

**Final Draft (Version 0.9)**

## **Barnet Safer Communities Partnership**

**Supported by:  
Barnet Domestic Violence Delivery Board  
Barnet Domestic Violence Forum**

# **Barnet Violence against Women and Girls Strategy 2017-2020**

**May 2017**

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## **Foreword**

Preventing and responding to violence against women and girls remains a priority for Barnet's Safer Communities Partnership.

As more victims and survivors come forward to report domestic abuse and violence, we need to ensure that they get the support they need and that our services reduce the impact on children and families who witness incidents.

This strategy sets out our partnership commitment to work together to prevent all forms of violence against women and girls (VAWG) including domestic violence and abuse (DVA) in Barnet.

We want to see an increase in reporting as a result of raised community awareness and victim confidence and an increase in prosecution and convictions for what can still be hidden crimes.

We want to see early intervention and prevention that builds resilience in families and contributes towards making Barnet a family friendly borough.

We have committed to reviewing and developing our services so that fewer victims reach crisis point and that every victim is able to access co-ordinated support at the right time.

We will achieve these outcomes by raising public and professional awareness, providing early intervention, supporting victims and their families, and bringing perpetrators to justice.

We will not be complacent as we accept that this type of crime is under reported and we need to continue to deliver effective and accessible services that build resilience and increase the confidence of victims so they can come forward and seek assistance to stop problems escalating.

As chair of the Safer Communities Partnership Board, Chair of the Council's Community Leadership Committee and as the current Mayor of Barnet I fully support this strategy and the approach set out within it.

I would like to thank all our partners (statutory, private and voluntary) especially their officers for the ongoing commitment to work together to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls in Barnet.

I also want to thank the many victims who have had the strength and courage to come forward and report the abuse, showing trust in us to help them, their children and their families.

**Clr David Longstaff**

**Chair of Barnet Safer Communities Partnership Board**

**On behalf of the Safer Communities Partnership**

## Executive Summary

Between 2012 and 2016, DVA calls to the police in Barnet increased from 3503 to 4990. As more victims and survivors come forward to report domestic abuse and violence, we want to ensure victims are able to access services that build victim resilience, reduce the risk of families reaching crisis point and reduce the impact on children who witness incidents. We also want to hold perpetrators to account for their behaviour.

Across the partnership, it costs Barnet an estimated £38 million<sup>1</sup> a year to respond to DVA and VAWG.

Partners across the borough include the Local Authority, Police, Clinical Commissioning Group, Public Health, National Probation Service, Community Rehabilitation Company, Health providers, voluntary and community groups.

By responding to VAWG early on and even preventing it, we will make significant savings and, most importantly, reduce the harm it causes to victims, their families and the wider community.

Barnet Council continue to fund specialist services for victims of DVA and VAWG; this includes refuge provision, IDVA<sup>2</sup> Service and the Domestic Violence MARAC<sup>3</sup>.

Between April 2016 and December 2016 Solace Women's Aid received 890 referrals to Barnet's IDVA service, 40 referrals for our refuge service and our DV MARAC, delivered by Hestia, received 226 referrals with 211 children within these households.

569 perpetrators were charged (as at December 2016) with 374 perpetrators cautioned (66% of total charged - in line with the rest of London overall). In 2015 Barnet council commissioned RISE to deliver our adult and young people's perpetrator service to support perpetrators in changing their behaviour. In 2016/2017 the programme received 42 referrals.

Our local partnership working has gone from strength to strength, with Barnet Homes, Solace Women's Aid securing £100,000 in March 2015 to set up an additional refuge and securing a further £100,000 in February 2017 to sustain the refuge provision, partnering up with IKWRO, Jewish Women's Aid, Asian Women's Resource Centre and Mental Health services.

In September 2015 Barnet Homes working with partners including Victim Support, Jewish Women's Aid, Solace Women's Aid and 3 private solicitor firms (specialising in family law, housing and immigration), Barnet Magistrate and Cyber Care set up

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<sup>1</sup> London Borough of Barnet Community Safety Strategic Assessment 2014/15

<sup>2</sup> Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy Service

<sup>3</sup> Multi-agency risk assessment conference for high risk cases

Barnet's One Stop Shop (OSS), a drop in service for early intervention and advice for victims of DVA and VAWG. Since September 2015 the OSS has responded to 401 cases.

In 2015/2016 and 2016/2017 our Local Children's Safeguarding Board (LCSB) prioritised DVA and the impact on children, actively supporting the partnership to respond to DVA and VAWG by:

- Including DVA in their Safeguarding training program
- Working with partners including Public Health and CCG to raise £87,000 to fund an IRIS project to train 25 GP surgeries in Barnet. This project will be commissioned and delivered in 2017/2018.
- Initiating the use of the anti-social behaviour injunction (ASBI) to ensure perpetrators fully engage with a perpetrator by using the positive requirement in the injunction. We are really pleased that Barnet Police with the support of the council and RISE, successfully secured the first ASBI in the UK for a DVA case.

Partners in Barnet also came together to conduct a review into two domestic violence homicides. Barnet Community Safety Team led on the Domestic Violence Homicide Review (DHR) and received recognition from the Home Office who regarded one of the reviews as best practice. Both reviews had independent chairs. We are appreciative that the chairs conducted thorough reviews and provided clear recommendations and learning for the partnership.

In April 2017, Barnet and Harrow Public Health procured new sexual health services for the North Central London sub-region which includes Barnet.

Good progress has been made since the previous strategy; however, all partners in Barnet recognise the need to continue to develop our response to DVA and VAWG.

Service user feedback, when consulted as part of developing this strategy, highlighted the good support they received from our local services, this included Solace Women's Aid, the One Stop Shop and Victim Support. However, they also highlighted:

- The bureaucracy of getting help was difficult
- There were still multiple services they needed to approach and wanted better co-ordinated services
- Some felt that agencies did not believe them and staff required training in the softer skills to communicate with victims
- More integrated services for children in families where there is DVA

The consultation feedback has assisted in the development of this strategy which clearly sets out the ongoing partnership commitment to work together to respond to and prevent DVA and VAWG in Barnet.

