

# Barnet Safer Communities Partnership

Barnet Domestic Abuse  
& Violence Against Women and  
Girls Strategy 2021-2024

Our partnership approach to  
tackling Domestic Abuse and  
Violence against Women and Girls  
in Barnet

Supported by:

Barnet Safer Communities Partnership Board  
Barnet Violence against Women and Girls Delivery Group

SAFER COMMUNITIES  
PARTNERSHIP



Keeping Barnet Safe

**BARNET**  
LONDON BOROUGH

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## Dedication

Four domestic homicide reviews were undertaken for five Barnet residents who had their lives taken from them because of domestic abuse during the four years of the last VAWG Strategy.

This document and all our work is dedicated to them.

# Foreword

Chair of the SCPB Message

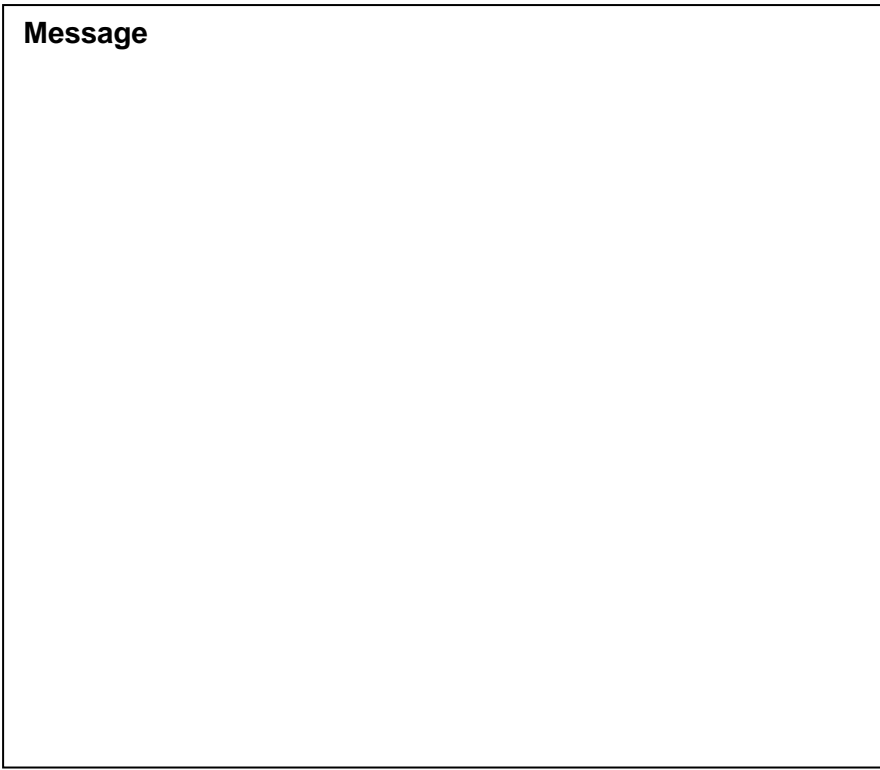
DRAFT

Cllr Jennifer Grocock  
Chairperson of Barnet Safer Communities  
Partnership Board On behalf of the Safer  
Communities Partnership

## Met Police Borough Commander, Co-chair of the Safety Community Partnership Board

Sarah Leach

**Message**



## Director of Family Services and Chair of the VAWG Delivery Group, London Borough of Barnet

**Message**



# Executive Summary

In 2017, Barnet published our first VAWG strategy 2017-20 with a clear message: we wanted to ensure victims and survivors are able to escape abuse and be safe, access services that build victim resilience, reduce the risk of families reaching crisis point and reduce the impact on children. We also wanted to hold perpetrators to account for their behaviour.

To do this we needed to make tackling violence against women and girls everybody's business, from practitioners at statutory, community and voluntary levels, to law enforcement, communities and friends and family, we all need to play our part. By enabling people to disclose violence and abuse as part of their everyday interactions we can reduce the stigma, support earlier identification and intervention to stop domestic abuse and VAWG escalating to critical levels.

## Our Vision

Our vision is for Barnet to be a borough where everyone can live free of domestic abuse and violence against women and girls. Working with all our partners we will seek to ensure those impacted are able to get the help and support they need and want.

## Our Aim

This strategy sets out our partnership commitment following the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 to reduce the prevalence of domestic abuse and violence against women and girls, and to improve the support and response for all victims and survivors in Barnet.

## This strategy will seek to:

- enable victims and survivors of DA and VAWG to feel safe and to access the support they need and deserve
- increase awareness within the local community to encourage people to report DA and VAWG
- reduce the prevalence of DA and VAWG by preventing more of these crimes in the first place and by identifying more of the crimes for those with additional barriers
- increase the number of perpetrators of DA and VAWG brought to justice and engaged in perpetrator programmes. We seek to encourage an increase in public confidence in the system and an increase in reporting to the police.
- build on the multi-agency partnership approach to improve outcomes.

## Our Partnership Objectives

In Barnet we have developed 5 shared partnership objectives that we will all work towards to achieve the aims of the strategy, these are:

1. Early intervention and prevention of Domestic Abuse and VAWG
2. Support all victims and survivors to report, access help and recover
3. Pursue perpetrators and engage them in behaviour change interventions to eliminate harm to victims and their families
4. Strengthen the partnership response to improve multiagency working and information sharing to deliver improved outcomes
5. Working together for safer streets, community and public spaces

# Background

Barnet Council, to support its commitment to tackling domestic abuse and VAWG, commissioned 4 specialist domestic abuse services namely the Advocacy and Support Service, 2 women's refuges, the perpetrator programme, the IRIS programme to train GP surgeries staff on domestic abuse, and specialist Domestic Abuse Charities to help front line work and support services. The Domestic Abuse Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) was brought in-house to Barnet Council in April 2021. Barnet Homes runs the Domestic Abuse One Stop Shop every Thursday morning. We want to ensure that by responding to domestic abuse and all forms of VAWG early on and focusing on preventing it, we will reduce the harm it causes to victims and survivors, their families and the wider community.

The Government is continuing to make record investment so that victims and survivors are supported with more than £300 million being invested this year. This includes £27 million to recruit more Independent Sexual and Domestic Violence Advisers who provide advice and support for victims at the highest risk of harm. The Home Office will provide £1.5 million funding to further increase provision for 'by and for' services and to further increase funding for valuable specialist services such as the 'revenge porn' helpline.

In addition this year, the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 ('the 2021 Act') was passed.<sup>1</sup> The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 creates for the first time, a statutory definition of domestic abuse to ensure that DA is properly understood, considered unacceptable and actively challenged across statutory agencies and in public attitudes. It provides absolute clarity and certainty that domestic abuse can take many different forms and can be physical or sexual abuse, violent or threatening behaviour, controlling or coercive behaviour, economic abuse, psychological, emotional or other abuse and it does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a course of conduct.

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 will transform our approach to tackling domestic abuse to create a society where domestic abuse is stopped, where victims feel safe and supported by strengthening protections for those who have experienced abuse and harm whilst also ensuring perpetrators feel the full force of the law.

Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 includes a new duty on Tier 1 local authorities (the Greater London Authority (GLA) in London) to provide support to survivors of domestic abuse and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation. This statutory duty will come into force following publication of statutory guidance and regulations.

The DA Act 2021 also creates consolidated new Domestic Abuse Protection Notices and Domestic Abuse Protection Orders; allowing police and courts to intervene earlier where abuse is suspected. The breach of these new orders will be a crime, aimed specifically at tackling domestic abuse, and will offer better and earlier protection for victims.

In the year ending March 2020 there were 114 recorded domestic homicides in England and Wales, 18% of all homicides of victims aged 16 and over recorded in that year<sup>2</sup>. Partners in Barnet came

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/17/contents/enacted>

<sup>2</sup> Home Office Homicide Index,

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/homicideinenglandandwales/yearendi ngmarch2020#homicide-in-england-and-wales-year-ending-march-2020-data>

together to conduct a review of four domestic violence homicides. Barnet Community Safety Team led on the Domestic Violence Homicide Reviews (DHR). The Home Office Domestic Homicide Review Quality Assurance Panel has provided us with detailed feedback on one of the completed reviews that they found it to be thorough, well written and detailed, and demonstrates good analysis and excellent use of research. All the four reviews had independent chairs. We would also like to acknowledge the work of the Independent DHR Chair, the VAWG partners and the engagement of the families of the victims for the review.

Our strategy recognises the Government's Tackling Violence against women and girls' strategy published in July 2021 which sets out how the government plan to prevent these crimes, improve the experiences of victims and survivors, ensure perpetrators are brought to justice, and improve the way different organisations work together; the Home Office's 'Violence Against Women and Girls National Statement of Expectations' (NSE) published in December 2016<sup>3</sup>, which outlines the expected standards for local areas when commissioning services (due to be updated and refreshed this year in 2021 ) as well as the London Mayor's Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2018-2021(due to be updated and refreshed in 2021) which focuses on preventing Violence Against Women and Girls, tackling perpetrators, protecting and supporting victims of VAWG.

The Government strategy recognises that men and boys are also affected by these crimes. In 2019 they published the first men and boys position paper<sup>4</sup> which will be followed by a new position paper to be published in late 2021. The first ever cross-government Male Victims' Position paper helped to clarify and strengthen the response to male victims of domestic abuse, sexual violence, stalking and so-called 'honour' based abuse. We are working with specialist agencies to ensure all victims and survivors - regardless of their gender identity and including transgender and non-binary survivors – can effectively access appropriate support in the borough of Barnet.

The Government will publish a dedicated and complementary Domestic Abuse Strategy later this year in 2021. The implementation of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 will be reflected in this forthcoming Domestic Abuse Strategy which complements the wider work across Government to tackle violence against women and girls, including the Government's End-to-End Rape Review, the cross-Government Tackling Child Sexual Abuse Strategy, the Ministry of Justice's Concordat on women in or at risk of contact with the Criminal Justice System, and forthcoming Victims' Bill consultation, the Women's Health Strategy, the National Disability Strategy, and the Hate Crime Strategy.

We know that these terrible crimes are disproportionately gendered, however we recognise that anyone can be victims of domestic abuse and our approach is framed within a DA and VAWG strategy to benefit all victims of these crimes, including men, boys and non-binary people. Similarly, we also recognise that some of the offences covered in our definition of abuse and gendered violence can be committed by women. In Barnet from 2017 to 2019 we had conducted DHRs into the deaths of 2 males out of a total of 5.

We will ensure everyone's needs are represented in this strategy regardless of sex or gender, whilst

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<sup>3</sup> The National Statement of Expectations is a public document explaining the actions local areas should take to ensure victims of violence against women and girls get the help they need. The Government will update and publish a refreshed statement in 2021

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/strategy-to-end-violence-against-women-and-girls-2016-to-2020/male-victims-position-paper-march-2019-accessible-version>



also keeping a focus on women's experiences in line with the national VAWG strategy.

