

March 2010

# The Way Forward

Taking action to end violence against women and girls

**Final Strategy 2010 - 2013**



**MAYOR OF LONDON**



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Taking action to end violence against women and girls

**Final Strategy 2010 - 2013**

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When I became Mayor I promised I would do everything in my power to combat violence against women and make London a safer city for all Londoners. This cannot be achieved without a coordinated, pan-London strategy to eradicate violence against women.

In April 2009 I launched my draft strategy 'The Way Forward' and, following extensive consultation, I am very pleased to be publishing the final strategy for 2010-2013 and alongside it an action plan for 2010-2011, to take forward action to tackle violence against women and girls.

My vision for London is of a fair and equal society in which no woman has to live with the fear or reality of violence. This is no easy task but everything we do must aspire to the goal of eradicating violence against women. My strategy sets out five objectives for London and my action plan sets out the key tasks for delivery. We cannot achieve this work alone.

Partners and agencies across London have responded to my call for action and are now working with me on 'The Way Forward'. Our integrated approach will seek to prevent violence from happening, support and protect women when violence does occur and



get tougher with the perpetrators of violence who have lived with impunity for too long.

This is London's first integrated strategy and action plan to tackle violence against women and girls. It is an important first step but we won't eradicate violence against women and girls overnight. Tackling the root cause and challenging attitudes and beliefs that condone violence will require political leadership.

I have already taken an important first step by increasing the availability of Rape Crisis Centre provision; with new services in west, east and north London and additional provision in the south from the existing centre in Croydon.

I will continue to work closely with the Leaders of London's boroughs and use my influence as Mayor of London to ensure that tackling,

preventing violence against women and girls is consistently part of day to day activity for the police and other frontline services.

London will take a global lead in preventing and eliminating violence against women. In the words of the United Nations' Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon: 'Violence against women is never acceptable, never excusable, never tolerable'.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Boris Johnson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**Boris Johnson**  
Mayor of London



# Foreword

by the Deputy Mayor for Policing

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Anyone who meets a victim of violence will know that often uppermost in their mind is a selfless desire that no one else should have to go through the same experience as them. Of course they want their attacker caught and punished, but they also have an instinctive sense that something could have been done to prevent the attack in the first place.

We feel the same way about violence in all its forms, and in particular about violence against women. This strategy, a global first for London, seeks to address women's safety issues as more than just an "add-on". We want crimes specific to women and girls front and centre for all organisations who have a role in fighting and preventing violence in London.

First, we want to deal effectively with perpetrators: Catching them, charging them, punishing them and then making sure they don't offend again.

Second we want to understand why they were violent in the first place, take steps to deal with the root causes of their behaviour, and deter future offending.

Third, we need to make sure that we look after victims better. We must understand the impact of violence, short and long term, and we need to improve our response to it, providing

better, more timely, support where and when victims need it.

Finally we must take more account of the many ways different women experience violence because of their age, sexuality, culture or religion.

We have worked hard on this document. The team at City Hall have spent many hours consulting with groups and individuals across the capital to get it right. We are grateful for their help.

Our job now, and what we are trying to do in this strategy, is to weave these themes together to provide a strategic direction across London that will give women and girls the protection they need and deserve.

I hope you will join us in our endeavour.



**Kit Malthouse**  
Deputy Mayor for Policing



Making London safer for all Londoners is one of the Mayor's top priorities. He has pledged to combat violence in London and this document is one piece of that commitment.

By providing strategic leadership in London, the Mayor aims to make a real difference to women and girls who live with the fear and suffer the reality of violence.

This strategy focuses on the vast majority of victims of gender-based violence (ie women), but it is important to recognise that men and boys are also victims of violence. This strategy, therefore, sits alongside existing policies and procedures that provide protection and redress for all victims of crime. The focus of the strategy and action plan on the needs of violence against women and girls is a deliberate response to the disproportionate impact.

However, there is an expectation that the strategic activity will have a wider impact, so that agencies with responsibility for services consider the take-up and service provision for both women and men. The work identified on data disaggregation will be instrumental in achieving this. The strategy will be reviewed in three years at which point it will be possible to assess any wider impact on men and boys and identify further strategic activity required to address violence reduction.

The strategic approach being taken is to adopt an integrated framework to tackle all forms of violence against women.

In April 2009, the Mayor launched his draft violence against women strategy, 'The Way Forward', for a three-month public consultation. The feedback raised by the consultation has been used to help inform this final strategy document. For the overwhelming majority of respondents 'The Way Forward' is a strong first step towards producing an effective violence against women strategy for London, a number of key themes came up through the consultation process, which have been included in the strategy. The full consultation report can be downloaded online at: [www.london.gov.uk/thewayforward](http://www.london.gov.uk/thewayforward)

The Mayor's final strategy to tackle violence against women and girls maintains the overarching strategic framework and the five objectives that were published in April 2009. Feedback and suggestions received through the consultation have enabled us to shape new actions and priorities to eradicate violence against women and girls in London. This document should be read in conjunction with the accompanying violence against women and girls action plan, which provides greater

clarity on the activities and initiatives that will be undertaken in London to deliver the Mayor's violence against women strategy. The strategy is the Mayor's vision for eradicating violence against women and girls, and it will have a longer lifespan than the action plan.

The action plan is a multi-agency plan that was developed in conjunction with key partners, who are all committed to working together to deliver activities which will end violence against women and girls in London. We recognise that the only way to confront violence against women is to work together.

Violence against women is intolerable. It damages women and girls and has far-reaching consequences for families, children, communities and society as a whole. By taking action to eradicate violence against women, the Mayor's aspiration is to make London a safe city for all Londoners.

### Overview

Every year hundreds of thousands of women in London experience some form of violence.<sup>1</sup> The impact of violence against women can be devastating and is a breach of the most fundamental human rights. Violence against women creates an atmosphere of terror, anxiety, mistrust and uncertainty that has both immediate

and long-term consequences for women and their children.

The Mayor has the political will to tackle violence against women. Everything we do should be focused on the ultimate goal of eradication. We want to:

- prevent violence happening in the first place by changing attitudes and beliefs
- intervene at an early stage when violence does occur to stop it continuing
- deal effectively with perpetrators to stop violence
- support victims and their children to rebuild their lives and reduce their risk of experiencing further violence.

### *Prevention at the heart*

The prevention of violence against women is at the heart of this strategy. Violence against women is rooted in pervasive attitudes, cultures and traditions that have been perpetuated over time in communities that have allowed abusers to act with impunity. We must take steps to provide protection and support to those who bear the brunt of violence. Those with the power to transform the cultures that perpetuate violence against women must work together.

### *Global leader*

London is a world leader in many areas. Our ambition is to show the same leadership in ending violence against women and girls by developing, evaluating and improving interventions that will be a beacon for other cities and countries.

### *Objectives*

This document is based on five objectives, which build on the framework developed by the End Violence Against Women coalition and endorsed by the Equality and Human Rights Commission. This document provides both a strategic perspective and an overarching policy framework, and contains specific objectives with respect to prevention, provision, protection and prosecution.

#### **1. London taking a global lead to end violence against women and girls**

We will develop a range of measures to reduce the prevalence of violence against women over time with a strong emphasis on cultural change. Our approach will address violence against women as a whole, and its roots in gender inequality. We will promote an ambitious approach within which London will continue to develop innovative policy and practice. London will contribute to the United Nation's UNiTE<sup>2</sup> campaign, and share learning and knowledge with other cities and countries.

#### **2. Improving access to support**

We will improve the safety, wellbeing and freedom of women and children through access to better services that meet the needs of London's diverse communities. Our goal is to build capacity across the voluntary sector, including expanding Rape Crisis provision, and to help friends and family of victims, to whom women often turn first, to provide informed support.

#### **3. Addressing health, social and economic consequences of violence**

We will champion measures that reduce the long-term consequences of violence for women who experience it, improve their life chances and support them in rebuilding their lives. We want to make violence against women and girls a priority for service providers. We will promote integrated support services for the most marginalised and at-risk women. We will give a voice to survivors in shaping policy and delivery.

#### **4. Protecting women and girls at risk**

We will ensure that the whole criminal justice system deters crimes of violence against women and provides full, effective and timely protection to women who need it. We will work in partnership with key statutory and voluntary sector support services to improve the support, safety and satisfaction of victims.

### 5. Getting tougher with perpetrators

We want perpetrators to stop the violence and be held to account. Our approach will champion the effectiveness of the criminal justice system and call for tougher sanctions and consequences. Perpetrators must be deterred from violence against women.

‘The Way Forward’ sets out the strategic framework for the next three years 2010 to 2013. The accompanying action plan provides an overview of all the activity required to take forward a coordinated approach to tackling violence against women in London.

The activity will be facilitated by the London Violence Against Women and Girls Panel, which is chaired by the Deputy Mayor for Policing.

# Introduction

Every year hundreds of thousands of women and girls in London experience some form of violence including rape, domestic violence, forced marriage, stalking, sexual harassment, sexual exploitation and trafficking, female genital mutilation (FGM) or 'honour' based violence.<sup>3</sup> Violence against women leaves in its wake heightened levels of fear, broken bones, miscarriages, long-term mental health problems, substance abuse and poverty. It also costs the city over £5.6 billion a year.<sup>4</sup>

## What is violence against women?

Violence against women<sup>6</sup> is both a form of discrimination and a violation of the human rights of women and girls. It is both a cause and consequence of gender inequality and is one of the most serious inequalities facing women and girls in London today. The United Nations (UN) defines 'violence against women' as 'any act of gender-based violence that is directed at a woman because she is a woman or acts of violence which are suffered disproportionately by women.'<sup>7</sup> This includes violence against girls and adult women; physical, sexual and psychological/emotional violence, economic abuse and exploitation. Violence happens in a range of settings – at home, on the street, on public transport etc – and within a range of relationships, from family members and

'Around three million women across the UK experience rape, domestic violence, forced marriage, stalking, sexual exploitation and trafficking, female genital mutilation (FGM) or crimes in the name of 'honour' each year.'<sup>5</sup>

partners to complete strangers. In the majority of cases, women know the men who abuse them.

Box 1 provides short definitions of all the forms of violence against women covered by this strategy. There are links between the different forms including:

- similar myths and stereotypes which are used to justify or excuse the abuse
- their use as forms of power and control
- high levels of under-reporting
- low conviction rates
- repeat victimisation
- most perpetrators are known by the victim
- long-term social, psychological and economic consequences for victims
- the historic failure by the state to prevent violence.

## Box 1 | forms of violence against women

**Domestic/intimate partner violence** – a pattern of coercive control, which includes combinations of physical, sexual, psychological and financial abuse by a current or former partner. In extreme cases this includes murder.

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

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

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

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

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

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



**Sexual harassment** – unwanted verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. It can take place anywhere, including the workplace, schools, streets, public transport and social situations. It includes flashing, obscene and threatening calls, and online harassment.

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

### **Why do we need this violence against women and girls strategy?**

Violence against women is just unacceptable. It is a human rights violation that is both intrinsically wrong and has wider affects in preventing women from fully participating in public life. The analysis underpinning this document recognises that violence against women is both a barrier to equality and a consequence of inequality. This is not to say that men and boys are never victims of these crimes. We recognise that some men and boys are victims of violence such as rape, domestic violence and forced marriage. However, this document addresses the needs of women, reflecting the fact that women are at substantially greater risk of most of these crimes than men.<sup>8</sup> This strategy will sit alongside existing policies and procedures that provide protection and legal redress for all victims of crime.

The focus of the strategy and action plan on the needs of violence against women and girls is a deliberate response to the disproportionate

impact. However, there is an expectation that the strategic activity will have a wider impact, so that agencies with responsibility for services consider the take-up and service provision for both women and men, the work identified on data disaggregation will be instrumental in achieving this. The strategy will be reviewed in three years at which point it will be possible to assess any wider impact on men and boys and identify further strategic activity required to address violence reduction.

#### *Extent of violence against women in London*

Given the hidden nature of violence against women, getting an accurate picture of its scale and extent remains a challenge. Having said that, we have a much greater knowledge base on violence against women than ever before; from prevalence studies, many research projects and evaluations, and agency monitoring data. Presented in Box 2 below are selected data that illustrate both the range of violence addressed and, where available, London-specific data.<sup>9</sup>

## Box 2 | extent of violence against women in London

### Violence against women

- London has the highest rate of female victimisation in England and Wales.<sup>10</sup>
- Compared to the rest of the country, London has the lowest percentage of successful outcomes (measured as convictions of prosecuted cases) for violence against women offences (only 62 per cent were successful last year compared to 72 per cent nationally).<sup>11</sup>

### Domestic violence

- There were 53,069 domestic violence crimes reported in London during the 12 months from March 2008 to March 2009 – a 4.4 per cent increase compared to the previous year.<sup>12</sup>
- London has higher rates of domestic violence than the average for England and Wales.<sup>13</sup>
- Nationally the police remain unaware of 81 per cent of domestic abuse victims.<sup>14</sup>
- Three per cent of the total NHS budget goes to treating the physical health of victims of domestic violence.<sup>15</sup>

### Sexual offences

- Women in London are more likely to report that they are worried about being raped (48.1 per cent) and fear violent crime (70 per cent).<sup>16</sup>
- The rape conviction rate in England and Wales is 6.5 per cent. This is the second lowest conviction rate in Europe after Scotland.<sup>17</sup>
- On average, just ten per cent of rapes are reported to the police.<sup>18</sup>
- A woman is more likely to be sexually assaulted than she is to get breast cancer.<sup>19</sup>
- Seventy-six per cent of the women refugees and asylum seekers at a single service in London had been raped.<sup>20</sup>
- There were 2,180 recorded rape offences in London for the 12 months between March 2008 and March 2009.<sup>21</sup> This is an increase of 14.5 per cent over the last year.<sup>22</sup>
- London Ambulance Service is called to approximately 450 rape/sexual assault incidents per year.
- Only 22 per cent of serious sexual violence offences are brought to justice.<sup>23</sup>
- The police remain unaware of 87 per cent of serious sexual assault victims.<sup>24</sup>
- The number of 'multiple perpetrator rapes'<sup>25</sup> has increased from 71 in 2003/04 to 93 in 2008/09.<sup>26</sup> The actual number of women and girls affected is likely to be much higher.<sup>27</sup>

### Female genital mutilation (FGM)

- An estimated 6.3 per cent of pregnancies in inner London<sup>28</sup> and 4.6 per cent in outer London are to women with FGM.<sup>29</sup>
- There have been no convictions for FGM since it was outlawed in 1985, compared to 100 in France.

