Way Forward** was first published, the approach to tackling perpetrators of VAWG has developed considerably. At the national level, the government introduced legislation which addresses specific areas of VAWG. New stalking legislation came into effect last year. The new amendments to the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 create two new offences of 'stalking' and 'stalking that causes serious distress or fear of violence'.

In relation to harassment, there were 44,000 offences in London in the last year alone. Successful criminal justice outcomes for these offences have fallen in the last six years, from 2007-08 when 45.5 per cent of cases had a criminal justice outcome, to last year when only 24.8 per cent of cases resulted in a sanction detection.

Policy and practice to address stalking and harassment should take into account the specific issues and experiences of London's diverse communities. BME women and girls at risk of forced marriage or 'honour'-based violence may face ongoing stalking and harassment from multiple perpetrators and it is crucial that specific risks and vulnerabilities are identified. Lesbian, bisexual and transgender (LBT) women often face threats of rape/sexual assault with a view to 'punishing' or 'curing'. The nature of harassment experienced by Londoners needs to be further understood.

MOPAC will:

- Ask the MPS to undertake a review and analysis of harassment and stalking cases to strengthen understanding of the nature of these crimes with a particular focus on the specific risks and vulnerabilities of BME and LBT women and girls.

# PERFORMANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY: MAKING THE STRATEGY WORK

## The London VAWG Panel

Established in January 2010, the London VAWG Panel brings together a range of agencies from across the statutory and voluntary sectors and oversees delivery of the current VAWG strategy. The London VAWG Panel is co-chaired by Stephen Greenhalgh (the DMPC) and Joan Smith (journalist, author and women's rights campaigner). Membership consists of representatives from a range of organisations including:

- Metropolitan Police Service
- Crown Prosecution Service
- London Councils
- NHS England (London)
- London Safeguarding Children Board
- Transport for London
- Representatives from the specialist VAWG voluntary and community sector

The London VAWG Panel will oversee delivery of the refreshed strategy. In order to measure success, the Panel will develop a performance dashboard for VAWG. This will enable a comprehensive assessment of the progress that all partners are making against key commitments. The Panel will also use the dashboard to identify and resolve key issues and barriers to delivery should they arise.

The VAWG Panel will report progress to the London Crime Reduction Board which is chaired by the Mayor.

## VAWG Reference Group

The DMPC has established a VAWG Reference Group to provide him with independent advice on tackling VAWG in London. The purpose of the VAWG Reference group is to enable the DMPC to stay in regular contact with experts from the specialist VAWG sector to understand emerging issues and concerns on women's safety and VAWG in London. It also seeks perspectives on activity being led by the London VAWG Panel, MOPAC and other London partners to tackle VAWG.

## Subgroups and networks

There are also a number of other groups, networks and time-limited working groups in existence that will take forward specific projects and commitments outlined in the refreshed strategy. These include:

- Harmful Practices Taskforce
- The Rape and Criminal Justice System group
- London VAWG Co-ordinators Network



# APPENDIX ONE: FORMS AND DEFINITIONS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

**Domestic violence and abuse** – a 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, psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional abuse. In extreme cases this includes murder. Controlling behaviour is: a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour. Coercive behaviour is: an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

**Female genital mutilation (FGM)** – involves the complete or partial removal or alteration of external genitalia for non-medical reasons. It is mostly carried out on young girls at some time between infancy and the age of 15. Unlike male circumcision, which is legal in many countries, it is now illegal across much of the globe, and its extensive harmful health consequences are widely recognised.

**Forced marriage** – a marriage conducted without valid consent of one or both parties, where duress is a factor.

**'Honour'-based violence** – violence committed to protect or defend the 'honour' of a family and/or community. Women, especially young women, are the most common targets, often where they have acted outside community boundaries of perceived acceptable feminine/sexual behaviour. In extreme cases, the woman may be killed.

**Prostitution and trafficking** – women and girls are forced, coerced or deceived to enter into prostitution and/or to keep them there. Trafficking involves the recruitment, transportation and exploitation of women and children for the purposes of prostitution and domestic servitude across international borders and within countries ('internal trafficking').

**Sexual violence including rape** – sexual contact without the consent of the woman/girl. Perpetrators range from total strangers to relatives and intimate partners, but most are known in some way. It can happen anywhere – in the family/household, workplace, public spaces, social settings, during war/conflict situations.

**Sexual exploitation** – involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where someone receives 'something' (e.g. food, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, protection money) as a result of them performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the person's limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability. Girls involved in or connected to gangs are at risk of sexual exploitation by gang members.

**Sexual harassment** – unwanted verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. It can take place anywhere, including the workplace, schools, streets, public transport and social situations. It includes flashing, obscene and threatening calls, and online harassment.

**Stalking** – repeated (i.e. on at least two occasions) harassment causing fear, alarm or distress. It can include threatening phone calls, texts or letters; damaging property; spying on and following the victim.

**Faith-based abuse** – child abuse linked to faith or belief. This includes a belief in concepts of witchcraft and spirit possession, demons or the devil acting through children or leading them astray (traditionally seen in some Christian beliefs), the evil eye or djinns (traditionally known in some Islamic faith contexts) and dakini (in the Hindu context); ritual or muti murders where the killing of children is believed to bring supernatural benefits or the use of their body parts is believed to produce potent magical remedies; and use of belief in magic or witchcraft to create fear in children to make them more compliant when they are being trafficked for domestic slavery or sexual exploitation. This is not an exhaustive list.