## 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, which defines violence against women<sup>5</sup> 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 only seen as a series of incidents or assaults which an individual experiences; 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 abuse
- coercive and controlling behaviour
- female genital mutilation (FGM)
- forced marriage
- abuse and violence committed in the name of 'Honour'

## The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 received royal assent on 29 April 2021.

This 'landmark' Act will provide further protections to the millions of people who experience domestic abuse and strengthen measures to tackle perpetrators.

The Act will:

1. Create a statutory definition of domestic abuse, emphasising that Domestic Abuse is not just physical violence, but can also be emotional, controlling or coercive, and economic.
2. Establish in law the office of Domestic Abuse Commissioner and set out the Commissioner's functions and powers.

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<sup>5</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)

3. Provide for a new DA Protection Notice and DA Protection Order.
4. Place a duty on Local Authorities in England to provide accommodation based support to victims of DA and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation (each relevant Local Authority in England must assess or make arrangements for the assessment of, the need for accommodation-based support in it's area; prepare and publish a strategy for the provision of such support in it's area and monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy).
5. Prohibit perpetrators of abuse from cross-examining their victims in person in the civil and family courts in England and Wales.
6. Create a statutory presumption that victims of DA are eligible for special measures in the criminal, civil and family courts (inc. giving evidence from behind a screen). Victims of DA will not have to satisfy the fear/distress test.
7. Clarify the circumstances in which a court may make a barring order under Section 91(14) of the Children Act 1989 to prevent family proceedings that can further traumatise victims.
8. Extend the controlling or coercive behaviour offence to cover post-separation abuse.
9. Extend the offence of disclosing private sexual photographs and films with intent to cause distress (known as the 'revenge porn' offence) to cover threats to disclose such material.
10. Create a new offence of non-fatal strangulation or suffocation of another person.
11. Clarify by restating in statute law the general proposition that a person may not consent to the infliction of serious harm and, by extension, is unable to consent to their own death.
12. Extend the extraterritorial jurisdiction of the criminal courts in England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland to further violent and sexual offences (the Act extends the jurisdiction of the UK courts so that, where appropriate, UK nationals and residents who commit certain violent and sexual offences outside the UK may be brought to trial in the UK)
13. Provide for a statutory Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Strategy.
14. Enable DA offenders to be subject to polygraph testing as a condition of their licence following their release from custody (a 3-year pilot).
15. Place the guidance supporting the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (Clare's Law) on a statutory footing.
16. Provide that all eligible homeless victims of DA automatically have 'priority need' for homelessness assistance.
17. Ensure that where a Local Authority, for reasons connected with DA, grants a new secure tenancy to a social tenant who had or has a secure lifetime or assured tenancy (other than an Assured Shorthold Tenancy) this must be a secure lifetime tenancy.
18. Prohibit GPs and other health professionals in general practice from charging a victim of DA for a letter to support an application for Legal Aid.
19. Provide for a statutory Code of Practice relating to the processing of DA data for immigration purposes.

**It is expected that most of the provisions in the Act will come into force during 2021/2022**

## The Statutory definition of Domestic Abuse:

The Act creates, for the first time, a cross-government statutory definition of Domestic Abuse (DA), to ensure that DA is properly understood, considered unacceptable and actively challenged across statutory agencies and in public attitudes.

### Behaviour of a person A towards another person B is domestic abuse if

A and B are each aged 16 or over and are personally connected to each other and

The behaviour is abusive.

### Behaviour is abusive if it consists of any of the following

- Physical or sexual abuse
- Violent or threatening behaviour
- Controlling or coercive behaviour
- Economic abuse
- Psychological, emotional or other abuse

and it does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a course of conduct.

For the purposes of this Act A's behaviour may be behaviour towards B despite the fact that it consists of conduct directed at another person (e.g. B's child).

### Definition of personally connected

For the purposes of this Act, two people are personally connected to each other if any of the following applies

- They are, or have been, married to each other
- They are, or have been, civil partners of each other
- They have agreed to marry one another (whether or not the agreement has been terminated)
- They have entered into a civil partnership agreement (whether or not the agreement has been terminated)
- They are, or have been, in an intimate personal relationship with each other
- They each have, or there has been a time when they each have had, a parental relationship in relation to the same child
- They are relatives

**Child means a person under the age of 18**

**Controlling behaviour** covers 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 the victim.

## Strategic Context

### International, National, Regional and Local 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 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. The NSE is being updated and refreshed in 2021. In addition, the Government has enacted legislation including mandatory reporting for FGM, forced marriage protection orders and the new offence of 'coercive control'.

In July 2021, the Government published the 'Tackling Violence against women and girls' strategy and sets which sets out how the government plans to prevent these crimes, improve the experiences of victims and survivors, ensure perpetrators are brought to justice, and improve the way different organisations work together.

The London Mayor's Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2018-2021 is due to be updated and refreshed in 2021 as well as the Government first ever cross-government Male Victims' Position paper in 2019 will be followed by a new position paper later this year in 2021.

The Government will publish a dedicated and complementary Domestic Abuse Strategy later this year in 2021. The implementation of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 will be reflected in this forthcoming Domestic Abuse Strategy which complements the wider work across Government to tackle violence against women and girls

The Government will also publish a comprehensive perpetrator strategy that aims to bring more perpetrators to justice and reduce reoffending. This will form part of a wider domestic abuse strategy which is due to be published within 12 months of Royal Assent of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 that will go beyond the implementation of the Domestic Abuse Act to help transform the government's response to domestic abuse; prevent offending, protect victims and ensure they have the support they need and deserve.

### Barnet context

In recent years we have seen a step change in the number of these crimes recorded by the police

and the number of referrals to our support services.

For rolling 12 months to March 2018 and for rolling 12 months to March 2021, domestic abuse incidents reported to the police in Barnet increased from 4757 to 5023. For the rolling 12 months to March 2018 the percentage of incidents that became offences increased in 12 months to March 2018 from 53% to 60.5% in the 12 months to March 2021.

Barnet's rate of domestic abuse incidents in Barnet is 7.6 per 1000 population (12 months to March 2021). This is the 2nd lowest rate of all 32 London boroughs.

There were 782 domestic abuse violence with injury offences recorded by the police in Barnet in 2020/21 (a decrease of 3.2% compared to the previous year).

In 2020, for violence with Injury domestic abuse offences, 118 suspects were identified and proceeded against by police. This equates to a Sanction Detection Rate of 14.9%, up from 13.3% the previous year.

Over the last 12 months (2020/2021) the domestic abuse MARAC has received 477 referrals of high-risk cases of domestic abuse (against 363 in 2019/20) with 403 children in the households (against 238 in 2019/20). The number of families with children were 218 (against 154 in 2019/20). The repeat referral rate for Barnet DA MARAC 2020/21 is 10.5%.

Over the last 12 months in 2020/21, the Barnet Domestic Abuse Advocacy and Support Service received 1357 new referrals against 1360 in 2019/2020. The One Stop Shop has provided advice and support to 399 victims of Domestic Abuse in the 12 months to March 2021. The demand has been constant from 442 in 2019/20, 486 in 2018/19, 456 in 2017/18 and 324 in 2016/17.

However, as more victims and survivors came forward we needed to ensure that they received the right support at the right time; we needed a transformation of service provision. Through our strategy we co-located IDVAs within adult Mental Health services, Children and Adult MASH, Colindale Police station, and Barnet Homes One Stop Shop. We strengthened our work, improved prevention to change behaviour and attitudes and developed our perpetrator programmes to stop reoffending. We have also committed funding to collocate an IDVA with our Children Social work team.

We introduced the Identification and Referral to Improve Safety. (IRIS) programme in Barnet in 2018 which is a general practice based DA training, support and referral programme for primary care staff. IRIS Services work in partnership with General Practitioners(GPs) Surgeries and offer tailored training on the public health issue of domestic abuse. As at September 2021, 33 G.P surgeries have signed up to the IRIS programme.

Barnet Homes was successful for the fourth time to a bid of £100,000 per year to sustain women's refuge provision for women who are homeless as a result of fleeing domestic abuse and approach Barnet Homes.

We are making progress, however the number of people experiencing domestic abuse is still far too high. Despite record numbers of prosecutions and convictions for domestic abuse, there are approximately 2.3 million victims of domestic abuse aged 16 – 74 in the UK, two thirds of whom are women.

We have organised three major campaigns to raise awareness at community level on prevention of VAWG issues like harmful practices (Forced marriage, so-called honour based violence and Female Genital Mutilation), Modern Slavery, Trafficking and Prostitution and learning lessons from a recent

## Domestic Homicide Review.

Survivors have told us they didn't always feel believed when they told someone about abuse. We want domestic abuse to be properly understood and recognised in Barnet, so that we can provide victims with the services and support they are entitled to receive. We will continue with the delivery of multi-agency domestic abuse training and awareness programmes in the borough of Barnet. Since August 2021 we have been delivering a series of DA Act training sessions to raise awareness to multi agencies and in-house agencies' staff to ensure that all front-line staff understand what is new to the DA Act 2021.

In 2020, COVID-19 touched our lives in nearly every way, everywhere, as we went into various lockdowns and movement was restricted to contain the spread of the virus. As doors closed and isolation began, reports of all forms of violence against women and girls, particularly domestic abuse, began to rise. In Barnet we ensured business continuity of domestic abuse support programmes during the lockdowns and all support for survivors of domestic abuse – although remotely- were available for those in need, even during the coronavirus pandemic. We have implemented a fourfold increase in the frequency of the MARAC meetings – a change from monthly to weekly MARAC meetings during lockdown. The MARAC partners dedicated their efforts in adjusting to the new ways of working to respond to the fast turnaround in keeping families affected by domestic abuse safe during the lockdown. We are highly appreciative to the charities, agencies, and service providers who work tirelessly and with such tremendous dedication in the borough of Barnet.

All of our commissioned services continued to offer support virtually during the three lockdowns. We developed a poster which was circulated to police stations, supermarkets, all walk in centres, hospitals, health centres, maternity clinics, pharmacies, and councillors. We dedicated all the efforts to preventing the escalation of domestic abuse cases during the COVID-19 lockdowns to all the domestic abuse organisations, agencies, and service providers who worked tirelessly and with such impressive dedication in an amazing partnership in Barnet and supporting each other including Barnet Solace Women's Aid ( Advocacy /Support service and women's refuges) , Hestia, CCG, RISE Mutual Barnet Homes(housing) Adult and Children Social Care, Change Grow Live , Probation, Community Rehabilitation Centre ,Mental health BEH MHT team, Metropolitan Police, Victim Support. The Barnet Homes Domestic Abuse One Stop Coordinator working in partnership with Barnet Solace Women's Aid, Barnet Homes Housing Officer, Cyber Care, Asian Women Resource Centre, 2 Family law solicitors, and one immigration Solicitor continued to operate virtually during lockdown with increasing numbers of survivors calling for support and help.

It is by listening and learning from those who know what is needed on the frontline – the victims and survivors, and those who provide them with support that we maintained the excellence in the delivery of VAWG services throughout the pandemic. All key domestic abuse agencies met weekly during lockdown to manage risks and share good practices.

