

# APPENDIX 1

## Domestic Abuse & VAWG Definitions

- 1. Gender-based violence (GBV)** - refers to harmful acts directed at an individual based on their gender or violence that affects persons of a particular gender disproportionately. It is rooted in gender inequality, the abuse of power and harmful gender-norms. While women and girls are the main victims of GBV, it also causes severe harm to, families and communities.
- 2. VAWG** is defined as: '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 private life<sup>1</sup>.' Different types of VAWG have their own distinct causes and impact on victims and survivors. What these crimes share is that they disproportionately affect women and girls<sup>2</sup>.
- 3.** The term 'VAWG,' refers to acts of violence or abuse known to disproportionately affect women and girls, please note that a considerable number of men and boys also experience these types of crimes<sup>3</sup>. The use of the term VAWG should not negate the experiences of, or provisions for, male victims of these crimes. VAWG is an umbrella term which brings together multiple forms of serious violence under a single policy strand.
- 4.** It is important to note these forms of violence are not discrete strands, victims often experience more than one form of VAWG crime and or exploitation at any given time, during the experience of abuse. Unlike other types of crimes, VAWG crimes, exploitation and abuse can take place over a prolonged periods of time. Some victims are affected by multiple forms of VAWG within intimate partner and/or family relationships, whilst others experience of VAWG crimes and exploitation is perpetrated within wider local community. Metropolitan Police Service VAWG crimes classifications include:
  - Rape
  - Assault by Penetration
  - Sexual activity without consent
  - Sexual assault
  - Indecent assault
  - Abduction
  - Harassment
  - Stalking
  - Trafficking for sexual exploitation

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<sup>1</sup> UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, 1993 [Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women | OHCHR](#)

<sup>2</sup> Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy, 2021 - <https://www.southwark.gov.uk/community-safety/domestic-abuse/information-for-professionals-about-domestic-abuse/violence-against-women-and-girls-strategy-2019-to-2024>

<sup>3</sup> Supporting Male Victims, 2022 (Position statement on male victims of crimes considered in the cross-government Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy and the Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan). [Position statement on male victims of crimes considered in the cross-Government strategy on ending Violence Against Women and Girls \(VAWG\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

- Indecent exposure
- Outraging public decency (exposure nature)
- Voyeurism
- Up-skirting
- Spiking

People in abusive, intimate relationships may experience the above and other forms of violence and Domestic Abuse.

- 5. In 2021 a new Domestic Abuse Act** and introduced a legal definition of domestic, and, for the first time children and young people are recognised as direct victims of Domestic Abuse when living in a household where Domestic Abuse has or is taking place, the act recognises the impact of domestic abuse on a child/children who see, hears or experiences the effects of abuse and treats children as victims of domestic abuse in their own right.
6. It is also worthwhile noting Part four of the act, the Safe Accommodation duty, places statutory requirements on local authority functions relating to the provision of support for all victims of domestic abuse including their children, regardless of their relevant protected characteristics, within 'relevant' accommodation.
7. **Domestic abuse**, as defined by the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 is: 'Behaviour of a person (A) towards another person (B), where they are each aged 16 or over and personally connected to each other and the behaviour is abusive.'
8. Domestic abuse affects millions of people in the United Kingdom (UK) every year. An estimated 7.3% of women (1.6 million) and 3.6% of men (757,000) experienced domestic abuse in the year between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2020. It is considered that this is an underestimate as domestic abuse and VAWG are not always reported to the police and are 'hidden crimes'.
9. It is estimated that one in four women will become a victim of domestic abuse in their lifetime, and two women in the UK are killed each week by an intimate partner.
10. The gendered nature of domestic abuse is consistently illustrated in statistics; victims are disproportionately female and perpetrators are disproportionately male.
11. Behaviour is "abusive" if it consists of any of the following -
  - a. Physical or sexual abuse
  - b. Violent or threatening behaviour
  - c. Controlling or coercive behaviour
  - d. Economic abuse
  - e. Psychological, emotional, or other abuse
12. The definition ensures several types of relationships are acknowledged, including ex-partners and family members.
13. Organisations exercising public protection duties and frontline professionals need to be able to identify all victims of abuse, including children and young people, and ensure people receive appropriate support and are protected as per their particular needs.

**14.** Incidents categorised within the definition of domestic abuse can and do, manifest in other categories of VAWG, including 'honour' based abuse, sexual harassment and violence, exploitation and rape, and stalking.