

Item:

Meeting	Community Safety Partnership Board
Date of meeting	January 2022
Report title	Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy Annual Update (January -December 2021)
Report author	Radlamah Canakiah – VAWG Strategy Manager
Executive summary	<p>This report provides an update on the delivery and implementation of the Barnet Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) 2017-2020 Strategy and its refresh Domestic Abuse and VAWG 2021-24.</p> <p>The draft Barnet Domestic Abuse (DA) and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy 2021-24 sets out how the Barnet Safer Communities Partnership (BSCP) works to prevent and respond Domestic Abuse and underlines the partnership's commitment to working together to prevent all forms of violence against women and girls (VAWG).</p>
Recommendation	For approval/discussion/information
Risk assessment	Any risks (or N/A)
Audit trail	Where the paper has been previously discussed
Legal implication	Any legal implications
Financial implication	Any associated costs beyond the BSCP budget



Executive summary

1. Key achievements in the past year

Partnership work delivered under the Barnet VAWG Strategy has included:

- Barnet Council continued to fund specialist services for victims of DA and VAWG; this includes Refuge provision, IDVA Services, Domestic Abuse MARAC and Perpetrator Programme
- The Domestic Abuse Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (DA-MARAC) for high risk domestic abuse victims was brought in-house to the Council from Hestia Charity in April 2021.
- Transferred Domestic Abuse and VAWG services to Family Services delivery
- Successfully bid for Home Office/MOPAC one-year funding amounting to £305,832. RISE is delivering a Culturally Integrated Family Approach (CIFA) to Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programmes to minoritised and/or marginalised communities. The programme is led by LB Barnet in collaboration with Brent and Enfield. The delivery of the programme started on 1st October 2021
- Extended child to adult/parent Domestic Abuse work to include children who are aged 18+ (adult child to adult parent abuse)
- Rolling out an Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA) and Young Peoples IDVA (YIDVA) Training to statutory and VCS providers working in front line roles Training a core group of professionals (25-30) in an accredited IDVA/YIDVA course starting in February 2022. The course comprises 12 days (online) training, delivered in four blocks.
- Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) development of a new role in Children's Services to respond to incidents of sexual harassment and violence.
- Development of an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) role to Children's Services
- Delivered multi-agency Domestic Abuse Act 2021 training via the appointment of a Domestic Abuse consultant to support agencies and professionals understand and implement the changes made within the provisions set out in the Domestic Abuse Act

2021 which gives police, local authorities, and the courts wider powers and greater accountability concerning protection of domestic abuse victims

- Increased social media content using **#AllMenCan** **#WhiteRibbon** **#MakeThePromise** to promote White Ribbon Day (International Day for Elimination of Violence Against Women) and throughout the 16 days of activism and enlisted White Ribbon champions and/or ambassadors in the Council to support Barnet Council becoming White Ribbon accreditation as part of our commitment to meeting the Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010
- Held a webinar on *Engaging men and boys to end violence against women and girls'* on Human Rights Day in December to mark the end of the 2021 White Ribbon Campaign with speakers from leading organisations working with perpetrators of abuse and violence, including RISE CIC, Respect and the DRIVE programme in addition to Simon Kerss, Associate Lecturer, Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge.
- Developed a DA and VAWG strategy 2021-24:
Consultation *Phase 1*:
 - ❖ Developed a draft strategy and action plan in collaboration with key stakeholders – survivors, partners, practitioners, LBB staff, Members
 - ❖ Consulted with 27 survivors – 12 in focus groups, 1 by phone and the rest provided written answers
 - ❖ Involved over 110 practitioners, staff, council Members and partners in the consultation process, including:
 - Barnet Partnership board
 - LBB Women's Network
 - LBB LGBTQ+ Network
 - Healthy Workstream
 - Health and Wellbeing board
 - Council Members focus group
 - Practitioner and Partner workshop
- ❖ Approval for full public consultation given by SCPB on 22nd October 2021
Phase 2:
 - 8 weeks online public consultation, focus groups with young people and individual stakeholder meetings
 - Engaged with 11 members of the Youth Forum to seek their feedback on the 5 partnership objectives

- Individual meetings with key stakeholders, including voluntary and community groups; public health colleagues; mental health commissioners and community safety
 - Online questionnaire gained insightful and in-depth feedback from residents, and people who work in Barnet – 28 respondents, 74% are Barnet residents.
- ❖ The refreshed strategy will be launched on 8 March 2022.