### Trafficking and prostitution

- Between 1,000 and 10,000 women and girls are trafficked into the UK each year for sexual exploitation.<sup>30</sup> Many are trafficked to or through London.
- Around 6,000 of the estimated 8,000 women involved in off-street prostitution in London's brothels, 'saunas' and 'massage parlours' are foreign nationals. It is believed that a significant number of them have been trafficked.<sup>31</sup>
- There are estimated to be around 80,000 people involved in prostitution in the UK.<sup>32</sup>
- Women involved in prostitution are some of the most vulnerable in our communities and are likely to be victims of serious physical and sexual violence. Women in prostitution in London suffer from a mortality rate that is 12 times the national average.<sup>33</sup>

### Forced marriages

- An estimated 1,000 British Asian girls/young women are forced into marriage each year.<sup>34</sup>
- The Forced Marriage Unit recorded 1,618 cases of forced marriage across the UK in 2008.<sup>35</sup> Of these cases, 339 were identified in London.

### 'Honour' based violence

- Nationally, there are around 12 so-called 'honour' murders a year.
- The Metropolitan Police recorded 256 incidents linked to 'honour' in the year 2008/09, of which 132 were criminal offences. This is a 60 per cent rise for the year to April 2009.<sup>36</sup>

### *Impact of violence against women*

The fear and reality of violence deny women the most fundamental of human rights: life, liberty, dignity, bodily integrity, and freedom of movement. It is a major cause of death and disability for women<sup>37</sup> and is linked to mental health problems including depression; anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD); attempted and successful suicide; and misuse of drugs and alcohol.

Men already known to victims, including partners, fathers, friends, neighbours and colleagues, perpetrate

the vast majority of violence against women. The threat and reality of violence mean that most women devote time and energy to 'safety work' – planning what they do, when they do it and how they travel in order to maximise their own personal safety. Some women decide to restrict their lives if they feel at risk, meaning they are not free to use public space as men do.

Violence against women not only damages women, it has far-reaching consequences for families, communities and society

as a whole. It harms families across the generations, impoverishes communities and reinforces other forms of violence throughout our society<sup>38</sup>. Women who experience violence suffer a range of health and social problems that prevent them from fulfilling their full potential. This in turn lowers economic production and drains resources from employers and the public sector.<sup>39</sup>

Violence against women also impacts on children. Growing up exposed to domestic violence is linked to increased levels of attention deficit disorder, anxiety, stuttering and asthma; reduced educational attainment; increased involvement in anti-social behaviour and street and playground violence.<sup>40</sup> Most child maltreatment deaths take place in homes where domestic violence is also occurring.<sup>41</sup>

We also know from work on children and domestic violence, both here and in the USA, that boys and young men often deal with violence in their household by spending as much time as possible out of the home. This makes them more vulnerable to getting involved in gangs and anti-social behaviour, and learning that violence 'works'.<sup>42</sup> Domestic violence may also undermine a mother's ability to parent with authority.

### *What makes London different?*

The nature, extent and impact of violence and the options available to those affected by it are influenced by factors such as race, religion, age and disability as well as women's financial position and access to resources.

London has high levels of ethnic diversity with many languages spoken and many faiths practised<sup>43</sup>. Some forms of violence such as FGM are linked to particular communities and beliefs. Women from minority ethnic backgrounds and migrant women may face greater barriers to accessing services.

Compared nationally, a higher proportion of London's population is aged between 20 and 44, an age group which is associated with a greater risk of domestic violence and sexual assault.<sup>44</sup> London's higher levels of poverty<sup>45</sup> are also linked to experiences of violence.<sup>46</sup> Whilst violence against women cuts across all social classes, research shows that women in households with an income of less than £10,000 per annum are three and a half times more likely to suffer domestic violence than those living in households with an income of £20,000. However, it remains unclear whether the poverty is associated with the onset of domestic violence or if women are reduced to poverty by fleeing violence.<sup>47</sup>

The capital's higher rates of population turnover can create challenges for delivering services. In London the key services are delivered by 33 local authorities, 31 primary care trusts, central government departments, and non-departmental public bodies. In this context creating coherent strategic leadership is more complex than anywhere else in the country.

#### *What is already being done?*

More than a century ago, London charities pioneered work to help women and girls escape prostitution, sexual abuse and domestic violence. London was also at the forefront in the 1970s, opening the first refuge and first Rape Crisis helpline. The public sector has been involved in efforts to tackle violence against women at both local and regional levels for more than 20 years, and has developed a range of responses, some of them groundbreaking. However services for women are still not joined up; rape and sexual abuse services have closed; and government responses have concentrated on the criminal justice system, even though most women don't go to the police.

In recent years the London Domestic Violence Strategy and Project Umbra have provided some coordination. This has delivered:

- independent domestic violence advocacy services (IDVAs)
- partnerships with drug and alcohol services
- improved systems for information flow
- better structures for making things happen.

However, they have been less effective in dealing with the long-term consequences of violence and in prevention work aimed at stopping violence happening in the first place.

Other forms of violence against women have lacked the coordinated working and investment that domestic violence has seen. Reporting and conviction rates for rape remain low. Sexual bullying and coercion in schools and neighbourhoods and the links between youth violence and sexual violence have yet to be adequately explored. We need further investment in FGM prevention and there has been limited consideration of the needs of migrant or refugee women, many of whom have been affected by violence.

Violence against women cannot be separated from the cultures and communities in which it takes place. The proliferation of lap dancing clubs and brothels<sup>48</sup> may further legitimise violence against women and undermine efforts to prevent it. Yet

there has been no strategic approach to the sex industry in London and its links to violence against women.

The London Map of Gaps<sup>49</sup> research identified the post-code lottery of services available for women who are victims of violence. London's only Rape Crisis Centre is based in Croydon, south London, and during the last six years two other centres have shut. London also has three Sexual Assault Referral Centres, the Havens, which provide both a forensic service and medical and psychosocial care, including counselling for recent victims of rape and sexual assault (both male and female victims) for up to one year after the assault. Some voluntary sector agencies are also providing services for men and women, but all identify high levels of demand and long waiting lists for support and counselling.

The balance of service requirements between males and females may change over time. Tracking any changes should form part of regular needs assessment at the local level, and will be monitored by the Havens Sexual Assault and Referral Centres. However, capacity building in the sector will also benefit men, and individual centres are encouraged to make arrangements to work with men if there is demand.

### *The problem with the current approach*

While we acknowledge the good work that has been done, we cannot be complacent. There is still a lot to be done. The Mayor believes that the current fragmented approach does not adequately address the evident gender disproportionality: it fails women and fails London. We are not meeting the needs of the many women who have experienced more than one form of violence, particularly the most marginalised women and those who have experienced repeated sexual abuse as children.<sup>50</sup> Responses to date have paid insufficient attention to the fact that many men offend across more than one form of violence. Whole areas of policy, where addressing violence against women would also help achieve wider goals, such as unemployment, educational attainment and community cohesion, have gone largely untouched. Such ineffective responses result in a waste of potential in individual lives and a waste of money.

### **Towards an integrated strategy focused on prevention**

#### *Integrated strategy*

The UN has called on governments to take 'integrated measures to prevent and eliminate violence against women', and many have done so. The Mayor wants London to be a global leader in tackling violence against

women and London will be one of the first global cities to put such a strategy in place.

By integrated we mean:

- working to an agreed definition that meets UN standards, including recognising that violence against women is a gender equality and human rights issue
- linking different forms of violence, their underlying causes, short- and long-term impacts and opportunities for learning
- building responses that acknowledge that many men are multiple abusers and many women experience more than one type of violence during their lifetimes
- tackling all forms of violence together in a joined-up way, whilst ensuring that issues specific to particular forms are considered
- mainstreaming violence against women into other policies and strategies
- helping agencies work together to make the best use of resources and deliver what works for victim-survivors
- acknowledging the inter-reliance of the statutory and voluntary sectors and the ongoing contribution of specialised women's organisations
- treating violence against women as a crime whilst doing more for the

majority of women who still choose not to report to the police.

We want to shift to a proactive, integrated approach that puts prevention of violence against women at the heart of what we do; moving beyond the current primarily crisis driven, reactive, criminal justice-focused response. In partnership with relevant bodies, including voluntary organisations, we will tackle violence against women as a whole, recognising the links between different forms and the benefits of dealing with them in a coordinated and coherent way. This will improve our response to violence when it happens, and create a sound framework for prevention. We also propose to support investment in more specific forms of violence that have been neglected up to now, as well as building on existing effective work on domestic violence.

The government strategy 'Together we can end violence against women and girls', published in November 2009, complements the Mayor's strategy with measures to protect victims, tackle perpetrators and prevent violence.

The Mayor aims to improve the lives of women and girls who have experienced violence through better support and service provision.

However, the Mayor's long-term ambition is to change attitudes and end tolerance of violence against women so that London becomes a city in which women do not have to live with the fear and reality of violence. Ending violence against women will enhance women's ability to earn a living, participate in public life and make a contribution to society. This in turn will benefit all Londoners. The Mayor's vision is for London to become a city where there are equal life chances for all.

The Mayor has the political will to tackle violence against women and has made this one of his priorities. However, the Mayor cannot achieve this alone. We recognise that the only way to end violence against women is by working together with our partners.

The Mayor's draft violence against women strategy, 'The Way Forward', was launched in April 2009 for a three-month consultation period. Throughout this period the Mayor used a number of different consultation processes and events to engage with agencies, communities and individuals across London. This included an online consultation survey, written responses, and five focus groups. A consultation report providing more information on methods used, agencies that

participated and key themes has also been produced and can be downloaded online at: [www.london.gov.uk/thewayforward](http://www.london.gov.uk/thewayforward)

This strategy and the action plan that accompanies it were developed in collaboration and consultation with our statutory and voluntary sector partners, with whom we will work to eradicate violence against women. This work will be taken forward through the London Violence Against Women and Girls Panel. The Panel's purpose is to deliver 'The Way Forward' by raising the profile of this issue, promoting a London lead and improving coordination across a number of agencies and other statutory and non-statutory boards, and overseeing the delivery of the action plan.



# London taking a global lead to end violence against women and girls

**To significantly reduce the prevalence of violence against women over time by creating a culture based on equality and respect, where perpetrators are held to account and victims are protected and supported to rebuild their lives, and for London to be a leader in developing and implementing a range of measures to achieve this.**

The lack of a fully coordinated approach to tackling violence against women has resulted in an over-focus on a crisis-driven criminal justice response to domestic violence, based on risk management rather than preventing violence from happening in the first place.

Long-term prevention will require tackling the root causes of violence against women, which the UN has identified as:

- historically unequal power relations
- control of women's sexuality
- cultural ideology
- notions of privacy
- patterns of conflict resolution
- government inaction.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon launched the global UNiTE campaign to end violence against women in 2008, which aims to address these root causes, raise public awareness and increase political will and resources for preventing and responding to all forms of violence against women and girls.<sup>51</sup>

The European Union (EU) has also acknowledged the issue of violence against women and has dedicated funds to support trans-European projects that take action to combat all types of violence against women, children and young people.<sup>52</sup>

## Priorities for London

### *1. Adopt and promote the UN definition of violence against women*

The GLA is leading by example and will adopt the UN definition of violence against women.

The UN defines 'violence against women' as any act of 'gender-based violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately'.<sup>53</sup>

By signing up to the UNiTE campaign the Mayor will promote the approach that London is taking in combating violence against women to the UN and other cities around the world.

*'There is no blanket approach to fighting violence against women. What works in one country may not lead to desired results in another. Each nation must devise its own strategy. But there is one universal truth, applicable to all countries, cultures and communities: violence against women is never acceptable, never excusable, never tolerable.'*

United Nations Secretary-General **Ban Ki-moon**, February 2008 at the launch of the UNiTE campaign.

Political commitment will be crucial in ending violence against women. The scale of change required cannot be underestimated. The Mayor is committed to providing strategic leadership across London and making the best use of the levers he has at his disposal. But the Mayor does not control the delivery of frontline services. Local authorities have a significant role in delivering and commissioning a wide range of services. They also have a leadership role in the areas they serve, including within local crime and disorder partnerships and local strategic partnerships.

We have established a London Violence Against Women Panel to liaise with relevant bodies and voluntary organisations, with responsibility for delivery. In keeping with the Mayor's decision to address violence against women as a whole, the Metropolitan Police Authority's Domestic and Sexual Violence Board has already expanded its focus (previously covering domestic violence). But we need to work with London boroughs to encourage the same approach at a local level. We need a significant shift in thinking and strategic direction at the regional and local level. Existing work around domestic violence needs to be broadened out to incorporate the wider violence against women agenda.

## *2. Make London a leader in preventing violence against women.*

We want to put London at the forefront of work to end violence against women, not just in the UK but globally. London is one of the world's few truly global cities and it faces the full range of forms of violence against women. It can become

a beacon in preventing violence against women, building on the elements for an effective approach that are already in place through collaboration, cooperation and facilitation:

- a voluntary sector which is at the forefront of developing responses to violence against women and putting it on the agenda of the statutory sector
- parts of the public sector pressing for responses, ranging from group work with children affected by domestic violence to the MPS's Project Sapphire specialist teams investigating sexual crime
- an enviable academic heritage<sup>54</sup>, parts of which are already engaged in work on violence against women
- highly performing local authorities with the potential to deliver more focused responses
- a well-developed health sector, parts of which have been on the leading edge of health innovation.

We need to make the most of these opportunities, drawing on our academic excellence and the innovation and knowledge of our voluntary and public sectors, to put London at the forefront of preventing and eliminating violence against women. As well as innovation, we encourage our partners to adapt best practice from elsewhere to address London's needs.

Violence against women is a multi-faceted issue that links to, and impacts on, other social issues such as poverty, unemployment, youth crime, health inequalities and planning policy. Tackling it more effectively will help us achieve other priorities, and integrating violence against women

into other policy priorities will enhance violence prevention. The Mayor will make sure that violence against women is integrated into his plans to tackle youth crime, and strategies on transport, housing, health inequalities and refugees. All London agencies including local authorities should consider how they can effectively mainstream violence against women into other policy priorities. This includes agencies' own workplace policies.

### *3. Improve our understanding of violence against women*

To ensure that we address the needs of London's diverse communities it is crucial that we improve our understanding of violence against women.

Women's experiences of violence are influenced by other aspects of their identity or circumstances such as ethnicity, age, disability, sexuality, religion/belief, gender identity and social class. Understanding these different aspects is crucial to developing the right responses to violence against women.

#### **National prevalence survey**

The UN, World Health Organization (WHO) and the Council of Europe all recommend regular specialised violence against women surveys, framing them as studies either on women's safety or health.<sup>55</sup> The UN recommends that states carry out violence against women surveys every ten years, to measure the numbers of women at risk from all forms of violence against women.<sup>56</sup>

The only national survey we currently have is the British Crime Survey, which does not cover all forms of violence against women. The crime

context of the survey may also hinder women from disclosing incidents they do not view as criminal, particularly where the perpetrator is known. Violence against women surveys are likely to give us a more accurate picture of the numbers of women affected by sexual violence.<sup>57</sup> The GLA will lobby the government to undertake a national prevalence survey every ten years to measure the extent of, and progress in, tackling violence against women.

