

Date: Wednesday, 5 December 2018
Location: Committee Room 5, City Hall
Hearing: Justice Matters Round Table Meeting: VAWG

Start time: 11.35am
Finish time: 1.05pm

Members:

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime) (Co Chair)
Joan Smith (VAWG Board) (Co Chair)
Marie Snelling (MOPAC)
Marai Larsi (IMKAAN)
Commander Richard Smith (Metropolitan Police Service)
Catherine Hinwood (Ministry of Justice)
Krisztina Katona (Home Office)
Jade Holvey (Lambeth Council)
Hong Tan (NHS England)
Gurpreet Virdee (Women and Girls Network)
Lucy Hayton (Women and Girls Network)
Yolanda Burgess (London Councils)
Jain Lemom (MOPAC audience member)
Andrea Simon (End Violence Against Women Coalition)

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime) (Co Chair): Thank you very much and welcome to another edition of Justice Matters. We do this on a quarterly basis, but with different themes and different topics, so thank you very much for taking time. We will just quickly whizz round the room and just to remind everyone that this is a public meeting, it is being filmed and broadcast, so you are on the record and people do download it and do watch it back, as I have found on previous occasions; so you just need to be aware of that, but that is what is happening, even though we are not in the chamber, this is a room to be filmed.

Shall we just quickly whizz round? I am Sophie Linden, I am the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime and I am really glad today that I have got Joan Smith with me, who is co chairing.

Joan Smith (VAWG Board) (Co Chair): Yes, I am Co-chair of the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Board.

Yolanda Burgess (London Councils): I am Yolanda Burgess; I am Strategy Director at London Councils.

Marie Snelling (MOPAC): I am Marie Snelling, I am one of the directors here at the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime.

Commander Richard Smith (Metropolitan Police Service): I am Richard Smith; I lead for Safeguarding for the Metropolitan Police Service.

Lucy Hayton (Women and Girls Network): I am Lucy Hayton, the Rape Crisis Centre Manager at the Women and Girls Network.

Gurpreet Virdee (Women and Girls Network): Gurpreet Virdee, I am one of the directors at Women and Girls Network.

Marai Larsi (IMKAAN): Marai Larsi, Tech Director at IMKAAN.

Andrea Simon (End Violence Against Women): I am Andrea Simon; I am the Public Affairs Manager at the End Violence Against Women Coalition.

Catherine Hinwood (Ministry of Justice): I am Catherine Hinwood, Deputy Director and Family and Criminal Justice Policy Director and Ministry of Justice and Violence Against Women and Girls (inaudible) portfolio.

Hong Tan (NHS England): I am Hong Tan, I am National Lead for Commission and Partnerships for NHS England on the Sexual Assault and Abuse Strategy.

Jade Holvey (Lambeth Council): And I am Jade Holvey from Lambeth Council, I am Head of Commissioning for Safer Communities, which includes Violence Against Women and Girls.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime) (Co Chair): Thank you very much. I have just come from, with Hong and Richard actually, a fantastic event where it was the official opening of Child House, which is just a fantastic collaboration with the National Health Service

(NHS), Mayor's Office, the Police, Camden, National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) and also Morgan Stanley and again there, a very brave young woman talked about how Child House and the services that are in Child House have affected her and been so important to her in terms of recovering from sexual abuse. So for me, it was a really good coincidence that they were both on the same day; it was a good start to a morning of looking at violence against women and girls and a reminder of not just what we are going to talk about today, which is the prevalence of violence against women and girls, but also a reminder of what is needed, and a reminder that it has been a very long journey to get there to opening those doors and for people, young children and young people, to be going through those doors and getting the support; and the support from the police as well to take it to the Criminal Justice System in the best way possible.

I do not need to tell people around this table about the prevalence, quite shocking prevalence of violence against women and girls. Just this year, there have been 83,803 domestic abuse offences in the year to October 2018 in London, and 20,448 sexual offences in London; a shocking amount of violence against women and girls. I remember when I first became Deputy Mayor and I was briefed about the Sexual Violence Needs Assessment that Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) had commissioned, and one of the key things that has always stuck in my head round that Needs Assessment was that in every London borough in London every week, 11 women are raped or sexually abused, and we cannot talk about that enough around the level of violence that women and girls are suffering in London.

Today, we wanted to go through what the picture of demand looks like, and that makes it sound very clinical, that you are talking about women and girls being abused and violence against them, what that looks like, but also to look at what that means in terms of services, what that means in terms of funding, and what we ought to be doing in terms of looking forward to a comprehensive spending review; but also what it means in terms of the unmet need in London to ensure that women and girls have the support and the services that they need. We know that there is a huge gap between demand and funding. For example, there is research that shows that of all the women trying to access refuge places, 64% of the referrals during the last year were unsuccessful, that is 64% of women that need that service not getting that service.

We will go through the agenda. We are going to look at the current landscape, then look at the sexual violence triage pilot, a presentation on that which again, is a new and fantastic service, which is a look at how we might utilise the learning in that pilot, and then move on to what the national response ought to look like. I am very keen that yes, of course, there are asks of City Hall, there are asks of local authorities, and asks of Government, that I am also very keen that we also make sure that we think about; but what are the asks of the stakeholders, of the voluntary sector, and how do we ensure that actually, we are making it as easy and as simple as possible for the funding to go to the right places, and to meet the right demand and the right need. So, there are challenges in all directions, I think, in terms of today. So if we could just start; Marie, you are going to take us through the data?

Marie Snelling (MOPAC): Yes, no worries at all. Just a few slides just to set the scene for the session this morning then. So, the first slide that many of you will have seen, that for particular types of VAWG and here domestic abuse and indeed sexual offences, we know that recorded offences of these are increasing. We also know that we saw sharp increases from 2015 and our analysis tells us that the Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) Report into Crime

Data Integrity in late 2014 and indeed things like the launch of Operation Yewtree at the end of 2012, have had a really big impact around recording crimes of this kind.

Yet, turning over a slide, we also know that prevalence has stayed fairly static. The Office for National Statistics recommends that the Crime Survey for England and Wales is the most robust measure of crime in the country and on that basis, we can see from the graph here that it indicates that there has been no real change in prevalence for women over the last ten years.

Yet, when we then look at some of the data that we have collated from across London, we know that services in London are struggling with demand and that capacity is really, really limited. Information from service providers has highlighted that there has been a massive increase in demand; I think the stat there is incredibly compelling, that for women's services the demand has increased by 85%, at the same time funding has fallen by 50%. That is a real challenge for this morning's session and beyond.

In terms of capacity, we also know there are real challenges there. So, currently in London, there are 6.6 refuge bed spaces for 1,000 estimated female victims in London; and we know that over a third of women are staying in refuges for a period of longer than four months, so that creates a real challenge around capacity. In addition, we hear back from providers, and I am sure we will hear lots of this this morning from colleagues, that services are just really struggling to cope with the increased complexity of needs of those women. So, we know that successful referral rates become even lower where there are more complex needs, so where there are mental health issues, for example, substance misuse, or indeed the number or age of a woman's children. We also know that over 50% of all women placed in refuges, for example, have children, so that kind of compounds that issue around the needs of these groups are becoming more complex and how do we enable ourselves to deliver for those.

So, that is a bit of background of stats then, Sophie has talked about that we would be looking at funding today. I apologise that this is slightly sort of wiry, but what we have attempted to do here is to provide a snapshot of the funding landscape in London for VAWG services. It is not perfect, it absolutely does not represent everything, but I think there are a couple of key things to note that we thought were useful and interesting for the purposes of discussion this morning.

The first is obviously the number of different funders, and that probably does not represent all of them, so that is an interesting piece for us to think about. Secondly, you can see there on the left, MOPAC's funding is by far the largest funder in this regard, funding over £20 million worth of services into VAWG. We know that all of these different funding streams have different processes, they have different conditions, they have different timescales, which creates a whole set of challenges for providers in terms of service delivery. We also know that organisations will be receiving funds from multiple of those funders as well and needing to juggle all of that. So, I think there is a question for us this morning about, is this most effective way to fund VAWG services in London and to ensure that we are both delivering value, but also importantly, that we are looking at how we best meet that demand that we have just seen in the previous slides.

