

Social Inclusion and Community Safety Policy and Accountability Committee Agenda

Tuesday 22 November 2022 at 7.00 pm

Main Hall (1st Floor) - 3 Shortlands, Hammersmith, W6 8DA

Watch the meeting live: youtube.com/hammersmithandfulham

MEMBERSHIP

Administration	Opposition
Councillor Nikos Souslous (Chair) Councillor Omid Miri Councillor Trey Campbell-Simon Councillor Sally Taylor	Councillor Andrew Dinsmore

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Date Issued: 14 November 2022

Social Inclusion and Community Safety Policy and Accountability Committee Agenda

22 November 2022

Item

Pages

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

If a Councillor has a disclosable pecuniary interest in a particular item, whether or not it is entered in the Authority's register of interests, or any other significant interest which they consider should be declared in the public interest, they should declare the existence and, unless it is a sensitive interest as defined in the Member Code of Conduct, the nature of the interest at the commencement of the consideration of that item or as soon as it becomes apparent.

At meetings where members of the public are allowed to be in attendance and speak, any Councillor with a disclosable pecuniary interest or other significant interest may also make representations, give evidence or answer questions about the matter. The Councillor must then withdraw immediately from the meeting before the matter is discussed and any vote taken.

Where Members of the public are not allowed to be in attendance and speak, then the Councillor with a disclosable pecuniary interest should withdraw from the meeting whilst the matter is under consideration. Councillors who have declared other significant interests should also withdraw from the meeting if they consider their continued participation in the matter would not be reasonable in the circumstances and may give rise to a perception of a conflict of interest. Councillors are not obliged to withdraw from the meeting where a dispensation to that effect has been obtained from the Standards Committee.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

4 - 11

(a) To approve as an accurate record and the Chair to sign the minutes of the meeting of the Social Inclusion and Community Safety PAC held on 19 July 2022; and

(b) To note the outstanding actions.

4. ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR THE LAW ENFORCEMENT TEAM 12 - 35

This report provides PAC with an update following the previous meeting focusing on work of the Law Enforcement Team between July and September 2022.

5. PROGRESS REPORT ON THE GANGS, VIOLENCE AND EXPLOITATION UNIT 36 - 45

This report provides PAC Members with the opportunity to scrutinise the work and performance of the Council's Gangs Violence and Exploitation Unit (GVEU) reviewing its work and progress since its establishment in September 2020.

6. VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS 46 - 85

This report provides PAC Members with the opportunity to scrutinise the council's approach to responding to and preventing Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) in H&F. In particular this, report focuses on the support services provided to women and girls experiencing domestic abuse.

7. WORK PROGRAMME

The committee to discuss potential work programme items within the remit of its terms of reference.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, 24 January 2023
Tuesday, 21 March 2023

London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham



Social Inclusion and Community Safety Policy and Accountability Committee Minutes

Tuesday 19 July 2022

PRESENT

Committee members: Councillors Nikos Souslous (Chair), Omid Miri, Trey Campbell-Simon, Sally Taylor, and Andrew Dinsmore

Other Councillors: Jacolyn Daly, Chair of Housing and Homelessness PAC (T); Victoria Brocklebank-Fowler, Conservative Leader of the Opposition; Rebecca Harvey, Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion and Community Safety; and Rowan Ree, Cabinet Member for Finance and Reform

Officers: Mohammed Basith, Law Enforcement Manager; Detective Inspector Debbie Field, The Metropolitan Police; Sergeant Seb Golding, The Metropolitan Police; Matthew Hooper, Chief Officer for Safer Neighbourhoods (T); Bram Kainth, Strategic Director of Environment (T); Roy Morgan, Head of Prevention and Wellbeing (T); Neil Thurlow, Assistant Director of Community Safety

(T) – Attendance by Teams

The meeting was not livestreamed.

1. APOLOGIES

None.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

3. WELCOME BY THE CHAIR

Councillor Nikos Souslous welcomed everyone to the first Social Inclusion and Community Safety and Policy and Accountability Committee meeting. The Administration manifesto promises to make the council 'ruthlessly inclusive' and compassionate, bringing communities and people together and to do as much as possible to make H&F a kind and happy place to be. It also places public safety front and centre and keeping residents safe will be a top priority for the new Administration. Councillor Souslous set out his expectations to balance community

safety and social inclusion themed items on the agenda and invited members of the committee to consider and suggest areas for inclusion within the committees work programme, Agenda Item 6.

4. REFUGEE UPDATE

Councillor Souslous introduced the refugee verbal update on council activities supporting refugees from Afghanistan, and more recently from Ukraine. Roy Morgan (Teams) gave a PowerPoint presentation outlining a comprehensive range of activities and support services being provided to refugees hosted in the borough, as well as sponsors for Ukrainian refugees, working with local voluntary sector organisations. The council continued to work with the Home Office to co-ordinate the resettlement of Afghan refugees. The council was also lobbying actively against the government's inhumane proposals to send asylum seekers to Rwanda and advocating for open, safe routes for asylum seekers. A final aim as a compassionate council was to work to prevent people trafficking and exploitation and to be designated as a borough of sanctuary for refugees and asylum seekers.

Support services were currently being provided for 780 refugees in the borough, with donations and wrap around support services co-ordinated through local faith groups (mosques, churches) community and voluntary health and social care providers. This also included support in obtaining housing and providing advice on tenancy agreements. The council had also worked with the Department for Work and Pensions to help navigate benefit pathways, obtain national insurance numbers and personal independent payments. Officers had worked closely with the North West London Health colleagues to ensure that families had been registered with local health providers. Due diligence had been undertaken around children's safeguarding, with free school meals and uniforms also provided. Detailed figures were given on the number of individuals and family units being supported by nationality and the ways in which they had been supported. A slide deck of the presentation would be circulated following the meeting.