1.1 COVID-19 and Business Continuity

- ❖ Implemented a fourfold increase in the frequency of the Domestic Abuse MARAC meetings by increasing to weekly from monthly. This has resulted in a faster turnaround between referral of complex DA cases and multi-agency risk review and actions at the MARAC. The MARAC has assessed risk and put in place risk reduction plans for complex/high risk DV cases, there are approx. 10 -12 cases being referred to DA MARAC each week.
- ❖ DA services commissioned by the local authority (including the IDVA service, Refuge services, Perpetrator Programme) have made adjustments to their operating models in order to effectively operate under the COVID-19 Government restrictions. All have accepted referrals and delivered interventions and support services. Details of how to access these services as well as other DA related services delivered by the Council and the VAWG partnership have been published on-line:

<https://www.barnet.gov.uk/community/community-safety/help-and-support-domestic-or-sexual-abuse>

2. Delivering the VAWG Strategy in 2021

Priority: Preventing Violence Against Women and Girls

- 2.1 This priority aims to prevent violence against women and girls by focusing on changing attitudes and behaviour that foster violence against women and girls. Some of the key partnership activities that have been delivered during 2021 are:

- VAWG Training
- Awareness raising campaigns
- Women's refuge provision
- Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy (IDVA) service provision
- Domestic Abuse Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)
- Barnet Sanctuary Scheme

VAWG Training

- 2.2 A landmark Domestic Abuse Act 2021 received Royal assent on 29 April 2021. This legislation steps up the response to domestic abuse at every level, giving victims more support while ensuring perpetrators are brought to justice. A DA Consultant was appointed to raise awareness to practitioners and front-line workers on the new legislation. The following training has been delivered.

Training participation (DA Act 2021)

Course Name	Date	Attended
Domestic Abuse Act 2021 - Barnet Homes Housing Options	19/08/2021	29
Domestic Abuse Act 2021 - Barnet Homes Housing Options	26/08/2021	25
Domestic Abuse Act 2021 - Mental Health Safeguarding Champions	06/09/2021	64
Domestic Abuse Act 2021 - Housing Management - Neighbourhood	13/09/2021	25
Domestic Abuse Act 2021 - Multi-agency	27/09/2021	27
Domestic Abuse Act 2021-Barnet Health providers	18/10/2021	15
Domestic Abuse Act 2021 - Adults & Health Services	03/11/2021	20
Domestic Abuse Act 2021 - Housing Management - Neighbourhood	04/11/2021	25
Domestic Abuse Act 2021 - Multi-agency	11/11/2021	18
Domestic Abuse Act 2021- MARAC Reps and deputies	18/11/2021	27
Domestic Abuse Act 2021-Barnet Health providers	25/11/2021	19
Domestic Abuse Act 2021-Barnet Health Providers	02/12/2021	14
Domestic Abuse Act 2021 - Multi-agency	09/12/2021	23
	Total	331

- 2.3 The 331 attendees at the DA Act training awareness programme included partners from Family Services, Adult Social Care and Barnet Homes as well as other statutory and non-statutory partnership agencies. Further, as the table below sets out, MARAC training has been provided; feedback has been very positive on the content and delivery.

MARAC Training participation (12 months to December 2021)

Training Course	Attendance numbers
MARAC 07/10/2021	12
MARAC 08/07/2021	7
Total	19

- 2.4 Barnet Homes housing options staff have requested further interviewing and investigating skills training as Section 78 DA Act 2021 which came into force 5 July 2021, 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. Local Authorities are no longer permitted to carry out an evaluative assessment of whether or not a person has become vulnerable as a consequence of their experiences and instead will be required to conduct a factual assessment as to whether or not the person has in fact experienced DA, and if they are homeless as a result
- 2.5 MOPAC have commissioned Victim Support to provide an uplift in IDVAs across London, the '*Integrated Victims and Witnesses Service*'. MOPAC has allocated a Senior Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA) at Barnet Hospital and a part time Victim Support IDVA at Colindale Police Station to align the provision with the Police Basic Command Units.

