

## The Way Forward: Taking action to end violence against women and girls

### Minutes 10 November 2010

### Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) Panel Meeting

#### Attendees

Kit Malthouse (KM)	Deputy Mayor for Policing (Chair)
Valerie Brasse (VB)	VAWG Panel Vice Chair and MPA Independent Member
Professor Sir George Alberti (GA)	NHS London
Commander Steve Rodhouse (SR)	MPS
Commander Simon Foy (SF)	MPS
Detective Supt Michael Duthie (MD)	MPS
Ron Belgrave (RB)	GLA
Gemma Townsend (GT)	GLA
Joe Mitton (JM)	GLA
Miriam Merkova (MM)	Toynbee Hall
Lynne Abrams (LA)	MPA
Anastasia Lungu Mulenga (AM)	London Councils
Nick Brenton (NB)	Secretary of ALDCS
Carlene Firmin (CF)	ROTA
Nicola Weller (NW)	Nia Project
Marai Larasi (ML)	Imkaan
Jain Lemom (JL)	GLA
Yeliz Osman (YO)	GLA
Pathumal Ali (PA)	GLA (Minutes)

Apologies: Jane Smith (TSA), Andrew Morley (LCJP), Richard J Martin (MPS), Caroline Bates (MPS) and Mark Darby (LCJB)

#### 1. Welcome and introductions –Kit Malthouse

KM welcomed members to the meeting and Panel members introduced themselves

#### 2. Review of actions from July and September meetings

KM went through the actions from the minutes of July and September. Members were updated on actions that were completed.

#### Outstanding actions carried forward

- Producing London guidance for an integrated VAWG approach. This will include training and focus on the development of local strategies and action plans. This action will be merged with another action in the action plan to provide guidance to Local authorities on the gender duty. This will be developed in light of the new single equalities bill. The GLA is working on a specification for this piece of work and it is timetabled for December 10/early Jan 11.

**Action:** The GLA to update on the London guidance at the next VAWG Panel meeting

- JL informed members that Data Evaluation action for the GLA is still in progress and that the GLA would be in a better position to provide an update at the next meeting to members.

**Action:** The GLA to update on the Data Evaluation at the next VAWG Panel meeting

**Action:** The GLA will ensure that the dates for the health meetings are set around the panel meetings.

### **3. The London Crime Reduction Board – Kit Malthouse**

KM provided a brief update to members informing them that the first meeting of the London Crime Reduction board had taken place in October and the next one is scheduled for the 7<sup>th</sup> December 2010.

The Board is comprised of the Mayor, his Chair of Police Authority/Deputy Mayor for Policing and 3 London Councils' nominees. The structure of the board is that there will be a commissioning group who will oversee the priorities, strategic assessment and programmes. KM informed members that representation from the health sector was missing from the structure and that he was pleased that GA had agreed to sit on the Commissioning group.

KM informed members that the role of the Board is to provide leadership and to co-ordinate at a strategic level on crime and policing. The Board members will develop a joined up strategic assessment process in London to identify joint priorities and to help achieve focus and value. A key role of the board is to lobby for change and seek to secure/maintain funding for London to achieve crime reduction.

KM updated members that the Mayor had lobbied around the London Councils proposed cuts to their grants programme, raising the importance of VAWG projects and services in London, which are heavily dependent on funding to deliver services. KM informed members of the funding available from Brussels and that the MPS had been successful in securing some joint funding with Lithuania. KM informed the panel that Birmingham had been successful in getting funding from Brussels to do some work on FGM and that this is something the panel would need to explore.

4. Findings of the London Councils VAWG survey –Anastasia Mulenga  
ALM provided a visual presentation on the findings from the London Councils survey. The survey provided a snapshot of services locally and highlighted where certain types of services were a low priority for boroughs.

5. VAWG service provision – services identified for pan-London and sub-regional commissioning – Valerie Brasse  
VB asked the Panel for consensus on VAWG provisions and services, in particular the need to have clarity on what the core VAWG services would look like. VB suggested overlaying the core services over the Diamond District area. KM felt that while this could be something worth exploring, it is not feasible due to the time constraints in finding a solution to the current funding situation. The current funding issues need to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

**Action:** Panel members to send any final comments on the VAWG core services table to the GLA ASAP.

6. Update on London Rape Crisis Centres – Yeliz Osman

YO informed members that the Nia project has been commissioned to deliver the East London Rape Crisis Centre. In the North quadrant, Solace Women's Aid has been commissioned to deliver services. On 9th December the Mayor will launch the North and East London Rape Crisis Centres and the first pan-London Rape Crisis website. This event is to celebrate the fulfillment of the Mayor's commitment to deliver four Rape Crisis Centres in London. It is also an opportunity for the Mayor to thank the boroughs involved and make the case for sustainable funding.

KM had a meeting with Crispin Blunt MP to discuss government funding for Rape Crisis Centres nationally to ensure that London receives an adequate proportion through the victim surcharge levy. KM made the case for funds to be channelled through the LCRB and Crispin Blunt seemed to feel this was a good way forward.

SF said that The Sapphire Unit is keen to ensure that the London Rape Crisis Centres work in partnership with them and support the work of the Havens.