While good progress has been made since the previous strategy, all partners in Barnet recognise the need to continue to develop our response to domestic abuse and VAWG. To ensure all victims get the right support at the right time, we will continue to drive an improvement to our service provision. We want to promote new approaches and establish and embed best practice to help victims, and their families, and hold perpetrators accountable and prevent them from re-offending. To improve provision, we want to focus on survivors with additional barriers; parents and guardians experiencing domestic abuse from their children; those with complex issues of mental health, substance misuse and domestic abuse; and domestic abuse toward the elderly. We want to reach out to those in the most deprived areas of Barnet and where the hotspots for domestic abuse prevail.

We will continue to make sure that our VAWG Forum and VAWG Delivery Group have access every quarter to examples of best local practice, all the monitoring VAWG data /DASH board and evidence and analysis they need, to provide an integrated and effective partnership response to prevent domestic abuse in Barnet.

We will continue to deliver a partnership response which focuses on the safety of adults and children, whilst developing the strategy to also prioritise longer term support and highlighting their ongoing support needs and recovery journey.

## **Safeguarding Adults**

A proportion of safeguarding adults work relates to the abuse or neglect of people who are living in their own homes and have care and support needs. Domestic Abuse has been one of the key priorities of Barnet Safeguarding Adults Board. Where appropriate we have ensured that the legal requirements of conducting a Safeguarding Adult Review (SAR) and a Domestic Violence Homicide review (DHR) are aligned to ensure the recommendations and lessons learnt from a death involving domestic abuse of an adult at risk are communicated to all relevant staff, setting out the actions to further strengthen the partnership working on Safeguarding of adults at risk of domestic abuse.

## **Early Help Services**

Working with partners, Barnet's 0-19 Service provides help and support to families, children and young people up to the age of 19 (or 25 with a disability). The Early Help hubs offer a range of services and evidenced-based programmes and interventions for children and young people and their families. The main objectives of the 0-19 hubs are to provide the right help first time; that meets identified need, improves outcomes for children and young people and prevents the escalation of issues that would then require specialist services.

We have a multi-agency weekly Early Help panel where partners from DA services attend to ensure each Early Help Assessment has the right team around the family for the support needs identified. We have a secondee from RISE Mutual in our Supporting Families programme who works closely with the hubs to provide advice and support where families have experienced DA.

## **Serious Adult Violence panel**

The Barnet Serious Adult Violence panel (SAV) has an overview of adults who have been convicted of serious violence offences but also those who are on the periphery and or at risk of committing serious violence. Part of the panel's analysis is to understand and respond to underlining triggers of violent behaviour and explore gaps in intelligence. From this, the panel formulates partnership resources and grass roots services to help tackle violence related issues with clear community and individual focused outcomes. The criteria of the panel, drug trafficking, violence and group/gang offending overlaps into violence against women and girls in a number of ways. Women and girls may often be affected directly or indirectly by this cohort. As well aiming to reduce re-offending , SAV also aims to safeguard survivors by diverting and disrupting the behaviour of perpetrators.

## Voice of service users

### “Please listen to our needs”

#### (Barnet survivor’s message to services, 2021)

Service users, when consulted as part of developing this strategy, highlighted the good support they received from our local voluntary sector partners, Solace Women’s Aid, the One Stop Shop, and Victim Support. However, they also highlighted:

- Being alone after escaping violence and abuse is very difficult and even more difficult when you have children. Support to settle in a new area, and to meet people when you are moved from everyone you know is essential.
- Everyone’s experience is unique, and it is important that support services recognise this.
- To help people feel confident and safe to report abuse, there needs to be clear information about what will happen; about what support is available -not just at the time but also long term; and for the person they tell to believe them and fully understand domestic abuse and VAWG.
- The importance of psychological support from someone who understands domestic abuse and VAWG, and the long term need for this to recover from abuse.
- Cultural barriers which prevent reporting to police.
- A believing and understanding response from Housing was highlighted as very important.

Our conversations with survivors and the practitioners who support them has assisted in the development of this strategy which clearly sets out the on-going partnership commitment to work together to respond to and prevent DA and VAWG in Barnet. We believe preventing violence against women and girls is everybody’s business. We want to ensure that everyone can identify victims and report early to prevent situations from escalating to crisis point.

We also want to ensure that we continue to 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 provide them with the help they want. We are committed to continue listening to victims and survivors as we implement our new strategy and action plan which will help us measure the progress of our response.

Domestic abuse and VAWG cannot be addressed by any single agency. Statutory services, voluntary organisations and communities need to work collaboratively to increase opportunities for victims to seek and access support. 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.

Through this refreshed strategy, we have set out an ambitious vision to tackle domestic abuse and violence against women and girls in all its forms over the next four years.

Our strategy puts the victims and survivors at the centre of service delivery, and includes a clear focus on perpetrators, keeping people safe, and acknowledges the need to raise local awareness of the issues. In developing this strategy, we have consulted with service users, elected members and our local partners.

Further data can be found at **Appendix 1**.



## Equalities

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

We acknowledge that men, boys and people of all gender identities also experience and/or are affected by the range of issues that encompass DA and VAWG. It is important to ensure appropriate service responses are in place to support male and non-binary victims - noting that gender may be an additional barrier to seeking help. Regardless of gender identity, we aim to include every victim and survivor in all aspects of our strategy, particularly our prevention and awareness raising work across the borough.

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, LGBT+ people, those with no recourse to public funds, those with complex needs and/or substance users, children and young people. Some groups also face language issues and are not able to easily express their feelings and experiences in English, while some others experience cultural expectations which may deter them from making reports.

We will seek to ensure that our services meet individuals' needs in a sensitive, trauma-informed and consistent manner, in line with the relevant legislation.

# Partnership Objective 1:

## Early Intervention and Prevention of Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls

We will make early intervention and prevention the foundation of our approach and embed DA and VAWG as 'everyone's business' across agencies, services and the wider public. We will address the attitudes and behaviour that can underpin crimes of domestic abuse and violence against women and girls as part of our approach to tackling them. We will raise more awareness and understanding of DA and VAWG with the community and among professionals, and to make sure more of our children and young people understand what healthy relationships and behaviour look like.

Although DA and VAWG disproportionately affect women and girls, we are committed to ensuring that all victims of DA or VAWG receive a sensitive, appropriate response and the right support at the right time.

We want Barnet residents to feel safe at home; in their place of education; at work; and in the community.

### Early Help, Family Services

The main objectives of the 0-19 hubs are to provide the right help first time; that meets identified need, improves outcomes for children and young people and prevents the escalation of issues that would then require specialist services.

There is a multi-agency weekly Early Help panel where partners from DA services attend to ensure each Early Help Assessment has the right team around the family for the support needs identified. We have a

secondee from RISE Mutual in our Supporting Family's programme who works closely with the hubs to provide advice and support where families have experienced DA.

Each 0-19 hub provides a recovery group programme for mothers and their children who have experienced DA.

The team has developed training for LBB and partner staff as part of our work on parental conflict, which includes tools and interventions for work with children and families. The training is explicit in identifying where parental conflict has escalated to DA so that safeguarding, and the right support can be put in place.

## Schools and Education

Perpetrators who have successfully engaged with and/or completed programmes with RISE Mutual CIC have regularly called for information and lessons around healthy relationships and domestic abuse to be taught in schools and colleges. Programmes or workshops in secondary schools for young people are raised by perpetrators as strategies they feel would've been useful and helped them in recognising the early signs of abusive behaviours and relationships.

The Government has already taken action to prevent these crimes, including making Relationships Education compulsory in all primary schools, Relationships and Sex Education mandatory in all secondary schools, and Health education compulsory in all state funded schools since September 2020.

The Department for Education's statutory guidance on this states that pupils should be taught about the concepts of, and laws relating to a range of areas including consent, exploitation, grooming, coercion, harassment, domestic abuse and female genital mutilation.

The Department for Education will better support teachers to deliver the recently introduced Relationships, Sex and Health education curriculum, as well as explore how we can engage young people, such as university students, to support this.

The Department for Education has also updated the Keeping Children Safe in Education statutory guidance for schools and colleges and will help ensure that all school and college staff are clear on how to deal with reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment, whether they occur inside or outside the school or college gates, or online. It will also ensure that all school and college staff understand how they can actively identify and respond effectively to all forms of abuse and neglect, including harmful sexual behaviour and peer-on-peer abuse, so that victims are confident action will be taken and both they, and perpetrators, will get the support they need.

In collaboration with primary and secondary schools, a peer-on-peer audit tool was developed and circulated to all schools in 2020/21 Summer term. This tool was further updated in the Autumn term of 2021/22 to reflect additions in KCSIE and a new Model Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy was also been updated to ensure peer-on-peer abuse was covered in all schools appropriately. They also circulated a model Peer-on-Peer Abuse Policy, however, it is not a mandatory requirement for schools to have a separate policy. The effectiveness of school's response to peer-on-peer abuse is monitored through Ofsted inspections and the Learning Network Inspector SEV (School Effectiveness Visits).

Since the media attention regarding the 'Everyone's Invited' website, Schools in Barnet have had a stronger emphasis on Peer-on-Peer sexual abuse and misconduct and have:

- Increased the focus in training on sexual violence and harassment in schools
- Met with headteachers, deputy headteachers, DSLs and Governors to highlight learning from Ofsted reports, remind and signpost to the DfE September statutory guidance sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges, highlighted the need for school Behaviour Policies to be clearly communicated to pupils and parents and to challenge all low level derogatory or abuse behaviour and language.
- Facilitated the sharing of best practice between schools

- Currently reviewing the PSHE curriculum support offer through BPSI

## Support in higher education

The Department for Education will work with the Office for Students to tackle sexual harassment and abuse in higher education settings, including within universities. The Government will continue to encourage higher education providers to review and update their systems, policies and procedures, in line with the Office for Students' statement of expectations on harassment and sexual misconduct before the next academic year. These steps also include exploring further options to ensure that all providers see the statement of expectations as the minimum standard for addressing sexual harassment on campus and how the Office for Students can take action against providers who are not doing enough to support students experiencing harassment. This will include the Office for Students considering options for connecting its statement of expectations to its conditions of registration. The Department for Education will also review options to limit the use of Non-Disclosure Agreements in cases of sexual harassment within higher education.

We recognise that some children and young people such as children in care, care leavers and young offenders are not in formal education settings and we want to ensure these high-risk groups are a clear focus in the strategy.

We want to monitor how these programmes are being implemented in Barnet through our safeguarding leads in schools, colleges, and Middlesex University.

## Safe and supportive workplaces

In June 2020, the Government launched a review into workplace support for victims of domestic abuse. During the review, they heard about the impacts that domestic abuse can have on the victim and the challenges it raises for employers. Victims highlighted the real difference that a supportive employer's response can make. The review concluded with three key areas to focus on: Raise awareness in workplaces to help people spot the signs and signpost to support; Workplace policy can be an effective mechanism for employers and employees, but this needs to be embedded in wider organisational frameworks and cultures; and consideration for consulting on a change to employment rights to support flexible working for victims to help them deal with the impacts of domestic abuse.