Preventing violence against women and girls is everybody's business. We want to ensure that everyone can identify victims, and can intervene early to prevent situations from escalating to crisis point.

We also want to ensure that we understand the needs of victims and their families. This will help us to provide the best response we can, to intervene at the right time and providing them the right services.

VAWG cannot be addressed by any single agency. Statutory services, voluntary organisations and communities need to cooperate in increasing opportunities for victims to seek help. To achieve the best outcomes for victims and their children, our response needs to be co-ordinated and consistent; it needs to consider the whole family particularly children and early intervention needs to remain a priority.

This strategy:

- Enables victims and survivors of domestic violence and abuse to feel supported, and encourages the local community to report instances of VAWG.
- Informs the community how we would like to work with them to reduce the risk of VAWG in Barnet.
- Provides clear direction on joint working for the strategic partners, voluntary and community group to ensure a consistent co-ordinated service.
- Sets out the VAWG priorities that partners can embed into their own organisational strategic and commissioning plans.
- Holds perpetrators to account for their behaviour through our zero tolerance approach to VAWG.

Our strategy recognises the Government's 'Ending Violence against Women and Girls Strategy 2016 – 2020', which focusses on service provision, prevention, pursuing perpetrators and partnership working, the Home Office's 'Violence Against Women and Girls National Statement of Expectations' (NSE) published in December 2016, which outlines the expected standards for local areas when commissioning services.

We have developed 4 shared partnership objectives that we will all work towards, these are:

1. Preventing Violence against Women and Girls
2. Improving outcomes for victims and their children
3. Holding perpetrators to account
4. Enhancing joint working practices between agencies

Our approach is framed within a VAWG strategy because we know that these crimes are disproportionately gendered. However, we intend to benefit all victims of these crimes. Men and boys can also be victims of violence and abuse and so proposals supporting men's services will not be excluded from consideration in this strategy.

Our strategy puts the victim at the centre of service delivery, has a clear focus on perpetrators, keeping victims safe, and acknowledges the need to raise local awareness of the issues. In developing this strategy we have consulted with users, members and our local partners. Our strategy also acknowledges the gendered nature of VAWG.

### **Definition of Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG)**

VAWG is both a form of discrimination and a violation of human rights. Locally we have adopted the United Nations Declaration on Elimination of Violence against Women<sup>4</sup>, which defines violence against women 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 [or girls], including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty’ (1993, Article 1)*

The definition incorporates a wide range of abusive behaviours including physical, sexual, financial, emotional or psychological violence, economic abuse and sexual exploitation.

VAWG can take place at home, work or in public places such as on the street or public transport. It is important that VAWG is not seen as a series of incidents or assaults which an individual experience; instead, 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.

This strategy covers the following forms of VAWG:

- Sexual violence, abuse and exploitation
- Sexual harassment and bullying
- Stalking
- Trafficking and forced prostitution
- Domestic violence and abuse
- Coercive and controlling behaviour
- Female genital mutilation (FGM)
- Forced marriage
- Honour based violence

### Domestic violence and abuse

In certain sections below, this strategy focuses on domestic violence and abuse (DVA). DVA is one strand of VAWG.

The cross-government definition of domestic violence and abuse is: any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse

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<sup>4</sup> United Nations Declaration on Elimination of Violence towards Women (1993), <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/48/a48r104.htm> (last accessed 27.06.16)

between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional.<sup>5</sup>

Controlling behaviour is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

The family members are: mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister and grandparents who may be directly-related, in-laws or step-family.

## **Strategic Context**

### National Strategic Context

Addressing VAWG is recognised as a priority area regionally, nationally and internationally. The UN Declaration (above) was adopted by the General Assembly in 1993. This was followed by a resolution of 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 aimed at ending all forms of violence against women in London. The strategy was refreshed in 2013.

In March 2016, the Government published its 'Ending Violence against Women and Girls Strategy 2016 to 2020' – outlining a commitment to make the tackling VAWG everyone's business, and outlining plans for increased support for service commissioners to assist women who have experienced violence.

In December 2016 the Home Office published 'Violence against Women and Girls National Statement of Expectations' (NSE) - outlining the expected standards for local areas when commissioning services. In addition, the Government has enacted legislation including mandatory reporting for FGM, forced marriage protection orders and the new offence of 'coercive control'.

The 'Police and Crime Plan 2017-2020' also refers to tackling VAWG as a priority.

## **Equalities**

Our approach is framed within a VAWG strategy because DVA and VAWG disproportionately affect women and girls. However, we are committed to ensuring that all victims of DVA or VAWG receive a sensitive, appropriate response and the right support.

We acknowledge that men and boys also experience and are affected by the range of issues that encompass VAWG. It is important to ensure appropriate service responses are in place to support male victims - noting that gender may be an

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<sup>5</sup> Domestic violence and abuse - Detailed guidance - GOV.UK. (2013). <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/domestic-violence-and-abuse>



additional barrier to seeking help. Male victims and those impacted are included in all aspects of our strategy, particularly our prevention and awareness raising work. We hope to engage more men and boys in this through close work with the White Ribbon Campaign.

Other groups may face additional barriers that prevent them from seeking help - including those from black, Asian, minority, ethnic and refugee (BAMER) communities, disabled victims, elderly victims, the LGBT community, those with no recourse to public funds, those with complex needs and/or substance users and those under the age of 18 years old. We will seek to ensure that our services meet individuals' needs in a sensitive and consistent manner, in line with the relevant legislation.

### **Violence against Women and Girls in Barnet**

It is widely acknowledged that all strands of VAWG are underreported<sup>6</sup>, and that many victims/survivors do not come to the attention of services. Over the next three years, a key priority for the partnership will be to increase this reporting.