Councillor Omid Miri sought clarification about the direction of travel and an update about the city of sanctuary application process. The borough offered safety, assurance, and support for refugees, learning from examples of best practice from other boroughs, for example Lewisham. Roy Morgan explained that the designation highlighted the wrap-around provision offered, ensuring that all refugees were treated with equity and were able to have parity of access to services. Parity of provision was important as there had been notable differences in the response to Afghan refugees, compared to Ukrainian. The council was working with voluntary providers to ameliorate this.

Councillor Andrew Dinsmore sought assurance that refugee children were not being placed in private fee-paying schools. Councillor Rebecca Harvey confirmed that the council was not placing children in private schools however, some had offered places to sponsor families. All other children had been placed in state schools. Councillor Dinsmore reported that he had also received an email from a resident who described their poor experience of a "welcome" session hosted at the Quaker centre, with no school places and vouchers that had not initially worked and the absence of other welcoming provisions. Councillor Dinsmore sought an assurance that the

council would primarily focus on school provision and the provision of vouchers. Councillor Rebecca Harvey assured the committee that all children had been placed in local schools. Approximately £72k in vouchers had been issued and although there had been some one-off issues due to the speed of the scheme being established these had now been resolved, with frequent checks and monitoring to ensure tight management. Councillor Harvey commented that she was very proud of the support provided, including the Paddington Bear gift given to all Ukrainian refugee children, and that refugee week had offered a series of well-run events, including a range of arts and healing activities. Foster carers had been brought together and the council was working with Lord Alf Dubs to advocate for the rights and protection of unaccompanied children and child refugees. Positive feedback from the Home Office had indicated that H&F was one of the best council's supporting Afghan refugees placed in bridging hotels

Councillor Souslous noted that a member enquiry had been lodged by Councillor Dinsmore on 6 July and encouraged him to contact Councillor Harvey to follow up any further concerns about the issue to see if the council could provide any further assistance. It was also noted that there was support available from a council team for sponsor families, particularly where there was a breakdown in communication. Councillor Harvey outlined some of the provisions which included drop-in sessions and reported that council officers worked hard to support families and their sponsors.

Councillor Souslous commended the support provided by the council and the success of the refugee week activities and events. He asked what funds or support measures had been put in place to support any future refugee crises. Roy Morgan responded that there was a council team that was ready to be mobilised, with officers from across the council, including housing and children's services. There was also a dedicated refugee management team ready to provide wrap around support services for the next cohort.

RESOLVED

That the verbal update was noted.

5. LOCAL ENFORCEMENT TEAM

Neil Thurlow briefly described the role of the Local Enforcement Team (LET) established in December 2020, formed part of the Community Safety Unit and was one of the largest teams in London. Reflected in a budget of £4.5 million this represented a significant investment placing highly visible customer service and the accessibility of staff at the heart of the local community. Covering 21 wards, including the newly created additional wards, this was a 24/7 service working closely with the police, supported by the corporate communications unit. LET officers came from a range of diverse backgrounds and experience (including the police) and the LET Team Manager, Mohammed Basith had significant experience in leading such teams. There had been significant and exponential growth since the team had been established, maintaining and sustaining services with strong management.

Councillor Andrew Dinsmore enquired how many weapons had been recovered through active searches. Neil Thurlow confirmed that there had been 1237

searches, recovering 17 weapons (a range of knives), drugs (12 cannabis bags in a recent search) all of which had been safely removed, processed, and disposed. The methodology of a structured weapons sweep was described including how a site was identified and where searches were regularly undertaken. Mohammed Basith explained that LET ward officers routinely visited ten housing blocks each day and undertook patrols in two parks (minimum) as it was recognised that criminals commonly secreted weapons in communal areas and shrubbery.

Councillor Dinsmore noted the number of weapon sweeps and the number of items recovered calculating a low outcome rate. He enquired how this could be improved. Neil Thurlow responded that residents were aware that they could not secrete weapons in communal areas and that the LET was in regular communication with DI Debbie Field. The LET and Metropolitan police officers worked closely together and in tandem, maximising opportunities for sharing intelligence. Matthew Hooper added that 2019 had seen a significant number of youth attacks and violent incidents. Of the weapons sweeps undertaken so far, 17 weapons had been removed which, had they been used for criminal purposes, could have resulted in tragic loss and significant impact on the community. The social impact and removal of such weapons was balanced against the cost to the public purse.

Councillor Trey Campbell-Simon asked what the LET was doing to reach out to groups that had been more challenging to engage with. Mohammed Basith outlined the relationship with local tenants and residents' associations (TRAs). The LET, as a public facing council service, connected with residents through TRAs to reach entrenched communities, breaking down barriers and offering help to signpost or access support services. Sergeant Seb Golding explained that Metropolitan police officers were increasing the number of community engagement events (pop ups and ward panel meetings) that they attended to assist with crime prevention, offering higher police visibility and presence. Neil Thurlow added that residents can contact Mohammed Basith and his team through ward surgeries.

Councillor Sally Taylor provided some feedback with a proposal that the Mund Street offices in her ward of West Kensington could be refurbished and made to be more welcoming. The LET was a highly visible presence, but residents did not appreciate that the office did not offer access to a "drop-in" space, although the office was used as a base for the LET. The office lacked signposting about what residents could do to report incidents or concerns and this was particularly difficult for residents who were digitally excluded. A drop box for messages or easy to remember contact details were suggested, together with posters. Neil Thurlow recognised that whilst there were digital and phone routes to contact the service there were no drop ins offered. He agreed that alternate ways to engage would be further explored. Mohammed Basith added that the aim had been to align LET shifts with ward surgery opening hours but the variation in officer hours did not always make this feasible. It might, however, be possible to run LET surgeries. Exploring the feasibility of this it was recognised that digitally excluded residents were often a rich source of local intelligence and should not be overlooked.

ACTION: That information about the LET officers and their work be made more visible, communicated more accessibly in print and at the LET office; and that easy to recall contact details be made more readily available for residents to contact LET.

