

Community Leadership and Libraries Committee

11 May 2023

Title	Family Services Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women & Girls (VAWG) Annual Report
Report of	Chair of the Community Leadership and Libraries Committee
Wards	All
Status	Public
Urgent	No
Key	No
Enclosures	None
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Summary

This report provides the Community Leadership and Libraries Committee with an update on the delivery and implementation of the Barnet Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2022-25.

Officers Recommendations

1. The Community Leadership and Libraries Committee note and comment on the progress made by the Safer Communities Partnership on delivering the five priority objectives of the Barnet Domestic Abuse (DA) and Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy (2022-2025).
2. The Community Leadership and Libraries Committee note and comment on Safer Communities Partnership priorities as set out within Barnet's Domestic Abuse & Violence Against Women & Girls Strategy (2022 – 2025)

1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

- 1.1 To provide an update to the annual report of June 2022 to the Community Leadership Committee (CLLC) on the work of the Safer Communities Partnership in meeting the aims of the Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women & Girls Strategy 2022-25.
- 1.2 The Barnet Safer Communities Partnership ('BSCP' or 'the Partnership') are responsible for overseeing the development and implementation of an overall strategy for reducing crime and anti-social behaviour; this includes Domestic Abuse (DA) and Violence Against Women & Girls (VAWG). This report sets out the priorities and aims of BSCP's Domestic Abuse & VAWG Strategy for 2022-2025 and the partnership's commitment to working together to prevent all forms of VAWG.
- 1.3 The Barnet Corporate Plan 2023-26 has two priorities that are linked to the DA & VAWG Strategy Caring for People and Caring for Place; these priorities focus on working with residents, communities and our partners to support residents to stay well and free from abuse and creating a network of safe spaces for women and girls.
- 1.4 The Violence Against Women and Girls Partnership Delivery Group (a subgroup to the Barnet Safer Communities Partnership Board) brings together partner organisations in the borough to work together to respond to DA & VAWG with the aim of preventing it and reducing the harm it causes to victims, their families and the wider community. The Delivery Group agrees the annual VAWG Delivery Plan setting out the key partnership activities required, in order to deliver against the five new partnership priorities within Barnet's DA & VAWG Strategy.
- 1.5 The five partnership priorities within the draft Barnet DA & VAWG Strategy 2022-25 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

2. Background context

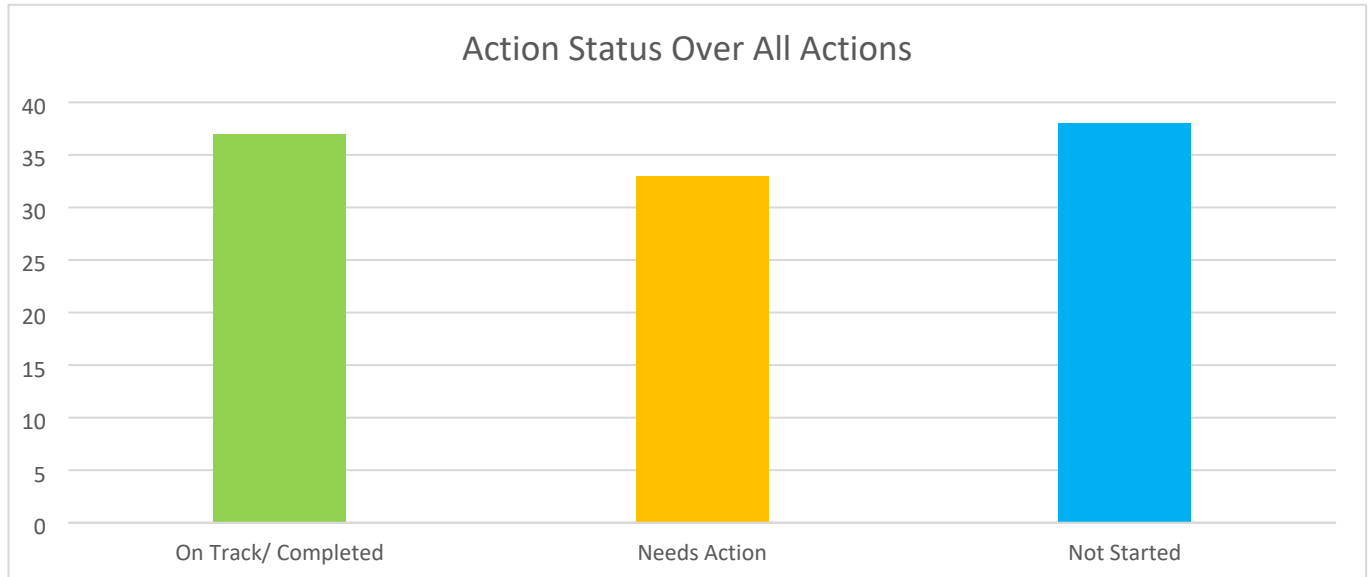
- 2.1 In the Annual VAWG Report presented to CLLC in June 2022, it was reported that the Barnet's Domestic Abuse (DA) and Violence Against Women & Girls (VAWG) Strategy 2022-25 was launched on 8 March 2022 on the occasion of International Women's Day 2022. It set out how the Barnet Safer Communities Partnership (BSCP) works to prevent and respond to Domestic Abuse and underlines the partnership's commitment to working together to prevent and tackle all forms of violence against women and girls (VAWG).
- 2.2 The government's 'Tackling Violence Against Women & Girls Strategy' 2021, has been shaped by a call for evidence from 180,000 respondents. It sets out four strategic aims which are reflected within our local strategic plan; these include prioritising prevention, supporting victims, pursuing perpetrators, and strengthening the system.
- 2.3 The Government published a Tackling Domestic Abuse plan in March 2022 to complement the Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy. It sets out how various aspects of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 will be delivered,
- 2.4 A key amendment, which came into effect from 5th April 2023, to the Coercive Control Behaviour (CCB) offence under the Serious Crime Act 2015 amended the definition of "personally

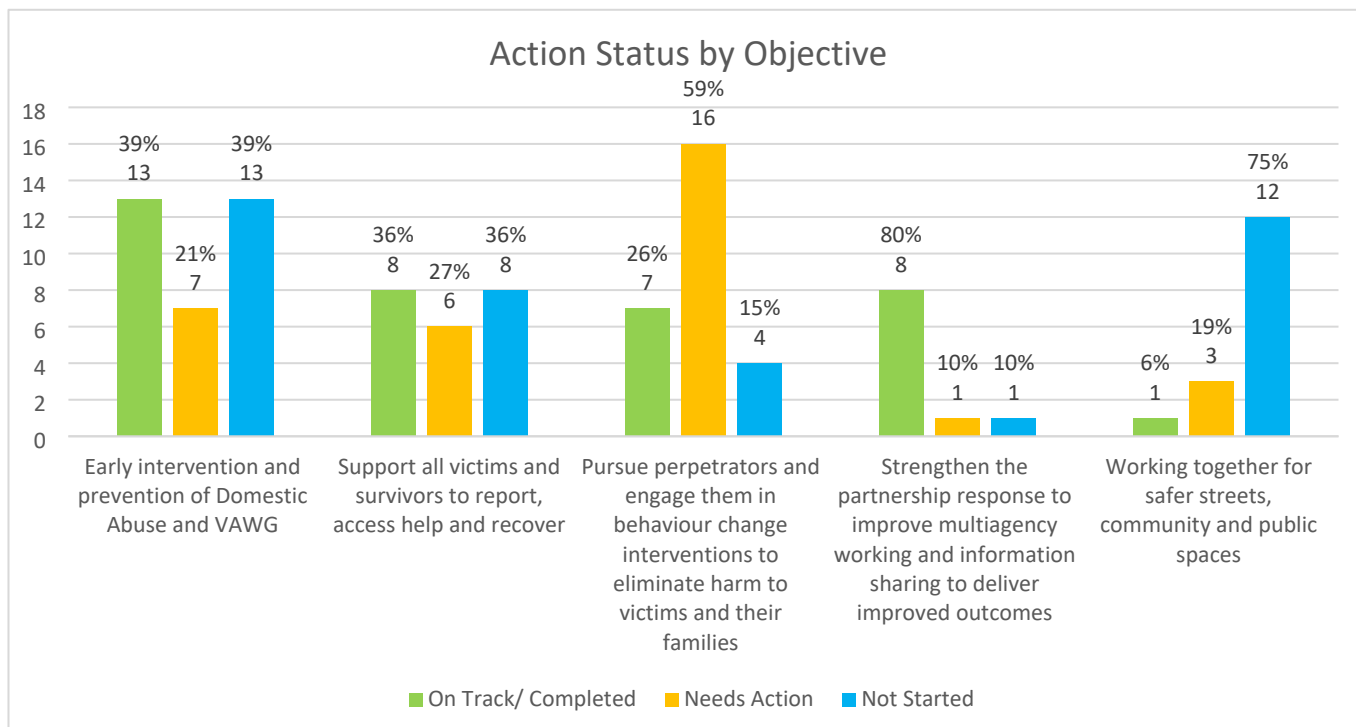
connected” in section 76 of the 2015 Act. This removed the “living together” requirement, which means that the offence of controlling or coercive behaviour now applies to partners, ex-partners or family members, regardless of whether the victim and perpetrator live together. The amendment was made to extend the offence recognising that controlling or coercive behaviour can persist and often increase when a relationship ends, or in cases where the victim no longer lives with the perpetrator. It is also important to be aware that controlling or coercive behaviour can evolve when the perpetrator no longer lives with the victim, with new tactics being deployed to exercise control over a victim. A new Statutory Guidance Framework on Controlling or Coercive Behaviour was also published on 5 April 2023.

- 2.5 Domestic abuse data from the Crime Survey for England and Wales estimates that 2.4 million adults (1.7 million women and 699,000 men) aged 16 years and over experienced domestic abuse in the year ending March 2022. Domestic abuse disproportionately affects women and girls, accounting for 74.1% of the total victims of domestic abuse-related crimes in 2021/22.
- 2.6 According to the same Crime Survey, there were 41,626 offences of coercive control recorded by the police in England and Wales in the year ending March 2022. This is compared with 33,954 in the year ending March 2021 and 24,856 in the year ending March 2020. The rise in coercive control offences over recent years may be attributed to improvements made by the police in recognising incidents of coercive control and using the new law accordingly.