#### **Addressing disproportionality**

Agencies need to have a clearer picture of potential issues relating to disproportionality. Black and minority ethnic (BAME) women may find it even more difficult than white women to disclose domestic or sexual violence and agencies may be more reluctant to intervene in BAME communities out of a mistaken approach to 'cultural sensitivity', resulting in BAME women being afforded less protection and safety than other women.

At present, we lack adequate data monitoring systems that can tell us how well we are doing in responding to violence against women. We need better data collection systems, including producing disaggregated data by gender, race, sexuality and disability. This is crucial to improve our understanding of victim need, and to better inform service delivery to address potential disproportionality.

#### **BAME women**

London is a centre for migration and almost a third of London's population is from BAME communities. Our knowledge of BAME and migrant women's experiences of violence

against women is limited. The same is true for other marginalised groups such as disabled women, older women, lesbian, bisexual and transgender women.

Women from particular communities may be at risk of specific forms of violence such as forced marriage, 'honour' crimes and FGM. We lack accurate information about the extent of such forms of violence in London and the numbers of women at risk. This undermines the potential for prevention.

#### Disability and violence against women

Almost a fifth of households in London contain at least one person with a limiting long-term illness, health problem or disability<sup>58</sup>. Disabled women face all the forms of violence that non-disabled women face, but their disability may increase their risk of experiencing violence and may make access to support and safety more difficult. Some women become disabled as a result of violence. At present, we know very little about disabled women's experiences of violence against women.

#### Older women

There is very little data around older women's experiences of violence against women, but the majority of elder abuse is experienced by women rather than men.<sup>59</sup> According to Action On Elder Abuse, in 2004, 42,500 people aged 66 and over in the UK faced sexual abuse.<sup>60</sup> Older women's experiences of violence are complex. Some may be trapped in homes with abusive partners or carers; others may still be living with the profound legacies of childhood sexual abuse. We need to develop our understanding of these

complexities if we are to increase older women's access to essential support services.

#### Sexuality and violence against women

As with other large cities, London is believed to have a larger lesbian community than the national average, amounting to perhaps one in ten of the female population<sup>61</sup>. Although there has been progress in recent years in attitudes to lesbians, they continue to face discrimination and prejudice in many aspects of their lives. Religious institutions, the media, psychiatric institutions, family, and cultural networks have historically regulated women's sexuality and punished women who do not comply with cultural norms. Lesbians have faced a range of forms of violence and abuse from their families and communities to punish them for their sexual choices or try to force them to be heterosexual, including physical violence; rape and sexual assault; being forced to marry; and being disowned by the family, including being made homeless.

Recent research by the MPS reveals that four out of ten women surveyed have experienced one or more homophobic incidents in the past 12 months and just over two thirds have experienced some form of homophobic/transphobic abuse or assault in their lifetime.<sup>62</sup>

The needs and experiences of lesbians and bisexual women have often been grouped with those of gay and bisexual men, which has obscured how their lives are shaped by gender as well as by sexual identity.

#### 4. Cracking down on trafficking prostitution ahead of the 2012 Games

##### Trafficking for sexual exploitation

It is difficult to say precisely how many girls and women are trafficked into the UK.

The European Commission has estimated that between 100,000 and 800,000 women and children are trafficked into the EU each year.<sup>63</sup> There is currently no agreed estimate of the scale of human trafficking into the UK.<sup>64</sup> Estimates range from 1,000 to 10,000 women and girls being trafficked into the UK each year.<sup>65</sup>

The government's 'Action Plan on Tackling Human Trafficking' estimated that in 2003, 4,000 women were trafficked into the UK for sexual exploitation.<sup>66</sup> The majority of women in prostitution in London are foreign nationals, many of whom have been trafficked either directly from their home country into Britain or via another European country. According to both the MPS and the Poppy Project over 80 per cent of women identified in indoor prostitution (ie brothels, 'saunas' and 'massage parlours') across London are foreign nationals<sup>67</sup>, and many are thought to have been trafficked. This would mean that around 6,000 of the estimated 8,000 women involved in off-street prostitution in London are foreign nationals and a significant percentage of those is likely to have been trafficked.<sup>68</sup>

Trafficking victims come from a wide range of countries including China, South East Asia, Brazil and Africa, but the majority come from Eastern European countries.<sup>69</sup>

Internal trafficking has also been recognised, with a recent survey by Barnardo's identifying 76 young people who had been trafficked internally, nearly half of them into London.<sup>70</sup> As an economic and transport centre London acts as a hub for both international and internal trafficking of women and girls. The Poppy Project has found that poverty and a history of interpersonal violence increases the risk of trafficking and sexual exploitation. In addition, prostitution and trafficking are associated with high levels of violence and coercion, which can have a major impact on women's physical and mental health.

There is ongoing debate among academics, government, voluntary agencies and the media on the exact extent of trafficking, illustrating the substantial difficulties of estimating the numbers accurately. Women who have been trafficked are not easily detected due to the hidden nature of the crime. They may be too traumatized by their experiences to disclose information to the police, or fear retribution from traffickers.

##### Prostitution

Regardless of whether they have been trafficked, the vast majority of women and girls involved in prostitution are violated and sexually exploited. Though there may be different degrees of coercion, control and violence perpetrated against the women and girls involved, violence is intrinsic to prostitution. Forty-five per cent of women in prostitution report experiencing childhood sexual abuse and 70 per cent have spent time in care<sup>71</sup>. Seventy-five per cent of women in prostitution became involved when they were under 18.<sup>72</sup> Research shows that women in

prostitution have higher mortality rates, are at greater risk of physical and sexual violence, and suffer the same mental health consequences as survivors of torture.<sup>73</sup>

### Increase in demand

There has been a significant increase in the number of brothels in London in the last ten years, with many posing as saunas. Research by the Poppy Project has identified brothels in every area of London with an average of 28 brothels per borough.<sup>74</sup> Almost 10 per cent of the adult male population in London is thought to have paid for sex at some point. Research shows that the number of British men that report buying sexual services doubled between 1990 and 2000.<sup>75</sup> A new poll by the London paper The Metro has revealed that more than one in ten men has paid for sex. A third of men admitted to have visited strip clubs and one in three said they had bought pornography.<sup>212</sup>

### Trafficking for domestic servitude

Most of the current knowledge base is on trafficking for sexual exploitation, but many women and girls are also trafficked into the UK for domestic servitude. The figures for people trafficked into domestic servitude are very difficult to establish as domestic workers are often hidden away in their employer's homes and are rarely allowed out without their permission, so they are not likely to come to the attention of the authorities. AFRUCA (Africans Unite Against Child Abuse) estimates that equal, if not greater, numbers of girls are trafficked into domestic servitude. Women and girls trafficked into domestic servitude spend their lives doing domestic chores and care work in exploitative

conditions. Girls are deprived of an education and physically, sexually and emotionally abused. Yet the private nature of their exploitation means few are identified by social services or able to access support services.

It is vital that the government improves intelligence gathering and information sharing about how traffickers operate in order to more effectively stop and prosecute them and identify women and girls who have been trafficked, and the Mayor will work with the MPA and MPS to get tough on trafficking

### Tackling demand for prostitution

Cutting demand is key to reducing trafficking into prostitution. The vast majority of men do not buy sex. The minority who do need to be challenged through the law, licensing and regulation, public awareness programmes, and prevention work in schools. Local authorities could make better use of their powers for regulating health establishments, saunas and lap dancing clubs. We need to challenge the acceptability of buying sex through education and awareness-raising activity. The Mayor will consider, in consultation and partnership with relevant bodies and organisations, developing a public awareness campaign aimed at deterring paying for sex and will work with police, local authorities and other London partners in clamping down on paying for sex and on the proliferation of lap dancing clubs across London.

Research shows that the two most common routes men will use to access women are through advertisements in local newspapers

and in phone boxes.<sup>76</sup> A recent report by the Government Equalities Office found that 75 per cent of publications reviewed carried sex adverts, and London was one of the regions with a particularly high concentration of these adverts<sup>77</sup>. Newspapers, phone boxes and internet sites selling sexual services fuel demand for prostitution, which in turn leads to an increase in sex trafficking to meet the growing demand.

The Newsquest Group is campaigning jointly with Eaves, a women's NGO, to highlight the links between sex adverts, prostitution and trafficking. In consequence the Newsquest Group has banned sex adverts from all of their papers, which include around 300 titles. The Mayor would like all newspaper

groups to adopt this stance and will lobby for advertisements containing sexual services to be banned across all forms of media including the internet.

The display of vice cards in phone boxes was made an arrestable and recordable offence in September 2001. However, in many parts of London such as Soho, the cards are still so prolific that it is clear they are still a major means of information for men purchasing sexual services. The Mayor will work with the MPS and other London partners to adopt a more robust stance to cards advertising sexual services in London's phone boxes.

### **Partnership activity to crack down on London's vice trade**

In a number of London boroughs prostitute cards placed in telephone kiosks are one of the main forms of advertising used by brothels. In 2009, over 400,000 cards were seized by the police and other agencies.

Together with key partner agencies including Eaves, Object, the White Ribbon Campaign and the Salvation Army, the Deputy Mayor for Policing and the MPS removed cards from every phone box in and around Soho, Westminster. Local police officers also took down cards in other boroughs including Kensington and Chelsea, Camden and Lambeth. The MPS also undertook covert operations to arrest carders and the CPS arranged for all cases to be heard by the same bench through the virtual court at Charing Cross Police station.

Around 8,000 cards were removed on the day of action and around 16 carders were arrested. As a result of this high-profile activity Camden has now made carding a priority for some of their Safer Neighbourhoods teams.

This multi-agency initiative took place during the 16 days of action to end violence against women and is a good example of joint action engaging men in challenging negative behaviour.

### The London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games and trafficking

In 2012, the eyes of the world will be on London as it hosts the Olympic and Paralympic Games. Sport can be a positive force in the lives of Londoners and we are proud to host the 2012 Games. However, the Mayor is aware that major sporting events are sometimes linked with an increase in trafficking, prostitution and sexual assault.

A report by a leading counter-human trafficking organisation in Canada outlines a link between international sporting events and an upsurge in the demand for prostitution from visitors, site workers and athletes which in turn fuels human trafficking. At the Athens Olympic Games, where prevention efforts were poor, the number of known human trafficking victims almost doubled.<sup>78</sup>

The European Parliament recognised in their resolution passed on March 15 2006 that major sporting events result in a 'temporary and spectacular increase in the demand for sexual services'.<sup>79</sup>

The Mayor is determined that the London 2012 Games will set the standard for major sporting occasions and is working in partnership with the Equality and Human Rights Commission, the MPS, the MPA and third sector anti-trafficking groups to develop preventative activity prior to the 2012 Games.

Whether there is an increase in trafficking or not, the Olympic Games are likely to impact on the women already in prostitution in the five Olympic host boroughs. Coordinated and victim-centred policing across the boroughs is essential to ensure that women are not displaced from one borough to another.

#### 4. Place prevention at the core of tackling violence against women.

Attitudes condoning violence against women or blaming women for being abused are common. Studies have found that a third of people believe that a woman is partially or completely responsible for being raped if she has behaved 'flirtatiously'<sup>80</sup> or is drunk.<sup>81</sup> Many people are unaware how common violence against women is, and believe myths about violence that excuse the perpetrators and blame the victims.

Changing the attitudes that underpin violence against women is crucial. However, to date prevention has been the weakest part of

London's responses, with limited investment and little coordination. The Mayor is determined to transform the cultures and traditions that tolerate and perpetuate violence against women and will seek to engage men and boys in challenging negative behaviour by promoting the White Ribbon Campaign across London.

#### The sexualisation of women and girls

The sexualisation of popular culture can reinforce attitudes that condone violence against women. Research indicates that the sexualisation and sexist stereotyping of women and girls has become increasingly prevalent across all forms of media from films, TV programmes (targeting both



adults and children), music videos, young women's magazines, 'lad mags' and advertising. Women are sometimes represented as nothing more than decorative objects and depicted in limited roles.<sup>82</sup> There is also evidence of an increase in sexualised products being targeted at children and young people, from Playboy pencil cases to dolls in fishnet stockings, pole dancing kits for children, garters, push-up bras and thongs, which are aimed at girls from the age of seven. Pornography is also more readily available on the internet – an estimated 12 per cent of all web sites are pornography sites, which has a huge impact on the availability of sexualised imagery of women.<sup>83</sup>

A significant body of research exists which demonstrates the links between the increased sexualisation of women and girls and violence against women. For example, studies have shown that adults exposed to sexually objectifying images of women from mainstream media are more accepting of rape myths, sexual harassment, gender role stereotypes and interpersonal violence.<sup>84</sup> Research from the USA has demonstrated strong links between men who watched pornography featuring rape and sexual violence, and a subsequent willingness to coerce women into sexual acts.<sup>85</sup> A study of young people in Rochdale found that pornography influences young men's expectations of sexual relationships, leading to pressure on young women to comply.<sup>86</sup>

The Mayor will galvanise grass roots and community debate on the culture of sexualisation, and how it reinforces attitudes and behaviours that support violence against women. There also needs to be greater coordination of communication activity across London so that

agencies work collaboratively to improve public awareness of violence against women and develop integrated educational campaigns with consistent messages about the unacceptability of violence against women.

### *5 Young people at the heart of prevention*

A sizeable minority of young people hold views condoning violence against women, particularly coercive sex. Thirty-eight per cent of young men and 16 per cent of young women though it was acceptable for a young boy to expect to have sex with a girl if she was very flirtatious with him.<sup>87</sup> The London Teenage Sexual Health Forum has commissioned research on the role of non-consensual sex in teenage pregnancy and has received anecdotal evidence of sexual bullying and coercion of teenage girls, often by groups of boys and young men. Girls are often seen as 'sexual accessories'<sup>88</sup> by young men in gangs and can be passed around among group members. Rape and sexual assault, by individual gang members and by the whole group, is relatively common.<sup>89</sup>

The Mayor has hosted a roundtable event in partnership with Race on the Agenda (ROTA) to investigate the links between violence against women and serious youth violence, particularly on the issue of rape within gangs, to identify issues and develop multiagency solutions and actions. Further work will be undertaken to address the impact of serious youth violence and gang-related violence on young women and girls following the publication of ROTA's 'Female Voice In Violence' report and recommendations.