Councillor Dinsmore asked about the LET authority to arrest individuals, for example, someone in possession of a weapon or a person being attacked. Mohammed Basith explained that the immediate LET response would be to call in the incident to the police incident room. However, the presence of the LET served to deter such behaviour and discouraged incidents from occurring or escalating. DI Fields added that this was a two-way communication process, and that the LET could be called by the police to attend, where appropriate. Following a question from Councillor Dinsmore, DI Field confirmed that attendance at an incident reported through the LET could be marginally quicker than a response requested through dialling 999 because CCTV coverage was linked to the Metropolitan Police incident room. Councillor Rebecca Harvey clarified that CCTV-recorded evidence could facilitate a quicker response as this was closely monitored in real time.

Councillor Campbell-Simon commended the level of engagement work undertaken by LET but highlighted the importance of gaining trust in some sections of the community, for example, the homeless and he asked about the powers of the LET in removing homeless people from a sheltered housing site. Mohammed Basith replied that the LET worked very closely with local sheltered housing officers and reported that there had been a significant increase in unauthorised access. The LET signposted support services but where sites had been unauthorised trespass or damage to property, the LET officers would engage and encourage people to leave, signposting to help or housing outreach workers or contact the police. In some cases, a fixed penalty notices might be issued, with a lower penalty for early payment.

Councillor Omid Miri sought further information about the relationship between the police and LET. Councillor Jacolyn Daly (Teams) also welcomed the LET as a fantastic resource and enquired about how the LET safeguarded green or park areas where people had congregated during the summer, and where there had been an increase in casual “rough” sleeping because of the heat but not necessarily from those who could be regarded as homeless. Mohammed Basith confirmed that contrary to perception, not all those who were sleeping on green areas were rough sleepers but had decided to sleep outside because of the warm weather. Exploring the issue, it was noted that [Thames Reach](#) provided support to rough sleepers, however, it was recognised that breaches of law and order resulting in local residents being disturbed were a concern and that the optics did not look good for the wider homeless community. Areas where there was street activity that resulted in disturbance were prioritised by patrols and there was a list of known “hotspots”. Shepherd’s Bush, for example, was an area that was routinely visited each night to help prevent anti-social behaviour. Any non-compliance would lead to a referral and police intervention.

Councillor Souslous asked if LET officers had ever felt unsafe at times. Mohammed Basith explained that he had not been aware of any recent incidents that had given rise to fear for personal safety. Citing examples of incidents such as barbeques in public areas, officers had asked individuals to remove them (due to the threat of fire on dry grass) and they had complied with the request. It should be noted that many of the LET officers were from non-enforcement backgrounds but who were well trained and made good use of civil powers of restraint.

Councillor Miri asked if there were any plans to increase the number of officers within the LET from current 72. He also asked about the length of time it took to train LET officers, what the competency framework consisted of, and how this varied from the training received by metropolitan police officers. Neil Thurlow explained that exponential growth of the LET had been included in the Administration manifesto and was currently being costed. Training for newly recruited officers began with an intense period of internal training where they were informed of the frontline and high public profile of their community-based roles, with visible engagement. Six weeks of training began with two weeks desk-based training on enforcement regulations, training on casework and dispute resolution followed by an assessment with a minimum pass criterion to be met. Once the theory test had been completed, further training was undertaken with Mohammed Basith with on the ground training, working with other services (e.g., waste collection, licensing) followed by a six-month probationary period. A suggestion from Councillor Souslous to undertake mental health awareness training was welcomed.

ACTION: Officers to contact West London Trust to explore how mental health awareness training for LET could be included as part of formal training

DI Field outlined the training undertaken by police recruits, the level of support and intense scrutiny of progress throughout the training period and at every stage, from going out on patrol for the first time to evidence and intelligence gathering. Mentoring was provided throughout the street duty phase, with evidenced based appraisal and assessment.

Councillor Campbell-Simon asked how often the council's mandatory training was refreshed, for example General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), and whether there were training opportunities for personal development. It was confirmed that the intention was that the council offered a well-rounded package of training ensure that individuals were able to develop professionally into their roles and supported throughout. DI Field added that police had worked with the LET from its establishment. Their presence had offered a rich source of visual intelligence through camera footage. Illustrating this with an incident of drugs being openly sold at a local café, intelligence gathered by LET officers had led to the eventual imprisonment of two people. DI Field added that the LET was also invaluable in the enforcement monitoring of communal open spaces such as in Shepherds Bush Green and offered support to residents to mitigate the impact of violence against women and girls (VAWG). In respect of VAWG, two have-your-say events had been held with residents being able to speak to female police officers. The events had been actively promoted and offered support and advice. Walk and talk events had been held in areas where people did not feel safe to point out danger areas and the LET officers had supported these initiatives. Sergeant Golding explained that key advantages of working with LET was the service was operational 24/7 and had access to response teams such as sheltered housing, as had been discussed earlier in the meeting. In this context, where an offence had not been committed, this was not regarded as a priority event and LET officer were better positioned to respond. This had the effect of extending the coverage provided by the police.

Councillor Souslous highlighted the occurrence of anti-social behaviour during the Queen's Platinum Jubilee weekend in some of the Borough's parks. It was noted that the LET was able to respond when the police were unable to and act as a visible deterrent.

Councillor Miri asked if there were any incidents where a person had contacted 999, and this had been referred to the LET. Sergeant Golding explained that when a call was made to the 999 service that was not an emergency it was assessed and triaged. Calls that came through the neighbourhood teams could be responded to by a LET patrol. The breakdown of police officers was compared to the LET. Each neighbourhood ward had two police offices, two police special constable officers, across the old 16 ward boundaries. The switch to new ward boundaries was in progress but a new computer system would need to be operational before coverage was adjusted to reflect the new ward boundaries.

Councillor Dinsmore enquired about the base salary costs of a LET officer, compared in broad terms to a Metropolitan police officer. Neil Thurlow explained that LET officer salary range commenced on Principle Officer Grade 1, with a day shift enhancement of 14%, increased to 20% for night shifts, so approximately £32k. A Metropolitan probationary police officer received a starting salary of £29,600 (excluding London weighting) per annum. Matthew Hooper (Teams) highlighted that oncost were higher and that a comparison of the two salary scales was unhelpful given that the cost of training a police officer or special constable was significantly higher. Sergeant Golding agreed and clarified that it was more helpful to note that the cost of supporting a police officer on a street patrol was about £100 per hour, and therefore considerably more expensive than maintaining a LET officer.

