

London Borough of Tower
Hamlets

**Violence against
Women and Girls
Plan
2012-2015**

The Mayors Forward

As the Mayor of Tower Hamlets, I have the opportunity to make a real difference to the lives of all those who work, live and visit our exciting and diverse borough. I am pleased to present this partnership Tower Hamlets Violence against Women and Girls Plan, which contributes significantly to my Mayoral priority of making our borough a safer place to live.

This Plan has been developed as a result of the culmination of work over the last two years with individuals, organisations and survivors of violence and I would like to thank all of those who have contributed to this important agenda. The safety of the community can only be achieved through the kind of coordinated multi-agency approach that this Plan outlines. I look forward to seeing partners from the voluntary and statutory sectors contributing to the delivery of the Plan and utilising it to improve the services they provide.

Violence against women and girls has a devastating impact on victims of crime and their families, friends and community. Seeking help or disclosing violence is extremely difficult for victims and in some cases, can increase the risk of further violence.

Tower Hamlets has already demonstrated a strong commitment to providing a co-ordinated response to domestic violence. Our provision of a Specialist Domestic Violence Court with a dedicated LBTH co-ordinator is one example. Another is the recently established 'Domestic Violence One Stop Shop' led by the Police and coordinated with the Council and other partners. I will ensure that Tower Hamlets continues to lead the way in tackling violence against women and girls.

The Plan sets out four important objectives for our borough – to develop a better understanding of violence against women and girls and its impact in our borough, to intervene early in ensuring violence is prevented wherever possible, to support and protect victims, and to hold perpetrators to account. Challenging the attitudes, behaviours and practices that allow Violence against Women and Girls to prevail is also key to this Plan.

My commitment to eradicating violence against women and girls is echoed by leadership of this agenda at all levels throughout this Plan and it highlights the absolute importance of all our roles in providing an immediate and appropriate response to Violence against women and girls.

Lutfur Rahman

Deputy Mayors Forward

Community safety remains the biggest concern for residents of Tower Hamlets and as the lead member for Community Safety, I welcome all initiatives to support women and girls who are at risk of or who are experiencing violence.

The Violence against women and girls Plan is a partnership Plan and is reflective of concerns that residents have raised within the borough. The action plan seeks to draw the highlighted areas of risk together and provides recommended actions for both statutory & voluntary agencies.

The Plan will commence in 2012 and run for 3 years. It will be reviewed every three months to ensure that the action plan is updated and to reflect the needs of the community and any issues that impact on Community Safety within the borough.

I look forward to working with the Community Safety Partnership to develop this important and proactive piece of work.

CLlr Ohid Ahmed

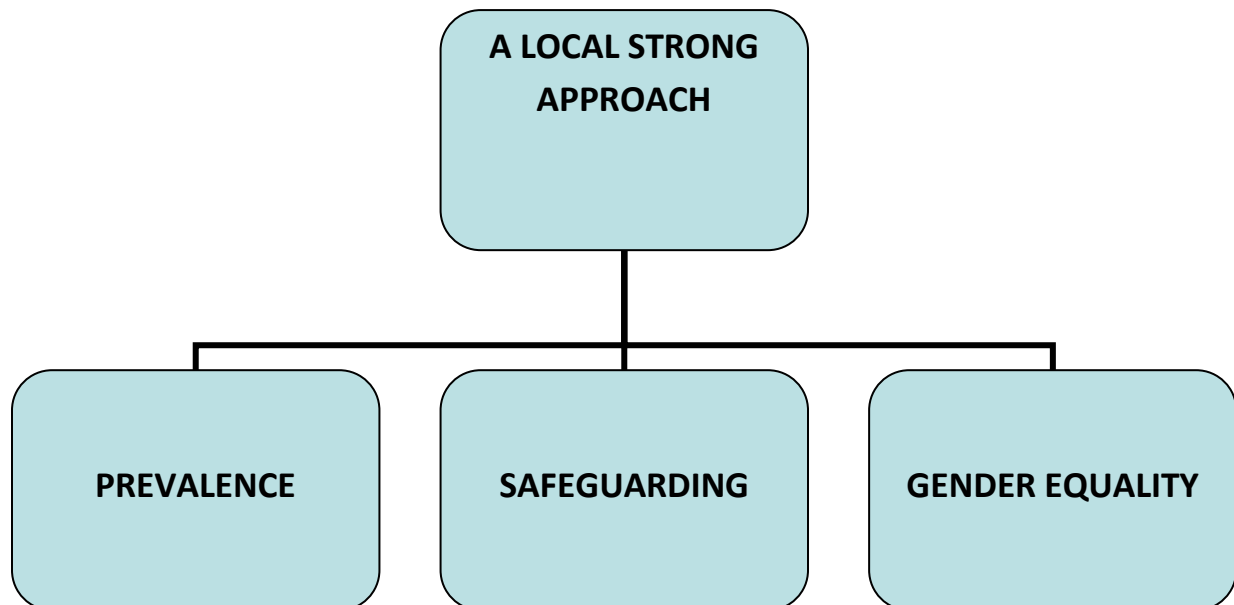
Deputy Mayor of Tower Hamlets, Lead member for Community Safety

Introduction

This is Tower Hamlets' first Violence against Women and Girls plan. The plan builds upon and provides a new direction for current work in Tower Hamlets, particularly work around domestic violence. It clearly states the borough's commitment to addressing all gender specific abuse and violence. By adopting this plan, the partners who will be responsible for delivering against it are making a high level commitment to the Violence against Women and Girls agenda and to ensuring that it is given a high priority within their organisation.

Tackling violence against women and girls is already recognised as a priority area internationally, nationally and regionally. The United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women was adopted by the General Assembly in 1993, followed by a resolution on Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women in 2009. In 2010, the Mayor of London published 'The Way Forward', a London-wide plan to end all forms of violence against women in the capital. The coalition government has published its 'Call to end violence against women and girls' (2011), which outlines the clear responsibility of local authorities to coordinate their response to VAWG issues within their local areas.

