

Item No. 13.	Classification: Open	Date: 16 July 2019	Meeting Name: Cabinet
Report title:		Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
Cabinet Member:		Councillor Evelyn Akoto, Community Safety and Public Health	

FOREWORD – COUNCILLOR EVELYN AKOTO, CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY AND PUBLIC HEALTH

This is Southwark’s first violence against women and girls (VAWG) strategy and sets out our priorities for tackling and preventing gender violence going forward until 2024. This strategy builds on our current domestic abuse strategy to include all areas of VAWG aligning with current national and regional strategies.

The strategy considers all forms of violence against women and girls and its impact on those who, live, work and visit Southwark. The strategy aligns with the aims of the Council Plan 2018-19 – 2021-22 where we have committed to a “*Fairer Future and for All*”. The strategy aligns with a number of existing work streams and priorities; violence against women and girls is a priority for our community safety partnership, whilst helping vulnerable parents is a priority of our children’s safeguarding board. In October 2019 the community safety scrutiny commission conducted a review of violence against women and girls, with a particular focus on girls, with an emphasis on prevention, protection and support, and working with our partners to improve effectiveness. I welcome the recommendations from this review which are incorporated in this strategy and associated delivery plan.

This strategy builds upon the firm foundation what has already been achieved through delivery of our 5-year domestic abuse strategy 2015 to 2020. This includes the introduction of a holistic domestic abuse service, which not only supports survivors of domestic abuse, but also provides therapeutic support for children and a perpetrator programme working with perpetrators towards behavioural change. Our housing solutions service approach to domestic abuse is recognised as best practice; they were the first housing service in the country to achieve the domestic abuse housing alliance (DAHA) accreditation in 2018. Southwark has also been at the forefront of tackling harassment within the night time economy. In 2015, we introduced our woman’s safety charter which has been signed up to by some 180 business premises across the borough.

Violence against women and girls in all its forms is unacceptable. It affects all communities and has an incalculable impact on the lives of those individuals affected, their families and the wider community. Tackling violence against women and girls is therefore ‘**everybody’s business**’. Southwark benefits from the diversity of its statutory, voluntary and community partners whom contribute to tackling gendered violence both formally and informally. We acknowledge that support networks provided by friends, family and faith groups have an important role to play in our response to tackling violence against women and girls. Through building on the community foundations we

already have in place, I am confident that by working together we will achieve our vision, and reduce the harm caused by gendered based violence for future generations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the cabinet approves the violence against women and girls (VAWG) strategy set out in Appendix 1.
2. That the cabinet notes that the current domestic abuse strategy remains in place as a standalone strategy until 2020 at which point the domestic abuse strategy will be reviewed. This acknowledges that while the majority of domestic abuse survivors are women and girls, men and boys can also be victims.
3. That the cabinet notes the link between this strategy and the councils work on hate crime and other key areas such as the needs of the LGBT community.
4. That the cabinet notes this strategy will be reviewed annually to ensure that it aligns and compliments other existing council strategies.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

5. Southwark developed a five year domestic abuse strategy in 2015. Although much has been achieved in the delivery of this strategy (full review of strategy to take place during 2020), there is a need to develop a broader VAWG Strategy to ensure that we are delivering a strategic partnership response to all areas of VAWG, not only domestic abuse. This includes harmful practices such as FGM and honour based violence as well as sexual harassment and stalking. This new strategic response will work alongside the councils work on Hate Crime and other key areas such as Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE). The chart in Appendix 2. Outlines how this strategy aligns with other Council Strategies and priority areas.
6. This is Southwark's first VAWG Strategy and sets out our five year (2019-2024) commitment to tackling all forms of VAWG in Southwark. The strategy will inform future commissioning plans.
7. The strategic governance for delivery of this strategy rests with the safeguarding adults board (includes statutory community safety partnership). The strategy is underpinned by high-level commitment to deliver our agreed priorities, working collaboratively with partners in statutory and voluntary services. This will build on the transformative work already happening across the borough.
8. The strategy has been developed after extensive consultation with our partners across a range of statutory, voluntary and community organisations delivering services for those affected by VAWG in Southwark. The consultation findings are woven into this strategy and provide considerable insight into what is required for Southwark to make the transition to a gendered approach to violence reduction.