All partners should have policies in place to protect staff and volunteers in the workplace. This should include increasing awareness and encouraging staff to report; steps taken to prevent abuse; how they support the victims of abuse and how they deal with the perpetrators of the abuse. We will monitor how all partner agencies are implementing workplace policies.

We want this strategy to raise awareness with employers in Barnet a big step towards creating supportive workplaces. Barnet Council are committed to progressing this conversation and will develop a domestic abuse and VAWG policy for staff.

White Ribbon UK is a leading charity engaging with men and boys to end violence against women. Their important work aims to stop violence before it starts. The White Ribbon movement was started by men 30 years ago and the message remains the same. They call on all men to make the white ribbon promise to never commit, excuse or remain silent about violence against women. Barnet Council are working towards becoming White Ribbon UK Accredited and will be asking the men in our organisation and our partners to make the pledge.

## Domestic abuse and Health

NHS England and NHS Improvement are developing local 'pathfinder' projects for enhanced trauma-informed mental health support for sexual abuse victims and survivors with the most complex needs.

The Identification and Referral to Improve Safety (IRIS) is a general practice based DVA training, support and referral programme for primary care staff. IRIS is targeted intervention for patients experiencing current or former DA (including female genital mutilation, forced marriage and so called "honour" based violence) from a partner, ex-partner or family member. This service enables support to

be offered to DA victims at an early stage, before the abuse becomes a serious risk to mental, emotional and physical health.

The IRIS Programme in Barnet is designed to provide a quick and direct referral route to the domestic violence advocate-educator (AE). The AE works closely with victims (women and men) who have been affected by domestic and/or sexual violence and sees the patients at the GP surgeries to carry out risk assessment and safety planning with the survivors/patients. Engagement with practices is supported by the GP Clinical Lead, Primary Care lead. IRIS also make referrals to MARAC, Safeguarding and provide support to the victim survivors. Since the implementation of IRIS in Barnet we have seen a fluctuation in the number of referrals to the AE. In 2018, 53 referrals were received; in 2019 there were 92; and 74 in 2020. Between 1st April and 7<sup>th</sup> October 2021, 80 referrals have been received.

**“I found this training to be extremely useful. Pre-covid when I worked at the surgery (working from home at the moment) I was fairly confident talking to patient face to face about personal issues but since the training knowing where to signpost the patient(s) I feel very confident and able to help DA patients both male and female. Video/digital training can be difficult but the length of time (under 1 hour) is perfect to hold our attention – I do believe that face to face training is best but this training was excellent.”**

**“I can’t believe I’d never been trained in it before – not at medical school, as junior doctor or in GP training. The more I learnt the more I realised DV was the underlying problem for so many of my patients (of all backgrounds, gender and age) and helped me move forward to provide the best possible care.”**

There is a dedicated London Victim & Witness Service Senior IDVA (Independent Domestic and Abuse Advisor) located at Barnet hospital within maternity services and A & E.

The Health IDVA provides specialist help and immediate support and advice to victims of domestic violence attending Barnet hospital, often in the immediate aftermath of a crisis: severe physical assault, drug/alcohol related medical needs, attempted suicide or self-harm.

They work with victims and other professionals to reduce the risk of immediate /further harm; particularly when hospital release is imminent (as many of the of the victims in hospital are still in a relationship with the perpetrator which means they face additional risk), and to ensure that specialist support is sustained the risk is reduced.

The Health IDVA also provides expert training, advice, DA awareness and support to hospital staff so that they have the confidence to ask about domestic abuse and signpost to support, and works closely with the Safeguarding team and attends regularly key meetings at the hospital to raise awareness, and offer support to victims and professionals. This post is funded by MOPAC London Victim & Witness Service.

## Domestic abuse and mental health

The impact of DA and VAWG includes a detrimental effect on mental health: this may be short or long-term and could include feelings of anger and frustration, decreased self-esteem, depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, a loss of identity and suicidal thoughts. For example, research conducted by Sussex Stalking Support and the National Centre for Cyberstalking Research at the University of Bedfordshire (in conjunction with the Suzy Lamplugh Trust) found that as many as 91% of victims of stalking involved in the research reported suffering from mental health problems after being stalked.<sup>6</sup>

The Domestic Homicides Project <sup>7</sup> was established by police and government in England and Wales to collect, review, and share quick-time learning from all police-recorded domestic homicides and also from suspected suicides of individuals with a history of domestic abuse victimisation in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic and restrictions. There were 38 suspected suicides of victims of domestic abuse reported to the project in the 12 months 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021. They cannot know how the number of suspected victim suicides compares with previous years as there is no comparable baseline data. The 38 victims who lost their life by suicide highlight the devastating effects of domestic abuse and VAWG on the mental health of victims and survivors.

<sup>6</sup> Government ‘Tackling VAWG Strategy’ July 2021

<sup>7</sup>

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1013128/Domestic\\_homicides\\_and\\_suspected\\_victim\\_suicides\\_during\\_the\\_Covid-19\\_Pandemic\\_2020-2021.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1013128/Domestic_homicides_and_suspected_victim_suicides_during_the_Covid-19_Pandemic_2020-2021.pdf)

Survivors have told us about the impact of abuse on their mental health and the challenges they face in accessing support when they most need it. This includes longer term mental health support and counselling with practitioners who understand domestic abuse and VAWG.

We have in Barnet a mental health IDVA within mental health services. They are based at Springwell Centre but works across Barnet Mental Health services including at Edgware community centre and the Network Mental Health Safeguarding Service.

Appropriate mental health support needs to be available and accessible to Barnet residents. Links will be made to Barnet's suicide prevention campaign to ensure people who live and work in Barnet understand how to ask and respond when they are concerned someone is at risk of suicide.

## Domestic abuse and Housing

Domestic abuse can lead to homelessness, either arising from victims losing their home due to a lack of income or from the fact many victims have to flee their home in order to find safety and escape an abusive situation.

The DA Act 2021 will give those who are homeless as a result of DA priority need for accommodation secured by the Local Authority. This will help ensure victims do not remain with their abuser for fear of not having a roof over their head. Councils will no longer need to consider if a victim is vulnerable as a result of their abuse in order to access accommodation secured by the Local Authority (LA).

Section 78 of the DA Act came into force on July 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021. This means that a person who is homeless as a result of DA is in Priority Need for the purposes of Part VII of the Housing Act 1996. Previously DV made it not reasonable to remain for the purposes of being homeless but was not by itself sufficient to establish vulnerability and hence, Priority Need. A local authority is no longer permitted to carry out an evaluative assessment of whether or not a person has become vulnerable as a consequence of their experiences. Local Authorities will be required to carry out a purely factual assessment as to whether or not the person has in fact experienced DA, and if yes, is homeless as a result.

### Secure tenancies and victims of domestic abuse

Under the DA Act 2021 victims of DA can flee their abusive situation without fear of losing their lifetime tenancy. Part 4 of the Housing Act 1985 has been amended which include that the Local Housing Authority must grant a secure tenancy that is not a flexible tenancy if the tenancy is offered to a person who is or was a tenant of some other dwelling-house under a qualifying tenancy (sole or joint) and the Authority is satisfied that the person or a member of the person's household is or has been a victim of DA carried out by another person and the new tenancy is granted for reasons connected with that abuse

To implement the duties under the DA Act, Barnet housing colleagues told us what will help them to support and safeguard victims. They shared concerns about making the right decision when assessing eligibility and would like training on interviewing and investigating skills when responding to victims to ensure they give the best response.

From survivors we have heard just how important an effective and understanding response from housing is for them. We have heard what a difference safe and comfortable housing can make to them. We have also heard about their experiences of not being believed or being told 'at least the abuse isn't physical'. We want this strategy to ensure that practitioners and services have access to the knowledge and skills needed to do the best job they can for victims.

Through consultation with practitioners they have identified good practice of housing using their powers to remove perpetrators from joint tenancies for domestic abuse cases in another borough. We want Barnet residents to benefit from the sharing of good practice and will progress the conversation in the borough about all options for keeping victims safe in their homes.

Barnet Homes manages Barnet's Sanctuary Scheme which enables some domestic abuse victims to remain in their home by making it safe and secure. Barnet Homes works in partnership with representatives from the Police, Fire Brigade and Solace Women's Aid to risk assess victims and provide additional security measures to their homes which give them the option of remaining in their home if it is

assessed as safe and their partner no longer lives with them. The Sanctuary Scheme is free, and anyone can apply, no matter whether they own their own home, are a private tenant, a housing association tenant or a council tenant.

For the year ending March 2021, 121 referrals for sanctuary installations were received. 97 sanctuary installations were completed. The others were declined either because the installations were not needed or because of disrepair issues that should be addressed by the landlord.

## A confident workforce

We want staff to feel able to ask questions sensitively and provide an early intervention response to disclosures. We will continue to provide training to staff and volunteers across voluntary and statutory agencies to increase confidence and knowledge of how to respond. Our partnership DA and VAWG training is reviewed annually based on training needs assessment for multi-agency staff working in Barnet. We are also committed to funding the accredited IDVA training of 24 practitioners across the partnership. This will increase the capacity within teams to assess risk and support needs; and to provide specialist advice and guidance to meet these needs.

## Protecting people online

Preventing children and young people from being exposed to harmful online content both helps prevent them from developing harmful views and protects them from direct harm and abuse. Schools are taking a more targeted approach to educating parents and pupils providing online safety sessions virtually in the evenings, provided by Barnet's Prevent Education Officer, for parents and children to attend together. These sessions are very popular and have supported schools to get the messages out to parents. Parents have reported that these sessions have been invaluable. Through Prevent, Barnet have recorded an increase in concerns and referrals regarding ideologies that are defined as Mixed, Unclear or Unstable. This category reflects instances where the ideology presented involves a combination of elements from multiple ideologies (mixed), shifts between different ideologies (unstable), or where the individual does not present a coherent ideology yet may still pose a terrorism such as Incel (Involuntary Celibacy). Through Prevent, training and pupil workshops have been commissioned and delivered to schools seeking support for counter-narratives and information/guidance and support with curriculum development.

Domestic violence and abuse victims and survivors can be supported to re-gain control over their online IT lifestyle. Cybercare has delivered a clinic at the Barnet Homes One Stop Shop for domestic abuse victims and survivors working with multi-disciplinary colleagues and VAWG partners to provide a comprehensive and successful service since 2016. Cyber knowledge and skills are essential to combat Cyber-Abuse / Tech-Enabled Abuse. In today's world, having access to the internet and up-to-date digital skills is essential for jobs, communication skills development and raising a family. Supporting victims and survivors and their families gives them hope and a future. Cybercare's support enables them to remove and eliminate geo-locators, unwanted access, coercive control, damaging and harmful abuse by the perpetrator. The perpetrator often has access to the victim and survivors' IT systems, devices, apps and online documents. Cybercare Clinic team work closely with victims and survivors, using up to five unique specialist tools, to assess and re-configure several and often complex levels of risk within their IT lifestyles, connected homes and internet-enabled devices. Freed from stalking, tracking and coercive control by the perpetrator, victims and survivors and their families re-gain access to schools, training, job opportunities, communities and citizenship. Since 2016, Cybercare Clinics have supported over 600 victims and survivors and delivered many cyber awareness workshops to partner services.