Appendix 1 provides data for VAWG in Barnet at the time of writing this strategy

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<sup>6</sup> See for example: Home Office (2013) *Ending Violence Against Women and Girls*, London: Home Office; Palermo, T., Bleck, J. and Peterman, A. (2014) 'Tip of the Iceberg: Reporting and Gender Based Violence in Developing Countries', *American Journal of Epidemiology*, 179(5), pp.602-612; Allnock, D., Radford, L., Bunting, L., Price, A., Morgan-Klein, N., Ellis, J. and Stafford, A. (2012) 'In Demand: Therapeutic Services for Children and Young People who have Experienced Sexual Abuse', *Child Abuse Review*, 21, pp.318-334; Kimmel, M. (2002) "Gender Symmetry" in Domestic Violence: A Substantive and Methodological Research Review', *Violence Against Women*, 8(11), pp.1332-1363; Dragiewicz, M. and DeKeseredy, W.S. (2012) 'Claims about women's use of non-fatal force in intimate relationships: A contextual review of Canadian research', *Violence Against Women*, XX(X), pp.1-19; Lea, S. and Lynn, N. (2012) 'Dialogic Reverberations: Police, Domestic Abuse, and the Discontinuance of Case', *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, XX(X), pp.1-24

4 This figure has been extrapolated from the Home

## **Partnership Objective 1: Prevent Violence against Women and Girls**

*How: By changing attitudes and behaviour that foster violence against women and girls, and by intervening earlier*

We will make prevention and early intervention a core foundation of our approach to tackling VAWG. Once patterns of violence are entrenched the harder it is to break the cycle of abuse, support victims to recovery and independence, and deter perpetrators. We recognise that abuse can happen at any stage of a woman's life, this strategy will take a life course approach to ensure all victims – and their families – have access to the right support at the right time to help them live free from domestic violence and abuse.

### Schools and Education

We will continue to work with schools and higher education establishments to educate young people and teenagers about healthy relationships, abuse and consent and raise awareness of key issues like 'sexting' and online abuse. We will also ensure staff are trained and school safeguarding policies and procedures address the broader areas of VAWG for example honour based violence, FGM, forced marriage.

### Non-formal learning

We will pursue a preventative approach within non-formal learning systems by identifying and educating high risk groups - such as looked after children (LAC), care leavers and young offenders.

### Protecting people online

We will consider any further local or national risk analyses on the use of online dating services by perpetrators for purposes of targeting and abusing women. We will ensure that appropriate safety advice is provided and that all victims have the confidence to report these crimes. This includes raising the awareness of:

- The new law, introduced in 2015, making 'revenge porn' a specific criminal offence.
- The national 'revenge porn' helpline
- The Stop Online Abuse website, established in 2015, providing practical advice for women and LGBT adults on how to recognise abuse, how to report it, and how to get online content removed.

### Challenging and responding to harmful practices: FGM, Forced Marriage, Honour Based Violence

Locally we will continue to challenge the cultural attitudes that may underpin practices of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), Honour Based Violence (HBV) and forced marriage (FM) and ensure professionals are supported and have the confidence to identify and confront these issues.

These crimes have historically been hidden and want more victims to have the confidence to come forward to get the support they need and that perpetrators are brought to justice. In order to do this we the workforce across the partnership will be trained and supported to identify cases earlier and ensure that enforcement action is pursued.

To do this, we must make sure that our local police and partnership response is as good as it can be, and seeks the support of the central FGM, HBV and FM Unit to obtain best practice and receive outreach support.

We will also monitor and understand the prevalence of FGM, HBV and FM in Barnet. We will continue to take action to safeguard girls and women from harm.

### Earlier identification and intervention to prevent abuse

We will make VAWG 'everyone's business' across all agencies in Barnet and the wider public, ensuring women can seek help in a range of everyday settings as they go about their daily lives – for example with housing providers, job centres, community organisations and employers – and secure appropriate support from specialist victim services. Every point of interaction with a victim will be seen as an opportunity for intervention.

Identifying victims and offenders at the earliest opportunity, intervening effectively to prevent violence and abuse from escalating and tackling high-rates of re-victimisation and re-offending will be a key priority across the partnership.

We will engage with the public through awareness campaigns, and will consider new and emerging programmes for Barnet - for example the bystander programme that will provide additional opportunities for victims to receive the help they need.

### Moving to an integrated approach that builds on family and community resilience

We recognise how DVA impacts on different family members, and that preventing escalation is vital for victims and their children.

We will develop a wider, consistent approach where the risk and need identification for all members of a family is co-ordinated.

We will consider best practice<sup>7</sup> developed elsewhere - where health, schools, and housing providers work together to identify and support victims and their families at an earlier stage and provide effective wrap-around support.

### The role of our local health service

<sup>7</sup> For example, SafeLives' 'One Front Door' and Women's Aid's 'Change that Lasts' models are two approaches based on providing a wrap-around package of care for victims and their families which can help transform how services are structured.

Abused women identify health care workers as the professionals they would most likely speak to about their experiences<sup>8</sup>. In addition, abused women use health care services more than non-abused women.

GPs, midwives, health visitors, mental health, drug and alcohol services, sexual health and A&E staff are all well placed to identify abuse. These professionals can intervene early and direct victims to the most appropriate statutory and non-statutory services and support victims to get their lives back sooner. The new NHS Mandate recognises the vital role of the NHS in tackling abuse and violence.

The Royal College of Nursing (RCN) is committed to improving health care professionals' understanding of the impacts of domestic abuse.<sup>9</sup>

We will continue to support our local health service, this includes funding and commissioning a local Identification & Referral to Improve Safety (IRIS) model for Barnet<sup>10</sup>.