What do we mean by Violence Against Women and Girls?

9. The term violence against women and girls also known as gender violence or gendered violence, is the term used to denote harm inflicted upon individuals and groups that is connected to the normative understanding of their gender.

“any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts,

coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.”¹

10. Violence against women and girls is the umbrella term which brings together multiple forms of serious violence under a single policy strand.
 - Crimes committed in the name of “honour”
 - Female genital mutilation (FGM)
 - Forced marriage
 - Sexual violence, abuse, exploitation and rape
 - Stalking
 - Harassment
 - Trafficking for sexual exploitation
 - Prostitution.

National context

11. In 2010, the Government published the cross government strategy “Call to End Violence Against Women and Girls”² which detailed a series of action plans to address gender based violence across all agencies. This has been followed by “The National Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy, 2016 – 2021”³. The Government strategy introduced a new National Statement of Expectations. The strategy reiterated the framework of prevention, provision of services, partnership working and perpetrators as the model to tackle violence against women and girls. It also created a number of opportunities for all responsible authorities to address VAWG, which included a new dedicated VAWG funding stream, the VAWG service transformation fund.
12. In January 2019 the government published the draft Domestic Abuse Bill. Key measures include:
 - A new statutory definition of domestic abuse which includes economic abuse and coercive control
 - Strengthened responses to perpetrators through the introduction of new civil orders
 - Establishment of a domestic abuse commissioner in law.
13. Alongside the legislative reforms there are a range of additional measures planned by the government which focus on four main areas:
 - Promoting awareness
 - Protection and support for victims
 - Transforming the justice process and perpetrator response
 - Improving performance.

Regional context

¹ The United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, UN General Assembly, 1993

² <http://www.gov.uk>

³ <http://www.gov.uk>

14. In *A Safer City for All Londoners, 2017-21*: The mayor's office for policing and crime (MOPAC) set out its priorities for policing and crime reduction. Tackling violence against women and girls is one of the three overarching priorities within that plan and the Mayor subsequently published "A Safer City for Woman and Girls". The London Tackling Violence Against Woman and Girls Strategy, 2018 – 2021⁴ which detailed a framework for London to be at the global forefront of tackling VAWG. The strategy outlines priorities around prevention, by working with young people and in schools, ensuring women and girls have access to protection, justice and support to rebuild their lives and hold perpetrators to account.

Southwark context

15. In Southwark, VAWG has a significant impact upon our communities: Southwark has the fourth highest volume of recorded domestic abuse offences in London⁵. The number of DA offences has increased by 27% since 2015/16 and referrals to commissioned specialist services have risen by 52%.

Domestic Abuse in Southwark

FY 2015/16 to 2018/19

Source: MET Police and Southwark DA Services



16. **Female Genital Mutilation** - Southwark is estimated to have 7,000 women aged 15-49 years old affected by female genital mutilation (FGM). This is 7 times the national rate. It is estimated that 8% of women in Peckham and Camberwell Green are estimated to be affected by FGM. (JSNA 2018)
17. **Complex Multiple Needs** - Assessment of data from PAUSE⁶ Southwark highlights that this group are significantly impacted by multiple disadvantage with 89% affected by domestic violence and abuse, 71% experienced childhood abuse, 21% were involved in sex work and 100% experienced mental health issues, whilst 46% had a history of care.

⁴ <https://www.london.gov.uk>

⁵ <https://www.london.gov.uk>

⁶ The PAUSE team works with women who have had 2 or more children removed from their care. These women may have experienced complex difficulties like homelessness, violent relationships or substance abuse

18. **Children's Social Care** – Evaluation of data from social care assessments shows the prevalence of DA in families in need, 31% of assessments carried out between May 2015 and March 2019 recorded DA as a factor (either impacting the child, parent or other household member). It is estimated that 40% of our children in need have experienced DA⁷
19. **The Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)** is held on a fortnightly basis. Officers from key agencies meet to coordinate a multiagency response discuss high risk cases of domestic abuse. There were a total of 609 referrals between 1 April 2018 and 31 March 2019, an average of 51 per month. This compares to 551 in 2017/18, an average of 46 per month, an increase of 10%.

