

Equality Analysis (EA)

Financial Year
2013/14

Section 1 – General Information (Aims and Objectives)

Name of the proposal including aims, objectives and purpose
(Please note – for the purpose of this doc, 'proposal' refers to a policy, function, strategy or project)

Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy

**See Appendix
A**

Current decision
rating



Conclusion - To be completed at the end of the Equality Analysis process

(the exec summary will provide an update on the findings of the EA and what outcome there has been as a result. For example, based on the findings of the EA, the proposal was rejected as the impact on a particular group was unreasonable and did not give due regard. Or, based on the EA, the proposal was amended and alternative steps taken)

Name:

(signed off by)

Date signed off:

(approved)

Service area: Safer Communities

Team name: Domestic Violence and Hate Crime

Service manager: Shazia Ghani

Name and role of the officer completing the EA: Fiona Dwyer (VAWG Strategy Manager)

Section 2 – Evidence (Consideration of Data and Information)

What initial evidence do we have which may help us think about the impacts or likely impacts on service users or staff?

Evidence to support the VAWG Strategy has been collected over the past three years of the previous VAWG Plan. We have increased our equalities monitoring data over that time period and have a range of evidence to look at the impact on service users and staff including:

- VAWG training evaluation forms
- DV1 forms
- MARAC recording data
- SDVC evaluation data

This strategy has drawn upon a wide range of data sources to establish prevalence which includes a comprehensive consultation process with partners, survivors and organisations across the borough. Despite this, it is widely acknowledged that all strands of VAWG are underreported and many survivors do not come to the attention of services. This coupled with lack of awareness of professionals around

individual strands, means that true prevalence data is not obtainable. However, a major part of the work of the VAWG agenda has been to boost reporting across each priority area and there has been an increase across the majority of strands since 2013.

Section 3 – Assessing the Impacts on the 9 Groups

Please refer to the guidance notes below and evidence how your proposal impacts upon the nine Protected Characteristics in the table on page 3?

For the nine protected characteristics detailed in the table below please consider:-

- **What is the equality profile of service users or beneficiaries that will or are likely to be affected?**

Use the Council's approved diversity monitoring categories and provide data by target group of users or beneficiaries to determine whether the service user profile reflects the local population or relevant target group or if there is over or under representation of these groups.

This proposal seeks to address the inequality of women who experience abuse disproportionately to men. Approximately 97% of all known victims of interpersonal violence in Tower Hamlets are female - a significant gender bias towards women. As a team we do provide support to men experiencing domestic abuse and all forms of violence and whilst the VAWG Strategy does not make direct reference to male victims, we as a service remain committed to supporting male survivors of violence. Abuse can take place, however, regardless of gender, ethnicity, faith, sexuality or age. Whilst we recognise that the issues in the previous plan and this strategy have a disproportionate effect on women, we also recognise that boys and men are victims of violence too - 3% of all victims of interpersonal violence in Tower Hamlets. 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 qualitative or quantitative data do we have?**

List all examples of quantitative and qualitative data available (*include information where appropriate from other directorates, Census 2001 etc.*)

- *Data trends – how does current practice ensure equality*

We have collated a wide range of data during the previous 3 years of the original VAWG Plan. This has allowed us to build up a slight picture of VAWG in Tower Hamlets. However, as outlined above there are many areas where there is underreporting, meaning that the data we have does not show a full picture. The data that we have used for the development of the strategy has been:

- A Stakeholder consultation held between October 2015 and January 2016, with additional consultation with young people occurring between 2014 and 2015.
- Monitoring of MARAC data
- DV1 referrals
- Referrals to the One Stop Shop
- Referrals to the Sanctuary Scheme
- Monitoring of outcomes at the Specialist Domestic Violence Court
- Monitoring of IRIS data
- Monitoring of funded specialist support programmes: IDVA service, Violent Crime Caseworkers, Floating Support, Refuge and Harmful Practice pilot.