We will continue to work closely with our mental health services, to improve the local response for both victims and perpetrators. BEHMHT have recently been awarded a grant by NHS (E) to establish a Trust IDVA service to be deployed in Barnet. This was supported and brokered by the BSAB and BSCB.

We will support the 'Spotting the Signs' toolkit for sexual health clinic workers to engage and support young girls abused by gangs.

#### Women and girls affected or involved in gangs

Women and girls can experience significant harm as a result of their association with gang members. Barnet Council's Family Services will continue to work with partners to address girls and gangs and child sexual exploitation through our local Gang's Strategy and Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy<sup>11</sup>.

We will work with local communities, police and schools to investigate whether there is provision for supporting boys and girls involved in gangs to change their behaviour.

#### Women and girls affected by Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Many girls and young women are affected by CSE. This strategy recognises the need for a greater focus on CSE prevention and intervention outside of gang a contexts - for example with looked after children, care leavers and young people.

#### Perpetrators: Changing behaviours to prevent abuse and re-offending

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<sup>8</sup> [http://www.domesticviolencelondon.nhs.uk/uploads/downloads/DH\\_4126619.pdf](http://www.domesticviolencelondon.nhs.uk/uploads/downloads/DH_4126619.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.rcn.org.uk/clinical-topics/domestic-violence-and-abuse>

<sup>10</sup> (IRIS) model in health practices - a domestic violence and abuse training, support and referral programme to support GPs in asking about and responding to such disclosures.

<sup>11</sup> Link to documents to be added

A sustainable approach to prevention depends on changing perpetrators' attitudes and behaviours. We recognise the importance of tackling perpetrators as the root cause of abuse<sup>12</sup>.

Following a service review, in 2016 Barnet Council commissioned an adult and young person's domestic violence perpetrator programme. The borough's VAWG Delivery Group will monitor the programme's outcomes.

Locally, we expect to see an increased use of protection orders available to tackle domestic abuse, forced marriage, sex offenders and those who risk causing sexual harm.

We will take a proactive and robust approach to perpetrators in terms of the risk posed to victims and effective interventions to change perpetrators' behaviours.

We will work with the perpetrator programme provider in Barnet to: increase knowledge and understanding of perpetrators' behaviour; understand the family and community context that perpetrators operate within; and determine whether wider safeguarding issues need to be considered.

Barnet MARAC identifies that perpetrators often have complex needs, and that perpetrators come into contact with other services and systems such as mental health, substance misuse or homelessness services. We will consult with services about detecting and responding to perpetrators, and managing the risk they pose to their partners/ex-partners and the wider community. We will actively use orders for example Criminal Behaviour Orders and anti-social behaviour injunctions. These orders not only set out what the perpetrator is not allowed to do but also sets out positive requirements i.e. services and/or programmes the perpetrator must engage in that will change their behaviour – non engagement results in a breach of the order.

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.dur.ac.uk/resources/criva/ProjectMirabalfinalreport.pdf>

## **Partnership Objective 2: Improve outcomes for victims and their children**

*How? By intervening in the right way, at the right time, with the right services*

There will be a continued focus on improving outcomes for victims and their children - to ensure they can access the right support at the right time by the right service. We will ensure that the victim is at the centre of service delivery and will that services are flexible and responsive to the victim's experience and voice.

We will ensure that victims have access to a broad diversity of provision which will meet the needs of all groups and individuals - whether long-term or more recent residents of Barnet. It has been recommended that Barnet pursues targeted work to reach diverse groups - particularly BAMER, LGBT and Disabled victims of VAWG.

We recognise that on occasion, services cannot contact victims and that cases may be closed after failed contacts. To ensure that victims do not slip through the net, we must address this issue in a coordinated manner.

We expect that embedding VAWG as everyone's business, improving agencies' ability to identify abuse early, and supporting increased reporting will place a greater demand on local services.

See Appendix 2 for a list of specialist services that support a diverse range of victims in Barnet.

### Future commissioning

The National Statement of Expectations (NSE) December 2016 sets out measures that Barnet should put in place to ensure that our response to VAWG issues is collaborative, robust and effective. We will take a strategic, system-wide approach to commissioning, acknowledging the gendered nature of VAWG.

Our commissioning will be based on our local needs assessment and the best available evidence of what works, innovating where necessary to meet new or complex challenges. We will involve local specialist providers with input from victims, local authorities, health, police, education, housing, and the wider third sector.

Where possible, we will work together to pool budgets across different agencies to make the best use of available resources.

Our local strategic approach will support models of earlier integrated interventions with victims, perpetrators and their families, at the same time as maintaining crisis provision. For most high risk victims at crisis point, refuge and rape crisis centres will continue to be provided as it is a proven source of support.

Our services understand that women may travel far from home when fleeing violence. We will work towards making our local provision open to all - recognising that some women from our own area are likely to seek support elsewhere. We will consider future opportunities of collaboration across local authority boundaries and services.

### **Partnership Objective 3: Hold perpetrators to account**

*How? : Through enforcement, and placing the onus on them to change their behaviour*

Where abuse does happen, perpetrators must be brought to justice. We will continue to ensure that effective sanctions are taken against perpetrators, and that they are prevented from influencing children and other vulnerable people from becoming perpetrators in turn.

In investigating and prosecuting VAWG crimes, we will promote an even stronger focus on ensuring every report of violence and abuse is treated seriously from the time it is reported; every victim is treated with dignity; and every investigation and prosecution is conducted thoroughly and professionally. Evidence-led prosecutions will continue to be the focus of our approach.

The introduction of the new domestic abuse offence of coercive or controlling behaviour in an intimate or family relationship should lead to a further increase in referrals and prosecutions for these offences.

The court process can be lengthy but victims may not be able, nor want, to proceed to that stage if their first experience of the criminal justice system was negative. It is imperative that the first response by the police to all victims - particularly those who are vulnerable - is right first time, every time.