**7. The impact of serious youth violence on girls and young women – delivering the commitments in The Way Forward -Carlene Firmin.**

CF presented a paper to members, which proposed options for developing a framework to respond to young women and girls affected by serious youth violence. CF had discussed the proposal with Assistant Commissioner Ian McPherson, who is supportive of work in this area.

CF raised concerns that there were no agreed minimum standards in place for young women and girls affected by serious youth violence. CF would like to see a strategic document which outlines what should happen when a young woman or girl comes forward, what safeguarding mechanisms are in place, how to support young women and girls to exit connections with gangs safely and how to deliver preventative work and early interventions.

The paper seeks consensus on how to develop a coordinated response to women and girls affected by serious youth violence. The paper proposed three options and members were asked their views on which one was favorable option.

**Action:** GLA to explore the three options in further discussion with partners.

8. VAWG Communications subgroup update and tackling the demand side of prostitution- Yeliz Osman

YO informed members that the VAWG Comms group had met three times and are developing a number of coordinated activities across agencies. The initial focus was on International EVAW Day so a grid has been put together with information on activities taking place across agencies. The Comms group has also identified the need for a VAWG portal which would contain information for both potential victims/survivors looking for information, help and support services but it would also carry information on initiatives being led by the GLA group which could be a useful resource for professionals and agencies. The Comms group has also considered a campaign to tackle the demand for prostitution and publicise the section 14 offence of paying for sex with exploited

persons. YO presented a paper on tackling the demand side of prostitution. The paper looked at what the literature tells us about tackling demand and what works in deterring men from buying sexual services. The paper proposed undertaking a campaign to raise awareness of the section 14 offence.

YO informed members that Home Office research was published last year which suggested that the biggest deterrent in tackling the demand for prostitution is arresting the client. Interviews with men who buy sex state that more punitive measures such as arrests, criminal records, time in prison, higher fines and public exposure would deter them from buying sex. Educational programmes did not seem to have an impact. MD informed members that under the current legislation it was difficult to prosecute men paying for sex from exploited women. To date, there have been no convictions, only 3 cautions. Panel members explored the reasons for this and discussed ways of overcoming these barriers. MD stated that a key problem is proving that a woman has been trafficked or exploited. You cannot prosecute someone who buys sex until you can prove the woman was trafficked or exploited. Trafficking cases take a very long time- up to a year and under section 14 you only have 6 months to take a case to court. VB suggested the need to draft a lobbying letter to government asking for changes to the legislation if it is currently not enforceable. YO stated that the Coalition Government are unlikely to want to introduce any further legislation on this matter given that there is no consensus amongst the Coalition Government on how to address the issue of prostitution. KM suggested that a small change may not need to go through parliament but it may be possible to do this through the CPS. KM also suggested raising this issue through the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) Sentencing Green Paper. MD informed members that Richard Martin had written to editors of newspaper groups warning them about the advertising of sexual services and links to organised crime.

Members agreed that despite the difficulties in enforcing the section 14 offence, a poster campaign could still serve to deter men and warning them of the risks of arrest and criminal record.

**Action:** The GLA to develop the Section 14 offence poster campaign

**Action:** The GLA to discuss section 14 offence with the CPS and to feed this issue into the MOJ Sentencing Green Paper consultation response.

#### 9. Developing an action plan for 2011-12 – Jain Lemom

JL presented a paper, seeking agreement from members on the priorities for 2011- 2012 action plan, the need to concentrate on three to four key areas under each objective.

**Action:** All members to feedback to JL their views and comments on the key areas they feel the Action Plan should focus on.

#### 10. AOB

JL reminded members the need for accurate information on what partners are doing, the gaps and barriers and requested that a regular update be provided using the VAW monitoring form. This information will be used to develop the Annual Report.

**Action:** All panel members who have not done so to send their monitoring forms to the GLA.

Dates of futures meetings:

16<sup>th</sup> February 2011      3.00pm – 5.00pm in      CR5

18<sup>th</sup> May 2011            2.00pm – 4.30pm in      CR3

14<sup>th</sup> September 2011 9.30am-11.30am in CR3  
 14<sup>th</sup> December 2011 2.00pm- 4.00pm in CR3

## Summary of Actions

### Actions from VAWGP Meeting of 10 November 2010

Action	Date Raised	Deadline	Lead/individual/org	Status
Ensure Health Sub group meetings are co-ordinated around the panel meetings	10 November 2010		GLA	
The GLA to update on the London guidance at the next VAWG Panel meeting	10 November 2010		YO GLA	
The GLA to update on the Data Evaluation at the next VAWG Panel meeting	10 November 2010		JL GLA	
Panel members to send any final comments on the VAWG core services table to the GLA ASAP.	10 November 2010		All	
GLA to discuss with partners the three options in the proposal paper for Girls and serious youth violence	10 November 2010		GLA & MPS	
The GLA to discuss section 14 offence with the CPS and to feed this issue into the MOJ Sentencing Green Paper consultation	10 November 2010		YO GLA	

response.				
Develop a campaign to tackling demand and publicising Section 14	10 November 2010		GLA/Comms Subgroup	
Members to feedback on developing the action plan 2011- 2012 table	10 November 2010	17 November	All	
All panel members who have not done so to send their monitoring forms to the GLA.	10 November 2010	17 November	All	