3. Annual report 2022/23

- 3.1 The DA & VAWG Strategy 2022-25 Action Plan is monitored and reported to the VAWG Delivery Group. Progress against the 108 partnership commitments within the Action Plan is RAG rated. The charts below show the overall progress against meeting the aims of the DA & VAWG Strategy and demonstrate purposeful progress for year one of delivery.





3.1.1 Key highlights of the DA and VAWG Delivery Action Plan 2022/23:

3.1.1.1 IRIS funding for 2023/24

Family Services secured £40k from North Central London (NCL) Integrated Care Board (ICB) and £50k from Public Health to run the IRIS programme and train all 50 GP surgeries in Barnet by March 2024

3.1.1.2 New CIFA programme for 2023/25

Barnet successfully bid for Home Office/Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) for two-year funding 2021-23 amounting to £305,832 per year. RISE delivered a Culturally Integrated Family Approach (CIFA) to Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programmes to minoritised and/or marginalised communities in Barnet, Brent and Enfield. Barnet was the lead. The MOPAC Deputy Mayor, Sophie Linden visited the CIFA programme in Barnet on 23rd June 2022 and had the opportunity to hear from one service user of the CIFA programme.

Led by Barnet with 9 other London boroughs (Brent, Harrow, Newham, Tower Hamlets, Haringey, Enfield, Hammersmith & Fulham, Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster) continued funding to the amount of £1.46m, has successfully been secured for a further two years of a Culturally Integrated Family Approach (CIFA) to Domestic Abuse perpetrator programmes ending in March 2025.

3.1.1.3 Against Violence and Abuse (AVA) funding to Barnet Homes

Barnet Homes successfully obtained AVA funding for a three-year project, a two-year partnership to Barnet Homes which started in January 2023, with the remainder of the project focussed on creating and publishing guidance and sharing learning. Through the project Barnet Homes will recruit and train a new expert panel of local survivors. Working with Barnet Homes, survivors, and local expert organisations, AVA will create a co-produced programme of work to tackle identified challenges in Barnet.

3.1.1.4 Barnet Homes Domestic Abuse (DA) One Stop Shop

Barnet Homes DA One Stop Shop face to face drop in has resumed from February 2023 and an official relaunch was held on 9 March 2023

3.1.1.5 Minerva House funding for 2023/24.

The council was successful in securing £100,000 of funding from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing & Communities to support the continuation the Minerva House provision by Barnet Homes in 2023/24.

3.1.1.6 Ask for Angela initiative.

At present 57 of Barnet's 73 licenced venues are participating in "Ask for Angela". initiative to address women's safety. The Community Safety Team are exploring if training in Ask for Angela can be included in licensing conditions.

3.1.1.7 #HearMyVoice – a Barnet community initiative with Middlesex University students addressing DA and VAWG

In partnership with the VAWG team of London Borough of Barnet, Middlesex University's Changing the Culture Initiative (CCI) worked on a project since April 2022 to deliver #HearMyVoice –to address VAWG and DA. #HearMyVoice is specifically focused on capturing the local context of Barnet and in particular the narratives of individuals, groups and organisations in the community. It is planned that those narratives would be amplified through the delivery of a hub of resources on the CCI webpage, a showcasing/community networking event at the end of the academic year, and further dissemination through various online and social media channels. #HearMyVoice event planning is going well and will be held on 24 May 2023, 5-7pm at Middlesex University.

3.1.1.8 New Co-locations

A new Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA) has commenced alongside social workers in Children's Social Care and part-time IDVA is now located within the Children and Family Early Help Service.

3.1.1.9 Accredited IDVA Training and DA Champion Network

A 4-month accredited IDVA training, funded by LB Barnet, was completed by Safelives in June 2022. The 23 learners were from voluntary sector youth support services, early help, children's social care, Adult MASH, Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust, Barnet Homes, drug and alcohol services, and specialist DA services. The trainees have completed their assessments to gain their Level 3 IDVA Certificate in Domestic Abuse.

A DA Champion Network was set up with the newly trained IDVAs and the first meeting was held in September 2022. The aim is to maintain the inter-agency relationships built during the training and support the group as they implement the training into their roles. The terms of reference of this network will include sharing the multi-agency knowledge and expertise between Champions within the network and onwards into their respective agencies. It will also include support on a rota basis to the DA One Stop Shop.

3.1.1.10 New dedicated Team within the Housing Options Service

Barnet Homes had secured funding from MOPAC to create a dedicated DA Team within the Housing Options Service. The Team started in October 2022. The DA Team manages the most complex and high-risk housing cases for DA survivors, from the initial assessment of survivors' and their children's needs to their placement in safe-accommodation, to their move-on and resettlement in long-term accommodation. At each point, floating support will be available to hand-hold individuals through their recovery and resettlement pathway. The team support survivors to access DA services, and will be a consistent, supportive presence to aid the recovery of those who face complex issues and additional barriers. Any movement between accommodation types will be overseen and supported to minimise trauma.

3.1.1.11 LB Barnet Staff and Managers DA Guidance

The VAWG team identified and reviewed council policies to ensure domestic abuse support was set out for council staff. A staff guidance document to link to those policies which

demonstrates a zero-tolerance approach to sexist, harassing or abusive behaviours within the workforce with clear systems for reporting, assessing, dealing with, and reporting incidents of sexism, harassment, abuse, sexual assault or violence. The aim is to build confidence in reporting and raising awareness on what is acceptable behaviour at work. The guidance will also provide clear information about the response people can expect when they tell someone at work about domestic abuse, and the steps that are available to ensure they stay safe and supported in the workplace.

3.1.1.12 New funding from Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

The funding for the Part 4 statutory duty of the Domestic Act 2021 for 2023/24 and 2024/25 has been confirmed from Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities in December 2022. This provides continued funding for a DA consultant role which has been invaluable in both developing and implementing the DA & VAWG Strategy.

3.1.1.13 DA Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) Quality Assurance Panel

Barnet's DA MARAC is subject to a 6-monthly Quality Assurance Panel (QAP) to evaluate effectiveness. The Panel is chaired by the Head of Safeguarding, Access and Occupational Therapy, Adult Social Care and is attended by agencies who have been involved with the selected cases. QAP was held on 31 October with some good practice identified and with a recommendation to explore practice improvements against 8 of the Safe Lives effective practice principles. The audit provides evidence of multi-agency efforts to provide support to the victim as part safety planning before and after the MARAC; this is particularly evident in support provided by IDVA's. In addition, any emerging issues are always discussed at the MARAC Steering Group and if appropriate escalated to the Violence Against Women and Girls Forum. The questions within the 8 Safe Lives principles have been circulated to partners via a survey monkey for a report in July 2023.

3.1.1.14 Ending male violence against women.

Barnet Council has committed towards working to end men's violence against women. A steering group comprising champions and male ambassadors continues to meet monthly to implement a 3-year action plan.

3.1.1.15 Events

- A successful International Women's Day event was held on 8 March 2023 organised by the council and supported by the lead member for Community Safety and many DA/VAWG partners. The event was held at StoneX Stadium and attended by over 150 people from the voluntary, community and faith sector, and key partners including the Met Police. Guest speakers included Dr Doirean Wilson, Senior Lecturer & Diversity Lead at Middlesex University, and Barnet resident Propa Rezwana Anwar, Vice Chair of The Barnet Multi Faith Forum, and Youth Council Events Manager for The Faith & Belief Forum. There were also special performances from pupils at Copthall School and the Barnet Education Arts Trust.
- The Women's Network at Barnet Council have led an 'InspirationAll' awards campaign internally and externally to support attitude changes by identifying, empowering and celebrating women and girls in Barnet and those who make a strong contribution to gender equality within their everyday roles
- The award categories include: Business and Construction, Sport and Wellbeing, Environment and Sustainability, Inspiring Young Woman and Community and Culture

- As part of a month-long celebration, the council offered funding of between £500 - £1,000 for community groups, local charities, and organisations to host an event in March. Successful applications included a mother and daughter programme for the Somalian community in Grahame Park, a community quilt blanket by a church in Barnet, and a synagogues and refugee communities' event in Finchley.
- A successful World Social Work Day event jointly organised by Family and Adult Services and held on Tuesday 21 March 2023 with the theme 'Respecting diversity through joint social action', was attended by Rise, Solace and Barnet Homes stalls.
- During 16 days of activism between 25 November-10 December 2022, a series of events with expert speakers including Rachel Williams, a survivor, was organised.
- A partnership webinar around the new offence of non-fatal strangulation or non-fatal suffocation (Domestic Abuse Act 2021) was held on 6 December 2022. 80 participants from the multiagency partnership attended. The webinar was very well received.

Participant Feedback:

"I thought it was an excellent webinar, thanks so much. It was a good mix I thought and the case studies very powerful."

"Thank you, Rachel. I love how spirited and determined you are in your mission to change the law and get the message out there! Powerful!"

- The VAWG Team and the Lead Member for Community Safety visited the 3 women refuges commissioned by the Council and Barnet Homes on 7 December 2022. The survivors' messages were very powerful in how their journey was supported by the refuge and the positive impact it made on their road to safety.

Survivor Feedback:

"I want to thank all who helped with my difficult time now I live in a women's refuge house. I suffer from domestic abuse by my husband and his family. I decided to talk to my doctor about my husband and she helped me, and she contacted solace women's aid. before I came to this refuge, I have been in hospital for 2 months. I have tuberculosis in my brain and spine. I still take medicine and go to the hospital for a monthly check-up. I came to refuge house last year and they helped with my visa which I got last October. Then they helped my English course which starts this month. It was a very difficult time to stay in one room by myself, but my support worker and my manager always help to do something and busy myself. They provided in the summer many different activities; I really enjoyed it with another resident. I did 'Arise' course in the refuge. I attended last year in December 16 days activism which was a big day for me because I shared my experience with others for the first time. I enjoyed their lovely food and drinks. I received a gift from them. I meet during a time with Barnet councillors. I was so happy to talk with them. I really appreciate my manager and support workers."