Councillor Souslous asked for further guidance on the LETs 24-hour operations in estates across the borough. He noted that police officers in Fulham Reach had mentioned that they had not been given sufficient advance notice of an operation in Bayonne Estate that took place in June. Sweeps were planned where possible but was reliant on intelligence received. Advance notice of sweeps was communicated to members who could be invited to view the process through the Communications Team however, the Bayonne estate sweep had been set up at speed and with urgency following reports of ASB in the area. This had not allowed sufficient time to share details with all stakeholders

Councillor Souslous pointed out that due to the mismatch between police ward boundaries and the LETs operation based on new ward boundaries, some members may be confused. He also asked for local LET officers to reach out to their respective ward councillors and offer to meet with them.

ACTION: LET to proactively reach out to members because of the adjustment to new ward boundaries to help ensure that they were notified in advance and were able to attend local meetings, subject to LET shifts. This would also help LET officers get to know ward members. LET would also arrange to attend ward panel meetings as appropriate.

In terms of future VAWG events Mohammed Basith confirmed that another event was held along the river, and one near Fulham Broadway (travel hub). It was

acknowledged that there was scope to run more events. Councillor Harvey welcomed the positive feedback about the LET and their complementary enforcement role with the police. It was noted that there were approximately 32 police officers across the borough, compared to 72 LET officers. Councillor Harvey confirmed that the Administration's current focus was in supporting and expanding the LET, to complement and improve on the Met Police's actions on community safety. Neil Thurlow further confirmed that there were currently four Council officers dedicated to supporting the gang's unit.

ACTION: In future meetings, the LET will be asked to provide data on the service to help contextualise outcomes.

RESOLVED

That the report and actions were noted.

6. WORK PROGRAMME

The committee noted that LET updates would be a standing item for future meetings, supported by input from the police.

The following topics and themes were explored for inclusion in future meetings and a long list of work programme items:

- Cost of living, in the context of community safety. There was a clear link to increased crime during economic uncertainty. It would be helpful to include the perspective of different community groups and communities.
- VAWG, to coincide with the 16 days of activism campaigning against domestic and sexual violence. This year, the campaign coincided with the Men's football World Cup, an event that unfortunately also saw a corresponding and significant increase in domestic violence (November).
- Gang violence and the exploitation unit. The Gangs Unit had been established for two years and would be a complementary item to the VAWG piece (November).

7. DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Tuesday, 22 November 2022.

Meeting started: 7pm
Meeting ended: 8.53pm

Chair

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Agenda Item 4

LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM

Report to: Social Inclusion and Community Safety Policy and Accountability Committee

Date: 22/11/2022

Subject: Annual Performance Report for the Law Enforcement Team

Report author: Neil Thurlow, Assistant Director of Community Safety and
Mohammed Basith, Law Enforcement Manager

Responsible Director: Matthew Hooper, Chief Officer Safer Neighbourhoods and
Regulatory Services

SUMMARY

This report provides PAC with an update following the previous meeting focusing on work of the Law Enforcement Team between July and September 2022.

There are no decisions required from this report.

RECOMMENDATION

For the committee to note and comment on the report.

Wards Affected: All

Our Values	Summary of how this report aligns to the H&F Values
Building shared prosperity	A cleaner, greener, safer borough increases opportunities for all
Creating a compassionate council	Working with our communities the LET is the front face of the council for many and the service offers help, support and advice for all ensuring that everyone's problems are addressed
Doing things with local residents, not to them	Residents are concerned around environmental crime, ASB and how they feel and perceive safety. Key attributes that the LET work towards addressing
Being ruthlessly financially efficient	We have brought together several services to create on larger singular service with a wider parameter of powers
Taking pride in H&F	The LET works to improve the environment of the borough creating a cleaner, greener borough
Rising to the challenge of the climate	The service uses only electric vehicles

and ecological emergency	and the default for staff is to walk with vehicles being used for specific matters only
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Background Papers Used in Preparing This Report

None

Background

1. In July 2022, the Law Enforcement Team (LET) presented performance data and achievements since the formation of the service in April 2021. The LET sits within the Community Safety Unit and was formed following the amalgamation of several teams - Parks Police, Housing Wardens, Highways Enforcement and Street scene enforcement – creating one singular enforcement provision.
2. Since July 2022 to date, the LET has continued to deliver a highly visible front-line service 24/7, and this report provides further details of the work LET officers have undertaken. This includes a total of 23,806 patrols - an average of 258 per day – with officers working to investigate and resolve service requests, monitor sites following incidents or to inspection locations following referrals for a range of issues from both internal or external partners and teams.
3. The LET team have received 1433 service requests from residents and businesses, which have been investigated and resolved. Each request is acknowledged and tasked within hours of it being received, as the LET inbox is monitored 24/7.
4. During this period LET officers resolved most of the service requests without the need for enforcement however there are a number of more complex cases which require constant investigation, monitoring and enforcement activity which can take upwards of 21 to 28 days where legal processes are followed.
5. For the three months of this report the LET officers issued a total of 505 fixed penalty notices for issues such as fly-tipping, littering and highway obstruction.
6. The Team continues to show a high visibility presence in all the housing blocks and parks throughout the borough, having completed 5635 patrols in housing land, equating to 1625 hours and 1367 patrol hour in parks.
7. In addition, 3967 hours of reassurance patrols have taken place in all highways and district centres, with particular emphasis at Shepherds Bush and Hammersmith Broadway over the same period.
8. Keeping our residents safe remains a high priority for the Team, and as such, the LET officers have conducted 1154 weapons sweeps during their patrols.

They have found and removed five knives from the streets over the past three months, one of which was deliberately concealed under leaves in Bishops Park soon after a large group of youths were dispersed after a report came into the service of ASB taking place.