An important point that has emerged from ROTA's research is that the sexual exploitation of

girls is a universal problem and not just an issue that affects girls involved in gangs or living in gang-affected neighbourhoods. Prevention work needs to be universal and not limited to gang-affected neighbourhoods.<sup>90</sup>

Many young people feel that they do not have enough information or support to deal with issues of interpersonal violence, and the majority of secondary students and over half of those in primary schools (52 per cent) wanted lessons covering issues such as domestic violence.<sup>91</sup>

The voluntary sector has been at the forefront of developing primary prevention initiatives but needs the commitment of the statutory sector to properly implement them. A range of initiatives

and curriculum materials has been developed. Some, such as WOMANKIND Worldwide's programme, 'Challenging Violence, Changing Lives' have been evaluated but currently not all schools are taking advantage of these materials. A survey of Women's Aid member organisations found that only 46 per cent were aware of local schools that covered issues relating to violence against women in Personal, Social and Health Education lessons.<sup>92</sup>

In their recently published violence against women and girls strategy, the government has pledged to include gender equality and violence against women in the school curriculum for Personal, Social and Health Education and Sex and Relationship Education.

### **'Challenging Violence, Changing Lives'<sup>93</sup>**

WOMANKIND Worldwide is a voluntary sector organization that has developed a teaching resource for key stages 3 and 4 that aims to raise awareness and transform attitudes to stop violence against women. 'Challenging Violence, Changing Lives' aims to create school environments where young men and women are equal, safe from violence and have the confidence to negotiate healthy relationships. It does this by looking at the way gender stereotypes are part of the accepted norms in our society, and how this limits the lives and choices of young women and men. The programme invites young people and teachers to challenge the attitudes that can lead to violent relationships between men and women.

Education is key to eradicating violence against women in the long term and we endorse the approach of programmes such as 'Challenging Violence, Changing Lives'. However, greater commitment from schools across London is required to ensure that these opportunities are not wasted.

Education on healthy, respectful and equal relationships should be embedded across the national curriculum. Boys should be challenged about the attitudes that lead to violence against women, and all children should be taught about consent and their rights and responsibilities within relationships and towards one another.

Schools have a general responsibility to look at the ways in which gender stereotypes limit the life choices of young women and men, and to ensure that the school environment is one where girls and boys are equal. Schools and other youth provision have a crucial role to play in challenging the dominant models of masculinity based on bodily strength and power.

#### *6. Prevention of harmful traditional practices*

It is estimated that at least 66,000<sup>94</sup> women in England and Wales have undergone FGM, in the main prior to arrival in the UK, with a further 24,000 girls and young women at risk.<sup>95</sup> A significant proportion of these women and girls are likely to live in London. Responses of

statutory agencies to FGM have focused on health, particularly maternity care. Whilst the improvements in health provision are important, there is a need for a more comprehensive approach addressing prevention, the safeguarding of children, the long-term impacts of FGM, and prosecution. There have been no prosecutions for female genital mutilation in the UK. By contrast, France has prosecuted more than 100 offenders.

Some harmful traditional practices such as FGM and forced marriage are linked to age, with school-age girls and young women most at risk. Every year thousands of children go missing in London. Some are forcibly removed from schools and then forced into marriage or subjected to FGM. Schools are the first to identify children who are removed from school, and are in a powerful position to identify those at risk of forced marriage and FGM. If a young person fails to attend school for over six months, their place is often given away to someone else with little police involvement or inter-agency information sharing. This is an issue that needs closer analysis and monitoring.

### **Community based prevention work on FGM**

The Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, City Parochial Foundation and ROSA UK are jointly funding a new initiative to strengthen community-based prevention work on FGM in the UK.

The aim of the project is to develop community-based preventative work to reduce the risk to girls and young women in the UK of undergoing female genital mutilation and to protect the rights of girls (as enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child).

By investing in community organisations based within practising communities, in particular women's organisations, the project aims to raise awareness among practising communities about UK law and the health and psychological risks of FGM. It will also seek to increase the confidence of women, men and young people within practising communities to reject this procedure as part of their identity.

### 7. Making London a safer city

A lot of work is already under way to make London a safer city. The Mayor has recognised that women are disproportionately affected by theft and sexual offences on the transport network and they still have a greater fear of traveling than men, particularly at night. A number of measures to enhance women's safety on public transport have already been taken: significantly increasing Safer Transport Teams;<sup>96</sup> running awareness campaigns on planning journeys home and advising against using illegal minicabs; and working with the police and TfL to make the pan-London Cab Enforcement Unit (CEU) more effective as the use of illegal minicabs can put women at a higher risk of sexual assault.<sup>97</sup>

The Mayor will ensure that women's safety on public transport and across all travel modes continues to be addressed through the community safety plan for transport and travelling. In particular, he will seek to increase women's perception of safety on public transport and their confidence in traveling, as well as improving the reporting of sexual offences experienced on public transport; including the reporting of stalking and harassment.

#### **Improving women's safety at night**

Although rape can happen at any time and in a variety of contexts and situations, there are links between the night-time economy, licensed premises and sexual attacks.<sup>98</sup> The Mayor will work in partnership with the MPS, local authorities, the Havens and London Rape Crisis Centres to establish a London wide publicity

campaign in licensed premises to minimize the risk of becoming a victim of sexual violence.

While it is important to target victims and potential victims with vital information about safety and how to seek support through campaigns, it is crucial that campaigns also focus on the responsibilities and consequences for perpetrators.

TfL will also continue its Safer Travel at Night initiative to reduce cab-related sexual offences and improve women's safety when traveling at night.

# Improving access to support

## **To ensure the safety, wellbeing and freedom of women and children through improving access to, and take-up of, high quality services that meet the needs of London's diverse communities.**

Women and girls need access to help and support to enable them to escape violence and deal with its impact upon them. Boys may also be affected by violence against women, particularly domestic violence, and also need support.

Our proposals seek to build capacity in both the statutory sector and the specialised women's voluntary sector, both of which play a crucial role in improving the outcomes for women and children affected by violence.

### **Priorities for London**

#### *1. Expand Rape Crisis provision in London*

London has lost two Rape Crisis Centres over recent years and is now served by only one centre in Croydon. The Mayor has recognised that this is unacceptable for women and young girls suffering the significant health and wellbeing consequences of sexual violence, and inadequate for a city of over seven million people, particularly at a time when reported rapes and sexual offences are increasing. In his manifesto, the Mayor committed to delivering adequate provision for Rape Crisis services in London within the 2008-12 Mayoral term.

In recent years the government has focused on developing Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs).<sup>99</sup> SARCs were set up to

improve evidence gathering to assist police investigations, and to provide support and medical care to people who have recently been raped or sexually assaulted<sup>100</sup>. London has three SARCs known as Havens. The Havens provide high-quality victim care and clinical services for those who have suffered recent rape and serious sexual assault. However, it is crucial to note that they do not offer the same service as Rape Crisis Centres (RCCs) - which focus on long-term counseling. The work of the SARCs and RCCs should be viewed as complementary.

RCCs are independent and run by voluntary and community sector organisations; they work with female service users who often choose not to report to the police, or who have unresolved issues from historic sexual assaults or childhood sexual abuse. RCCs support some of the most vulnerable victims, including those struggling with mental health issues and self-harm. While they primarily support women and girls directly affected, they also support family members, partners and other supporters.<sup>101</sup> The SARCs offer crisis intervention with respect to recent sexual assault and work with both female and male service users, though the majority of service users are female.

The Mayor recognises that the only way to meet the needs of survivors of sexual violence is to offer both SARC and RCC service provision. The current level of SARC provision in London is arguably sufficient but there is a severe shortage of RCCs.

### The London Rape Crisis model

The Mayor will invest £1.4 million over the next three years to establish three new centres and to support the expansion of services at London's only existing Rape Crisis Centre in Croydon.

The approach currently being developed in London is to work on a sub-regional basis across the four quadrants of London so that London has a total of four RCCs (north, south, east and west). A sub-regional commissioning approach will enable local authorities and other funders, such as health services, to pool resources and will ensure that Rape Crisis service provision is sustainable in the future, as services will not be dependant on core funding from a single source

The new centres will have one main base that is likely to be located in the lead commissioning borough. Centres will adopt a hub and spoke model, to facilitate access for women living in other boroughs. Centres would be expected to develop partnership arrangements with other organisations so that satellite and outreach services can be offered across a greater number of boroughs, ensuring greater accessibility to all women living in London

#### *Promoting the Havens*

Most referrals to Sexual Assault Referral Centres are made through the police, but the Mayor has encouraged greater access to the Havens through self-referral.

The Mayor will continue to provide ongoing support to the Havens by supporting their marketing campaign to raise public awareness of the services the Havens provide.

#### *Pan-London sexual violence helpline*

Currently there is no national sexual violence helpline in England and Wales (the equivalent of the 24-hour National Domestic Violence Helpline). A widely-promoted sexual violence helpline would improve access to vital support services such as RCCs. The government has committed to establishing a national 24-hour sexual violence helpline. The Mayor will facilitate a scoping exercise working with key sexual violence support service providers in London to ensure that the needs of Londoners are taken into consideration in national developments.

#### *2. Ensure equitable access to high-quality support services across London*

The first support services were developed by the women's voluntary and community sector and women still tend to have most confidence in specialist women's services. Such services enable women to name and make sense of the violence, find safety, seek justice and recover from the long-term impacts of violence.

Most women do not report violence to the criminal justice system and rely on friends and family and the women's voluntary sector for support. Women value the encouragement and empowerment they get from women's support services,<sup>102</sup> which helps them to access the 'basket of resources'<sup>103</sup> that they need to build lives that are, and feel, safer. Independent community-based women's support services, including provision specifically for minority communities, are a vital part of our response.

A number of specialist services have already been lost in London or are under threat.

London is underserved overall<sup>104</sup> and provision is patchy across the capital, with few boroughs having the full range of services that are needed.<sup>105</sup> As with the UK in general the majority of services address domestic violence. Women should be able to access the right kind of support when they need it, regardless of where they live in London.

Specialist services for BAME and migrant women, including those addressing specific forms of violence such as forced marriage and female genital mutilation, are fragile and there is no provision in some areas of London.

The London Violence Against Women Panel will collaborate with the voluntary sector, local authorities, criminal justice system, NHS London and funders. It will also draw on recent government research on the stability and sustainability of the violence against women sector to identify long-term funding strategies that meet the necessary levels for core support services across London.

The Mayor calls on key agencies, local authorities and government to respond to the needs of women experiencing violence through the provision of high-quality, core support services with equitable access across London. Local authorities should undertake violence against women needs assessments to ascertain the level of service need across all forms of violence against women and girls in their borough. The government has committed to develop a standard local violence against women and girls dataset to enable every local area to undertake an accurate needs assessment.

A ‘ready reckoner’ tool has also been developed to enable commissioners to estimate need for local services in their area, and to facilitate joint strategic needs assessments to establish the current and future needs of the local population. The sub-regional approach being developed for the expansion of RCCs is a model that may be appropriate for other forms of service provision.

### *3. Protect and support children and young women experiencing violence.*

There is extensive evidence that sexual abuse in childhood can cause long-term negative impacts. These damaging consequences tend to be reduced for girls who have supportive and confiding relationships with their parents. Parents need support to enable them to help their children and to recover themselves from the impact that the abuse has had on them. Support should be available to parents whose children have been abused outside the family, and to the non-abusing parents of children who have been abused within the family.

In cases of sexual abuse within the family, children often only feel safe to disclose when they are no longer living with the abuser. Women’s refuges helped to uncover the link between domestic violence and child sexual abuse. As Sylvia Walby has said, ‘For such children, child abuse is structured by and takes place within a context of a male perpetrator of domestic violence.’ NSPCC research found that 78 per cent of children who reported sexual abuse by their parents also reported domestic violence.<sup>106</sup> These connections need to be integrated into the practice of child protection

agencies in London, and into the planning of support groups for non-abusing parents.

Long-term problems following child sexual abuse are also significantly lower in those who, as adolescents, experienced some success at school or with peers.<sup>107</sup> The nature of this success (academic, social or sporting) is less important than the accompanying strengthening of self-esteem and enhancement of opportunities for effective social interactions with peers.

Girls and young women may experience a wide range of forms of violence, including:

- rape and sexual assault
- violence within personal relationships
- indecent exposure
- sexual harassment/bullying
- sexual exploitation
- FGM
- forced marriage
- 'honour' based violence.

Although the British Crime Survey does not include the experience of under-16s, it does reveal that young women aged 16 to 19 are the age-group at most risk of rape. Thirty-six per cent of rapes and sexual assaults reported to police are of under-16s, the vast majority of whom are female<sup>108</sup>. A recent report on multiple perpetrator rape reveals that young women are the largest group of victims for this type of offence, and that the average age of victims has fallen over the last ten years. Forty-eight per cent of victims were 19 years old or less in 1998/99, compared to 64 per cent in 2008/09.

Thirty-six per cent of victims were 15 years old or less in 2008/09.<sup>109</sup>

In a recent NSPPC study, one in three girls reported some form of sexual partner violence; a quarter of girls reported some form of physical partner violence; and one in nine girls reported severe physical violence.<sup>110</sup> Significantly, girls stated that violence had a highly detrimental impact on their welfare. Many women involved in prostitution have experienced sexual abuse in childhood. Failing to protect and support girls who are at risk of or have experienced violence makes them more vulnerable to sexual exploitation and prostitution.

The issue of consent and coercive sex is a significant issue for young women. Teenage girls and young women often cannot identify what has happened to them as rape or sexual violence. At the London Female Voice in Violence roundtable event,<sup>111</sup> a number of issues relating to young women involved in or associated with gang members were highlighted. The power in these relationships clearly resided with boys, and girls gradually lost their right to refuse sexual contact with anyone in that group. Much more work needs to be done with young people to raise their awareness and understanding of the term 'consent'.<sup>112</sup> This includes work with boys on the consequences of disregarding consent.

There is very little specialist provision for girls who have experienced violence. Recent research by the NSPCC reveals that there is currently a significant gap in the provision of therapeutic



services for children and young people who have experienced sexual abuse.

Lack of awareness and a fear of retribution from family members, gang association, or fear of being taken into care act as a barrier to reporting or seeking support for young women experiencing familial violence.

It is vital that the level of specialist support available to young women is increased and that existing violence against women services build their capacity to respond to the specific needs of young women and girls. Service providers need to think about how they improve access to support for young women by communicating the right messages through their promotional materials and by working collaboratively with schools and youth agencies.

The Mayor will work with the London Safeguarding Children Board and other relevant London agencies to consider how support for the parents of sexually abused children can be enhanced. This includes improving responses to the non-abusing parent in situations of sexual abuse within the family, and assessing how children's services, particularly within schools, can be developed to help limit the long-term damage of child sexual abuse.

#### *4. Respond to the needs of children and young people witnessing violence*

Both boys and girls are affected by violence against their mothers, particularly domestic violence. Approximately 90,000 London children witness domestic violence each year<sup>113</sup> and there

is co-occurrence of domestic violence and child abuse in at least 40 per cent of cases<sup>114</sup>.