Lastly then, it is just a piece, and Gurpreet and Lucy I know are going to come on as part of the session this morning to talk more broadly about this, but it is kind of not all doom and gloom. So, what we are trying to say here is that, as Sophie alluded to in the introduction, the Sexual Violence Triage Pilot has been a really good example of where we have successfully achieved co

commission across agencies, there is also a joint operating model involving a wide range of delivery organisations, and I think one of the things today that we are going to look through is how do we kind of galvanise this experience, because this is a really good piece of work, it is a really good service, and surely there is learning to be had that we can apply elsewhere.

So lastly then, just to sort of say the issues, the challenges and the opportunities therefore presented in these slides will obviously be considered in more detail this morning, but I hope that gives a kind of a framework for which we can springboard into conversation.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime) (Co Chair): Thank you very much. Does anyone have any questions about the data? Catherine?

Catherine Hinwood (Ministry of Justice): This is really helpful and I am really pleased that we are getting into this conversation, so thank you very much. The first one was an offer, really, so your illustrative funding picture slide, my team has actually done quite a bit of work on this stuff, so very happy to help by filling some of the gaps, particularly on a national level, so we can work with you on getting a better picture, because what I would really like to understand, if you go to the slide beforehand when you talk about demand increasing 85% and funding falling 50%, what is the granularity underneath that, where has demand in particular risen, and how do we try to match those specific services where you are finding that need is not met? So, you know, I know today is how we bring today funding pots, but are there any specific areas where you think services are suffering; so sexual violence services, where you have got specific pots, or you have highlighted refuge funding for example, I can make an offer for us to work with you to try to look into the granularity of that and do some really meaningful work.

Marie Snelling (MOPAC): Thank you very much.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime) (Co Chair): That would be fantastic. Would you be able to look at that across Government, rather than just in the Ministry of Justice?

Catherine Hinwood (Ministry of Justice): Yes. So, I will come onto national response, but I am the SRO for the implementation of the Victims' Strategy, which has a commitment around bringing together funding across Government. So, that falls within my remit too.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime) (Co Chair): So, the MH the old CLG?

Catherine Hinwood (Ministry of Justice): I just brokered them about this yesterday, so I am really happy to lead on that for you.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime) (Co Chair): That is really helpful, thank you very much. I think also for me, it is not just around the gap, but you are absolutely right around the services, but also having come from Child House this morning, it is around locality as well, because Child House is going to be serving, I think, five boroughs in North West London North Central London, so we have really got to work out around actually, where are the services and how can women and girls actually get to them and have we got bits of London where there is just too much of a gap for services? Yes, Jade?

Jade Holvey (Lambeth Council): Can I just make two comments, one on the issue of refugees, because I think refugee funding is an absolute concern in relation to what is happening across the country, around allocation of funding; and from a Lambeth perspective, we are seeing a higher increase of people being turned away, so the demand is even higher than what you are presenting. So, we have 52 beds in Lambeth, which is the highest in London, and 85% of those are Black Asian Minority Ethnic (BAME), and what we saw in the last financial year is that we had 374 applicants for those refugee beds; we supported 102 women and their children, but we turned away, because we did not have space, 72%, and I think that is pretty significant, especially because they are BAME specific refugee beds. So, it is a real concern.

And then, in relation to the funding picture, I mean I would say this, coming from a local authority, but I think local authority funding is absolutely critical to understand as part of the response to violence against women and girls. From a Lambeth perspective alone, we invest £1.2 million into VAWG and if you think about that across the capital, that is actually a significant amount of money. So when we look at what the approach to commissioning regionally is, we need to really involve local authorities around how we use our resources and pool that into the London approach.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime) (Co Chair): Thank you. I think that is really helpful and I don't know, I think it is something we can take up with London Councils probably around actually ensuring that that London wide look around services and funding is there, so we are capturing all the services. But also, in terms of refugee beds, our Strategy that we published in March, I think it was it was not; anyway, it does not matter we published recently on VAWG had a commitment in it to look at panel and the commission of refugee beds as a way of trying to ensure again service provision is there where it needs to be, but also to ensure that all boroughs are pulling their weight in a sufficient number of refugee beds.

Jade Holvey (Lambeth Council): Absolutely, I would really welcome that.

Marai Larsi (IMKAAN): I will just be really quick. So, Marie, it is just an offer as well, in terms of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) element, it might be useful to have more granular detail, so we have got information on how that has effected BAME, or BAME specific organisations, because we have worked really closely with MHCLG around that and we have monitored all the way through, since that kind of funding pot started. So again, we can have some conversations with you around

Marie Snelling (MOPAC): We have found that more challenging.

Marai Larsi (IMKAAN): Yes, that funding has literally saved a couple of our member organisations.

Marie Snelling (MOPAC): OK, thank you very much indeed.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime) (Co Chair): OK, well, Hong?

Hong Tan (NHS England): Just first of all, congratulations on the opening of the Child House, it is wonderful to see such a great example of partnership working, which for me actually core to justice matters around violence against women and girls and sexual abuse and so on, so congratulations again, everyone. I think what would be really helpful also is to look at the funding picture over a few years, I think especially with all the pressures from all sorts of sources, for a support plan based on that against the increasing demand, so happy to help with that.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime) (Co Chair): Brilliant, OK, we can do that. Joan?

Joan Smith (VAWG Board) (Co Chair): I think one of the things that MOPAC is fantastically good at is producing this card data and as always, these presentations are incredibly helpful, but for this part of the meeting, we would like to actually talk to the Voluntary and Community Services (VCS) organisation, so it is basically Women and Girls Network and IMKAAN and End Violence Against Women Coalition (EVAWC) to ask about what is your actual experience over the last three or four years; how has this increasing demand and lack of resources, how has it actually affected your working on a day to day basis, I don't know who wants to go first?

Marai Larsi (IMKAAN): Shall we cut in? OK, so from IMKAAN perspective, we are really clear that the nature of violence against women and girls has both changed and remained the same, and what I mean is that the core elements of power control, violence against women and girls as a gendered issue, remains the same; but the mechanisms by which that power is exercised have expanded with the growth of the internet, social media, etc. And as awareness of violence against women and girls has increased, which is positive, it feels like as a city, we still have not completely adapted.

So, thinking through how we might think about addressing this, there is something around violence against women and girls being everybody's business and we say that and we say it almost, we role this thing out, but what does that actually mean? So sometimes we think that that means a little bit of training in an organisation, but we actually do need systems' change. There is still an overreliance on an individual champion, so I can always count on somebody like Jade to show up and to speak about these issues and what that means in a borough like Lambeth is there has been a lot of change, but what happens if somebody like Jade leaves? What we see is we actually can see a really quick shift in priorities, etc, so there is something about how we build organisational accountability.

Services are under constant pressure to innovate, adapt, etc. I cannot tell you how frustrating and exhausting that is, but we are dealing with a sector that is severely under resourced and we have had examples of that. So what I am going to share is just a little bit of information. So, looking across London, the combined income of 14 special experience organisations is half that, so the combined income is half that of the largest independent women's sector VAWG provider; and it is still less than that of the second largest. So, we are talking about across 14 organisations, a turnover of less than half.

And that combined income is a mere one fifth of the smallest of the large children's charities. So, it is impossible to have this conversation without talking about resources. So, we still need to think about ring fence sustainable funding, which is based on need, and I am going to leave

that for the moment and just have kind of colleagues pick some of that up, because I could go on about this ad nauseum.

Gurpreet Virdee (Women and Girls Network): Shall I? OK, so I am speaking from Women and Girls Network's perspective. In some ways, we have bucked the trend, so we have actually increased income over the last three years, but it hasn't been easy and it has been quite a challenging process, because I think for us it has meant actually looking at how do we exist as an organisation; how do we still do what we want to do within the limited resources available, and I think one of the key things that we have had to do is develop a lot more partnership working. And whilst partnership working definitely has its benefits, it has also been challenging; it has also been emotionally quite taxing, because I think when you are having to enter partnerships to go for a larger bid, which is going to ultimately going to help sustain your services, you have to make compromises. Those compromises are not always easy and they are not comfortable and I think, at the heart of everything, we want to maintain the integrity of the organisation and our ethos and way of working. Lots of the women that come to us, come to us because of the trust that they have in our services and it is normally a sort of, somebody would tell you about in and then you would go and access that service. So, there is a trust issue there.