9. The LET team have continued to focus on reducing ASB in all areas of the borough. From July 2022 through September 2022, the LET has received 153 Service requests to attend and address ASB-related issues. A vast majority of the problems occurred in parks, and LET staff resolved these by attending the location, identifying those causing the ASB and engaging with the individuals. Most of these issues were resolved once the LET officers engaged with the individuals; however, those who were not compliant with our initial engagement were dispersed on 85 occasions.
10. Reports of ASB to service show that most demand comes from the North of the borough, with most incidents occurring in the White City ward and Shepherds Bush parks. Due to the number of housing blocks within White City, there were 35 ASB incidents identified and resolved by the LET team. This includes unauthorised access by non-residents into the blocks and drugs or drinks consumed in the communal area.
11. ASB issues are second highest in Central wards, most of which have been identified and resolved in Normand Park as it continues to attract issues such as noise nuisance, drug consumption and street sleepers.
12. South of the borough has seen the least ASB issues over the past three months, and these were identified in the West Kensington Estate and Clem Atlee Estate.
13. All the locations with high ASB levels have been added to the priority patrols list and will remain there until there is a significant reduction in ASB.
14. The Team continually monitors an area through targeted patrols once ASB issues have been reported, identified, and resolved. This is to ensure that those causing the problems do not return to the location. These patrols also enable the officers to collect information and intelligence, which is supplied to various teams such as the Community Safety Units ASBU team, Housing colleagues (including repairs teams), the relevant SNT and parks to name a few.
15. The effectiveness of our officers in their engagement and communication skills is demonstrated as follows:
 - a. of the 1089 ASB patrols undertaken in July; 659 (60%) required no further action.
 - b. On 361 occasions (33%), LET staff engaged with individuals or groups who were identified proactively or by the residents as those causing ASB or a nuisance. LET officers advised them of their behaviour's impact and dispersed these individuals.
 - c. Where the LET officers were not able to respond immediately, due to wider service needs and/or where the person(s) responsible for the

ASB were no longer present on our visit the LET staff engaged with the complainant and/or local neighbours to discuss their concerns and obtain further information and/or intelligence. Officers use this additional information and location to add onto their, and their colleagues, patrol routes until they feel confident that the issue has been completely resolved.

16. As we progressed through summer, there was a rise in the number of ASB patrols. In August, there were 1263 patrols, and 871 (68%) required no further action, with 388 (30%) either actioned immediately or requiring continued monitoring. Finally, in September 1481, patrols were conducted, and 1025 (69%) required no further action, whilst 448 (30%) required LET officer intervention or continued monitoring.
17. On 177 occasions, LET officers undertook patrols following reports from residents and park colleagues to address issues due to alcohol consumption and the associated ASB this causes. LET officers also conducted 680 patrols focused on identifying and deterring drug consumption in areas frequented by users or following reports of misuse.
18. Encampments – The LET have worked with the Rough Sleeper Team, Outreach Team, Parks, SES and the Police to remove illegal encampments. Following the referral to Streetlink, the Team worked closely with colleagues to assist those encamping to find suitable accommodation. Once the occupants rejected these officers, LET officers visited the encampments with Police colleagues to enforce Byelaws which covered the areas. A total of five encampments were cleared from Shepherds Bush Green. Since this operation, the Team has continued to make referrals and work with colleagues to support the borough's street population and enforce removals where all accommodation offers have been rejected.
19. To increase the Team's engagement and visibility LET surgeries will commence in libraries in December 2022. These will be based at the three main North, Central and South libraries and will take place monthly. These surgeries allow residents and users to engage their local LET officers, who will be on hand to provide face-to-face advice or discuss issues before investigating and resolving the residents' requests.

20. Updates on actions assigned in the July PAC:

21. Since the July PAC, LET officers have contacted all ward members to introduce themselves and offer to conduct walkabouts. LET Team has completed eight 24-hour service-wide operations, and members have been invited to participate in these.
22. The LET have also conducted engagement Days in Shepherds Bush Green, Ravenscourt Park and Bishops Park to introduce the service and to share our contact details. The Team also conducted two engagement days at Shepherds Bush Mosque and continued to attend all TRA and ward panel meetings. LET officers have also supported events at the Sands End

Community Centre and assisted the events team at the North End Road Festival.

23. Following Cllr Taylor's request to provide further information at the sites used by LET officers, posters have been placed at the Mund Street office in the south of the borough detailing how to contact the LET.
24. The LET attended the Youth Council to speak about the service. We have asked the attendees to provide us with ideas on how we can increase our engagement with the younger residents of the borough. In addition, all LET staff will receive training from the youth engagement coordinator to understand the issues faced by youths and ways to engage them better.
25. We have engaged with West London Trust to explore how mental health awareness training can be delivered to all LET officers on an ongoing basis. We were referred to a Hammersmith, Fulham, Ealing and Hounslow Mind who will provide in-person training in December to increase the LET officers' knowledge further to recognise signs and symptoms of depression, anxiety, psychosis, and PTSD. In the interim, all LET officers have undertaken in-house online mental health training. This covered areas such as how to communicate with individuals with mental health issues and resilience building to overcome trauma. They also now know how and when to make a referral for vulnerable persons. This training will now be integrated into the mandatory training LET officers receive when they start with the service.
26. Over the next few months, LET will work with the Licencing Team to promote Ask Angela. In addition to this, the Team will increase VAWG-focused patrols over the winter months. The LET is also expanding the number of VAWG champions from five to ten.
27. The Walk and talk event scheduled for 28 Sept with the police was postponed due to the Queen's funeral. This has now been scheduled for later in the year. Most recently, staff have engaged with Fulham Football Club to provide additional patrols around the ground. This is to make the site safer for female users who stated they wanted more presence when they train in the evenings.