- **Equalities profile of staff?**

Indicate profile by target groups and assess relevance to policy aims and objectives e.g. Workforce to Reflect the Community. Identify staff responsible for delivering the service including where they are not directly employed by the council.

N/A

- **Barriers?**

What are the potential or known barriers to participation for the different equality target groups? E.g.- communication, access, locality etc.

The key barriers are underreporting of VAWG across all strands, particularly across the harmful practices areas (so-called 'honour' based violence, forced marriage and female genital mutilation). We have worked to mitigate this by working with MOPAC and partners from across the voluntary and statutory sector to increase reporting through a combined approach of prevention, provision and perpetrator accountability.

The demographics of Tower Hamlets means that there are relatively high levels of vulnerability within the borough's population including high numbers experiencing mental health and substance misuse issues as well as those with language support needs and disabilities (physical and learning). Women with additional vulnerabilities find it most difficult to seek help and are therefore often most at risk from abuse. We have found that coupled with No Recourse to Public Funds, women are often living for many years with abuse across the spectrum of gender-based violence.

We also work closely with specialist organisations to increase reporting from other groups who are less likely to report including women with no recourse to public funds and those experiencing multiple disadvantages (homelessness, complex drugs and alcohol use, street based sex working and mental health needs).

We have ensured that all specialist services funded by the council have speakers of key languages in the borough and an awareness of the different ethnic groups across Tower Hamlets.

- **Recent consultation exercises carried out?**

Detail consultation with relevant interest groups, other public bodies, voluntary organisations, community groups, trade unions, focus groups and other groups, surveys and questionnaires undertaken etc. Focus in particular on the findings of views expressed by the equality target groups. Such consultation exercises should be appropriate and proportionate and may range from assembling focus groups to a one to one meeting.

We have taken a combined approach to consultation. The consultation methodology is varied to allow for different stakeholders to contribute to our Strategy. A consultation questionnaire was launched in October and individual meetings and focus groups started in November 2015. (A paper version of the questionnaire is also available). We have also held a range of focus groups with professionals, local residents and survivors to inform our strategy and assessment.

- **Additional factors which may influence disproportionate or adverse impact?**

Management Arrangements - How is the Service managed, are there any management arrangements which may have a disproportionate impact on the equality target groups.

N/A

- **The Process of Service Delivery?**

In particular look at the arrangements for the service being provided including opening times, custom and practice, awareness of the service to local people, communication

We are not providing a new service but building on our VAWG work and the VAWG Plan 2013-2016. We have developed action plans across all 10 strands working with organisations, statutory and voluntary, across the borough to inform our response to tackling VAWG.

Please also consider how the proposal will impact upon the 3 One Tower Hamlets objectives:-

- **Reduce inequalities**

The VAWG Strategy specifically seeks to address inequalities that contribute to women and girls experiencing all forms of violence and exploitation. We are also working within that to recognise areas where women experience further inequalities including disability, age, maternity and so on.

- **Ensure strong community cohesion**

This plan seeks to increase awareness of gender inequality and includes a commitment to working with perpetrators of violence and increasing awareness of the impact of VAWG issues on individuals, families and the community as a whole.

- **Strengthen community leadership.**

We work in partnership with community and voluntary sector organisations and this includes faith, disability, LGBT and other community based organisations who are central to raising awareness of VAWG.