Locally, there are already many reasons why it is important for us to develop a strong approach to these issues, including:

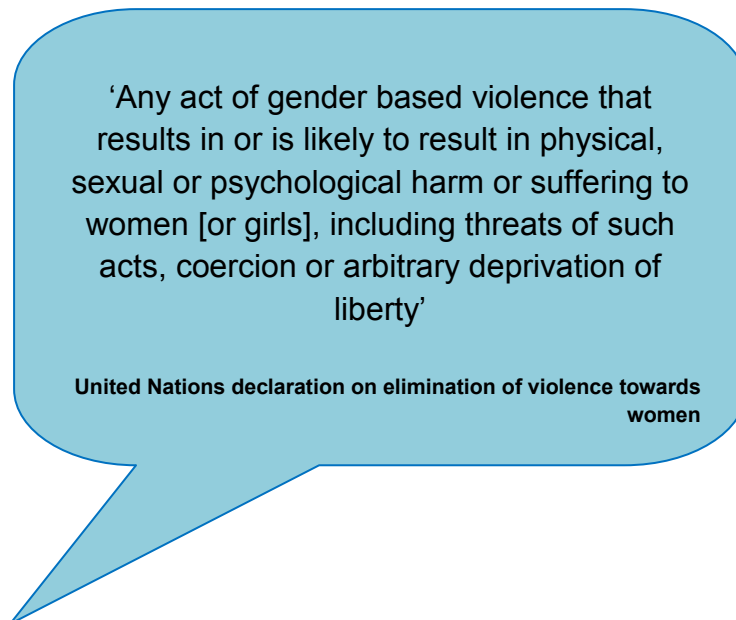


- **Prevalence** - Violence against women and girls affects a large number of women in our community. It is estimated that 45% of women will experience some form of domestic violence, sexual violence or stalking at some point in their lives (British Crime Survey). Locally, domestic violence accounts for around 30% of violent crime in the borough and 6% of overall crime levels.
- **Safeguarding** - Victims of abuse are some of the most vulnerable members of our community. Tackling violence against women and girls is therefore a crucial part of our safeguarding responsibilities to both adults and children. The risk of serious harm and even homicide in violence against women and girls cases is high. The consequences of getting our response to these issues wrong are therefore significant.
- **Gender equality**– Under the Gender Equality Duty 2007, all public authorities must demonstrate that they are promoting gender equality and that they are eliminating sexual discrimination and harassment. Developing a comprehensive violence against women and girls plan is a priority within Tower Hamlets' current gender equality scheme.

It is proposed that this plan will be reviewed and updated annually to assess the borough's response to VAWG and developments in understanding and response, as well as to ensure that partners demonstrate and maintain their commitment to service provision in this area.

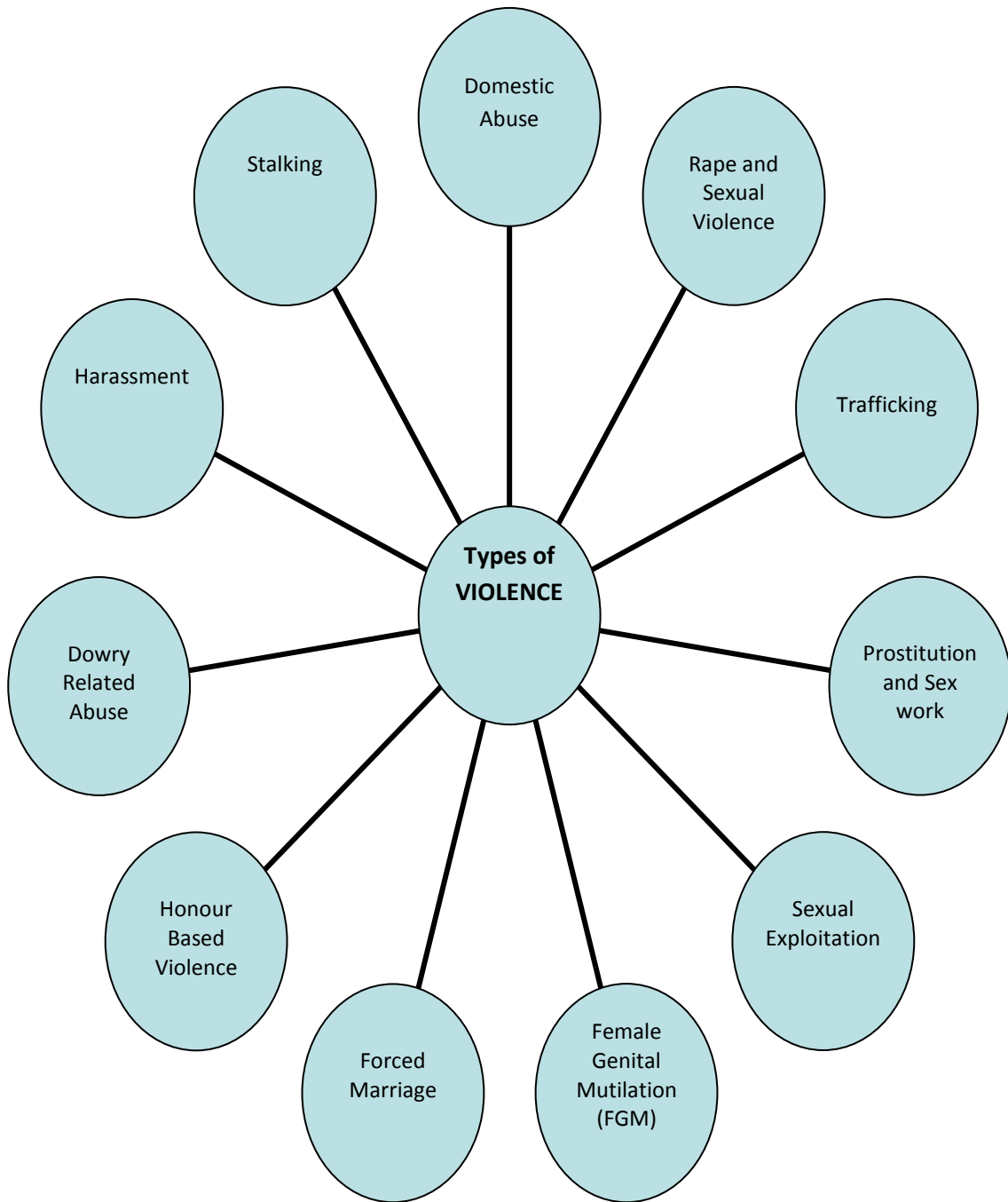
What is Violence against Women and Girls?

Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) is both a form of discrimination and a violation of human rights. Locally we propose to adopt the United Nations declaration on elimination of violence towards women, which defines violence against women as:



Violence against Women and Girls includes violence that is targeted at women or girls because of their gender or affects women and girls disproportionately. Examples of the types of violence included are:

- **Rape and Sexual Violence**
- **Domestic Violence**
- **Trafficking**
- **Prostitution and Sex work**
- **Sexual Exploitation**
- **(Criminal) Gang related initiation practises against women and girls**
- **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**
- **Forced Marriage**
- **Honour Based Violence**
- **Dowry Related Abuse**
- **Harassment**
- **Stalking**



Approximately 97% of all known domestic abuse victims in Tower Hamlets are female - a significant gender bias towards women. A Violence against Women and Girls approach sees the phenomenon of violence against women as both a cause and effect of fundamental inequalities between males and females. The UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993) states that "violence against women is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women, which have led to domination over and discrimination against women by men and to the prevention of the full advancement of women, and that violence against women is one of the crucial social mechanisms by which women are forced into a subordinate position compared with men."