3.1.1.16 Communication

- A Leaflet on where to get help and support for domestic or sexual abuse in Barnet was launched on 25 November 2022 and widely circulated to all networks and residents.
- The Barnet Council Domestic abuse website: www.barnet.gov.uk/domesticabuse has been updated with the new leaflet and videos produced by students from Middlesex University who have worked with the council to create short films to promote awareness about local support services for people at risk of Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls. Included are videos from Jewish Women's Aid, Youth Realities, Art Against Knives, Rise Mutual, Barnet Homes One Stop Shop and Middlesex University students.
<https://www.barnet.gov.uk/children-and-families/domestic-abuse/helpful-videos-barnet-residents>
- The Comms team produced a comms toolkit for the 16 days activism. The key messages were promoted across the 16 days of activism (with one social media post per day) to support residents and signpost residents to information about where to get help and support through provision of key contact information of voluntary sector organisations and partners working in Barnet and also to share video content to promote awareness of how local voluntary organisations and partners are supporting and promoting events for professionals. The assets for the campaign were:
 - Barnet first magazine article page Barnet First magazine - Winter 2022.pdf
 - 4-page leaflet to given out locally and at community safety hubs
 - Press release.
 - Video with Cllr Sara Conway
 - Films from local support groups and voluntary organisations
 - Mayor of London #haveawordwithyourself campaign
 - Home office 'enough' campaign

3.2 Delivering the DA and VAWG Strategy Annual report 2022/2023

3.2.1 Objective 1: Early Intervention and Prevention of Domestic Abuse and VAWG

Early intervention and prevention are key to reducing the amount of domestic abuse, domestic homicide, and suicides linked to domestic abuse and by stopping people from becoming perpetrators and victims to begin with. Domestic abuse devastates the lives of millions. In Barnet in the 12 months to March 2023, there were 5048 DA incidents, 3149 DA offences and 737 DA violence with injury cases reported to Police. The interventions set out below aims to address this by driving down domestic abuse and domestic homicide and preventing them from ever happening in the first place.

3.2.1.1 IRIS programme in Barnet

In 2023, IRIS have delivered training to 9 new surgeries that previously never had any IRIS training and completed those partially trained. To qualify as "fully trained" a GP practice must complete numerous trainings: Reception & Admin, Clinical 1 and Clinical 2 teams. This is both a time and resource pressure which has made it difficult to achieve full coverage. We have 50 GP surgeries in Barnet-there are currently 28 fully trained practices and a further 15 partially trained and 7 have not engaged. We have recently linked Solace with Barnet Primary & Community Care Training Hub who will support engagement with surgeries.

This means that 43 out of 50 GP surgeries in Barnet have engaged with IRIS training. During trainings, GP's have commented that they previously didn't think of domestic abuse as a health issue and felt it was not their place to ask patients about it. They felt that doing the IRIS training gave them permission to engage in discussions with their patients, indicating towards a shift in the General Practitioner perspective and approach to DA in Barnet.

Service user feedback:

"My GP has been supportive. For the first time in my life, I had somebody I felt safe enough to open up to" and "My GP made me feel like she cared. My GP was the first professional to tell me that I was amazing and could do this. That made all the difference."

- In 2022/23, IRIS received 118 referrals from GP's. IRIS also provided a further 17 individual DA consultations to GPs for their patients. Service users greatest support needs were in relation to housing, family law, criminal justice, mental health, their children and finances.
- 80 service users completed support with IRIS, of these, 26 service users were supported with housing: 13 moved into a safe accommodation, 7 added safety measures to the property so they could continue living there, and in 5 cases the perpetrator was removed from the property. 26 service users were supported with family law and 19 were supported with police and criminal justice. 16 were linked with support for their mental health.
- From all the referrals, 27% service users had a disability, 58% had mental health issues and 19% had a physical health support need. Several service users had multiple disadvantages with the above as well as suicidal ideation and drug and alcohol support needs. IRIS provided them with more intensive, longer-term support.
- IRIS can provide 4 emotional support sessions to service users on identifying and understanding DA dynamics, rebuilding their self-esteem, confidence, agency and identity.

Service user feedback:

"Thank you very much for giving me the confidence" (06/04/2023)

"I am in a much better space mentally." (23/2/23).

"Through [IRIS] support I have decided I do not want a relationship with that man anymore. I have also learnt that I will not be co-dependent with any future relationships." (23/01/2023).

- In March 2023, IRIS funding came to an end. The IRIS steering committee requested an investment of £202,000 (£101,000 reoccurring for two years) to fund two advocate educators (AE) to work in primary care for two years. £90k was agreed and funded by Barnet Public Health and North Central London (NCL) Integrated Care Board (ICB for one year with a review with); this leaves a shortfall of £10k which will reduce capacity for a IRIS Advocate Educators

Referrals into Solace Services from Local GPs in Barnet have been constant.

Year	Date Range	Referrals to Solace Services from local GPs
Baseline	Feb 17 – Jan 18	4
1	April 18 – March 19	53
2	April 19 – March 20	92
3	April 20 – March 21	74
4	April 21 – March 22	131
5	April 22 – March 23	118

3.2.1.2 Education in schools

Public Health have led work to map support, resources and training for schools, and their pupils and families in relation to prevention of domestic and sexual abuse. Following an initial scoping meeting a draft version of the information has been circulated for comment.

A request has been made to the VAWG team for training to all Designated Safeguarding Leads in schools on brief overview of signs and indicators, some useful information for schools in responding to children and non-abusive parents plus local support options.

3.2.1.3 Operation Encompass

Operation Encompass is led by the Metropolitan Police (MPS) in partnership with the local authority and schools. The joint-agency protocol enables the Police to share information with schools following a reported domestic abuse incident where the police have been called out and a child has been present the following day.

Sharing information about incidents of domestic abuse to which children have been exposed ensure school staff have immediate awareness so they can practice silent observation, assess needs and/or provide appropriate support to children and young people who have experienced domestic abuse.

The protocol does not replace or supersede existing protocols for child safeguarding or welfare and is used in conjunction with current safeguarding procedures and practice guidelines. 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

Further information about Operation Encompass can be found <https://www.operationencompass.org>; the local authority is exploring ways in which to capture and report impact on children in the borough.

3.2.1.4 DAVAWG partnership training

- 139 practitioners attended 4 multi-agency DA trainings over 2022/23 organised by Barnet Council. 37 attended Domestic abuse awareness level 1, 27 attended level 2, 'Responding and Recognising DA', 38 attended DA MARAC and 37 attended 'Understanding the coercive control and economic abuse' training.
- Of all attendees, the majority were from voluntary sector organisations (28%); with 21% from Family Services; 16% from Adults and Health; 13% from housing; 8% were foster carers; and small numbers of attendees from education, early years, mental health, and probation.
- Everyone who provided feedback said it is likely that their learning will change the way they work for the better. Many learners valued the opportunity to have discussions with others and liked the interactive nature of the training, with some saying they wanted more case studies and longer time for discussion.
- Suggestions for improvement included one learner who said a film of a DA survivor would be impactful, and one saying they think DA training should be delivered face to face.

Learner feedback:

"Thank you for organising it. It is a course that is necessary for all those who provide services and support to people to take part in."

"I am much more prepared in directing people to the appropriate organisations for support."

"I have recognised the importance of knowing the Key voluntary agencies that support victims/survivors of DV and how they can offer support in a variety of ways."

"I have gained a more nuanced understanding of the subject".

- DAVAWG training has been paused for Q1 2023/24 with the exception of MARAC training until a training needs assessment is completed with an analysis to review the trainings for 2023/24. Some training events have had low attendance and it is important to review and learn from the multiagency partnership and practitioners themselves in order to co-produce the training programme with the intended trainees.
- The new administration received a briefing on Domestic Abuse and VAWG Strategy and work in the borough to support victims and work with perpetrators on 20 June 2022.
- A partnership webinar around the new offence of non-fatal strangulation or non-fatal suffocation (Domestic Abuse Act 2021) was held on 6th December 2022. 80 participants from multiagency partnership attended with expert speakers from The Faculty of Forensic and Legal Medicine and Rachel Williams, a survivor. Attendees were introduced to resources and key information following the introduction of the new offence of non-fatal strangulation and suffocation.
- The VAWG team together with the Barnet Safeguarding Children Partnership Manager delivered a briefing on multi-agency responses to domestic abuse involving children based on learning from the national Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel on 2 March 2023.

3.2.2 Objective 2: Support all victims and survivors to report, access help and recover

Support is crucial to help all victims and survivors who have escaped from domestic abuse feel that they can get back to life as normal, with support for their health, emotional, economic, and social needs.

In Barnet there is a range of support available to ensure that every victim and survivor can have their needs met. The DA/VAWG team also monitor changing needs and reflect these in the partnership action plan.

The council commissions Solace Women's Aid to deliver Advocacy and Support Services and 2 women's refuges to support our victims and survivors in the borough. DA MARAC is managed in-house in which high risk cases of domestic abuse are discussed on a weekly basis and risk reduction safety plans are implemented. Barnet Homes manages the Sanctuary Scheme, DA One Stop Shop and one women's refuge funded by MOPAC (Minerva House). Victim Support provides an uplift for a Senior IDVA at Barnet Hospital.

3.2.2.1 Commissioned Services

Contract monitoring meetings are held on a quarterly basis. A tool kit with agreed data together with feedback and case studies are presented to the VAWG team on a quarterly basis.

3.2.2.2 Solace Advocacy and Support Service (SASS)

Solace received 1251 referrals in 2022/23 bringing the total referrals for the year to 1251, this exceeds their annual target of 1200 and represents a 9.2% decrease from the previous year. The number of accepted cases in the year was 512, a 2.5% decrease from 525 last year. In this reporting period, 14 service-users identified as LGBT+ and 17 male victims accessed the service. 46 (4%) service-users referred had no recourse to public funds and 68 (13.3%) of service-users self-reported mental health needs.

Over the course of 2022/23, Barnet SASS supported 512 service users – 80 of which were assessed as high risk, 285 were medium risk, and 97 were standard risk. In addition to supporting service users to reduce the risk posed from further incidents of domestic abuse, Solace staff also provided 116 consultations with professionals regarding domestic abuse support. The Barnet SASS service was regularly engaged in events across the borough, including providing training to other professionals on recognising and responding to domestic abuse, strengthening partnerships with mental health services in the borough to best support survivors, and establishing the Early Help and Children's Social Care IDVA roles to support the children's workforce best respond to DV affecting children.