We will support sustainable behaviour change and robust disruption to reduce re-offending. Although this will not be possible for all offenders, it is a critical element in stopping perpetrators moving from one victim to another.

#### Supporting victims through the criminal justice system

The process of bringing an offender to justice can be challenging and distressing for victims of VAWG. Many victims wish to remain living with the suspect and don't want to pursue their prosecution. While in many cases a victimless prosecution is appropriate, we recognise this dilemma and would like to support victims through VAWG victim/survivor or perpetrator work.

Interventions with perpetrators will focus on victims' safety, behavioural change, harm reduction and risk management. Services should meet the needs of perpetrators who have complex needs e.g. drug/alcohol dependency, mental health issues, and homelessness.

Barnet has recently (March 2017) secured the first ASB injunctions in the country, and we will monitor the outcomes of this pilot.

Vulnerable victims and witnesses are being provided with a greater opportunity to give evidence from a location away from the court. While victim testimony is important, we must ensure that all possible evidence is considered when building a case - so that evidence-led prosecutions ensure that perpetrators are brought to justice without victims undergoing unnecessarily adversarial court procedures.

To support local victims in the criminal justice process and hold perpetrators to account, Barnet police will be using body-worn cameras to gather evidence at domestic abuse incidents. Cameras will record the offender's behaviour, the responses of adult and child victims, and the scene itself.

Victims identify ongoing contact with key workers and professionals and being kept up-to-date with developments as important issues. Better use of technology is allowing victims access to information about the status of their case. For example, TrackMyCrime is a secure online system, hosted on police.uk which allows victims of crime to receive updates from the police on the investigation of their case. The system does not replace existing forms of communication, but provides greater choice for victims about when they receive an update on their case and how they interact with the police.

Locally, the Shiva Foundation<sup>13</sup> promotes anti trafficking within the hotel industry.

### Prostitution

We remain committed to tackling the harm and exploitation that can be associated with prostitution, whilst giving those who want to leave prostitution every opportunity to find routes out.

Our priority in this context is public protection: people involved in prostitution can be particularly vulnerable to sexual and other violent crime, and may in fact be victims of child sexual exploitation or modern slavery.

### Supporting female offenders affected by violence and abuse

We know that many victims of sexual, physical and emotional abuse can also be drawn into offending behaviour<sup>14</sup>. The proportion of female prisoners that report experiencing some form of abuse during their childhood is twice as high as among male prisoners - with many reporting that their offending was to support their partner or someone else's substance misuse.

Nationally, models are being developed that provide effective joined-up approaches to addressing the complex needs of female offenders<sup>15</sup>, and produce improved outcomes for these victims.

The National Offender Management Service (NOMS) published 'Better Outcomes for Women'<sup>16</sup> earlier this year. This publication sets out the commissioning principles for developing services for women in the criminal justice system.

A new national helpline will also be rolled out for female offenders so that they can obtain support whilst in custody and on release. This follows a pilot helpline delivered at HMP Holloway by Women's Aid and Refuge.

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<sup>13</sup> <http://www.shivafoundation.org.uk/>

<sup>14</sup>

[http://www.womensaid.org.uk/domestic\\_violence\\_topic.asp?section=0001000100220048&sectionTitle=Women+in+prison](http://www.womensaid.org.uk/domestic_violence_topic.asp?section=0001000100220048&sectionTitle=Women+in+prison)

<sup>15</sup>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/achieving-better-outcomes-for-women-offenders>



Locally, reducing re-offending is one of the key priorities of the Safer Communities Partnership Board (SCPB). This priority is delivered through a sub group of the SCPB – The Reducing Re-offending Delivery Group. In addition, Barnet has in place an Integrated Offender Management Scheme – IOM, providing increased engagement and interventions with the most persistent offenders in Barnet. This group will ensure that Barnet female offenders can access the help they need to rebuild their lives and break the cycle of offending.

### Sharing intelligence

Sharing intelligence across agencies enables better protection of those who might be at risk. Border Force works closely with the police and airlines on joint FGM operations to target high risk flights and to raise awareness, especially during the school holidays when girls may be most at risk. Border Force Officers, both in the UK and abroad, provide crucial extra intelligence and carry out additional checks on passengers in support of these operations.

In addition, Border Force's Safeguarding and Trafficking Teams have been given advanced training on FGM and forced marriage, including on what to look out for on the equipment which may be used to carry out FGM, so they have the right skills to spot potential perpetrators and deal sensitively with potential victims of FGM.

### Tackling online offending

The internet has revolutionised how we communicate and share information but it has also been used as a vehicle for online abuse, harassment, bullying and stalking. An 'online flag' allows police forces to record crimes such as stalking and harassment that take place online. New questions in the Crime Survey for England and Wales mean that VAWG crimes with an online component will be identified. This data will be published in due course.

Legislation to deal with internet trolls, cyber-stalking and harassment, and perpetrators of grossly offensive, obscene or menacing behaviour has been strengthened. The Government has also acted in response to new kinds of online offending, for example by introducing a new law making the fast growing incidence of 'revenge porn' a specific criminal offence.

## **Partnership Objective 4: Develop joint working practices between agencies**

*How?: We will develop our joint working practices to provide a consistent, co-ordinated response to victims and their children.*

### Ensuring we remain an effective partnership

Standing Together's 'Guide to effective domestic violence partnerships' provides a useful overview of components of 'Excellent Partnerships' based on research with 10 partnerships across the UK<sup>17</sup>, including London. Taking this guide into account the VAWG Delivery Group will ensure:

- We have shared objectives, vision, joint responsibility and equality between partners
- We have clear structures and governance in place, with two way information flow, accountability and space for both strategic and operational input
- We have a partnership strategy and action plan setting out who is doing what and when, and ensuring that outputs and outcomes are measurable
- We have partnership and agency-specific policies, protocols and processes to ensure effective project delivery
- We use data to measure and define success
- The partnership has good representation from all agencies – including the voluntary sector
- There is clear co-ordination across the partnership - supported by the Community Safety Team
- There is continuous training and a commitment to effective change, awareness raising and skill development across the partnership workforce
- We have specialist services to respond to VAWG
- Our approach considers and meets the needs of Barnet's diverse community
- Victims and survivors will be consulted on all areas of the strategy and service provision

### Multi-agency working

The complex nature of VAWG requires organisations from statutory services (including health, local authorities, police, the Crown Prosecution Service and probation) and voluntary and community services to work together.