So, we have managed to draw down funding, the Gateway being obviously one of those sources of funding, but also through the London VAWG Consortium and the Angelou Partnership. So, over the last six years, actually we have managed to increase our income, but I think the constant push for innovation has been really, really difficult because organisations like ours have existed for over 30 years; we know what works; women tell us what works; lots of our services are defined by women; and we monitor and evaluate and there is a good evidence base to say what works. So, the constant push for innovation to do what we know works differently is really, really challenging, so definitely would echo that.

In terms of our actual services, waiting lists are much, much bigger. I think we have gone from kind of thinking three months is really bad, to going six months is pretty horrendous, to now across actually the four London Rape Crisis Centres having an average waiting time of 9 13 months for counselling. So, in terms of the numbers of women at the moment, the four centres alone have 452 survivors waiting on a waiting list for counselling. So, if the waiting list is that long and you have got that many women to put through, you can kind of see the scale of the picture.

I think the other thing for us that has been really challenging is not just that our own services are under huge demand; obviously other services are under huge demand. So, the onward referral, so NHS referrals to us are about 40% for our counselling, but actually, where Children and Mental Health Services (CAMHS), we would kind of refer high risk clients, we would kind of go for counselling elsewhere, it is not sufficient.

We have been really creative about how we have worked around some of those things, so the introduction of Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT), we have created really good pathways to work with IAPT services, particularly in West London. They will do some of the kind of initial grounding work, or whatever, and we kind of do the longer term work. We have had to manoeuvre around what we have, but it is not to say it is not challenging and it is not to say that it always works, but we are trying different ways and different approaches.

But ultimately, what women are telling us is, there are lots of different needs and they are just not being met. So, I might come to you for counselling, but I also need Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) provision; I also need advocacy; I need housing; I need my right to stay in this country is under threat. So, there are so many, and the complexity of issues and the number of high risk clients coming through has dramatically increased. We have gone from having maybe a quarter of our client base being at high risk to now having pushing towards the three quarters to being a really high risk.

Lucy Hayton (Women and Girls Network): Yes, and just to add to that, that puts huge pressures on the way that we work and on the staff and we are having to acclimatise, and I think we are doing that well, but at the same time we are also having to reduce the way that we work and compromise. So, whereas before we might want to offer 25-30 sessions of counselling, we now have a standard contract of 15, and we know that for the majority of the women coming to us who have got long term trauma, who have been victimised multiple times, that is not enough, and then they come back into service. So, that is one of the really tangible impacts that we have seen, I think, over the past few years.

Again, also having those crisis issues, housing, as we say, a huge issue for us, and we are then constantly rolling back into crisis again, and women are then unable to engage in the longer term therapeutic benefits of support, and are back into crisis services. So, I think those are some of the tangible challenges that we have been facing.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime) (Co Chair): Andrea, do you want to add something?

Andrea Simon (End Violence Against Women): Yes. I mean, that has covered quite a lot of ground, but what I would say is that our member organisations are operating in a climate which has seen a lot of high profile, broad related trials in the media, social movements like Me Too, etc, which has raised expectations, it has raised the expectation that there are services out there for you if you need help and you want to access them at whatever point in your lifetime you choose to come forward and do so. The reality is, the picture that we have, is that those services are often not available and waiting lists are closed; and that then creates a situation which can, in some ways, be dangerous for victims and survivors. So, that is an overarching context.

But as has been mentioned already, there is this inclination often for commissioners to go for innovation and innovative and new ideas to test or trial new things, when women's services are under pressure and have closed or long waiting lists. So, more of the focus on what can be done to help sustainability of those services, and for those services to grow and meet demand, is really paramount. Our specialist services, such as BAME services that have been mentioned, have the highest rates of self referral. So, if those services are not there, often those women will not seek help for their situations. Those services are not always providing in isolation, so for a particular type of VAWG so just Domestic Violence (DV) and Sexual Violence (SV), there is a crossover between many forms of violence against women and girls, and those services are often supporting women in the round; and that needs to be acknowledged.

Joan Smith (VAWG Board) (Co Chair): I don't know if you can answer this off the cuff, but what would you say are the top three areas that need addressing in terms of gaps in the provision?

Marai Larsi (IMKAAN): Sorry, so I have got some notes, just an integrated VAWG approach is critical, and this needs to cover from the public sphere to the private sphere and as Andrea said, you know, our members are working with women who may be experiencing multiple violence against women and girls. So the silos that have emerged in the work are not the silos that exist in women's lives and in women's realities; those are silos that have emerged in practice, and some of those silos are really problematic. So, we need an integrated VAWG approach to be held and maintained from everything to how we imagine this strategically to what we deliver at a service perspective. Even if a service is centring sexual violence or forced marriage, the service does need to be acutely aware of the broader VAWG issue and have that context.

A transformative approach which thinks not only about the basics of safety, but which is thinking about what equality and freedom of movement could look like for women, we are constantly, in the era of Me Too, we are having conversations that are so much around the basics of survival that we cannot even imagine what it would look like to have London be a free, safe and equal city for women and girls to move around; not just in public spaces, but what it would look like for women to be safe and free in their own homes.

A meaningful partnership, so years of successive civil servants and politicians, very often with very great intentions, will have conversations with us really coming from the place of we will be the ones to get it right, and we really appreciate that. But, part of what has happened for us is that sometimes, people do not listen to us, and it is not that we are not open to change, because we are constantly adapting, but sometimes it can feel like we are mirroring survivors during this, or saying me too and not really being heard, and there is something around valuing and supporting the expertise that exists in this work.

We can be difficult as a sector; we are feminists, we are meant to be difficult, you know, because we are fighting for all lives and all liberation and that is difficult work. And so there is something about that being heard and held and valued, and also, you know, innovation is critical, but we still need to have innovation alongside sustaining what already exists, because what already exists is good and important.

Joan Smith (VAWG Board) (Co Chair): Anybody want to add anything?

Andrea Simon (End Violence Against Women): Just simply, it is quite hard to address the gaps in provision when often, there is a real lack of accountability mechanisms, what is actually holding commissioners to account; who is doing that holding to account? Often, that is an unknown, or a space that needs to be filled with something. So, yes, just broadly how do we actually encourage partners to get together and jointly commission these areas of VAWG which cover, are not just crime, they are not just health, they are not just education, they go across all of those different responsibilities.

Joan Smith (VAWG Board) (Co Chair): Thank you. I think that is really, really helpful as kind of a picture of the demand and what capacity there is at the moment. And I think it is

quite important to reiterate that this is a very big priority for London and for the Mayorality and the rest of this meeting is going to be about how some of those gaps might be addressed. I will hand back to Sophie.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime) (Co Chair): Thanks, Marai, thanks very much for that, because I know it was not off the cuff; you have thought deeply about this and worked incredibly hard in this sector for a very long time. But, although those three challenges are incredibly important challenges, I recognise that sort of everyone, politicians perhaps, want to get it right and we need to listen, and we have got to always remember that; and as far as we can, we will.

And funny you saying we are meant to be difficult, and frankly that is; I feel that as well, you are right, you are there to challenge us, and to push us and to push us and to drive us, because that is what matters to women and girls out there, so I have no problem with that whatsoever. The real challenge is how do you, as I am always saying to the Government, move those long words into actions, and I hope after today we can because, you know, what you were saying, Andrea, about accountability for me, maybe that is about funding and help, where it is and the fact that we started with the complex nature of the funding landscape and trying to work out who has got what and where it is; how can we move that forward, because I think accountability is incredibly important and it is too complex at the moment.

So, we have got a presentation from Gurpreet and Lucy on the Sexual Violence Triage which I came to, was it before the summer?

Lucy Hayton (Women and Girls Network): Yes.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime) (Co Chair): It was fantastic; very, very exciting, so I am looking forward to understanding how it has developed and how it is going and as an example of where partnerships can work and, you know, what can be done and learning what the lessons are from that.

