



MAYOR OF LONDON

A Safer City for Women and Girls

THE LONDON TACKLING VIOLENCE AGAINST
WOMEN AND GIRLS STRATEGY 2018-2021

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Foreword - Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London

I am a proud feminist, and I am determined to use my time as Mayor to do everything I can to make London the best city in the world for women and girls – a beacon of freedom, equality and safety. As we mark the 100-year anniversary of the 1918 Representation of the People Act, when some women were allowed to vote for the first time following the determined campaigning of suffragists and suffragettes, this is the time to carry on their legacy and redouble our efforts to improve life for women and girls in London.

Tackling violence against women and girls (VAWG) is one of the most important issues facing our city. It would be easy for me to say that, relatively speaking, London is one of the world's safest cities for women and girls. That is true. But relatively safe is not good enough. It is not good enough for the tens of thousands of women and girls who experience abuse and violence in our city each year. It is not good enough for those for whom harassment and unwanted attention is an expected part of daily life. It is not good enough for girls who will have their lives blighted by the horror of genital mutilation or other harmful practices. It is not good enough for parents – myself included – who worry about the safety of their daughters growing up in London.

The extent and severity of harm caused to women and girls in London is the reason I made this issue one of the key priorities in my Police and Crime Plan, and why this strategy focuses exclusively on issues affecting women and girls.

That is not to say that men and boys do not similarly experience these types of abuse and violence, and we recognise their specific needs both in the Police and Crime Plan and in the services we commission. However, it is clear that women and girls are so disproportionately affected by these offences that a specific strategy is needed to address them.

This strategy begins with an honest and unflinching assessment of the nature and extent of violence against women and girls in London. On average, 11 women and girls are raped or sexually assaulted in each of the 32 boroughs in this city every week. Domestic abuse accounts for a tenth of all crime reports to the Met. In a recent survey of 8,000 Londoners on policing and crime, 74 per cent of female respondents told us they worried about their safety some or all of the time. This is totally unacceptable.

In this strategy, we go on to set out a comprehensive and focused package of measures to step up enforcement against the offenders behind these crimes and the work done to punish and rehabilitate them, reducing the risk they pose to society. Furthermore, we set out a new agenda for improving the service provided to victims of VAWG, ensuring that every woman and girl who needs support can access it, whether they have reported their crime or not, and at any stage in the criminal justice process.

As important as improving our work with offenders and victims is, we must also recognise and address the deeper causes of VAWG. Underlying these crimes is a persistent misogyny – conscious and unconscious.

“London is recognised globally as a city of rights and opportunities for women. That is a testament to the work and sacrifice of generations of Londoners, fighting to ensure that their daughters and granddaughters would grow up with a quality of life and opportunities to thrive that they never had.

“We owe it to generations past, present and future who have worked so hard and achieved so much for equality, to continue their work and make our city the greatest, safest in the world for women and girls.”

- Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London

This misogyny is exhibited all around us – through the objectification of women in the mass media; through commodification and exploitation of women in online pornography; through everyday harassment and cat-calling. These behaviours are not ok, and not enough has been done to call them out or provide a counter-narrative. In this strategy, we set out our plans to tackle this deep-rooted issue. This includes increasing the support to children and young people – teaching them about healthy relationships and respect for one another. It includes a renewed effort to challenge unacceptable and misogynistic behaviour whenever and wherever it is encountered. In addition, we commit to launch a new campaign to bring misogynistic beliefs and behaviours out into the light and to challenge how we think about women and how we behave towards them.

Throughout the strategy, we highlight the voices of survivors of abuse, bringing to life the impact of these crimes for women and girls in our city. Survivors have been central to the process of developing the document and our plan of action for the future. I am grateful to them for having the courage to speak about their experiences, and I am grateful to Claire Waxman, London's Victims' Commissioner, for her work leading this important consultation.

Through this strategy I will convene key partners including the police and other criminal justice agencies, Local Authorities and Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) colleagues to take action.

My role is to bring these partners together to ensure that collectively we can find solutions for London. We publish this document fully recognising the real pressure our public services are under in light of significant reductions to funding, a situation which is exacerbated as our city continues to grow whilst resources continue to decline.

To achieve our ambition of making London a safer city for every woman and girl at a time of such pressure on our public services, we must work together – as men and women, as politicians, as public services, as employers, as parents, as a society.

That's why, as we have developed this strategy, we have worked closely with many individuals and organisations to ensure that a wide range of voices and opinions are heard. I am grateful to all of those who have taken the time to contribute.

London is recognised globally as a city of rights and opportunities for women. That is a testament to the work and sacrifice of generations of Londoners, fighting to ensure that their daughters and granddaughters would grow up with a quality of life and opportunities to thrive that they never had.

We owe it to generations past, present and future who have worked so hard and achieved so much for equality, to continue their work and make our city the greatest, safest in the world for women and girls.

Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London



Foreword - Sophie Linden

Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime

The process of developing this strategy has been a long, intensive and often emotive one. VAWG is a huge issue, not just in terms of its volume and harm, but in how complex it is and how far its causes and impacts reverberate through our society.

That's why it was so important that we engaged so closely with all of our partners working to tackle VAWG, and vitally with women and girls who have themselves been the victims of VAWG in all its forms.

Over months of consultation activity, the response we received and the level of engagement from participants was truly revealing. The challenges are numerous and significant. We heard much about the appalling harm done to women, girls, families and communities every day in this city. We heard about failings at every stage of the justice process, or victims left without any support at all. We heard about the impact of years of Government cuts on all of the services and groups working hard in some of the most difficult circumstances imaginable to protect women and girls from serious harm.

But the consultation highlighted much more than the problems. What we heard from participants helped light the way towards new policies and initiatives that could make a real and noticeable difference. Above all, it demonstrated the level of energy and commitment across the city to make a positive difference, and to work together to do so. London is truly fortunate to have so many great people and organisations working to protect the vulnerable and make our city a better place for everyone. Everyone has a part to play and no one organisation can tackle this alone. It is everyone's responsibility – from community, to local government, other public sector bodies, City Hall and government. Together we will step up and drive the progress we need.

This strategy seeks to build on the momentum that gathered during the initial consultation, working with all of our partners to challenge the attitudes and behaviours behind VAWG at every turn; to ensure that more dangerous perpetrators are brought to justice for their crimes; and to provide support for all victims of VAWG, whoever or wherever they are in the city. The Mayor and I will do everything in our power to support that mission and make our city the safest in the world for women and girls.

Sophie Linden
Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document is the Mayor of London's strategy for delivering his vision of a safer London for women and girls, covering the period 2018-2021. It has been produced following an in-depth consultation with Londoners, the police and all the partner agencies involved in tackling VAWG, and, crucially, with survivors of violence against women and girls (VAWG).

Background

On average, 11 women and girls are raped or sexually assaulted in each of London's 32 boroughs every week. Domestic abuse accounts for a tenth of all crime reports to the Metropolitan Police. In a recent survey of 8,000 Londoners on policing and crime, 74 per cent of female respondents told us they worried about their safety some or all of the time.

This volume of offending – and the tremendous harm it causes – are of huge concern. For this reason, in his Police and Crime Plan for London, published in March 2017, Mayor Sadiq Khan made tackling VAWG a key priority.

VAWG offending takes many forms. Most will know and understand the physical manifestations of VAWG – violence, sexual assault or abuse. Yet it can also be manifested psychologically – through stalking, harassment and through coercive control. Often, victims experience more than one kind of VAWG.

Preventing violence against women and girls

Prevention of VAWG must be the first priority, and over the long-term, that can only be achieved by tackling the misogynistic attitudes and behaviours that can lead to these crimes.

Attitudes are shaped early in life, and it is vital that we support our children and young people to develop in a culture of respect for one another. Through the measures set out in this strategy, we will help schools to further embed healthy relationships and respect into the curriculum, and improve the support available where children and young people are exhibiting signs of vulnerability to offending or victimisation.

We send out a clear message that public spaces, workplaces and cyberspace should be safe for all. All too often, women face harassment on the street, at work or online – to the point that for many, harassment and abuse is seen as a normal part of everyday life. This kind of offending reduces the freedom of women and girls to live their lives as they want to. This is simply not compatible with our vision of London as a city of freedoms, opportunities and rights for all.

Tackling perpetrators

To keep women and girls safe, those who are committing violence against them must be dealt with robustly and effectively. However, we know that a comparatively small number of offenders ever come to the attention of services, with fewer still being brought to justice, and often the resulting legal outcome fails to finally resolve the problem. While the police identify a significant number of perpetrators each year, the majority of these perpetrators have previous convictions either for VAWG-related offences or broader criminality.

The relatively low level of offenders being brought to justice, and high reoffending rates show that more must be done to bring perpetrators before the courts and to use the justice service to put a stop to their behaviour. Moreover, if VAWG reporting rates are to increase, victims need to know that reports will be taken seriously, will be properly investigated, and that action will be taken against the perpetrator.

This activity must take four forms: work to secure convictions of offenders, work to address the behaviour of offenders, work to reduce repeat offences and work to ensure sanctions are meaningful and effective.

Protecting and supporting victims of VAWG

All too often, victims of VAWG are failed by the services that are supposed to ensure that justice is done and that they are properly supported to cope and recover. It is absolutely vital that the justice service improves how it protects and supports victims of VAWG at every stage in the justice process, ensuring that more perpetrators are punished; that all victims get access to the support services they need to cope and recover; and that victims feel able to report offences, with the confidence that the justice service is there to help them.

The needs of victims are at the heart of everything we do, and the Mayor has appointed London's first independent Victims' Commissioner, Claire Waxman, to champion the needs of victims of crime and ensure that effective services are in place to support them. The Mayor aims to help provide higher-quality services, which respond to the needs of victims, and secure a more positive experience for those who have contact with the criminal justice service.

Delivering this strategy

The police alone cannot deal with VAWG, and work is required from a broad partnership of agencies, communities and organisations to achieve our shared ambitions to prevent VAWG, tackle perpetrators and protect victims.

Many of these partners are under real pressure as a result of years of government funding cuts. By working together, we can ensure that the limited resources at London's disposal are used to the best possible effect.

OUR VISION

A SAFE CITY FOR EVERY WOMAN AND GIRL

Our vision is of a city where every woman and every girl can live in safety - where men and boys don't think violence against women and girls is acceptable and where women and girls don't feel it is inevitable.

Many VAWG offences are hidden from view - offending and abuse behind the closed doors of homes; within the powerful bonds of the family; victims ashamed to come forward and tell someone about what has happened to them; victims worried that they won't be taken seriously; victims afraid of losing their livelihoods and families if they report their abusers. For some victims, for whom violence and abuse has long been a part of their lives, they may not even recognise that what is happening to them is criminal or abusive.

The hidden nature of these crimes can mean perpetrators are not stopped and brought to justice and opportunities to prevent repeat offending are lost. It means victims suffer in silence, without accessing the vital support services in place to help them to cope, recover and move forward in life. Furthermore, it means services and policy-makers have to make decisions about how their resources are used based on a partial understanding of the true extent or nature of the needs of victims.

It is essential therefore, that we encourage more victims to come forward. In this strategy, we commit to actions to ensure that our police and criminal justice services are providing a high quality and victim-focused service from the first report to the sentencing outcome and post-sentence.

We also commit to actions to ensure that specialist support services are in place when and where victims need them, and that we as policy-makers and budget

holders are doing everything we can to better understand need and ensure that our resources are targeted as effectively as possible.

Other VAWG offences happen in plain sight. Women and girls harassed and abused on our streets, on our transport networks, in the workplace, in our pubs and clubs, on the internet. For all too many women and girls, this is seen as a fact of life and something to be put up with. But it isn't – it's totally unacceptable.

We must challenge the cultural acceptance of this kind of behaviour towards women and girls. It is plainly not right that any woman or girl in this city should feel afraid for their safety. It is not right that women and girls should have to change how they live their lives to protect themselves.

In this strategy, we set out our commitments: to challenge the cultural norms which give some men the belief that it is acceptable to attack, abuse, harass and degrade women; to ensure that more of the perpetrators of these crimes are brought to justice, sending out a message that this kind of behavior will not be tolerated and will have serious consequences; to strengthen our work to educate boys, encouraging a culture of respect towards women and girls and a better understanding of their rights; and to improve and innovate in our interventions with the most serious perpetrators, in order to address their behaviour and its root causes.

To create a society that is truly free of VAWG, we must go even further than this. The underlying cause of many VAWG incidents is societal attitudes towards women and girls, and although much progress has been made, there remains a long way to go in this area.

We at City Hall, along with other public sector partners – particularly those within the criminal justice service – have a responsibility to exemplify and uphold the standards of conduct towards women and girls that we expect in society. It is our role to continually share learning and evidence, to lobby for legislative changes, to influence the political and social landscape, to represent the communities we serve and to speak out about and combat everyday sexism and misogyny.

The overarching aim of our work to protect and support victims and to punish and rehabilitate offenders is to prevent harm from occurring and to prevent further harm if it has occurred. We will never truly tackle VAWG until everyone understands what behaviours and attitudes are acceptable – in public and in private. This strategy, and the Mayor's wider work, is therefore committed to not just preventing VAWG and tackling perpetrators but to help change the attitudes and behaviours that have all too often come to normalise many forms of violence against women and girls.

These are complex issues, ones that will require concerted effort over generations to truly resolve. So much good work has already been done in London by many people and organisations to advance the cause of women's safety. In this strategy, we set out a focused plan of partnership action to ensure that over the next four years we build on that work, taking further concrete steps towards our ambition to make London a safe city for every woman and girl.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS IN LONDON

THE FACTS ABOUT OFFENDING AND VICTIMISATION

Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and the activities that cause it or are associated with it, describe a number of different crimes and forms of abusive behaviour. These crimes happen to women of all ages. They can happen in the home, on the streets, on public transport or online. They can happen at night and during the day.

It is important to acknowledge that several of the offences described can be committed against both men and women. But in many circumstances the victims are overwhelmingly likely to be women and that is why they are of particular focus in this strategy.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY 'VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS'?

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) - a form of child sexual abuse, where an individual or group coerces, deceives or manipulates a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity. This is one of the high-harm crimes that, in the Police and Crime Plan (PCP), has been made a mandatory part of local policing priorities, to ensure that the MPS maintains its focus on protecting children in every part of the city.

Coercive control - abusive behaviour which often, but not always accompanies physical abuse, consisting of extreme psychological and emotional abuse specifically intended to control a partner.

Domestic abuse - can include a combination of physical, sexual, psychological and financial abuse. This can be committed by a current or former partner, and also recorded within this category is Child to Parent Violence (CPV), characterised as any behaviour used by a young person to control, dominate or coerce parents.

Harmful Practices – a group of crime types rooted in the traditional practices of some communities. This strategy specifically focuses on the following forms of harmful practices: **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)** (complete or partial removal or alteration of external genitalia for non-medical reasons), **Forced marriage** (a marriage conducted without valid consent of one or both parties, where duress is a factor) and

'Honour' based violence – violence committed to protect or defend the 'honour' of a family and/or community.

Image-based sexual offending – the digital age has brought with it new types of offending against women and girls. This includes illicitly taking photographs under women's skirts ('up-skirting'), sharing private images of a partner or ex-partner without their knowledge or consent (sometimes referred to as 'revenge porn') and the unwanted sending of sexually explicit digital images, videos, livestreams, messages, or emails.

Misogyny - an underlying attitude of contempt towards and prejudice against women. Tackling misogynistic beliefs and encouraging positive attitudes towards women is critical if we are to build a society in which all women and girls can live with confidence and in safety.

Prostitution - the exchange of sex for money. This can occur on- or off- the street. Prostitution has many associated risks to the safety, health and mental health of women and girls. Our focus on prostitution in this strategy is to reduce these safety risks facing women involved in prostitution and to support more women to leave prostitution behind.

Sexual harassment – is unwanted verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. It can take place anywhere, including the workplace, schools, streets, public transport and social situations. It includes flashing, obscene and threatening calls, and online harassment.

Sexual violence and rape – a sexual act conducted with someone else without their consent. Anyone can experience sexual violence including: children, teens, adults, and elders. Perpetrators of sexual abuse can be acquaintances, family members, trusted individuals or strangers.

Stalking – repeated harassment causing fear, alarm or distress. It can include threatening phone calls, texts or letters; damaging property; watching and/or following a victim.