A list of other accomplishments and work is covered in Appendix 2

List of Appendices

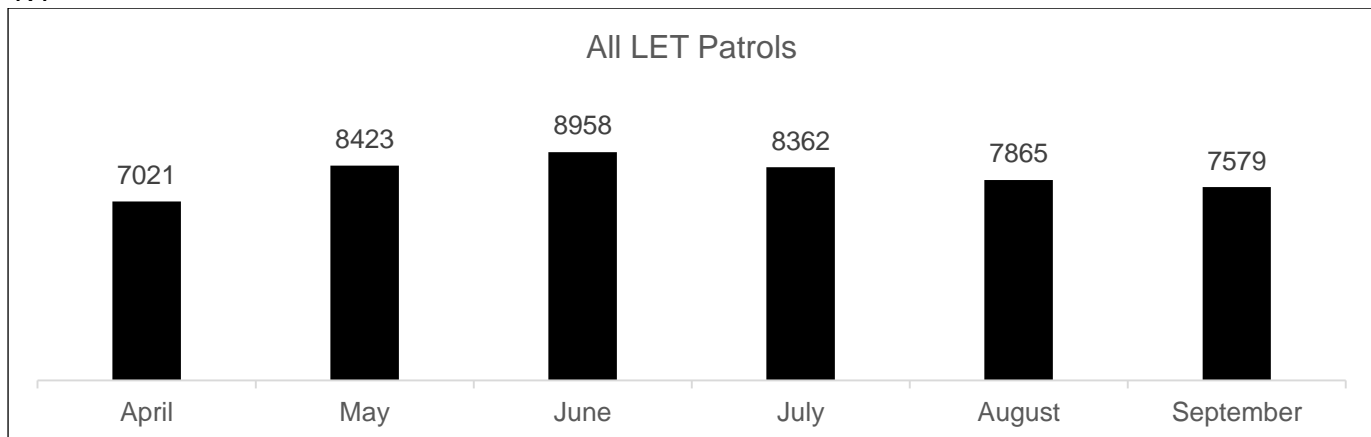
Appendix 1 - LET Performance Data

Appendix 2 - List of LET achievements and other taskings

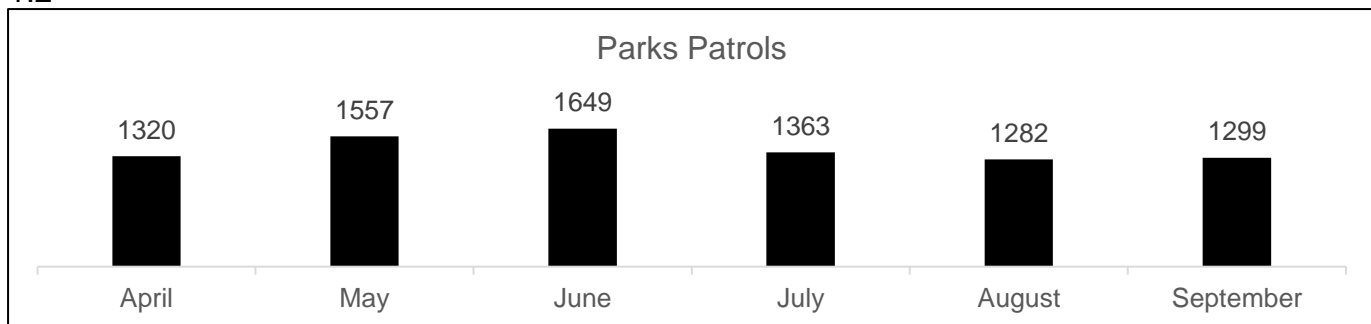
LET Performance Data

2022/2023	Q1 & Q2	Q2
Total Investigations	3188	1433
Total FPNs issued	785	505
Patrols in HRA estates and/or blocks	14500	5635
Patrol hours in parks	3280	1367
Patrol hours in estates and/or blocks	4144	1625
Patrol hours in public realm	8431	3967
Weapon sweeps	2208	1154

