

VAWG 2022-2025

SCP Strategy 2022-2025

Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG)

1. Our strategic vision is that: **“The Square Mile is free from Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and is a place that is safe for everyone to live, work and learn”** with examples of VAWG including:
 - Domestic abuse (including coercive control)
 - Sexual violence and rape
 - Stalking and sexual harassment
 - Online abuse
 - Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
 - Forced marriage
 - Honour-based violence
 - Faith-based abuse
 - Trafficking and sexual exploitation
 - Prostitution
 - Breast ironing
 - Forced terminations
 - Gendered gang violence
2. The SCP oversees a distinct “Violence Against Women Girls Strategy”, which is due to be refreshed in 2023. The actions outlined below summarise the situation at the outset of the SCP strategy in 2022, but the VAWG strategy may change some of these details when the refresh occurs.
3. We acknowledge that VAWG impacts all services (adult and children social care, public health, housing, community safety, civil and criminal justice as well as voluntary and community organisations) and it is the responsibility of all agencies to tackle VAWG and address the needs of survivors and their families. Hence the SCP is committed to working in an inclusive partnership method to develop a whole system approach to VAWG, bringing together the criminal and justice system, the NHS, local authorities, voluntary and community sector, service users and other partners. In this manner the SCP response to VAWG will be coordinated to prevent further harm, reduce risk and increase safety for people residing, working, studying and travelling in the City.
4. VAWG affects people regardless of their sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, age, religion, culture, ethnicity, background or disability. As well as the VAWG act there are a range of consequences, such as homelessness, mental health issues and substance misuse, that need to be addressed. We will aim to understand and meet survivors needs and aspirations with effective risk management, safety planning, safe accommodation, emotional support, healthcare, education, legal aid and access to justice.

2. Our VAWG strategy is built around three priorities:

Priority One: People are prevented from becoming victims of VAWG

1. Prevention is the first step to fulfil our vision that “The Square Mile is free from VAWG and is a place that is safe for everyone to live, work and learn”.
2. Undeniably, if we can ameliorate awareness of and prevent VAWG or identify occurrences early and intervene, it will improve outcomes for individuals, stop violence escalating to critical levels, while reducing the pressures on services long term.
3. Improved awareness of VAWG and training in identification will:
 - Increase chances of intervening at an earlier stage
 - Stop violence escalating to critical levels
 - Reduce pressure on services, and
 - Improve outcomes for individuals
4. Additionally, prevention of VAWG will improve the Square Mile population’s resilience, well-being, warding off of adverse childhood experiences, mental illness and homelessness in the years to come.

What we will do:

Awareness

- We will raise awareness of VAWG (its occurrences, how to prevent it, how to spot the signs and what services are available to people at risk as well as survivors), through internal and external communication campaigns. We will deliver joint campaigns with partner agencies such as the City of London Police and neighbouring London boroughs.
- Communication plans will be applicable and accessible to our audiences. For example: awareness campaigns will be multilingual and there will be signposting to specialised campaigns/information for our vulnerable cohorts.
- We will strengthen awareness partnership work within the City Corporation's various services (community safety, children and community services, housing, employment and licensing) as well as with external agencies (hotels, licensed premises) along with community and voluntary sector specialist providers to allow clarity on messages, adopting a consistent ethos that all VAWG is unacceptable in the City of London. Every point of interaction with a victim is an opportunity for prevention and intervention and should not be missed.
- We will aim to promote the Women's Safety Charter and encourage licensed venues to sign up. We will deliver a joint campaign with Hackney Council to raise awareness of the Charter and promote the joint responsibility of keeping women safe at night.
- We will support the following agencies to have information publicly available on VAWG support services: GPs, hospitals, schools, children's centres, family planning/sexual health services and council offices.
- We will challenge those attitudes and behaviour towards women and men which can lead to violence and abuse and act early to prevent harm. We will do this through effective, sustainable and robust commissioning and training to deliver resources and campaigns to challenge and change attitudes.
- Promote nationally acclaimed campaigns such as This is Abuse to build awareness.
- We will raise awareness and promote the 16 Days of Activism Against VAWG.
- We will engage with religious leaders to raise awareness in cohorts where VAWG tends to be under-reported.
- We will aim to deliver a campaign working with construction companies to promote support for modern day slavery amongst laborers.