Gurpreet Virdee (Women and Girls Network): So, a key objective of the Sexual Violence Survivors' Gateway is to pilot a new way of working with survivors. The framework aims to simplify access into Sexual Violence Services and from there, clear referral pathways to other provision including statutory services and other specialist provision and community based services. The over-arching objective of the model is improved outcomes for survivors and consistency in service and offer to survivors when accessing the Gateway and onward referral, a core principle being that seamless, collaborative working and a utilisation of a shared pool of skills and resources will ensure a better service and better outcomes for all survivors.

This new way of working in London aims to improve the current service offer by pooling skills and resources where possible, without dismantling current services and losing the independence and integrity of established best practice. So I have to say, you know, it was a really long process to have got to this year. I think it was about something so after the needs assessment, I think there was a further 18 months in the development of this model and it took a lot of negotiation, it took a lot of difficult conversations between the four Rape Crisis Centres, MOPAC, the Havens, lots of the partners that were involved in kind of getting us to where we are now, about whether it is possible for us all to work together. We all work around the same

issues, we have got our own approaches and actually, is it possible; is this going to work; are we going to lose or have to compromise our ethos? So, it was a long journey to get here and that time was really quite painful, but I am glad we have got here and it does feel that we are going in the right direction with this.

So, Lucy will tell you more in a little bit, but the Gateway obviously brings together four Rape Crisis Centres in London, so we are bringing together the four different regions across London that Rape Crisis is split over: we have got the Havens, we have got Survivors UK and Gallop. So, we have really developed quite a strong partnership and as I said, even though the resistance was there, actually already we are seeing the benefits of now having a much more fluid relationship with those partners. We are definitely sharing expertise and we are offering efficiencies across the board, bringing together four funding streams. So, this is funded through the Transformation Fund, also funded through MOPAC, NHS England and obviously Havens have also contributed to that. So, that in itself has been quite a unique feature of this. I am going to pass over to Lucy in terms of some of the details of the Gateway.

Lucy Hayton (Women and Girls Network): Yes, and I just echo what Gurpreet said about how positive an experience it has been, certainly at the operational level and how exciting it is for the future of sexual violence provision in London. I am just going to mention a couple of things in terms of the benefits as we see them.

The Gateway offers us the opportunity to really map need and demand across the capital in a way that does not mean that we have to create one homogenous service; we can map it across agencies and continue to retain those specialist agencies and ways of working. What is really exciting from our perspective as well, and innovative about this approach, is that often when survivors disclose, we automatically go into crisis response and we think about A&E, we think about police and forensics, and of course those things are important. But what we also know is that sexual violence is usually disclosed many months or years later, and that survivors are not actually looking necessarily for a crisis response, but for their options for their choices for some control and for recovery, and that is what they come to us asking for.

That is what we focus on in the voluntary sector and now, through this new triage process and our close collaboration with the Havens, we are actually able to put that recovery model right at the forefront, and that is working really, really well and giving women, and all survivors, their options and choices instead of just putting them into the path of crisis response. So, that has been really, really positive.

And we are working together really well to find solutions for individuals, so when we have got a tricky issue, we talk, we speak, we try to find the best way forward. And through this new, improved process with the Gateway, we actually believe we are going to increase referral rates across multiple agencies. So, we have really tried to think about, what do referrers, what do survivors need in terms of what is going to make it easy for them. And by improving it in that process, we think we can do it across all our partners.

And that means that we think there are really good possibilities for easier outreach and greater awareness raising of support across London because instead of having to say, you go here for this service and here for that service, actually everybody can say, let us focus on the best practice response, how do you respond to survivors appropriately, and then you simply fill in a

form, or you simply pass on this telephone number. So, that uniform entry point, we think, has great possibilities pan London.

As Gurpreet said, we are sharing expertise, we have done lots of joint training, learning from each other, boosting our expertise and understanding of sexual violence and how to respond better, and that means we are identifying common issues, and themes that we are seeing in our services and thinking about solutions; what data do we need to collect, how can we start to raise this issue and make some noise about this, and it helps us to think strategically actually, which has been brilliant.

Also, we are able to contact survivors very quickly and within that kind of window of help seeking that we know that exists. So, often with long waiting lists, survivors will say, actually I need to move on with my life, or I'm going to withdraw from the process, but by working together and creating this triage system, we are able to get in there and say, this is what support is available to you, this is what you can expect; and there are multiple offers because it is increasing the opportunities. It is no longer just that they will go through the Havens, but they will know about the Gateway and there will be multiple contacts to increase the chances of engagement in services over the long run.

There are some challenges, which I think we have covered already, but certainly this does not necessarily we still, as we have said, have historic underfunding around sexual violence, and we are seeing an increase in demand at the same time, and this does not necessarily uplift existing services. We have got an additional ISVA in each agency, which is great, and they are focussed on complex, what we would term 'complex' needs, or multiple disadvantaged or chronic disempowerment, and providing some insight for us around how we can work more effectively within the ISVA model for those survivors. But really, there is no significant uplift for additional counselling services, so we anticipate that that will put additional pressure as we improve access.

So, that does mean that we already telling survivors that there are no services; that is a regular conversation that we have to have, and we have worked quite hard to find the best and safest way to do that and to think of possible solutions, but it is challenging. And we see, as we have said, restricted service criteria for some agencies who, understandably, have to put in some limitations, so particular around higher risk needs, high suicide ideation, domestic violence, child protection risks, for example. That means that it is even harder to get some survivors into services.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime) (Co Chair): Sorry, could you just explain that little bit please; you say, "High risk not accepted"?

Lucy Hayton (Women and Girls Network): So, some counselling services would not accept somebody if they had had significant suicide ideation, for example. So, they limit their services and what their service would have.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime) (Co Chair): And you have, through this triage, this Gateway, you do not have other places to refer them to?

Lucy Hayton (Women and Girls Network): We will certainly try, but we also have other limitations based on boroughs, or what other services are able to hold. At the moment, we have closed waiting lists in West, North and South London for some counselling and ISVA services. So, those are regular conversations we have to have at the moment. But we try to be innovative where we can and look for other provision, but it can be challenging. And it ends in 2020, so it is fast coming upon us.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime) (Co Chair): We hope it does not end in 2020.

Gurpreet Virdee (Women and Girls Network): Yes, just in terms of adding on to what Lucy's just said, so I think we always predicted that even with the Gateway model and with kind of all of the intentions around being able to triage, being able to refer onward to other services, we kind of expected that waiting lists were often going to be quite high, and that demand was going to be high and that actually, we would often kind of still have to deal with a little bit of a bottleneck, if you like, of onward referral. So, I guess for us, at the moment now, we have started to do this already, once we have now obviously drawn down this funding, and obviously it ends in 2020, but we are already looking for other funds so that actually, we can start to kind of go, OK where else is it needed, and ultimately for us, things like the counselling. If we can start to reduce those waiting lists and we can kind of throughput better, we do think that the Gateway can work, and we are really on board, as much as we resisted this model, we are really, really on board with making sure that it is a success. But in order for it to be a success, all of these services over here need to have increased capacity and ultimately, increased funding.

I mean, we tried to think about other approaches of other ways of working or, you know, without additional resources, what can we do, but ultimately it does come down to funding and it does come down to resources. So, NHS England has recently put out a Sexual Violence Fund; we have applied for that specifically for the Gateway, and we are looking at other sources of funding as well. But, until we can resource adequately the onward referrals, the Gateway's success will be limited. So, we hope that the pooling of resources that have got it to this point will kind of continue, but also that there will be opportunities to expand that and to look at actually, you know, really the need and demand that is coming through that Gateway. We are working with the Evidence and Insight Team here at MOPAC to really have some robust data that can be used to kind of evidence the work that is being done, both in terms of outcomes, outputs, so ...

Lucy Hayton (Women and Girls Network): I think it would be maybe good to say, but as an interim measure, the Gateway is a really positive one, and maybe I can just show you through just, you know, a very brief case study which is somebody coming through, reports child sexual abuse to the police, and has years of self harm, suicide attempts and never access to support previously; the officer makes an online referral to the Gateway, but there are no services available for that survivor. So previously, what would happen is the police might refer on a lengthy word document; that would be emailed to the service, they might get back within several days and say, sorry we are closed, and that would be the end of the contact.