Future auditing will consider how individual services contribute to keeping victims safe. Future audits will also consider the quality of the partnerships and the ways that joint-working is scrutinised.

We will develop a more integrated approach to multi-agency working that focuses on victims, their families and perpetrators. We will continue to develop models of multi-agency working, and note that these models contribute to positive outcomes for victims of VAWG.

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<sup>17</sup> Standing Together Against Domestic Violence, (2013), In Search of Excellence: A Guide to Effective Domestic Violence Partnerships.

Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs)<sup>18</sup> are a statutory requirement led by Barnet SCPB and co-ordinated by the Council's Community Safety Team. DHRs are a multi-agency response to domestic violence and abuse. We will continue to promote learning from the two DHRs conducted in Barnet in 2015/2016.

A new FGM mandatory reporting duty is now in force. The duty requires regulated health and social care professionals and teachers to report 'known' cases of FGM in under-18s to the police. The national multi-agency guidance for all frontline professionals on FGM will be reviewed and put on a statutory footing.

The aim of this statutory footing is to increase the number of referrals to the police, increase prosecutions<sup>19</sup> and to strengthen our understanding of this form of abuse. The VAWG Delivery Group will monitor the local implementation of this duty.

Effective multi-agency responses are also critical in managing adolescent to parent violence. An information guide is available to support police, youth justice, health, education, social care, safeguarding and housing service providers and practitioners to respond to and prevent adolescent to parent violence. We will ensure that this is promoted locally.

### Making VAWG 'everyone's Business'<sup>20</sup>

A recent Home Office review of services indicated that 85% of victims of domestic abuse seek help from professionals at least five times before they receive the support that they need.<sup>21</sup> Locally, it is vital that better use is made of these critical opportunities for identification and support.

We will make VAWG 'everyone's business' across all agencies and the wider public, ensuring women can secure appropriate support from specialist victim services, and seek help in a range of everyday settings – for example with housing providers, job centres and employers. Every point of interaction with a victim will be seen as an opportunity for intervention not to be missed.

We will develop a VAWG community engagement campaign strategy making VAWG everyone's business. We will work with local partners to develop reporting mechanisms and referral pathways to better enable victims to come forward and access the support they need. This will include community/faith groups - as this strategy recognises the likelihood of increase of refugee communities with multiple needs, and this strategy recognises that certain groups may only seek to engage with their community or faith groups.

We will carry out a training needs analysis before developing a training strategy that will enable groups and stakeholders to spot all forms of abuse and take the appropriate action.

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<sup>18</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reviced-statutory-guidance-for-the-conduct-of-domestic-homicide-reviews>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mandatory-reporting-of-female-genital-mutilation-procedural-information>

<sup>20</sup> Taken from the HMIC report in domestic abuse: <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wpcontent/uploads/2014/04/improving-the-police-response-to-domestic-abuse.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> Review led by Department of Communities and Local Government

## Domestic Abuse and Housing

A housing officer may be a victim's first port of call, and is ideally placed to identify perpetrators and those at risk - including children. We will continue to support local housing professionals to obtain the necessary knowledge and skills to recognise domestic abuse and to know how to take action. We will ensure that all housing staff receive specialist training on domestic abuse and housing law, to be able to meet their statutory duties and to provide appropriate signposting and support.

People with no recourse<sup>22</sup> to public funds (NRPF) generally cannot access local authority accommodation because places are paid through housing benefit. These individuals face the same difficulty in accessing women's refuges. We will work in a coordinated way to support homeless victims with NRPF who approach their local authority for housing assistance.

Barnet Homes' DVA One Stop Shop is delivered through a multi-agency partnership of specialist professionals, IDVAs, police and solicitors, all in one location. The One Stop Shop produces effective outcomes for victims of VAWG. Barnet Homes' Sanctuary Scheme provides free extra security measures for victims of VAWG - if it is safe for them to remain in their homes.

The Pan London Domestic Violence Reciprocal agreements provide victims of domestic abuse with secure housing the option to flee to another safe borough of their choice in London without losing their secure tenancy.

### Public transport

In partnership with the British Transport Police (BTP), the Government commissioned a Rapid Evidence Assessment entitled 'What works in reducing sexual harassment and sexual offending on public transport nationally and internationally?', to provide greater safety for women and girls.

An outcome from this assessment was the '**report it to stop it**' campaign. The campaign encourages more active engagement from bystanders, and will be supported by a wider range of technological options to improve mechanisms for reporting. We will work with our local British Transport Police to understand the prevalence of VAWG in Barnet transport networks, ensure there is a local response in place and that our local public transport remains a safe mode of travel for our women and girls.