Training and learning

- We will make sure practitioners have the training (comprehensive), tools (Safelives DASH risk assessment) and support they need to identify and respond early before situations of violence occur and/or escalate to crisis point. We will also ensure those practitioners receive feedback on which of their actions are effective and safe or not. We are currently looking at better ways of promoting this training to ensure it reaches as many people as possible.
 - We will deliver training around changes to practices including statutory recording of domestic abuse in safeguarding cases.
 - We will disseminate learning from the Domestic Homicide Reviews, Serious Case Reviews and Safeguarding Adult Review.
5. We will aim for the schools and tender to work in partnership to deliver training and awareness to school pupils. There are clear referral pathways and regular contact in place between the City of London schools and the City of London Police Public Protection Unit.
- The staff at the schools are regularly offered training around how to spot the signs of domestic abuse and Female Genital Mutilation, pupils have sessions on healthy relationships (as proposed in the Relationship, Education, relationships and sex education, and health education: Government response 2019).
 - We will offer a guide for schools around risk assessment, as there have been differences in professional judgement around 'risk' between schools and the police.
 - We will aim to achieve accreditation for the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) and ensure that all staff working on our housing estates are trained to know how to spot the signs and respond to domestic abuse and VAWG. By achieving DAHA the City Corporation would be a local authority that is recognised as being committed to protecting and supporting residents from domestic abuse.
 - We will offer training to licensed venues signed up to the Safety Thirst Scheme, working with external agencies such as Galop to ensure they are able to recognise and respond to incidents of VAWG especially around our most vulnerable cohorts such as children and young people and LGBTQI+.
 - We will support the safeguarding partnerships by implementing statutory guidance released under the 2014 care act: delivering training around changes to practice including statutory recording of domestic abuse in safeguarding cases; conducting review of the links between domestic abuse, elder abuse and carers (either as victims or perpetrators), high risk domestic abuse and domestic homicide in order to improve local practice.
 - We will deliver training and promotion on the Safelives DASH risk assessment and the MARAC to ensure agencies understand how to refer, when to refer and the purpose of the MARAC. SafeLives estimate that the CoL should have around ten cases per year heard at the MARAC. In 2018 the City of London MARAC heard five cases.
 - We will ensure frontline staff are trained on the needs of older survivors, including pensions and benefits available to

Early intervention

- Our Early Help team will work with the families to raise awareness of VAWG, support the entire family and prevent harm.
- We will aim to increase early interventions to people experiencing VAWG through mainstream and specialist support services by encouraging the creation of early identification and response system within its various departments and partner agencies.

Community development

- We will support residents, workers and employers especially non-violent/abusive members, to be educated about, take responsibility and proactively respond if they encounter abuse and to know how to help family, friends, colleagues and neighbours through ongoing communication campaigns, community engagement, prevention and awareness raising. The aim is that victims, residents, students, visitors and workers should be confident that they live/work in a community that has zero tolerance for a and they know how to get help should they experience any problem.
- We will ensure residents know that their local authority take a lead in challenging the community to tackle VAWG, that their local authority is committed to ensuring healthy, safe, equal and violence-free relationships.
- We will ask businesses and various agencies, through the use of surveys, events and networks how we can help them support their service users/employees and offer them tailored training and information. We will ensure these organisations have a clear protocol around how they identify and respond to staff members at risk of domestic abuse by promoting and translating the 'Spotting the Signs' toolkit.
- We will encourage support agencies in the City of London to adopt protocols regarding joined-up responses and inter-agency information sharing.

Priority Two: People affected by VAWG have access to support services

6. Once an occurrence of VAWG has taken place our services must be easily accessed by the victim, considering any inequity to access that may be prevalent in some population groups.
7. The victim should feel believed, listened to, respected and not blamed; they must be informed on how to engage with services, what will happen next; get expert independent advice and feel supported short and long term.
8. Awareness of available services and easy access to support services matter because needs can remain unreported and unaddressed. When people are unable to access care and support, it has serious negative impact on people's lives (e.g. alcohol and drug problems, loss of employment, debt, housing problems and homelessness), families and communities (e.g. adverse childhood experiences, family breakdown, crime or anti-social behaviour) and other services. It also matters because some groups in our diverse communities are under-represented in our services, including children and young people, LGBTQI+ people and older adults.
9. The response to an instance of VAWG must be coordinated, holistic, consistent, confidential, safe and personalised.
10. A referral pathway was created for all professionals with a step-by-step process detailing how people will be supported if a disclosure of domestic abuse is made. It was then circulated to the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Forum for it to be embedded in standard practice.
11. Being clear on the demographics of our communities and working in partnership with service providers with whom the City Corporation has trusted relationships will enable a consistent delivery of services.