Development of Southwark Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy

20. The development of the strategy has been a collaborative process involving extensive consultation with 39 stakeholders including representatives from the statutory and the voluntary sector, and survivor group.
21. The consultation process was invaluable as for many of the VAWG areas published data is minimal, capturing the experience from frontline practitioners has helped fill some of the gaps, adding value to the information that is available. Speaking to practitioners also reinforced the impact of VAWG on the everyday lives of residents in Southwark.
22. In October the community safety scrutiny commission undertook a review into VAWG & Modern Day Slavery, the findings of which can be found in the report "Making Southwark a safe place for EVERYONE". The review recommendations have been incorporated into the strategy.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

23. VAWG is an issue that impacts on all those directly involved. The controlling, coercive and physical abuse can also affect family members, friends and local community into future generations and future relationships. The strategy recognises the importance of developing and adopting an interventionist model that creates a multi agency approach, drawing on the national and local good practice that already exists in each of priority areas such as family matters, substance misuse, mental health or child sexual exploitation to name a few.
24. Based on the evidence gathered through our consultation and research. Southwark has aligned its priorities with those set out in the Mayoral and Government strategies. The VAWG Strategy sets out some key principles which will help to further develop the council's approach to address gender based violence over the next five years. These are :

Priority 1. Partnership: Development of a coordinated agency and community response.

⁷ Stocktake of LBS Children's Services where domestic abuse is a factor, September 2018

Priority 2. Prevention and Early Intervention: Identification of individuals and families at risk prior to point of crisis.

Priority 3. Protecting Victims: Reduce harm and impact of gender based violence on individuals and families

Priority 4. Perpetrators: Provide support to change behavior, tackling the attitudes that support VAWG, and enforcement.

25. The strategy acknowledges that there has been considerable progress made in Southwark to support those who are affected by gender based violence but that we are in a transitional stage and our consultation findings have highlighted, there are further opportunities to provide a fully effective gender based violence intervention programme. Therefore, Southwark will focus upon the following recommendations:-

Priority One: Partnership: development of a coordinated agency and community response

Delivery of a coordinated response to all forms of Violence Against Women and Girls

Southwark will provide strong leadership to ensure violence against women and girls is "Everybody's Business" and ensure that an integrated approach to tackling VAWG is developed, modelling best practice principles.

Southwark will adapt the national best practice coordinated community response to domestic abuse and extend this as our framework for all forms of violence against women and girls. This model acknowledges that no one agency can meet all the requirements of those affected by VAWG.

We will use the lessons learned from our Domestic Homicide Reviews to improve local practice.

We will develop a revised VAWG data set across all service areas. This will improve our knowledge of the prevalence of VAWG

We will support agencies, business and communities to work together to prevent and respond to all forms of VAWG. This includes a more integrated approach on prevention and promoting healthy relationships. To include improved working with schools particularly on the area of harassment this links to both exploitation and VAWG.

We will review our existing Women's Safety Charter assessing the impact and effectiveness. We will encourage all businesses and licensed premises to sign up to the charter.

Southwark council as an employer – we will continue/improve our response as an employer and ensure that victims and witnesses feel able to recognise and report harassment and that any issues are dealt with appropriately.

Southwark Council will work with the Business Sector to ensure the boroughs overall response is coordinated with common referral pathways to support.

We want to identify victims at an earlier stage and will continue to work in partnership

with out partners in Health towards earlier identification and to mitigate the health impact of VAWG.

Priority Two. Prevention and Early Intervention: identification of individuals and families at risk prior to point of crisis

Southwark is committed to preventing violence and abuse. Early intervention is key to reducing harm and we will draw from local and national evaluations to further develop our approach.

We will tailor our VAWG awareness raising to meet the needs of all communities and through a range of channels including future communication strategies.

We will work with children's centres and multi agency teams to support earlier intervention. These services are well placed to participate in awareness raising activities and early intervention.

We will develop a public awareness campaign to address harassment in private and in public and in the workplace. This will include targeted age appropriate messages.

We will target work with schools and colleges to address attitudes that support VAWG, including education events focused on the links between gang involvement, serious and sexual attitudes and beliefs amongst young people.