Trafficking – the recruitment, transportation and exploitation of people for the purposes of activities including prostitution and/or domestic servitude across international borders and county borders.

HOW MANY VAWG OFFENCES HAPPEN IN LONDON?

The level of recorded violence against women and girls is increasing – in particular domestic abuse and sexual violence. As we committed in the Police and Crime Plan, we are currently working to understand if the increase seen in these offences is due to an improvement in police crime recording practices, an increase in the number of women and girls feeling empowered to report, an increase in the number of these crimes being committed or a combination of the three. Whatever the reason, the increase in recorded violence is significant for the MPS and other services.

Estimates provided by the Office for National Statistics from the Crime Survey for England and Wales – an important source of information because it includes crimes that were not reported to the police as well as those that were - indicate that:

- **Over 249,000 people were victims of domestic abuse in London in 2016.** Of these, approximately 74,500 were classified as notifiable offences (offences against an identified victim, the circumstances of which meet the classification of a crime, and of which the Home Office should be notified to include in their crime statistics) – this means that **approximately one in every ten crimes recorded by the Met is domestic abuse related.**
- **In the year to March 2017 there were over 17,700 sexual offences recorded across London** (an increase of 9% on the preceding year), with over 6,000 of these being classified as rapes. However, it is widely recognised that these deeply personal, invasive offences are under-reported. Part of the challenge we face is supporting more victims of sexual offences to gain the confidence to come forward and report, so that the perpetrator can be brought to justice and so the victim can receive the specialist help they need to cope with and recover from their experiences.

- **In the year to March 2017, London accounted for more than 10% of the 5,200 cases of stalking recorded in England and Wales.** Nationally, recorded stalking offences have increased by over 27% compared to the preceding year. Figures from the Office for National Statistics show that the majority of victims of stalking are women. However, this is another area of VAWG that is considered largely hidden; with underreporting and low levels of charging believed to affect our understanding of the prevalence of this form of harassment and also how this intersects with other VAWG offences, such as domestic abuse and sexual violence.
- **In the year to March 2017, there were over 360 victims of so called 'revenge porn' in London.** These primarily were young women - with almost a third specifically between the ages of 19 and 24.
- The first annual report of the FGM Enhanced Dataset, April 2015 to March 2016, was published in July 2016 and showed that **52 per cent of the 5,702 nationally recorded instances of FGM were recorded in London.**

Our survivor consultation has told us that while 69% of victims reported to the police, 59% also reported their experience to a third-party agency such as a VAWG charity.

*“I was so scared
I lived in my car
for 8 months. I was
too frightened to
go home. I had
nowhere to go.
Then this [refuge]
saved me.”*

“I’ve been bullied and controlled and you think it’s your fault. You stay because you’re frightened, you leave because you’re frightened, you try killing yourself because you’re frightened. You don’t know which way to turn.”

WHERE DOES VAWG HAPPEN?

Different forms of VAWG will occur in different places. Crimes like sexual assault, rape, domestic abuse and so-called ‘honour’ based violence are most often committed in the home. Other forms of VAWG, particularly harassment, are more prevalent in public spaces.

A national YouGov survey commissioned by the End Violence Against Women Coalition (EVAW) in 2016 found that 64% of women of all ages had experienced sexual harassment in public spaces, a figure that increased to 85% for women between the ages of 18-24.¹

Since 2013, reports of sexual offences on London’s transport network have doubled to more than 2,000 a year, and arrests have increased by 36 per cent.

For many reasons, overall, women worry about their safety in London more often than men. This perception of risk is connected to the circumstances in which the woman finds herself – for example, we know that certain environments such as empty streets and isolated transport locations can increase an individual’s feelings of vulnerability.

Fewer than half of respondents (44%) in a recent online survey on TalkLondon, agreed that London is a safe place for women and girls and 68% of respondents were concerned about sexual offences on public transport. **74% of female respondents told us they worry about their safety ‘all the time’ or ‘sometimes’,** compared to 61% of male respondents.

WHEN DOES VAWG HAPPEN?

The links between time of day, time of year and VAWG are known but little understood. Research has suggested there are links between spikes in VAWG offending at different times of year and during major occasions.² For example, police forces around the country have, in previous years, targeted domestic abuse as a priority during major sporting tournaments. MOPAC is working to develop a greater understanding of the connection between time and offending patterns, which may help to improve the focus of future activity to tackle VAWG.

We are particularly keen to understand women's safety at night in London, as the city increasingly becomes a 24/7 society, and with a number of boroughs reporting that a high portion of VAWG related offences occur during the night.

WHAT IS THE VULNERABLE LOCALITIES PROFILE?

The Vulnerable Localities Profile is an online index that overlays different sets of data about London, such as crime, health, educational attainment and population density, to show which areas of the city are at risk of community stability issues.

Using the Vulnerable Localities Profile, it is possible to identify that:

- residents in the top 10% vulnerable wards – those at highest risk of crime and antisocial behaviour - in London are more likely to be a victim of domestic abuse compared to wards in the 10% least vulnerable.
- This does not correspond when looking at sexual offending, with wards associated with the night time economy and high levels of transient population such as West End and St James's in Westminster, experiencing high concentrations of sexual offending.

However, approximately two thirds of Londoners who are victims of sexual offences were victimised within their home borough in the last twelve months.

1. <http://www.stopstreetharassment.org/2016/03/uknationshstudy/>

2. <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0022427813494843>

THE LONDON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

In 2016, MOPAC commissioned an assessment of the level of domestic violence in London and the scale of the need for support services, in order to inform our future work. It found that:

- Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) support was inconsistent across the city.
- There are gaps in the provision of services for people with disabilities, BAME communities, LGBT victims and those with no recourse to public funds.
- There are gaps in information about the experience of service users themselves.
- Sharing of best practice across London should be improved.
- Provision of refuges and housing is patchy across London, with varying levels of usage and coordination.

WHO ARE THE VICTIMS?

The crime types this strategy seeks to address are significantly underreported. This makes it even more challenging to get to grips with the true scale of the problem across London and as a result, more difficult to tackle perpetrators and offer women and girls the support they need.

Each year, the situation of 50,000 high-risk victims and 70,000 children are discussed at MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference) meetings across England and Wales. **More than 90% of these victims are female, 5-10% are male. 15% are black, Asian or minority ethnic (BAME). 4% are disabled. 1% are lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans (LGBT).**³

Data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) suggests that those who suffer most from inequality, for example lone partner households and those in low income households, see higher prevalence of domestic abuse. The ONS also states that women and men with either long term illness or disability are more likely to suffer domestic abuse.

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3. <http://saferlondon.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/PLDV-Needs-Assessment-Final-low-res.pdf>
 4. SafeLives (2015), Insights Idva National Dataset 2013-14. Bristol: SafeLives.
 5. SafeLives (2014), Marac national dataset 2014. Bristol: SafeLives
 6. Walby, S. and Allen, J. (2004), Domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking: Findings from the British Crime Survey. London: Home Office.
 7. To provide a breakdown of the prevalence of domestic abuse by age and sex, ONS used a combined 3-year CSEW dataset from April 2013 to March 2016
 8. Lewis, G, Drife, J, et al. (2001) Why mothers die: Report from the confidential enquiries into maternal deaths in the UK 1997-9; commissioned by Department of Health from RCOG and NICE (London: RCOG Press)

What are the characteristics of victims that mean they are more likely to be abused?

- **Gender:** Women are much more likely than men to be the victims of high risk or severe domestic abuse: 95% of those going to MARAC or accessing an IDVA service are women.^{4,5}
- **Low income:** women in households with an income of less than £10,000 were 3.5 times more at risk than those in households with an income of over £20,000.⁶
- **Age:** Younger people are more likely to be subject to violence. The majority of high risk victims are in their 20s or 30s. In March 2016, the Crime Survey for England and Wales identified that 12% of women aged 16 to 19 had experienced domestic abuse in the past year. This compares to 9% for women aged between 20 and 29 years of age.⁷ Young victims of domestic abuse are more likely to be victims of familial abuse (abuse committed by other family members) than the group as a whole.
- **Pregnancy:** Nearly one in three women who suffer from domestic abuse during their lifetime report that the first incidence of violence happened while they were pregnant.⁸
- **Separation:** Domestic violence is higher amongst those who have separated, followed by those who are divorced or single.

THE LONDON SEXUAL VIOLENCE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

In 2016, MOPAC and NHS England commissioned an assessment of the level of sexual violence in London and the scale of the need for support services, in order to inform our future work. It found that:

- The number of assaults varies considerably across London's boroughs.
- 40 per cent of assaults take place on public transport.
- While there has been an increase in reports, the number of people referred to Havens has remained static.
- A case is more likely to be 'no-crimes' – meaning no further action will be taken - if the accuser is BAME, has mental health problems or has learning disabilities.
- There are lower levels of reporting from Asian victims.
- Illegal or uncertain immigration status can lead to lower levels of reporting.

- **Previous criminality of the perpetrator:** domestic abuse is more likely where the perpetrator has a previous conviction (whether or not it is related to domestic abuse).⁵
- **Drug and alcohol abuse:** Victims of abuse have a higher rate of drug and/or alcohol misuse (whether it starts before or after the abuse): at least 20% of high-risk victims of abuse report using drugs and/or alcohol.⁹
- **Mental health issues:** Around one third of both female and male victims of sexual assault have a pre-existing mental health issue. Severe mental illness increases the risk of assault for women by five times and for men by ten times.¹⁰ A report for Standing Together indicated that two thirds of victims of Intimate Partner Homicide (IPH) had mental health needs requiring support.¹¹
- **Learning difficulties:** Women with learning disabilities are at increased risk of abuse and are least likely to proceed through the criminal justice service to see the conviction of the offender. For victims who have learning disabilities the chance of “no criming” a rape – where no further action is taken - is 4.4 times higher than for those without.¹²
- **Homelessness:** One in five women (21%) who have experienced extensive sexual abuse have also experienced homelessness.¹³
- **Prostitution:** Participation in prostitution significantly increases vulnerability, with more than 50% of women and men involved in the sex trade suffering assaults.¹⁴
- **Immigration status:** Illegal or uncertain immigration status has an impact in terms of increased risk of assault, increased barriers to reporting and access to support for both women and men.¹⁵
- **Prison:** 46% of female offenders in prison report having previously suffered domestic violence. (80% of the women the support organisation Women In Prison works with have reported experiencing domestic violence). 53% of women in prison report having experienced emotional, physical or sexual abuse during childhood.¹⁶

9. SafeLives (2015), *Getting it right first time: policy report*. Bristol: SafeLives.

10. SafeLives (2015), *Getting it right first time: policy report*. Bristol: SafeLives.

11. http://www.standingtogether.org.uk/sites/default/files/docs/STADV_DHR_Report_Final.pdf

12. Hohl and Stanko 2015

13. Forthcoming research report by Professor Liz Kelly, London Metropolitan University

14. MBARC on behalf of MOPAC and NHSE - The London Sexual Violence Needs Assessment 2016

Children and young people exposed to VAWG

The exposure of children to the trauma of crime in the household is a significant concern, and one which may contribute to future issues as they mature into adulthood, such as mental health concerns, drug and alcohol abuse and higher risk of offending behaviour.

- 140,000 children in the UK live in households where there is high-risk of domestic abuse. A quarter (25%) of children in high-risk domestic abuse households are under 3 years old. On average, high-risk abuse has been going on for 2.6 years, meaning these children are living with abuse for most of their life.
- 64% of high- and medium- risk victims have children, on average two each.
- 62% of children living in domestic abuse households are directly harmed by the perpetrator of the abuse, in addition to the harm caused by witnessing the abuse of others.¹⁷

Young women are particularly at risk for some forms of harassment and abuse. During our consultation, boroughs highlighted the huge issue this is in particular areas of London for all women, but for girls and younger women in particular. Figures around this are likely to be underreported, but research by PlanUK provides an overview of the nature of sexual harassment and street based abuse towards girls (including under 16s):

- One in five women (22 per cent) in the UK reported some experience of sexual touching, groping, flashing, sexual assault or rape while they were in or around school.
- Reports of sexual offences in UK schools have more than doubled in recent years to an average of 10 each school day.
- Two thirds of victims of reported sex offences on school premises are girls or women (66 per cent).¹⁸

A recent Girl Guides attitude survey corroborates these findings, highlighting that school is not necessarily a place of safety from sexual harassment. A worrying finding from the report was that in 2014, 37% of the girls surveyed experienced jokes or taunts of sexual nature in school, by 2017 this number had increased to 41%. Sexual intimidation via social media has shown a huge increase, from just 15% in 2014 to over a third of girls (36%) by 2017. The facts are clear - at school, girls are being subjected to name-calling, physical harassment, and obscene graffiti and images on a weekly basis.

15. Ibid

16. <http://www.womeninprison.org.uk/research/key-facts.php>

17. <http://www.safelives.org.uk/policy-evidence/about-domestic-abuse/who-are-victims-domestic-abuse>

18. <https://plan-uk.org/file/plan-international-ukthe-state-of-girls-rights-in-the-uk-2016pdf/download?token=upKuLdiO>

Barriers to reporting

During the consultation for this strategy, a number of survivors stated that they did not feel safe and were looking for protection, but faced significant issues in coming forward to ask for help from agencies. Survivors told us about how they continued to feel unsafe even after criminal justice services had taken action against the perpetrators. Court orders, prison sentences and injunctions seemed to have little effect at keeping some of the survivors safe from further abuse.

Despite changes made over the years to improve the options available to judges and prosecutors to protect women in the court setting, court was not a safe place for a number of women who spoke about feeling exposed and fearful because of the way the court service treated them and a lack of protective measures. One woman spoke about feeling under pressure to give evidence and how difficult this experience was because of inadequate protection from the perpetrator and as she was not allowed to have her keyworker by her side for additional support.

We also heard testimony about the barrier that concerns about immigration status can present to victims of serious crime coming forward – an important problem, which potentially leaves very vulnerable people at continued risk and dangerous perpetrators out on our streets.

Repeat victimisation

Many forms of VAWG are characterised by a victim being repeatedly abused, in particular domestic abuse, which has the highest rate of repeat victimisation of any other crime. A sample of victims in August 2017 shows that 32% of all victims of domestic abuse are repeat victims – having experienced at least one other offence in the preceding year – compared to 18% for repeat victims of any crime. For sexual offences, 6% of victims had experienced at least one other offence in the preceding year.

It is important to understand that there is a complex relationship between types of VAWG – and cases which may be perceived as isolated may in fact be interlinked with other offences. For example, a victim reporting domestic abuse may also report other offences including:

- Violence or threats of violence to the victim (including threats against property); or,
- A pattern of stalking or harassment; or,
- Rape or sexual abuse.

This demonstrates the ‘intersecting’ nature of VAWG offences and highlights why a strategic approach to these issues is so important. By viewing each incident as part of a potential continuum of VAWG and not simply on its own, we are able to better identify and protect those at risk of victimisation, address the behaviour of perpetrators; and ensure that victims are directed to the all of the relevant support they need.

THE IMPACT OF VAWG

Fear of VAWG governs many women's lives. This ranges from avoiding particular streets or areas to avoid harassment and intimidation, to altering their behaviour in an attempt to avoid physical abuse and coercive abuse.

All forms of VAWG can have significant and lasting implications for those that experience it and for those that are affected by it through association with victims and survivors. The trauma caused by VAWG often has a long-term emotional impact on the victims themselves, but can also lead children growing up in violent households to perpetuate the cycle of violence once they become adults. Many survivors in our consultation repeatedly stated their primary concern was the impact of the violence and abuse on children. Survivors wanted children to be heard and to be able to access specialist support separate and distinct from the support being given to their mothers. Survivors stated that their safety, and the safety of their children should be

paramount in cases of violence and abuse. However, in practice, they felt that this was not the case and that survivors were judged and sometimes asked to mediate with the abuser. This is particularly true when family courts are involved with proceedings.

The MOPAC-commissioned Needs Assessment into Sexual Violence and Child Sexual Exploitation reported that three in five (61%) victims of serious sexual assault suffered mental or emotional problems, while two in five (41%) reported having problems trusting people or having difficulty in other relationships. In 9% of incidents, the victim attempted suicide as a result. 5% of victims reported becoming pregnant as a result of the incident and the victim reported contracting a disease in 3% of incidents.

These and other physical and mental health concerns present a range of complex needs that provide a challenge to victims when attempting to secure the right kinds of services to help them recover.