Awareness raising campaigns

- 2.6 The VAWG partnership has overseen the delivery of a publicity campaign focused on raising awareness about Domestic Abuse, the unacceptability of abusive behaviour, and encouraging people to report domestic abuse.
- 2.7 On the occasion of International Women's Day 2021, a panel discussion was organised on 18 March 2021, "BAMER women experiencing gender based violence" where representatives from Southall Black sisters, IKWRO, Asian Women Resource Centre, Barnet New Citizen gateway (formerly Barnet refugee Service), Solace Women's Aid, London Black Women project and Galop discussed the issues of women with no recourse to public funds and their challenges especially during COVID-19 pandemic, the impact on Middle Eastern and Afghan women , migrant and refugee women in Barnet, the experiences of sexual harassment on women from racially minoritised backgrounds including, migrant women and experiences of trans women, lesbian and bi women experiencing domestic abuse in the UK; c.125 participants attended the panel discussion
- 2.8 From 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women to 10 December, Human Rights Day there are 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence. It is a campaign to galvanise action to end violence against women and girls. In the context of White Ribbon Day 2021 and 16 days of

activism, the VAWG partnership organised a Webinar on 'Engaging men and boys to end violence against women and girls' on 10 December 2021. Speakers included representatives from Rise Mutual, Drive project and a visiting Research Fellow with PIER (Policing Institute for the Eastern Region). They outlined the local picture in respect of work with perpetrators, the Drive approach to perpetrators and explored the indicators, impacts and responses to adult family violence as a type of domestic abuse; c. 98 participants attended the webinar.

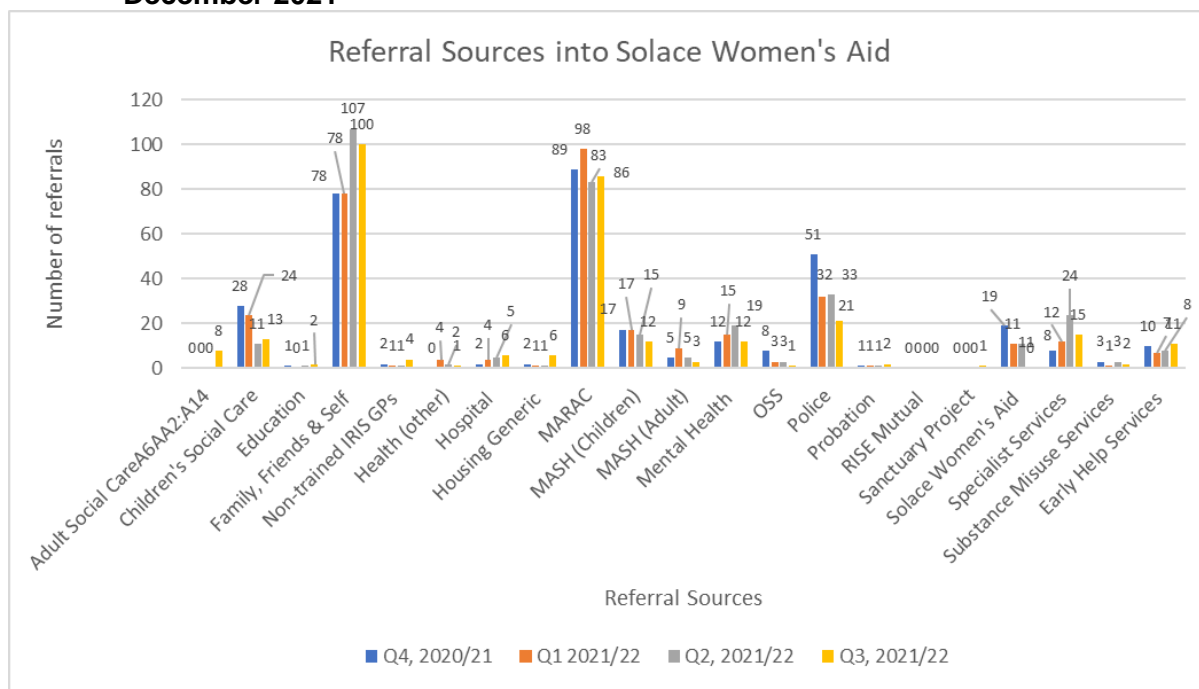
- 2.9 Barnet council is committed to becoming White Ribbon accredited and awareness has been raised with a call to action for attendees at events and Barnet staff to show their support by signing up as a White Ribbon ambassador or champion. Barnet Council engaged in daily social media awareness raising using the #WhiteRibbon and #AllMenCan and several male officers within the council have signed up to support accreditation.
- 2.10 Following the tragic murders of Bibaa Henry and Nicole Smallman in 2020 and Sarah Everard in 2021, the London Borough of Barnet Family Services team produced a special edition of the Barnet First magazine 'VAWG: Help women stay safe' that was delivered in March 2021 to every household in the borough to raise awareness and signpost women to services.
- 2.11 The Government has taken action to make 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.