It is important that Violence against women and girls is not seen as a series of incidents or assaults which an individual experiences. VAWG describes violent and oppressive patterns of behaviour and practises which achieve power and control over women and girls. It impacts on the physical safety, health and emotional well-being of individuals and impacts on families, carers, children and the community as a whole.

Abuse can take place, however, regardless of gender, ethnicity, faith, sexuality or age. Whilst we recognise that that the issues in this plan have a disproportionate effect on women, we also recognise that boys and men are victims of violence too. As a local area we remain committed to providing support for all victims of abuse and the intention of this plan is to strengthen our response to responding to abuse rather than undermining this approach.

What is the experience of local women and girls in Tower Hamlets?

In developing this plan, the LBTH Domestic Violence Team (now Domestic Violence and Hate Crime Team) sought the views of a wide range of stakeholders in the borough between July 2010 – September 2012. The key stakeholders are:

LBTH Children's Social Care
LBTH Adults Social Care
LBTH Children's Safeguarding Board
LBTH Adults Safeguarding Board
The Metropolitan Police
Public Health Services/ The NHS
LBTH Housing Department- HOST & Homeless Families Services
The Jagonari Centre
The Muslim Women's Collective
The London Muslim Centre
Refuge
Tower Hamlets Asian Women's Aid
Look Ahead Domestic Violence Floating Support Services
Victim Support IDVA Services
Supporting People Team
The East London Rape Crisis Steering Group
The Probation Service
The Royal London Hospital (A & E Department)
Lifeline
Community Mental Health Services
The Carers Centre, Tower Hamlets
Registered Social Landlords
Toynbee Hall
Safe Exit
Members of the Domestic Violence Forum
Rainbow Hamlets
LBTH Children's Centres
The Haven
Sexual Exploitation Group (NSPCC)
The Youth Offending Team
Youth Services
LBTH Domestic Violence Team services- the DV survivors network, The MARAC, The LBTH Domestic Violence One Stop Shop, The HPU DV drop-in service, The Barkentine Medical Centre
The 'No Place for Hate' Forum
The SDVC (Specialist Domestic Violence Court)

The key findings can be summarised as follows: -

- Nearly all of the women questioned stated that they had safety concerns when they travelled by themselves on public transport and most cited that they would 'change' their behaviour due to their fear of experiencing abuse, e.g. they would dress differently, not go out when it was dark or they would avoid certain areas of the borough.
- Most women had personal experience of domestic abuse, current or historic. There are many barriers women face to reporting abuse, that prevent them from seeking help, including fear that the perpetrator of violence would be informed of their disclosure or that their children would be removed. It can thus be many years before women seek help.
- Women need a variety of services in place to help them deal with their experience of abuse. These range from short-term crisis support to protect from further abuse to longer-term support to help women deal with the consequences of past abuse experienced and to rebuild their lives
- In spite of extensive work to promote services, there is still some lack of awareness amongst the community and professionals of what help they can expect and how to access support.
- Feedback from victims suggests that local services are generally helpful and have a positive impact on women's' safety. However some victims reported negative responses from particular services or experienced a lack of understanding from professionals around VAWG issues.

Current Profile of Violence against Women and Girls in Tower Hamlets

- Tower Hamlets currently has one of the highest rates of reported domestic violence incidents across the 32 London boroughs. In the period 2011-2012, The Police received 6625 reports of domestic violence.
- High risk referrals to the Tower Hamlets Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) have increased year on year, such that 2011-12 will see around three times as many high risk cases being referred as in 2008-09. In the last 12 months there has been an increase of 30.6% in the number of cases referred.
- Domestic abuse and incidents of violence (against women) currently accounts for a high proportion of referrals to LBTH Children's Social Care and is a key child protection issue for the borough.
- The borough's high levels of immigration have an impact on our response to violence against women. For example, 20% of women seeking help for domestic abuse need language support. In addition, a significant proportion of women facing abuse in the borough have no recourse to public funds due to their immigration status and this affects which services these victims can access.

- The ethnic profile of the borough suggests that culturally specific forms of violence such as forced marriage, honour based violence and female genital mutilation are key issues for the borough, although these forms of violence are not always well reported to local agencies. A number of professionals responding to our local consultation noted the importance of challenging culturally based attitudes to abuse.
- There are relatively high levels of vulnerability within the borough's population including high numbers experiencing mental health and substance misuse issues. Women with additional vulnerabilities often find it most difficult to seek help and are therefore often most at risk from abuse.
- Prostitution is a significant issue for the borough – particularly the on-street trade. We know that those involved in prostitution are likely to be at increased risk of violence and abusive behaviour, including sexual exploitation and being sexually assaulted.
- The Violence Against Women and Girls Plan is a development of the existing Domestic Violence Action Plan and builds upon the recognition between partner organisations that success in combating this problem requires agencies to work more effectively together. The need for a plan that achieves this is especially significant in the current economic climate where there have been substantial cuts in funding to relevant support services across the Public Sector including Women's refuges and Legal Aid. The forthcoming welfare benefit reforms which are due to commence on 1st April 2013 will also increase the challenges faced by survivors of violence in securing access to safe accommodation at an affordable rent close to their jobs, social or family support networks or their children's schools