Almost a third of domestic violence starts, and existing violence often escalates, during pregnancy<sup>115</sup>. Nearly three quarters of children on the at risk register live in households where domestic violence is also occurring<sup>116</sup>.

The links between domestic violence and child abuse are well established<sup>117</sup> and need to be integrated into the practice of child protection agencies in London. In cases of domestic violence the best form of child protection is often woman protection. Domestic violence has been identified as a factor in a significant proportion of the cases of child abuse that have resulted in serious case reviews.<sup>118</sup> Child protection agencies often have low expectations of violent men and instead focus their interventions on the child's mother.<sup>119</sup> Even though they themselves are not abusing the child, and are frequently living in terror of the perpetrator, mothers are frequently told by social services that their children will be removed if they stay with or reconcile with the perpetrator. They are rarely offered the resources to leave violent partners safely. And if they do, the civil courts frequently grant child contact to violent fathers, thus compromising the safety of both the woman and her children.

Domestic violence and child abuse are linked with negative consequences for children and young people, including reduced educational attainment; increased involvement in anti-social behaviour; and street/playground violence and running away. These problems may bring the

family to the attention of a range of statutory agencies and may result in referral to parenting programmes. Again, the focus is often on the mother improving her parenting with little attention paid to the father, either in terms of how he parents or how he sets limits and controls the behaviour of the mother. Violent men are rarely confronted about the impact of their abuse on the lives of their children.

The Mayor will work collaboratively with the voluntary sector, local authorities (individually and collectively), the criminal justice system, the health service, the Mayor's Fund and funders to identify sustainable funding strategies that meet the levels of need identified for support services for children across London.

The Violence Against Women and Girls Panel will work with the London Safeguarding Children Board to improve safeguarding guidance so that it includes the impact on children who witness violence against women. It is vital that the London Child Protection Procedures address the needs of mothers experiencing violence, and put in place clear guidance for managing perpetrators.

#### *5. Violence against women training for key professionals across London and improved information and resources for the public*

The statutory sector provides a number of useful specialist violence against women services, such as Havens and specialist domestic violence courts. Professionals in a wide range of other statutory services – such as GPs, midwives, social workers, employment advisers, police officers,

lawyers and teachers – also come into contact with violence against women. However, they often lack understanding and skills and as a result their responses can be inadequate and even dangerous. This can be particularly true with BAME communities. Practitioners should receive training on the different forms of violence against women, and how to work with victims and perpetrators from BAME communities.

The government has previously suggested that training for professionals should:

- increase understanding of violence against women, its nature, scale and impact
- assist service providers in identifying violence against women
- build skills and knowledge about preventative approaches, early interventions and reducing the long-term impacts of violence
- cover the law and policy
- go beyond raising awareness to identifying desired service responses.<sup>120</sup>

In reality, vocational qualification courses for professionals such as social workers, teachers and probation officers do not address violence against women. At best, limited information on domestic violence is included. In-service training is also inadequate. Improved training is a key element of improving statutory responses.

The Mayor calls on the government to meet its UN obligations to develop and fund violence against women 'training programmes for judicial, legal, medical, social, educational and police and immigration personnel'.<sup>121</sup>

The London Violence Against Women and Girls Panel will consider, in consultation with partners, how to improve training provision on violence against women for key professionals across London.<sup>122</sup> Such training should include information about addressing the needs of London's diverse population.

#### Information for friends and family

Most women turn to friends and family first for help and support. While many friends will do their best to help, the lack of advice and information available to the public can result in responses rooted in myths and stereotypes that tend to minimise the impact and seriousness of the violence, blame the victim and excuse the perpetrator. In situations of ongoing violence, friends and family can:

- become frustrated if the woman doesn't leave her violent partner
- believe that the woman should uphold the 'honour' of the family and remain in the marriage despite the violence.

Similarly with respect to sexual violence there is an all too common tendency to hold women responsible for what has happened, by questioning their actions, clothing or trust of others. For women dealing with the legacies of previous abuse, friends may not understand the long-term impact that abuse can have and feel that she should 'get over it'. Even where friends are sympathetic, they may be unaware of the support that may be available.

The Mayor will work with voluntary and statutory agencies to improve the availability of

information and resources to members of the public so that they are able to support women more effectively.

#### 6. *Meet the needs of London's diverse communities*

Women's experiences of violence may be influenced by other aspects of their identity and circumstances, such as ethnicity, age, disability, sexuality, religion/belief, gender identity and social class. Understanding how these aspects intersect with violence is crucial to developing appropriate responses. They undoubtedly create additional barriers to accessing services and achieving safety. For example:

- there is a lack of physically accessible support services for disabled women
- lesbians may fear homophobia if they come forward
- the availability of appropriate interpreting services is unreliable for women who speak little or no English
- BAME women may find it more difficult to disclose sexual violence,<sup>123</sup> particularly in cultures where concepts of family honour are focused on female behaviour
- women with uncertain immigration status may be trapped in situations of violence, unable to access protection because they have 'no recourse' to public funds<sup>124</sup>
- recent migrants may be unaware of their rights and the services available to them
- older women may think it is too late for them to change anything
- agencies may be more reluctant to intervene in BAME communities out of a mistaken

approach to ‘cultural sensitivity’, resulting in BAME women receiving less protection than other women.

Some groups of women may be at greater risk of experiencing violence:

- certain forms of violence, such as FGM, forced marriage and ‘honour’ based violence are closely linked to particular ethnic/cultural/religious groups
- many refugee women have experienced sexual violence in their countries of origin, including being subjected to rape as a tactic of war/conflict<sup>125</sup>
- a disproportionate number of domestic homicides involve recent migrants as victims and/or perpetrators
- disabled women and girls are more likely to be sexually assaulted during their lifetime<sup>126</sup>
- at least two thirds of victims of elder abuse are women<sup>127</sup>
- rape, sexual assault and sexual bullying/harassment are more common among girls and young women.<sup>128</sup>

The Mayor will ensure that the Violence Against Women and Girls Panel considers the needs of London’s diverse communities and works in partnership with relevant agencies and strategic partnerships to ensure that older women, young women, migrant, refugee and asylum seeking women, disabled women and lesbian, bisexual and transgender women are able to influence the delivery of the Mayor’s violence against women strategy and action plan so that it effectively meets their needs.

### Refugee and migrant women

Refugee women are more affected by violence against women than any other women’s population group in the world.<sup>129</sup> The Refugee Council’s Vulnerable Women’s Project found that 76 per cent of their service users had been raped either in their country of origin or in the UK. Research shows that women living in poverty are up to three times more likely to report being raped.<sup>130</sup> Refugee and asylum seeking women are more likely to be living in poverty due to barriers to the job market. Refused asylum seekers are destitute and often homeless or ‘sofa surfing’ with friends and family, making them more vulnerable to rape and sexual exploitation.<sup>131</sup> Refugee women may also be at elevated risk of domestic violence that is connected to refugee men’s loss of status within the family.<sup>132</sup>

London should be a haven for those in need of protection. However, for refugee women this is often not the case. Structural barriers make it harder for them to access support and protection.

Most refugee women do not make an independent claim for asylum and are instead included as a dependent on their partner’s claim. Many women are not aware of their entitlements to make claims for asylum or support in their own right, and some face additional cultural pressures, making them less likely to reach out for support and more likely to remain in violent relationships.<sup>133</sup> Refugee women are less likely to report rape to the police due to fears that contacting the authorities may place their immigration status at risk.<sup>134</sup>

Fear of destitution can trap women with insecure immigration status in violent relationships. Many migrant women who enter this country on a visa are unaware of rules requiring a subsequent application for indefinite leave to remain (ILR). Some abusive men do not make an ILR application for their partner, in order to reduce her independence. Women from the EU accession states may also be trapped in violent relationships. Even though they are allowed to remain in the UK, they may lack access to public funds and often face additional barriers to finding employment to support themselves and their children. Women in these situations who decide to leave violent relationships may have 'no recourse to public funds' – in other words they are not entitled to any financial support such as housing benefit. Research estimates that between 600 and 1,000 women per year are trapped in violent relationships because of the 'no recourse rule'.<sup>135</sup> This sends out a message of tolerance of domestic violence, particularly amongst men in very closely-knit communities. Refugees struggle to meet the costs of women with no recourse and may be unable to accept them. Women who have been trafficked into sexual exploitation or domestic servitude face similar problems.

Through his Refugee Integration Strategy, the Mayor will tackle barriers to employment and training, address housing and health needs and strengthen the ability of refugees to engage in civic, political and community life in London. This will in turn help to reduce the structural barriers to refugee women's access to protection and support services.

The Mayor also chairs the London Strategic Migration Partnership (LSMP) and will address some of the language and cultural barriers within the work of the group. The LSMP will prioritise improving women's access to appropriate ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) provision, within its wider focus on ESOL provision. It will also prioritise increasing the availability of appropriate interpreting services and improving access for migrants to information about their rights, including support to deal with the legacies of violence.

The Mayor calls on the UK Border Agency to ensure consistent implementation of their gender guidelines. The Mayor also calls on the government to guarantee the rights of women with uncertain immigration status who are fleeing or threatened by violence to have access to crisis, temporary and permanent accommodation, specialist support services and essential financial support.



# Addressing the health, social and economic consequences of violence

## **To reduce the long-term consequences of violence and improve the life chances of the women and girls who experience it, and support them to rebuild their lives.**

Violence against women, especially where there is multiple experience of abuse either from the same or different perpetrators, can have serious long-term consequences including:

- mental health problems such as depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and attempted and successful suicide<sup>136</sup>
- low self-esteem, isolation and social exclusion<sup>137</sup>
- alcohol and drug misuse<sup>138</sup>
- disability<sup>139</sup>
- unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases<sup>140</sup>
- negative impacts on attainment in education and employment.<sup>141</sup>

Women who have experienced violence in childhood are at greater risk of being raped as an adult and of being the victim of domestic violence<sup>142</sup>. Many women involved in prostitution have experienced sexual abuse in childhood. Women who sell sex are 40 times more likely to be killed.<sup>143</sup> Almost half of women in prison have experienced domestic violence and a third have been sexually abused.<sup>144</sup>

These statistics make grim reading, but long-term damage is not inevitable. The availability of support can both reduce the level of damage and enable recovery, helping survivors re-make connections with others, develop their self-worth and rebuild their lives.

## **Priorities for London**

### *1. Fulfill the potential of the health sector to address violence*

As well as immediate impacts such as broken bones, bruising, vaginal and anal tearing, and sexually transmitted infections, violence against women can also have long-term, and even permanent, impacts on mental and physical health.<sup>145</sup> The WHO has urged agencies to adopt a public health response as ‘the impact of such violence goes far beyond the immediate harm caused, affecting all aspects of women’s future health’.<sup>146</sup>

Violence against women is a significant health issue and the Mayor intends to prioritise it within his duty to promote the health of Londoners and to reduce health inequalities.

The Mayor will integrate violence against women prevention into his Health Inequalities Strategy and will work with the London Health Commission to facilitate engagement of the health sector in the new violence against women strategy.

The NHS is often the first point of contact for women who have experienced violence, although they may not disclose the violence directly. It can play an important role in preventing violence against women by intervening early, providing treatment and information, and referring women on to other services. It also has a role in commissioning specialist support services such as Rape Crisis. Whilst some progress has been made, the health system has yet to fulfill its potential to

reduce violence against women and the health problems associated with it. Many health personnel are unaware of the role of violence as the underlying cause of women's health problems and lack the information to provide the right interventions and referrals.

Health services should do more to identify women who are experiencing violence or dealing with its aftermath. Department of Health guidance recommends routine inquiry about domestic violence in maternity services. Where this happens it helps link women at risk to support services, although it is unclear whether routine inquiry is consistently implemented in maternity services in London. Almost a third of domestic violence starts, and existing violence often escalates, during pregnancy.<sup>147</sup>

Violence against women needs to be integrated into all areas of care, including

emergency services, mental health services, substance misuse services, health visiting and reproductive health and maternity services.

Routine and clinical enquiry should be extended to cover a wider range of forms of violence in more of the health settings likely to be used by women who have experienced violence. These include mental and sexual health services (including those aimed at teenagers), maternity and post-natal provision, and accident and emergency.

In addition, routine and clinical enquiry, support and referral mechanisms must take account of the needs of women who speak limited English. Informal interpreting arrangements by women's partners, children and friends can make it almost impossible for women to disclose violence. The Mayor calls on NHS London to develop a strategy for increasing access to appropriate interpreting services.



## IRIS (Identification and Referral to Improve Safety)

The IRIS research study aims to improve health care responses to domestic violence in a general practice setting.

IRIS focuses on addressing the barriers to asking women patients about abuse and responding appropriately, which includes offering referral to a specialist domestic violence agency that provides advocacy. The intervention consists of two two-hour multidisciplinary training sessions for clinicians and one one-hour training session for administrative staff. The programme for clinicians is designed to address the expressed and tacit barriers to ensuring improved identification, support and referral to specialist agencies. The training for administrative staff focuses on issues of confidentiality and safety for patients experiencing abuse.

During training, IRIS information materials for signposting, publicity materials and a pop-up template linked to diagnosis and acting as a prompt to remind clinicians to ask questions and record domestic violence, are introduced and a project 'champion' is identified.

Training is delivered by the advocate educator (based in one of the two collaborating specialist agencies: the nia project in London or Next Link in Bristol), a clinical psychologist specialising in domestic violence, and an academic general practitioner.

The aims of IRIS are to increase identification and referral rates; provide information, materials and support to practice teams; and to increase safety for women patients and their children.

### 2 Build better financial futures

Violence against women can have a wide range of negative financial consequences. Women who have been sexually abused as children are at risk of ending up in lower paid employment. Lack of financial alternatives can trap women in prostitution and jobs in the wider sex industry.

A violent partner may stop a woman from working, studying or training, making her more dependent on him. Domestic violence can also lead to women losing their jobs as they struggle to cope with the impact of injuries and anxiety.<sup>148</sup> The mental health impacts of violence against women can make it difficult

for women to work and limit their prospects for employment. Living in a refuge or hostel may make it harder for women to maintain their existing jobs.

Many women are denied access to economic resources because their abusive partners take control of their bank accounts and refuse to let them have money of their own. Many also face debt as a consequence of the abuse they have experienced, with abusive partners forcing them to take out loans, credit cards and overdrafts in their name.<sup>149</sup> Financial abuse is often part of domestic violence and can include forcing women to take out loans

## Economic Empowerment Programs

In the USA, Economic Empowerment Programs have been developed to support women who have experienced violence to build a better financial future for themselves and their children.