Priority: Improving outcomes for victims & their children

2.12 Between January 2021 to December 2021 **Solace Women’s Aid** received **1313** referrals to Barnet’s IDVA service, up from **1169 (12.3% increase)** in the previous year;

	Q4 2020/21	Q1 2021/22	Q2 2021/22	Q3 2021/22	Year 2021(Jan-Dec)
Number of Solace referrals	336	318	333	326	1313
New Service users	243	121	117	126	607
DASH Risk assessment & safety advice given	236	115	114	126	591
High risk cases receiving IDVA service	45	22	25	23	115
Number of service users leaving the service	138	140	135	112	525

2.13 **Barnet Solace Advocacy and Support Service :Referral sources 12 months December 2021**



2.14 The top five sources of referrals into the Advocacy service during this period (by volume) were:

- the Domestic Abuse MARAC (30%)
- Self-referrals, Family and Friends (13%),
- Solace Helpline and internal referrals (13%)
- Children Social Care (12%)
- and the Police (10%),

2.15 The profile of **Barnet Solace DA Support Service** service-users is set out in Table 4 below:

Table 4.

Organisation	Female	Age range	Other factors
Solace Advocacy and Support Service	98% female victims 2% male victims	38.5% of service users between 31-40 24% between 41-50 15% service users between 26-30	52.5% of SUs with mental health disability 4.5% SUs with problematic drug use 4.7% SUs with problematic alcohol use 14.7% SUs with physical health

Women’s refuge provision

2.16 Solace Women’s Aid are commissioned by the Barnet Council to provide two women’s refuges for Barnet. A third women’s refuge (Minerva House) is run by Barnet homes. Barnet Homes was successful in securing £100,000 of funding from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (formerly MHCLG) to support the continuation the Minerva House provision in 2020/21.

2.17 Minerva House supports women who approach Barnet Homes fleeing domestic abuse. It provides victims with supported refuge accommodation and thereby can sometimes help avoid victims being isolated in temporary accommodation far away from their support networks. **104** women and children were supported in the Barnet refuges service

Refuge provision in Barnet for January to December 2021

Refuge	Bed space	Support provided in 2021(Jan-Dec)
Minerva House	6 bed spaces	Supported 16 women residents and 14 children fleeing domestic abuse
Hannah House and Arlene House	18 bed spaces	Supported 41 women residents and 33 children fleeing domestic abuse

- 2.18 Barnet's **One Stop Shop (OSS)** is a drop-in service for early intervention and advice for victims of Domestic Abuse. The OSS which is delivered by Barnet Homes (with partners including Barnet council, Solace Women's Aid, Asian Women's Resource Centre, private solicitor firms, Barnet Magistrate and Cyber Care) has provided advice and support to **338** victims of Domestic Abuse in the 12 months to December 2021
- 2.19 The **Barnet Homes Sanctuary Scheme** helps victims of domestic abuse, who live in Barnet, to remain in their own home, if it is safe to do so, by increasing the security at their home. In the last year, **86** homes received extra security measures under the Barnet Homes Sanctuary scheme to make the victims homes safer.
- 2.20 From January to December 2021, the number of homelessness approaches to Barnet Homes due to domestic abuse is **284** while the number victims in Temporary Accommodation (TA) due to DA is **83**. The possible explanation for the number variation is that some victims may have fled to refuge accommodation or be renting in the private sector.