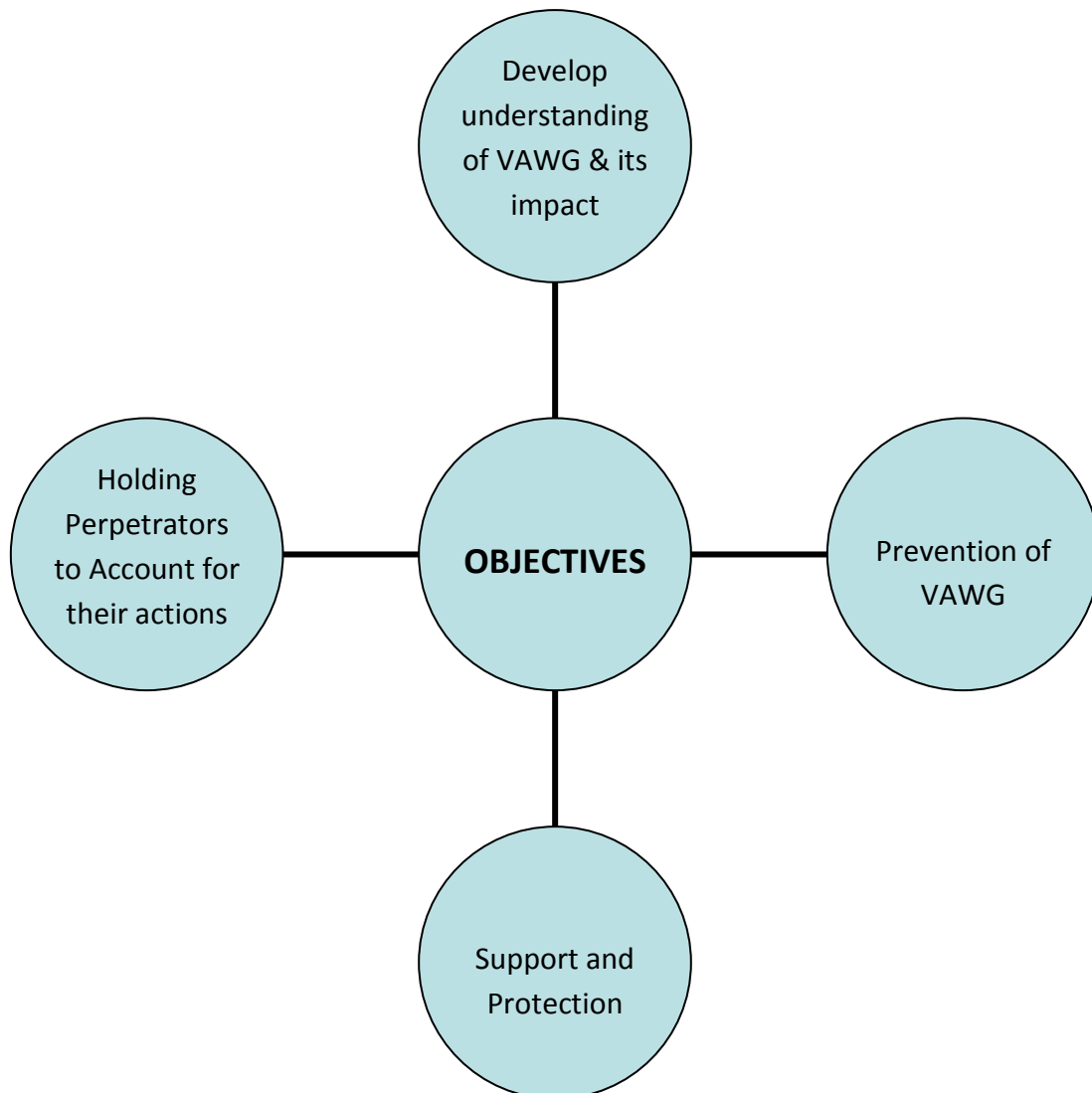
Our Vision

In adopting this plan, Tower Hamlets and its partner organisations have recognised the following key principles:

- Everyone has the right to live free from violence and from the fear of violence.
 - Violence against women and girls is unacceptable and any attitudes that seek to minimise abuse or blame women for abuse should be robustly challenged.
 - In order to respond to addressing violence against women and girls there must be a coordinated local response that brings together statutory services, the voluntary sector and the community in addressing these issues.
 - Our approach to tackling violence against women must be survivor-centred and survivors of abuse must be given a voice in the way that local services are delivered.
 - Leadership is key to developing an effective response to the violence against women and girls agenda, ensuring that local agencies and the community as a whole are held to account for their role in addressing these issues
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Our Key Objectives

There are 4 key objectives underpinning our plan: -



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- **Develop further understanding of VAWG and its impact** – Pulling together existing local information to build a comprehensive picture of VAWG and undertaking research and analysis to fill gaps in knowledge.
 - **Prevention of VAWG** - Increasing awareness of the violence against women agenda and challenging attitudes which seek to minimise abuse or blame victims of abuse
 - **Support and Protection** - Supporting the victims of abuse, both adults and children, helping them to rebuild their lives
 - **Holding Perpetrators to Account for their actions** - Protecting those experiencing violence and abuse and holding perpetrators to account for their behaviour

Develop further understanding of VAWG and its impact

The following specific recommendations fall under this objective: -

- The current LBTH domestic violence team and services will be developed, to ensure the objectives of the wider VAWG agenda are met.
- The multi-agency Domestic Violence Forum will become a Violence against Women and Girls Board.
- All agencies will work in partnership to address these issues and their contributions will be identified in our annual VAWG Action Plan.

1. Prevention of VAWG

The Issue

- Over a third of women in the borough are not confident about their understanding of domestic violence and sexual violence and over half do not feel well informed about domestic violence and sexual violence services.
- In a BBC poll, 14%-20% of those surveyed believed it is acceptable to be abusive in relationships in certain situations.
- In an online poll, conducted as part of the Home Office national campaign on violence in teen relationships, 76% of young people responding said they thought it was acceptable to hit a partner if they had been flirting with someone else.
- Nearly three quarters of children considered 'at risk' by Social Services are living in households where one of their parents/carers is abusing the other (Women's Aid)

Tower Hamlets Response

National survey findings suggest that more needs to be done to challenge negative and ill-informed attitudes about violence against women. Attitudinal surveys have shown that a significant proportion of people would readily accept abusive behaviour in their own relationships and a significant proportion still feel that violence against women and girls is not something that should concern the wider community. Attitudes that seek to excuse abuse, blame women for abuse or make women solely responsible for protecting themselves and their children are also far too prevalent.

The findings of surveys into the attitudes and experience of young people are particularly concerning. A significant number think it is acceptable to be abusive to a partner in certain situations and a high number of young people are experiencing abusive behaviours in their own relationships. Many of those responding to our consultation felt that it was important to work with young people to ensure that future generations are educated about violence against women and girls and what is or is not acceptable behaviour. A number of respondents also felt that our local approach needed to focus more on getting men to take a stand against violence and abuse and act as role models.

The following specific recommendations fall under this objective: -

- Work to increase awareness and training in VAWG
- Work to ensure that VAWG issues are dealt with in a holistic way, rather than as a series of incidents or assaults.
- Support agencies to identify potential or existing VAWG concerns.
- Agencies to develop clear policies and procedures which inform their response to any VAWG concerns that are raised.

2. Support and Protection

The Issue

- A significant proportion of women report feeling unsafe in the borough – 40% of respondents to a local project said they were fearful of being a victim of crime and 51% reported feeling unsafe on the street at night time
- 31% of women surveyed through the British Crime Survey had not told anyone about their worst experience of domestic violence and 40% had not told anyone about their worst experience of rape.
- Domestic violence accounts for about 12% of homeless acceptances within Tower Hamlets and is the second most common cause of homelessness in the borough.
- An estimated 22% of women first entered prostitution when they were homeless or in temporary housing.
- Women experiencing domestic violence are up to fifteen times more likely to misuse alcohol and nine times more likely to misuse drugs than women generally (Start and Flitcraft)
- Abused women are at least three times more likely to experience depression or anxiety disorders than other women

Tower Hamlets Response

The findings of our local consultation suggest that women can be reluctant to report any abuse they have experienced. There are many reasons for this including a fear of reprisal from the perpetrator and a lack of family support. The VAWG plan seeks to address these concerns and to encourage survivors to disclose abuse in a safe and supportive environment. In addition, our local consultation highlighted that women do not always know what support is available and where to go to for help. In Tower Hamlets, the average time for women to report domestic violence to local agencies is over 3 years (2010/11 figure). When women do disclose abuse they often vary widely in where they go for support. Locally, women seek help from agencies as diverse as homeless services, children's centres, their GP or health visitor, the police and local specialist services.

