

Developing London's Violence Against Women and Girls Prevention Principles

Aim

To develop principles for the prevention of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) in London, to support the development of a long-term pan-London VAWG Prevention Plan, involving all partners with a role to play combating VAWG.

Our methods

The Mayor's Office of Policing and Crime (MOPAC) and London's Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) have conducted a **literature review** to **identify** the **key success factors** that make interventions preventing VAWG effective. We have also held **co-design sessions** with **victims-survivors** of different types of VAWG, the **voluntary and community sector** (VCS), and **statutory services**. The co-design sessions focused on understanding their priorities for VAWG prevention in London. It is recognised that further engagement with key partners is required to support the development of the VAWG Prevention Plan.

Key Definitions

Prevention: preventing VAWG can mean stopping violence before it starts, or reducing the frequency and severity of new episodes where it has previously occurred. Prevention occurs across three tiers:

- **Primary: Stopping violence before it starts**, by addressing **root causes** including **misogyny** and **harmful attitudes** to women and girls.
- **Secondary: Immediate responses to incidents or signs of violence** to prevent it from **continuing or escalating**.
- **Tertiary: Preventing reoffending and revictimisation once violence has happened** and reducing **the long-term, harmful impacts of violence**.

VAWG (MOPAC): as set out by the United Nations, is **any act of gender-based violence** that results in, or is likely to result in, **physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering** to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.

What are the VAWG Prevention Principles?

The principles will be used to support the development of a **long-term pan-London VAWG Prevention Plan**, involving all partners with a role to play combating VAWG.

The principles are guiding statements that help to inform decisions and actions.

They bring **partners together** to provide a **consistent, achievable, and sustainable** framework. The principles **build on the VRU's guiding principles and apply them to preventing VAWG**. The principles **do not describe specific interventions** that should be implemented, but can instead be **applied across practice**.

Three broad categories were used to develop the principles:

Goals: what we want to achieve

Goals help to define **what you should be working towards achieving**.
Examples could be 'reducing risk factors' or 'increasing awareness of VAWG'.

Shared ways of working

Shared ways of working form the **overarching framework that supports how you carry out your work**.
Examples could be 'partnership-working' or 'being victim-led'.

Methods: how we get there

Methods are the **tools and techniques you use to reach your goals**. Examples could be 'long-term interventions' or 'targeting high-risk offenders', but they should not be specific interventions.

Key success factors

Key success criteria

The principles need to:

- Be **evidence-based and rooted in best practice with a view to drive consistency and coordination of partners** and achieve the ambition of ending VAWG.
- **Support all partners to enable a whole-systems approach to VAWG prevention.**
- **Be broad and succinct** enough to secure **buy-in from all partners**, recognising **more engagement with London's communities** including men and boys, children and young people, and other sectors, **will be required in the development of the VAWG Prevention Plan.**
- Be **accessible** to the public and **inclusive** of the communities served in London.
- Be **sustainable** given the VAWG Prevention Plan is intended to cover **10-15 years.**
- Provide a **grounding** for the VAWG Prevention Plan without constraining it.

Preventing VAWG is a shared priority for London.

MOPAC, the VRU and their partners will work towards these principles

Goals: what we want to achieve

1. We work together to prevent all types of VAWG from happening, escalating or reoccurring
2. We address the societal drivers of VAWG, combating misogyny and addressing gender inequality
3. We recognise the importance of the application of a Child First approach in delivering primary prevention
4. We protect and support all victims-survivors of all ages
5. We prevent and stop perpetrators' harmful behaviours, predominately carried out by men and boys
6. Our services are accessible, inclusive and meet the needs of all the communities they serve
7. We equip ourselves with the right skills, expertise and capacity across all partners

Shared ways of working

1. We will take a partnership approach ensuring we align on the shared vision that preventing VAWG is everyone's business, driving leadership and culture across organisations
2. We will take a gender-based and intersectional approach
3. We will continuously learn from and respond to evidence, adapting practice as new challenges emerge
4. We will take a long-term approach, including longer-term and collaborative funding arrangements

Methods: how we get there

1. We will deliver sustained interventions aiming for long-term success
2. We will promote consistent prevention messages across multiple settings and services
3. We will deliver high-quality services that are trauma-informed
4. We will proactively reach out to London's communities to tailor services
5. We will monitor impact and performance
6. We will deliver prevention throughout life
7. We will work together by sharing relevant and appropriate information to manage risk