The Barnet SASS team consistently supports service users to reduce the risk posed to them. Over 2022/23, there were 485 exits from the Barnet SASS service. Of these exits, 380 service users reported feeling that there was some or significant improvement to their perception of their own safety. Additionally, a majority of clients were supported to end the abusive relationship they were seeking support around with 343 service users reporting that they had not reconciled with the abusive partner at the point of exit from our service. 245 service users completed exit PoWER forms, which are used to assess how clients' perception of their situation has changed since engaging with the service. Of the completed forms:

- 113 reported they were feeling safer
- 109 reported feeling more confident
- 108 reported feeling better about themselves
- 85 reported feeling close to other people

- 95 reported they are dealing with their problems well
- 81 reported they felt more confident to make decisions, and;
- 87 reported feeling optimistic about the future.

Due to service users exiting our service feeling more confident about making decisions, feeling close to others, and reporting increased confidence, many service users will therefore be supported to either stop a relationship before it becomes abusive in the future or seek support from our service if needed in the future.

SASS delivered Arise Group Programmes 8 times while Picking Up the Pieces (PUTP) was delivered 3 times. 68 women attending the Arise programme reporting having an increased understanding of what a healthy relationship looks like, while 20 women attending PUTP reported an improved understanding of the impacts of domestic abuse on children. Whilst attending these programmes, the Barnet SASS group worker has shared that feedback is largely positive, with women gaining a great deal of support from one another in a peer-to-peer capacity, which strengthens the social support survivors are receiving in the borough. Overall, between the risk reduction work being completed within the IDVA services, the prevention and awareness raising across the service, and the ongoing identification and strengthening of partnerships across the borough, Barnet SASS is continuing to combat instances of DA and VAWG across the borough of Barnet.

3.2.2.3 Collocations of independent Domestic Violence Advisers (IDVAs)

The part time role at Police CSU from Victim Support has been withdrawn. A new IDVA has been co-located with social workers in Children's Social Care to facilitate referral pathways, provide options and advice and also to accompany social workers to visit families experiencing domestic abuse.

A part time IDVA has also been co-located with the Child & Family Early Help Service. The IDVA sits on the multi-agency referral panel and provides consultation to practitioners around cases where may initially be unclear if there is domestic abuse or Parental Conflict, so the correct referral pathway is followed.

3.2.2.4 Womens refuges

Solace Women's Aid are commissioned by the Barnet Council to provide support and manage 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 to support the continuation the Minerva House women's refuge provision in 2023/24

Barnet Council commissions 2 refuges offering 18 adult bed spaces with 20 children's bed spaces. Minerva House provides 6 adult bed spaces and 10 children's bed spaces for homeless women fleeing domestic abuse and approaching Barnet Homes for housing assistance. For the period 2022-23 Barnet Refuges supported 38 women and 26 children with 19 departures. Minerva House accommodated 14 women and 16 children with 8 departures.

The Refuge team accepted 21 new referrals to Barnet refuges and 10 new referrals to Minerva House with the largest number coming from The National Domestic Violence Helpline, Barnet Homes, out of borough housing, other Domestic Abuse Services and Solace Advocacy Services.

The majority of victims were rehoused in the private rented sector. Victims benefit from holistic and trauma-informed support through risk and needs assessment, safety planning, individual support

planning to achieve the best outcomes for independent living which includes crisis support, advocacy, ongoing emotional support, counselling, children's creative play therapy, children's activities, support to achieve employment, education and training goals including accessing ESOL classes, budgeting and financial support, immigration support. The service provides a specialist Family Support Worker providing age-appropriate 1:1 support to children, young people and their mothers. The service also received funding to recruit a Multiple Disadvantage Worker. Safeguarding referrals were made to Adult and Children's Social Care as appropriate.

There was a total of 11 MARAC cases with key professionals attending the refuge to carry out visits i.e. social workers, health visitors and midwives. The ARISE Domestic Abuse Awareness Programme was facilitated in-house by our dedicated refuge team to improve understanding of DV/A, the effects on survivors and their children, to recognise unhealthy relationships in order to recover from trauma and move forward in their lives free from abuse.

They have achieved positive outcomes for victims through partnership working with a number of agencies: Acacia, The Arts Depot, Barnet Adult Social Care, Barnet Family Services, Barnet One Stop Shop, Barnet Homes, Barnet Job Centre, Barnet Benefits Service, Barnet and Southgate College, Barnet Public Health, Barnet Well Being Hub, Boost, Bowling & Co Solicitors, Bright Horizons, Buddy Bag Charity, Buttle Trust UK, CAHMS, Chipping Barnet Food Bank, CLG Drug and Alcohol Service, Crisis Fund, Cyber Care, Dawn counselling, Debt Advisory Service, Debt Recovery Service, Finchley Women's Institute, GN Law Solicitors, GPs, HAB Law Solicitors, Health Visiting Team, Home Start, Historic Royal Palaces, Jewish Deaf Association, Jewish Women's Aid, Little Village, MARAC, Mencap, Met Police, Neighbourhood Doula, Pram depot, Renew, Sangam, Southall Black Sisters and Trinity Church Mill Hill

Survivors living at the refuges provide peer support by accompanying new arrivals to the GP, hospital and local shops enabling them to settle into the refuge which alleviates feelings of isolation. Our refuges encourage co-designed and survivor-led activities such as baking/ cooking activities, responsible for purchasing ingredients and upskilling each other. This has been a great success at various events throughout the year, including Black History Month, Eid, International Women's Day and the 16 Days of Activism partnership event with Barnet Homes at which the women shared their stories with local councillors. The vegetable beds, herb garden implemented through a partnership with Finchley Women's Institute inspired the women to learn basic garden skills by sharing their gardening expertise with survivors. The Flower Bank in Barnet is another example of using local projects to develop skills, service users created hanging baskets and hand painted individual flowerpots that they were able to keep at the end of the session.

Activities for the period included a seaside trip to South End, London Zoo, Discovery Children's Story Centre, Clown Town, Flip Out Trampoline, Swimming, Cinema, Belmont Farm, Summer Picnic and Sports Day and our End of Year Christmas Party.

The refuge provisions are immensely grateful to the generosity of key stakeholders and partners who work so hard to provide the many donations to families for special occasions and throughout the year. Barnet Homes, Bright Horizons, Chipping Barnet Food Bank, United Synagogue, Jewish Deaf Association, Trinity Church Mill Hill. New partnerships were developed with The Arts Depot a cultural hub in Finchley offering free tickets to theatre shows for families, also Historical Palaces. The Family Support workers at the 3 refuges received training to facilitate the trips. Chipping Barnet Foodbank provides targeted donations, resettlement funding and on-going support with food supermarket vouchers and Vodafone SIM cards allocated to women with NRTPF, those experiencing benefit delays, deductions, or financial hardship due to the increase in cost of living. The refuges have also approached other charities including Lifetime Chances for individual grants for furniture items needed when moving into independent living.

Equality, diversity, and inclusion is promoted within the service, utilising all available resources to ensure service users feel welcome and safe in Solace refuges. All women are provided with face to face and telephone interpreting services. There is Halal cooking equipment in shared kitchens and

Diwali coffee mornings alongside celebrations for Black History Month and religious festivals such as Easter, Eid and Christmas. One refuge has a self-contained adapted unit for wheelchair users. Solace has received funding from MOPAC for a multiple disadvantage refuge worker and are recruiting to this role currently. Solace have been consulting with staff and service users on their trans-inclusive approach and policies. They have also consulted through House Meetings, children's meetings, exit surveys and through annual service user consultation meetings learning of the positive impact of the service on women and children's self-esteem, confidence and independence.

3.2.2.5 Inhouse service : DA MARAC

MARAC	Q1 22/23	Q2 22/23	Q3 22/23	Q4 22/23	Apr 2022- Mar 2023 Total
Number of MARAC referrals	87	123	122	145	477
Number of children in the household	51	64	68	111	294
Number of families with children	38	48	37	64	187
Number of repeat MARAC referrals	9	22	19	35	85
Percentage of repeat MARAC referrals	10%	18%	16%	24%	17%

- Over 2022/23 Barnet has seen a gradual increase in MARAC referrals which is increasing the number of children exposed to this behaviour. Also, the percentage of repeat MARAC referral has increased.
- 36% of victims in 2022/23 reported mental health needs and 21% of the alleged perpetrators reported mental health needs.
- The victims in 2022/23 identified as female in 90.6% of the cases. 89.8% of alleged perpetrators in 2022/23 were reported as being male.
- The majority of perpetrators in 2022/23 are the victim's Ex-partner 182 (37%), Partner 157 (32%) or son 26 (6%)
- The DA consultant has started a review of the DA MARAC based on the Safe lives review tool. 8 of the 10 SafeLives principles will be reviewed, including quality assuring the action planning process. This will also explore increased referrals and re-referrals reported in Q4.
- Alongside the review of MARAC, Family Services are leading a multi-agency audit of a sample of MARAC victims with caring responsibility for children to identify good practice and areas for learning and improvement. This is due for reporting to the VAWG Delivery Group in July 2023.

3.2.2.6 Other partnership services:

Housing support

- There were 405 homelessness approaches due to domestic abuse in 2022/23. Of these, 106 were provided temporary accommodation (TA). Housing options include refuge accommodation, sanctuary installations to make victims' homes safer, move to private sector properties, move through the North London DA reciprocal scheme and for single applicants housing in the private rented sector. Some victims also prefer to remain with friends or family until they secure suitable accommodation and refuse TA as they want to minimise the number of moves whilst awaiting alternative housing.
- The Barnet Sanctuary Scheme is a housing option available for survivors of domestic abuse. It is managed by Barnet Homes -Housing Options Team where we have a DA & Sanctuary Scheme Coordinator. Sanctuary Scheme is for DA survivors who live in the London Borough of Barnet and want to remain living in their properties with extra security measures. This is a housing option which allows them to avoid homelessness and achieve safety. This scheme is for survivors who have sole tenancies or have sole occupation through a court order, where the alleged perpetrator has no legal right to enter the property.
- The Barnet Sanctuary Scheme received 130 referrals and secured 88 properties between April 2022 and March 2023. Most referrals came from Solace Women's Aid, in addition to referrals received from Children and Social care, Barnet Homes, Police, Victim Support and other voluntary agencies across VAWG sector.
- Barnet Homes dedicated DA Team within the Housing Options Service manages the most complex and high-risk housing cases for DA survivors, from the initial assessment of survivors' and their children's needs and their placement in safe accommodation, to their move-on and resettlement in long-term accommodation. At each point, floating support is available to hand-hold individuals through their recovery and resettlement pathway. The team support survivors to access DA services, and are a consistent, supportive presence to aid the recovery of those who face complex issues and additional barriers. From October 2022-31st March 2023, the DA Team supported 43 victims with multiple needs and assessed as high and medium risk.
- The DA Manager in her role has started delivering bespoke training to housing teams - 15 staff have so far been trained.

