

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

Minutes Friday 12th October 2012

Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) Panel Meeting

ACTION	JL/GW To provide a list of MOPAC meetings for Jenny indicating what level of Court representative is appropriate at each
ACTION	JH to send actions from FGM event to group and speak at next meeting regarding FGM and CSE
ACTION	SG request a shopping list of major issues/concerns from the VAWG Panel
ACTION	LA to share presentation/scoping report re rape action plan
ACTION	MOPAC to contact the Home Office for further information on 'info doc' re changes on DV definition and workshops
ACTION	LC and MOPAC to begin discussions to address a prostitution prevention agenda
ACTION	CF to provide briefing for MOPAC in advance of full CSE report

Attendees: Stephen Greenhalgh Chair, MOPAC

Jain Lemom, MOPAC
Gemma Woznicki, MOPAC
Lynne Abrams, MOPAC
Carlene Firmin (CF), OCC
Julie Bindel, Eaves
Rangan Momen, London Councils
Amina Khan, Home Office
Christina Papaleontrou, Home Office
Colin Fitzgerald (CFG), Respect
Susan Bewley, NHS K&CL
Mick Duthie, MPS Sapphire
Jenny Hopkins, CPS London
Nick Sumner MPS, SC+09
Marai Larasi, Imkaan

Apologies

Jo Todd
Karen Ingala Smith
Commander Peter Spindler

1. Minutes of last meeting agreed Actions

Action	Owner	Update
MOPAC to follow up on Imkaan/Children's Commissioners links with Ofsted	YO	Yeliz currently liaising with Carlene Firmin
Panel to send comments on strategy refresh through to MOPAC Officers	Panel	Complete. No comments received as of yet, panel members encouraged to send comments to Jain
JL to investigate whether a retainer is available for Chair role	JL	
Panel to feedback suggestions for Chair	Panel Members	On agenda to be discussed later in the meeting
VAWG Panel dates for the next 12 months to be set	YO, LA	This will be decided once a chair has been chosen

2. VAWG Strategy refresh

SG met with academics on 12th October to discuss which areas of the current VAWG agenda to focus on going forward. Stephen is keen to ensure that the refresh is just that and in no way a newly developed strategy thus allowing us to concentrate efforts on specific areas of the VAWG agenda. This will need panel input, views fed in will go a great way in shaping how we take the strategy forward. The specifics of a consultation period are not yet finalised but once the process has been confirmed panel members will be informed.

3. CPS update (including FGM roundtable event), Jenny Hopkins

JH informed the panel that the CPS is in the process of a major restructure. It was felt that the operational model of predominately small borough based teams was no longer serving London effectively. These teams are to be combined into three offices, one in Pimlico (which will house a team focusing on rape cases), one in Croydon and one at Tower Bridge (which will house a team focusing on youth case work). There is a strong emphasis on improving casework. The Rape and Serious Sexual Offence team will no longer simply focus on charging but will now have a 'cradle to grave' approach to cases.

The Crown Prosecution Service held an event on Female Genital Mutilation, actions are currently being discussed with the director and an update will be circulated shortly via email.

ACTION: JH to send actions from FGM event to panel and speak at next meeting regarding FGM. Also, to provide feedback on the Child Sexual Exploitation event that took place last week as requested by CF.

CF noted that the relationship types for childhood sexual exploitation can appear similar in profile to that of DV cases and unreliable witness indicators can often be similar to

risk indicators for sexual exploitation (repeated missing incidents, drug addiction etc). As such, CF stated that DV prosecutors may be best placed to assist a RASSO team.

CF asked how the definition change on DV will affect processes, will these cases be heard in youth court? If so will there be additional resource available to account for this as both victims and perpetrators will be affected. JH said that at 16 or 17 an individual would be dealt with in a youth court regardless of the crime, though some cases would go to crown court. There is now a dedicated youth team that exists dealing only with youth cases. CF suggested that it would be good to engage with CPS so they can feed directly into this process, JH agreed to feed this back to the policy leads.

CFG informed the group that there has been some training developed around child to parent violence but only a sparse amount currently being applied in youth setting. There are regular monthly meetings taking place between practitioners in order to update and share learning.

CF asked the forum to bear in mind the uniqueness of incidences that occur in London, while they are still child safeguarding issues their variables and context remain very different to instances that occur outside of the capital. As such London specific needs demand separate learning. JH agreed to take this back to Director.

4. Rape action and rape prevention plan

LA stated that the draft rape action plan was presented at the March VAWG panel meeting for comment, and an updated version has now been circulated LA updated on parts of the rape action plan, noting that there is a current scoping review into sexual violence and media which will influence commissioning, this is not yet ready to share but panel will receive updates as soon as possible. The rape prevention plan is still in draft form. It has taken inspiration from a US document *Sexual Violence Prevention, Centre for Disease Control* which outlines how prevention plans could be structured.

LA and JL met with the GLA Mayors Academies lead to discuss the development of a 'whole school approach' to prevention which they were very receptive to.

MD stated the MPS prevention plan will link in with MOPAC's. He stated that the Met had seen a reduction in the rate of reported rape since April. Though this is in keeping with other sexual offences and crime in general the Met are looking into further explanations for this.

MD advised that the Sapphire unit is currently undergoing a restructure. He stated that the unit now has a Detective Inspector embedded in the CPS Rape and Serious Sexual Offences Unit (RASSO) which allows for greater and earlier collaboration on cases.

ACTION: JL request MD circulate final version of draft to the group via Peter Spindler.

JH asked whether there could be further discussion outside the meeting concerning the action point relating to CPS and MPS targets.

ACTION: LA to contact JH.