**Anna: “actually the social services was very useful for me because they pushed me to do more steps, for me this was like nightmare, and I said how can I do by myself everything if I don't have a job, but she took me to One Stop Shop on that time when the lady from Cybercare there, she gave me some IT support, .... then I got help to go to the job centre to apply for all the benefits and everything, I received support from the council housing and all these kind of things and I just took some stuff and I moved to my friends house and slowly slowly I found a job, I found where to move and everything was sorted out with those things. I don't have much contact with him, just little bit sometimes but now he doesn't control my life at all.”**

**Survivors' testimonial to Cybercare, 2021**

**Debbie: “I am so grateful for all the help Cybercare and your colleagues provided to me”**  
**Eliza: “just when Cybercare started to speak to me I felt strong, I needed to change my life. That was important, at the beginning I was scared, I felt like I can’t do that and that, maybe he follows me, he does something to me”.....“it was stressful and difficult, but I am happy now and all the help from the DV charity , police and GP , they all came and helped me any time I am thankful for this. In some way this was good for me because I am stronger now. Since I left him everything that comes to my life it is good. “**

### **Survivors’ testimonial to Cybercare, 2021**

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

Understanding the prevalence of ‘honour’-based abuse, including female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage nationally, is challenging as there is limited information<sup>8</sup>. However, a 2009 Government-commissioned study on forced marriage (using data from ten local authorities, Karma Nirvana and the Government’s Forced Marriage Unit) estimated the national prevalence of reported cases of forced marriage in England to be between 5,000 and 8,000 cases (including those involving threats to force someone into marriage).<sup>9</sup> Ministry of Justice data<sup>10</sup> show that, to date, over 2,800 Forced Marriage Protection Orders and almost 700 FGM Protection Orders have been made since their respective introductions in 2008 and 2015.

In 2015 the Government introduced a mandatory reporting duty which requires regulated health and social care professionals and teachers in England and Wales to report known cases of FGM in under 18s which they identify in the course of their professional work to the police. In Barnet we will continue to raise awareness of the FGM mandatory reporting duty and ensure that frontline professionals are aware of their obligation to report these cases.

The Department for Health and Social Care will work to criminalise ‘virginity testing’, which some women and girls are being forced to undergo, to send a clear message that this practice is wholly unacceptable in our society.

In Barnet, there is limited information on the prevalence of so called ‘honour’-based abuse’, including female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage. We have seen an increase in referrals to MARAC for honour-based abuse. In 2018/2019 there were 0; 2019/2020 there were 3 and 2020/2021 there were 15.

For 2020/2021, Solace supported 15 victims of so called ‘honour-based abuse’ and 10 victims of forced marriage.

We will continue to raise awareness of harmful practices across the borough, working closely with specialist support agencies who are working within the community. We will look at communications methods to ensure they reach those most at risk.

## **Partnership Objective 2:**

### **Support all victims and survivors to report, access help and recover**

**“You won’t get an increase in reporting if we don’t get help and feel safe”  
 (Survivor, Barnet, September 2021)**

We address the barriers that prevent people telling someone about abuse and violence that they are experiencing.

<sup>8</sup> Tackling VAWG strategy, July 2021

<sup>9</sup> <https://natcen.ac.uk/media/23519/forced-marriage-prevalence-service.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/family-court-statistics-quarterly-april-to-june-2021>

**“Not everyone is able to speak to police as it causes a ripple effect”  
(Survivor, Barnet, referring to cultural expectations, September 2021)**

We have heard from survivors that not everyone feels able to talk to the police. We want to understand the issues faced by our communities and seek to increase opportunities for them to tell someone.

Survivors have told us who they told first about the abuse they were experiencing. This was commonly friends, family or a community member. We have heard how for some it was someone else who called the police which enabled them to talk about the abuse, as they had felt too scared or worried to call the police themselves. We will be focusing on raising awareness in the community to ensure everybody understands what domestic abuse and VAWG are, and how to respond if they are worried about someone.

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. We want all victims and survivors (including children) in the borough to be able to access long term specialist support to address their needs & enable their recovery

We know that certain groups are more likely to be victims of these crimes, experience higher levels of violence, and lower rates of accessing support. For example, the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) showed that amongst adults aged 16 to 74 in the year ending March 2020, disabled people were more than twice as likely to have been victims of domestic abuse, stalking or rape than people without a disability<sup>11</sup>. In addition, when considering sexual orientation, gay, lesbian or bisexual people were more likely to be victims of domestic abuse than heterosexual people.<sup>12</sup> Looking at gender identity, trans and non-binary people were less likely to access support, while being more at risk of experiencing both intimate partner violence (IPV) and abuse from family members. This was also the case for stalking, sexual violence and rape. Age can also impact the likelihood of victimisation. For domestic abuse, sexual assault, rape and stalking those aged 16-19 and 20-24 were more likely to be victims of these crimes than any other age group. This difference across age groups is particularly apparent for sexual assault, where 12.9% of women aged 16-19 and 10.5% of women aged 20-24 had been a victim in the last year compared to 3.2% of women aged 25- 34, the next highest group. Prevalence decreased as age increased<sup>13</sup>.

In January 2019, new research<sup>14</sup> carried out by women with lived experience was released which highlights the extent of the challenges faced by the most disadvantaged women. The report argues for support services to be trauma-informed and for more staff with lived experience to be on the workforce.

In Barnet we recognise the need to address these challenges and are committed to working in

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<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/sexualoffencesprevalenceandvictimcharacteristicsenglandandwales>

<sup>12</sup> Terminology used here reflects that used in the CSEW

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/domesticabuseprevalenceandvictimcharacteristicsappendixtables>

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<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/sexualoffencesvictimcharacteristicsenglandandwales/march2020>

<sup>14</sup> ‘Hand in Hand’, co-produced by peer researchers with the charities AVA (Against Violence & Abuse) and Agenda, the alliance for Women and Girls at Risk, for the National Commission on Domestic and Sexual Violence and Multiple Disadvantage, 2019.



partnership with services, communities and individuals to stop people being excluded from support. We will place particular focus on Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector (VCFS) organisations working with partners across the borough to achieve this. By-and-for specialist services are recognised as being key as they build the relationships and trust with members of the community who may feel unable to approach statutory services.

We will reach out to those with additional barriers. As identified in a gap analysis in November 2020, there is likely to be significant under reporting of domestic abuse and VAWG. In Barnet we identified barriers encountered by groups when help seeking. These include women with multiple disadvantage; refugees, migrant women and those with no recourse to public funds; male victims; those whose first language isn't English; older victims and those with a disability.

Survivors have told us about the good support they received in Barnet and what helped them to feel safe. We also heard about the isolation and loneliness they felt when they moved away from everyone and everything they know in order to keep safe. The new DA Act addresses the support for adult and children when they are in safe accommodation and we will ensure our response in Barnet prioritises this. They told us that they were unaware of support options and say we need to ensure everyone knows what help is available. They highlighted the need for long term support to help with their recovery. They want to access psychological support from a practitioner who understands domestic abuse and VAWG to help them cope with the trauma of abuse. They really value informal sessions with other survivors; a space where they can get together, make friends and links with others for support and understanding on the issues around domestic/sexual violence.

## Domestic Abuse Advocacy and Support Service (DAASS) in Barnet

Our Domestic abuse Advocacy and support service in Barnet is commissioned by Barnet Council to provide appropriate advice, information and advocacy support to ensure a safe environment for men, women, lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender (LGBTQ+) individuals over the age of 16 who are affected by domestic abuse. According to Safe Lives,<sup>15</sup> victims, survivors and their families need the right resources at the right time to help them become safe, sooner. For a service to achieve this we believe a thorough understanding of the complexities of client's needs based on reliable evidence is vital.

The impact of domestic abuse on the victim and on children is severe and long-lasting and families live with domestic abuse for far too long before getting effective help – on average 2.7 years. Reducing the time it takes to find and help victims and their families is critical to stop murder, serious injury, and enduring harm

But there are still far too many missed opportunities to get help for families experiencing domestic abuse. Safe Lives data shows that 85% of victims sought help five times on average from professionals in the year before they got effective help to stop the abuse. Each contact represents a chance for us to help the victim disclose and get help – a chance that was missed, leaving the family to live with abuse for longer.

In the year before they got effective help:

- Four in five victims at high risk of serious harm or murder due to domestic abuse (78%) and two thirds of victims of medium risk abuse (62%) reported the abuse to the police
- Nearly a quarter of victims at high risk of serious harm or murder, (23%) and one in ten victims at medium risk went to an accident and emergency department because of their injuries. In the most extreme cases, victims reported that they attended A&E 15 times.

Not all domestic abuse incidents are reported to the Police. Other service providers such as the health service, Probation, Housing and voluntary organisations may identify cases of domestic abuse. We want all practitioners in Barnet to know the signs to look out for, including those of coercive control, and understand how to respond in a safe and supportive way.

<sup>15</sup> <https://safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Getting%20it%20right%20first%20time%20-%20complete%20report.pdf>

Following a service user survey regarding the Domestic Abuse Advocacy and Support Service (DAASS) programme completed in September 2020, 72% of service users who were consulted in London Borough of Barnet(LBB) strongly agreeing that the Advocacy Service is working efficiently, 69% of them strongly agreeing that the advocacy met their expectations and 81% strongly agreeing that the support they received met their individual circumstances and overall were satisfied with the support they received. 75% of the service users reported that the impact of the support they received from Advocacy and Support Service were very positive for them and their families:  
Some of them are:

**“Being a destitute and having no family ties who can and want to support me, I would have broken down completely if it were not for you all. First time in my life people are taking care of me and make me feel like am not invisible or unwanted. “**

**“The support I have received here is more than I would ever have imagined. Even a fraction of this in term of quantity and quality doesn't exist in many countries including where I am from. First time, among all the worst times of my life, I am being treated with compassion and dignity”.**

Survivors also reported some areas where they need improvement and some of them are:

**“Sometimes it took long time for the caseworker to return my calls or emails”**

**“IDVA (support worker) changed twice and neither were versed with case notes, I had to explain my situation twice,**

From the Consultation feedback with survivors held in September 2021, they reported that the gaps in services are counselling sessions and support groups for survivors in Barnet.

We recognise that on occasions, services cannot contact victims or survivors do not engage and those cases may be closed after failed contacts. To ensure that victims do not slip through the net, we will address this issue in a coordinated manner. We also want to ensure that victims at standard and medium risk are given support which addresses their safety and support needs including steps to prevent the risk increasing. We continue to audit the advocacy and support service on a regular basis to ensure that the service meets new demands and provide effective support to our survivors in the borough.

## One Stop Shop

The DA One Stop Shop (OSS) is a drop-in multi-agency service for early intervention, information and advice for victims of DA and VAWG. The OSS which is delivered by Barnet Homes with partners including Barnet housing officers, Solace Women's Aid, private solicitor firms, a Barnet Magistrate, Asian Women Resource Centre, Jewish Women's Aid and Cyber Care. The service is supported by the OSS coordinator. Every Thursday morning all Barnet residents can contact this service.