3.2.2.7 BEH MHT –Safeguarding Team, DA and Sexual Safety

A Domestic Abuse and Sexual Safety Co-ordinator (DASSC) was appointed in August 2022 to support the Trust in developing its response to domestic abuse and sexual abuse. As a part of this role, the co-ordinator serves as an expert point of reference within the safeguarding team, providing consultation on disclosures of domestic and sexual abuse, including harmful practises alongside developing key resources that can be utilised by frontline staff. A weekly Domestic Abuse and Harmful Practices drop-in surgery was set up, providing staff with a drop in space for advice around disclosures or concerns. The DASSC also attends Perinatal, Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services and Acute Inpatient and Community Supervisions.

There was limited means to collect data on domestic abuse, and as such data is now pulled from 5 sources and triangulated to ensure a more accurate reflection of the reports seen throughout the Trust (Incident reports via Ulysses, Adult/Children Safeguarding referrals, MARAC referrals and direct approaches to the DASSC). Between Q3 and Q4 there was an increase in disclosures of domestic abuse being raised, with further support given by the DASSC to frontline workers

around risk assessment, safety planning, appropriate referrals to support the victim/survivors, children and perpetrators. It is expected that identification will increase further with the ongoing embedding of the DASSC post.

Domestic Abuse Training has been developed and is available to all teams. Specialist DA workshops have been delivered to staff within older peoples and memory services by the Silver Project and the domestic abuse co-ordinator. Monthly Learning sessions are run and available all staff which have covered/due to cover; Child/Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse, Black, Asian and Minoritized Young Women & Girls and Sexual Violence, Harmful Practises with more to be confirmed. A Stalking masterclass was delivered throughout the trust by the BEH Stalking Threat Assessment Centre (STAC) psychologists and Domestic Abuse & Sexual Safety Co-ordinator, equipping staff to be able to effectively identify and respond to stalking. Additionally, staffing teams are able to request individual CPD sessions delivered within team meetings addressing themes of abuse that they are identifying within the services.

3.2.2.8 Sexual Health IDSVAs –CNWL NHS Sexual Health Clinic- Edgware Community Hospital since July 2022

The Sexual Health IDSVAs Project sits under the Islington SASS team, in Solace Women's Aid and is partnered with CNWL NHS sexual health clinics. They support people of any gender, ages 16 and above, who have experienced domestic abuse and or sexual violence. The IDSVAs project only receives referrals from CNWL sexual health clinics. If a patient discloses domestic abuse and/or sexual violence to someone at these clinics, a referral to the IDSVAs project will be offered.

The IDSVAs provide emotional and practical support. They are primarily an advocacy service. They frequently advocate for survivors with housing, the criminal justice system, and social care, as well as other statutory and voluntary organisations. They also regularly signpost to other services including counselling, and lawyers. They work in line with a trauma informed, person-centred and strength-based approach. The needs and wants of service users is central to the work that we do.

3.2.2.9 LBB Family Services: Recovery for mothers and children: AVA CODA (Children overcoming domestic abuse) Mother and Children's groups and 1:1 through the Child & Family Early Help Hubs.

Children and Family Early Help Hubs aims to provide the right help first time; meet identified needs and improve outcomes for children and young people; preventing the escalation of issues that would then require specialist services. Early Help hold a weekly multi-agency panel to ensure the right team around the family is in place for the support needs identified.

Each Early Help 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 their 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. Children Overcoming Domestic Abuse (CODA) Community group programmes run by AVA (Child and Family Early Help) are offered for children and mothers that aren't living with the alleged abuser.

The aim is to help children sharing their experiences, exploring ways of expressing their feelings and looking at coping strategies for the future. Mothers have the opportunity to network with other women who have similar experiences, explore the impact the experiences may have had on their children and understand how to help their children recover. In 2022/23 more than 20 women have attended AVA Women's Group.

The AVA/CODA Group programme is not suitable for all families, as some children may have special needs or be outside of the age-group for the particular programme, and some women may not be group-ready, or need an interpreter, so the CODA trained practitioners also can offer this support on an 1-1, as required.

There have been no repeat referrals into Barnet's Family Service (in relation to domestic abuse or otherwise) for any of the women or children who have attended groups. In addition, women attending the group shared the positive feedback having the opportunity to connect with other women who have experienced similar issues in their lives.

In the west Children and Family Hub, practitioners have adapted the AVA/CODA materials to be more suitable to women from Muslim background following consultation with community leaders and the women themselves and have a planned pilot for a AVA/CODA group aimed at teenagers (all staff trained in CODA can cover all age-groups, but until now, have focused on under 11yrs, and referred older children to Safer Spaces Plus, or offered 1-1 intervention).

3.2.2.10 Family Services Early Help reducing parental conflict programme - Early intervention to prevent escalation to Domestic abuse.

The Early Help reducing parental conflict programme is an early intervention to prevent escalation to Domestic abuse. The service has completed the first year of a new round of 3-year funding from DWP (Department for Work and Pensions) Reducing Parental Conflict Grant. Over the year, 10 awareness-raising virtual workshops have been held for a wide range of professionals about Parental Conflict; refresher training has been provided for Early Help Practitioners around the structured interventions which form part of the Early Help offer. Two workshops via the Tavistock on the Mentalisation Approach, when working with higher levels of parental conflict and two workshops on helping professionals to differentiate the difference between domestic abuse and parental conflict have also been held.

Early Help have refreshed their website to include information for parents i.e. self-help manuals, animations (to help parents to put themselves in their children's shoes when caught up in the middle of parental disagreements), and links to other relevant websites, such as CAFCASS. The page also ensures that parents are clear where to go for help if they are experiencing domestic abuse and directs them to the Children and Family Early Help Hubs, if they need support beyond self-help materials. The Early Help Hubs provide up to 6 weeks of structured interventions to help both parents together, and those who are separated to reduce parental conflict, information is contained in these links [Reducing parental conflict | Barnet Council](#)
<https://youtu.be/uqlhHbDcCzo>
<https://youtu.be/qXJSW759GRo>

3.2.3 Objective 3: Pursue Perpetrators and Engage them in behaviour change interventions to eliminate harm to victims and their families

Perpetrators are the ones who need to change their behaviour and stop offending. By relentlessly pursuing them the prevalence of domestic abuse will drive down and reduce the number of domestic homicides.

This involves better understanding and addressing the falling number of charges, prosecutions, and convictions so perpetrators are stopped and face justice. We also need to continue in investing in interventions and programmes which change their behaviour in the long-term.

3.2.3.1 DVPNs and DVPOs

Police in Barnet have issued 26 DV Protection Notices (DVPN) and 22 DV Protection Orders (DVPO) in rolling 12 months to March 2023.

3.2.3.2 Clare's Law disclosures

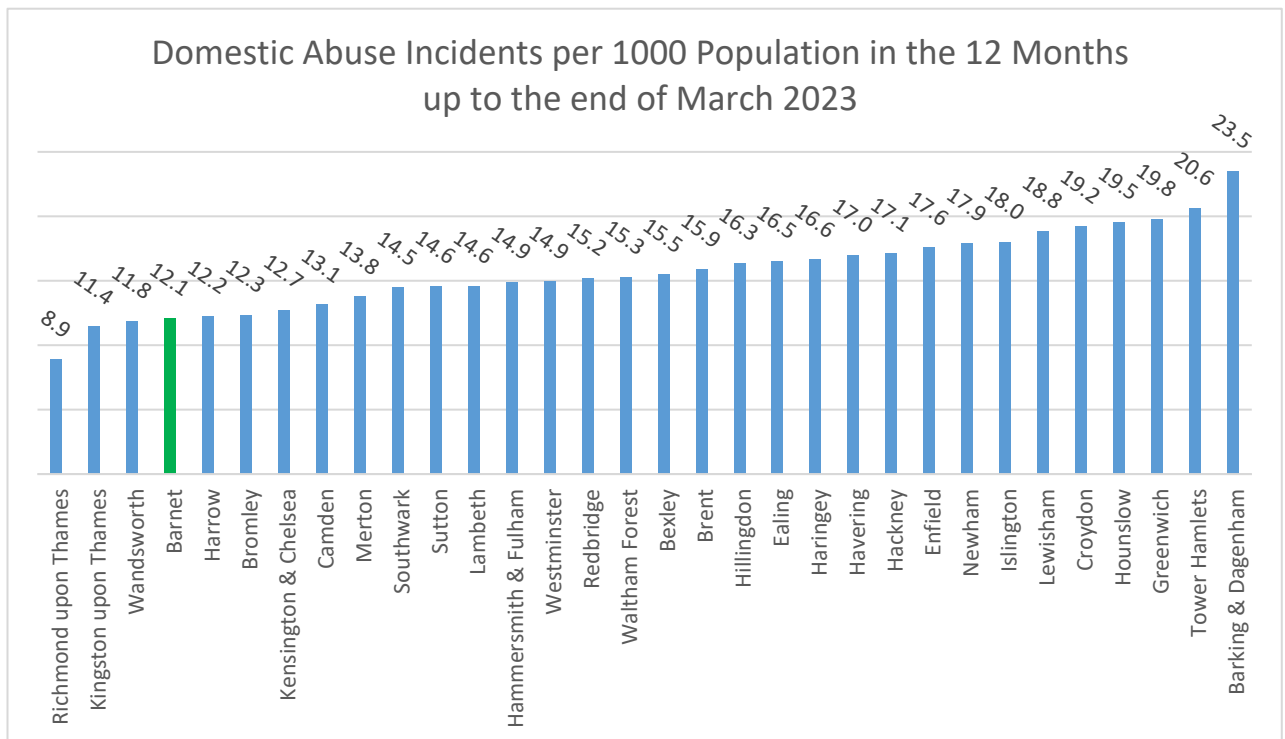
45 requests for Clare's Law disclosures at DA MARAC during 2022/23

3.2.3.4 Body worn cameras in DA calls

The percentage of body worn cameras used in DA calls by Police were 65% in March 2023 down from 75% in September 2022. This reduction will be explored with Police at the next VAWG Delivery Group meeting in June 2023.