Priority: Holding perpetrators to account

- 2.21 This priority aims to hold perpetrators to account through enforcement and placing the onus on perpetrators to change their behaviour. Key partnership activities that have been delivered during 2021 are:
- Perpetrator programme for Behaviour change
 - Young Person Perpetrators programme

Perpetrator programme for Behaviour change

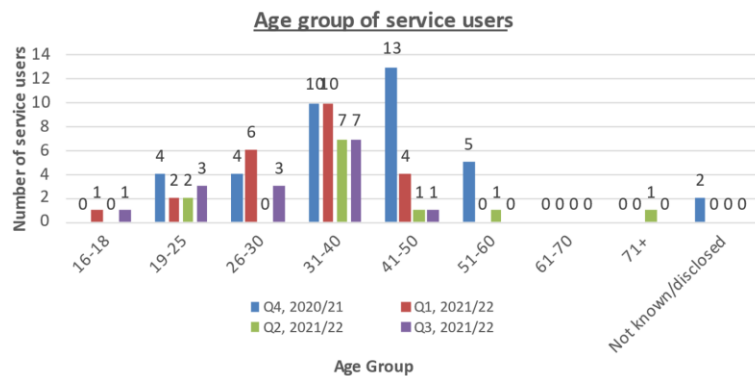
- 2.22 Barnet Council commissions Rise Mutual to deliver a domestic abuse perpetrator programme aimed at reducing re-offending and repeat victimisation. The programme uses proven evidence-based models for behaviour change. The service helps perpetrators to take positive and tangible steps to prevent re-offending. Between January and December 2021, **108** adult perpetrators received interventions under the Perpetrator Behaviour Change programs.

RISE Mutual Perpetrator Programme

Adults Service: Q4 2020/21– Q1-Q3 2021/2022 (Jan December 2021)

Adults Service	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3
New referrals	39	23	12	15
Number of engaged service users in the programme at the start of the Quarter	17	34	30	27
New service users entering the programme	10	7	7	8
Number of service users leaving the service	20	18	14	10
Number of service users departing in an agreed and planned way	16	9	2	8

- All **15** new referrals came from **Social Care**
- **13** male, **2** female.

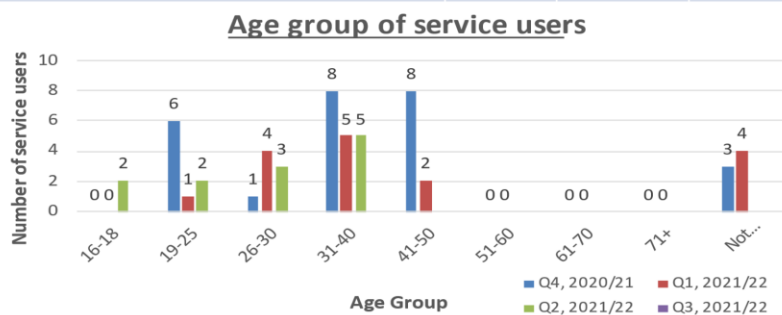


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RISE Mutual Perpetrator Programme

Partner Service Q4 2020/21– Q1-Q3 2021/2022 (Jan December 2021)

Partner Service	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3
New referrals	25	16	10	9
Number of engaged service users in the programme at the start of the quarter	35	32	23	37
New service users entering the programme	10	9	4	13
Number of service users leaving the service	13	11	2	2
Number of service users departing in an agreed and planned way	13	11	2	2



2

- 2.23 In 2021, RISE Mutual received a total of **186** new referrals. Of these, 89 were for the adult male and female perpetrator interventions, 60 were for the partner service for the victims and 37 for the young person service
- 2.24 Family Services: Children's Social Care and Early Help Services make the largest volume of referrals. The service is being promoted via MARAC and other professional services
- 2.25 RISE Mutual is a support service and therefore relies on service users consenting to engage and attend appointments and sessions; given it is a voluntary attendance service, engagement rates are very positive.
- 2.26 New CIFA (Culturally Integrated Family Approach) to domestic abuse perpetrator programme launched in September 2021. In August 2021, the London Borough of Barnet led a tri-borough bid with Brent and Enfield boroughs, along with RISE as the provider, and was successfully awarded Home Office perpetrator funding, overseen by MOPAC to work with 65 families/residents. The project applies an intersectional approach, which takes into account the inter-familial conflicts that feed into the victim's abuse and distress and the perpetrator's sense of power. The intervention includes optional family sessions to incorporate a wider cultural approach - working with multi-oppressors. The CIFA practitioners will work predominantly with the main perpetrator but also other family or friends/members of the community facilitating abuse.
- 2.27 RISE seeks feedback from pre/post questionnaires and there are useful case studies returned on the impact of the programme which demonstrate positive impact.