Although the numbers of people supported by the service have been constant, we want to create more awareness within the borough to ensure everyone is aware of the service should they or someone they know in the community needs it.

## Women's refuges and safe accommodation

Barnet Council commissions 18 bed spaces within 2 women's refuges in Barnet. Barnet Homes receives funding from MHCLG/MOPAC for a third women's refuge to deliver another 6 bed spaces. The 3 women's refuges provide advice, information and advocacy support to women and children fleeing domestic abuse. The women's refuges also ensure a safe environment for women and children fleeing domestic abuse and deliver support interventions required to meet the needs of the women and children who have a range of issues. They can accommodate children, boys under the age of 13, and girls up to any age.

Following a service user survey regarding the two current women's refuges in Barnet, 73% of service users

strongly agree and 27% tend to agree that overall, they were satisfied with the support they had received at the 2 women's refuges. The stay at the refuges are normally around 1 to 6 months but there are cases where they may stay for up to 1.5 years.

Overall the responses are very positive and highlighted the following:

**“I come from a place where human rights are just words... To be treated like and care for as a human being, to be given so much dignity is overwhelming and makes me have hope for a better life and gives me a purpose.”**

**“It has made me aware of my rights. I feel confident that I can speak to someone who doesn't judge me my support worker helps my children with emotional support the children have visited places I could not ever have afforded, they have arranged a holiday me and my children in a caravan it's the very first holiday we ever had. I was so happy to see my children be happy and feel normal, it made me emotional watching my children so happy. I cried tears of joy. it's so clean and warm and safe and happy as a family in this refuge.”**

The main suggested areas for improvement are:

**“I believe with the pandemic, housing availability in advance is of primary importance..... If we all work together, we will heal the society faster.”**

**“There were no spaces available and was deemed to be unsafe as it was local to our client we were supporting.”**

**“It is not easy to find a place due to high demand”**

Domestic abuse victims who need to escape home will be provided with better support in safe accommodation from 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2021 as a result of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. There is now a clear expectation that expert specialist support is provided to victims in safe accommodation that best supports their needs, whether in refuges or other safe housing. The guidance<sup>16</sup> details the type of support victims can expect to receive and also places a focus on the delivery of trauma informed services based on individual needs for safety and support.

**“The help when we move in, the smile, the support, coming to check on us in the early days because coming here is a big change and we need all the support”  
(Refuge resident talking about what could be better in Barnet, 2021)**

## Safeguarding adults and domestic abuse

In consultation with the Healthy workstream, within Adult Social Care the priorities they identified include a focus on prevention and early help; work with partners to improve access to mental health support for anyone impacted by domestic abuse; develop outreach to older people, LGBTQ+ residents, refugee communities and other under-represented groups; and on reducing domestic homicide.

They will continue to work in partnership on this issue including communications, awareness and training for frontline staff. They are focusing on developing a strategy on trafficking and modern slavery.

In response to a review of the IDVA service, consultation with MASH practitioners highlighted the needs for an IDVA to be co located within adult and children's safeguarding MASH. Due to the success of this, an IDVA will now also be co-located within social care teams.

## Safeguarding Children and domestic abuse

We have heard from survivors about their experiences of Children's Social Care in Barnet. We have been told about the social workers who are really easy to talk to, who have taken the time to hear the voice of the

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-duties-for-councils-to-provide-support-in-safe-accommodation-for-domestic-abuse-victims>

child, who were knowledgeable and understood the dynamics of coercive controlling behaviour. We have also heard about the fears that parents have when social workers are in their lives. We have been told about the times parents haven't felt heard, where the abusive parent has been able to manipulate the social worker and how the way a social worker talked to a survivor made her feel more scared rather than safe and supported.

**“All I want is someone to listen to me”  
(Survivor sharing her daughter’s voice, Barnet, September 2021)**

We want to learn from the good practice examples to ensure all survivors and their children receive the response they need. We will focus on identifying training needs and providing the necessary knowledge and skills training to meet these needs. Survivors told us we should raise awareness about the role of a social worker to dismiss the fear of children being removed from their care.

## Partnership Objective 3: Pursue perpetrators and engage them in behaviour change interventions to eliminate harm to victims and their families

The Government perpetrator strategy will form part of a wider domestic abuse strategy which is due to be published within 12 months of Royal Assent of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 that aims to bring more perpetrators to justice, reduce reoffending, protect victims and ensure they have the support they need.

Available data on stalking, sexual offences and domestic abuse indicates that perpetrators tend to be male, and most victims are female. Over 90% of people prosecuted in 2020 for stalking, domestic abuse and sexual offences sex offenders were male. While the overwhelming majority of perpetrators are men, we recognise that any person can be a perpetrator, regardless of their gender.

As stated in the government VAWG strategy, for many forms of violence against women and girls, the number of perpetrators charged, prosecuted, and convicted has been falling. Of the large number of these crimes recorded by the police in 2019/2020, only 9% of domestic-abuse-related crimes, 4% of sexual offences, and 2% of rape offences were given an outcome of charged/summonsed in the same year. A significant proportion of these cases are recorded by the police as having been closed with the outcome 'evidential difficulties, victim does not support action' (54% of domestic-abuse-related crimes, 35% of sexual offences, and 44% of rape offences), indicating that the victim withdrew from the process.

Barnet has the second lowest rate of police reported domestic abuse of all 32 boroughs, with 728 Violence with Injury domestic abuse incidents recorded for the 12 months to May 2021. For this same period, 82 offenders were identified and proceeded against. This equates to a Sanction Detection rate of 11.2% which is down from 15.5% a year prior.

We want to see this rate increase in Barnet. We want to see a focus on stopping re-offending to prevent repeat victimisation and to stop perpetrators moving from victim to victim and continuing their abuse. Police are consistently wearing Body Worn cameras in Barnet. We want to understand how victim's inability to support Police action in Barnet is impacting the Sanction Detection rate and monitor the number of evidence-led prosecutions.

### Perpetrator programmes to change behaviour and support victims in Barnet

RISE Mutual CIC deliver a range of domestic abuse perpetrator programmes (DAPP) fully accredited by RESPECT, aiming to address the attitudes and behaviour of those who have been abusive within an intimate partner relationship.

The Safe Relationships intervention consists of 20 sessions, a combination of group work and one to one meetings, and is designed to challenge participants to achieve a better understanding of why they

have used violence and/or aggression in intimate relationships. they aim to provide a safe, respectful, and challenging environment, which facilitates change and motivates individuals to engage and learn.

They use group discussions and interactive exercises that are meaningful and relevant to explore and challenge abusive behaviours, including coercion and control.

Any perpetrator intervention should have a victim-survivor support element that meets their individual needs, and is delivered by a specialist DA organisation, and takes a joined-up approach to work with the perpetrator service to ensure effective risk management and victim-survivor safety. In addition, the interventions delivered should be working towards, or be RESPECT accredited to ensure that their work with perpetrators of domestic abuse is based on a set of working principles and quality, safe and effective standards.

Their Respect and Principles Programme (RAPP) is an 8 session interactive programme for young people aged 11-18. It provides education about healthy relationships; identifying patterns of healthy and unhealthy behaviours; effective ways to communicate relationship needs and manage conflict. There is a focus on the role of peer groups in young people's decision making and challenging beliefs about gender roles and stereotypes.

In August 2021, London Borough of Barnet (lead local authority) in collaboration with Brent and Enfield was successful to a bid with Home Office/MOPAC for the amount of £305,832 which seeks to address significant gaps in culturally appropriate provision of perpetrators of domestic abuse in minoritised and/or marginalised groups. RISE will deliver the services as part of an intersectional approach, which takes into account the different elements of the victim and perpetrators' identities (rather than focusing on just one identity marker e.g. gender or race) when working with the family. It will also help to break down some of the barriers to victims accessing support and help challenge and disrupt the abuse. It is a multi-faceted bid with provision including an offer to female perpetrators (who may also be victims), child to parent abuse/violence, familial domestic abuse intervention, and support for victims. The funding is for one year.

We want to improve engagement with behaviour change interventions in Barnet. We want this partnership approach to include engagement with Police, CPS and advocacy and support agencies, to improve outcomes for victims and build trust in the criminal justice process.

We want people in Barnet to feel safe and confident to report domestic abuse and VAWG and there to be a robust response to hold the perpetrator to account.

### Domestic abuse GPS pilot

There is a GPS tagging pilot running across London. The aims are:

- Offenders subject to GPS have their thinking and behaviour challenged and positively changed through the use of location data in supervision
- GPS data is used to improve the management of the risk posed to past, current and future partners and other known adults and children and becomes an integral part of risk management plans
- GPS monitoring acts as a deterrent to domestic abuse perpetrators
- GPS monitoring increases the effectiveness of enforcement action and managing compliance with licence conditions, particularly exclusion zones
- Best practice learning is developed around how priority cases can be identified and how information on these cases can be shared with police, victim/survivor safety agencies and other professionals, within legal boundaries and ICO guidelines.

To be eligible an offender must be:

- Aged 18+
- Serving a determinate sentence for a domestic abuse related offence
- Being released from a London prison (or HMP Onley or Highpoint) to a release address in a London borough
- Being released before the pilot end date, which will be 31st March 2022.

### Adult Child to parent domestic abuse in Barnet

From the cases heard at DA MARAC in 2019/20, 11.6 % (42/ 363) of the alleged perpetrators

of abuse (APOA) were from adult sons and daughters. In 2020/21, the number of cases of adult children abusing their parents were 54 out of a total of 477 cases (11.3%) at the MARAC. Abuse of this type is increasingly being identified in Barnet. With funding from the Home Office, we have been delivering, since August 2021, a new a domestic abuse perpetrator programme to change behaviours of the abusive adult children and support their parents.

## Supporting victims through the criminal justice system

The Government VAWG strategy<sup>17</sup> highlights victim's experiences of reporting to the police, with 69% saying they had reported their abuse. 8% of those whose abuse was reported to the police had it reported by someone else on their behalf, and 29% chose not to report to the police. Reasons given for not reporting included that they did not believe anything would be done by the criminal justice system (46%), embarrassment (40%), and a fear of not being believed (33%).

We want residents of Barnet to know how to report and to feel confident that they will be believed, and that action will be taken.

### DA Protection Notice(DAPN)

The DA Act introduces a new civil DA Protection Notice (DAPN) to provide immediate protection following a DA incident. A DAPN would be issued by the police and could, e.g., require a perpetrator to leave the victim's home for up to 48 hours. If a constable has reasonable grounds for believing that a person is in breach of a DAPN, the constable may arrest the person without warrant.

### DA Protection Order (DAPO)

Where a person is given a DAPN by a member of a relevant police force, the Chief Officer of Police in relation to that force must apply for a DAPO against that person. The application must be heard by the Magistrates Court no later than 48 hours after the DAPN was given to the person.

DAPOs will have flexible duration and victims will not have to pay a fee to apply for a DAPO.