Long-term abuse of women and children can have a devastating impact on their quality of life and the general wellbeing of our community. Gender related abuse is linked to higher levels of suicide, depression and self-harm, increased sexual health problems, higher levels of miscarriage and stillbirth, lower life expectancy, poor housing stability and poorer socio-economic outcomes.

The following specific recommendations fall under this objective: -

- Key agencies who work with women and children in the borough to be equipped with full working knowledge of all the agencies that can offer support to VAWG survivors.

- Publishing a service directory of all the VAWG services available to those within the borough.
- Work to ensure service user engagement is always at the heart of safety planning.
- Agencies to be made aware of the importance of respecting and where appropriate advocating the views and opinions of the service user.
- VAWG survivors to be supported to make informed choices about the VAWG services they receive and feel that their needs are fully recognised.
- Continued development of the new 'One Stop Shop' providing walk-in support for VAWG survivors by a number of key agencies to enable multiple needs met to be met under one roof.
- Increasing the extent to which victims of violence feel well supported by agencies.

3. Holding Perpetrators to Account for their actions

The Issue

- 2 women a week in the UK are murdered by their partners or ex-partners
- Less than 1 in 7 of the worst cases of sexual assault and less than 1 in 4 of the worst cases of domestic violence are reported to police (British Crime Survey)
- About 6% of recorded rape cases and less than 10% of domestic violence incidents reported to police result in a conviction
- Over 260 high risk cases of domestic violence – where the victim is felt to be at risk of serious harm or homicide - are referred to the Tower Hamlets MARAC annually
- Children are known to be living in the household in 70-80% of domestic violence cases reported in the borough and 60% of the highest risk cases
- A study by the NSPCC found a quarter of girls aged 13-17 had experienced physical partner violence, three quarters had experienced emotional partner violence and a third had experienced sexual partner violence.

Tower Hamlets Response

It is our belief that perpetrators of violence against women and girls should be held accountable for their actions and improving the safety of those affected by abuse is crucial to our local response to tackling violence against women. Many perpetrators will continue to perpetrate violent behaviour in their future relationships thus affecting more adult victims and their children.

Victims of abuse are vulnerable to the risk of experiencing serious harm and as their experience of abuse escalates, they become at risk of being the victim of murder. Many of our highest risk cases involve residents experiencing additional vulnerabilities such as disability, mental health and substance misuse issues. The Violence against women and girls agenda is therefore a key strand of our local approach to safeguarding adults.

Violence against women and girls is also a significant child protection concern. Children are present in the household in the majority of abusive incidents reported in the borough. It is recognised that living in abusive households has a significant impact on the safety of children and their emotional wellbeing and development. In addition, girls and young women are overwhelmingly affected by violence with most domestic violence and sexual abuse starting during teen relationships. Young people are also at higher risk from issues such as forced marriage, female genital mutilation, sexual exploitation and sexual bullying on the internet.

Most respondents to our local consultation felt that men needed to be held accountable for their abusive behaviour rather than giving women the sole responsibility for keeping themselves and their children safe. However, it is recognised that there are significant challenges involved in holding perpetrators to account for their behaviour.

Violence against women often goes unreported and women can be especially reluctant to report abuse to the police or to go through with criminal cases. When cases are reported, the length of time to get to court and the weakness of some criminal sanctions can put victims at increased risk or result in victims withdrawing from the process. This means the majority of perpetrators of these crimes never or infrequently come into contact with the criminal justice system.

The following specific recommendations fall under this objective: -

- Work to increase the reporting of incidents to The Police
- Agencies to obtain more information from perpetrators when conducting assessments of risk in VAWG cases, in order to obtain a fuller picture of the circumstances
- Increase the percentage of cases being referred to the Specialist Domestic Violence Court (SDVC)
- Further joint working between agencies, for perpetrators who are convicted of VAWG offences, in order to keep the survivor safe
- Agencies to consider that most perpetrators will continue to have contact with their children after a relationship has ended and the impact on the children
- Increased awareness and support for the perpetrators programme facilitated in Tower Hamlets so that more perpetrators have the choice to access it

Existing Work and Development of Existing Work

The following points highlight some of the existing work around domestic violence in Tower Hamlets and ways that it can be developed and improved. Some of the development work is further detailed in the action plan below.

1. Sustainable funding to be provided for the existing Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) service and the service improved through a rigorous and robust tendering process and monitoring, ensuring that the VAWG dynamic is considered as part of the contract.
2. Continue with coordination of fortnightly Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) meetings ensuring key partners are able to effectively and efficiently refer and support high risk victims. Ensure all new MARAC representatives are appropriately trained before becoming a member. Deliver refresher training every year to existing MARAC representatives, with a focus on addressing areas requiring improvements such as effectively and efficiently assessing and referring high risk cases.
3. Secure sustainable funding for the Sanctuary Project, including increasing outreach work with housing providers, community groups and other key organisations in order to increase referrals.
4. Secure sustainable funding for the coordination of the Specialist Domestic Violence Court (SDVC) in order to strengthen the responsiveness of the criminal justice system to VAWG offences. Utilise the strength of the existing SDVC Steering Group and partner relationships to improve the response to VAWG in the criminal justice system, particularly courts and Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). In particular to focus on improving successful prosecutions for rape.
5. Continue providing weekly surgeries at the Homeless Persons Unit (HPU) to prevent homelessness and further focussing on priority areas of need, such as the needs of single women and families and to use this to increase safety planning.
6. VAWG surgeries/workshops in community locations including the Carers Centre, Community alcohol and drug service agencies, Hostels, Refuges and GP surgeries, in particular at locations to support older women experiencing violence.
7. To add to existing data and knowledge by reviewing local and national data on VAWG.
8. To improve the focus on vulnerable groups, to ensure this informs service delivery and policy development, identifying any gaps in services. This includes ensuring equalities monitoring profile data is collected for victims, identifying how closely this reflects the demographics of the borough and whether more work is needed with particular groups who are not accessing services.

9. To continue to update the Domestic Violence Service Directory incorporating new chapters to encompass the broader VAWG agenda and ensure contact numbers and services are accurate.
10. Continue to deliver training, including to Social landlords.
11. To ensure that Survivors forums run by LBTH or partners are high quality, well attended, run according to appropriate procedures and with highly trained and specialised staff, and available and accessible to all VAWG victims.
12. To continue to work with the Police in providing Tower Hamlets One Stop Shop in partnership with Victim Support and other key partners.
13. To develop the existing DV Forum to become a VAWG board and consider the re- launch of the Rape and Sexual Offences Forum (RASOF) as a sub-group.
14. To develop the existing Third Party Reporting (TPR) project for hate crime, to develop the capacity of existing sites and identify new sites. Specifically, to set up independent reporting centres that work specifically with VAWG victims and organise a re-launch of the Third Party Reporting Project to encourage reporting and raise awareness.
15. To utilise existing campaigns and materials to send out key messages about the wider VAWG agenda, encourage reporting and raise awareness of support provisions available.