What will do

Services

- We will aim to provide high quality services which are easily accessible, flexible, and available in a timely way to a wide range of survivors.
- We will monitor performance of both mainstream and specialist services regularly to ensure the provisions available remain efficient and useful by collecting various data (number of referrals and their origins, outcomes, costs, etc.)
- We will aim to regularly review the City Corporation website to ensure that the resources available on the website are kept up to date and relevant.
- We will ensure the City Corporation's Domestic Abuse Policy is regularly reviewed and updated.
- We will aim to increase access to services and provisions through outreach workers and community navigators.
- We will ensure that victims and survivors can influence service development (service user satisfaction surveys) through regular feedback on services and consultation.
- We will utilise a cross-sector recognised specialist quality standards and outcomes framework to ensure quality provision with commissioning, for example the DAHA.
- We will ensure access to counselling services through partner agencies such as Iranian Kurdish Women's Rights Organisation (IKWRO).
- We have made a commitment to tackling child sexual exploitation and modern-day slavery and will continue to provide and commission services to fight these issues.
- We will support women and girls at risk from gangs.
- We will continue to provide a robust police response and access to criminal justice remedies.
- We will continue to provide access to refuge provision as identified by survivors as essential in making the decision to leave an abusive relationship.
- We will aim to ensure the safety of those who stay in their own homes by providing security measure.
- We will promote the 24-hours Victim Support.

Partnership

- We will aim to support survivors of VAWG in the short and long term in their health, social and economic wellbeing and treat them with equality regardless of their life choices, culture, age, gender, sexuality, immigration status, etc. by liaising with various partner agencies.
- We will endeavour to work with primary care networks, the City and Hackney Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and other CCGs, to promote a consistent response in GP practices via the use of the Identification Referral to Improve Safety (IRIS) model around domestic violence and abuse.
- We will increase access locations, strengthen working relationships and improve referral pathways between providers, partners and agencies.
- We will promote coordinated need-led and risk-led provisions and services (safety but also housing, advocacy, employment, benefit support, child custody, criminal cases, civil justice measures, resettlement, therapeutic, group work and peer mentoring) and provide joined up specialist and bespoke responses.
- We will work collaboratively with St Mungo's and other voluntary sector services to aim to ensure that staff are trained to respond to disclosures and incidents of VAWG, and staff know where to refer or signpost individuals for support.
- The City of London Police will work with the voluntary sector to encourage sex workers to report crime and seek assistance.
- We will aim to ensure the City of London Police and VAWG support services are working in partnership to signpost and refer people that are not City of London residents and affected by VAWG for appropriate support.
- We will work in partnership with the City of London Police Cybercrime team to ensure people who are experiencing online abuse are receiving advice from the police and being referred for specialist support.
- We will develop a multi-agency approach that reflects the varying need of individuals involved with sex work.
- We will aim to work with specialist human trafficking services to provide support to survivors and avoid repeat victimisation.
- We will provide survivors of VAWG with advocacy support throughout the Criminal Justice process, from the early stages of reporting the incident through to support at court.
- We will ensure the safety of victims at court including a separate waiting area and that they are referred to the Witness Service when giving evidence in court.
- We will aim to invest in resources to help prevent women and girls entering prostitution, to reduce harm to them whilst in it and to help them to be able to exit and have viable alternatives.
- We will aim to criminalise those who profit from individuals selling sex – pimps, managers, exploiters as well as challenge the demand for prostitution by penalising the buyers of prostitution.