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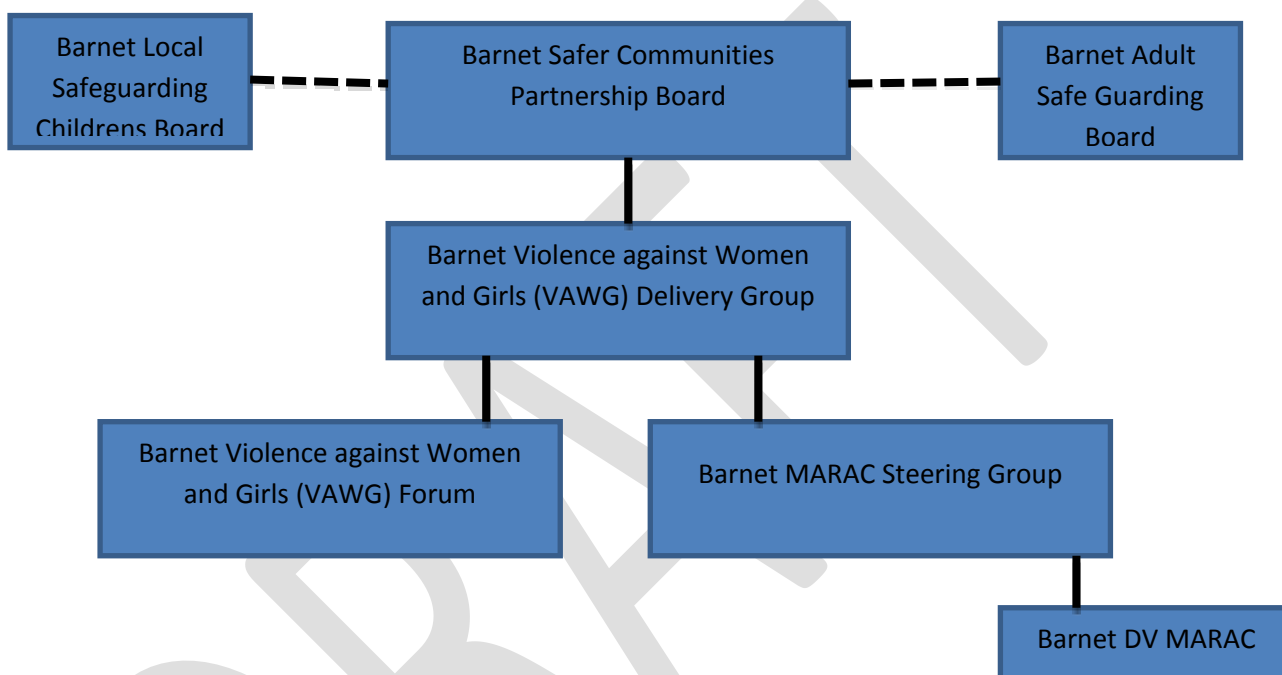
<sup>22</sup> people subject to immigration control such as those on a partner's, work or student visa, or who have been refused asylum from accessing certain public funds including most welfare benefits and social housing. EEA citizens who are not "exercising their Treaty rights" (neither working nor studying) or who are not the family member of someone who has the right to reside in the UK, also have no recourse to public funds.

## Delivering the Strategy

### Governance

This strategy will be overseen by Barnet's VAWG Delivery Group - a sub group of Barnet's Safer Communities Partnership Board (the statutory board overseeing delivery of Barnet's Community Safety Partnership Plan, which includes a priority on responding to and preventing violence against women and girls).

Diagram 1: Barnet VAWG governance chart



## 4. Measuring Success

The VAWG Delivery Group will agree an annual delivery plan and a set of partnership indicators that will measure success and outcomes against the objectives set out in this strategy. These will be reported to the VAWG Delivery Group Quarterly and the Safer Communities Partnership Board annually.

## 5. Co-ordinating delivery

To support this Strategy, we will create a three year (2017-2020) partnership action plan - or 'logical framework' - that will guide data monitoring and evaluation. The framework will include key indicators of success, outcomes and outputs, and will explain how data will be collected, when and by whom.

The indicators will help us to observe, measure and validate performance - to show whether progress has been made as planned, and provide early warning signs if things go wrong. Indicators will assist in identifying where changes might need to be made in practice or to the Strategy.

During implementation, data will be discussed and analysed on a regular basis at VAWG Forum and VAWG Delivery Board - to redress areas of poor performance. Data will inform decision-making, and will be reported to all stakeholders where relevant.

Data evaluation will look for planned and unplanned outcomes and impact, and will tell us what change has occurred and why. Data evaluation will make the partnership accountable, and new knowledge that is generated will be made available to stakeholders and to outside agencies. Learning from data evaluation will steer funding applications within future commissioning processes.

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## **Appendix 1: Data on VAWG within Barnet**

- In the rolling year from October 2015-September 2016, Barnet had the 6th lowest rate of recorded domestic abuse in London. The domestic incident rate is 13 per 1000 population<sup>23</sup>
- For rolling year to September 2016, the number of domestic abuse offences in Barnet is 2522 which represents 6 % increase from last year<sup>24</sup>
- The number of rape offences rolling year to September 2016 in Barnet is 209<sup>25</sup> which represents 39.3% increase on the previous 12 months?
- Rolling year September 2016, 539 sexual offences were recorded which represents ' 22.8% increase on the previous 12 months
- Around 33% of reported Domestic Abuse Violence with injury offences result in the suspect being identified and charged (or other action being taken against the suspect) <sup>26</sup>
- Women account for less than 15% of suspects for crime in Barnet overall. However more than 50% of victims of violent offences in Barnet (Violent crime, robbery, sexual) are female
- Barnet Family Services completed statutory social work assessments on over 800 children where DV was a noted factor
- The average number of cases referred to the Barnet Domestic Violence Multi-agency Risk Assessment Case Conference<sup>27</sup> has increased from an average of around 35 per quarter in 2012/13 to around 70 per quarter by 2016.
- During 2013/14, Barnet Homes placed 45 victims who were made homeless because of domestic violence into emergency accommodation and from January to December 2016, 25 victims were placed in emergency temporary accommodation, while 21 moved to Barnet Homes women's refuge in the same year with support and smooth on options Comparing the 12-month periods 2013/14 and 2016, almost the same number of DV victims (45:46) made homeless applications because of domestic violence but the difference is the level of support and smooth move on housing options offered at Barnet Homes women's refuge instead of isolated temporary accommodation.