“He told me no one will believe me because of my [immigration] status... that they will take my children from me.”

WHO ARE THE PERPETRATORS?

We know that:

- Men are most frequently the offender in all reported types of domestic abuse (88%) and sexual abuse (97%).
- The relationship between offender and victim is most frequently recorded as an intimate one for domestic abuse
- For domestic abuse 69% of offenders knew their victim in an intimate way – with ex-boyfriends representing 25% of all offenders.
- For all sexual offences, one in ten offenders knew their victims intimately – rising to two in ten offenders of rape.
- 13% were acquaintances for all sexual offences compared to 19% for rape
- A study of Domestic Homicide Reviews indicated that two thirds of perpetrators of Intimate Partner Homicide had mental health needs requiring support.¹⁹
- Offenders most frequently receive a charge following arrest, although cautions are also used.
- One study showed that half of perpetrators (47%) had convictions in four or more different crime categories.
- Women are usually the instigators and practitioners of FGM on girls, either out of a misplaced belief that they are doing a good thing for their child, or due to pressure placed on them by their wider community. However, males can also be perpetrators – either by directly carrying out the offence or in assisting others to carry out FGM.

Just as there is no single profile of a victim, nor is there a single type of perpetrator. We recognise VAWG is caused by an individual feeling entitled to have power or some degree of control over another. In addition to this, there are also lifestyle and environmental factors which are likely to influence VAWG offending.

For example, witnessing domestic abuse in the home at an early age can normalise this behaviour to a point that that child goes on to become a perpetrator themselves. Another example of environment influencing offending can be seen when young men exhibit abusive behaviours amongst their friends in order to adhere to what they perceive as 'hyper masculine' ideals.²⁰

It is important to be open to understanding the context of perpetrators' offending. By doing so we are better placed to devise effective ways to tackle their behaviour.

Many perpetrators are already within the criminal justice service for non VAWG-related offences. Analysis of a random sample of 500 individuals from a group of repeat offenders with domestic abuse convictions showed that a common theme in their criminal careers was violence directed at people, authority or property:

- 76% had convictions for violence against the person
- 62% committed offences against property
- 62% had convictions for offences against the police, courts or prison

As our knowledge in this area expands, our understanding of perpetrators has diversified and we now see an increasing amount of young men and boys that commit serious VAWG-related offences.

The UK's first study into teenage relationship abuse and exploitation found that one in three girls surveyed had experienced sexual violence from a partner before they turned 18 and 25% had been in physically abusive relationships.²¹ Young people have reported physical, sexual and emotional abusing, and being abused, by their peers as a means of survival in gang-affected neighbourhoods.²²

WHAT HAPPENS TO PERPETRATORS?

In 2017 over 75,000 domestic abuse offences were recorded in London. During this period over 20,000 people were proceeded against for domestic abuse. Two thirds of these individuals were charged with offences, with the remainder largely receiving cautions or other disposals. However, in the same period there were just 181 Domestic Violence Protection Orders issued and approved. In the same period, there were 209 approved Domestic Violence Protection Notices.²³

Over the same period there were over 17,000 recorded sexual offences. The number of individuals proceeded against in the same period was approximately 2,600. As would be expected, most of these individuals are charged with offences, yet a small proportion receive lesser outcomes (cautions =7%).

Only one individual has ever been charged with FGM offences in London.

19. http://www.standingtogether.org.uk/sites/default/files/docs/STADV_DHR_Report_Final.pdf

20. Firmin, 2011; Hallsworth and Young, 2011; Pitts, 2013

21. Barter et al 2009

22. Beckett et al 2013, Firmin 2011, Pitts 2008

23. Met Police Data, October 2016-September 2017

WHAT DO LONDONERS THINK ABOUT VAWG?

As part of the consultation for this strategy, we interviewed 416 individuals (74% female, 26% male) across five London boroughs – Brent, Islington, Lewisham, Lambeth and Newham. Participants were from a range of age groups and ethnicities.

The aim was to explore how accepted certain types of behaviours were, as well as how likely people would be to report to the police or seek wider support. The results highlight how accepted sexual harassment in public places can be in parts of London. It is important that through this strategy we encourage the attitude that these types of behaviours are **NOT accepted**. Our survey demonstrated that those who feel this are more likely to report, which is essential in order for us to really understand the scale of the issues we are dealing with and in turn, develop the right response for victims. Overall the survey provided an enlightening insight into where this strategy needs to focus its efforts.

As a result of the survey and the further consultation that took place, we are keen to explore what effective reporting looks like. Any woman or girl who feels threatened by any behaviour - from wolf whistling to touching - should consider reporting, either to the police, to local agencies including the local authorities,

Safer Neighbourhood Boards and VCS agencies such as Holla Back, Victim Support, Tell MAMA or local women's organisations. The more that is known about this behaviour, the more informed and effective the response can be.

It is worth remembering that that a significant number of those that experience sexual harassment on our streets and on our transport networks are children. We have a particular responsibility to address this.

Other findings from the survey include:

- In general, respondents felt that unwanted attention from strangers was most accepted by people in the local area (e.g. A third felt 'inappropriate staring', 'wolf-whistling or cat calling' were always or often accepted with almost another third being sometimes accepted) whereas 'hitting a partner' or 'following someone around' were least accepted.
- However, a minority of respondents across the more severe behaviours reported they were either 'Always, Often or Sometimes accepted' (i.e. 18% groping or inappropriate touching; 13% inappropriate pictures; 11% hitting a partner or following somebody).

- The proportion saying they would report a behaviour to the police or seek alternative forms of support (e.g. friends/family, charities etc.) followed a similar pattern: respondents were least likely to report or seek support for 'wolf-whistling or cat calling' or 'inappropriate staring,' and most likely to report or seek support if someone was 'following them around or hanging around where they live or work'.
- Across all behaviours, respondents were less likely to report to the police than seek alternative forms of support.
- Those who feel a type of behaviour is NOT accepted in their local area are more likely to say they would report this behaviour to the police if they experienced it. However, across all behaviours the proportion of respondents saying they would report to the police is smaller than the proportion feeling the behaviour is not accepted.
- Results also highlight a small but important minority of people who said they would neither report a behaviour to the police nor seek any other form of support if they were to experience it: 1 in 10 respondents said they would seek no help if 'a partner damaged their property' or 'controlled their use of money or contact with friends/family'.

- There were no differences between males/females in terms of whether behaviours were accepted or not. Males were significantly less likely to say they would report to police or others, with especially large gaps in seeking help reporting around being 'hit' or 'pushed' by partner.

As part of the consultation for this strategy, young people, boy and girls, were also surveyed for their views on VAWG and how best to tackle pervasive attitudes in society.

Several overarching themes emerged from our consultation including:

1. A high volume of victims under 18 experience repeat instances of sexual harassment
2. The response by the police, criminal justice service and even teachers often does not sufficiently protect young women who try to report violence and abuse.

When asked whether they would report an experience of sexual harassment/ assault to the police, more than one in four young women (28%; 33) said no, as they believed it wouldn't lead to any conviction and they feared facing a very difficult experience through the criminal justice service. Sadly, the most common response to this question (36%; 43) was that young women would feel ashamed about their experience of abuse.

PREVENTING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

TACKLING PERVASIVE ATTITUDES AND
PREVENTING ALL FORMS OF VAWG IN LONDON

*Prevention of VAWG must
always be the first priority,
and over the long-term,
that can only be achieved
by tackling the misogynistic
attitudes and behaviours that
can lead to these crimes.*

That means an uncompromising stance against images, language and behaviour that demeans women; that presents them as little more than sex objects; or that portrays women's bodies as being 'public property' that is ok to ogle, comment on or touch without consent. It is not good enough for the women and girls of London to write this kind of thing off as 'lad culture' or 'boys being boys'. The Mayor has taken a clear stance against advertising on the TfL network that demeans women and sets unrealistic expectations of how they should look, and will continue to use his role to challenge harassing or demeaning behaviour wherever possible.

However, the purpose of this strategy is not to persecute men and boys. Far from it. This strategy supports and encourages the highest ideals for men and boys to aspire to. Respect – for yourself and for others. Responsibility for - and control over - your actions. The duty to set a positive example for the boys of this generation and for those yet to come. In this chapter, we commit to supporting that attitude through the example we set in the GLA family and through new efforts to help educate and encourage boys to respect themselves and others.

*“Teach boys
about consent
and healthy
relationships.”*

We recognise that wholesale attitude change is a process that will stretch long beyond the period covered in this strategy. In this document, we commit to a range of actions to push this work further forward, building a stronger culture of respect and equality, one in which attitudes and behaviours that intimidate, degrade and harm women and girls are more readily exposed and challenged.

AT SCHOOL AND COLLEGE

The behaviours and beliefs that can lead to violence against women and girls are often manifested in early years.

All areas of our consultation raised the fact that more needs to be done with both girls, boys, young women and young men in order to effectively prevent VAWG. In particular it was felt that young men and boys needed to receive education and advice around how best to conduct respectful and positive relationships.

This sentiment was also echoed by the adult female survivor groups we spoke to, who were very concerned about children who had been exposed to violence and abuse. They welcomed any efforts to ensure that all those working with children and young people had access to information that helped them identify abuse and be able to recognise it should it happen and to know where sources of support could be found and accessed if needed.

In the Police and Crime Plan, we committed to a pan-London campaign to raise awareness of VAWG and begin to challenge the attitudes and behaviours that lie behind it. Backed with £600k funding from the Mayor's 2018-19 budget, MOPAC will work with partner agencies and communities to develop and deliver a campaign that not only raises awareness of VAWG but also robustly tackles unacceptable attitudes to women and girls. We will bring partners together as a subgroup of the VAWG Board to take this forward in 2018.

In the Police and Crime Plan we committed to ensuring that all children and young people in London will have a direct line of engagement with the MPS through Safer Schools Officers, helping to keep them safe and improving trust and confidence in our first emergency service. This includes young women and girls that experience significant barriers to seeking support for sexual abuse and harassment, and young people from the LGBT community who, though the consultation, highlighted their concerns that their sexuality was a very strong barrier to reporting. Through our oversight and scrutiny, MOPAC will ensure that the MPS delivers on this commitment.

MOPAC will continue to fund Safer London, a pan-London organisation that works with London's local communities and young people to reduce crime and improve community safety. MOPAC has

commissioned Safer London until March 2020 to deliver its Empower service aimed at reducing sexual violence and child sexual exploitation across London through group work, work in schools and Young People's Advocates (YPAs). The YPAs deliver an intensive support and education programme for young people affected by sexual exploitation, in the context of gang related violence, combined with high quality training and advice for the adults involved in the young person's care. Safer London also works in school settings to ensure that young people enter into a dialogue about healthy relationships and consent.

Research from organisations working closely with schools highlights the need for ongoing training and support for all school staff. It also points to the need for a "whole-school approach" which requires the challenging of sexism to be embedded into the whole curriculum of a school and within the wider environment, as opposed to being delivered via Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) lessons or one-off sessions.

This work should provide clear explanations of what correct behaviour is, explain the negative impact of offensive behaviour and challenge those that go on to exhibit those harmful behaviours. At the same time this work encourages women, particularly young women, to come forward and name and reject sexual assaults of this nature.

MOPAC supports the Government's move to reintroduce mandatory sex and relationship education in schools, but further work must take place to ensure that this is meaningfully embedded in an education environment which teaches healthy relationships and freedom from sexual harassment and abuse. We recognise that more needs to be done with both girls, boys, young women and young men in order to effectively prevent VAWG. In particular we feel that young men and boys need to receive education, support and advice around conducting respectful and positive relationships. MOPAC will lobby the education sector, supporting calls for a proactive approach which challenges the normalisation of views and behaviours that facilitate VAWG.

The Mayor is funding and supporting the implementation of a whole school prevention pilot in four Croydon schools over three academic years. Due to launch in 2018, this project is focused on gangs, serious youth violence and violence against women and girls within the context of healthy relationships; resilience and enabling young people to make positive choices. A whole school approach involves addressing the needs of pupils, staff and the wider community, not only within the curriculum, but also across the whole school and learning environment. Learning from this will go on to inform the potential for further roll out of the whole school approach around the city.

We are keen that any approach to tackle VAWG focuses on empowering young men and boys to speak out against VAWG. MOPAC is committed to affecting behaviour change around this issue. We will look to the projects and programmes we commission across all of our areas of work to ensure that any agency working with young people is capable of supporting young men to be strong in their commitment to equality and healthy relationships, making this a part of the tendering process.

“Teach boys in school to not do these types of things, instead of only teaching girls how to avoid it.”

COMMITMENTS

- **MOPAC will work with partner agencies and communities to develop and deliver a campaign that not only raises awareness of VAWG but also robustly tackles unacceptable attitudes to women and girls. We will bring partners together as a subgroup of the London VAWG Board to take this forward.**
- **Safer London will continue to deliver its Empower service aimed at reducing sexual violence and child sexual exploitation across London through groups work, work in schools and Young People's Advocates (YPAs).**
- **MOPAC will lobby the education sector, supporting calls for a proactive approach which challenges the normalisation of views and behaviours that facilitate VAWG.**
- **MOPAC will fund and support the implementation of a whole school prevention pilot in four Croydon schools over three academic years. This is focused on gangs, serious youth violence and violence against women and girls within the context of healthy relationships; resilience and enabling young people to make positive choices.**
- **The MPS will ensure that Safer Schools Officers tackle VAWG within schools as a priority issue.**
- **MOPAC will convene local authorities and the MPS to drive forward work to ensure that tackling VAWG is treated as a priority within Pupil Referral Units.**
- **MOPAC will look to the projects and programmes we commission to ensure that any agency working with young people is capable of supporting young men to be strong in their commitment to equality and healthy relationships, making this a part of the tendering process.**

SAFER PUBLIC SPACES

Sexual harassment and street-based harassment have been key emerging themes from the VAWG strategy consultation, and many women and girls told us that they experience low-level harassment in London on a daily basis, to the point where they felt it was a normalised part of living in a city.

That this kind of behaviour towards women and girls is seen as normal and acceptable by a significant number of men is totally unacceptable. We can and must do better in London.

UN Women's Global Flagship Initiative, 'Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces', builds on the "Safe Cities Free of Violence against Women and Girls" Global Programme. It is the first ever global programme that develops, implements, and evaluates tools, policies and comprehensive approaches on the prevention of and response to sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence against women and girls across different settings.

The programme is born from the idea that although violence in the private domain is now widely recognised as a human rights violation, violence against women and girls, especially sexual harassment in public spaces, remains a largely neglected issue, with few laws or policies in place to prevent and address it. This reduces women's and girls' freedom of movement. It reduces their ability to participate in school, work and public life. It limits their access to essential services and their enjoyment of cultural and recreational opportunities. It also negatively impacts their health and wellbeing.

We want London to be a beacon of safety and freedom for women and girls. The principles as set out in this strategy will allow London to seek accreditation from the UN, endorsing London as a safe city. To support this, MOPAC will work with the MPS to encourage the reporting of any form of sexual harassment, such as flashing or unwanted physical contact, so that this information can help us gather an intelligence picture of where women are more likely to be vulnerable, and in turn, where perpetrators of such behaviour can be targeted most effectively.

In 2016, MOPAC funded an innovative Safeguarding in Public Spaces pilot which aimed to scope, pilot and evaluate an innovative safeguarding model, applicable to a range of community settings, and produce a research report and a toolkit informed by the views of young people. Based on work undertaken in major London shopping centres, the pilot project involved young people themselves conducting outreach in public spaces, training for staff, and research with hundreds of young people. A report following the pilot was launched in November 2017.²⁴ This important piece of work has highlighted that improvements are necessary in safeguarding procedures to ensure that they account for the needs of young people in communal spaces. MOPAC will work with partners including the MPS, local authorities and the business community to take forward the recommendations in the report.

Transport for London's 'Report It To Stop It' campaign tackling sexual harassment on public transport is already doing great work to help keep women in the capital safe, and encouraging the reporting of crime. We will continue to support the work of Transport for London, the MPS, the British Transport Police and the City of London Police in tackling unwanted sexual behaviour on the transport system. We will also support TfL and the Road Traffic Policing Command to ensure that taxis and private hire vehicles are as safe as possible.