Vulnerable cohorts

- We will ensure continued provision to survivors with a range of needs/ complex needs (women-only support group, accommodation and services, face to face multi-lingual support, LGBTQI+ only space, SEND specialist services and counselling services).
- We will ensure that children and young people witnessing/victims of abuse are supported, and that they understand the meaning of VAWG, healthy relationships and consent.
- We will link in with CityAdvice to ensure people working within the City of London are supported.
- We will engage the 'hidden workforce' in support and services available to workers in the City of London.
- We will identify and support high-risk domestic abuse cases and provide support to those who need it most.
- We will ensure that men and boys who have been affected by any of the issues under VAWG are supported.

Priority Three: Perpetrators are held to account and rehabilitated

12. We want to ensure that VAWG perpetrators are held to account for their actions and deterred from reoffending through rehabilitation. This means that they will be supported to understand that the impacts and implications on victims, their children and themselves is an important step forward in ending violence. Rehabilitation gives perpetrators the opportunity to take responsibility for their behaviour and make positive change.
13. Perpetrators need to access help to sustainably change their behaviour, this is particularly important for those women who do not want to end the relationship.

<p style="text-align: center;">What we will do <i>Response</i></p>
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- We will aim to improve the arrest conviction rate of perpetrators.
- We will provide interventions to manage risks posed by perpetrators and support them to change their behaviour.
- We will work closely with the City of London Police, the national probation service and community rehabilitation company and the East London specialist domestic violence court to provide an effective criminal justice response and pursue perpetrators.
- We will work directly with perpetrators of abuse as needed to reduce the risk they pose as well as protecting victims and survivors. This will complement working with perpetrators within children and young people services, the national probation service and the community rehabilitation company.
- We will encourage young people to join the City of London cadet's if they have experienced or perpetrated VAWG.
- We will commission perpetrator programmes for perpetrators involved with City Corporation's Social Care. We will refer perpetrators who do not meet the threshold for a programme to be commissioned to a specialist perpetrator service such as Respect.
- We will work to engage with the British Transport Police, the night-time economy and City of London Police to hold perpetrators to account and counter sexual harassment on transport, on our streets - in public as much as private spaces.
- We will ensure that systems such as MARAC and MAPPA, already in place to deal with high risk victims, will continue to work in partnership to ensure effective responses to these victims and perpetrators.
- We will explore the option of perpetrator programmes for women with external specialist agencies such as Respect.
- We will investigate utilising the CoL police lifetime offender management unit for prolific VAWG offenders in the City of London.
- We will ensure partnership working through the police and Crown Prosecution Service response, specialist domestic violence courts, sanctions and interventions.
- We will support victims and signpost them for legal advice when applying for civil injunctions and ensure breaches are notified to the police.
- We will lobby criminal courts to order the use of electronic tagging to monitor behaviour and movements of perpetrators.
- We will encourage The City of London Police to keep delivering training and awareness workshops to their staff on Domestic Violence Protection Orders and Domestic Violence Notice Orders to increase the use of these orders.
- We will continue to encourage victimless prosecutions, in cases where victims are unable or unwilling to pursue the perpetrators themselves, to make the Square Mile safer for everyone.
- We will work with Criminal Justice Courts to explore ways that vulnerable victims can give evidence at a secure location away from the court.
- We will aim to create a collaboration between the police and the NHS to support perpetrators and victims, by addressing mental health support needs.
- We will encourage the City of London Police to supply body worn cameras to frontline officers who might respond to VAWG incidents.

Campaigns and training

- We will deliver awareness raising campaigns aimed at perpetrators to encourage them to take responsibility for their actions, rather than putting responsibility to stay safe on the victim.
- Reduce perpetrator risk by intervening to address their behaviour through prevention and rehabilitation workshops as well as training of offenders.
- Services will be identified to support people and specialist training will be offered to service providers who work with perpetrators in order to be skilled and confident to engage and champion the positive outcomes of perpetrator programmes.
- We will ensure the City of London Police and the Metropolitan Police are working in partnership using the stalking threat assessment centre.
- We will aim to create pathways between the Civil and Family Courts and the City of London Police to ensure that protection orders are being monitored.
- We will aim to challenge the lack of separate waiting rooms in Civil and Family Courts for victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse. We will also aim to work with Civil and Family Courts to ensure Judges are trained on domestic abuse and VAWG.
- We are supporting the Draft Domestic Abuse Bill in its aim to pilot the use of polygraph testing as a condition for high-risk offenders' release.