DAPOs can also be made without the victim's involvement where appropriate.

The Government will provide sufficient funding to cover the cost of court fees incurred by the Police for any applications for DAPOs they consider appropriate during the 2-year piloting period.

Any person can apply for a DAPO, provided the court gives them leave to apply.

The Act enables victims and the police to apply without leave of the court, and any other person to apply with leave of the court.

A court may make a DAPO under this section in any of the following cases: Family Proceedings, Criminal Proceedings, Civil Proceedings. A DAPO may not be made against a person under the age of 18.

## Women in contact with the Criminal Justice System

The Corston report<sup>18</sup> estimated that around half of women in custody have experienced domestic abuse, however a report by Women in Prison (2009) indicated that 80% of the women surveyed reported such victimisation.

London's Blueprint for a Whole System Approach to Women in Contact with the Criminal Justice System 2019 - 2022<sup>19</sup> has agreed

- All women in London who are in contact with the criminal justice system(CJS) or at risk of such contact are entitled to receive a holistic, trauma informed, woman-centred approach throughout the

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tackling-violence-against-women-and-girls-strategy/tackling-violence-against-women-and-girls-strategy#supporting-victims-1>

<sup>18</sup> [https://www.basw.co.uk/system/files/resources/basw\\_31011-5\\_0.pdf](https://www.basw.co.uk/system/files/resources/basw_31011-5_0.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> <https://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s56437/Blueprint%20for%20Women.pdf>

criminal justice process and in the delivery of early prevention and intervention services. This includes women suspected or convicted of serious offences, as well as the majority of women who are prosecuted for suspected minor, non-violent offences.

- As stated in the government's Female Offender Strategy published in June 2018, there are a number of common underlying factors linked to women's offending, including domestic abuse, sexual abuse and coercion, human trafficking, modern slavery and exploitation, involvement in prostitution, poverty, homelessness, intersectional discrimination, mental health needs, learning disabilities, problematic substance use, and a lack of education and skills training.
- Most of the solutions to women's offending lie in the community, including through early intervention and prevention, diversion at the point of arrest and community sentencing options where available, rather than short custodial sentences for minor offences.
- We are committed to working together to transform the criminal justice response to women in London, improve outcomes and reduce women's imprisonment by developing and implementing an evidence-based, sustainable whole system approach. This includes a commitment to systemic change.

In Barnet, we would like to work with NPS, Criminal Justice Crown Prosecution Service, Health, social Care, Met Police and local stakeholders to ensure the needs of women in contact with the Criminal Justice System in our local area are identified and are included in this strategy .

For people on Probation who are female and are victims of domestic abuse, referrals are made to Advance Minerva which is a part of the Commissioned Rehabilitative Services offered for women in partnership with MOPAC.

## Prostitution and sex work

The Government is committed to tackling the harm and exploitation which can be associated with prostitution and sex work and believes that people who want to leave should be given every opportunity to find routes out. In addition, they know that victims of modern slavery, including sexual exploitation often have needs arising from their exploitation

We have limited knowledge about residents of Barnet who are facing sexual exploitation. We recognise the barriers to reporting these crimes.

We will research the prevalence of prostitution and sex work in Barnet to understand the number of people being exploited, abused and trafficked. We will also link with national and local specialist organisations to understand the options for support in Barnet.

## The Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS) also known as Clare's law

The Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS), also known as 'Clare's Law' enables the police to disclose information to a victim or potential victim of DA about their partner's or ex-partner's previous abusive or violence behaviour. The guidance on which the DVDS is based will be based in statute.

The scheme has two elements:

- **The right to ask** (an individual or relevant third party can ask the police to check whether a current or ex-partner has a violent or abusive past).
- **The right to know** (enables the police to make a disclosure on their own initiative if they receive information about the violent or abusive behaviour of a person that may impact on the safety of that person's current or ex-partner).

We have heard from survivors that they were not aware of Clare's law and they feel there should be more awareness about it in the borough. They suggested displaying the posters at GP surgeries, bus stops and so on to promote it widely. In the year ending March 2020, 17 applications were received. This increased to 52 for the year ending March 2021.

# Partnership Objective 4:

## Strengthen the partnership response to improve multiagency working and information sharing to deliver improved outcomes

Tackling these crimes requires a 'whole-system' approach. There should be zero tolerance for DA and VAWG to occur – at home, at work, at school, online, or on the streets. A 'whole system' approach means different professionals and agencies (including criminal justice professionals, as well as teachers, health and social care professionals and others), local and national Government, charities, and others all working together to tackle domestic abuse and violence against women and girls. Partnerships at a local and regional level should be striving to ensure better joint working and more effective interventions.<sup>20</sup>

We want to build on the strengths of the whole-system approach in Barnet to ensure victims of domestic abuse and VAWG, and their children, feel safe and supported whilst perpetrators are held to account for their behaviour. We believe the whole-system also includes our communities and those who are impacted the most, which is why it is important this strategy reflects their views.

The VAWG delivery board is committed to a whole-system approach in Barnet.

We want to minimise the number of times victims and survivors have to re-tell their story. We know this can be retraumatising. By strengthening the system, and the way we communicate and share information, we can address this in Barnet.

### MARAC

In Barnet, since March 2020 due to the pandemic, all VAWG partners pulled together to implement a fourfold increase in the frequency of our Domestic Abuse Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) from monthly to weekly. As a result, there is now a faster turnaround between referral of high risk and complex domestic abuse cases and multi-agency risk review and implementation of risk reduction safety plans. There is also improved attendance at the MARACs. As we were already piloting the use of a new multi-agency data management system called ECINS before the lock down, by using ECINS since first lock down it made it easier for MARAC members to share information, upload their information and research ahead of the MARAC. We have also improved our MARAC referral form and it will now be a web page online referral form for easy access to VAWG members.

We continue to evaluate the effectiveness of the MARAC through a quality assurance panel. The steering committee agreed to increase learning and shared experiences, self-learn on how effective we have been as a MARAC partnership. The quality assurance panel report on two complex cases highlights the learning and self-grading of the different domains like analysis of risks. Information sharing, multi-agency working, diversity issues, action planning, voice of all members of the household, impact and the learning. With our BCU Police as Chair, our MARAC multi agency partnership have improved practice to safeguard survivors, children and other vulnerable members of the household of high risk domestic abuse in the borough.

We want all partners across the borough to be aware of the MARAC process for victims who are at high risk of harm so they can benefit from this multi-agency action plan. We need to ensure partners are aware of high risk indicators and encourage them to attend MARAC training which are held every quarter.

### Operation Encompass in Barnet

Domestic abuse is a safeguarding children issue; statistics show that in 90% of cases children are present in a household during a domestic abuse incident. Often the following day children are ill prepared to deal with the school day.

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tackling-violence-against-women-and-girls-strategy>, July 2021.



Operation Encompass is the implementation of key partnerships working between the Metropolitan Police (MPS), the local authority (LA) and designated safeguarding leads (DSL) in the school. This protocol sets out a joint-agency procedure to provide, by next day notification, appropriate support for Children and Young Persons who have experienced domestic abuse in their household.

This protocol does not replace or supersede existing protocols, or singularly address child welfare. The protocol should always be followed in conjunction with the current safeguarding procedures and practitioners' guidelines and is designed to reinforce safeguarding and ensure children's wellbeing support after a domestic incident. Schools will receive information when:

1. Police have been called out to a domestic incident
2. AND the child is present at the time of the incident
3. AND the child is Under 18

This knowledge, given to schools/educational establishments through Operation Encompass, allows the provision of next day notification to provide immediate silent observation and awareness. Any further needs identified will be processed via the school's standard pastoral care process.

Barnet schools have been signing up to Operation Encompass Since February 2021, currently there are 59 schools signed up with ongoing work to enable all schools to do this. Operation Encompass has been discussed with school Designated Leads for safeguarding and there has been representation and presentations by police at DSL briefings.

## Sharing intelligence

We will continue to work in partnership to share the intelligence and VAWG data to VAWG partners in the borough on a quarterly basis by reporting on the VAWG DASH board. They include data from Police, advocacy services, perpetrator programme, MARAC, One Stop shop, Children and Adult MASH.

We would like to improve data collection about harmful practices in the borough. We want to identify any emerging borough issues at the earliest opportunity and address them through this strategy and the partnership work.

To make sure that we are continuing to build our understanding of domestic abuse and VAWG. who they happen to, and who commits them, we will work across the Barnet borough partnership to improve data monitoring, and in turn improve understanding and our response to these crimes and behaviours.

# Partnership Objective 5:

## Working together for safer streets, community and public spaces

### Safety in the streets

Sarah Everard and Sabina Nessa's murders showed the horrific violence and vulnerability experienced by women in the streets of the UK.

Women and girls disproportionately experience violence and abuse at school, at work, on buses and trains, on the street, and at home. The conviction rate for domestic or sexual violence remains low at the rate of 6.2% according to the Centre for Women's Justice. The low prosecution rate suggests clearly much more work is needed to protect women and understand the threats.

The Barnet resident's perception survey<sup>21</sup>, 2020, found that over three fifths (63%) of residents feel safe when outside in their local area after dark. 8% reported feeling very unsafe. The sample included 50%

<sup>21</sup> \*Source: Barnet Council Residents' Perception Survey of c.500 residents 18+, carried out by telephone

male and 50% female respondents.

We want all Barnet residents to feel safe out in the community. We will work closely with the Community Safety team, TFL and NW BCU Police to understand the scale and nature of the problem in Barnet. We will talk to residents to understand how safe they feel in Barnet.

We want to see offenders being prosecuted, and an increase in sanction detection rate in Barnet. We want victims to feel able to report abuse to the police and feel confident of their response.

We want to see changes in societal attitudes and will focus on an awareness raising campaign to help people recognise abusive behaviours and the attitudes and beliefs that underpin this abuse. We have to stop the culture of blaming women, that women are at fault and that it is up to women to ensure their own safety.

It is also about empowering all children at school and making them part of the discussion. If we want long lasting radical change and culture shift, we have to start with education about gender equality, respect and consent. Conversations must come from all schools, colleges and universities in UK, so that there is one clear message among all young people, children and parents.

In Barnet, we will ensure that children and young people understand what healthy relationships and behaviour look like.

The Home Office will be working with the police to pilot StreetSafe, an online tool which will enable the public to anonymously report areas where they feel unsafe. StreetSafe will enable everyone, including women and girls, to report locations where they feel or have felt unsafe and to identify the features about that location that made them feel this way. The data will be made available to Police and Crime Commissioners and local authorities who will use it to support their local Policing and Crime Plans and influence community safety partnerships with stakeholders.

### **Safety in public transport**

To help ensure women and girls are safe on our public transport, the Department for Transport will appoint a new Violence Against Women and Girls Transport Champion. The British Transport Police (BTP) and Transport for London (TfL) have undertaken innovative new approaches to address sexual offending through their 'Project Guardian' and 'Report It to Stop It' campaigns.

In Barnet we need to understand the local issues around sexual harassment and sexual offending on public Transport, and how the 'Report it to stop it' campaign is being delivered on transport routes in the borough.