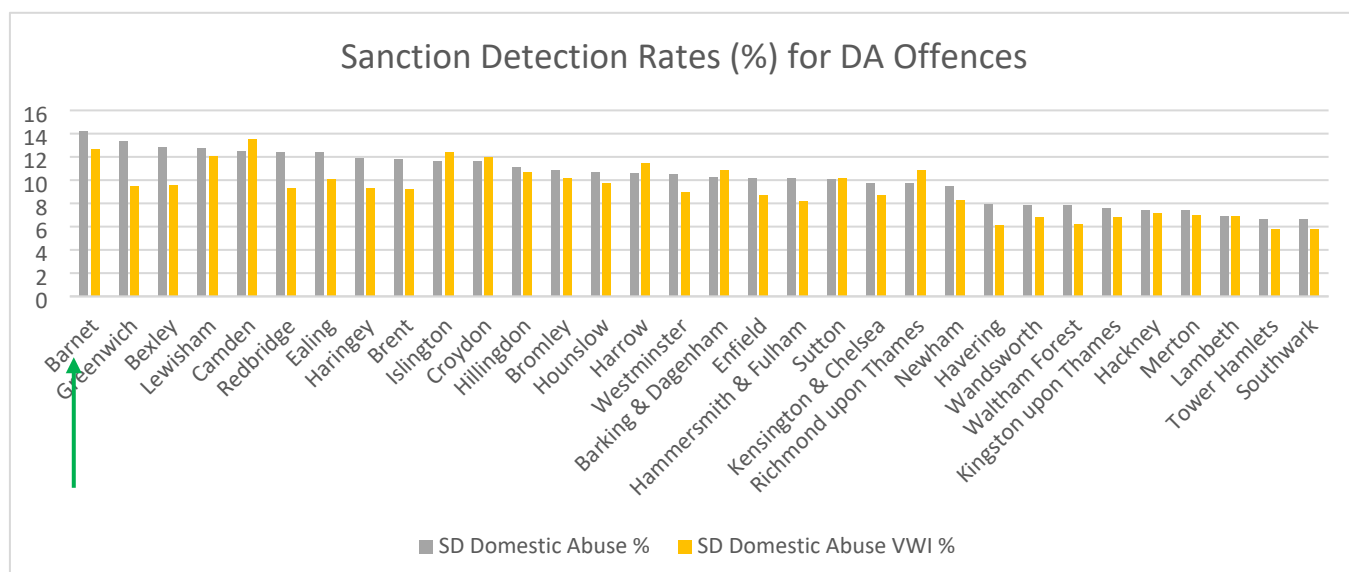
The table below highlights the DA incidents and offences reported from Barnet:

Barnet	DA Incidents	DA Offences	DA VWI
12 months to March 2022	5222	3243	730
12 months to March 2023	5048	3149	737
Change	Decrease (3.5%)	Decrease (3.0%)	Increase (1.0%)



Barnet had the 4th lowest rate of all 32 London boroughs in 2022/23 compared to 3rd lowest in the previous year. In Barnet, the rate of DA incidents was 12.1 per 1000 population (12 months to March 2023).

The rate of DA incidents that become DA Offences is 62% (12 months up to March 2023), this is remaining steady.



Barnet has the highest Sanction detection rate of the London boroughs for Domestic Abuse Offences of 14.2% (12 months up to March 2023), last year it was 11.0%. For Domestic Abuse Violence with injury (VWI) sanction detection rate, Barnet is 2nd highest with a rate of 12.7% (12 months up to March 2023), last year it was 11.4%.

3.2.3.5 Probation

The revised Domestic Abuse Policy Framework was relaunched in September 2022 and mandates that all staff, in line with their roles and responsibilities, are pro-active in looking for indicators of domestic abuse, i.e., exercising professional curiosity, so that it is identified at the earliest possible opportunity in every case. Staff are expected to maintain an investigative approach to their work with domestic abuse perpetrators and share information to manage risks identified, in order that; current and potential victims, including family members and children, are protected and supported sufficiently.

A comprehensive risk assessment (using the Offender Assessment System (OASys) or other approved authority tool is completed in every case where domestic abuse has been identified within current or previous behaviour, so that acute risk factors are assessed and where required, a plan is in place to manage the risk. All eligible and suitable domestic abuse perpetrators are referred to an appropriate accredited programme, so that their criminogenic needs are addressed. Post pandemic the waiting lists are decreasing and perpetrators posing the highest risk are prioritised. Activities to reduce domestic abuse-related reoffending and risk of serious harm are prioritised in every case of intimate partner and familial domestic abuse. In addition, Probation Staff are expected to undertake mandatory Domestic Abuse training as part of the Competency Based Framework. This must then be refreshed every 2 years.

This year Probation staff have fully utilised the capabilities of the MOPAC DA GOS Tagging pilot, with 9 cases completed successfully and only 2 perpetrators recalled. This intervention is reserved for individuals presenting a high risk of serious harm in a DA context and has been impactful in ensuring that the increased monitoring and control measures have served to protect survivors and victims.

Staff have been briefed on the changes to the Victim Notification Scheme which has been extended to cover cases of harassment/stalking who receive less than 12 months imprisonment.

The unwanted prison contact service launched in November 2022. This has particular relevance for survivors of DA and is accessible to any member of the public. It has been promoted amongst staff and the details circulated to the wider Barnet partnership.

Despite challenges with staffing, Probation have remained committed to contributing to MARAC. There is a standardised administrative process to support the research required on referrals and there is now an agreed recording convention in place on the Probation case management system, nDelius, to reflect Probation involvement.

For all cases where electronic monitoring is being considered, mandatory Police intelligence and safeguarding enquires are taking place to assess any potential for DA is identified at pre-sentence stage or immediately thereafter.

3.2.3.6 RISE Mutual CIC:(Barnet Council's Commissioned service)

Barnet Council commission RISE Mutual CIC to implement programmes which change the behaviour of perpetrators in the long-term. Funding is also received from the Home Office and MOPAC for Culturally Integrated Family Approach (CIFA) domestic abuse perpetrator programmes.

Impact of RISE DA work April 2022-March 2023

RISE worked with a total of 79 perpetrators in 2022/23. 64 of these were newly referred in the reporting year.

- 93% were successfully contacted and booked for an Initial assessment and of these;
- 85% were assessed suitable.91% started a DV programme. The retention rate on the programme up to the midway point was 83%.
- 100% of those who reached the midway point of the programme went on to complete.
- 19 completed the full intervention, either the groupwork programme, Safe Relationships or the 1:1 programme, Preparing Men for Change.

Child to Parent Violence (CPV)

RISE worked with a total of 81 individuals in 2022/23r. 62 of these were newly referred in 2022/23.

- 92% were successfully contacted and booked for an Initial assessment. 94% attended.
- 100% were assessed suitable.
- 95% started the CPV programme. The retention rate on the programme up to the midway point was 70%,91% of those reaching the midway point of the programme went on to complete (14 sessions)

Victims

RISE received referrals for a total of 57 victims this year.

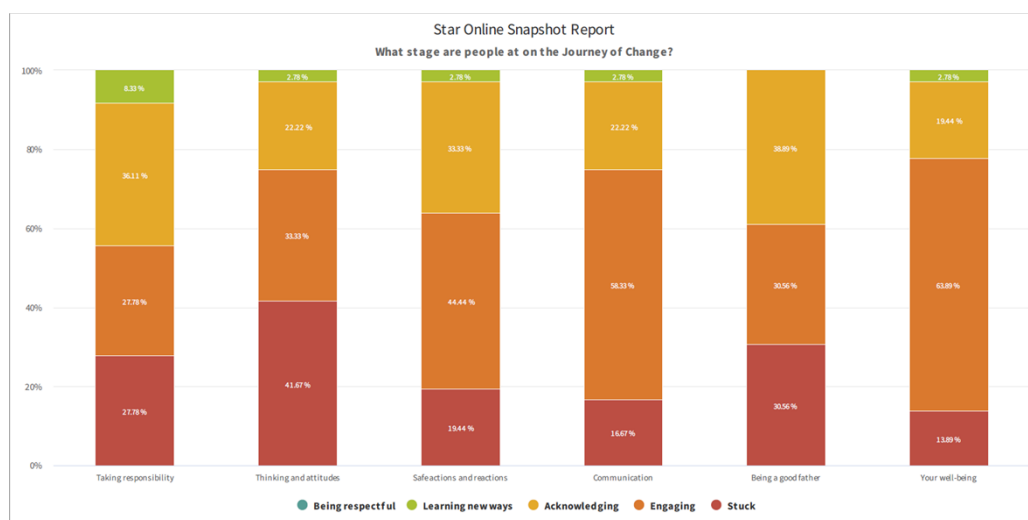
- 88% of victims were successfully contacted and 67% consented to a RISE service.
- The DASA team delivered 158 support sessions during the financial year with an average of 10 support sessions per person.