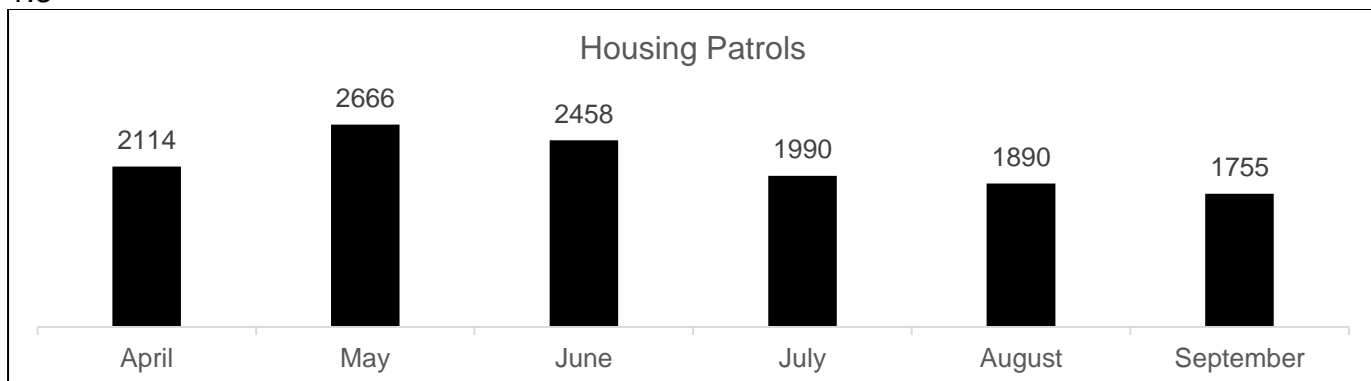
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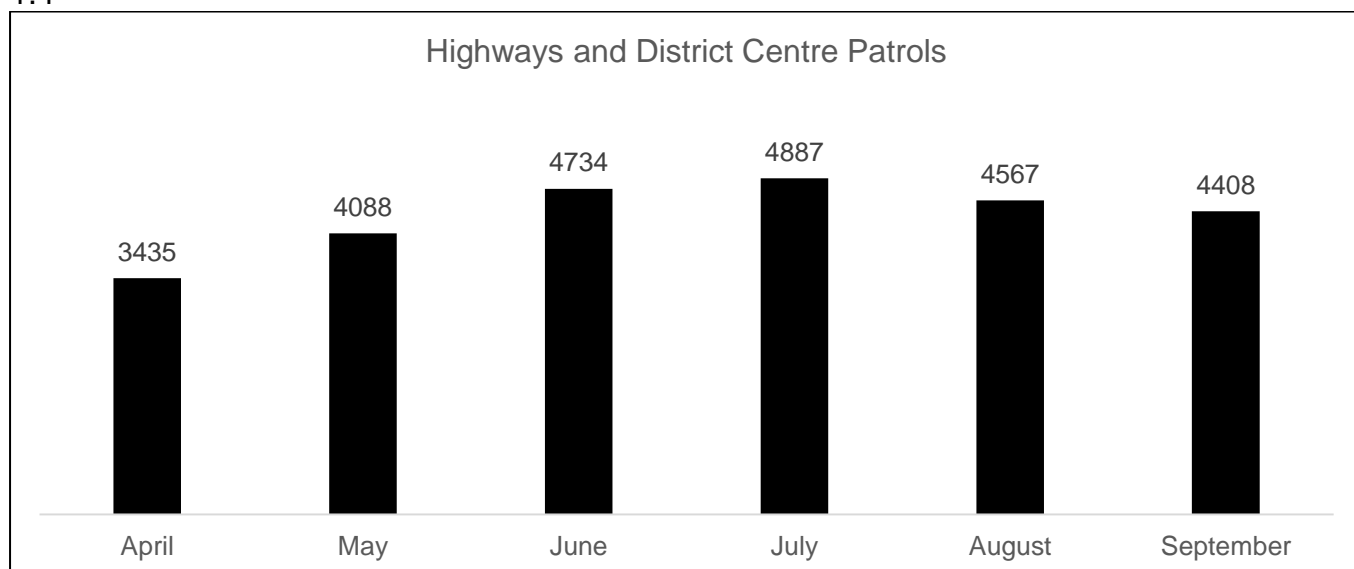
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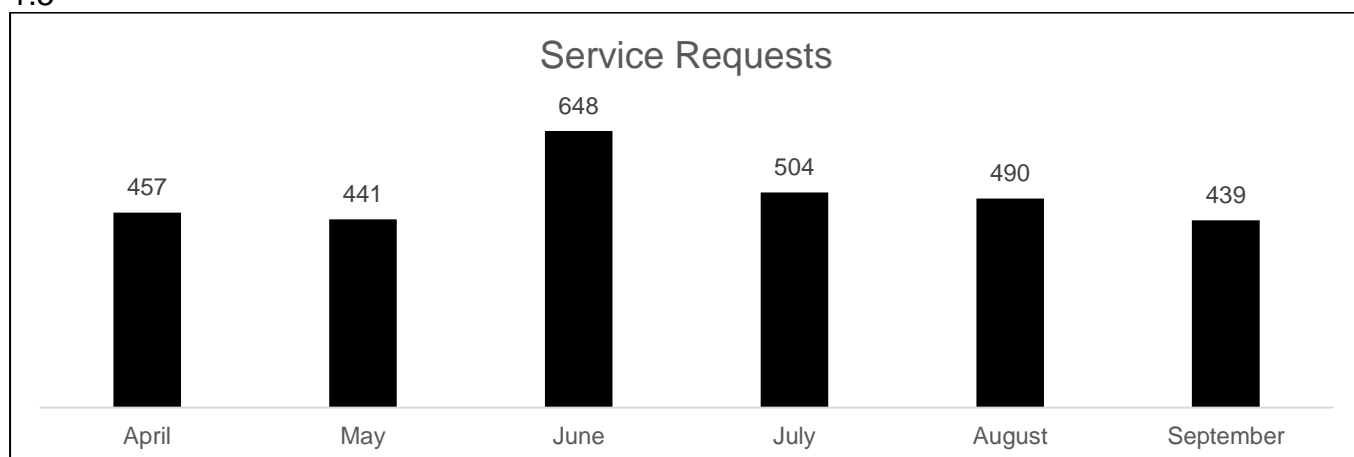
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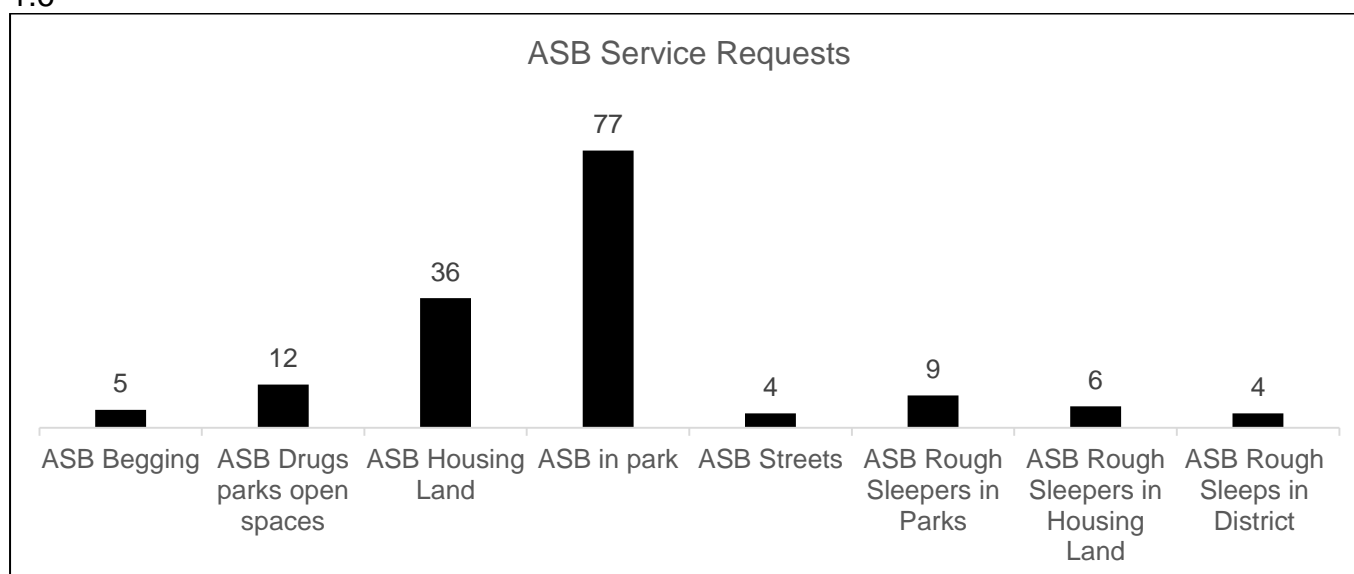