Whereas now, what we are able to do is we are able to contact quite quickly, discuss the types of support available, even if they are not available right now, but give hope and possibility for that survivor; we are able to provide a trauma informed response, validate her feelings; provide

that response that we know works; and to take a risk assessment. So in this case, the police said that there was no risk, but actually when we spoke to her, there were lots of past suicide ideation attempts and self harm; we are able to safety plan around that, talk about her options, existing health needs; we are able to talk about the Criminal Justice issues and provide her with some kind of self advocacy resources and collect feedback, which is something that we are also doing, is working with the police to provide them with the feedback that survivors give us around their experiences.

And then we provide helplines, lots of different types of helplines, talk through what that means, how to access, what they can do. And then we provide self help resources, so for her it was particularly around self harm, and agree that she would call back in January to see if services had reopened, and once she does, we will have that information and we can make that referral really, really quickly. I don't know if she will and I don't know if that is still a barrier; maybe she will never respond and never call back, but I hope that we have increased the possibility that she might and given her an insight into what a specialist support does look like and how it can be positive. So, it is challenging, but I still really do believe that the model is better than what we had before.

Joan Smith (VAWG Board) (Co Chair): Thank you. This is a specific question for the local authorities, so for Jade and Yolanda. So, how can we use what we have just heard at a regional level to streamline commissioning of VAWG provision, and what challenges need to be overcome to enable a coordinated and sustainable approach to funding VAWG provision, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and harmful practices?

Yolanda Burgess (London Councils): Do you want to go first?

Jade Holvey (Lambeth Council): Yes, OK. So, when you showed the picture around funding, it is immense, isn't it? There are lots of different funding streams and I think what you said about different timelines, different priorities, different outcomes, different funders, is all a challenge. It is not only a challenge to us around how we best use our resource, but it is also a challenge for the British Crime Survey (BCS) around how they access that resource, because they spend a lot of time bidding in for various pots of funding, all asking for something in a slightly different way, and that is not the best way to do this. I think we need to have a look at how we commission, across London and from a local authority perspective, and how we do that in partnership.

So, it is not about the commissioner/provider relationship, it is about an alliance. You know, we know what works, like you said, we have been developing and delivering what works, so how do we build on that, rather than look for what is new and the innovation. Some of the basics are not there and there are real concerns around not having enough capacity to deal with sexual violence and the demand coming through the rape crisis centres. So, what do we do about that before we look at, you know, what is new?

So, it is about pooling resources, it is like what you have done here via this, you know, what are the strategic priorities in London, what are the key issues, the key demands, the key needs that you are identifying through all of this evidence and insight, and then where are we going to put our money together. And I think that is not only MOPAC, but I think that is also central Government and local Government. How can we do this together; that is absolutely crucial?

We are under massive pressure from a local authority perspective in relation to our funding, as are other local authorities. We don't have as much money, we need to get better value out of that and better use and do that together.

So I think it is about co commissioning, pooling resources, set outcomes and priorities, and doing it together, but also looking at what the gaps are. So, not putting in additional resource to what we already have in London. So for example, we have a decent response to domestic violence, so where are the gaps? For me, it is around sexual violence, it is around refuge funding, communications and campaigns, but also around tackling perpetrators, and maybe we will talk about the Violence Reduction Unit, because I think that is probably quite a good opportunity in which to do that. So, it is really about engaging everyone who has a vested interest in this and thinking about what funding they can add and really having local authorities as central to that.

So, in relation to sexual violence, you know, we have got an integrated VAWG service in Lambeth, we have had that since 2011. It is called the Gaia Centre, and we see a significant amount of referrals coming through that. The capacity, the demand is huge, but we still need more. Sexual violence is a bit of a gap for us; we have looked at the data, it is increasing in Lambeth, historic and current sexual violence, so as a commissioner, it is important that I look at what else is happening in London. So, rather than investing in a new service in Lambeth, what can I do on a London perspective, so can we engage in what you have, can we add capacity, can we invest, can local authorities be part of that funding response, I think, is actually really, really critical?

Joan Smith (VAWG Board) (Co Chair): Yolanda?

Yolanda Burgess (London Councils): Yes, I am thinking about the work that London Councils do with our local authorities when we put our priority to in the current grant funding programme, where we added in a specialist layer. I would like to say that everything you have said this morning has been replicated by conversations I have had as a commissioner with our networks, you are involved in those networks, in terms of seeing huge increases in complexity; that is the main one. The fact that as commissioners, I think we need to be a bit clearer about when we use the word 'innovation'. There is simply, in terms of capacity, we need more of and it can be difficult as commissioners to say we want to buy more of the same, because other people are asking us to spend our money creatively and innovatively and as commissioners, I think we need to perhaps push back a little on that.

But where I think there may be some creative and innovative space to help with filling those gaps is, your comments about partnership, I think, were very well made. We all have to work in partnerships and we know that that can be difficult at times. So, perhaps one of the things that we need to challenge ourselves as commissioners on is how do we create some headroom in funding to pay for the glue for those partnerships? And some of that glue has to take account of the fact that there is a lot of resource and energy put into those partnerships, but if they work, well you have already described where they work, it really works to the benefit of the participant, the person who needs that support. So I think that is some space as commissioners we really need to think about, and we need to come to talk to you and ask you about it.

I am looking at your network in terms of the triage pilot, I am thinking about my networks that we fund, I am thinking about some of the work that we currently do with MOPAC that actually supports those networks as well, and there are very, very few organisations currently outside of those networks that are not funded. And how do we actually build on keeping those networks alive, keeping those organisations in a place where they are actually fit to respond in a way that meets our procurement requirements? I think it can be done, we just need to think it through better. I know that some of us get very anxious about how we procure, the fact that it needs to be open and competitive, etc, but there are different ways of doing this. I think with combinations, we need to come and talk to you definitely.

I will rephrase that: we need to listen to you and to hear you, OK, stop using the words 'creative' and 'innovative' where we do not need to, but then make some space about where genuinely do we need to be creative, and is that creative about partnerships; is that creative, for example, when I talk to Jade and her colleagues in terms of the VAWG network around the fact that we know that you commission upwards of £1 million a shot across each local authority. That is a lot of money. That is attached to a £15 million programme with London Councils, £20 million of support from MOPAC, how do you for example, if we need more of the same, and you are about to commission, tap into a network that is already delivering, and how can we help you do that?

If this was easy, we would have done it by now, so let us not kick ourselves too hard, OK, but I think we actually need to create some space to have some of those conversations and recognise that some of it is going to be difficult, but actually let us try some different things, not in an innovative and creative way, let us just try some different things and look at how we can be a bit more comfortable saying, actually we do need more of the same.

Joan Smith (VAWG Board) (Co Chair): Last week, there were some new figures about prevalence of FGM and the number of cases; I don't know if either of you wants to say anything about a coordinated approach across London to provision for FGM survivors?

Yolanda Burgess (London Councils): Well, I know that we are starting to look at some of that at London Councils. I know obviously the boroughs are looking at that very carefully. This might sound a very odd thing to say, but particularly as we are talking about having a much more strategic and pan London approach, for me, where we need to think slightly outside of the box is, how do we include other things that are happening around us? So for example, we know that the Government has just finished a consultation on compulsory sex and relationship educations in school. What would compulsory sex and relationship education in London look like in terms of helping us with the problems we are talking about today? So, how do we incorporate all of those things?

So when we are having a discussion about FGM, violence against women and girls, forced marriage, etc, how do we include that? Let us regionally have a conversation with our schools that it simply being a central Government coordinated consultation about a piece of curriculum at school. Jade?

Jade Holvey (Lambeth Council): Just picking up on FGM, so when we first commissioned the Gaia Centre, which is our one stop I am not going to call it a one stop (inaudible) it is a community based response to tackling and dealing with violence against women and girls in

London. So, it is the one route in, a bit like your Gateway. We put FGM into that and, I guess we expected that that provider would be able to deliver that on our behalf, but actually our learning is that actually they were not the right provider to do that because they were not the specialist provider. And actually, for things like FGM, it is really important to have it rooted in the community and specialist BAME providers delivering that on our behalf.