### **VAWG and Hate crime**

The objective of the Barnet Hate Crime Strategy 2020 is "To keep the people of Barnet safe by reducing hate crime in the borough. This will be achieved by increasing people's confidence to report hate crimes in Barnet; improve the support for victims of Hate Crime; and raise awareness of how to report Hate Crime in Barnet while safeguarding the most vulnerable in the community who are impacted".

The hate crime team monitor and redress issues for adults at risk who experience domestic abuse and to pursue perpetrators who are also adults at risk through their Hate Crime Reporting Centres in the community.

Some sections of the community may lack the confidence to report crimes or seek support due to cultural, language or other issues. The hate crime team are working in partnership with local organisations to identify groups of women and girls that might be at risk of hate crime in the home or in the community and identify pathways for them to access support from our existing and, if relevant, new Hate Crime Reporting Centres.

The Hate crime project continues to increase awareness of the impact of hate crime. This includes delivering awareness-raising workshops to community groups and volunteers to identify where women may be at risk of hate crime, particularly where they also have protected characteristics including:

- Disability;
- Faith, Religion and Belief;

- Race, Ethnicity and Nationality;
- Sexual Orientation; and
- Gender Identity.

The hate crime project works with people with learning disabilities and autism and their families to raise awareness of the issues and pathways they can follow, if they experience domestic abuse. They will monitor localised hate crime trends and address the specific needs of women who are potentially at risk of abuse from perpetrators in and around the home. This includes the monitoring of hate crime trends and raising awareness of women who are potentially at risk of racist and religious hate crime, women who are victims of violence because of their gender identity or sexual orientation and ensure there are clear pathways for support within the local community.

This new strategy recognises DA and VAWG as hate crime. We are working to expand the hate crime reporting model to include VAWG and DA where community groups can identify and receive reports and are supported by clear referral pathways to our DA and VAWG services – making VAWG everyone's business.

### **Cross partnership communications campaign**

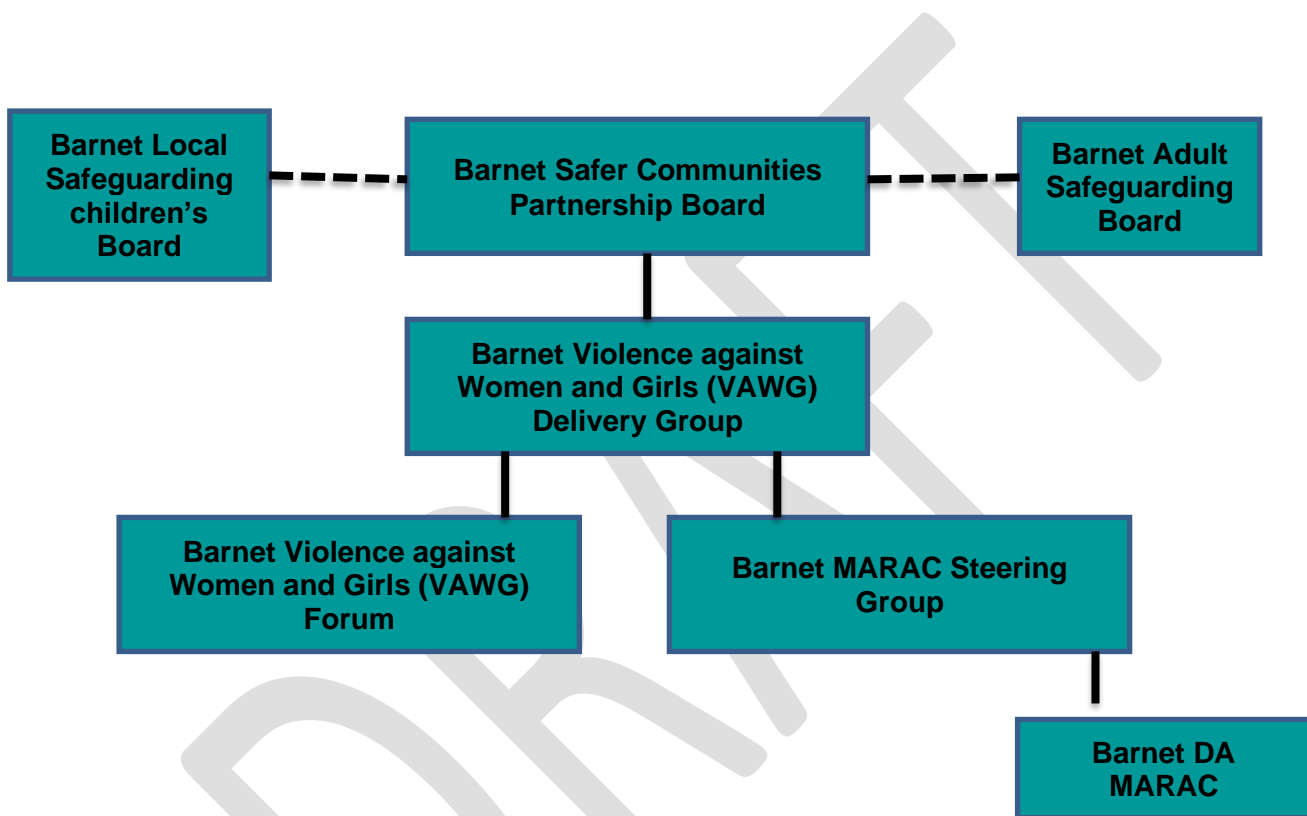
The partnership is committed to working together to increasing awareness of violence against women and girls in public spaces focusing on creating behaviour change. The aim is to target and challenge perpetrators and the harmful misogynistic attitudes that exist within wider society, and ensure victims can recognise abuse and non-contact sexual offending, while seeking support at an earlier stage. We will launch a communications campaign to raise awareness on how to access support, and with clear messages about unacceptable behaviour in places such as bus adverts, bus stops, bill boards, sports clubs, companies, supermarkets, and pharmacies.

# 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 DA/VAWG governance chart



Key	
_____	Reports to
-----	Provides updates to

## Measuring Success

The VAWG Delivery Group will agree an annual delivery action 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.

## Co-ordinating delivery

To support this Strategy, we will create a four-year (2021-24) partnership action plan that will guide data monitoring and evaluation. The framework will include outcomes, key performance measures/targets, delivery leads, completion dates, 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 are not on track. 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 group - to redress areas of poor performance. Data will inform decision-making and will be reported to all stakeholders where relevant. In relation to the performance monitoring of the VAWG Strategy, the VAWG Delivery Board will report to and be accountable to the Safer Communities Partnership Board.

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.

We want to involve survivors to help us evaluate our progress with the strategy and to validate our performance. We will work alongside support agencies to gather their feedback regularly.

# Appendix 1: DA/VAWG data in Barnet

Barnet Borough	2019									2020												2021		
	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
No. Police recorded DA Incidents	369	405	246	475	415	408	392	385	408	405	412	429	441	451	413	499	469	418	416	405	384	378	363	400
No. Police recorded DA Offences	224	240	273	306	256	263	262	254	253	286	249	277	246	249	230	292	270	239	250	233	246	241	236	276
No. Police recorded total sexual offences	34	53	42	40	52	41	58	59	40	55	45	40	48	37	34	61	38	47	60	41	45	32	52	67
No. Police recorded Rape offences	11	15	13	13	18	15	32	26	12	22	9	19	21	15	13	22	18	13	15	20	20	15	20	22
No. of referrals to MARAC	31	52*	24	30	32	28	33	23	40	16	23	31	32	30	37	41	35	43	37	36	44	47	43	52
No. of repeat MARAC cases	7	7	2	3	5	6	5	2	1	3	5	2	4	5	3	6	3	6	5	4	11	11	3	12
No. of referrals to Barnet Solace Advocacy (SASS)	82	97	77	115	85	68	98	127	98	123	110	82	86	99	112	126	121	105	99	95	105	86	110	101
No. of short term work completed by Barnet SASS	41	19	13	26	36	59	80	43	35	95	68	70	62	90	91	63	43	32	38	28	32	37	36	48
No. of referrals to IRIS Programme	6	10	5	10	5	6	4	7	9	12	13	5	2	3	13	7	5	11	8	2	1	8	4	13
No. of Homelessness approaches due to DV	18	20	22	18	19	18	15	15	21	18	18	17	21	25	15	33	25	30	31	24	19	25	15	37
No. of victims in Temporary Accommodation (TA) due to DA	4	6	6	11	5	8	5	5	6	7	8	4	11	12	5	13	5	9	4	4	19	25	15	13
No. of referrals to OSS	36	48	39	35	32	22	47	50	28	41	43	22	42	40	36	47	40	46	30	18	15	29	26	30
No. of contacts with DV as a Presenting Issue at Childrens MASH	674	696	690	684	540	661	850	811	826	923	698	708	670	735	860	835	733	881	722	741	129	146	163	257
No. of individuals with DV as a Presenting	554	578	556	570	436	528	555	505	532	597	482	458	417	493	554	544	423	556	493	494	128	136	157	236

Issue(Childrens MASH)																					
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# Appendix 2: List of specialist VAWG services in Barnet (TBC)

## 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
- 1 Women's Refuge funded by MOPAC/MHCLG
- Victims Support

Services Commissioned by Barnet Council:

- Refuge provision (2)
- Independent Domestic Violence Abuse Advocacy Service
- Perpetrator Programmes (adults and young people)
- Barnet Domestic Abuse multi-agency risk assessment Conference (DA MARAC)
- Multi-agency VAWG training programme

Services Commissioned by pooling of partnership budgets:

- IRIS programme
- In-house specialist partnership services
- Barnet One Stop Shop (led by Barnet Homes)
- Barnet Sanctuary Scheme (led by Barnet Homes)

Voluntary, Community, Faith Sector

Details are on the Council's website:



## Appendix 3: Forms and definitions of violence against women<sup>22</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 forced marriage is where one or both people do not (or in some 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 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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<sup>22</sup> Mayor strategy on VAWG 2013-17

## Appendix 4: List of Abbreviations

ASBI	Anti Social Behaviour Injunction
BEHMHT	Barnet Enfield and Haringey Mental Health Trust
BSCB	Barnet Safeguarding Children Board
BSAB	Barnet Safeguarding Adults Board
CCG	Clinical Commissioning Group
CJS	Criminal Justice System
DA	Domestic Abuse
IDVA	Independent Domestic Violence Advisor
IRIS	Identification and Referral to Improve Safety
LGBT	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender
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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- All service user's voices
- Barnet elected Members for feedback at the Members workshop
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- The Chair and Members of the Community Leadership Committee
- The Chair and Members of the London Borough of Barnet VAWG Delivery Group
- The Chair and Members of London Borough of Barnet Safer Communities Partnership Board
- The Chair and Members of London Borough of Barnet VAWG Forum
- Barnet Partnership Board
- Barnet Council Women's Network
- Barnet Council Healthy Workstream
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- Tina Mc Elligott, Director of Family Services, who led on overall vision and development of the London Borough of Barnet's VAWG strategy 2021-24

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