2.28 Young Person Perpetrators programme

RISE Mutual Perpetrator Programme
*Young People Service :Q4 2020/21 – Q1-Q3
2021/2022 (Jan-December 2021)*

Young People Service	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3
New referrals	8	7	10	12
Number of engaged service users in the programme at the start of the Quarter	20	15	15	16
New service users entering the programme	8	5	4	3
Total service users leaving the service	2	2	0	3
Total service users departing in an agreed and planned way	1	0	0	3

3

2.29 Rise Mutual delivers a Young Person Perpetrator programme in Barnet for 11-18 year olds. This programme provides one-to-one and group interventions for young people who are engaged in violence towards a parent(s).

2.30 The Respect and Principles (RAP) Programme is for 13 to 18-year-old males who have been involved in adolescent intimate relationship abuse.

Priority: Enhancing joint working practices between agencies

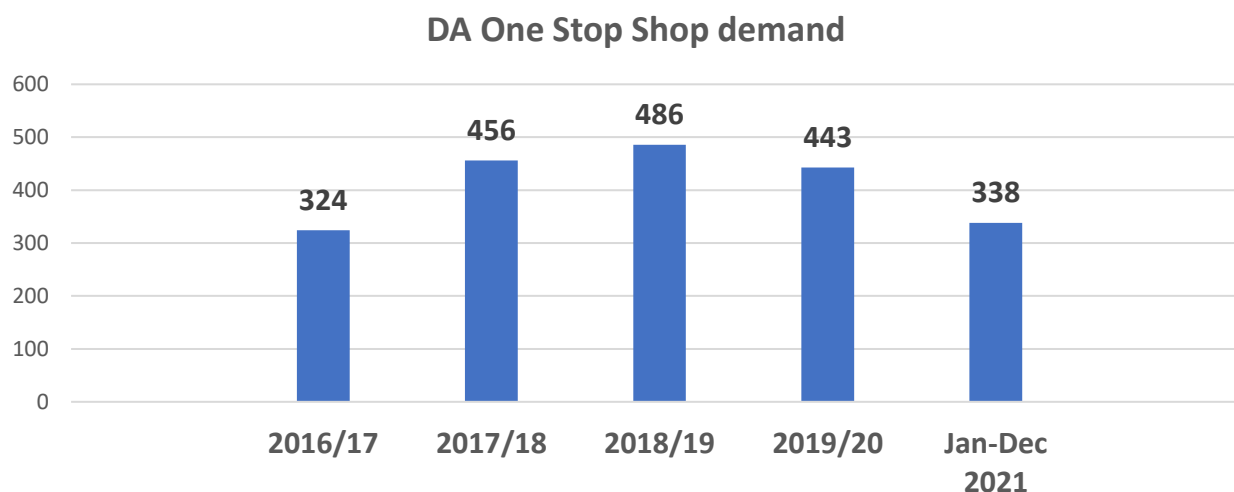
2.31 This priority aims to prevent violence against women and girls by developing joint working practices to provide a consistent, co-ordinated response to victims and their children. Some of the key partnership activities that have been delivered during 2019/20 are:

- The Barnet Domestic Abuse One Stop Shop
- Delivery of the Barnet IRIS project
- Safeguarding Children in Barnet through Operation Encompass
- Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs)
- Governance arrangements for the delivery of the VAWG Strategy

The Barnet Domestic Abuse One Stop Shop

2.32 Barnet's One Stop Shop (OSS) is a drop-in service for early intervention and advice for victims of DA and VAWG. The OSS which is delivered by Barnet Homes (with partners including Barnet council, Solace Women's Aid, private solicitor firms, Barnet Magistrate, Asian Women Resource Centre and Cyber Care) has provided advice and support to **338** victims of Domestic Abuse in the 12 months to December 2021. The demand has been constant from **443** in 2019/20, **486** in 2018/19, **456** in 2017/18 and **324** in 2016/17.