So, we had to rethink what we were doing and say we are not going to route it through this anymore. It is part of the wider alliance, which is really important, part of the bigger picture, but you know, for different areas of VAWG, different responses are needed, so one response will not fit all. And I think that is really important when we are commissioning that there is not one model, you know; there are lots of different models, but it is how we bring together the alliance, the partnership, to make it easier for people to access, but then root them into the best, the most specialist services that can respond to their needs. So, that is what we are doing in Lambeth from a local perspective.

Joan Smith (VAWG Board) (Co Chair): Hong, did you want to come in here?

Hong Tan (NHS England): Yes. I really value your experience and expertise and what you were saying about the need to support the current work as well, but I think also to think through, you know, you are saying demand is increasing, you know it is increasing, we need a longer term look, don't we? And it is great the work you and Jade are doing in terms of mapping that longer funding. But you know, what does it mean for us with so much demand?

You know, your waiting lists are getting longer, what does that mean; we know that early intervention really improves lifelong impact, doesn't it, and outcomes; we know that if people have to wait a year or more, then they will be in and out of a whole range of GP services, A&E and other services, which in the whole will be more costly for us. So, I think there is a narrative to be made about, well what does it mean if we do not do this over the next five years, what does it mean if we do do this across all of our agencies. And it is great that the council is helping with this.

I think also, something about how can we work with, I want to call them 'generic services' rather than specialist ones, but how do we work with broader I mean, it is great you are doing with education, but how do we work with broader social services, broader health provision, other voluntary sector organisations that may not be specialist; how can we get them to get everyone to work better in partnership so that they do consider your issues, do look at referral pathways, do say, this is what we can do, and work with us over the next five years as well; so how can we add value to what we have within the resources that we do have and that people know, hopefully know, improve the referral pathways better so survivors are not bouncing around the system, which we know re-traumatises when you have to retell your story over and over again?

I think in terms of FGM, you may know, the Department of Health and Social Care are funding a two year pilot, which is being led through London, NHS England London, to set up four clinics; two will be in London to provide support through midwives and onward referral as well. So, I can give you the details of them.

Joan Smith (VAWG Board) (Co Chair): Thank you. Marai?

Marai Larsi (IMKAAN): Can I say something really quickly about FGM? So, IMKAAN did a report for MOPAC seven years ago around this, the missing link – Joan, you will remember this and we spoke about the need to locate FGM in a broader VAWG agenda to think about issues like education, safeguarding, but the need for the community focus to respond, and also if the local authority is going, you know, I don't have a huge amount of FGM in my area, then thinking about pooling budgets. So basically, we were talking a model seven years ago, you know, in many ways, in ways that some of the Gateway kind of thinking has evolved. And I really encourage us to go back to some of that conversation, because actually there are some great ideas in that.

We know that generic support is not going to deliver effectively around FGM, because we know that women are not going to disclose. And also, while I appreciate the health based response in terms of the midwife response, there is something around the handholding, the support, the advocacy, etc, that is absolutely critical and for women to rebuild their lives; the thing that Gurpreet spoke about, recovery. That is not about a clinical health response that we need to make sure that we invest in.

Joan Smith (VAWG Board) (Co Chair): Thank you, that is very well made. Sophie?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime) (Co Chair): Sorry, very briefly, because we need to move on, I just want to ask Richard a question about, you know, you talked about lack of services for women and going through the Gateway, and we also know there is a lot of attrition in the Criminal Justice System, and I wondered whether you might just be able to advise, as part of this section, how we, you know, what it is that you can do to help survivors, where they want to actually get through the Criminal Justice System; it is linked to your thing about perpetrators as well?

Commander Richard Smith (Metropolitan Police Service): That is really interesting, and just to draw some of that together, it has been fascinating listening to the providers' perspectives on something that I have heard back from our Sexual Offence Investigative Technique (SOIT) officers and our investigators of domestic abuse and sexual assaults and abuse and rape. And what they have described is the other side of this, that very often we know there is a lot of attrition through the Criminal Justice Service; we have some people actually who are not seeking a crisis response from us either, but they are bringing reports to us. And the investigators in the SOIT hugely value advocacy for the complainants and victims and survivors that come to us, but are finding the same thing, so waiting lists being closed more frequently; they talk particularly about specialist advocates for complex needs of whatever type that are even more difficult to access; and on the domestic abuse side, particularly with high risk where demand is having to be managed by the advocates, who will make a certain number of attempts to contact a woman who has been referred and then will make no further attempts because they will be moving on to the next case.

All of this causes them the same concern and they would love to see more capacity and particularly, that specialist capacity to help where attrition is meaning we are not going to be going through Criminal Justice Service or system necessarily, but also even when we are. And the other thing they mention is where prevalence is staying constant, we are having more reports into our system, but within those reports is quite a substantial number of survivors who the investigator, or SOIT, will recommend advocacy to, but they do not wish to be referred, and

they are asking for us not to share details. So, there is still unmet demand that we know of that we are not yet referring in.

However, on the plus side, they were equally positive about where we have real partnerships in place, so the Rape Triage and Lighthouse, where we were this morning. And similar stories are coming out about that side there where a risk has not been made apparent to us for lots of reasons that we understand, but the officer in the case needs to, or would like to know that, to avoid re-traumatising or contacting at exactly the wrong time, particularly around suicide ideation. So both on the Gateway, we are seeing that now starting to happen, and also through Lighthouse. So it is absolutely critical that we do it.

And the other benefit, I think we heard from a service user this morning who was incredibly brave, but one of the things she talked about was just her resilience was really apparent when we saw her, despite what she had encountered. But she talked about having adults always available to her and how critical that had been in her recovery. And I think that is something that really reinforces the need to invest in this area, but my concern is how sustainable will that be, and we have to match the available provision to the fund. So, if there is suddenly a huge amount of funding in here, which we would love I am sure, is there a workforce that could be commissioned; are they available or are they not; and how do we make sure strategically that this is a career path that people can invest their time in training for with an expectation that they will be able to be employed in this sector, because that stability needs to be there to make funding worthwhile.

And on the long term, finally, from a policing perspective, a plea: it is absolutely right that survivors of these offences should be getting advocacy services to help them recover in the long term because of all the harm that follows and their life chances. But also, prevalence staying static means that we are not yet doing enough around prevention, and I think that that may be where, if we are going to talk about being creative, the Violence Reduction Unit could play a part, in both prevention in terms of perpetrator programmes, which we will need to look at, and I think also early help, early intervention, that recognition of adverse childhood experience, which plays to this in two ways, both in terms of increased prevalence of offending in later life for lots of reasons that we can map out, but also increased vulnerability, because we know that perpetrators do target, disproportionately target, people who have complex needs, multiple vulnerabilities, many of which are rooted in childhood. So I think that early help, early intervention is somewhere we need to invest because, with the best will in the world, with prevalence staying static, all we are doing is continuing to service a beast that we have not managed to bring down.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime) (Co Chair): Anyone else want to contribute at this section around these issues? No? OK. Shall we just move on to what the national response is? We have got colleagues from the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) and the Home Office here, which is really helpful, and we have had that sort of overview of the funding landscape, and I also wanted to ask Hong from the NHS around how do you nationally, and from the London obviously as well, which I am interested in the most, ensure that in terms of priorities, you know, from a national perspective, that is going down to the local and that VAWG is being prioritised strategically across London by the NHS? Hong?

Hong Tan (NHS England): Shall I start? Great, thank you. As you know, in April this year, it took about two years of working with survivors and partners, we launched our Multi Agencies Across Government Sexual Assault and Abuse Strategy, which sets out six priorities around prevention, around safeguarding, around active engagement to survivors and around improving services, around improved quality standards, driving collaboration, reducing fragmentation and appropriate trained workforce.