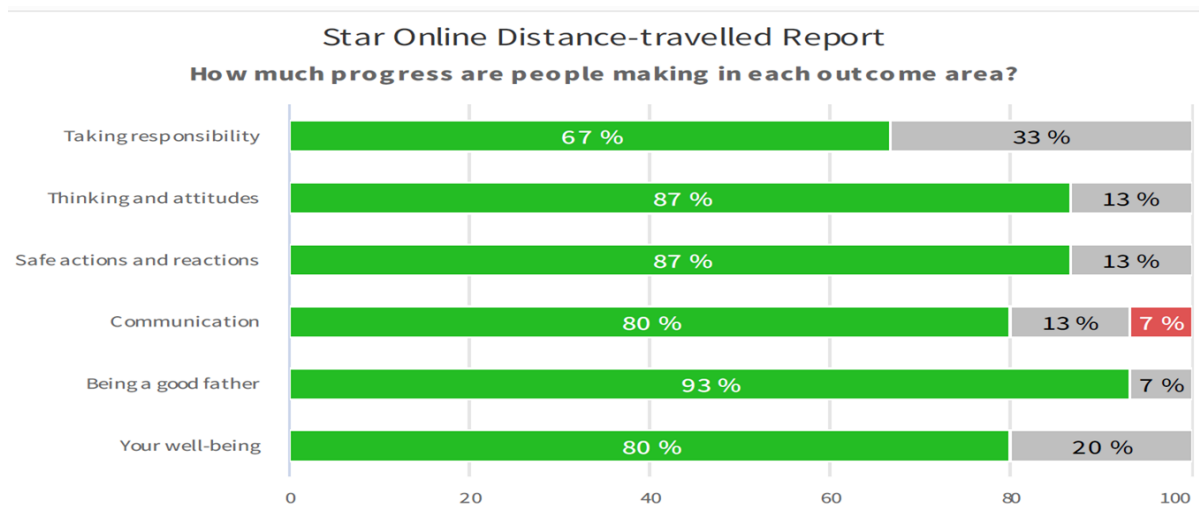
Evaluation

RISE uses the evaluation system called Change Star (Triangle Consulting) to measure our outcomes. Perpetrators' behaviours and attitudes are measured at assessment stage, midway stage and following completion of the intervention. The Star measures change across six areas: accountability, thinking and attitudes, safe reactions, communication style, being a child centred father and personal well-being. In addition, the evaluator will conduct interviews and distribute surveys with victim/survivors to ascertain perceived levels of safety and will draw on feedback from social workers/other key professionals who may be involved with the family.

A 'snapshot report' of Barnet cases over the year shows the following results at the initial assessment. The red colour represents men assessed as being 'stuck' in initial interviews whether that be denial, thinking and attitudes, safe reactions, communication, child centred fathering and well-being. The orange colour indicates men who are willing to discuss their behaviour and accept that they may have something to learn. Yellow represents those who have admitted to some level of abuse. Green indicates they have already made some positive change. Dark blue (not represented here) is selected when practitioners have observed and received feedback related to meaningful change.

Beneath the snapshot report we have the 'distanced travelled' graph which shows the amount of progress made. This a combination of midway and final stars and shows that 67% of men have achieved progress with regard to accountability with 33% remaining static in this area, 87% have made progress with regard to thinking and attitudes and safe reactions, 80% have improved in terms of communication, 90% have made improvements with regard to parenting and 80% in terms of their well-being. Some of those scores are likely to shift further when final stars are completed.





3.2.3.7 CIFA Perpetrator programme (funded by Home Office and MOPAC)

RISE has also completed its pilot intervention, the Culturally Integrated Family Approach, across the boroughs of Barnet, Brent and Waltham Forest and a cut-off was agreed from mid-November for new referrals.

RISE positively worked with referrers to secure men’s engagement post-March and following a successful bid led by Barnet and in partnership with 9 other boroughs (Brent, Harrow, Newham, Tower Hamlets, Haringey, Enfield, Hammersmith & Fulham, Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster) a further 2 years of funding totalling £1.46m, has been awarded for 2023-25.

RISE practitioners report high levels of poverty, trauma, homelessness, and isolation as exhibited by CIFA men; many are reported to have more than one job and to be working long hours on low pay, some have responsibilities to send money home to family in their country of origin. These stressors can impact behaviour and responses towards partners and children.

In relation to the CIFA ‘distance travelled’ stars, to date (which are a combination of midway and final stars), CIFA findings demonstrate an increase in markers of progress, with 83% of service users having made progress with regard to taking responsibility (with 13% static at the point of the assessment and 3% dropping back.)

3.2.4 Objective 4: Strengthen the partnership response to improve multi-agency working and information sharing to deliver improved outcomes.

The whole of society needs to work together to reduce the prevalence of domestic abuse, domestic homicide, and suicides linked to domestic abuse, and deliver the best possible outcomes for victims and survivors. Domestic abuse must be identified quicker and in greater numbers. In Barnet, we are working to improve collaboration and coordination between and within organisations.

3.2.4.1 #HearMyVoice

#HearMyVoice is a campaign which addresses various aspects of VAWG and DA, a collaboration between London Borough of Barnet; Middlesex University; and DA & VAWG partners from across the borough with a specific focus on capturing the local context of Barnet and in particular the narratives of individuals, groups and organisations in the community.

These narratives will be amplified through the delivery of a range of outputs. On the 24th of May, Middlesex University student’s work will be showcased including projects where they have paired with Barnet DA/VAWG community partners. The aim of the event is also to bring Barnet partners

together to share knowledge and experience, build connections, and renew our shared commitment to working together to address DA and VAWG in Barnet. The planning is going well.

3.2.4.2 Multi-agency Governance

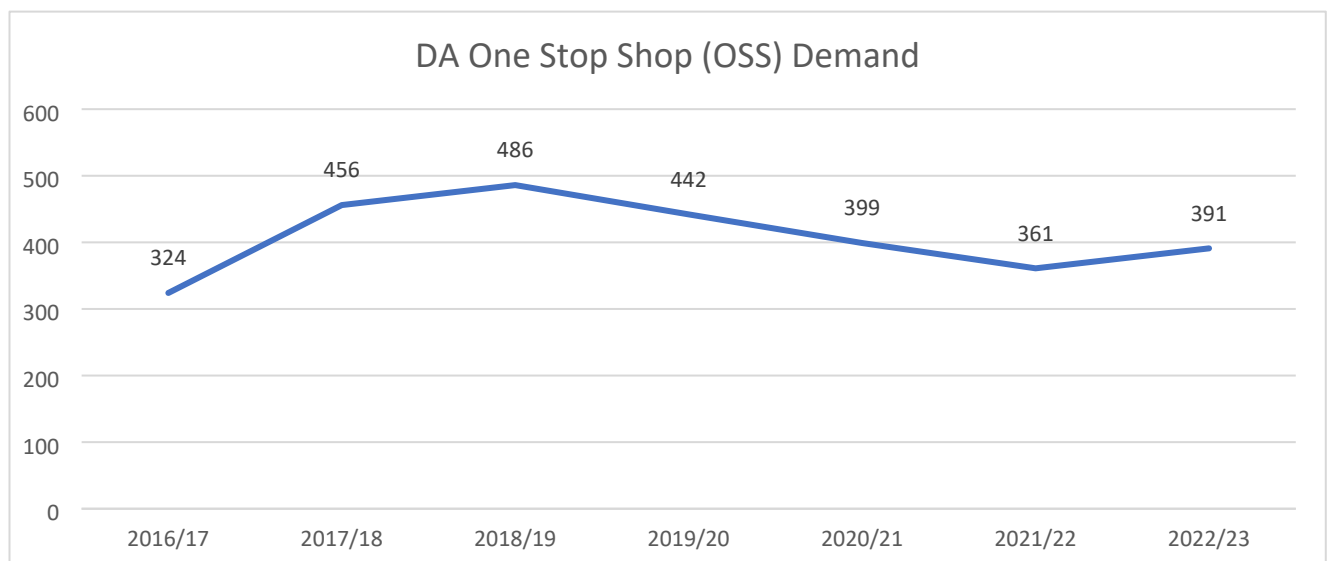
The VAWG Delivery Group with representatives from the partnership is a decision-making group and works to support victims of DA and VAWG and coordinate delivery against the DA and VAWG Strategy and Action Plan 2022-2025. It aims to ensure a robust, coordinated response to DA/VAWG issues across the strategic partnership, plan the effective use of resources in the borough, make explicit the roles, responsibilities and commitments of the key partners to ensure that VAWG outcomes and targets are agreed, owned and delivered and that there are clear lines of accountability. The Delivery Group seeks to build on continual improvement in the Barnet multi-agency response to DA/VAWG and disseminate best practice and innovation across services in and outside the borough. Issues that need a decision from the VAWG Forum are escalated to this group. The group meets quarterly and quarterly reports on the strategy and its action plan, the VAWG DASH board together with updates and discussions on new legislation/good practice as well as challenges in delivery.

The VAWG Forum has an appointed Chair from the DA/VAWG partnership is a forum that works to support victim/survivors of all forms of VAWG and aims to support Barnet Partnership DA and VAWG Strategy and Action Plan 2022-2025. Members are practitioners from agencies from the statutory and voluntary sector that work or have an interest in DA/VAWG. They contribute to relevant actions identified in the Barnet DA & VAWG action plan, share good practice, identify gaps, recognise emerging needs and raise issues. They also share their respective agency's objectives and expectations of each other in the partnership and provide regular updates about their agency's programmes and developments.

3.2.4.3 Multi agency partnership working.

Barnet's One Stop Shop (OSS) resumed face to face drop-in services in February 2023 and holds the OSS every Thursday from 9.30am to 12.30pm at the new office of The Barnet Group, at 2 Bristol Avenue, Colindale, NW9 4EW. The OSS is led by Barnet Homes in partnership with Barnet council, Solace Women's Aid, Asian Women's Resource Centre, private solicitor firms, Barnet Magistrate.

Barnet Homes Domestic Abuse One Stop Shop (OSS) had 85 referrals in Q4 bringing the total for the year to 391 The demand for service over time is set out in the chart below. The impact of this on referrals and service take up will be monitored.



Anonymised OSS service user case study:

Vanessa shares her recent experience of the One Stop Shop. Barnet Homes staff spoke to Vanessa who had suffered domestic abuse for the past 15 years. Vanessa came to the OSS and received support from the multi-agency team, she tells us about her experience.

Tell us a bit about yourself?

I live in Barnet with my children. I have suffered domestic violence from my partner for 15 years. I still suffer it now even though we're not together. I have been supported by the police and an independent advocate for domestic violence (IDVA) from Solace Women's Aid and the Barnet Homes' OSS service.

How you have been supported by Barnet Homes' multi-agency OSS?

I came to the OSS six weeks ago to get help with housing because my ex-partner found out where I'm living, currently he's in prison. The OSS have been amazing. I've been treated with a lot of respect and dignity. I've had help from the legal team there with getting a non-molestation order, and from the housing officer to get help with my housing.

Would you recommend the One Stop Shop?

I'd recommend the domestic abuse one stop shop to people suffering domestic violence. If I'm honest people might not realise that the one stop shop is not just for housing, it is for legal stuff, counselling, female support groups, and there's a lot of other ways you can be helped including financially if you're struggling.

What are your hopes for your future?