2.33 One Stop Shop demand January to December 2021



2.34 In addition to bringing together a breadth of partnership expertise to support victims of Domestic Abuse the OSS receives referrals from a wide range of agencies across the partnership as well as self-referrals.

Delivery of the IRIS¹ project- Overview of January-December 2021

2.35 The IRIS project started in February 2018; 39 GP Surgeries have received training as part of the programme.

IRIS referrals	Q4, 2020/21	Q1, 2021/22	Q2, 2021/22	Q3, 2021/22	Jan-Dec 2021 Total
Number referrals from GP surgeries	25	45	30	33	133

- The total number of fully trained GP surgeries is 25
- The total number of partially trained GP surgeries is 14

2.36 Feedback about the impact of the IRIS project, from the GP practices has been positive and this has been reflected in a marked increase in the rate of Domestic Abuse referrals from those surgeries. Of the GP surgeries to have received training the number of Domestic Abuse referrals has increased from **4** per year prior to the IRIS training to **133** referrals in the year 2021.

Operation Encompass in Barnet

2.37 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. Domestic Abuse causes anxiety and emotional harm to children, leaving them traumatised, this can affect their education and peer relationships and also is a primary causal factor in young people who go on to engage in violence in the community.

2.38 Operation Encompass is a partnership between the Metropolitan Police (MPS), the local authority (LA) and designated safeguarding leads (DSL) in schools. This protocol sets out a joint-agency procedure to provide, by next day notification, appropriate support for children and young people who have experienced domestic abuse in their household.

¹ IRIS stands for: 'Identification and Referral to Improve Safety'. Its aim is to improve awareness among GP practices around domestic abuse and thereby to increase the early identification (and appropriate referral) of victims of domestic abuse by primary care practitioners.

2.39 This protocol does not replace or supersede existing protocols, or singularly address child welfare and is used in conjunction with the current safeguarding procedures and practitioners' guidelines. It is designed to reinforce safeguarding and ensure children's wellbeing through the provision of 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

2.40 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.

2.41 Barnet schools have been signing up to Operation Encompass Since February 2021 to September 2021; there are **59 schools** signed up with ongoing work to encourage all schools to do so. Operation Encompass has been presented to Designated Safeguarding Leads by the Police.

Domestic Homicide Review

2.42 Sadly, death as a result of domestic abuse is an all too frequent and tragic reality. When this happens, the law says that professionals involved in the case must conduct a multi-agency Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) to identify what changes can be made to reduce the risk of similar incidents happening in the future. The purpose of Domestic Homicide Reviews is not to assign blame or responsibility but to understand what lessons there are to be learned and make recommendations based on those lessons as to how we can better work together to prevent future homicides.

2.43 A Statutory Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) was conducted by Barnet Safer Communities Partnership (BSCP) for the case of 'Zoltan' (pseudonym and a male victim), who was, in April 2018, killed by his partner. The BSCP agreed and approved the content and signed off the Overview Report, Executive Summary, and Action Plan on 22 October 2021. The full Overview DHR report draws overall conclusions and recommendations from the information provided to the DHR panel

by the participating agencies, including any IMRs (Individual Management Review) that were conducted. Based on these conclusions and the lessons learned, the report makes 10 recommendations for action arising from this review and from Panel discussions and these are followed by 36 recommendations from participating agency's Individual Management Reviews. Once signed off by the Home Office training and webinars on the learning lessons will be organised.

Governance arrangements for the delivery of the VAWG Strategy

- 2.44 The delivery of the Barnet VAWG strategy is overseen by Barnet's VAWG Delivery Group (a subgroup of Barnet's Safer Communities Partnership Board). The VAWG Delivery Group meets on a quarterly basis.
- 2.45 The VAWG Forum is comprised of agencies from the statutory and voluntary sector that work or have an interest in supporting the delivery of the VAWG strategy in Barnet. The Forum seeks to monitor performance of multi-agency delivery of the VAWG action plan, share good practice, identify gaps, recognise emerging needs and issues; the group report into the VAWG Delivery Group
- 2.46 Updates on progress against the VAWG strategy are provided quarterly to the VAWG Delivery Group and annually to the Safer Communities Partnership Board.

Diagram 1: Barnet VAWG governance chart