In order to support delivery of this, which is very much about supporting survivors around recovery, around healing and rebuilding of lives, this is a five year Strategy. I think recognition that we have done quite a bit and partners are doing important work, but there is still so much more to do. We have developed a costimate partnership board, which Catherine and other partners are part of, which will oversee the delivery of this Strategy and escalate as needs be. And in terms of the additional pressures, as a starting point, we have got agreement from our commissioned committee in NHS England for an additional £4 million per year. Now, that is national, but this year, £750,000 went to each region; so London got £750,000 to support delivery of the Strategy, and that is recurrent to 2020/2021. So, next year there will be another £4 million that is new, and the final year, another £4 million.

We have put in submissions for the ten year funding round in the comprehensive spending review to support the ongoing work around the Strategy, and we hope to hear in the next month or so the outcome of that. But I think for me, the importance is, in many ways, the Strategy outlines and builds on current good practice. So, in the six areas that I outlined, often a reflection of mine is, you know, safeguarding is not new; it is everyone's business, we are already engaged in work around safeguarding. The prevention agenda is there and we are doing areas of work around that. I think it is thinking of how do we do that, how far and what is happening, who is doing what, how can we support each other and add value so we do not need to replicate and look at the better use of resources on those areas.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime) (Co Chair): OK. I am just interested in what you said around the funding, although sorry, it is not your fault, but a small amount, and it is just an issue of the division of that funding across the country, is it not, and whether it is reflective, in any way it can, of the actual demand and need; I am just interested, it sounded like it had just been divided up into ten, or however many different regions there are, whereas as with victim services, that does not work for London, because of the immense demand?

So I would just be, just really briefly, interested in how you ensure that not just around how you deliver the Strategy into London, but actually how you also ensure that in terms of funding, that it is reflective, as far as it can be, in terms of demand, in terms of proportion; and that is a question for the MOJ and the Home Office as well, as you know, as we have had many conversations, Catherine. So just really briefly, and then if we could go onto Catherine and Krisztina around that as well, that would be helpful.

Hong Tan (NHS England): Yes, and obviously I know London from my previous role and a clear advocate in terms of the complexity, but also the larger range of needs in London. In terms of our commissioning work through the local commissioners, and so the process involved getting for them collating the bids for the funding, I think this year we did invest in one area, because it carried out a review with recommendations

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime) (Co Chair): Sorry to interrupt. I was really talking about how nationally, funding is divided up into local regions, taking account of demand and need, because if you just equally share between the regions, London will lose out because of the demand and complexity in London; that is what I was really asking, is understanding from a national level how that funding, or asking in future, that that is taken into account, and victim services, we lost out, we often lose out in those services?

Hong Tan (NHS England): And I think there is a recognition of that in terms of overall, the NHS funding around sexual violence for London is more than other regions, if you include the Havens and other services that we do fund. I think this year, because of a whole range of finance issues and getting the money out, there was an agreement that we would divide it amongst the four regions, which has challenges as well as opportunities. But we have another two year funding round, and we have asked local commissioners to start now looking at what needs to happen actually to meet the demands, which we will consider in the next month or so.

Joan Smith (VAWG Board) (Co Chair): I was just going to ask Hong how this works at local level? I mean, you obviously have a very comprehensive grasp of the subject; at local level in London, are people engaged with this agenda around sexual violence and domestic violence?

Hong Tan (NHS England): Obviously, we work through our regional commissioners. So, Chloe Collins, who is the Lead Health and Justice Commissioner for London, would be making those relationships and partnerships. I know, for example, around the work with Child House, that London, having 42 local authorities and Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and that may change next year with restructuring, but I think it was important to have the coordinated approach across London, hence a few years ago, we commissioned, jointly with MOPAC, a coordinated health needs assessment to advise on ways forward around child sexual abuse. So, I think in terms of working with local authorities, it would be through our regional commissioners and working with their partnerships.

Catherine Hinwood (Ministry of Justice): Well, I was just going to add, Hong, there was a really fantastic launch event that your team held a couple of weeks ago for national, local, regional partners to really try to understand the Strategy and ask questions, develop ideas for how implementation could be best brought forward. So, I know there was a real desire to try to look at all levels and how we could bring them together to reinvent the first principles.

Hong Tan (NHS England): Thank you, Catherine. And I think for me, that is a real recognition that it cannot be done at only local level, it has got to be regional and national, all having their key roles and linking up in terms of the impact for survivors.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime) (Co Chair): So, Catherine and Krisztina, it would be really helpful if you could just outline your thinking around where you are going with funding and how that will be put down to the regions, or if there is actually an element where this could be devolved in terms of budget. We talked about regional commissioning and understanding; from our point of view, we think that is best done regionally, as we have had many conversations about, but also, I was just interested in what Yolanda said around, you know, being interested in funding the glue; how do you get that into commissioning? Catherine?

Catherine Hinwood (Ministry of Justice): So, the first thing I wanted to say was that I absolutely recognise that a lot of the work in this space has been done in silos for way too long, and one of the things that I have noticed has changed the most, within the two years that I have been in this role, is the way that we work in partnership across Government and with bodies like the NHS and also, with partners like MOPAC now to try to get better results. So, this year we published the first ever Cross Government Victim Strategy, which a very dog eared copy I have here, which brought together government departments and bodies like the NHS, and colleagues across Police and Crime Commissions (PCCs) in particular, to try to come up with a strategy that is holistic, that means that we are not working in silos and that we are doing all we can to have a joined up, end to end approach for supporting victims.

So, there is a specific chapter that looks at support available to victims, and the first commitment in there is to increase the availability of services through more joined up and sustainable funding. So, we absolutely recognise that there is no way, particularly in the current financial climate, that we can address demand and do better unless we join up properly. So, the map that you put up earlier about funding pots was no surprise to me, because my team spent a year looking in particular at the landscape for sexual violence support services, and I actually think it is more complicated than you put on here, which is why I am very happy for the team to help you to bring that out.

There are a number of separate commitments in the Victim Strategy that look at different parts of the VAWG picture, and I think Kris will probably pick up some specific stuff around domestic abuse, but one of the key commitments that we put in there was to improve support for victims of sexual violence, so I wanted to focus on a little bit on that in particular. But before we leave that, I thought it might be helpful to try to talk about where all the funding pots are; if I had a wipe board, I think I would go into a slightly different scribble as to what all of this looks like.

So, you have got national funding, and what national funding looks like at the moment is you have got specific victim services funding, and then you have got funding that comes from local authorities – from MHCLG to local authorities, and different other pots that come from government departments to local, regional partners. You have got the NHS funding, but when you look at funding specifically for victim services, you have got some nationally provided pots. So, you have got the refuge funding, that comes from MHCLG; you have got funding which goes to police and crime commissioners, that is specifically for victim services and there is a core element there that is ring fenced for the provision of support for victims of child sexual abuse; and then you have got some national funding that complements that kind of local and regional funding.

And as you have said, that national funding falls into two provisions: you have got the funding of core services and the funding of innovation transformation. Now, I and our ministers, my team, Government, have really heard what has been said recently, in particular around the funding of core services and the funding of transformation projects. And recently, there was a fantastic All Party Parliamentary Groups (APPG) meeting that Rape Crisis helped organise, that myself and Dame Vera Baird and NOMS Director, Kate Davies, spoke at around what we are doing to try to better join up around funding, but also to listen to what the sector is saying about funding and how we can respond more effectively to that.

So, my budget covers core services. So, from my budget, Minister Argar, my Victims Minister, recently announced that he was providing an uplift of 10% for core services, as of next year an uplift of 30% for London in recognition that as you have clearly demonstrated today, there is a specific serious problem here in relation to demand. We launched recently a competition for sexual violence services on a three year basis and again, that was in recognition that we heard what you said about the lack of sustainability for funding, so we hope very much that that will go some way to providing some certainty in the sector around sexual violence in particular.

One thing we are doing in London and four other areas, we are providing our national service budget to the Police and Crime Commissioner, so we are taking one person out of that complex funding equation, so there will be no more national core service funding in those areas. So, you have already got a fabulous model here in terms of the triage project, which is funded through a transformation fund, so I hope that some of our core service funding can be used to supplement that. I came from a meeting this morning with Elise, my head of team, who is here, talking about what we want from the three years where we are providing PCCs with ring fenced funding for sexual violence services. And what we really want is what you have started to do here, but we want a little bit more as well.