Goals: what we want to achieve

1. We work together to prevent all types of VAWG from happening, escalating or reoccurring	Stopping VAWG before it starts is the best way to prevent harm to women and girls, and we will increase our focus on primary prevention. A focus on safety in public spaces alongside private spaces is necessary, this includes online and offline settings. When VAWG does occur, we will use effective identification, enforcement and rehabilitation to prevent it escalating or repeating.
2. We address the societal drivers of VAWG, combating misogyny and addressing gender inequality	We recognise the role of misogyny, sexism and harmful beliefs about genders as drivers of VAWG. We will support the vital role of education and the wider community in nurturing healthy relationships at the earliest opportunity.
3. We recognise the importance of the application of a Child First approach in delivering primary prevention	We have a responsibility to support children to thrive. A Child First approach means putting children at the heart of service provision and supporting children to know their rights. We will empower children to recognise unhealthy behaviour related to VAWG, provide education on healthy relationships, and the tools to enable them to know when and where to seek support.
4. We protect and support all victims-survivors of all ages	We will keep victims-survivors safe, providing support to prevent re-victimisation and minimise the harmful effects of VAWG. We adopt a Child First approach when dealing with children and young people.
5. We prevent and stop perpetrators' harmful behaviours, predominately carried out by men and boys	Perpetrators are responsible for violence against women and girls. We will support effective deterrence, identify perpetrators and ensure they are held accountable. This means delivering effective enforcement and consequences for harmful behaviour, while providing opportunities for change to prevent further harm.
6. Our services are accessible, inclusive and meet the needs of all the communities they serve	Our services will deliver prevention activities that are inclusive and effective by meeting the needs of London's diverse communities, taking into account specific needs regarding children and wider vulnerable cohorts. We will make services easier to access, reduce the burden on survivors to access support.
7. We equip ourselves with the right skills, expertise and capacity across all partners	Effectively preventing VAWG requires organisations with the right skills and expertise to deliver interventions, build relationships, and identify warning signs of victimisation and the risk of perpetration, and of perpetrators manipulating professionals.

Shared ways of working

1. We will take a partnership approach ensuring we align on the shared vision that preventing VAWG is everyone's business, driving leadership and culture across organisations

Everyone has a role to play in preventing VAWG and needs the right knowledge to do so. All partners will embed this vision and the future VAWG Prevention Plan within their organisations' day-to-day work. We will make this the basis of a shared vision of VAWG prevention across all partners, informed by contextual safeguarding approaches, especially when working with children and young people.

2. We will take a gender-based and intersectional approach

We acknowledge the gender-based nature of VAWG and will reflect this in our approach. Our policies, strategies and services will address the specific types, experiences, and drivers of VAWG in different communities, and specific support needs of survivors based on their protected characteristics and vulnerabilities.

3. We will continuously learn from and respond to evidence, adapting practice as new challenges emerge

Partners' practices will be based on evidence and evaluation, and will be agile in their response as the evidence evolves and new challenges emerge. We will complement quantitative evaluations with survivor voice and learning from experts. We will support evolution of policy and practice to respond to new challenges and to address current barriers.

4. We will take a long-term approach, including longer-term and collaborative funding arrangements

We will be proactive in assessing and understanding resourcing requirements in preventing VAWG to enable a long-term approach to provide sustainable change. This will include working towards more sustainable and collaborative methods of commissioning services and partnership funding.

Methods: how we will get there

1. We will deliver sustained interventions aiming for long-term success

We will plan for the long-term, delivering interventions of the right length and intensity to achieve impact. We will track a range of measures across the short to long-term, so we know what impact we are having on VAWG.

2. We will promote consistent prevention messages across multiple settings and services

It is crucial that prevention work happens across all parts of life, and everyone agrees that VAWG is unacceptable. We will work in partnership to deliver consistent messages across statutory services, the voluntary sector and communities, including businesses.

3. We will deliver high-quality services that are trauma-informed

We will deliver high-quality services resourced with well trained professionals underpinned by trauma-informed practice.

4. We will proactively reach out to London's communities to tailor services

Different individuals and communities have different needs. We will reach out to and engage communities to understand their needs and tailor our services to meet them.

5. We will monitor impact and performance

We will monitor and evaluate our services to know how effective they are, combining data and victim-survivor voices to understand performance and adapt services as needed. This should inform continuous service design and improvement.

6. We will deliver prevention throughout life

We will seize the earliest possible points to prevent VAWG throughout life and design safer public spaces. This means ensuring appropriate services are in place from pregnancy through to older adulthood, identifying opportunities for change.

7. We will work together by sharing relevant and appropriate information to manage risk

We will go further than having a shared vision and understanding of the problem. We will support our operational partnership by sharing relevant information appropriately, to better manage risk. We will do so with the interest of the public, victims-survivors and communities first.

Definitions

A list of some of the terms used in the VAWG Prevention Principles.

Term	Definition
Child First	A Child First approach means putting children at the heart of service provision and seeing the whole child, identifying/tackling the influences on offending and identifying/promoting the influences that help them to move to pro-social, positive behaviour.
Contextual safeguarding	Contextual safeguarding is an approach to understanding and responding to children and adult experiences of significant harm beyond their family and home.
Prevention	<p>Preventing VAWG can mean stopping violence before it starts, or reducing the frequency and severity of new episodes where it has previously occurred. Prevention occurs across 3 tiers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Primary: Stopping violence before it starts, by addressing root causes including misogyny and harmful attitudes to women and girls.• Secondary: Immediate responses to incidents or signs of violence to prevent it from continuing or escalating.• Tertiary: Preventing reoffending and revictimisation once violence has happened and reducing the long-term, harmful impacts of violence.
Trauma-informed	Trauma-informed approaches realise the effects that trauma can have on individuals and communities, recognise the signs and symptoms of trauma, and aim to prevent re-traumatisation.
VAWG	As set out by the United Nations, is any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.
Whole-system approach	A whole system approach involves applying systems thinking, methods and practice to better understand VAWG challenges and identify collective actions.