The Allstate Foundation's Economics Against Abuse Program<sup>151</sup> offers help to victims of domestic violence and economic abuse by offering them targeted tools and strategies to help them deal with the financial struggles they face. The Foundation developed a priority programme called Economics Against Abuse with the National Network to End Domestic Violence, to address how economic abuse can impact the personal safety and financial security of victims and their families. The programme provides a comprehensive network of services for domestic violence survivors, including a grant programme that allows service providers to address the complex, broad and often immediate range of victims' needs. They also have an Education and Job Training Assistance Fund that provides grants directly to domestic violence survivors, helping them access education and job training opportunities.

Research shows that financial abuse and economic dependence on perpetrators can act as a barrier to women leaving an abusive relationship, and so empowering women to establish financial independence is vital.

for their partners. Women can end up in severe debt and can struggle with the costs of rebuilding their lives.<sup>150</sup>

The Mayor has already launched a number of initiatives to enhance the economic opportunities for women across London through the London Economic Recovery Action Plan. The CompeteFor programme<sup>152</sup> will make it easier for businesses, including those owned by women, to win contracts related to the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. So far, 2,994 female-owned businesses have signed up to the CompeteFor programme.<sup>153</sup>

Since the launch of the Women into Construction Project in April 2008, 124 women have been assisted into construction jobs on

the Olympic site and 37 of these have already moved into permanent employment.<sup>154</sup>

The Mayor's Childcare Affordability Programme will continue to provide access to good quality, affordable and flexible childcare which will enable women to get back into education, training or work. Childcare costs are typically 25 per cent higher in London than in the rest of the country and are recognised as one of the biggest barriers faced by parents who wish to return to work.<sup>155</sup>

In addition the Mayor will:

- call upon government to introduce a new resettlement grant for women escaping violent relationships
- influence London's skills and employment strategy to develop tailored work programmes to help women escape violence and exit prostitution
- develop the London Economic Empowerment Programme for women who have experienced violence and women exiting prostitution.

Civil protection orders are available in relation to domestic violence (non-molestation and occupation orders), and harassment and forced marriage (injunctions and restraining orders). However the costs can be prohibitive for women who are not eligible for legal aid and there are gaps in availability of community-based legal advice for those who are eligible.

The Mayor will work with the Legal Services Commission to improve women's access to civil protection orders.

### *3. Safe and secure housing options*

Many women who experience ongoing violence in and around the area in which they live want the violence to stop, and to remain in their homes safely. The development of sanctuary schemes, injunctions and interventions with perpetrators has enabled more women to achieve the immediate security that they seek, although there remains a need for better access to services that will support recovery. However some women must leave their local area in order to achieve safety and the chance to start again.

Violence against women is a significant cause of homelessness, and fear of losing their home can trap women in violent situations. Around 40 per cent of young homeless women have left home because of sexual abuse<sup>156</sup> and domestic violence is cited as the direct reason for presenting as homeless by 13 per cent of applicants to local authorities.<sup>157</sup> Homelessness among women can be particularly hidden and often there is limited contact with services that provide for more accessible rough sleepers. Although they are the minority of rough sleepers, homeless women present with specific needs that are often not met by existing hostel and day centre services. Homeless services need to develop ways of reaching homeless women who are hidden, and to develop and provide services that meet the variety of specific needs, including sexual and domestic violence services, in settings and practices that maximise accessibility.

Through the Violence Against Women Panel, the Mayor will work with the Tenant Services Authority (TSA) to urge social landlords to update their policies to incorporate the wider forms of violence against women. This will ensure that they meet the specific needs of women experiencing violence, such as offering holistic sanctuary schemes to all victims of violence who choose to stay in their own homes or ensuring timely moves for women escaping violence both across and within boroughs. The Mayor will also ensure that the London Delivery Board addresses the specific needs of homeless, rough sleeping women.

#### 4. Respond to the needs of at risk and marginalised women

Women experiencing domestic violence are up to 15 times more likely to misuse alcohol and nine times more likely to misuse other drugs than women generally.<sup>158</sup> Drugs and alcohol can be a means of coping with experiences of violence. Some abusers introduce women to drugs as a means of controlling them.<sup>159</sup> The vast majority of women involved in street-based prostitution have an addiction to class A drugs (heroin, crack cocaine or both). In many cases, their addiction has led them to their involvement in prostitution and also keeps them there. Women use drugs in order to deal with the trauma of selling sex and the violence that is associated with it.

Many service users at Rape Crisis Centres have histories of problematic drug and/or alcohol use,<sup>160</sup> and between 50 and 90 per cent of women attending substance misuse services have been abused, either in childhood or adult life, or both.<sup>161</sup>

Many substance misuse agencies have failed to recognise the role of violence in women's substance misuse problems. That situation is changing in London, at least in relation to domestic violence. A recent report from the Stella Project<sup>162</sup> found that 18 boroughs were undertaking integrated work between domestic violence and substance misuse services.<sup>163</sup>

The Corston Report (2007)<sup>164</sup> identified histories of victimisation as underpinning much female offending. It called for 'a radical new approach... a woman-centred approach', based around the development of specialised community-based women's centres as an alternative to prison for

vulnerable women. Such centres would address the roots of offending and aim to reduce exclusion and isolation through provision of specialised and long-term intervention, and providing gateways to mainstream services.

In recent years there have been concerns raised about the increasing involvement of girls and young women in violent offending and gang-related violence. Women and girls involved in gangs have been found to occupy a number of roles, from perpetrating violence alongside male gang members to hiding weapons and drugs for partners, brothers and associates.<sup>165</sup> Women and girls associated with gangs are at risk of sexual exploitation by male gang members who may pass them on from one gang member to another. They may also be targeted for sexual assault by rival gang members as a form of reprisal or warning from other gangs.<sup>166</sup> To date, research and policy has been driven by males as both victims and perpetrators and as a result criminal justice interventions and service delivery has been developed around the needs of men and boys.<sup>167</sup> Young women and girls have been considered as an 'add-on' to existing programmes, which has led to inappropriate and inadequate responses unable to meet the needs of this vulnerable group. At the Female Voice in Violence Roundtable (see page 34) it was argued that policy and programmes need to be gender-specific and developed around young women's experiences.

The Mayor will ask the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) to ensure that the national implementation plan for the Corston Report meets the needs of London. This will include asking the MoJ to undertake a review of the way young women and

girls are treated in the criminal justice system to ensure that their needs are being met.

The Mayor would like to see agencies develop greater awareness of women's experiences of serious youth violence, and to ensure that London leads the way nationally in developing solutions for these highly complex issues.

Women's organisations have a long history of working with the most vulnerable and marginalised women, many of whom face multiple barriers to rebuilding their lives. These are often the women at greatest risk of re-victimisation and many require intensive, long-term support in order to recover from the trauma that they have experienced.

Specialist women's services have faced pressure from statutory funders to expand their provision to include men under the guise of meeting the requirements of the gender duty. The Equality and Human Rights Commission, which polices the gender duty, has stressed that women-only services are both legal and valuable, and are able to play a role in meeting the differing needs of men and women as required by the gender duty. Likewise services for BAME women are legal, and able to address their specific needs. Statutory services should introduce funding and commissioning criteria that address the needs of marginalised women, including through funding specialist women-only services.

The London Violence Against Women and Girls Panel will collaborate with the Stella Project,<sup>168</sup> the Greater London Alcohol and Drug Alliance (GLADA), the health service, the National

Treatment Agency and sexual violence support services to increase awareness of the links between violence against women and substance misuse, and to improve responses.

### Holistic responses to women involved in prostitution

Whether they have been trafficked or not, women involved in prostitution are some of the most vulnerable in our communities. Most women enter prostitution because of a lack of choice and many are coerced by pimps or were groomed as children. Seventy-five per cent of women in prostitution became involved when they were under 18.<sup>169</sup> Seventy per cent of women in prostitution have spent time in care and 45 per cent report experiencing childhood sexual abuse.<sup>170</sup>

The majority of women involved in prostitution have experienced physical violence, rape or serious sexual assault. Sixty-eight per cent of women in prostitution meet the criteria for post traumatic stress disorder in the same range as victims of torture and combat veterans undergoing treatment.<sup>171</sup>

Research shows that nine out of ten surveyed women in prostitution want to exit but feel unable to do so.<sup>172</sup>

The Mayor will work with London partner agencies such as the NHS, local authorities, the Havens and third sector service providers to develop a more holistic approach to women involved in prostitution in order to reduce harm and support exiting.



# Protecting women and girls at risk

**We need to ensure that the whole criminal justice system deters crimes of violence against women and provides full, effective and timely protection and justice for women.**

Of all the parts of the statutory sector, the criminal justice system has made the most progress over the last ten years in responding to violence against women, particularly domestic violence. New services such as Specialist Domestic Violence Courts (SDVCs) and Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs)<sup>173</sup> have been developed; more positive approaches to arrest, investigation and prosecution have been implemented; partnerships with both the voluntary and statutory sector have been strengthened; and London has been at the forefront of developing domestic homicide reviews. Nationally, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) has developed its Violence Against Women Strategy based on a gendered understanding of violence against women, which provides a model for other agencies.

Despite this progress, the vast majority of both victims and perpetrators still have no contact with the criminal justice system, and confidence in the system is undermined by low conviction rates, which in London stood at 6.4 per cent in 2006 for rape.<sup>174</sup> Successful prosecutions for domestic violence cases (that is after charge) were among the highest across England and Wales.<sup>175</sup> The proportion of unsuccessful prosecutions for rape in 2007-08 (54.5 per cent) is the highest across England and Wales, although this is not the case for other sexual offences (29.3 per cent for London, while other areas have rates of 35 to 38 per cent). Civil and criminal justice processes

remain disconnected, making it difficult to take forward protection and prosecution at the same time. Case tracking is hampered as data collection is not integrated across the system, and recording and monitoring practices need to be improved.

The government has set a number of targets for the criminal justice system (CJS) for 2008-11 including:

- to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the CJS in bringing offences to justice
- to increase public confidence in the fairness and effectiveness of the CJS
- to increase victim satisfaction with the police, and victim and witness satisfaction with the CJS
- to consistently collect, analyse and use good-quality ethnicity data to identify and address race disproportionality in the CJS.

The CPS has set targets nationally for its approach to violence against women within this framework. In this chapter we expand on that approach to identify priorities for the whole CJS in London.

## **Bringing offenders to justice**

The national CJS strategic plan for 2008-11 recognises the particular importance of bringing serious offences, including domestic violence and sexual offences, to justice. It is a huge challenge to increase the number of victims who come forward and to make the system work for them when they do – both in terms of outcomes, and how they are treated in the process.

The London Criminal Justice Partnership (London CJP) has already identified aspects of tackling violence against women as priorities within its work on serious and violent offending. The London Domestic Violence Coordinating Group (DVCG) has worked over the last two years to improve the CJS responses by bringing more perpetrators to justice and improving the support, safety and satisfaction of victims. The London Mainstream Model<sup>176</sup> will continue to support the national SDVC programme and to provide an end-to-end model for dealing with domestic violence cases across the CJS. The London CJP will now consider extending this model to incorporate wider forms of violence against woman. The London CJP Sexual Offences Working Group will lead on this workstream, which will include monitoring activity and performance on a monthly basis in order to make improvements where required.

These achievements provide a foundation upon which a more integrated approach covering violence against women could be taken forward. An integrated approach could enhance the work of the CJS. For example:

- many perpetrators offend across more than one form of violence against women – for example a domestic violence offender may also have committed stranger rape
- many victims experience more than one form of violence – for example women may report physical violence by their partner to the police, but find it more difficult to also disclose that the same man has sexually assaulted her
- the problems of under-reporting and low conviction rates are common to different forms of violence against women and potentially have similar solutions – there is scope for better learning across the board
- young men involved in gun and knife crime also commit serious sexual offences, both individually and in groups, particularly against young women.

Making these connections could deliver a step-change in performance.

The Mayor will work through the London CJP with criminal justice agencies including the MPS, Crown Prosecution Service and London Probation to ensure that resources are in place to combat violence against women. It is vital that all criminal justice agencies receive training in the wider forms of violence against women. Our goal is to increase reporting across forms of violence against women, increasing successful prosecutions, reducing re-offending and increasing victim support, safety and satisfaction. In addition, we will work with our criminal justice partners to address violence against women within work on serious youth crime. The MPS fully endorses and supports a London strategy to tackle violence against women and is committed to playing its part to achieve the Mayor's strategic aims. It is currently reviewing policies, standard operating procedures, partnership arrangements and service delivery across the different forms of violence against women, with the goal of increasing safety and further improving services to victims and potential victims.



## Priorities for London

### *1. Make significant improvements to protection and support at a local level.*

Not only do most women not report violence to the CJS, but the majority of those who do so then withdraw their complaints.<sup>177</sup> For women to have confidence in the CJS, reporting violence must increase their access to safety, support and justice; and must not expose them to further victimisation. The process and the outcome both matter to victims of violence. Victims want to be treated with respect and dignity. Some rape victims have described the process, especially the trial, as a ‘second assault’.<sup>178</sup> Whilst SDVCs have improved responses, only a quarter of women feel that their increased safety is solely the result of CJS intervention.<sup>179</sup>

### Sapphire Teams

The MPS has established Sapphire Teams that specialise in investigating rape and sexual assault cases, and provide victims with the support and care they need.

The MPS recognises that there were significant failures in the investigations into the serial sex offenders John Worboys and Kirk Reid. These two cases led the MPS Management Board to recommend that whilst much excellent work has been achieved by Sapphire Teams since their creation, accountability for rape and serious sexual violence investigation should transfer from mainstream policing arrangements in Territorial Policing to the Specialist Crime Directorate.

As of September 2009 the investigation of serious sexual assault moved into the Specialist Crime Directorate (SCD2 Sapphire). This will have a number of key benefits, including a dedicated 24-hour response to victims; bespoke senior officer oversight and leadership in the investigation of offences; and greater and more consistent support for victims. Improvements in bringing offenders to justice need to go hand-in-hand with procedural justice – ‘making and implementing decisions according to fair processes’.<sup>180</sup>

Through the MPA, the Mayor will ensure that the MPS’s response to rape and sexual assault is monitored and scrutinised in a number of ways: by holding the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police to account, commissioning reports from the MPS, and through the MPA Domestic and Sexual Violence Board (see below).

The MPA has published ‘Met Forward’, its three-year strategy to guide the MPS in tackling the issues that matter most to Londoners. The ‘Met Forward’ strategy has a number of strands that link into the violence against women strategy, such as public protection, rape, human trafficking, serious youth violence, hate crime and JEMs (joint engagement meetings).