Monitoring and Governance

The violence against women and girls agenda cuts across a wide range of different operational service areas including health, housing and community safety. The Violence against women and girls agenda cannot be delivered in isolation and relies on a broad range of agencies working in partnership.

We have developed an initial VAWG action plan to reflect this and as a way of monitoring what outcomes are required to be achieved in the next 12 months. This action plan will be reviewed on a quarterly basis at the new VAWG Board. It is also recommended that it is reviewed and reported on annually at the Community Safety Partnership (CSP). The VAWG action plan will be delivered by the Violence against women and girls partnership manager based within the LBTH Domestic Violence Team.

Leadership locally will be provided by the CSP, known locally as the Safe and Cohesive Community Plan Delivery Group. Responsibilities will also lie with the Local Safeguarding Children's Board and Local Safeguarding Adults Board.

ACTION PLAN

- The action plan will be reviewed quarterly at the VAWG forum and an annual progress report will be completed at the end of each financial year
- The VAWG partnership officer will be responsible for working with agencies to ensure that they are contributing to the VAWG plan

KEY OBJECTIVE 1: TO DEVELOP FURTHER UNDERSTANDING OF VAWG

Objective	Actions	Outcomes	Lead Agencies	Progress update by agencies
To use the VAWG plan to support organisations to understand VAWG and implement strategies for preventing and dealing with violence against women	Increased awareness of how VAWG impacts on the lives of women and girls, their safety, health, development and child protection	To develop a LBTH VAWG awareness raising campaigns	LBTH DV Team YOT Education Health Services Adult and Child Safeguarding	This has commenced with the introduction of the VAWG plan.

	To encourage further understanding of gender inequality and how this impacts on women and girls experiencing violence	Targeted schools and YOT campaigns	Boards Housing Voluntary Sector Groups Advocacy Groups DV and Sexual Violence Organisations
	To challenge oppressive attitudes that seek to attribute 'blame' towards female victims of abuse	Working jointly with all agencies including BME, LGBT and religious/community groups to support them to understand their role in tackling violence especially with regard to forced marriage, FGM, honour based violence and sexual violence	Legal Services
	To promote the belief that responding to the needs of VAWG survivors is the responsibility of all organisations	Support organisations to develop their own policies and procedures in response to the VAWG plan	

Provide specialist VAWG training programme to all organisations	All key statutory and voluntary agencies are equipped to recognise VAWG issues and develop ways of responding to them pro-actively within their own service and through joint working agreements	Integrate specialist VAWG training as part of the LSCB training programme	LBTH DV Team LSCB Safeguarding Board	To commence in 2012-13
		Deliver VAWG training to partner organisations and to work with organisations to ensure that this work is prioritised		
		Provide support to organisations to develop their VAWG procedures		
Establish a VAWG Board	To develop the current Domestic Violence Forum into a VAWG forum which considers all forms of violence against women and girls. This does not reduce the focus on domestic violence but seeks to incorporate other	Review the current DV Forum membership list to include more organisations which represent specialist VAWG organisations and the community/faith groups/ disability/ health/ LGBT	The DV forum membership	To be raised for consultation at the next DV forum on 18 th October 2012

	VAWG factors which are relevant to addressing and minimising risk to individuals and families.	representatives		
		Broaden the current focus of this group to facilitate VAWG discussion and agree a new VAWG action plan.		
		Provide a particular focus on how organisations can support individuals who do not meet statutory thresholds for social services support /do not wish to report incidents to The Police		

		Develop the LBTH Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) and increase the % of referrals from non-statutory agencies		
Work in partnership with Communications leads to develop a VAWG Communications Plan to promote our VAWG plan	To work jointly and regularly with LBTH and partner Communications Teams to promote VAWG activities, awareness raising and campaigns	Meet regularly with the Communications Team to identify ways of promoting the 'VAWG message'	LBTH DV Project Officer Representatives from Health, Safeguarding Adults and Children Housing Schools	To commence in 2012-13
	Increase campaigning and promotion of VAWG services, The One Stop Shop and Third Party reporting sites			
Establish a VAWG cross borough awareness raising	To promote the VAWG agenda, the borough's commitment to it, and the services available to	Establish VAWG working 'groups to increase awareness of the	All agencies	To commence in 2012-13

campaign	encourage accessibility.	VAWG agenda.		
	Include all agencies, health, education, BME specific groups, disability advocacy groups to participate in this			

KEY OBJECTIVE 2: PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

Objective	Actions	Outcomes	Lead Agencies	Progress update by agencies
Ensuring staff from all agencies know how to assess, identify and provide an appropriate response to victims of gender based violence.	Staff and organisations have clear policies and procedures which address this	For all agencies to have developed a fully co-ordinated response to prevention of VAWG	Adult and Children's Social Care Voluntary Agencies	Commencing in 2012-13
	Staff and organisations are trained to use the DV1 form, make safeguarding referrals, referrals to agencies and referrals to The MARAC	Increased awareness of sharing of information and making safeguarding referrals	Community organisations Faith organisations	

	<p>Training is provided in using the CADDA 'Dash' risk assessment tool as a risk matrix to identify VAWG risks</p>	<p>Co-ordinated response to assessing risk, addressing risk, increasing harm minimisation and repeat victimisation</p>	<p>Children's Centres Schools and Colleges</p> <p>YOT and Probation</p> <p>Voluntary Sector Groups</p> <p>Health Services</p> <p>HM Courts Service</p> <p>Rape Crisis/ The Haven/ The Nia Project</p>	
<p>Ensuring that all staff who work with children and young people are able to identify VAWG concerns and risks in order to provide intervention support.</p>	<p>LSCB and Adult Safeguarding Board to provide specialist training in identifying VAWG risks</p>	<p>Increased training provided to staff to support them to identify and report VAWG issues</p>	<p>The VAWG partnership officer & the LSCB training board</p>	<p>Commencing in 2012-13</p>

		Increasing awareness of VAWG as a child protection issue		
		Increased accountability of staff to report VAWG issues amongst young people		
		Early intervention support provided		
		Reduction in harm to young people		

<p>Develop, implement and deliver a VAWG training programme for health providers especially in relation to identifying FGM, sexual violence and cases of VAWG during pregnancy and where there are children aged under 12 months old</p>				
	<p>Provide VAWG training to health visitors, midwives, maternity units and A and E Departments on identifying VAWG and making referrals to the POVA team, Children’s Social Services and the DV Team</p>	<p>Increased identification of cases where there is FGM or where women and girls are at risk of FGM</p>	<p>Developing an equalities based understanding of practises such as FGM, forced marriage, rape and sexual violence</p>	<p>Health Services are leading on developing a approach to addressing FGM within the borough</p> <p>To work with the LSCB to include this in their guidance</p>