Target Groups	Impact – Positive or Adverse	Reason(s)
Race	Positive	<p>We are committed to supporting all victims of VAWG, regardless of their ethnic background. We know that 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, despite a vast increase in reporting through our coordinated approach, are not always well reported to local agencies. We hope to address this through a two year project which is currently in its first year which is funded by MOPAC and the DfE.</p>
Disability	Positive	<p>Research has consistently found that disabled women are twice as likely to experience domestic violence as non-disabled women are. The same research has shown that disabled men are also more at risk, although at a rate of about 1.5 times non-disabled men. In 2014/2015 there were 23 disabled victims (20 female and 3 male victims) referred to the domestic violence MARAC. The VAWG strategy provides key consideration to the additional barriers that disabled victims face in reporting and we have highlighted the impact on disabled victims of forced marriage in particular.</p>
Sex	Positive	<p>Although the strategy is predominantly aimed at supporting women and girls who have been affected by abuse, we recognise that men and boys also need support and we provide services to ensure that all victims are supported. Young men are included within all training and awareness-raising in schools and we work to ensure a rights based approach to supporting all victims affected. In 2014/2015, 382 females and 31 males were discussed at MARAC, meaning that men comprised almost 7.5% of all cases discussed.</p>
Gender Reassignment	Positive	<p>The VAWG Strategy (and separate domestic violence action plan) gives consideration to the needs of transgender people, how they choose to define their gender and choose the services that are appropriate to their needs. We are committed to providing specialist training in this area to organisations within the borough. We are currently aware that there may, as with other areas of VAWG, be an underreporting from the transgender community but we do keep figures from the MARAC on transgender people and are aware that 1 case was subject to MARAC during 2014/2015.</p>
Sexual Orientation	Positive	<p>The Strategy gives consideration to sexual orientation and we support all survivors of abuse regardless of sexual orientation. Research suggests that there are similar levels of VAWG in LGBT relationships as in heterosexual relationships: here it is clear both men and women can be victims and perpetrators. In 2014/2015, there were 9 gay men, 2 bisexual women and 1 transgender man referred to the Domestic Violence MARAC.</p>
Religion or Belief	Positive	<p>The VAWG strategy recognises the key role of faith leaders in challenging attitudes about the prevalence and acceptability of VAWG and sets out how we will work with people from all faith backgrounds to involve them in the development of the</p>

		communications and awareness raising elements of the strategy with a focus on prevention and early intervention.
Age	Positive	<p>The VAWG strategy seeks to address inequalities faced by women and girls of all ages. We are particularly aware that older women (aged 60+) may face increased vulnerability due to their age and we actively work with the Safeguarding Adults Team to promote increased awareness of VAWG as well as providing training delivered by specialist services working with older victims of VAWG.</p> <p>Each year up to 750,000 children in the UK experience domestic violence. Most children who live in families where there is abuse are aware of the abuse that has been taking place and a meta-analysis of research studies estimated that in 30 -60 percent of domestic violence cases, the abusive partner was also abusing children in the family meaning that it is the most serious safeguarding issue for children. Children’s social care estimates that around 70-80% of all contacts to the Integrated Pathways and Support Team (IPST)/Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) Team involve domestic abuse (using the wider definition). In 2014/2015 there were 467 children involved in the case referred to MARAC.</p> <p>The majority of forms of VAWG adversely impact on young people up to the age of 24, including forced marriage and other forms of harmful practices. The VAWG Strategy explicitly recognises the impact that the high youth population in the borough has on our response to VAWG and we work closely with children’s social care to address specific areas that affect young people including child sexual exploitation and sexual violence within a gang or group situation.</p>
Marriage and Civil Partnerships.	Positive	The VAWG strategy aims to support all residents regardless of their marriage status.
Pregnancy and Maternity	Positive	The risks of experiencing violence increase during pregnancy and we work closely with maternity services to establish clear working protocols and actions to address this. This includes a holistic maternity clinic for women survivors of FGM who are pregnant.
Other Socio-economic Carers	Positive	<p>In Tower Hamlets, over the past year alone, we have had 10 cases to the domestic violence MARAC where single women with no recourse to public funds have been referred. Women who are also victims of forced marriage or trafficking for the purposes of forced marriage have been forced to flee from abusive homes but have been unable to access any adequate accommodation. Some women have been supported to return to their countries of origin but this does not mean that they are necessarily safer and this is a real safety concern for us, especially as the numbers of women identified are increasing.</p> <p>Another key challenge to providing our work on VAWG is the difficulties that welfare reform coupled with austerity has on the survivors we work with and also the organisations providing specialist support services. Women are disproportionately affected by all of the reforms and victims of VAWG are further victimised through high levels of financial control. We have sought to mitigate some of the impacts through development of the partnerships, the champion programme as well as external funding meaning that our VAWG work can be developed without huge levels of additional resourcing.</p>