COMMITMENTS

- **MOPAC will work with the GLA and the MPS towards achieving accreditation from the UN, endorsing London as a safe city, as part of the UN Women's initiative 'Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces'**
- **MOPAC will continue to support efforts to encourage greater reporting of any form of sexual harassment, to improve the MPS' intelligence picture of where these offences happen and enable a more targeted response**
- **MOPAC will join with partners including the MPS, local authorities and the business community in a Review Group to take forward the recommendations in the evaluation report for the Safeguarding in Public Spaces pilot project**
- **TfL, the MPS, the British Transport Police and the City of London Police will continue to work in partnership to tackle unwanted sexual behaviour on the transport system**
- **TfL and the MPS Road Traffic Policing Command will continue to work together to ensure taxis and private hire vehicles are as safe as possible.**

24. http://saferlondon.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/CSE-Executive-Summary_webspreads.pdf

RECLAIMING THE NIGHT

For many women and girls, going out at night is something approached with some trepidation, requiring forward planning on how and where to travel in order to ensure personal safety. Whilst it is absolutely sensible to think about safety and to plan ahead, we must not accept that this has to be the norm. The onus must be on the behaviour of perpetrators, issues we address elsewhere in this strategy.

In July 2017, London's night czar Amy Lamé held a Women's Safety Summit attended by Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime Sophie Linden, Deputy Mayor for Transport Val Shawcross, Deputy Mayor for Culture and Creative Industries Justine Simons and TUC General Secretary Frances O'Grady.

As part of this session, plans to publish a Women's Night Safety Charter in the next year were unveiled.

COMMITMENTS

With the GLA Culture team, MOPAC will call on its partners to support the Charter below:

Reporting

- **The GLA and MOPAC will continue to coordinate prominent, cross-departmental GLA campaigns across London in order to keep women safe at night, to prevent harassment and encourage reporting.**
- **For all sectors to identify and encourage champions across the industry within businesses, local authorities and community groups that proactively promote women's safety at night and support women to report.**

Response

- **For the licensed premises industry to have appropriately trained staff, who are proactive and vigilant around women's safety at night. This includes a duty to capture information and report to the police where appropriate.**
- **For every woman to be and feel believed when coming forward and for referrals to the VCS or other relevant support agencies to always be made where appropriate.**

Responsibility

- **For London to promote campaigns that target and educate perpetrators to change behaviours, highlight examples of good practice and to encourage reporting, including bystander and third party.**
- **For the GLA and MOPAC to work with the industry champions to build an atmosphere of transparency and safety for women who work at night.**

Redesign

- **To empower women with the correct safety information and clear guidance to confidently use all public spaces.**
- **Ensure that planning and the built environment factor in and support women's safety at night, recognising good practice and existing campaigns across London and broaden them to cover all public spaces.**

The ambition is that this Charter will provide a baseline set of standards that our venues, clubs and businesses can sign up to, and develop measures to prevent harassment and wider forms of VAWG. By helping to create the new Charter, venues, operators and businesses can do their bit to help make sure women feel safe, whether they're on the tube, at work, or on the dancefloor.

RESPECT AND SAFETY AT WORK

London is a great place to work, and latest statistics²⁵ show that the employment rate in the capital is at a record high, with 5.8 million jobs located in the city. The workplace is a central part of millions of lives in the city, and a safe, healthy workplace can make a huge difference to quality of life.

However, as recent high-profile cases and the #MeToo campaign have demonstrated, the dynamics of power in the workplace can be abused by individuals to harass and abuse others, and leave fellow colleagues afraid to speak out for fear of losing their professional reputation or livelihoods.

We want to make sure that every woman in London's workforce can feel confident that they are safe at work, and that their rights will be respected. When lines of acceptable behaviour are crossed, it is vital that systems are in place to deal effectively with these situations.

25. https://data.london.gov.uk/apps_and_analysis/labour-market-update-for-london-october-2017/

It is vitally important that employers recognise their responsibility to ensure that the work place is a fair and equal environment. The Mayor has set out his ambition for London to be the best place in the world to work, proposing a compact with employers, called the Good Work Standard, which will promote:

- fair pay and the London Living Wage
- excellent working conditions
- diversity in the workplace

We will work closely with GLA colleagues as the Standard is developed and implemented, advising and supporting on measures to ensure that issues around respect and equality, together with strong and effective reporting processes for harassment and abuse, form an important part of the Standard.

MOPAC will lead by example, setting clear standards of acceptable behaviour, encouraging a culture of respect, equality and ensuring that all areas of City Hall and the wider GLA family have in place gold-standard processes for reporting abuse and harassment.

In addition, MOPAC will work with GLA colleagues to ensure that City Hall has a victim-centred approach that supports those that do come forward, embedding a pathway in Human Resource policies across the GLA family.

COMMITMENTS

- **MOPAC will advise and support on the development and implementation of the Mayor's Good Work Standard.**
- **MOPAC and the GLA will lead by example, setting clear standards of acceptable behaviour, encouraging a culture of respect and ensuring that all areas of City Hall and the wider GLA family have in place gold-standard processes for reporting abuse and harassment.**
- **MOPAC will work with the GLA to ensure that City Hall has a victim-centred approach that supports those that do come forward, embedding a pathway in Human Resource policies across the GLA family.**

WITHIN PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

Our public institutions, such as the police and courts – paid for by the public and operated with their consent – must exemplify the standards of respectful behaviour and equality in the way they treat service users.

The 2010 report ***Rape: The Victim's Experience***, by Sara Payne MBE and the Home Office, showed that attitudes of agencies such as MPS and CPS reflected the attitudes of the general public with regard to rape victims, and this is true for many other forms of VAWG.²⁶

The majority of people consulted felt that rapists were strangers, who break in to victims' homes or attack them in public places, and who use force. In fact, most victims are attacked in private, by someone known to them and injuries are not common. These preconceptions mean that when faced with a jury, a victim has to challenge these prejudices to establish their credibility.

These attitudes, when left unchallenged, affected the whole judicial process from whether a victim felt confident to report (e.g. whether they can identify what has happened to them as a crime) to whether a jury is prepared to convict a defendant who doesn't fit their idea of a 'real rapist'.

This highlights the need for a substantial public attitude change: to make it clear that in all forms of VAWG, the responsibility lies with the perpetrator. There is a real willingness from agencies to work together on both the regional approach to these issues and also the national approach.

In its work with the MPS, criminal justice service, statutory agencies and other organisations to increase awareness and understanding of VAWG, MOPAC will use its convening powers and networks to encourage and facilitate learning from other sectors such as healthcare, where concepts of emotional intelligence have been successfully embedded into their ways of working to improve the experiences of service users.

Misogyny as a hate crime

In April 2016 Nottinghamshire Constabulary introduced misogyny as a criterion for recording hate crime. Criminal incidents ranging from on-street harassment to aggressive physical approaches will be recorded under the new category in an effort to increase reporting of these incidents.

MOPAC is keen to see the learning and evidence that comes from the Nottinghamshire work and the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime will continue to host discussions on the matter as this information becomes available.

COMMITMENTS

- **MOPAC will continue to use its convening powers and networks to increase awareness and understanding of VAWG, and encourage learning from other sectors such as healthcare, where concepts of emotional intelligence have been successfully embedded into their ways of working to improve the experiences of service users.**
- **MOPAC will await and evaluate learning and evidence from the Nottinghamshire pilot on using misogyny as a criterion for recording hate crime.**

TACKLING PERPETRATORS

ENSURING PERPETRATORS ARE BROUGHT TO JUSTICE
AND THAT POLICE AND OTHER PARTNERS ARE USING
ALL THEIR POWERS TO FULL EFFECT

*Violence Against Women
and Girls is criminal and
needs to be tackled in the
same way as we tackle knife
crime or gun crime.*

To keep women and girls safe, those who are committing violence against them must be dealt with robustly and effectively. Moreover, if greater reporting of incidents of VAWG is to happen, victims need to know that their report will be taken seriously, properly investigated – and that action will be taken against the perpetrator. This strategy sets out several categories of activity: work to secure convictions of offenders, work to address the behaviour of offenders, work to reduce repeat offences and work to ensure sanctions are meaningful and effective.

The basic expectation is that once an offence is committed, the police will respond, arrest the suspect and the criminal justice service will deal with that person effectively. However, we know from our partner agencies and reports, such as Domestic Violence Homicide Reviews, that a comparatively small number of offenders ever come to the attention of services, fewer still are brought to justice, and often the resulting justice outcome fails to finally resolve the problem. While the police identify a significant number of perpetrators each year, the majority of these perpetrators have previous convictions either for VAWG related offences or broader criminality.

The relatively low level of offenders brought to justice, and the high levels of reoffending of this group demonstrates that there is more that can and must be done to bring perpetrators before the courts and to improve the effectiveness of their sentence in putting a stop to their behaviour.

UNDERSTANDING THE RISK OF OFFENDING AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

Risk is a key concept for the police and all agencies involved in tackling VAWG. The term encapsulates all of the factors that might make an individual more vulnerable to offending or victimisation. It reflects the level of likelihood that an offence is to take place, and when offending is likely to happen. Identifying and understanding risk is key to reducing VAWG – stopping offences from happening and protecting vulnerable people from harm.

Two processes are used to identify and evaluate risk – ‘risk identification’ and ‘risk assessment’. Risk identification involves knowledge, the use of a checklist and identification of specified risk factors. Risk assessment requires more in-depth knowledge and is an on-going, sustained process that considers a victim’s circumstances in much greater detail. Staff likely to come into contact with perpetrators or victims of VAWG should be trained in carrying out risk identification. Specific members of staff with additional skills, knowledge and training should conduct the more detailed risk assessment process. This is something MOPAC will consider with partners as part of our work to improve responses to VAWG victims.

Timely identification of potentially high-risk people or situations continues to be a challenge for the police and other services. Agencies, short on resources and having to make difficult decisions to prioritise what appear to be the most urgent threats to safety, rely heavily on risk identification and risk assessments that concentrate on immediate threats of harm. However, to reduce the risk of offending over the longer term, more can be done to consider risks at an earlier stage, enabling agencies to step in and reduce that risk before situations come to a point where an offence is an immediate threat. We will establish a working group with partners in the criminal justice service – the MPS, the CRC, HMPPS and Safe Lives to discuss and implement such an approach, working with disclosure schemes such as Clare’s Law to ensure the safety of potentially vulnerable people.

With all key partner agencies, such as the MPS and local authorities, we will also facilitate discussion on whether the Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Honour-based violence (DASH) risk assessment currently used by the police and specialist agencies, could be used more widely to help identify who is at risk. As part of this work we will look at existing risk assessment tools which seek to prevent perpetrating behaviour and likelihood of domestic and sexual abuse.

COMMITMENTS

- **MOPAC will convene and facilitate discussions between key agencies through the London VAWG Coordinators forum and the London VAWG Board to establish the appropriate levels of risk identification training and specialist skills for front-line staff who potentially come into contact with victims of crime.**
- **MOPAC and the Victims’ Commissioner will work with Safe Lives, the MPS, the Community Rehabilitation Company and HMPPS to establish a Review Group to develop and implement an approach in which risk is considered at an earlier stage in a victim’s journey through the justice process, working with disclosure schemes such as Clare’s Law to ensure the safety of potentially vulnerable people.**
- **With all key partner agencies, such as the MPS and local authorities, MOPAC will facilitate discussion on whether the Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Honour-based violence (DASH) risk assessment currently used by the police and specialist agencies, could be used more widely to help identify who is at risk. As part of this work we will look at existing risk assessment tools which seek to prevent perpetrating behaviour and likelihood of domestic and sexual abuse.**

A MORE EFFECTIVE POLICE RESPONSE

An effective first response to cases of VAWG is incredibly important. Done well, it can be the first step towards a perpetrator being successfully prosecuted and a vulnerable person being protected for the long term. Done badly, it could be a missed opportunity to bring a dangerous individual to justice and prevent further harm. Training, learning and development are key - police officers called to incidents need to have the knowledge to identify and understand what has taken place, but also to identify the potential for future harm. They need to give victims confidence that they are listened to and taken seriously.

This understanding of risk and vulnerability is particularly important in familial offending, and where a victim does not want to be separated from the family member who has abused them. This can be driven by many factors including being financially, physically or emotionally dependant on the perpetrator.

To illustrate, one woman in our survivor consultation, who had been the victim of child-to-parent violence, spoke of the overwhelming pressure she was faced with from services who felt that she had to press charges against her son.

This is a revealing example of the complex and emotive situations that responding officers can face. It is entirely understandable that officers would want to separate a person who has committed an assault from their victim and bring them before the courts. It is equally understandable that a parent would want to protect their child, regardless of their actions.

There will never be easy answers in such traumatic and complex situations, but we can better equip officers with knowledge, skills and confidence to identify and understand the issues involved and draw on evidence and best practice of how to achieve the best possible outcomes for the victim and the wider community. This is why, through the Police and Crime Plan, the MPS committed to introduce enhanced training for officers on the first response to domestic incidents. MOPAC will use its oversight and scrutiny of the MPS to ensure that this is embedded, monitoring victim satisfaction data to understand its impact.

What happens after the initial police response is equally important. The quality of the support provided to victims as they go through the justice process, the quality of the investigation and the quality of evidence gathered can be the difference between a perpetrator being prosecuted or going unpunished, resulting in further risk to both victim and the community.

“[The police] were called to my house. He’d tried to drown me and I was soaked. It was two male police officers. I was crying and in a state. He told the police that I had slipped and spilled my drink on me. We were stood there, both of us, with the police and I couldn’t say anything. 18 minutes! Stood there together and I couldn’t speak.

“They finally separated us and I could tell them what happened. The police arrested my partner and he was charged with four counts of assault. I think they need more training...about reading the non-verbal signals, about separating the man and the woman.”

MOPAC continues to work with CJS partners to encourage them to invest sufficient resources into their ability to offer a service that goes beyond the minimum in each case. For example, the MPS will use HR data and visits to investigation teams to scrutinise the workload of officers involved in the investigation and personal support in these cases so that they allow for the type of tailored response we wish to see to address the uniqueness of each case.

The quality of evidence going from the police to prosecutors is of fundamental importance to the effective and fair delivery of justice. Failings in that process can lead to victims not getting justice, dangerous individuals not being prosecuted, and in some cases, innocent people being wrongly tried for offences they did not commit. Improvements can and must be made in evidence quality, and work is ongoing between the MPS and CPS to ensure that this takes place. MOPAC will closely scrutinise this work to ensure that changes for the better are made.

As technology increasingly becomes a part of our everyday lives, our expectations around police capacity and capability to effectively gather evidence from these technologies increases too. Recent events regarding police disclosure of evidence in high profile cases reflect the huge challenge to the justice service that is being experienced nationally. The truly exponential growth in the amount and variety of material that could be considered relevant in cases (as such disclosable) is an issue the criminal justice service must get to grips with.

For example, defence teams in rape trials can reasonably request thousands of private electronic messages such as SMS and exchanges from instant messaging platforms, as well as comments made on social media. These will often be messages or comments to third parties including friends and/or strangers. They may even concern character and behaviour, not just the incident being investigated. In the not too distant past this material simply did not exist.

Put simply, email and electronic messaging have changed the nature of many serious forms of trials, including those that specifically relate to VAWG. This has an immense resource implication and we are committed to working with the MPS and senior leaders across government to ensure that everyone's right to a fair trial is not affected by a lack of capacity to effectively gather and share evidence.

Case Study

BODY-WORN VIDEO LEADS TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CONVICTION

In March 2017, video evidence captured by MPS officers on their body-worn cameras was used at Wimbledon Magistrates' Court to prosecute a man for domestic abuse against a woman and a child.

Although both victims spoke to police after being assaulted at their south London home, they felt unable to give their evidence in court.

Magistrates allowed footage recorded by responding officers straight after the attack – in which the woman described how both she and the child had been assaulted – to be played in court during the trial.

The footage was a central part of the prosecution's case and the accused was subsequently convicted of two counts of assault – without either victim having to appear and give evidence.

In the Police and Crime Plan, MOPAC committed to investing in the technology the MPS needs to be a 21st-century crime fighting organisation, including body-worn video, mobile data tablets, digital forensic technology and core IT systems.

MOPAC will hold the Met to account for ensuring that this improvement impacts positively on VAWG cases, specifically domestic and sexual violence. The rollout of body-worn video is now complete, and this is already demonstrating its value in providing compelling evidence of offending in court cases.

In addition, MOPAC will work with the MPS, probation services and our other partners to commission a more effective approach to tackling perpetrators.