### MPA Domestic and Sexual Violence Board

The MPA Domestic Violence Board was set up in 2006 to ‘monitor, scrutinise and support’ the performance of the MPS. The board has helped drive improvements in service delivery in relation to domestic violence with in-depth scrutiny of more than half of the Borough Operational

Command Units (BOCUs). Following the Mayor's decision to develop a violence against women strategy, the board's remit has been expanded to consider domestic and sexual violence and has been renamed as the Domestic and Sexual Violence Board.

The Mayor, through the MPA, will consider a number of specific areas of work aimed at improving the police's response to violence against women including:

- receiving regular reporting on violence against women
- auditing recording and reporting practices
- quarterly monitoring of the Home Office minimum standards for reporting sexual offences at borough level<sup>181</sup>
- monitoring withdrawals and no-criming across violence against women
- monitoring disproportionality
- monitoring responses to 'honour'-based violence, forced and child marriage and FGM
- improving front desk delivery in relation to violence against women
- police training on violence against women.

Increased reporting must be supported by better availability of options to increase safety and security and address the impacts of violence. The focus in recent years has been on providing support linked to the CJS process such as SDVCs, but as the previous chapter makes clear, many women who have experienced violence have needs that go far beyond the CJS such as health, housing, employment and debt issues. Support linked to improving CJS outcomes

should be integrated with a wider range of support options for survivors.

Women at risk of ongoing violence from the same perpetrator also need access to protection through the civil courts. However, protection orders are still not linked with criminal cases and civil courts are not taking sufficient account of domestic violence or child sexual abuse when making decisions about child contact, which results in the risk of further victimisation.<sup>182</sup>

## *2. Increase public confidence, victim support and satisfaction*

The high rate of attrition in relation to cases involving domestic violence, rape and sexual assault undermines public confidence in the system. This lack of confidence in turn results in victims not coming forward, and perpetrators not being brought to justice and continuing to offend. The proposals already set out by the London Criminal Justice Partnership in relation to domestic violence and rape have the potential to reduce attrition and increase public confidence. They would be enhanced by the integrated approach to violence against women proposed above.

Cases of avoidable death can be particularly damaging to public confidence. The rate of domestic homicide has reduced in recent years, although this is mainly linked to fewer women killing abusive men. The disproportionate number of victims from migrant communities and other ethnic minority groups is a cause of concern and requires continuing focus. In addition, some women take their own lives as a result of the impact of violence against women

on them. Women who have been subjected to domestic violence have much higher rates of suicide than other women. Research shows that 34 per cent of suicides and attempted suicides are at least partly caused by domestic violence, and around 13 per cent of suicides and attempted suicides may be attributed to domestic violence.<sup>183</sup> Suicide has also been identified as a long-term consequence of sexual violence including childhood sexual abuse.<sup>184</sup>

South Asian women are significantly more likely to self-harm between the ages of 16 and 24 than white women. These women are generally more likely to be married, and less likely to be unemployed or use alcohol or other drugs. They report more relationship problems within the family. South Asian women are less likely to seek medical attention with repeat episodes since they hold the view that mainstream services do not meet their needs.<sup>185</sup>

These deaths are avoidable and we need systems that would enable lessons to be learned. The Mayor calls on the Domestic Homicide Review Group to conduct reviews of suicides occurring in the context of domestic violence, and to expand its work to include homicides and suicides in the context of 'honour' based violence and sexual violence including childhood sexual abuse.

## *2. Improve access to protection for at risk and marginalised women and girls*

### *Improve protection of women in prostitution*

As outlined on page 55, women involved in prostitution are a highly vulnerable group and

at particular risk from violence and abuse. Women in prostitution in London suffer from a mortality rate that is 12 times the national average.<sup>186</sup> At least three-quarters of women in prostitution in the UK have been physically assaulted, and more than half have been raped and/or seriously sexually assaulted.<sup>187</sup> However, women involved in prostitution often face greater barriers in reporting violent incidents to the police. The Mayor will work with London partners to encourage the roll-out of assisted reporting schemes, diversion schemes and exiting programmes to increase reporting and access to safety.

### *Protecting women and girls affected by gang-related/serious youth violence*

According to the NSPCC, one London project that works with girls who are involved with gangs said that all the girls they have contact with have been raped by male group members.<sup>188</sup> Rape and sexual assault are increasingly used as a weapon in response to rivalries. 'The assault of a female is used as a means of asserting power not only over the girl involved, but also over those who are associated with her.'<sup>189</sup> Senior gang members may pass their girlfriends around to lower-ranking members, and sometimes to the whole group at the same time.<sup>190</sup> In the past two years, there have been 176 reported multiple perpetrator rapes (involving three or more attackers) in London.<sup>191</sup> These offences are likely to be highly under-reported because girls are extremely reluctant to talk about their experiences to anyone in authority for fear of repercussions, and some girls don't perceive their experiences as rape.<sup>192</sup> As Race on the Agenda argues, 'a girl who has been targeted

by a rival gang of her boyfriend's will be at risk both from the gang who raped her, as well as the gang to whom she is associated as both will have an interest in her not reporting what has happened to her. Supporting an individual who has that number of people actively not wanting her to speak out increases risks to her as well as staff who are supporting her.<sup>193</sup>

The Mayor will work with the MPS and other London partners, including the youth sector and the violence against women sector, to improve the response and protection offered to gang-affected females.

# Getting tougher with perpetrators

**To intervene with perpetrators of violence against women in order to stop the violence, hold them to account, change their behaviour and deter others.**

The overwhelming majority of perpetrators of violence against women are men and boys. For most there are few, if any, sanctions for their behaviour either in the justice system or in the community. As a result many perpetrators can commit violence, usually against women and girls that they know, often on a repeated basis, with virtual impunity.

If we are to make real our commitment of ending violence against women we need both to support all moves to increase the effectiveness of CJS interventions, including a strong emphasis on prosecuting and convicting perpetrators, and to support the extension of the range of possible sanctions and proactive intervention opportunities.

We believe that getting tougher with perpetrators will not only offer the necessary protection and support to victims, but will also stop violence from occurring in the first place. Tough action with perpetrators sends a clear message that there is no place for such heinous crimes in our society and will deter perpetrators from re-offending. The police and other criminal justice agencies play a vital role in dealing with perpetrators of violence against women. Through the MPA, the Mayor will ensure that violence against women is placed at the forefront of policing in London and will use his influence to make sure resources are put in place to support violence against women initiatives

that are going to make a real difference to women in London.

## Priorities for London

### *1. Addressing violence against women through joint engagement meetings (JEM)*

JEM provide a new way to bring together different partners to engage in constructive discussions for the purpose of addressing and problem solving specific crime issues in each borough. JEMs provide an opportunity for borough leaders to engage with senior representatives from the MPS, British Transport Police, the MPA and TfL, and to work more closely with the Deputy Mayor for Policing. Boroughs can use JEM to tackle local issues and identify any areas where they may need more support, and they also provide an opportunity for boroughs to exchange good practice.

Through JEM, violence against women offences that have previously lacked a coordinated strategic response at a local level, such as trafficking and organised crime, serial rape, rape, and sexual violence within gangs, can be given the priority they deserve.

### *2. Clamping down on traffickers*

Trafficking is a serious problem that we intend to combat. It is shaming that 200 years after the abolition of slavery, thousands of women are trafficked into the UK and forced into prostitution or domestic servitude. This is intolerable. Traffickers need to be stopped. We want to see more traffickers arrested, prosecuted and convicted for these abominable crimes.

With Home Office funding for the MPS Human Trafficking Team ending at the start of April 2010, the MPS undertook a review of how they currently respond to human trafficking.

As a result of this review, the MPS has decided to move the overall responsibility for human trafficking into the Clubs and Vice Unit, which already has expertise in the policing of trafficking for prostitution and sexual exploitation. The Clubs and Vice Unit will move from Central Operations into the Specialist Crime Directorate (SCD) and will cover all forms of human trafficking from 1 April 2010. This will enable the considerable expertise and skills within the Clubs and Vice Unit and the Human Trafficking Team to be built upon, with the benefit of reducing duplication and improving leadership, governance, accountability and clarity for partners and victims. The move into SCD will provide the benefit of increased access to SCD assets, one command structure for trafficking, and the SCD focus and specialisation on organised crime.

Through the MPA, the Mayor will monitor the impact and effectiveness of the new trafficking and prostitution command structure to ensure that it is responding effectively to all forms of human trafficking.

### *3. Taking a tougher stance with men who buy sexual services*

The Mayor will also ensure that the MPS gets tougher with men who buy sexual services by ensuring that officers are trained around the enforcement of Section 14 of the Policing and Crime Act 2009, which created a new offence of

paying for the sexual services of a prostitute when a third person has used 'exploitative conduct' (including force, threats, and other coercion). Section 14 is a strict liability offence. This means that the person who buys a sexual service commits an offence whether or not he knows that the person he is buying has been exploited. The burden of proof is on the Prosecution, which has to show that the person charged paid, or attempted to pay, for a sexual service.

The Mayor will also ensure that the MPS works in partnership with national and regional law enforcement agencies such as the Serious Organised Crime Agency, the UK Human Trafficking Centre, British Transport Police and the forces that police airports that serve London (West Sussex, Essex and Bedfordshire) to develop a more robust approach to dealing with criminal networks.

The Mayor will also work with London partner agencies to develop a preventative strategy to tackle trafficking in the lead up to the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games (see page 32).

### *4. Develop a zero-tolerance approach to gang-related rape*

While recent police operations such as Operation Blunt have successfully taken thousands of knives off the streets, there is concern that the use of rape as a weapon will continue to increase.<sup>203</sup> ROTAs research with young women highlights that by focusing responses on a particular weapon, such as a knife, girls can be placed at increased risk of sexual assault as raping a sister or girlfriend of rival gang members becomes a 'safer' weapon of choice<sup>204</sup>.

### Links between the proliferation of lap dancing clubs and the sex industry

Over recent years there has been a proliferation of lap dancing clubs across London. Research indicates that the number of lap dancing clubs has doubled in the UK since 2004.<sup>194</sup> Licensing legislation since 2005 has made it easier for lap dancing clubs to obtain licences and made it harder for local communities to have their say in the process. This situation has arisen because lap dancing clubs have been licensed in the same way as other leisure establishments such as restaurants, cafes, pubs and cinemas instead of being licensed as 'sex encounter establishments' like peep shows and sex cinemas.<sup>195</sup> Following lobbying by local authorities and community groups new legislation will change the classification.

Research has identified that some lap dance club owners and managers create conditions in which prostitution is likely to occur.<sup>196</sup> The clubs are run in a way that implicitly encourages the customers to expect and seek sexual services from the dancers.<sup>197</sup> Research into lap dancing clubs has found evidence of management exerting pressure on the dancers to create an impression of sexual availability, as well as evidence of bodily contact and sexual services being offered and/or requested in some lap dancing clubs.<sup>198</sup> Dancers have also revealed problems such as threats of physical violence from customers and demands for sex.<sup>199</sup> Men who might never dream of paying for sex with a street prostitute think it's fine if they hand over money for sex with a girl who dances in a lap dancing club.<sup>200</sup> Anti-trafficking and prostitution organisations have highlighted that lap dancing clubs are used by traffickers to 'hide' women trafficked into prostitution, or bribe them for good behaviour.<sup>201</sup> Research has suggested possible links between clubs opening in an area and an increase in reports of rape and sexual assault upon women in that area, and harassment from men leaving the club or touts outside also increased significantly after the opening of a club.<sup>202</sup>

We will ensure that the safety issues presented by lap dancing clubs come under local authority and police scrutiny through JEM. The Mayor will work with local authorities to review the implementation of the new licensing regime under the Policing and Crime Act 2009 to ensure that London leads the way in regulating lap dancing clubs as sexual entertainment venues and giving local people the power to object to lap dancing clubs in their area. We will support boroughs in ensuring that the proliferation of lap dancing clubs is controlled. We will also champion any police operations that target lap dancing clubs to investigate any misconduct or criminal activity.

It is important that police operations tackling serious youth violence start to address the issue of sexual violence against girls to stem this trend. Safer Neighbourhoods teams and Safer Schools officers have an important role to play by increasing their presence in areas that are most affected by gang violence and raising awareness of sexual violence and support on offer to girls. They must also deliver a clear message to young men that forcing a girl to have sex is a very serious offence. Key partner agencies need to undertake a gender review of existing strategies, eg the MPS Youth Gang Strategy, to ensure that the issue of violence against women within gangs is given top priority. Any diversion activities and restorative justice intervention programmes that are delivered in partnership with schools and youth justice agencies should ensure that they provide key messages about sexual violence to men and boys.

#### *5. Effective community-based interventions with perpetrators*

The majority of perpetrators of violence against women never come to the attention of the criminal justice system, so when they do it is really important that we get interventions right in order to reduce re-offending and increase victim confidence.

#### **Evaluating the Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme**

Over the last 20 years domestic violence perpetrator programmes have been set up across the UK. Their role is to increase the safety of those experiencing domestic violence

through rehabilitation for offenders to reduce re-offending. Domestic violence perpetrator programmes are not a panacea and not all men will end their abuse, but at their best they reduce danger and/or enable women to end relationships more safely.<sup>205</sup>

London Probation runs the Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme (IDAP) for perpetrators, with an associated women's safety officer service covering the whole of London. To date the government has not undertaken an independent evaluation of the effectiveness of the IDAP programme nationally<sup>206</sup>. However, we do know that nationally, Ministry of Justice figures have shown that of the 4,927 people ordered to undergo a community-based perpetrator programme during 2007-2008, some 32 per cent failed to complete a programme and 11 per cent failed even to start one.<sup>207</sup> Further monitoring and investigation is required around what happens to offenders who are sentenced to a community-based programme but fail to complete or start the programme. We believe that offenders of domestic violence should only be given one chance to attend a perpetrator programme; if they repeatedly fail to attend and engage with the Probation Service they should be taken back to court and sentenced to custody rather than being given a further community order.

Measuring the success of perpetrator programmes is complex. Following a conviction and the completion of a programme an offender may not perpetrate violence against a woman for a substantial period of time,



indicating a successful outcome. But this does not mean that other forms of abuse have stopped or that he will never be violent towards a partner in the future. On the other hand, by providing associated women's support services, perpetrator programmes provide support to women who may not yet have accessed support services.

Following the independent evaluation of the IDAP programme in London to assess its effectiveness in reducing re-offending and enhancing victim safety and satisfaction, and to gauge value for money, the London Violence Against Women and Girls Panel will consider the implications for other community based programmes and the policy implications for further interventions with perpetrators.

#### Sex offender programmes

Unlike domestic violence perpetrator programmes, sex offender programmes have not been developed within a gendered understanding of violence against women<sup>208</sup>. There is little external scrutiny of the nature of the programmes and no parallel support services for victims.

The Mayor will lobby the Ministry of Justice to conduct an audit of the extent to which sex offender programmes are informed by gender analysis and to develop parallel support programmes for victims of sexual offences.