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/mayors-office-policing-and-crime-mopac/data-and-research/crime%20domestic-and-sexual>

<sup>24</sup> Ibid 5

<sup>25</sup> Ibid 5

<sup>26</sup> In the rolling 12 months to January 2017

<sup>27</sup> case conference to discuss high risk cases

### **Footnote**

*The official definition for sanction detection is: 'A sanctioned detection occurs when (1) a notifiable offence (crime) has been committed and recorded; (2) a suspect has been identified and is aware of the detection; (3) the CPS evidential test is satisfied; (4) the victim has been informed that the offence has been detected, and; (5) the suspect has been charged, reported for summons, or cautioned, been issued With a penalty notice for disorder or the offence has been taken into consideration when an offender is sentenced.*

*'Flatley, Kershaw, Smith, Chaplin and Moon (2010) BCS - Crime in England and Wales 2009/10*

- The Barnet's Sanctuary Scheme enables some DV victims to remain in their home by making it safe and secure. In 2013/14, 76 survivors were helped in this way. From April 2015 to March 2016 another 43 clients were also helped.
- The needs analysis conducted to inform the 2014 Barnet Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy showed domestic violence as one of the 8 themes or problems which are most likely to drive poor outcomes for Barnet families. It also found that victims with complex needs or facing multiple disadvantages including domestic violence, alcohol/drugs and mental health were the most prevalent causes of poor outcomes.
- The proportion of DVA victims who are repeat victims (based on incidents reported to the police) has remained stable at around 25% - 26% over the last three years.
- Barnet MARAC performance data for April 2014 – March 2015 shows a 24.8% increase in the number of referrals in comparison to the previous year's data, with the total number of victims discussed at the MARAC being 306 with 97.7% of them being female victims. There were 353 children involved in these households, 3.3% of victims discussed have a disability, 3.6% have poor mental health, 6.2% have alcohol/substance misuse problems and 2.6% have both poor mental health and substance misuse problems.
- Referrals into the Barnet MARAC frequently feature perpetrators with mental health, substance use (in particular alcohol) and/or both mental health and substance as contributory factors of harm. In the period between April to December 2016, 45% of repeat victimisation cases has substance use as an issue



### Central Government Funded Services

Services funded by central government that support Barnet victims are:

- The North London Rape Crisis Service – supporting Barnet victims of rape
- Forced Marriage Unit – supporting victims and survivors of forced marriage
- National Domestic Violence Help Line – Providing advice and emergency accommodation for victims wanting to flee domestic violence
- Pan London DV Reciprocal agreement

### Services Commissioned by Barnet Council

- Refuge provision
- Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy Service
- Perpetrator Programmes (adults and young people)
- Barnet Domestic Violence multi-agency risk assessment Conference (DV MARAC)
- Multi-agency VAWG training programme

### Services Commissioned by CCG/Public Health TBC

### Services Commissioned by pooling of partnership budgets

- IRIS programme

### In-house specialist partnership services

- Specialist Domestic Violence Court (led by our local court TBC)
- Barnet One Stop Shop (led by Barnet Homes)
- Barnet Sanctuary Scheme (delivered by Barnet Homes)

### **Appendix 3: Forms and definitions of Violence against women<sup>28</sup>**

**Female genital mutilation (FGM)** – involves the complete or partial removal or alteration of external genitalia for non-medical reasons. It is mostly carried out on young girls at some time between infancy and the age of 15. Unlike male circumcision, which is legal in many countries, it is now illegal across much of the globe, and its extensive harmful health consequences are widely recognised.

**Forced marriage** – a marriage conducted without valid consent of one or both parties, where duress is a factor.

#### **Forced Marriage**

A forced marriage is where one or both people do not (or in cases of people with learning disabilities, cannot) consent to the marriage and pressure or abuse is used.

The pressure put on people to marry against their will can be physical (including threats, actual physical violence and sexual violence), emotional and psychological (for example when someone is made to feel they are bringing shame on the family) or financial abuse (taking the victims wages or not giving them any money). Forced marriage is a crime and an abuse of human rights.

**Honour based violence** – violence committed to protect or defend the ‘honour’ of a family and/or community. Women, especially young women, are the most common targets, often where they have acted outside community boundaries of perceived acceptable feminine/sexual behaviour. In extreme cases, the woman may be killed.

**Prostitution and trafficking** – women and girls are forced, coerced or deceived to enter into prostitution and/or to keep them there. Trafficking involves the recruitment, transportation and exploitation of women and children for the purposes of prostitution and domestic servitude across international borders and within countries (‘internal trafficking’).

**Sexual violence including rape** – sexual contact without the consent of the woman/girl. Perpetrators range from total strangers to relatives and intimate partners, but most are known in some way. It can happen anywhere – in the family/household, workplace, public spaces, social settings, during war/conflict situations.

**Sexual exploitation** – involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where someone receives ‘something’ (e.g. food, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, protection money) as a result of them performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the person’s limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability. Girls involved in or connected to gangs are at risk of sexual exploitation by gang members.

**Sexual harassment** – unwanted verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. It can take place anywhere, including the workplace, schools, streets, public transport

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<sup>28</sup> Mayor strategy on VAWG 2013-17

and social situations. It includes flashing, obscene and threatening calls, and online harassment.

**Stalking** – repeated (i.e. on at least two occasions) harassment causing fear, alarm or distress. It can include threatening phone calls, texts or letters; damaging property; spying on and following the victim.

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**Appendix 4: List of Abbreviations**

CCG	Clinical Commissioning Group
CJS	Criminal Justice System
IRIS	Identification and Referral to Improve Safety
MARAC	Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference
MOPAC	Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime
MPS	Metropolitan Police Service
NHS	National Health Service
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls
VCS	Voluntary and Community Sector

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- Colleagues across the council
- The chair and members of the Community Leadership Committee

For working with us and supporting us in developing this strategy.

(Radlamah to add an appendices listing all the agencies and officers that assisted us)