We have approached probation and other partners to look at domestic and sexual offenders as a 'cohort of interest' so that we can build a better picture of who and where these offenders are.

Building on our Police and Crime Plan commitment to increasing the amount of data available on VAWG, we will feed this analysis into an interactive data dashboard accessible to the police and partner agencies in order for them to more effectively identify and act against perpetrators.

BASIC COMMAND UNITS

Between 16th January and 25th April 2017, two Pathfinders for a new model of local policing were established - bringing together the boroughs of Barking & Dagenham, Havering and Redbridge and, separately, Camden and Islington.

The aim of this initiative was to trial a new approach to delivering local policing in a way that is more responsive to the needs of policing London and reflective of the extremely difficult financial situation facing the MPS. This approach included reducing the number of boroughs, thereby reducing senior management and administrative costs; and bringing together specialist teams responsible for investigating serious crimes against vulnerable people into larger, more effective units.

The learning from the Pathfinders has already enabled the MPS to use an evidence-based approach to make improvements to the programme's design and implementation as it is rolled out across the rest of London.

The success criteria for the programme include safeguarding, specifically detection rates for sexual assault, child cruelty and domestic abuse. The MPS continue to monitor the performance of the programme regularly and through reporting cycles and will update MOPAC as to the impact upon VAWG related offences.

COMMITMENTS

- **The MPS will introduce enhanced training for officers on the first response to domestic incidents.**
- **MOPAC will scrutinise the work of the MPS and CPS in improving the quality of evidence provided to prosecutors.**
- **MOPAC will hold the MPS to account for delivering on the investment in key technologies such as body-worn video, digital forensic technology and core IT systems, and ensuring that they impact positively on VAWG cases.**
- **The MPS will report on the impact of the BCU programme in relation to VAWG offences.**
- **The MPS will use HR data and visits to investigation teams to scrutinise the workload of officers involved in VAWG cases to ensure they have the time and resource they need to deliver the right response.**
- **MOPAC, the MPS and the Probation Service will work together to analyse domestic and sexual offenders as a 'cohort of interest', so that we can build a better picture of who and where these offenders are.**
- **MOPAC will feed analysis on domestic and sexual violence offenders into an interactive data dashboard for police and partner agencies to use.**
- **The MPS will review practices regarding evidence gathering from technology.**

A MORE INTENSIVE FOCUS ON THE MOST DANGEROUS INDIVIDUALS

There is work taking place to look at high harm, high risk perpetrators and MOPAC supports the MPS Dauntless+ programme, which identifies, monitors and disrupts individuals who are often deliberately transient, target vulnerable individuals and pose an ongoing risk to others through their violent offending behaviour.

All of the individuals targeted by Dauntless+ are treated as high-risk offenders and 1) have appeared as a suspect or accused within a domestic violence-flagged crime report 2) against three or more separately named individuals 3) in three or more London boroughs over the last three years. There are several hundred people that this applies to, all of whom will be subject to an enhanced level of risk management in order to limit their opportunities to cause harm.

As part of our work with the Ministry of Justice to devolve elements of the criminal justice service in London to the Mayor's control, we support work by partners including the National Probation Service (NPS), Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) and the MPS to ensure better information flow between these agencies to support cases and identify more strategic learning on how the police respond to early identification of high risk.

This is essential to address the overall lack of focus and information on who perpetrators are, improve our understanding of their reoffending behaviour and what this means for the safety of the victim.

More also needs to be done by partner agencies to focus on both high risk prolific perpetrators whilst at the same time closing the existing knowledge gap around less prolific, lower risk, possibly younger individuals. MOPAC will convene a meeting with local authority and criminal justice service partners to establish the current use of risk assessments and encourage better sharing of knowledge around risk assessments for individuals suspected of or being treated for spousal or family-related assault, helping better determine the degree to which an individual poses a threat to his/her spouse, children, family members and others, ultimately helping to prevent further offending.

To ensure that lower-level risk is being appropriately addressed, the MPS will review its practices around arrest by appointment, which presumes the risk of imminent further offending is low enough to delay a response. MOPAC recognises that there may sometimes be sound operational reasons for the police to progress an investigation by making an arrest by appointment. Through this review of the use of this practice, we can seek assurance that this approach is being used appropriately and with due regard to risk management and the needs of the victim.

COMMITMENTS

- The MPS will continue its Dauntless+ programme, which identifies, monitors and disrupts individuals who are often deliberately transient, target vulnerable individuals and pose an ongoing risk to others through their violent offending behaviour.
- The National Probation Service (NPS), Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) and the MPS will work together to improve the flow of information between them to support cases and identify more strategic learning on how the police respond to early identification of high risk.
- MOPAC will convene a meeting with local authority and criminal justice service partners to establish the current use of risk assessments and encourage better sharing of knowledge around risk assessments for individuals suspected of or being treated for spousal or family-related assault, helping better determine the degree to which an individual poses a threat to his/her spouse, children, family members and others, ultimately helping to prevent further offending.
- The MPS will review its practices around arrest by appointment, to provide assurance that it is used appropriately and with due regard to risk management and the needs of the victim.

“Why don’t they stop asking me: ‘why won’t I leave?’ Why aren’t they asking why he doesn’t stop?”

EFFECTIVE INTERVENTIONS WITH PERPETRATORS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

Data shows that victims of domestic abuse, in particular older victims, are often likely to still be living with the perpetrator of their abuse following support and intervention.²⁷ In situations where safeguarding remains a concern, we are clear that continued provision of service must not be predicated on victims leaving their relationship.

Effective partnership working to ensure that a victim has access to support is essential if more perpetrators are to be brought to justice and more survivors can cope, recover and move forward safely over the long-term, with minimal disruption to their lives. Alongside this, further measures must be put in place to prevent repeat offending by a perpetrator.

We welcome and support the Government's pledge to ensure that domestic violence committed in households where there are children is recognised as a serious aggravating factor in the sentencing of perpetrators, which is an important step towards improving the safety of children exposed to this kind of crime at home.

A key concern around all forms of VAWG is the effective application of non-custodial orders and sentences, and how we ensure perpetrators comply with these. The police have a number of means which range from issuing cautions to out of court disposals such as Domestic Violence Protection Orders. Ultimately, the aim of these is to prevent a perpetrator from reoffending.

However, we know improvements are required in tackling reoffending – the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) suggests it is likely that reoffending rates for those who perpetrate domestic abuse are high – by some estimates, higher than for any other category of offending. We also know that mandated attendance to programmes designed to address perpetrators behaviour carry small, if any, consequences for non-attendance after release. MOPAC will lobby the Sentencing Council to seek a change to this practice.

In the Police and Crime Plan, a commitment was made to review the use of Criminal Behaviour Orders and Domestic Violence Prevention Orders (DVPO) to improve compliance and ensure effective action takes place if they are breached. This strategy takes that commitment further – to review the use of all out of court disposals with a view to improve current compliance rates, this includes Stalking Protection Orders, in line with new measures introduced by the recent Stalking Protection Bill. Breaches of DVPOs and other orders should be considered criminal. MOPAC will work with London's criminal justice and probation services to see what can be done to improve compliance with licence conditions.

There is a need for accurate and consistent recording and sharing of perpetrator information across systems and over time, including post-release, to ensure relevant needs and risks are being identified.

This extends to sentencing information as well as compliance to referred programmes. Currently there is a huge knowledge gap around how many perpetrators we are attempting to address and how effective punitive and rehabilitative measures are.

We support the implementation of a register system – similar to that used to monitor sex offenders – for domestic abuse and harassment perpetrators, and will support calls for the Government to include it in the forthcoming Domestic Violence Bill. We will continue to work with our partner agencies to develop our approach to this.

The Drive Project

To further challenge the behaviour of perpetrators of domestic abuse and reduce offending, after successfully bidding for national funding, MOPAC has embarked on delivering a new programme known as Drive.

Drive challenges perpetrators of domestic abuse in order to fundamentally change their behaviour to make victims and families safe. Its first principle is to move the response to a crime from 'why doesn't she leave?' to 'why doesn't he stop?'

The goals of Drive are:

- To reduce the number of repeat and new victims
- To reduce the harm caused to victims and children

- To reduce the number of serial perpetrators of domestic abuse
- To intervene earlier to protect families living with the most harmful domestic abuse
- To develop an evidence-based approach that has the potential to become a model for wider use.
- To provide interventions for perpetrators who are not eligible for a Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programme (DVPP).

Drive provides a case manager who acts as a single point of contact for perpetrators. Liaising closely with local police and support agencies, case workers seek to use the criminal justice service to disrupt offending behaviour and bring in other support services to address any unresolved personal issues that increase the likelihood of a perpetrator reoffending, such as drug abuse or mental health needs. The service has been developed to knit together existing services, complementing and enhancing existing interventions. The Drive Project pilot focuses on priority (high-risk or serial) perpetrators, as this group carries the greatest risk of serious harm and engage poorly in available services.

MOPAC will work with the MPS to embed Drive Project work with local police responses, thus ensuring that a replicable model is developed through the programme's life time.

COMMITMENTS

- **MOPAC will go beyond the original Police and Crime Plan commitment to review the use of Criminal Behaviour Orders, Domestic Violence Prevention Orders and the MPS, CRC, HMPPS, and extend the review to examine the use of all out of court disposals, including new measures surrounding Stalking Protection Orders as introduced by the recent Stalking Protection Bill.**
- **MOPAC will continue to support calls for the creation of a register system for domestic abuse and harassment perpetrators, pushing for it to be included in the forthcoming Domestic Violence Bill.**
- **With the MPS, CRC, HMPPS, MOPAC will review what more can be done to improve compliance with license conditions.**
- **Embed the Drive Project within the work of the MPS, challenging perpetrators of domestic abuse to change their behaviour.**
- **MOPAC will lobby the Sentencing Council to seek a change to current practice, where there are small, if any, consequences for non-attendance at behaviour-change programmes for perpetrators after release.**

ALCOHOL, DRUGS AND OFFENDING

Alcohol and drugs can make existing abuse worse or can be a catalyst for an attack, but alone they do not cause domestic or sexual abuse. The idea that they do simply reinforces cultural stereotypes, and in particular that drinking in some way mitigates responsibility for the perpetration of violence when we know this to be unacceptable. It is a fact that most people that use alcohol or drugs do not abuse their partner,²⁸ and drinking or taking drugs should never be used to excuse violent or controlling behaviour.

When we look to data sources such as Domestic Violence Homicide Reviews or police call outs to domestic incidents, alcohol use can be seen as a feature of both offending and victimisation. Alcohol-dependent individuals are overrepresented in police reports regarding domestic abuse. In one Home Office study into domestic abuse conducted in 2010, alcohol was a feature in a majority of offences (62%) and almost half the sample (48%) were alcohol dependent. This is an important point that suggests although alcohol does not cause an individual to become a perpetrator, those individuals that have problematic alcohol concerns, may in turn be susceptible to greater episodes of violence through drinking and drug taking.

In the same Home Office study, a range of intersecting issues were associated with an offender, including; mental health issues, personality disorders, effects of negative early childhood experiences, unemployment, a tendency to engage in antisocial behaviour, likelihood to endorse macho attitudes, having difficulties with empathy and being likely to have previous convictions.²⁹

This leads us to the reality that our services deal with a volume of cases each day whereby both victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse are likely to suffer from a number of complex issues predominantly characterised by mental health issues, drug dependency and alcohol abuse.

Recognising the links between these three issues, the Stella Project brought these strands of work together through the Mental Health Initiative in 2010. This three-year project, funded by the Department of Health, has supported a range of services in Bristol, Nottingham and London to develop more effective, joined-up responses to survivors and perpetrators of domestic and sexual violence who are also affected by substance use and/or mental ill-health.

The programme highlighted that the connection between domestic abuse (DA), sexual violence (SV) and problematic substance use (PSU) is complex, and that at a strategic level, a range of needs must be addressed for those experiencing PSU and DA and/or SV in order to cater for these individuals appropriately, including the need for agencies to recognise the reasons that victim/survivors and perpetrators might use substances problematically. The programme was deemed a success, particularly with regard to the way it opened dialogue between three key sectors, success we will look to maintain and build upon throughout the lifetime of this strategy.

COMMITMENT

- **MOPAC will work with the CRC and Probation to understand whether existing drug, alcohol and mental health programmes adequately address an intersection between these issues and VAWG.**

28. Office for National Statistics 2016, Intimate personal violence and partner abuse

29. <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110218141158/http://rds.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs2/r217.pdf>

TACKLING STALKING AND HARASSMENT

Stalking has been acknowledged by police chiefs as “leading to some of the most serious crimes police can deal with including domestic violence, sexual assault and murder.”

There is a significant body of academic evidence to show that stalking perpetrators have a fixation/obsession with their victims, which restraining orders or even imprisonment do nothing to address. Through research into charged stalking cases, the MPS, working in partnership with other police forces, have identified that half of stalking offenders have underlying mental health needs. Legal sanctions alone do not address the fundamental problem of fixation and obsession: there is a need to treat the underlying mental health issues in perpetrators if reoffending is to be prevented.

MOPAC and the MPS, in collaboration with the Police and Crime Commissioners and police forces in Hampshire and Cheshire, together with the National Probation Service (NPS) and Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), have been brought together by the Suzy Lamplugh Trust to improve the response to stalking perpetrators. The partnership has bid successfully for £4m in shared funding to trial a new approach to tackle the issues that drive this dangerous behaviour.

To test the effectiveness of different approaches, each force area will trial a different project. In London, we will establish a new centre of excellence – the Stalking Threat Assessment Centre – based within the MPS.

Through this work, a multi-agency London partnership (including police, mental health, probation, Crown Prosecution Service, and the Suzy Lamplugh Trust) will review incoming cases on a daily basis, with referrals coming in from mental health teams in London boroughs as well as the Suzy Lamplugh Trust.

Risk assessments will be carried out, priority levels assigned (low, medium, high) and management plans put in place: perpetrators may be referred into other community services (such as local mental health, drug & alcohol or other support services) or they may be referred for treatment at the Stalking Threat Assessment Centre (STAC).

This treatment programme will be developed and overseen with the National Stalking Clinic, and staffed with 2 nurses, 1 nurse manager, a psychiatrist and a psychologist to provide diagnosis and rehabilitation, supported by a Crown Prosecution Service lawyer and a probation officer to ensure that the individual complies with the terms of their sentence.

We recognise that the rise of mobile technology, internet and social media has created new challenges around the harassment and abuse of women and girls, challenges that must be addressed. We are lobbying the Government for changes in the law to enable the prosecution of perpetrators of 'upskirting' and for tougher sentences for those convicted of these offences, with promising initial signs that these proposals will be taken forward.

In addition, we are working with the MPS to understand and address emerging issues around the misuse of livestreaming to harass women and girls, such as the filming and broadcasting of women as they visit abortion clinics. Used in this way, livestreaming can not only invade women's privacy, but also deter them from accessing sexual and reproductive health services, which are recognised in this country and by the UN as human rights.

Technology advances quickly and it is vital that our enforcement and victim support responses evolve to meet changing types of offending and victimisation, and we will continue to work with the MPS and all of our partners to identify and address any emerging risks to women and girls.

COMMITMENTS

- **MOPAC will lobby the Government for changes in the law to enable the prosecution of perpetrators of 'upskirting' and for tougher sentences for those convicted of such offences.**
- **A partnership involving MOPAC, the MPS, the NHS and the Suzy Lamplugh Trust will establish a new Stalking Threat Assessment Centre, based within the MPS, to assess the risk of offending and put appropriate treatment and management plans in place to address stalking behaviour.**
- **MOPAC and the MPS will continue to assess and address the emerging issues around the use of livestreaming to harass women and girls, such as the filming and broadcasting of women visiting abortion clinics.**
- **MOPAC and the MPS will continue to discuss and address any future risks to women and girls arising from technological advances.**

A STRONGER RESPONSE TO HARMFUL PRACTICES

We know that the enforcement response to harmful practices such as Female Genital Mutilation has not been sufficient, although we recognise that progress is being made, with the first charge in London for perpetrating FGM being made this year. This is an important and welcome step forward – practices that cause tremendous physical and emotional harm to women and girls, and infringe their human rights, have no place in our city and the MPS has our full support in seeking to arrest and prosecute more perpetrators.