We will target work at faith groups to ensure that there all members of our community are aware of the support available.

We will look to continue funding for specialist VAWG support in the MASH and Housing Solutions to ensure early intervention.

We will target work at the LGBT+ Community and work with specialist agencies including GALOP and Stonewall to ensure our response is appropriate across VAWG strands.

Witnessing violence in the home, in their own relationships, or in the wider community can have a significant impact on young people ability to participate fully in school and achieve academically. We will explore the findings from the Contextual Safeguarding pilots <https://contextualsafeguarding.org.uk> to inform how we work with children and young people and communities to reduce the harm caused by exposure to trauma.

We will extend our network of DA community champions across the borough and expand the programme to include the other forms of VAWG.

We will target young people to ensure that future generations are educated about gender based violence from an early age. To include improved working with schools.

We will continue to support the provision of services that focus on the prevention of learned behaviours for individuals at risk of being future perpetrators.

Priority Three. Protecting Victims: reduce harm and impact of violence against women and girls on individuals and families

The protection of victims is central to the focus of this strategy. Although

It is recognised that men and boys can be victims of VAWG, women and girls are disproportionately affected.

Southwark will incorporate the guidance within the national and regional Violence Against Women and Girls Strategies which call for support services to target wider vulnerability/exploitation and offer wrap around support.

Where possible we will ensure "lived experience is incorporated into our response. We will ensure this by including stakeholder and services user's in future consultations to inform commissioning and our future service delivery model.

One of the key findings from our consultation was the need to improve early identification of those affected by VAWG particularly those in hard to reach groups. We will do this thorough ensuring individuals understand what VAWG is and capacity building our communities to identify those at risk and raise appropriate alerts.

We will develop a VAWG Service User Group composed of post crisis VAWG survivors who will function as the Councils critical friend.

We will consider developing a peer support programme in collaboration with our partners in the voluntary sector

We will revise our service delivery model to work across risk levels after conducting a full review of existing services and a comprehensive needs assessment.

A new service delivery model will be developed which includes support for victims (children, young people and adults) and perpetrators (across age ranges).

We will continue to deliver appropriate support using a wide range of gender and culturally sensitive services to ensure that all Southwark residents are able to access appropriate support.

We will incorporate the Foreign and Commonwealth Guidance on FGM, Forced Marriage, and Honour Based Violence into our service processes. We will ensure that the additional guidance relating to the heightened risk for Disabled and LGBT people are also embedded into practice.

We will target young people at the place they frequent including those using Family Nurse Partnership Services as well as substance and/or sexual health clinics to ensure they are offered support in relation to VAWG issues.

We will encourage the best practice approach of Housing Solutions to DA is extended across the partnership so all will receive a premium service.

We will strive to provide survivors with effective Housing Options.

We will review the referral pathways and procedures across the partnership to ensure they are robust and reflect current legislation and best practice.

We will include clear expectations in all our new contracts that gender based violence is not acceptable.

We will work to ensure that any barriers to services and safety are removed so that all victims are provided with adequate support.

Priority 4. Perpetrators: Provide support to change behaviour, tackling attitudes that support VAWG, and enforcement

Perpetrators of violence against woman and girls are responsible for their behaviour which is an intentional behaviour/choice. We will continue to work to change attitudes

and misogyny that drive VAWG.
We will raise awareness that in the wider context of VAWG, perpetrators can be intimate partners but also wider family members, sometimes in collusion with the community. Many forms of gendered violence are carried out by strangers including rape and sexual violence and harassment
We will continue to pursue perpetrators of VAWG through the criminal justice system
The Domestic Abuse Bill 2019 explicitly instructs Housing Departments to tackle perpetrator behaviour. Southwark will review its current response to tackling perpetrators introducing a tiered approach of prevention, protection and provision of services.
Southwark has commissioned some perpetrator work and will take forward the learning from our commissioned services, to develop a tiered response to VAWG which will include criminal justice interventions and support to change behaviour.
Southwark will consider the findings from the pilots in Bristol of perpetrator work linked to GP Surgeries to enable earlier identification of perpetrators and reduce harm.
We will capacity build professionals to have a greater understanding of working with perpetrators, ensuring that support and safety measures are put in place to support change.

