

# **VAWG and young people**

## **Key information**

Publication type: Current investigation

Publication status: Adopted

Publication date: Tuesday 28 January 2025

## **Contents**

[Introduction](#)

[Investigation aims and objectives \(Terms of Reference\)](#)

[Key issues](#)

[Key questions](#)

## **Introduction**

The Police and Crime Committee is investigating the work the Mayor has carried out in relation to preventing violence against women and girls in London.

## **Investigation aims and objectives (Terms of Reference)**

The Mayor has committed to publishing a refreshed violence against women and girls (VAWG) strategy in 2025. This investigation will explore how VAWG is affecting children and young people up to the age of 25 in London and what the Mayor's refreshed VAWG strategy needs. It will examine:

- Young peoples' experiences of VAWG in London, including those from ethnic minority and LGBTQIA+ communities
- What services are available to support young victims and survivors of VAWG in London

- How the Mayor can ensure that prevention-based education programmes and initiatives are reaching boys and young men in London, particularly around addressing root causes including misogyny and harmful attitudes to women and girls

## Key issues

The UN defines VAWG as any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women.

The scale of VAWG in the UK has been described as both a national emergency and an epidemic. Police recorded VAWG related crime increased by 37 per cent between 2018 and 2023. Across 2022/23, this accounted for 20 per cent of all police recorded crime.

In London, in 2024 there were 87,526 instances of recorded domestic abuse offences, an increase of 9.1 per cent compared to November 2024. During the same period, 27,596 sexual offences were recorded, a 5.7 per cent increase compared to the previous 12 months. As these figures are only the offences dealt with by the police, the real number will be much higher, reflecting a wider problem with underreporting in VAWG.

VAWG is an issue that is affecting the lives of many young people. According to the healthy relationships charity Tender, young people between 16 and 24 are the age group facing the highest risk of domestic abuse. A recent survey conducted by the End Violence Against Women (EVAW) coalition found that 80 per cent of girls surveyed believed schools need to do more to tackle sexual harassment, while 30 per cent of girls surveyed reported not feeling safe from sexual harassment in school.

In his 2022-25 VAWG strategy, the Mayor includes a commitment to “protect all young Londoners from abuse and sexual exploitation; and to support young people in standing up to, and calling out, inappropriate behaviour”. This includes a “Whole School Approach - preventing abuse and tackling gender-based violence by promoting healthy, equal and respectful relationships between young people”.

As part of the Mayor’s draft Police and Crime Plan 2025-29, the Mayor has said he will take a “public health approach to changing the behaviour of men and boys and making our city safe for every woman and girl.” This includes a commitment to holding perpetrators to account, preventing and reducing VAWG, supporting all victims and survivors and building trust and confidence amongst victims and survivors of VAWG. The Mayor also highlights that criminal exploitation “disproportionately affects vulnerable groups such as children exposed to violence or drugs in the home – feeding a self-perpetuating cycle of vulnerability, violence and exploitation”. The draft Police and Crime Plan states that the Mayor will publish a refreshed VAWG Strategy in 2025 “setting out how we will continue to tackle the perpetrators of these appalling crimes, address the misogynistic attitudes and behaviours that underpin them and ensure that victims and survivors are properly supported.”

## Key questions

- How is VAWG affecting young people in London?
- How well do the support and services available both in London and commissioned by MOPAC meet the needs of young victims and survivors of VAWG?
- How the Met is working to prevent, support and reduce young victims of VAWG, and how successful are programmes such as the [V100 initiative](#)?
- How should the Mayor's refreshed VAWG strategy address the issues affecting young people, including protecting women and girls from criminal and sexual exploitation? How should it support young women and girls from ethnic minority and migrant communities who may be more reluctant to involve the police?
- How well are the Mayor's educational programmes aimed at young men and boys helping to prevent VAWG and address harmful attitudes?

[Back to table of contents](#)