While legislation has provided the tools to take action, many believe there is too much emphasis on prosecutions and we are aware that some consider this not to be in the interest of the child, who may suffer additional trauma if their family is broken up through the prosecution of parents or other relatives. Others believe that an over-emphasis on prosecution may drive the practice of FGM further underground. We advocate for enforcement action to take place alongside efforts which focus on prevention and encourage local areas to invest in provision which supports women and girls at risk of FGM in London.

This includes the MPS focusing on community driven solutions which protect and keep people safe, and highlighting the need for local people to speak out and report concerns about girls at risk in their community.

While we recognise the limitations of prosecution, we are also clear that harmful practices such as FGM and often faith-based abuse are forms of child abuse and those that perpetrate and support these offences will be handled appropriately through the criminal justice service.

We recognise the challenges that come with tackling often deep-rooted practices like FGM – the vulnerability of women and girls in affected communities, the societal pressure to conform to such practices, and reluctance to come forward and report these offences.

It is vital that front line workers know the signs of vulnerability, and MOPAC will commit £200k from its Victims Fund to add value to a regional London Councils Harmful Practices programme to increase the training available to those who may come into contact with potential victims of Harmful Practices, such as midwives, nurses and social workers and also ensure that the MPS introduces enhanced training to improve the first response to VAWG victims to ensure that officers get this right.

MOPAC will require delivery partners to ensure that the training element of the Harmful Practices programme:

- Is clearly linked to the wider service offer around harmful practices. This will ensure that trainees are aware of sources of advice and support when and should they require this;
- Is not just focused on increasing awareness of harmful practices, but provides clear information on the roles of individual agencies in supporting victims;
- Is rooted in the context of safeguarding, child protection and the wider Violence Against Women and Girls agenda;
- Is tailored to the needs of the front line practitioners. Consideration will need to be given to the delivery of universal and targeted training and whether particular front line workers would benefit from a bespoke offer;
- Gives consideration as to how trainees will be able to translate the learning into practice in their respective organisations; and
- Is particularly targeted at those front line professionals and practitioners who are able to embed and cascade learning in their respective organisation

In addition, MOPAC will continue to support the work of London Assembly Member Jennette Arnold, a leading voice in the fight against FGM in our city, in achieving the vision of London being a 'zero cutting city'.

COMMITMENT

- **MOPAC will commit £200k from its Victims Fund to support the London Councils Harmful Practices programme.**

TACKLING THE CRIMINALS BEHIND MODERN SLAVERY AND PEOPLE TRAFFICKING

Modern slavery and human trafficking are horrendous crimes and affect some of the most vulnerable people in society, both in London and across the world. As such, the Mayor made a clear commitment in the Police and Crime Plan to support work by the MPS to target and prosecute the criminals who are prepared to deprive others of their fundamental human rights and exploit them for profit.

However, a multi-agency response is required to fully address these often complex and international offences. A great deal of good work is taking place across London, work we are seeking to support with city-wide coordination. Sophie Linden, the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, has therefore taken forward the Police and Crime Plan commitment to "Support work by the MPS and partners to improve existing and encourage new multi-agency partnerships across London to tackle human trafficking and modern slavery" by establishing the London Modern Slavery Partnership Board.

This Board convenes senior partners from across sectors to work collectively; sharing intelligence and best practice, developing whole-system approaches, and pooling resources to target our response. This way, we can target action against the criminals behind these dreadful crimes and ensure that victims are identified and supported.

This Board met for the first time on 26 June 2017 and will continue to meet on a quarterly basis, commissioning action groups to deliver focused pieces of thematic work on identified gaps in service delivery. Through the Board, we will deliver the shared commitment of all of the agencies and partners involved to affect real improvements in London for victims of these horrific crimes.

COMMITMENT

- **MOPAC will continue to lead and develop the newly-established London Modern Slavery Partnership Board, sharing intelligence and best practice, pooling resources and developing new approaches to tackle the criminals behind these crimes.**

PROTECTING AND SUPPORTING VICTIMS OF VAWG

GETTING IT RIGHT FOR VICTIMS

“Listening to the survivor’s voice has been a vital part of this consultation. Survivors bravely shared their painful experiences with me, and I want to ensure that we listen and act upon what they are telling us. Their voice has given us great insight into what is needed in order to help victims identify abuse, to know where to seek help and to understand what their options are. It’s important they are given the right information and tools to access inclusive and timely justice and effective support that will help them cope and recover from the impact of the crime.”

- Claire Waxman, Victims’ Commissioner

The needs of victims are at the heart of everything we do, and the Mayor has appointed London's first independent Victims' Commissioner, Claire Waxman, to champion the needs of victims of crime in the city and ensure that effective services are in place to support them. Through this strategy we aim to provide higher-quality services, which respond to the needs of victims, and secure a more positive experience for those who have contact with the CJS.

We recognise that protecting victims begins with services identifying those most at risk. Our response currently tends to be centred on crisis intervention and high-risk cases. But we know we must become more sophisticated in recognising those who are at risk of sudden escalation of harm, supporting these individuals to come forward and seek help.

We know that VAWG is significantly underreported which is why it is particularly important to ensure that those who do come forward are believed and supported. People will report crime if they are confident that the justice service will take them seriously and act against offenders. Public confidence in the justice service depends on positive experiences.

We will place the needs of those that face significant barriers to reporting and accessing services such as BAME and LGBT victims, or those with no recourse to public funds at the heart of our work. Specifically, our work regarding solutions to refuge provision for victims of domestic abuse will contain caveats that make accessing this accommodate easier for those with no recourse to public funds.

We also recognise the struggle that both specialist services and the wider voluntary and community sector face during because of Government funding cuts across London and the subsequent reduction in services. Over the period of this strategy, MOPAC-funded services including IDVAs will seek to improve their reach into communities and into settings where specialist victim support services are limited, notably prisons.

The provision of IDVAs is particularly important in this picture. While currently only high-risk cases are managed by MOPAC IDVAs, more will be done over coming commissioning cycles to enable victims from low and medium risk to develop a trusting relationship with an IDVA or an alternative trained professional who can help with everything they need to be safe.

MOPAC is committed to improving the current IDVA service to better meet the emerging needs and demands of service users. This will include ensuring the service is aligned with the CJS and other MOPAC commissioned services.

“I want someone from the Police to talk to me. I don’t know if things are being dealt with properly...I have heard that one of the men who did this to me is out on bail. I’m not sure. I don’t know who the other man is and I’m very frightened. I keep looking round to see if he’s in the area or walking by me. I can’t go on like this.”

VICTIMS AND THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SERVICE

The response and provision of services to victims in the criminal justice service has greatly improved over recent years however, much more work needs to be done to get London's response right.

Ensuring compliance with the Victims' Code of Practice

The Victims' Code is a statutory document that sets out the services and information victims of crime are entitled to from criminal justice agencies - like the police and courts - from the moment they report a crime to the end of the trial.

The Code sets out that additional support should be provided to three priority categories of victims: victims of the most serious crime, persistently targeted victims and vulnerable or intimidated victims.

The Code is an important step forward for the treatment of victims of crime, but it can only be effective if properly upheld by the police, courts and all criminal justice agencies. We are keen to ensure that victims of crime, including victims of VAWG, are in fact receiving the level of service that they are entitled to.

The Victims' Commissioner for London, Claire Waxman, is leading work to establish levels of compliance with the Code of Practice in the MPS and the criminal justice service. Where it is found that the Code is not being fully adhered to, the Victims' Commissioner will work with partners to address these shortcomings, ensuring that victims can have confidence in a standard level of quality service from all parts of the justice process.

Through the Code, victims are also entitled to choose to make a Victim Personal Statement (VPS) and to read it out in court if the offender is found guilty. This Statement lets victims explain how the crime has affected them physically, emotionally or in any other way. The judge can then take this in to account when deciding on the sentence.

MOPAC and the Victims Commissioner will continue to push the MPS to ensure that all victims can make a VPS and understand their rights regarding how this can be presented in courts. Survivors told us of experiences whereby they had been made to read out their Personal Statement aloud in front of perpetrators. Victims must know and understand that their VPS can be read out by someone else if they choose not to and that if more support is required, that need should be met.

“I went to court. I was scared but I went. I wanted a screen but they said the judge said I couldn’t have it. I don’t know why after what he did. I had to see him in court and he was staring at me. I was so scared.”

We support and encourage the use of the tools available to judges and prosecutors to protect women in the court setting. In addition, implementation of legislation that allows innovative approaches to victims giving evidence is also being explored by MOPAC. This includes pre-recorded evidence, which allows the victim to give their evidence and be cross-examined by both prosecution and defence barristers ahead of the trial, in front of a judge. This recorded evidence is then shown to the jury as part of the trial. In other parts of the country, this has been seen to have a hugely positive effect on not only trial outcomes but also the victim's experience of going to trial.

MOPAC will work with Her Majesty's Court and Tribunal Service (HMCTS) and others to support the roll-out of the pilot for Section 28 of the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999, which allows vulnerable and intimidated witnesses such as children to video record their cross-examination before a trial, rather than have to face reliving their trauma in the courtroom.

COMMITMENTS

- **The Victims' Commissioner for London will lead and complete a review of adherence to the Victims' Code of Practice throughout London. Where it is found that the Code is not being fully adhered to, the Victims' Commissioner will work with partners to address these shortcomings, ensuring that victims can have confidence in a standard level of quality service from all parts of the justice process.**
- **MOPAC, the Victims' Commissioner, the MPS and CJS will explore innovative approaches to victims giving evidence, including pre-recorded evidence.**
- **MOPAC and the Victims' Commissioner will continue to push the MPS to ensure that all victims can make a Victim Personal Statement and understand their rights regarding how this can be presented in courts.**
- **Roll out a pilot for Section 28 of the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999 with HMCTS and other justice partners, which allows vulnerable and intimidated witnesses such as children to video record their cross-examination before a trial, rather than have to face reliving their trauma in the courtroom.**

Integrated services for victims of VAWG

As part of the Mayor and Commissioner's commitment to continuous improvement and putting victims at the heart of everything we do, we are looking to align services for victims of crime to improve standards and make the process of accessing support simpler.

This will involve integrating MOPAC-commissioned Victim Support services with the MPS-managed Witness Care Unit, as part of a three-year change programme. This will transform the currently siloed and disparate range of victim and witness services into an integrated service that meets the diverse and individual needs of all victims in London.

This integration will take the form of co-location of Victim Support workers being based in Witness Care Units. This will immediately simplify the process of seeking support for victims, and with shared access to data the quality of referrals, the transparency of victims' rights through VCOP compliance and the level of victim satisfaction should increase.

MOPAC are currently in negotiation with the Ministry of Justice on the devolution of a number of parts of the criminal justice service. Currently, most of the justice service is run by central Government, giving locally elected Mayors and Police and Crime Commissioners little influence over these key services on behalf of the people they have been elected to represent.

Devolution of greater powers over the justice service will give us more scope than ever before to tailor services, improve joint working and make improvements on behalf of victims. Included in the devolution proposal is the court-based Witness Service, and should this come into our control, further opportunities for integration with other services may arise.

COMMITMENT

- **MOPAC and the MPS will work together to integrate MOPAC-commissioned Victim Support services with the MPS-managed Witness Care Unit, as part of a three-year change programme that will transform the currently siloed and disparate range of victim and witness services into an integrated service that meets the diverse and individual needs of all victims in London.**

Helping victims find the support they need

A recurring theme in the feedback we received from victims and survivors was the difficulty they had in knowing where to begin in accessing help and support to recover from their experiences. Service providers in London have their own webpages, but there is no single point of access – a known site where any victim of crime can find out about their rights, what help is available and how to get it.

To address this, MOPAC is committing the funding to develop London's first 'one-stop-shop' Victims Portal – a single site for crime victims, where they can find out about the help they can access – whatever the crime type may be – and be directed to it. We are working with partner agencies to develop and subsequently promote the site and ensure that it is the comprehensive resource it should be. Our ambition for the site is that it becomes the first port of call for any victim of crime in London who is seeking help and support.

COMMITMENT

- **MOPAC will fund and work with partners to develop and launch an online portal for victims of crime – providing a single point for victims to find out about the services available to them in London and enabling them to get in touch.**

Strengthening the law around domestic abuse

A Domestic Violence & Abuse Bill has now come forward for public consultation. This is an important opportunity to strengthen and future-proof laws to tackle perpetrators and protect victims and we will submit a comprehensive response for London, including the points raised in this strategy. In drafting our response, we will seek the views of the organisations involved in tackling VAWG in London and ensure that the voices of survivors are heard.

COMMITMENT

- **MOPAC and the Victims' Commissioner will provide a comprehensive response to the consultation on the Government's Domestic Violence and Abuse Bill, seeking the views of all organisations involved in tackling VAWG in London and ensuring that the voices of survivors are heard.**

Improving our understanding of rape cases

The Met recorded around 17,000 sexual offences in 2016/17. Yet only 2,700 were prosecuted and just 1,700 of those prosecutions were successful.

The process that lies ahead of a victim after they make an allegation of rape or sexual assault is lengthy and can be intrusive - losing their phone for investigation, disclosing medical history, lengthy delays in getting to court and tough cross-examination by the defence at trial.

It can be of no surprise that, with such an intrusive and gruelling journey from report to court – many victims drop out of the justice process before it can run its course. As the John Worboys case has shown, the justice process post-conviction can be equally traumatic, as offenders reach the end of their sentence.

Our understanding of the victim's journey is currently limited and, for this reason, the Victims' Commissioner will launch a 'deep-dive' study into rape cases in London. This project, conducted in partnership with the MPS and the CPS, will improve our understanding of the victim's experience and identify common points in the process where complainants are most likely to withdraw, to guide future service provision in the capital.

COMMITMENT

- **The Victims' Commissioner, the MPS and the CPS will conduct a 'deep-dive' study into rape cases in London, to improve our understanding of the victim's experience, identify common points of attrition, and guide future service provision in the capital.**

“My husband is trying to take my children, he’s going for custody. I’ve been told the family court judge may not believe the abuse because I don’t have any evidence.”

“It was all psychological abuse. He knew better than to ever hit me cos then I could tell someone. How do you prove the mental stuff? The fact-finding meeting suggested I have not really been abused. This is a man who cons everybody. He’s nice to everyone but he’s been degrading me my whole life. How will I prove it?”

“The solicitor said, ‘you’ve left him, now, let’s just deal with the children’. But he was still following me, calling me, threatening me. No one was listening to me.”

Victims and family courts

Through our consultation survivors shared overwhelmingly negative experiences of family court services, social services and the courts system. In every focus group, survivors spoke of their significant criticisms in relation to child contact proceedings and their overall response to VAWG. Many survivors stated that perpetrators were using the family court system to continue to abuse and control. Survivors stated that the courts did not recognise domestic abuse and the impact on the non-abusing parent or the children. This lack of recognition resulted in survivors not being able to access the help and support needed.

Many survivors stated that the abusive parent's rights to see his/her children seemed to override the safety and well-being of their children. Survivors spoke of the non-abusing parent often being obstructive or lying to stop contact. Survivors stated that they were having real difficulty proving the abuse to the courts. Many survivors told us about how the family and civil courts were used by their abusive partners as a way of keeping track of them. Stalking and coercive control was used as a means of continuing control by men of women who had left them. However, survivors told us this was either not understood or ignored by the court and related agencies.

In many instances, survivors felt that the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS) and the family courts process enabled the abuse to which women had been subjected to

continue. They and their children were not heard in cases of child contact and survivors in many areas also spoke of their dissatisfaction with facilities available for supervised contact, following a family court decision.

This situation is plainly unacceptable and action must be taken. Agencies must have a better understanding of how abusers are able to manipulate legal processes to continue to abuse their partner, and MOPAC will work with the criminal justice agencies, in particular Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS), to understand the need for effective training around addressing safeguarding issues and coercive control.

In addition, victims who go through a court process should have access to a Domestic Abuse Advocate - who is trained to understand how power and control can play out in court – to support them and engage with the system on their behalf. MOPAC will work with the Pan London Domestic Violence service to develop an approach which enables victims to access this support in criminal, family and civil courts.

Furthermore, we support calls on Government to ensure that the 'presumption of parental involvement' (a presumption written in law that the involvement of both parents in a child's upbringing will be good for the child's welfare) should always consider the significant implications of contact when one parent is at high risk of offending, ensuring that the presumption does not put children in harm's way.

We back calls to enshrine in law measures that require civil courts – such as family courts - to recognise and have regard to criminal proceedings and other safety-based restrictions, which surprisingly, currently, they do not.