I just want to live a normal life with my children and not have to live in this constant state of fear and stress.

Do you have a message that you would like to share with survivors?

My message for survivors is to just keep going and to stay strong and try to stay safe. And to focus on your mental health because it will, and it does get better. Get any support you can, like from the Domestic Abuse One Stop Shop and other agencies. There are lots of forums out there and people that you can talk to because it is a very lonely time. But it's not as lonely as you think it is, even though it feels that way sometimes.

Feedback from Barnet Homes DA floating support service user:

Thank you for the help you gave to me and my son. I thank you very much. If it wasn't for you, I wouldn't have been able to handle anything alone. You really did your best like a kind sister. I hope you will always be successful. I am very happy with you.

3.2.5 Objective 5: Working together for safer streets, community and public spaces.

We want all Barnet residents to feel safe out in the community. We want to work together across Barnet to reduce Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) and raise awareness about unacceptable behaviour towards women and girls.

3.2.5.1 Mayor's Women's Night Safety Charter.

Barnet Council has signed up to the Mayor's Women's Night Safety Charter. The resources and training through the charter will be linked to the Safer Spaces Network Pilot for business operating in the night-time in the borough.

3.2.5.2 Survivor forum and Survivors voices

The scoping for setting up a survivor forum is in progress. While setting the survivors forum can have its benefits as well as some challenges, careful consideration is being given to have a discussion on having survivors voices heard across the quarters from various community meetings to diverse groups of victims and survivors and platforms. It is intended that the approach will provide a space for the voices of diverse groups of survivors to ensure the needs of specific groups of victims and survivors can be heard more consistently and acted upon, and for the council to hear from the survivors' voice across the commissioning cycle.

3.2.5.3 Safer Spaces

The government published the Protection from Sex-based Harassment in Public Bill 2022-23 on 22 March 2023 for a third and final reading on 24 March 2023. The Bill would introduce a new offence causing intentional harassment, alarm or distress to a person in public where the behaviour is done because of that person's sex. This will be considered for local education, action and awareness raising once the Bill has passed through Parliament.

A transformation project lead has been appointed to develop a Safer Spaces Network Pilot and will reach out to engage local businesses, town planners, housing providers, open spaces and a range of council services and launch in Autumn/Winter 2023.

3.2.5.4 VAWG events led by Barnet Safer Transport Police across the borough.

Barnet Safer Transport Team run a twice a month Violence Against Women and Girls events, providing advice and support on Female safety, travel safety and personal safety. Many organisations work in joint partnership with us including residents' groups and local women's groups. A series of intelligence led locations across the boroughs have been identified and circulated from March to August 2023 where the Barnet Safer Transport Team can engage with commuters and people going out for the evening, encouraging members of the public to interact with the team us on all topic of women's safety.

3.2.5.5 The impact of "Ask for Angela" on addressing women's safety

The safety initiative 'Ask for Angela' helps licensed venues across the country keep people safe while enjoying a night out. People who feel unsafe, vulnerable or threatened can discreetly seek help by approaching venue staff and asking them for 'Angela'. This code-phrase will indicate to staff that they require help with their situation and a trained member of staff will then look to support and assist them. This might be through reuniting them with a friend, seeing them to a taxi, or by calling venue security and/or the police.

Since October 2020 the Barnet Safer Transport Team have been leading the programme of work to visit and sign up Barnet licenced venues to the "Ask for Angela" scheme. Feedback received up to December 2022 showed very few incidents. Although they are increasing by 50% year on year.

When visiting each venue, officers also provide female bar staff with travel safety advice and a personal alarm app to use. This year a new spring promotion of "Ask for Angela" will be rolled out

across Barnet, this is in addition to the regular one leading up to Christmas. Officers are revisiting all the signed up licenced venues between April and June to offer support, on extra safeguarding training and more posters. They will also focus on signing more licensed premises to the scheme. At present 57 of Barnet's 73 licenced venues are participating in "Ask for Angela".

3.2.5.6 Domestic Homicide Review

When a death occurs as a result of domestic abuse, there is a statutory requirement to 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.

Two Statutory Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) are being finalised by an Independent Chair and were submitted to Barnet Safer Communities Partnership (BSCP) in January 2023 for approval. These are the cases of 'Duncan' (pseudonym, a male victim), who was, in October 2018, killed by his partner and 'Alyssa' (pseudonym, a female victim) killed by her partner in March 2019. The DHR Chair has finalised the reports and these are being submitted to Home Office.

4 Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

4.1 The council has an annual budget of £696,400 to commission services. These have been procured in line with the Councils procurement procedures, and a contract performance monitoring regime is in place to ensure the services deliver and demonstrate value for money. The cost for the delivery of the above services will remain within the existing budget allocations.

- The Advocacy services
 - Refuge Services
 - Perpetrator programme Services
- DA MARAC has been brought in-house

4.2 Where suitable opportunities exist, we work with local partners, including health, police, education, housing, and the wider third sector to secure additional external sources of funding to fund initiatives to support the delivery of the DA and VAWG strategy in response to our local needs assessment and the best available evidence of what works. Given the above, there are no significant resource implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

5 Legal and Constitutional References

5.1 Under s.17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, it is a duty of the Council (and other partner agencies, including Police, Fire & Rescue, Greater London Authority, Transport for London) when exercising its functions to have due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder (including anti-social behaviour), misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances, re-offending and serious violence.

5.2 The BSCP is a Community Safety Partnership set up in accordance with the requirement of the section 5 Crime and Disorder Act 1998 as amended by section 108 of the Policing and Crime Act 2009.

5.3 The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 which received Royal assent in April 2021 creates for the first time a statutory definition of domestic abuse, establishes in law the office of Domestic Abuse Commissioner and set out the Commissioner's functions and powers, places a duty on local authorities in England to provide, among others, accommodation based support to victims of

domestic abuse and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation, clarifies 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.

- 5.4 The Terms of Reference of the Community Leadership and Libraries Committee in Barnet's Constitution states that the Committee acts 'as the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee in accordance with the Police and Justice Act 2006 (Crime and Disorder (Overview and Scrutiny Regulations) 2009'.

6. Insight

N/A

7. Social Value

- 7.1 None applicable to this report, however the council must take into account the requirements of the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 to try to maximise the social and local economic value it derives from its procurement spend.

8. Risk Management

- 8.1 Risk management varies according to the different initiatives. The partnership or appropriate agencies are made aware of risks and actions to mitigate the risk are agreed and put in place. There is always risk that the partnership may not achieve the targets set due to factors outside its direct control – however there is strong partnership working in place enabling agencies to identify and highlight risk and be open to addressing the risk collectively.

9 Equalities and Diversity

- 9.1 Decision makers should have due regard to the public sector equality duty in making their decisions. Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 sets out the public-sector equality duty to which the authority must have due regard.
- 9.2 Elected Members are to satisfy themselves that equality considerations are integrated into day-to-day business and that all proposals emerging from the business planning process have taken into consideration the impact, if any, on any protected group and what mitigating factors can be put in place. The equalities duties are continuing duties they are not duties to secure a particular outcome.
- 9.3 A public authority, when exercising its functions, must have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act.
- 9.4 It must also have due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it and this involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:
- remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
 - take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
 - Encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

9.5 The public authority must also have due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it and this involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

- Tackle prejudice, and
- Promote understanding.

9.6 Compliance with the duties in this section may involve treating some persons more favourably than others; but that is not to be taken as permitting conduct that would otherwise be prohibited by or under this Act. The relevant protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race,
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage and Civil partnership

9.7 It is set out in the council's Equalities Policy together with the strategic Equalities Objective of the Corporate Plan - that citizen's will be treated equally with understanding and respect; have equal opportunities and receive quality services provided to best value principles.

9.8 The public sector equality duty considerations and the council's commitments to tackling inequalities and disproportionality are central to the development of local strategies and actions plans that deliver against domestic abuse and violence against women, tackling violence and reducing offending. This will include giving focus to areas of known disproportionality, such as over-representation of people from ethnic minority backgrounds in our dementia services. As well as considering the needs of groups with specific needs, such as people with a learning disability and a diagnosis of dementia and people diagnosed with early onset dementia.

10 Corporate Parenting

10.1 Many children who are cared for by the local authority have been exposed to domestic abuse prior to entry into care and young women in care and leaving care may have adverse childhood experiences that may make them more vulnerable to domestic abuse, coercion and control in relationships. The DA and VAWG Strategy 2022 – 2025 aims to ensure that domestic abuse services are accessible to all that need them, including children. The strategy will overlap with Corporate Parenting Services and arrangements for transitional safeguarding.

11 Consultation and Engagement

11.1 As a matter of public law, the duty to consult with regards to proposals to vary, reduce or withdraw services will arise in four circumstances:

- where there is a statutory requirement in the relevant legislative framework
- where the practice has been to consult, or, where a policy document states the council will consult, then the council must comply with its own practice or policy

- exceptionally, where the matter is so important that there is a legitimate expectation of consultation
- Where consultation is required to complete an equalities impact assessment.

11.2 Regardless of whether the council has a duty to consult, if it chooses to consult, such consultation must be carried out fairly. In general, a consultation can only be considered as proper consultation if:

- comments are genuinely invited at the formative stage
- the consultation documents include sufficient reasons for the proposal to allow those being consulted to be properly informed and to give an informed response
- there is adequate time given to the consultees to consider the proposals
- there is a mechanism for feeding back the comments and those comments are considered by the decision-maker / decision-making body when making a final decision
- the degree of specificity with which, in fairness, the public authority should conduct its consultation exercise may be influenced by the identity of those whom it is consulting
- where relevant and appropriate, the consultation is clear on the reasons why and extent to which alternatives and discarded options have been discarded. The more intrusive the decision, the more likely it is to attract a higher level of procedural fairness.

11.3 The Domestic Abuse and VAWG Strategy 2022-25 has been informed by consultations - including with partnership organisations through the VAWG delivery Board and VAWG Forum. In addition, an extensive consultation exercise has been undertaken with service users.

12 BACKGROUND PAPERS

[A4 Letterhead \(moderngov.co.uk\)](https://moderngov.co.uk)

Community Leadership and Libraries Committee 20 June 2022

[Agenda for Community Leadership and Libraries Committee on Monday 20th June 2022, 7.00 pm \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

[Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2022-2025 | Barnet Council](#)