# APPENDIX TWO: KEY NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

## 2013

### July

The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) Committee examined the UK government's progress in implementing the Convention and the recommendations that were made by the Committee in 2008.

The CEDAW Committee made a number of recommendations to the UK Government around VAWG including a recommendation to increase efforts to protect women, including black and minority women, against all forms of VAWG; to continue public awareness-raising campaigns on all forms of VAWG; to intensify efforts to train police officers to eliminate prejudices concerning the credibility of victims of domestic violence; the full implementation of its legislation on FGM; to adopt a comprehensive national framework to combat trafficking in women and girls.

To view the full report and recommendations please visit: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/the-cedaw-committees-observations-and-recommendations-published>

### April

New arrangements in the devolved health and care system, including Health and Wellbeing Boards, introduced.

### March

An extension of the definition of domestic violence to include those aged 16-17 and coercive control.

Launch of the government's revised VAWG action plan.

The United Nations fifty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women, focused on the elimination and prevention of all forms of VAWG, took place.

The agreed conclusions include commitment and actions under the following key areas:

- A. Strengthening implementation of legal and policy frameworks and accountability
- B. Addressing structural and underlying causes and risk factors so as to prevent VAWG
- C. Strengthening multi-sectoral services, programmes and responses to VAWG
- D. Improving the evidence-base

To view the agreed conclusions please visit:

[http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw57/CSW57\\_Agreed\\_Conclusions\\_\(CSW\\_report\\_excerpt\).pdf](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw57/CSW57_Agreed_Conclusions_(CSW_report_excerpt).pdf)

## 2012

### November

Publication of the Office of the Children Commissioner's interim report of the Child Sexual Exploitation in Groups and Gangs Inquiry.

A new 'Declaration against FGM' was signed by Ministers and a new CPS action plan on FGM launched to address the barriers to investigating and strengthening prosecutions.

The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 was updated by provisions made in the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012, creating two new offences of stalking.

**June**

The government announced its intention to introduce a new criminal offence of forced marriage.

The government signed up to the Istanbul Convention, the Council of Europe's convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence.

**March**

Launch of two national Home Office campaigns – Teenage Rape Prevention Campaign and the Teenage Relationship Abuse Campaign – to change and challenge attitudes, and prevent teenagers from becoming victims and perpetrators of sexual and relationship violence and abuse.

**January**

The introduction of Police and Crime Commissioners and the creation of the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime accountable to local communities to cut crime with other changes to the way crime prevention and victims' services are commissioned.

Pilots of Domestic Violence Protection Orders and a Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme run throughout the year.

**2011**

**October**

Publication of Home Office review into effective practice in responding to prostitution.

The government signed up to the EU Anti-Trafficking Directive and published a trafficking strategy.

**June**

The Bailey Review on the Commercialisation and Sexualisation of Childhood launched, following on from the Inquiry into the sexualisation of young people review by Linda Papadopoulos.

**April**

Publication of multi-agency practice guidelines on female genital mutilation.

The implementation of section 9 of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act making domestic homicide reviews a statutory responsibility for local authorities.

**2010**

**November**

Launch of the government's national strategy to tackle VAWG.

**March**

Baroness Stern reported on her review of the handling of rape and sexual violence complaints by public authorities.

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## MOPAC

City Hall  
The Queen's Walk  
More London  
London SE1 2AA

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## Chinese

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## Hindi

यदि आप इस दस्तावेज़ की प्रति अपनी  
भाषा में चाहते हैं, तो कृपया निम्नलिखित  
नंबर पर फोन करें अथवा नीचे दिये गये  
पते पर संपर्क करें

## Vietnamese

Nếu bạn muốn có văn bản tài liệu  
này bằng ngôn ngữ của mình, hãy  
liên hệ theo số điện thoại hoặc địa  
chỉ dưới đây.

## Bengali

আপনি যদি আপনার ভাষায় এই নথির প্রতিলিপি  
(কপি) চান, তা হলে নিচের ফোন নম্বরে  
বা ঠিকানায় অনুগ্রহ করে যোগাযোগ করুন।

## Greek

Αν θέλετε να αποκτήσετε αντίγραφο του παρόντος  
εγγράφου στη δική σας γλώσσα, παρακαλείστε να  
επικοινωνήσετε τηλεφωνικά στον αριθμό αυτό ή ταχυ-  
δρομικά στην παρακάτω διεύθυνση.

## Urdu

اگر آپ اس دستاویز کی نقل اپنی زبان میں  
چاہتے ہیں، تو براہ کرم نیچے دیے گئے نمبر  
پر فون کریں یا دہیے گئے پتے پر رابطہ کریں

## Turkish

Bu belgeyi kendi dilinizde  
hazırlanmış bir nüshasını  
edinmek için, lütfen aşağıdaki  
telefon numarasını arayınız  
veya adrese başvurunuz.

## Arabic

إذا أردت نسخة من هذه الوثيقة بلغتك، يرجى  
الاتصال برقم الهاتف أو مراسلة العنوان  
أدناه

## Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਦੀ ਕਾਪੀ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਆਪਣੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ  
ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਹੇਠ ਲਿਖੇ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਜਾਂ ਹੇਠ  
ਲਿਖੇ ਪਤੇ 'ਤੇ ਭਾਜਤਾ ਕਰੋ:

## Gujarati

જો તમને આ દસ્તાવેજની નકલ તમારી ભાષામાં  
જોઈતી હોય તો, કૃપા કરી આપેલ નંબર ઉપર  
ફોન કરો અથવા નીચેના સરનામે સંપર્ક સાધો.



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