COMMITMENTS

- **MOPAC and the Victims' Commissioner will call on the Government to ensure that the 'presumption of parental involvement' should always consider the significant implications of contact when one parent is at high risk of offending, ensuring that the presumption does not put children in harm's way.**
- **MOPAC and the Victims' Commissioner will call on the Government to enshrine in law measures that require civil courts – such as family courts - to recognise and have regard to criminal proceedings and other safety-based restrictions.**
- **The MPS and Victim Support will produce and analyse victim benchmarking data on victim satisfaction, to enable a better understanding of the need for training around safeguarding issues and coercive control.**
- **MOPAC, with the Pan-London Domestic Violence Service, will develop and implement an approach to enable victims to access IDVA support in criminal, civil and family courts.**

“If there are kids involved, the whole process of contact after leaving abuses you all over again. The supervised contact was a joke. I was in a room with him and my daughter. I was alone. The people who were supposed to be protecting me were in another room.”

Victims and immigration status

The arrest for immigration offences of a survivor of sexual assault outside a London Haven was a shocking and totally unacceptable incident. Thankfully, this is something that is not commonplace in London. We know that concerns around immigration status can prove a deterrent to victims reporting a crime and getting help, with victims of forced marriage and domestic abuse raising the issue during our consultation.

To improve our understanding of these issues and how they affect victims in London, the Victims' Commissioner will convene a roundtable meeting of all the agencies and groups with an interest in this issue, to share information and research and to make joint recommendations for safe reporting routes for these highly vulnerable women and girls.

COMMITMENT

- **The Victims' Commissioner will convene all the agencies and groups with an interest in this issue, to share information and research and to make joint recommendations for safe reporting routes for these highly vulnerable women and girls.**

SPECIALIST VICTIM SUPPORT SERVICES

Specialist services provide the bedrock of London's offer of support to VAWG victims and offer a vitally important source of support services which are often first port of call for survivors, before they go to the police.

We are working with partners to understand how funding changes have affected services that offer support for women that are victims and survivors of domestic abuse, rape, harmful practices and those seeking refuge from violence. Initial findings suggest that London is witnessing a diminishing offer to victims as services continue to close and Local Authorities desist funding non-statutory services. Funding cuts to local authorities over recent years have resulted in their having no choice but to reduce vital services. We have lobbied the Government to ensure that the commitments within the forthcoming Domestic Violence and Abuse Bill are properly resourced and that adequate funding is available to support the objectives of the Bill.

30. The uplift was calculated according to the Safelives recommendation that "to achieve optimal social and financial impact there needs to be 4 IDVAs and 1 MARAC coordinator for every 100,000 of the adult (16 years and over) female population in every area" and was based on 2019 population estimates for London.

Whilst many survivors recounted positive experiences of specialist services, they were aware that these services were not always well regarded by other service providers. In addition, some survivors who had not been satisfied with the service given by one of these specialist providers spoke of having nowhere to turn to raise their concerns. Many survivors wanted to see specialist VAWG services given professional recognition by other agencies for the services they provide supporting women and children and the expertise that they bring to this area of work. The Victims' Commissioner, MOPAC and the London VAWG Board will therefore examine the case for a London-wide accreditation or quality standard for VAWG services, to build confidence and provide a means of recourse for service users dissatisfied with their experience.

Specialist support for victims of Domestic Violence

In 2017/18, informed by the findings of the MOPAC/NHS England Domestic Violence Needs Assessment for London, £2 Million was allocated by MOPAC to provide an additional 40.5 Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVAs), 16 caseworkers, better strategic coordination and innovation within the criminal justice process across London.

The service has supplemented the existing number of 115 IDVAs within Local Authorities and brought each London borough in line with the Safelives recommended level of IDVA provision.³⁰ The service receives around 5,000 referrals a year from women and men, which results in around 4000 service users choosing to progress with support.

Co-locations

Boroughs were able to allocate where each IDVA they received sat within their local authority. Boroughs chose a variety of settings from Children's Services to within existing IDVA teams. The success of this element of this work is a testament to the service. The innovation of co-locating IDVAs in healthcare settings and police stations are two of the most notable successes. We know that the co-location of IDVAs in hospital is an extremely effective model for reaching service users who may have not previously engaged with support services, or reported to the police. Findings such as these that have emerged over the duration of the current service will go on to inform and shape the service in 2018/19.

Improving access to support

A new collaboration between TfL and domestic abuse refuge provider Hestia will explore how victims of abuse can seek support as part of their regular journeys on London's transport network, as that is less likely to cause suspicion from an abuser. This new pilot project seeks to provide safe, private spaces that could be a first step for victims of domestic violence to access the services and support they need, provided by Hestia's specialist staff. Victims will set a pre-agreed time and TfL location to meet with Hestia's staff. The start date for victims to access this new support will be announced in the near future.

Partnership Support for Victims

Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs) bring together police, health services, local councils, child protection, housing and Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVAs) to discuss how to protect those at highest risk of serious harm because of domestic abuse. They enable local agencies to identify risk and put in place activities to respond to the risk posed to a victim.

MARACs exist in every borough to support victims of domestic abuse, often with complex needs. They must be enabled to fully support the victims they see, allowing agencies to effectively tackle the perpetrators involved in cases. To get a fuller picture of access to support for victims/survivors experiencing multiple disadvantage

MARACs could more systematically record mental ill health, substance misuse issues, homelessness and criminal justice involvement. However, they are often encumbered by caseloads which are too high which prevents them from being fully effective. We rely heavily on the effective functioning of MARACs and this strategy seeks to support their work to ensure that the needs of victims and survivors are being met appropriately at borough level. MOPAC will lead work with key partners to understand how we can collectively ensure that MARACs function effectively, share best practice and ensure perpetrators are addressed. This includes ensuring that the Pan London Domestic Violence service fully supports the effective running of local MARACs.

Specialist support for victims of sexual violence

In the Police and Crime Plan, and considering the findings of the pan-London Sexual Violence Needs Assessment, the Mayor committed to sustain funding for the three London Sexual Assault Referral Centres (also known as the Havens), which treat female and male victims of sexual assault, and the four London Rape Crisis Centres. In the current financial year, MOPAC contributed a total of £3.5 million in funding to the two services - £1,260,000 to the Rape Crisis Centres and £2,165,000 to the London Havens. £70,000 in funding was also provided to the four Rape Crisis Centres to support the development of an interpreter service.

In 2016/17 the four London Rape Crisis Centres supported a total of 2,866 survivors of rape and sexual violence. This was through a variety of service provision including: one to one counselling support, group work, telephone helpline support and long-term advocacy provision. The London Havens provided forensic medical examinations to approximately 1,500 survivors of sexual assault and supported 1,300 survivors accessing the service through their urgent self-referral number.

Specialist support for young victims

Keeping children and young people safe is another of the core priorities in the Police and Crime Plan for London, and in that document, we set out a comprehensive range of actions to ensure that fewer children and young people become victims of crime.

In 2013 the government definition of domestic violence and coercive control changed to include victims/survivors aged 16 – 17. Our Pan-London Domestic Violence Needs Assessment found that addressing and combatting young people's experiences of domestic abuse was a priority raised in 92% of local VAWG strategies. Despite this, support for young people experiencing domestic abuse was often overlooked in action plans, with local authority focus being placed on prevention work.

Our recent needs assessment found that support available for young people experiencing domestic abuse in London overall is often limited and inconsistent across boroughs. While many mainstream domestic abuse services support people aged under 16, this is often targeted at children who live in households where there is domestic abuse, rather than young people experiencing abuse in their own intimate relationship.

To support victims, including victims of VAWG offences, MOPAC has allocated £2m over two years (2018-2020) to enable the commissioning of a new single specialist victim and witness service that is designed with and for London's children and young people, that provides:

- support to young victims of crime
- an opportunity to test innovative approaches to supporting victims through the criminal justice service
- an additional focus on supporting victims of high harm crime including, victims of child sexual exploitation and domestic violence.

MOPAC has already increased provision of Youth ISVAs in London via the Safer London Empower programme. This increase will enable Safer London to expand from its current service provision to include Newham, Redbridge, Barking and Dagenham, Havering, Greenwich and Bexley.

Alongside this, work is underway to develop and open London's first Child House – providing investigative, medical and emotional support in one place to young victims of sexual violence. These facilities will remove the need for young victims to go through the repeated trauma of giving their statement several times to different agencies, and improve the likelihood of perpetrators being brought to justice for their crimes.

We recognise that involvement or association with gang crime and serious youth violence can significantly increase the risks to young women and girls, be that through harassment, domestic abuse or sexual exploitation. As part of our commitments in the Police and Crime Plan and the London Knife Crime Strategy, we will continue to fund youth workers and Independent Domestic Violence Advisors to support victims of knife crime, gang crime, domestic abuse and sexual exploitation in London's four

major trauma centres to prevent repeat victimisation. We will take this work further and extend the programme to key A&E departments in boroughs that have high levels of knife crime to maximise the power and value of this 'teachable moment' and improve referrals to mainstream and specialist services.

Supporting victims of online crime

Work must continue to evolve to meet the needs of victims of new types of offending, particularly crimes enabled by digital technology and the internet. Harassment of young women online is at risk of becoming an established norm in our increasingly digitalised society. A recent study conducted by Opinion for the children's charity Plan International UK showed nearly double the number of girls (23%) said they felt harassed regularly by someone through social media, compared with 13% of boys. Harassment ranged from unwanted contact, trolling, and cyberbullying to sexual harassment and threats of rape and murder.

There is a serious gap in our response to types of sexual offences which are image based. Sexting and so called 'revenge porn' fall within this category. These are offences that are overwhelmingly committed against women and the current legal position means that it is a challenge for authorities to address perpetrators in line with broader forms of sexual offending.

Current legislation does not account for this kind of behaviour being part of a continuum of VAWG/sexual offending. MOPAC will work with partners to review support services to ensure they are equipped to meet the needs of victims of these offences, and consult with partners on whether lobbying is required to strengthen the laws around this kind of offending.

MOPAC will also work with partners to ensure that the online profile of these support services is increased, so that victims of crime are aware of the help available to them.

We are supportive of campaigns such as the Every Child Safe Campaign, which calls on Government to draw up minimum standards that internet companies must meet to safeguard children. We would go further and will lobby the government to apply this standard to all online users.

These standards must include:

- More stringent age verification measures and 24-hour live moderation
- Safe accounts automatically offered to under 18's – with default privacy settings, proactive filtering of harmful content and mechanisms to guard against grooming
- Fines for companies who fail to protect victims of online sexual offences
- An independent regulator for online companies, in order for them to come under robust scrutiny to face penalties when they fail to keep women and girls safe from abuse.

Supporting victims of harmful practices

There are many individuals and organisations in London doing outstanding work to support women and girls affected by harmful practices, but there is not enough resource or capacity to ensure that victims across the city can access specialist support. We continue to work with our partner agencies to identify how we can better support their service offer to victims.

We believe that action is needed at a national level to consider how to most effectively fund and provide the vital services, which deal with a relatively small number of victims but with highly difficult circumstances and complex needs. We will engage with the Home Office on what more can be done to support these highly vulnerable victims.

In addition, recognising that crimes such as FGM and forced marriage can often involve women and girls being taken overseas, we will engage with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to discuss whether and how better support could be offered to women and girls who live in London, but who are victimised abroad.

COMMITMENTS

- **MOPAC and the Victims' Commissioner will, in partnership with the London VAWG Board, examine the case for a London-wide accreditation or quality standard for VAWG services, to build confidence and provide a means of recourse for service users dissatisfied with their experience.**
- **MOPAC will use the learning from the Pan-London Domestic Violence Service to inform future development of the service.**
- **MOPAC will sustain funding for the three London Sexual Assault Referral Centres (also known as the Havens), which treat female and male victims of sexual assault, and the four London Rape Crisis Centres.**
- **MOPAC will commission a new single specialist victim and witness service that is designed with and for London's children and young people, handling all crime types including VAWG.**
- **MOPAC will fund youth workers and Independent Domestic Violence Advisors to support victims of knife crime, gang crime, domestic abuse and sexual exploitation in London's four major trauma centres to prevent repeat victimisation. We will take this work further and extend the programme to key A&E departments in boroughs that have high levels of knife crime.**

- TfL and domestic abuse refuge provider Hestia will explore how victims of abuse can seek support as part of their regular journeys on London's transport network.
- MOPAC and the Victims' Commissioner will engage with the Home Office to discuss how support can be improved for victims of FGM.
- MOPAC and the Victims' Commissioner will engage with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to discuss whether and how better support could be offered to women and girls subjected to FGM who live in London, but are victimised abroad.
- A review group will be convened by the London VAWG Board to review and ensure that MARACs function effectively. This includes ensuring that the Pan London DV service fully supports the effective running of local MARACs and reviewing the capacity of MARACs to exercise their responsibilities regarding tackling perpetrators.
- MOPAC will work together with HMCTS and the Pan-London Domestic Violence Service to enable victims to access IDVA support in both criminal and family courts.
- MOPAC will invite bids for new VAWG services made through the new co-commissioning element of the London Crime Prevention Fund and support implementation of the successful applications.
- In partnership with NHS England and the MPS, MOPAC will open London's first Child House – providing investigative, medical and emotional support in one place to young victims of sexual violence.
- MOPAC will review its commissioned support services to ensure they are equipped to meet the needs of victims of online offences, and consult with partners on whether lobbying is required to strengthen the laws around this kind of offending. This will include raising the profile of support services for victims of online crime, so that victims of crime are aware of the help available to them.
- We will lobby the Government to create an online standard for internet companies, introducing an ombudsman to invigilate the online space.

“I went to the doctor with bruises, cuts, crying and depressed. When I told him it was my partner who was hitting me, he said ‘Why don’t you just leave him?’”

VICTIMS AND THE HEALTH SERVICE

The NHS spends more on dealing with VAWG than any other statutory partner.³¹ Health professionals can play an essential role in responding to and helping prevent further VAWG by identifying, intervening early, providing treatment and information and referring patients to specialist services.

Many survivors told us that restricted time slots with GPs meant there was not enough time to disclose sensitive information about what was happening to them and that there seemed to be a lack of training and awareness in recognising signs of abuse. Others stated they were worried about family members finding out if they spoke to their GPs as they did not know or think it would remain confidential. Importantly there is a need to recognise that victims’ needs can be wide ranging and intersecting and that a ‘one size fits all’ approach to victim care is not always sufficient.

In recent years changes to the NHS have seen victims of VAWG, particularly those suffering from mental health issues, left with no adequate public health response. Local priority setting has not favoured VAWG and thresholds for accessing mental health services are now so high that we often see victims and survivors seeking support from VCS agencies such as the Rape Crisis Centres for long term counselling and support.

32. About IRIS. Available from: <http://www.irisdomesticviolence.org.uk/iris/about-iris/iris-service/>

We support examples of good work in the health sector, such as the IRIS (Identification and Referral to Improve Safety) project. IRIS provides training for GPs and health staff to help them identify the signs and enquire about domestic violence with their patients, and refer them to a specialist domestic violence service. A randomised controlled trial evaluation of the project found that women attending IRIS practices were six times more likely to be referred to a specialist domestic violence advocate.³² We will work with partners to understand the feasibility of expanding the IRIS model to encompass wider forms of VAWG beyond domestic abuse.

COMMITMENTS

- **MOPAC will meet with the NHS and conduct a feasibility study into expanding the NHS IRIS Model to encompass wider forms of VAWG beyond domestic abuse.**
- **MOPAC will meet with Directors of Public Health to explore VAWG as a priority issue. Specifically enabling better access to mental health services for those currently trying to access support.**

“You’ve only got ten minutes with the doctor. When you start telling them they say: ‘Sorry, but you’ll have to make another appointment’, and give you pills. That doesn’t help.”

ALCOHOL, DRUGS AND VICTIMISATION

The experience of domestic or sexual violence can lead to mental health problems and substance abuse, this is true for all forms of VAWG. In turn, people struggling with mental health problems and substance abuse are more vulnerable to further violence.