<p>Develop an offender based programme which offers planned intervention and support to female offenders who are VAWG victims, former criminal gang members or who are at risk of sexual exploitation/ returning to sex working when they are released from custody</p>	<p>To develop a working protocol with Safe Exit, The Probation Service, Women in Prison, Women Ahead, The Supporting People Team and The Housing Department to address the presenting risks these women face on their release from custody.</p>	<p>Provide an opportunity to women with complex needs to address factors which has impacted on them as offenders and VAWG survivors</p>	<p>The VAWG partnership manager, Safe Exit, The Probation Service, Supporting People Team, Women Ahead</p>	<p>Commencing in 2012-13</p>
		<p>Reduce sexual exploitation, reduce homelessness, repeat offending and repeat victimisation</p>		
<p>Develop and implement a VAWG awareness programme aimed at young people at school, colleges, involved in the criminal justice system and those involved with Social</p>	<p>Deliver VAWG training to schools and colleges incorporating the LSCB safeguarding procedures</p>	<p>Raising awareness amongst young people of what VAWG is</p>	<p>The VAWG partnership manager, Schools and Children's Services, The YOT</p>	<p>Commencing in 2012-13</p>

Services	Identify a VAWG/ CP representative who is the identified person responsible for developing referral procedures	Highlight and challenge presenting themes of violence within relationships amongst young people, gang initiation violence, the portrayal of women and how violence against women and girls is portrayed in the media	The VAWG partnership manager	
	Deliver regular 'VAWG youth conferences' to provide information to and encourage discussion and awareness amongst young people	Providing young people with information about how they can access support around VAWG as both victims and perpetrators		
Provision of a VAWG telephone advice line	Develop the current LBTH Duty Advice Line into a VAWG advice and information line. This is a free phone number- 0800 279 5434 and there is no cost to the caller if they are calling from a landline	To encourage victims, perpetrators, their families and carers and professionals to access support and information on VAWG services	The LBTH Domestic Violence Team	Commencing in 2012-13

	number.	To provide a multi-lingual, multi- cultural and equalities based information service		
Provision of 3rd Party Reporting Sites	To develop VAWG reporting centres within the borough where trained staff can offer immediate support or signposting to women and girls. e.g., at identified children's centres, The Homeless Persons Unit, Health Centres, The Library, Ideas Store, GP surgeries	To provide further opportunities for VAWG victims and perpetrators to access support and advice as an alternative to making a Police report.	The VAWG partnership officer & the LBTH DV Team	Commencing in 2012-13
		Increase community awareness of the impact of VAWG and the need to encourage disclosures of VAWG to be made		

		To place a particular focus on the needs of single women who are not supported by Adult and Children's Social Care and working women who cannot access services during normal working hours	The VAWG partnership manager, the voluntary sector, childrens centres, Third Party reporting sites, The Jagonari Centre,	
VAWG Policies and Procedures for employers	All employers within the borough should receive training to develop policies and procedures to identify and manage VAWG issues that may impact on individual employees	Employers should have clear guidelines to follow on how to respond to the employees who have experienced violence	The VAWG partnership manager and Human Resources	Commencing in 2012-13

		Addressing VAWG is the responsibility of the whole borough and not only VAWG agencies		
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KEY OBJECTIVE 3: SUPPORT AND PROTECTION

Objective	Actions	Outcomes	Lead Agencies	Completion Date
To ensure that victims of VAWG are aware of how to report VAWG, access support and have knowledge of referral pathways.	Development of the DV 'One Stop Shop' to become a specialist VAWG service	Encouragement to report historic and current VAWG issues	The Police LBTH DV Team Victim Support	Commencing in 2012-13
	Increasing VAWG advocacy services and information available to victims, professionals and the public	Develop self-advocacy for victims	Housing Services East London Rape Crisis Service	
	Increase in publicity of VAWG services	Access appropriate VAWG information and services	Safe Exit	
	Presentations to service user groups who access services	Service users to receive a positive, sensitive and knowledgeable		

		response		
	Create 3 rd Party reporting centres where victims can seek immediate advice and be supported to report VAWG incidents			
Ensure that women and young girls are safeguarded in line with London and Tower Hamlets Adult and Children Safeguarding Procedures	VAWG training is required to be included as part of the LSCB board and Adult Safeguarding Board training programme	Increased awareness of VAWG as a child protection issue	LSCB Adult Safeguarding Team	
		To include VAWG issues as part of child safeguarding assessments		

<p>Ensure that vulnerable adults experiencing VAWG are safeguarded in line with Adults Safeguarding Policies and Procedures</p>	<p>VAWG training is required to be included as part of the induction process of new staff</p>	<p>Increased awareness of VAWG as an adult safeguarding issue</p>	<p>Adult Safeguarding Team and The VAWG partnership Manager</p>	
	<p>MARAC training to be provided to safeguarding agencies</p>	<p>Increased referrals to The MARAC</p>	<p>The MARAC co-ordinator and VAWG partnership manager</p>	
<p>To provide key VAWG services which reach out to those with learning disabilities, mental health illness, dual diagnosis substance misuse, older people and carers.</p>	<p>Raising awareness of the impact of dual diagnosis or complex needs as part of the experience of VAWG survivors</p>	<p>Ensure that individuals with complex needs are supported with VAWG issues that may impact on their health and well-being and prevent them from accessing further rehabilitation for themselves</p>	<p>Substance Misuse services Disability services Mental Health Advocacy Groups Adult Safeguarding Team</p>	

	Further community engagement work to be completed to include service user participation and collating service user feedback on current services and service development	Providing alternative ways of reporting VAWG for those who choose not to report to The Police	The Carers Centre Hidden Harm	
Provide VAWG specific drop-in services to support the work of organisations providing support and protection to individuals and their families including A	Develop service level agreements to formalise joint working protocols	Increase access to services	Health Services	

<p>and E Depts, Children’s Centres, Health Centres, Housing Providers, GP surgeries</p>	<p>Provide regular drop-in advice surgeries to A and E Departments, Midwifery, Children’s Centres, Health Centres, Housing Providers and GP surgeries</p>	<p>To encourage victims to make disclosures to staff with whom they have already developed a trusting relationship with</p>	
<p>Ensure that women and girls who have experienced prostitution, trafficking, rape, sexual violence and sexual exploitation are able to access</p>	<p>Clear referral pathways to services</p>	<p>Increase support and protection to victims through a joined up working approach</p>	<p>LSCB Sexual Exploitation Group</p>

appropriate services	Identification of who these women and young women are and how they can be provided with immediate protective measures if required	Increased provision of emergency accommodation/ refuges	The LBTH Prostitution Group The Police The Haven ELRC	
	Establish a 'MARAC' style multi-agency sexual violence forum to address the risks of current high risk cases within the borough	To address high risk VAWG cases within the borough by safety planning and increased levels of support	ISVA Service Victim Support	
Sufficient and accessible support is available to those who have experienced or who are at risk of experiencing culturally specific forms of	Identify the current prevalence of culturally specific VAWG practises within the borough	Increased identification on cases within the borough	The Home Office Community and Faith Groups	

violence such as dowry abuse, forced marriage and honour-based violence	Joint working with community groups and faith groups to address the presenting risks and any trends identified and how we can address these	Increased knowledge of these practises	BME specific VAWG organisations The Nia Project The Jagonari Centre	
	Provide monitoring and KPI information to monitor the take up of service provision	Increased knowledge of forced marriage legislation and implementation of Home Office guidelines		
To develop an FGM plan and to support local communities to engage and support women and girls who have experienced FGM and who are at risk of 'cutting'.	To identify the prevalence of FGM in the borough	Agencies are required to develop a policy and procedure for managing cases of FGM	Health Services GP's Health Visitors	