#### Improving the enforcement of community orders

More rigid monitoring and enforcement of all court orders, including bail and

licence conditions, non-molestation orders and occupation orders is required. When perpetrators breach court orders they should be promptly taken back to court.

The Mayor will work with the London Criminal Justice Partnership to achieve London targets for enforcement of court orders, and assess performance in relation to violence against women related orders.

#### Implementing provisions in the national violence against women and girls strategy

The government's strategy to end violence against women and girls has committed to a number of actions to enhance interventions with perpetrators, including strengthening legal provisions to manage perpetrators – for example, a new Domestic Violence Protection Order (DVPO), which will require perpetrators of domestic violence to leave the address of the victim and/or prevent contact with the victim. Through the MPA, the Mayor will ensure that any new legal provisions such as DVPOs are implemented effectively in London.

#### Domestic violence perpetrator programmes outside of the criminal justice system

The vast majority of perpetrators remain outside of the criminal justice system and there is a shortage of voluntary perpetrator programmes across London.

Respect, the national umbrella organisation,<sup>209</sup> has established accredited programmes<sup>210</sup> comprised of violence prevention interventions with perpetrators and associated women's support services, both delivered to a set

of minimum standards. Integrated support services are recognised internationally as best practice and are considered vital in promoting women's safety. These programmes are based in the community, allow for voluntary entry, and work with many men referred through child protection procedures. The London Violence Against Women and Girls Panel will

encourage London boroughs to develop a sub-regional commissioning model for community-based perpetrator programmes – including those for fathers who are perpetrators – and to ensure that such programmes have been accredited or are applying for Respect accreditation.

### Caring Dads<sup>211</sup>

Caring Dads is an intervention programme designed for men who have abused or neglected their children or exposed them to the abuse of their mothers. The Caring Dads programme focuses on helping men to recognise attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours that support healthy and unhealthy father-child relationships; develop skills for interacting with children in healthy ways; and appreciate the impact on children of controlling, intimidating, abusive and neglectful actions including witnessing domestic violence.

NB Caring Dads should not be used instead of, or precede, attendance on a perpetrator programme; the primary issue here must be to **decrease the risk** they pose to children and women and a parenting programme alone will not achieve this. Children's Trusts should ensure that their commissioning frameworks support the requirement in the LSCB (London Safeguarding Children Board) domestic violence procedure for fathers using domestic violence to be referred to Respect accredited programmes, and clear guidance on the referral and eligibility criteria should be developed in conjunction with Respect.

## The Change Course

The Change Course is a one-day course for men charged with the offence of kerb crawling. The course employs cognitive behavioural methods, which encourage course participants to gain an understanding of their individual offences and challenge attitudes that support the use of street prostitutes. Men are urged to see the course as an opportunity to change. Course attendees pay the total cost of the course, and a proportion of the offender's fees can go to local NGOs working with women involved in prostitution. The aim of the Change Course is to stop men re-offending and to change their attitudes towards women involved in prostitution.

The course is currently delivered in Tower Hamlets in conjunction with Toynbee Hall. Research indicates that reconviction rates for offenders who have participated on the Change Course are around one per cent. The Mayor will lobby government to undertake a review of how effective the Change Course is in changing men's attitudes and behaviours towards women in the longer term.



# Leadership and governance: making the strategy work

## London Violence Against Women and Girls Panel

This is a new non-statutory board, which will bring together a range of agencies to work collaboratively to lead on and deliver the Mayor's violence against women and girls strategy and action plan 'The Way Forward'. The Panel's purpose is to deliver 'The Way Forward' by raising the profile of this issue, promoting a London lead and improving coordination across a number of agencies and other statutory and non-statutory boards, and overseeing the delivery of the action plan.

The Panel will be the lead London body looking at the issue of violence against women and girls. The Panel will be chaired by Kit Malthouse, Deputy Mayor for Policing. The Panel will include representatives from a range of organisations within the statutory and voluntary sector.

The term 'panel' has been adopted for this board as there are a number of boards already in existence with a pan-London role. The Mayor also intends to establish a London Crime Reduction Board with an overarching role on crime reduction for London.

The membership of the Panel will include representatives of:

- Association of London Directors of Children's Services
- Government Office for London
- Greater London Authority
- London Councils
- London Criminal Justice Partnership
- London Health Commission (review after the Health Roundtable)
- London Safeguarding Children Board
- Metropolitan Police Authority
- Metropolitan Police Service
- Tenant Services Authority
- Voluntary and community sector, selected from an open application process

Secretariat support is provided by the GLA's Community Safety Unit.

## Engaging with London's communities

It is imperative that action meets the needs of London's diverse communities – this is essential to shaping the agenda, setting priorities, and holding the London Violence Against Women and Girls Panel to account.

The Panel and its partners are committed to engaging with women and the wider community across London in order to achieve their objectives. This includes a variety of engagement activities to underpin and influence the strategic direction of its work. For example:

- regular events that bring together key practitioners to provide an opportunity to contribute to strategic planning and the dissemination of good practice in London
- work with local authorities to develop structures that ensure holistic engagement with services and communities at the local level – enhancing local understanding and capacity
- an annual conference for i) professionals (including key stakeholders)

- an annual conference for communities with a specific interest in shaping London's response to reducing violence against women
- regular media alerts (making full use of new media opportunities) highlighting specific progress and key issues of relevance to London's communities
- delivery of good practice events, at the local and regional level, to enable Londonwide learning and continued improvement.

### Summary of strategic objectives

#### Objective 1: London taking a global lead to end violence against women and girls

1. Adopt and promote the UN definition of violence against women
2. Make London a leader in preventing violence against women
3. Improve our understanding of violence against women
4. Cracking down on trafficking and prostitution ahead of the 2012 Games
5. Place prevention at the core of tackling violence against women
6. Young people at the heart of prevention
7. Make London a safer city

#### Objective 2: Improving access to support

1. Expanding Rape Crisis provision in London
2. Ensure equitable access to high quality support services in London
3. Protect and support children and young women experiencing violence against women
4. Respond to the needs of children and young people witnessing violence
5. Violence against women training for key professionals across London and improved information and resources for the public
6. Meet the needs of London's diverse communities

**Objective 3: Addressing the health, social and economic consequences of violence**

1. Fulfill the potential of the health sector to address violence
2. Build better financial futures
3. Safe and secure housing options
4. Respond to the needs of at risk and marginalised women

**Objective 4: Protecting women and girls at risk**

1. Make significant improvements to protection and support at the local level
2. Increase public confidence, victim support and satisfaction
3. Improve access to protection for at risk and marginalised women and girls

**Objective 5: Getting tougher with perpetrators**

1. Addressing violence against women through joint engagement meetings (JEM)
2. Clamping down on traffickers
3. Taking a tougher stance with men who buy sexual services
4. Develop a 'zero-tolerance' approach to gang-related rape
5. Effective community-based interventions with perpetrators





# Glossary of abbreviations

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AFRUCA	Africans Unite Against Child Abuse	GLA	Greater London Authority
BAME	Black Asian Minority Ethnic	GLADA	The Greater London Alcohol and Drug Alliance
BCS	British Crime Survey	GoL	Government Office for London
BTP	British Transport Police	IDAP	Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme
CDRP	Crime Disorder Reduction Partnership	IDVA	Independent Domestic Violence Advocate
CEDAW	Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination against Women	IRIS	Identification Referral to Improve Safety
CEU	Cab Enforcement Unit	ISVA	Independent Sexual Violence Advocate
CJS	Criminal Justice System	JEM	Joint Engagement Meeting
COLP	City of London Police	LA	Local Authority
CPS	Crown Prosecution Service	LCJP	London Criminal Justice Partnership
DVCG	Domestic Violence Coordinating Group	LDA	London Development Agency
EHRC	Equality and Human Rights Commission	LFB	London Fire Brigade
ESOL	English For Speakers of Other Languages	LMM	The London Mainstream Model
EU	European Union	LSCB	London Safeguarding Children Board
FGM	Female genital mutilation	LSMP	London Strategic Migration Partnership
FORWARD	Foundation for Women's Health, Research and Development	LSP	Local Strategic Partnership

MAPPA	Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements	SDVC	Specialist Domestic Violence Court
MoJ	Ministry of Justice	SYVB	Serious Youth Violence Board
MPA	Metropolitan Police Authority	TfL	Transport For London
MPS	Metropolitan Police Service	TSA	Tenant Services Authority
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation	UKBA	United Kingdom Border Agency
NHS	National Health Service	UN	The United Nations
NOMS	National Offenders Management Service	VAW	Violence Against Women
NSPCC	The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children	WHO	World of Health
NTA	National Treatment Agency	YOT	Youth Offending Team
PCT	Primary Care Trust		
PSHE	Personal, Social and Health Education		
PRU	Pupil Referral Units		
PTSD	Post-traumatic Stress Disorder		
RCC	Rape Crisis Centre		
ROTA	Race on the Agenda		
SARC	Sexual Assault Referral Centre		
SCD	Specialist Crime Directorate		

- 1 Coy, Lovett & Kelly, 2008, *Realising Rights, Fulfilling Obligations*. Calculated from London's share of the three million women experiencing violence in the UK (12.5 per cent on the basis of population)
- 2 The UN Secretary General's campaign launched in 2008.
- 3 Coy, Lovett & Kelly, 2008, *Realising Rights, Fulfilling Obligations*. Calculated from London's share of the three million women experiencing violence in the UK (12.5 per cent on the basis of population).
- 4 New Philanthropy Capital, 2008, *Hard Knock Life*. Calculated from London's share of the cost of £40 billion for England and Wales (14% on the basis of population)
- 5 Coy, Lovett, & Kelly (2008) *Realising Rights, Fulfilling Obligations: A Template for an Integrated Strategy on Violence against women for the UK*
- 6 Throughout this document, the term Violence against women is used however, when we say Violence against women we also refer to gender-based violence that affects girls under the age of 18
- 7 United Nations, 2006, *Secretary General's Report on Violence against women*, Para 28 and 104
- 8 See Appendix A
- 9 The UK has not conducted the kind of specialised violence against women survey which many other countries have done (Canada was the first to do so in 1993, other countries with recent national surveys include France, Germany and the USA), rather a module on interpersonal violence has been added to the British Crime Survey (BCS). This means that we collect data more regularly, but do not ask about the all the forms of violence against women: the BCS is limited to incidents that took place after age 16 and also excludes sexual harassment, sexual exploitation and trafficking, FGM, forced marriage and 'honour' based violence.  
The evidence base supporting this strategy comprises over 100 pages, and includes re-analysis of the BCS data for the last three surveys to create data for London and compare this to national averages
- 10 Home Office, 2004-8, *British Crime Survey. Analysis of data comparing London rates with overall findings*
- 11 Crown Prosecution Service, 2009, *Violence against women Crime Report 2008-2009*, p.70
- 12 Metropolitan Police Statistics, April 2009. <http://www.met.police.uk/crimefigures/index.php>
- 13 Home Office, 2004-8, *British Crime Survey. Analysis of data comparing rates for London with overall findings*
- 14 <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs08/hosb0308.pdf>
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been an eight per cent rise in the number of initial classifications (allegations) of rape. This should be considered as a positive indicator of performance, as there is known under-reporting in this area.

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- 154 Figures obtained from the London Development Agency
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- 197 Ibid. Dancers are self-employed and have no employment rights. They pay a fee to work in the clubs. The private dance is the only legitimate way for the dancers to make money and are therefore pressurised to secure dances with as many of the customers as possible, especially if they are in debt to the club.
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The most recent British Crime Survey (BCS) findings (Povey et al, 2009) suggest that the rates of domestic violence for men and women are getting closer. However, lifetime prevalence figures have always been relatively close between women and men and have changed little over the last four waves of the BCS. The high prevalence levels for both men and women reflect a wide definition of both 'domestic' and 'partner' abuse within the BCS: someone counts as a 'victim' if they have experienced 'one or more' incidents – this means that a single threat, push or slap is counted as domestic violence. Such single incidents, whether over either a year or a lifetime, do not constitute the 'pattern of coercive control' which is the more widely understood definition of intimate partner violence, and it is this which prompts calls to agencies for support and to police for intervention. When the data is analysed in more detail to take into account frequency, fear and

injury the disproportion between women and men as victims reappears (Walby and Allen, 2004; Crime Council of Ireland, 2005). In addition the BCS does not distinguish between offensive and defensive violence; Kimmel (2002) has estimated that in the US three quarters of the incidents where women use violence against their partners are in self-defence.

Although basic BCS figures over-estimate the proportion of men suffering intimate partner violence who need support, it is vital that access to services is there for those who need it. This strategy will sit alongside existing policies and procedures, which provide protection and redress for all victims of crime.

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### Vietnamese

Nếu bạn muốn có bản tài liệu này bằng ngôn ngữ của mình, hãy liên hệ theo số điện thoại hoặc địa chỉ dưới đây.

### Greek

Αν θέλετε να αποκτήσετε αντίγραφο του παρόντος εγγράφου στη δική σας γλώσσα, παρακαλείστε να επικοινωνήσετε τηλεφωνικά στον αριθμό αυτό ή ταχυδρομικά στην παρακάτω διεύθυνση.

### Turkish

Bu belgenin kendi dilinizde hazırlanmış bir nüshasını edinmek için, lütfen aşağıdaki telefon numarasını arayınız veya adrese başvurunuz.

### Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਦੀ ਕਾਪੀ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਆਪਣੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਹੇਠ ਲਿਖੇ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਫ਼ੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਜਾਂ ਹੇਠ ਲਿਖੇ ਪਤੇ 'ਤੇ ਰਾਬਤਾ ਕਰੋ:

### Hindi

यदि आप इस दस्तावेज की प्रति अपनी भाषा में चाहते हैं, तो कृपया निम्नलिखित नंबर पर फोन करें अथवा नीचे दिये गये पते पर संपर्क करें

### Bengali

আপনি যদি আপনার ভাষায় এই দলিলের প্রতিলিপি (কপি) চান, তা হলে নীচের ফোন নম্বরে বা ঠিকানায় অনুগ্রহ করে যোগাযোগ করুন।

### Urdu

اگر آپ اس دستاویز کی نقل اپنی زبان میں چاہتے ہیں، تو براہ کرم نیچے دئے گئے نمبر پر فون کریں یا دیئے گئے پتے پر رابطہ کریں

### Arabic

إذا أردت نسخة من هذه الوثيقة بلغتك، يرجى الاتصال برقم الهاتف أو مراسلة العنوان أدناه

### Gujarati

જો તમને આ દસ્તાવેજની નકલ તમારી ભાષામાં જોઈતી હોય તો, કૃપા કરી આપેલ નંબર ઉપર ફોન કરો અથવા નીચેના સરનામે સંપર્ક સાધો.