This is a huge issue for many trying to gain access to support. Many women with these intersecting needs are typified as being difficult, hard to reach and simply not the focus of some services. It remains a concerning feature of London's landscape that women with these complex needs are often turned away from services unable to cater to them. In one survey conducted by Women's Aid, nearly 10% of the total referrals into support services were declined because the service was unable to meet the woman's support or access needs around mental health, drug and alcohol issues, or around a previous conviction.³³

We have a responsibility, as key agencies to ensure that our strategies and policies enable services to work together to address the intersectionality of women's needs. To do so, attention should be paid to the ways in which these issues are commonly handled by services, the ways in which these issues tend to be separated out and dealt with in isolation of each other, and the impact this then has on referral practices and pathways.

The evaluation of the Stella Project Young Women's Initiative in 2013 recommended that more recognition is needed around age, in particular youth, as this can be a major issue in terms of someone's victimisation and perpetration. In line with this it also recommended that services need to develop specific responses for young women that are different from the service they provide to adult women experiencing the three overlapping issues of mental health, DV/SV and Problematic Substance Misuse. This should be reflected in policies and procedures of all key agencies. Also, that many of the young women in their programme as well as the practitioners, held inaccurate and sometimes confused attitudes and beliefs about the intersections of drugs (particularly alcohol) and violence. For example, that alcohol and drugs make men violent. Challenging these should be a priority area for commissioners and policy makers. MOPAC will ensure that this is part of our wider approach to challenging in harmful attitudes toward women through the Pan London VAWG campaign and associated VAWG Board subgroup.

COMMITMENT

- **MOPAC will ensure that dispelling myths regarding alcohol/drug abuse and domestic violence feature as part of our wider approach to challenging in harmful attitudes toward women through the Pan London VAWG campaign and associated VAWG Board subgroup.**

33. <https://www.womensaid.org.uk/violence-women-girls-challenging-myths/>

HOUSING AND PLACES OF SAFETY

The impact of London's housing shortage is felt by many vulnerable groups including women who are fleeing domestic abuse, an issue highlighted in the London Domestic Violence Needs Assessment.

Recognising the need for improvement, the Pan-London Housing Reciprocal Agreement - a voluntary collaboration between local authorities and registered housing providers in London - has been established. It aims to increase options for people in London with a social housing tenancy, who are at high risk of harm and need to move to a safe area of the city. The Reciprocal supports individuals and families to avoid homelessness, makes better use of housing stock, and ensures that those at risk do not lose their tenure.

MOPAC is working closely with GLA Housing and other partners to promote the service and continue to expand the list of Housing Associations that are signed up to the scheme. Further work is required to ensure that we attract greater numbers of these agencies to sign up.

The level of effectiveness of the response to victims very often depends on the availability of secure accommodation. The lack of available suitable housing for victims and survivors in London is chronic and creates several complex challenges.³⁴ For example, perpetrators of domestic abuse and other forms of VAWG often remain in properties after a survivor has initially fled and been placed in

alternative emergency accommodation (where it is available), making it impossible for survivors and their children to safely return to their home. Solace Women's Aid found that this was the case for around one third of the women in their refuges and 'In 87% of these cases the perpetrator still lived in a property which previously housed a family with 1 child or more'. Many survivors of domestic violence do not want to move from their house or area; being forced to move can be isolating and feel punitive against survivors wanting to exit a violent relationship.

The risk and harm is greatly increased when a woman flees with children, creating a further barrier to being able to access emergency accommodation. MOPAC will conduct a review into the lack of connection between child safeguarding and domestic abuse approaches in London. This review will focus on better communication and links between CSE / MASH practitioners and domestic abuse / MARAC stakeholders to increase consistency of approach and appropriate safeguarding which also recognises the nature of domestic abuse and VAWG. The review will also bring partners together to evidence the full scope of young people experiencing domestic abuse in London, and work with CSE support services to develop further integrated models of support.³⁵

This includes the ability to report incidents to the police, access the right support services and crucially to have accommodation needs met either through access to refuges or appropriate housing.

As part of this strategy, MOPAC will work with GLA Housing colleagues to explore the options for pan-London commissioning of refuges for survivors of domestic abuse and improve the overall availability of refuges and other safe accommodation. We will pay particular attention to those who have no recourse to public funds.

The national funding model

The new national funding model proposed by the Government for short-term supported housing represents a significant departure from the current system and the enhanced commissioning role for Local Authorities. This has the potential to cause serious issues for refuges across London as it depends on Local Authorities having strong connections with all local providers knowing the exact number of providers in the local area or the nature of provision available. Currently most connections are contract and client based, and a significant mapping exercise will need to be undertaken in each local authority to develop an accurate picture of the sector, particularly among private sector providers which will require capacity and resource at a time when Local Authorities are under immense pressure.

Refuge provision will require distinct consideration due to the reciprocal nature of services as a network regionally and nationally. This will be resource and time intensive and unlikely to provide a better result for victims and survivors fleeing domestic abuse. We fully support calls from the VAWG sector for the Government to rethink these proposals.

COMMITMENTS

- **The Pan-London Housing Reciprocal will continue to look to raise awareness of its services and bring in additional Housing Associations.**
- **MOPAC will conduct a review into the lack of connection between child safeguarding and domestic abuse approaches in London. This review will focus on better communication and links between CSE / MASH practitioners and domestic abuse / MARAC stakeholders to increase consistency of approach and appropriate safeguarding which also recognises the nature of domestic abuse and VAWG.**
- **MOPAC and GLA Housing will jointly explore options for pan-London commissioning of refuges and other safe accommodation, particularly for those who have no recourse to public funds.**

34. [2016, Solace women's aid: The Price of Safety: How the housing system is failing women and children fleeing domestic abuse](#)

35. [Work to be included in current subcontracting arrangement with Safer London](#)

PROSTITUTION

Women involved in prostitution face significant risks of serious harm. Home Office research has shown that 85 per cent of women involved in prostitution have experienced abuse from a family member and around 75 per cent have been physically assaulted by someone other than a family member. AVA reports that the primary link between domestic violence and prostitution is that, for some women, their partner is the person who encourages their entry into prostitution, profits from it, and can prevent their exit.³⁶ Involvement in prostitution is also known to be closely linked to complex issues including drug and alcohol dependency, mental health issues and physical health issues.

Our approach focuses on minimising the risks associated with prostitution and seeks to support vulnerable women to move away from their involvement, acknowledging the complex and overlapping circumstances that can lead to women selling sex in order to survive.

We recognise that women who have suffered violence or abuse and are involved in prostitution, may be reluctant to report matters to the police or access the support services they need. We will support the work of the police and other agencies in overcoming these barriers.

Leaving prostitution behind

The surest way to reduce risk to women involved in prostitution is to provide them with the support to leave. This is a significant challenge. Many women involved in prostitution are coerced into doing so, and some are trafficked into the country purely for this reason. Helping such women to leave prostitution behind requires a determined enforcement response to deal with the criminals forcing them into prostitution, alongside specialist support to assist women victims to cope and recover from their experiences and find other employment.

Homelessness is another key factor in prostitution. AVA reports that homeless women may exchange sex for somewhere to stay, and the threat of homelessness can also be a barrier to exiting prostitution. This increases dependency on abusive partners who are coercing women into prostitution.

We recognise that the drivers for entering prostitution may be complex and that drug dependency, financial motivations and a lack of alternative employment may all form part of the reasons for women's involvement. In these instances, we believe that relevant support services should also be in place to encourage and help support women to leave.

As per our commitment in the Police and Crime Plan, MOPAC will engage with the London Housing and Domestic Abuse Strategy Group to explore the

36. 'Independent Domestic Violence Advocates: Information Briefing December 2010 Prostitution And Domestic Violence'. N.p., 2015. Web. 26 Aug. 2015.

relationship between domestic abuse, prostitution and homelessness, seeking solutions to minimise these risks to women. In addition, MOPAC will develop a collective response with the MPS into how this issue is managed across London, with particular reference to trafficking and prostitution. MOPAC will work with the London VAWG Board and London Heads of Community Safety to put into place a strategic response across London to support women to leave prostitution.

Reducing on-street prostitution

Prostitution can cause wider harm in communities. On-street prostitution may have disappeared from more affluent boroughs in London, but in the most deprived communities it remains a significant issue. Not only does this pose a risk to the women involved in sex work, the presence of brothels and on-street prostitution can bring with it problems of anti-social behaviour and a reduced sense of safety for the people who live in the area. In addition to our work to encourage women to leave prostitution, we are committed to protecting communities from the associated impacts.

MOPAC's Directorate of Audit, Risk and Assurance will conduct and complete an audit of the MPS response to prostitution. Using the learning from this audit, we will work with the MPS, the MPS Sex Workers Advisory Group, local authorities, health services and the voluntary and community sector

to develop a pan-London approach to reducing on-street prostitution. Achieving a long-term reduction in on-street prostitution cannot be done through enforcement alone. We will encourage the use of a problem-solving approach, using all the powers and resources available to partners to address issues such as: drug abuse, homelessness and other circumstances that can push women to consider sex work; criminal exploitation of women and girls for prostitution; and the physical environment of affected communities, such as street lighting and security of unoccupied land and buildings.

COMMITMENTS

- **MOPAC will engage with the London Housing and Domestic Abuse Strategy Group to jointly explore the relationship between domestic abuse, prostitution and homelessness to seek solutions to minimise these risks to women.**
- **MOPAC will work with the London VAWG Board and London Heads of Community Safety to put into place a strategic response across London to encourage women to leave prostitution.**
- **MOPAC's Directorate of Audit, Risk and Assurance will conduct and complete an audit of the MPS response to prostitution.**
- **The MPS, the MPS Sex Workers Advisory Group and MOPAC to work together on a pan-London approach to reducing on-street prostitution, emphasising the use of a problem-solving approach.**

FEMALE OFFENDERS

This group of women demonstrate the most challenging and most complex set of intersecting needs. More than half of women in prison (53%) report having experienced emotional, physical or sexual abuse as a child, compared to 27% of men, and a similar proportion report having been victims of domestic violence.³⁷

In addition, some women become trapped in a vicious cycle of victimisation and criminal activity that is driven by abusive relationships, poverty, substance dependency, and/or poor mental health. For example, almost half of women in prison (48%) questioned for the Surveying Prisoner Crime Reduction (SPCR) survey reported having committed offences to support someone else's drug use compared to 22% of men. This highlights the complex and overlapping issues that can significantly increase a woman's risk of harm.

We need to improve our understanding of this vulnerable cohort in order to ensure support services are suitably tailored and accessible, enabling female offenders to cope and recover from their experiences of victimisation and reduce the likelihood of further offending. MOPAC will work with agencies who have specialist knowledge of underrepresented groups like female offenders to encourage and enable better information sharing and joint working.

MOPAC will ensure that its commissioned services are sufficiently accessible and where appropriate targeted to victims and survivors who are also female offenders.

In 2016, MOPAC jointly commissioned the Female Offender Service with London CRC to expand access to specialist women's centres. This investment was an essential first step in building up the capacity of female offender service providers so that community services like these could be rolled out pan-London as part of a whole systems approach. In 2018, following a competitive bidding process, a further £4.6 million was awarded from MOPAC's Co-Commissioning Fund to two multi-agency providers that will deliver services to female offenders across 22 boroughs over the next three years.

37. Ministry of Justice, (2012), Prisoners' childhood and family backgrounds, London: Ministry of Justice. Retrieved from https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/278837/prisoners-childhood-family-backgrounds.pdf

MOPAC will work closely with providers and partners to develop a sustainable model for these services that are so crucial in breaking the cycle of offending and victimisation amongst this vulnerable cohort.

MOPAC is working closely with the Metropolitan Police Service divert low-risk women away from the formal criminal justice process and into appropriate support services. MOPAC will fund a Female Offender Diversion Pilot that will enable officers to adopt more effective problem-solving approaches in response to individuals who are both victims and offenders.

COMMITMENTS

- **We will work with agencies with specialist knowledge of underrepresented groups to ensure the services MOPAC commission are sufficiently accessible and encourage partners to do the same.**
- **We will work closely with partners to develop a sustainable funding model for female offender services.**
- **We will work with the MPS to run a Female Offender Diversion Pilot that will divert women away from the formal criminal justice system and into appropriate support services.**

DELIVERING THIS STRATEGY

HOW WE WILL MAKE OUR COMMITMENTS HAPPEN

The Police and Crime Plan 2017-2021 sets out a new and comprehensive approach to setting priorities and measuring the performance of the MPS and partner agencies in delivering them.

WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

Measuring the things that matter

We want London to be a safer city for all, but we have not set any fixed, numerical, crime reduction targets for the MPS. We want the MPS to be focused on doing the right thing for the public.

Our performance framework is designed to measure the things that really matter to the safety of Londoners and that paint a more accurate picture of how safe and confident Londoners are. This framework enables the Mayor to fulfil his role (making sure that people's priorities are being dealt with effectively by the MPS and partner agencies) while also giving local police the flexibility they need to fulfil theirs – responding to and resolving the issues that really matter to the people in their community.

Ensuring focus on the most harmful types of crime

Our performance framework also ensures that the most harmful but often less visible crimes, such as sexual violence and child sexual exploitation – are treated as priorities across the city.

Under our performance framework, instead of focusing on crime targets set centrally, which may bear little resemblance to the things that really matter in communities themselves, we have consulted with every borough and developed a new system of agreeing local priorities, in partnership with local police leaders and the elected local Council. This means that across London, local police teams are focusing on local priorities, agreed using data and evidence and local strategic assessments. Under this system, each borough has selected two local priority crimes, based on local knowledge, crime data and police intelligence, along with antisocial behaviour, which has been identified in our consultation for this Plan as an important issue in every borough. In addition to these priorities, high-harm crimes – sexual violence, domestic abuse, child sexual exploitation, weapon-based crime and hate crime – have been set as mandatory priorities for every borough, to ensure that they are key considerations for the local police and the local authority. We actively monitor the volume of offences and look for a reduction in repeat victimisation.

To ensure that these priorities remain current and relevant, they are refreshed annually, with flexibility to change during the year if necessary. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor will hold the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police to account for the MPS' performance in tackling these local priorities.

Specific VAWG priorities

With specific reference to VAWG, a number of additional, specific objectives have also been set to ensure that women and girls are safer, and that victims of VAWG receive a better service. Using crime statistics and data from the Ministry of Justice, we will actively monitor and look for positive progress in:

- Encouraging more domestic abuse victims to come forward and reducing repeat victimisation
- Encouraging more victims of sexual violence to come forward and reducing repeat victimisation
- Reducing the rates of attrition in cases of violence against women and girls as they progress through the criminal justice process
- Encouraging more victims of harmful practices such as female genital mutilation (FGM), 'honour'-based violence and forced marriage to come forward and report

We will evaluate performance against these for the period of the Police and Crime Plan.

THE LONDON VAWG BOARD

The London VAWG Board brings together partner agencies involved in tackling VAWG and supporting victims to provide strategic leadership for VAWG in London. The Board is responsible for overseeing delivery of the London VAWG Strategy.

The Board seeks to ensure that services delivered to victims and survivors of VAWG are of the highest quality, are responsive to the changing landscape of VAWG and provide value for money.

The VAWG Delivery and Commissioning Group will ensure that the strategic priorities driven by the VAWG Board are delivered, while also ensuring effective and high-quality delivery from partners and commissioned providers.

OUR CURRENT FUNDING COMMITMENTS

The Mayor is committed to:

- ✓ Funding and supporting IDVA provision in London
- ✓ We will work with our partners to ensure that this service is integrated with local provision and is effective both within and outside the CJS.
- ✓ Working with partner agencies to develop a new sexual violence service model to better meet the needs of victims and survivors.
- ✓ We will co-fund advocacy services to support sexual violence survivors through the criminal justice process
- ✓ We will continue to provide discrete funding for projects to support male victims of rape, sexual violence and domestic abuse, including those in same sex relationships

In 2016/17 MOPAC provided £9.315 million in total for VAWG services. Of this, £3.85m is allocated to local authorities to support local commissioning and strategies to tackle VAWG through the London Crime Prevention Fund. The remaining £5.465m is directly commissioned by MOPAC for front line VAWG service provision.

We will ensure that all the services that we commission are responsive to the needs of different sections of London's communities

TRANSPARENCY

MOPAC is committed to high levels of transparency in its work. Terms of reference and previous minutes and agendas for all meetings of the London VAWG Board are publicly available on MOPAC's website.

In addition, MOPAC's website features comprehensive data on VAWG and other crime types in London, accessible through interactive dashboards. We continue to develop new dashboards to help Londoners and our partner agencies access and interpret the data we have on crime, justice and safety in our city.

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