	Work with identified communities to develop discussion on how we can address FGM	To provide monitoring of the identification of new referrals	Midwifery Schools Community organisations	
	Create a working protocol and referral pathway for women and girls who have been the victim of FGM or who are at risk of FGM		Faith groups	
	Provide training to schools to increase awareness of the prevalence of FGM			
To develop clear guidance on addressing issues of stalking, cyber-stalking and harassment and support victims of these specific crimes	Raise awareness of the impact of stalking and harassment on victims and the risks they present to both the emotional and physical safety of victims	To develop strategies in line with Home Office procedures on stalking	The Police The MARAC Adult and child safeguarding	

	Work in conjunction with The Police to identify cases where stalking and harassment are repeat incidents	Ensure that stalking and harassment risks are evidenced and an identified response is provided to all victims	teams Housing Services	
	Referral of these cases to The MARAC			
Provide support to those at risk of sexual exploitation through criminal gang membership and initiation practises	Identifying the current prevalence of gang violence and cases where there is evidence of VAWG	Ensure that gang related violence is seen as a VAWG risk	YOT Probation Service The Police	
	Develop joint working between youth services, Probation and agencies working with gang related violence	Gang related violence is a child protection issue	Youth Services NSPCC services Health Services East London Rape Crisis Services	

			The Haven	
Health services to provide specialist expertise on FGM, violence during pregnancy and that all health services provide a co-ordinated response to VAWG	Development of a multi-agency health based approach to addressing the risks of FGM and violence during pregnancy	<p>Increased support for victims</p> <hr/> <p>Increased awareness amongst health practitioners of FGM and the impact of violence during pregnancy</p>	<p>LSCB sexual exploitation group</p> <p>Children's services</p>	
To provide an equalities –based approach to VAWG by meeting the demographics of our borough such an LGBT specific service and a VAWG service specific to the needs of the Eastern European community and those	Collate statistical information on LGBT VAWG and current service provision and how we as a borough are meeting the needs of new communities	To ensure that our VAWG plan meets the requirements of The Equality Act 2010	<p>LBTH Equalities Team</p> <p>BME agencies including the Somali community</p>	

with NRTPF.	Develop services to provide further specialist VAWG services in line with the Equalities duty	Minimise barriers that VAWG victims face when accessing services	Rainbow Hamlets Galop Women's Aid/ Refuge
	Develop good practice guidelines with Tower Hamlets 'No Recourse to Public Funds' Team	Demonstrating a commitment to addressing inequality and discrimination within the borough	'No recourse to public funds team'

KEY OBJECTIVE 4: HOLDING PERPETRATORS TO ACCOUNT FOR THEIR ACTIONS

Objective	Actions	Outcomes	Lead Agencies	Completion Date
Increasing the reporting of VAWG incidents to The Police	Development of 3 rd Party VAWG reporting sites	Increase the reporting of VAWG incidents	LBTH Team Victim Support	Commencing 1st April 2012
	Additional provision of VAWG advice surgeries to provide advice & support victims to report to The Police	Provide increased safety planning support to victims	The Police VAWG advocacy services this service is currently in the process of re-tender and will commence in March/April 2012)	
	Increase of referrals to Victim Support	Ensure that victims have access to an IDVA (independent domestic violence advocate) / violent crime caseworkers		

		to encourage them to report incidents to The Police		
Increasing referrals to The MARAC particularly around FGM, sexual violence, trafficking & sex working	Increase MARAC training to all agencies who support VAWG victims	To increase safety planning & specialist support to VAWG victims to include addressing the behaviour of perpetrators and holding them to account for their behaviour	The Police VAWG agencies The voluntary sector	
		Reduce repeat victimisation		
		Share information within a multi-agency forum so the behaviour of perpetrators can be identified & challenged by agencies such as Childrens Services, The Housing Team and Legal Services		

<p>Probation Service to increase their referrals of VAWG victims to specialist services and contribute to safety planning measures</p>	<p>Provide VAWG training to The Probation Service & YOT to encourage them to refer victims for support prior to the release from custody of perpetrators</p>	<p>To increase the safety of victims & support perpetrators to address their behaviour within their probation/licence conditions</p>	<p>The Probation Service, The YOT & Women's Safety Officers</p> <p>VAWG services</p>	
<p>Working with The Police to ensure that they respond effectively to breaches of bail & non-molestation orders</p>	<p>Identify specialist officers for organisations to share this information with</p>	<p>To increase the arrest of repeat perpetrators of VAWG</p>	<p>The Police-CSU & The Sapphire Team</p>	
<p>Increase the number of referrals to the SDVC</p>	<p>To hold VAWG perpetrators accountable for their actions and increase support for victims to encourage them to report incidents and attend court</p>	<p>Increase the number of cases & convictions at the SDVC</p>	<p>SDVC co-ordinator</p> <p>Court Services</p> <p>The Police</p> <p>Victim Support</p>	

<p>Raising awareness of the Perpetrators Programme & Caring Dads programme to service providers</p>	<p>Increase the number of referrals to the Perpetrators Programme, include this work as part of assessments within Children's Services & encourage perpetrators to address their behaviour</p>	<p>Addressing the behaviour of perpetrators through them engaging in therapeutic work thus minimising further harm & repeat victimisation</p>	<p>Peter Joseph Children's Services, VAWG agencies</p>	
<p>Increased access of legal services to victims of VAWG</p>	<p>Identify experienced & responsive solicitors within the borough who are pro-active & knowledgeable in their support to VAWG victims</p>	<p>Providing victims with positive legal & advocacy services to address their needs & support them to take legal action against VAWG perpetrators</p>	<p>Local solicitors firms The DV One Stop Shop Tower Hamlets Law Centre</p>	

Co-ordinated working between all VAWG agencies & The Sapphire Team

Strengthening relationships with the Sapphire Team & increasing their attendance at the VAWG forum & other VAWG agency meetings

Increased sharing of case information which can be used to protect the victim

The Sapphire Team