So, we want better join up with CCGs, so we are working in partnership with Hong and his team to see what we can do in that space to ensure that that is an outcome of the three year period, where we are looking at how, after this round of competition, Phase 2, we are calling it, of this delivery model for support services for victims of crime, particularly in the Sexual Violence/Domestic Abuse (SV/DA) space, how that might look in the future. So, one thing is around CCGs and NHS join-up.

The other is looking at complex needs across the board, so yesterday met with MHCLG colleagues to talk about what they are doing in the refuge funding space and how we can bring that in to what we are looking at in the sexual violence, I'm calling it, the 'Pilot'; you have got the money, it is a pilot in our sense as to what the right model should be locally and nationally. And the other thing that we are trying to bring into consideration of how this funding model might work is how we support female offenders, and we have not spoken about that yet. But the real link between women's centres and the funding that they receive, and the pathways in and out of support for the many female offenders we know who are also victims of domestic abuse and sexual abuse.

So, as we start to develop the framework for this new model of support services, we very much want to involve you; I know that we have at a high level over the past few weeks, very much working in partnership with MOPAC as to what this could look like to really transform services in London.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime) (Co Chair): Could I just say briefly, otherwise we will run out of time and we will not hear from the Home Office?

Catherine Hinwood (Ministry of Justice): Two things: accountability is one of the key principles that we have put into the draft framework so far and I think you are absolutely spot on to raise that as an issue, so really want to look at that; and Sophie, I think your challenge around looking at population based formula, which we have at the moment for the provision of victim services, absolutely right, that is how you receive your core victim funding grant. We

looked at the sexual violence services in particular and said, you have such an issue with demand, we need to give you a bit extra, but as you know, we have committed to look at the funding formula in the work on this new delivery model for support services, which is one of the commitments under the Victim Strategy.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime) (Co Chair): Thank you.

Krisztina Katona (Home Office): I will be brief. So, as you know, we have got the VAWG Transformation Fund, which has been funding, and I was really pleased to hear the results of that. If you could share the work that you are doing, that would be really helpful, because one of the things we are really interested in is exactly what you are talking about; building the glue and building capacity, because I think for us, that is really important. And I think, for that particular fund, that is really helpful.

I think for us as well, one of the things we are interested in as well, with the kind of domestic abuse funds, so the £20 million of funding, which we will announce some more of shortly, is also looking at rather than necessarily at looking at kind of particular regional areas, whereas there are kind of national needs. So obviously, we are funding helplines, but also from our consultation, there was very specific need about, for example, kind of disabled victims and sort of BAME and things like that. So, rather than funding tiny pots across the country for particular things, actually supporting one supporting the organisations that already do that well; so that is what we are really interested in at the moment for the domestic abuse fund.

The other thing for the VAWG funding is we really want to evaluate how this is working. I mean, we are about halfway through, so one of our key aspects at the moment is, how is it working and, you know, we will come and talk to you and talk to all of the projects and talk to all of our stakeholders about what have we learnt from those projects and what have we learnt about how that funding works and what we can do better next time. So again, your conversations about, you know, regional funding in terms of London, all of those things will come into play.

I think finally, I mean we have hinted at this already, we are already having conversations about how we can make the funding work better and make it less burdensome for people to apply for stuff because, you know, it does not make sense that you have to spend so much of your time filling out these massive forms that we like to send you, but also how can we kind of get a bit of forced multiplier from the work that we are doing and really make sure that rather than kind of ending up with things like, oh you are funding that, oh I am funding that as well, or there is a gap here, that we kind of harmonise that a bit. So, those conversations are definitely ongoing.

I think actually the other thing that is really interesting for us is that, I mean, you have said this before, local commissioning, local commissioners know their populations and they know their needs, so that is something that we are very proud of and I think it will be really important to continue that and work with you on it. I have an email from MHCLG as well, because there was request. So, I am literally reading this out, so if you ask any questions, I am just going to look slightly blank. So, they said that they had been talking to you about sort of the combination of services provision

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime) (Co Chair): That was Jain.

Jain Lemom (MOPAC) (Audience Member): Hello.

Krisztina Katona (Home Office): Oh, OK, hello. Shall I just hand you the email; that might be easier? So, what they were saying was, yes, they said they had spoken to you about it and I think you were worried about that you would have preferred a jointly led commissioning model, because I think that PCCs at the moment are supporting the idea that local authorities should lead on commissioning and you were more interested in a sort of joint commissioning model.

Jain Lemom (MOPAC) (Audience Member): So, in London, the local authorities actually use Greater London Authority (GLA), and so it is not the local authority. So, we were concerned that in terms of this pot of money, that we would have MOPAC as a PCC working alongside GLA Housing, so that would become the commissioner; that is what

Krisztina Katona (Home Office): Yes, and that is the model that you would like or the model that

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime) (Co Chair): Shall we do you want to

Krisztina Katona (Home Office): Shall we take it offline?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime) (Co Chair): Yes, I think it would be helpful to have that in five minutes' time, not on the

Krisztina Katona (Home Office): Why don't we do that? It was simply because I was asked to sort of come with that

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime) (Co Chair): No, no, that is really helpful, thank you very much. We have reached the end and run out of time, but thank you very much for coming. I am really interested in taking forward this issue around funding and the funding model and the challenges around it and how we can look at that much better regionally, and join up what we know regionally, what local authorities and boroughs know locally, as part of that conversation, because if we do that together, it is going to be far more efficient and much better.

And also thinking about the processes, that how can we join together, not just Government, but we can as well to make it as easy as possible. It will always be complex, but we may be able to simplify it a bit, but there will still be different funding streams, models and processes that we are doing, and I am sure that might be something we could do with London Councils as well, because if you get that right, that is going to be a massive plus for organisations that are having to bid for the funding, not least ourselves.

Just a couple of other things that I thought have come out of today: somebody mentioned workforce; sorry, I did not write down whose name it was? You did? I am just not sure how big an issue that is and whether we need to big issue?

Marai Larsi (IMKAAN): Big issue.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime) (Co Chair): We need to think about that and what we can do about that regionally from City Hall then, alongside boroughs, and what that might look like, because if we can think about that and do some more thinking and come back on that, that would be really fabulous.

Gurpreet Virdee (Women and Girls Network): I think we would echo those comments, but also something about parity across sectors of salaries has been a real challenge for us recently.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime) (Co Chair): Right, that might be a bit more difficult.

Marai Larsi (IMKAAN): Well, something about the fact that it is mainly women doing this work, on low pay, right, and that is an equality issue in and of itself, right, and how we lose that expertise.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime) (Co Chair): OK, really happy to have a look at the workforce element then, including that parity and equality of pay. I will come back to the national picture around funding, because we have clearly heard the difference between demand and need and funding and services and what that is doing for survivors and what that is doing for attrition rates, whether that's criminal justice system or lots of other reasons, this attrition, and we are looking at that; the Victims' Commissioner has done a very good review of rape which will be coming out shortly, around attrition, around that.

And I know a couple of people, yourself Jade, and yourself Richard, talked about the Violence Reduction Unit. It is an ongoing. We are setting up the Violence Reduction Unit at the moment. I am really happy to convene a different meeting to talk to you and talk to yourselves about what that means for the VAWG sector, the VAWG services, because I am clear the scope should have domestic violence and sexual violence within it, but how does that remain within the framework of VAWG, is the key issue. I am really happy we should have a conversation and discussion around that.

Jade Holvey (Lambeth Council): I think that is really important, because it is about serious violence, isn't it, and we need to keep it there, you know. People lose their lives as a result of domestic violence regularly in London and we need to increase the narrative, we need to talk about it, you know, in a way that we are talking about serious youth violence, and I do not think it should get lost within that; both are so important, but holding it under the Violence Reduction Unit, I think, is a really good start around tackling those serial perpetrators, who will continue.

Joan Smith (VAWG Board) (Co Chair): Yes, and I think, Sophie, you said at the beginning that we are dealing with an epidemic of violence in London and I think it is really, really important to recognise that and keep reminding people of that, and that we have very special circumstances and very high levels, particularly of sexual violence in London. So I think it is really good to bring all of this together and talk about how we deal with that demand.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime) (Co Chair): Great. Thank you very much, thank you.