ML expressed concerns that the prevention piece in schools mainly focuses on sexual violence rather than the integrated approach to VAWG that the panel endorses. LA

stated that this would be in the context of healthy relationships so should capture a wider VAWG approach. JL commented that this work is still in its very early stages and of course would hope to frame any work within a VAWG context.

5. Mayoral Manifesto commitments:

i. Pan London DV service

At the last VAWG Coordinators meeting attendees raised concerns that local leaders did not understand how plans to develop a pan-London DV service would impact upon current Independent Domestic Violence Advocate services. There will be a letter sent to leaders from MOPAC explaining that this is not the case.

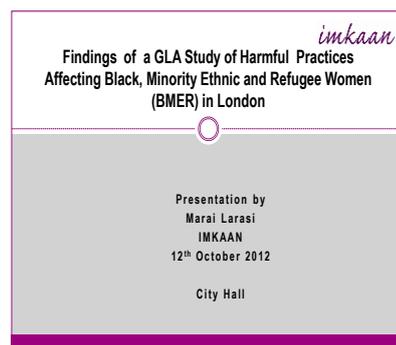
CF suggested speaking to Home Office leads regarding implications of changes to the DV definition as they are undertaking a study with a view to produce an information document about this, possibly holding workshops.

ACTION: MOPAC to contact HO

5. Mayoral Manifesto commitments:

ii. Harmful Practices Taskforce – Marai Larasi, Imkaan

Marai Larasi presented the findings of a GLA commissioned Study of Harmful Practices



JL stated that MOPAC will look to create a Harmful Practices taskforce whose remit will be inclusive of faith based abuse for the first time, DfE are also developing work in this area. The group is hoping to develop a pilot to take this work forward. Membership is currently being discussed.

ML highlighted how positive the study had been and that it had helped lead to the decision of London Council to dedicated a strand of funding specifically to HPs. JL highlighted the change in legislation which has made FGM a crime. The Government has given 500k through the Home Office to fund work in this area. Criminalisation (as a result of change in legislation) will affect provision and this should be noted. Steven Greenhalgh emphasised that the strategy refresh will have a strong focus on prevention.

London Councils will be funding 3 million of VAWG programmes with 300k dedicated to Harmful Practices.

5. Mayoral Manifesto commitments:

iii. Rape Crisis Center Funding

JL updated the group on the Mayor's funding commitment for Rape Crisis Centers, a submission has been agreed by DMPC recommending transitional funding for 2014. All RCCs will receive the same amount of funding from the Mayor for 2013/14. From now till mid 13/14 MOPAC will work with partners to develop sustainable funding models. The Mayor is committed to supporting RCCs but we need to look at other funding opportunities to sustain provision. The Mayor will look to local authorities to contribute as well as Health/NHS providers.

CF asked if there was information available on the ages of young women seen by RCC's, anecdotally it appears service users are becoming younger and this raises concerns over where and when children's services should be engaging in cases. It is not clear what the London Safeguarding Children's Board is doing to recognise their funding responsibilities and links with RCCs. ML added that it would be helpful to place RCCs within a holistic response.

SB expressed that she was delighted that Department for Education are so engaged with tackling VAWG and that she felt there was a very different landscape with regards to Health. The Department for Health is moving to a localism agenda and does not consider violence as core business. Yesterday's VAWG and Health meeting highlighted the need to identify a handful of champions who can help look into the Health/violence interface as expertise are being lost to the detriment of Health/VAWG. Next year will see the publication of public health guidelines in regards to DV which will hopefully improve the situation.

Action: SG agreed that integration with Health is immensely important and asked for a shopping list of major issues/concerns that members have regarding VAWG and Health. He has spoken about this to Jeremy Hunt regarding how to bring Health and the CJS closer together.

CF stated that DfE has a task and finish group regarding sexual exploitation which may be worth finding more information on. They are currently awaiting the publication of the OCC report before pushing their own findings. The group is not submitting to the Caldicott review.

6. Prostitution study update – Julie Bindel, Eaves



MOPAC
presentation.ppt

JB explained that she submitted an executive summary to MOPAC yesterday and presented a list of recommendations divided into themes.

SG asked about numbers and how many boroughs have significant problems around this. JB explained that prostitution features in all London boroughs but is problematic in around a third. SG stated that the industrial processing of women is not a local issue and is something that needs a pan London approach with a strong prevention agenda

and adequate exit provision. MOPAC can add real value here along with London Councils. JB detailed how the issues need increased awareness and for the demand for these services to be tackled.

ACTION: LC and MOPAC to begin discussions to address a prostitution prevention agenda.

ML said that practitioner ambivalence is an issue. There is a need to recognise child protection elements of these problems and encourage local authorities to enforce action. SG said there was a need to focus in on the hotspots and consider how we could possibly introduce licensing and also explore exit programmes.

7. VAWG Panel chair –Stephen Greenhalgh, DMPC

The following names were put to the forum for deliberation:

- Rose Boycott
- Helen Kennedy
- Joan Smith

The forum unanimously agreed to approach Joan Smith. JB and ML agreed to make this approach.

8. Update on the Inquiry into gang and group associated child sexual exploitation – Carlene Firmin, Office of the Children’s Commissioner

OCC have commissioned research into young people’s understanding of consent looking specifically into the overlap of DV and Child Sexual Exploitation. 21st November is the publication date for the CSE report.

ACTION: CF to provide briefing for MOPAC

MOPAC Mission

SG stated the MOPAC mission and explained it was a pledge which marries up the Mayor’s election promises and how his office will set about delivering his 20-20-20 vision for London. This is a 20% reduction in crime; 20% reduction in costs; and 20% increase in confidence, along with other Mayoral commitments and statutory duties to ensure the effective and efficient policing of London. This is a challenge which centres on doing better with the criminal justice system, specifically lowering the cost of policing in London.