Implementation

26. The violence against women and girls strategy is to be delivered over a five year period. The action plan will be refreshed annually to take account emerging trends, new developments in legislation or working practices. The strategy will be implemented and monitored by the VAWG strategic group which reports to the safer communities delivery group.
27. Actions arising from the recommendations and set out in the Delivery Plan will be shared across the key agencies and monitored on a quarterly basis through the VAWG delivery group and annually through the Safer Communities Delivery Group.

Policy implications

28. The VAWG Strategy will contribute to delivering the council's fairer future promises. More specifically it will help to support fairer future promise 7 - Safer Communities. It will also contribute to the fair future promise of making the borough a place to be proud of.
29. This strategy is also in line with the Southwark Community Safety Partnership Plan 2017-2020, which recognises Violence Against Woman and Girls as a priority.

Community impact statement

30. An equalities analysis has been carried out on the proposed VAWG Strategy; please see Appendix 3 attached. The equality analysis demonstrates that the policy shows no potential for discrimination.
31. Due to the nature of the VAWG Strategy, the extensive consultation and the involvement of partners in this process, the proposals set out in this report are

likely to create only positive impacts in relation to protected characteristics.

Resource implications

32. The above recommendations will be developed through existing resources and the re-commissioning of provision.

Legal implications

33. Please see concurrent below

Financial implications

34. In 2015 the overall costs of domestic abuse to the council were estimated to be in the region of £20m per annum. These costs arise from homelessness applications, children social care, specialist commissioned services, adult care services, mental health services and domestic homicide reviews.
35. The council currently invests £1,000,000 annually in specialist domestic violence and abuse support services. The amount includes a grant of £105,000 from the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime and £177,000 from the Home Office. These specialist services provide advice, support and accommodation to children and adults affected by this problem.
36. There are no additional financial implications introduced by this report. Any costs of implementing the proposed strategy will be contained within existing revenue budgets.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Director of Law and Democracy

37. This report is asking Cabinet to approve the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy set out in Appendix 1. This is a function of Cabinet alone.
38. Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 places a duty on local authorities when carrying out its functions to give due regard to the likely effect of its work on its functions and a need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent: crime and disorder, misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances, and reoffending.
39. In making the decision to approve this strategy, consideration should also been given by the Cabinet to the council's duty under the Equality Act 2010 which requires the council to have due regard when taking decision to the need to:
- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation or other prohibited conduct;
 - Advance of equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristics and those who do not share it;
 - Foster good relations between those who share a relevant characteristic and those that do not share it.
40. Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity is further defined in s.149 as having due regard to the need of:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages connected with a relevant protected characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the different needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic;
- Encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic participate in public life or any other activity in which they are under- represented.

41. The director of law and democracy notes the equalities impact assessment attached at appendix 3 carried out on the proposed VAWG Strategy.

Strategic Director of Finance and Governance

42. To follow the strategic director of finance and governance notes the strategy set out in this report and funding streams detailed within the financial implications section. The report confirms the implementation of the proposed strategy will be contained within existing resources.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Community Safety Partnership Plan 2017 - 2020	160 Tooley Street London SE1 2QH	Sharon Ogdon 020 7525 4396
Link (please copy and paste into your browser): http://safeguarding.southwark.gov.uk/assets/files/491/Southwark-Community-Safety-Partnership-Plan-2017-2020.pdf		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy (circulated separately)
Appendix 2	Overview of Council Strategies and Priority Areas associated with the VAWG Strategy (circulated separately)
Appendix 3	Equality Impact Assessment (circulated separately)

AUDIT TRAIL

Cabinet Member	Councillor Evelyn Akoto, Community Safety and Public Health	
Lead Officer	Michael Scorer, Strategic Director of Housing and Modernisation Stephen Douglass, Director of Communities, Housing and Modernisation	
Report Author	Sharon Ogden, Safer Communities Team Manager	
Version	Final	
Dated	4 July 2019	
Key Decision?	Yes	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included
Director of Law and Democracy	Yes	Yes
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance	Yes	Yes
Strategic Director Children and Adults' Services	Yes	Yes
Cabinet Member	Yes	Yes
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team	4 July 2019	