Section 4 – Mitigating Impacts and Alternative Options

From the analysis and interpretation of evidence in section 2 and 3 - Is there any evidence or view that suggests that different equality or other protected groups (including staff) could be adversely and/or disproportionately impacted by the proposal?

No

If yes, please detail below how evidence influenced and formed the proposal? For example, why parts of the proposal were added / removed?

(Please note – a key part of the EA process is to show that we have made reasonable and informed attempts to mitigate any negative impacts. An EA is a service improvement tool and as such you may wish to consider a number of alternative options or mitigation in terms of the proposal.)

Where you believe the proposal discriminates but not unlawfully, you must set out below your objective justification for continuing with the proposal, without mitigating action.

Section 5 – Quality Assurance and Monitoring

Have monitoring systems been put in place to check the implementation of the proposal and recommendations?

Yes

How will the monitoring systems further assess the impact on the equality target groups?

We complete a VAWG performance matrix on a quarterly basis as well as completing returns to MOPAC on the VAWG training programme, including equalities information.

Does the policy/function comply with equalities legislation?

(Please consider the [OTH objectives](#) and [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) criteria)

Yes

If there are gaps in information or areas for further improvement, please list them below:

N/A

How will the results of this Equality Analysis feed into the performance planning process?

This will be monitored on a quarterly basis by the VAWG Steering Group which then reports to the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) on a monthly basis and completes the Strategic Assessment on an annual basis.

Section 6 - Action Plan

As a result of these conclusions and recommendations what actions (if any) **will** be included in your business planning and wider review processes (team plan)? Please consider any gaps or areas needing further attention in the table below the example.

Please see attached VAWG performance matrix for actions and outcomes

Recommendation	Key activity	Progress milestones including target dates for either completion or progress	Officer responsible	Progress
Example				
1. Better collection of feedback, consultation and data sources	1. Create and use feedback forms. Consult other providers and experts	1. Forms ready for January 2010 Start consultations Jan 2010	1.NR & PB	
2. Non-discriminatory behaviour	2. Regular awareness at staff meetings. Train staff in specialist courses	2. Raise awareness at one staff meeting a month. At least 2 specialist courses to be run per year for staff.	2. NR	

Recommendation	Key activity	Progress milestones including target dates for either completion or progress	Officer responsible	Progress

Appendix A

(Sample) Equality Assessment Criteria

Decision	Action	Risk
As a result of performing the analysis, it is evident that a risk of discrimination exists (direct, indirect, unintentional or otherwise) to one or more of the nine groups of people who share <i>Protected Characteristics</i> . It is recommended that the use of the policy be suspended until further work or analysis is performed.	Suspend – Further Work Required	Red 
As a result of performing the analysis, it is evident that a risk of discrimination exists (direct, indirect, unintentional or otherwise) to one or more of the nine groups of people who share <i>Protected Characteristics</i> . However, a genuine determining reason may exist that could legitimise or justify the use of this policy.	Further (specialist) advice should be taken	Red Amber 
As a result of performing the analysis, it is evident that a risk of discrimination (as described above) exists and this risk may be removed or reduced by implementing the actions detailed within the <i>Action Planning</i> section of this document.	Proceed pending agreement of mitigating action	Amber 
As a result of performing the analysis, the policy, project or function does not appear to have any adverse effects on people who share <i>Protected Characteristics</i> and no further actions are recommended at this stage.	Proceed with implementation	Green: 