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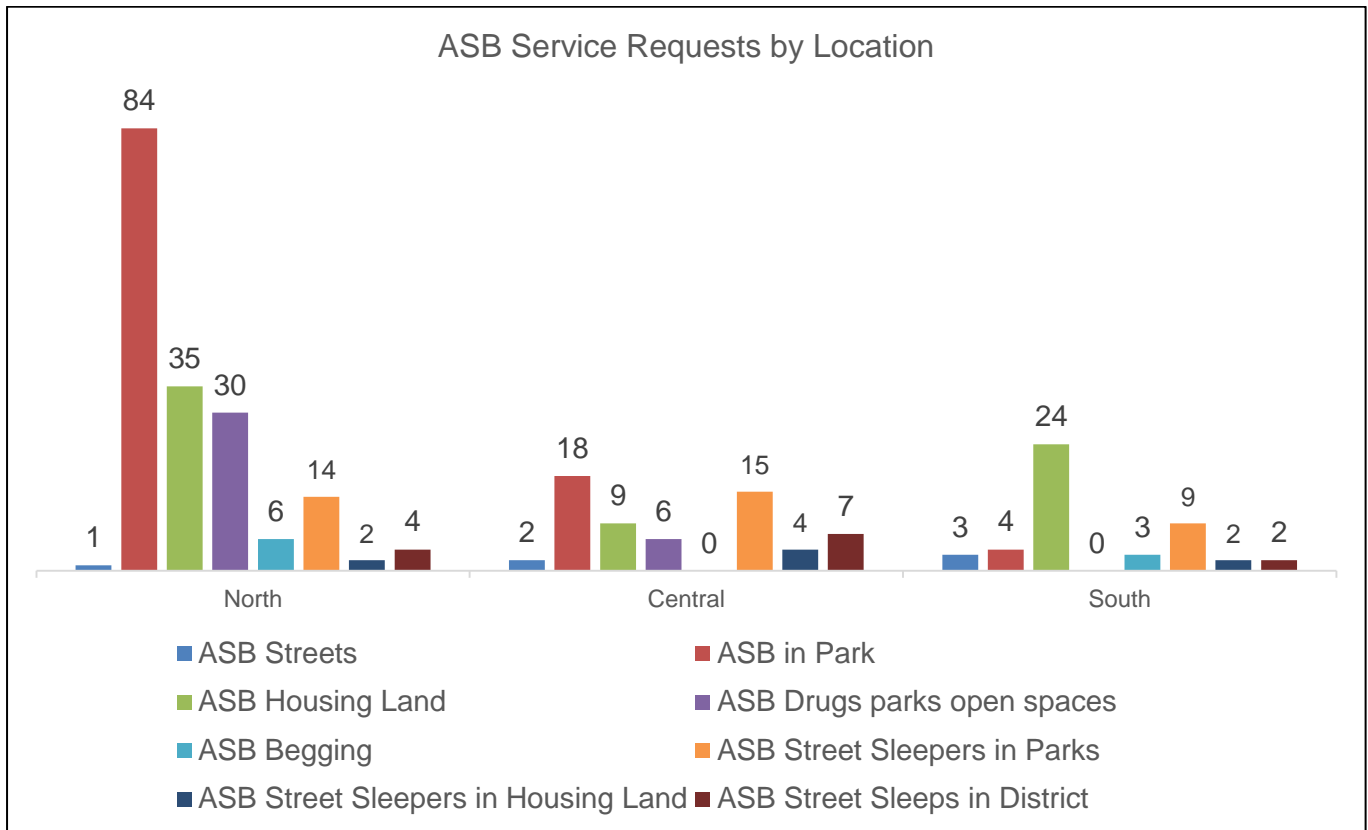
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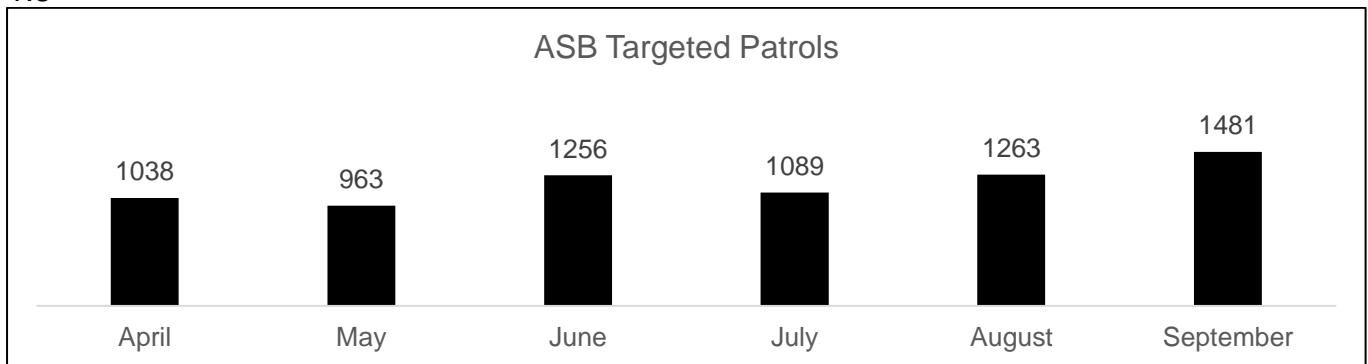
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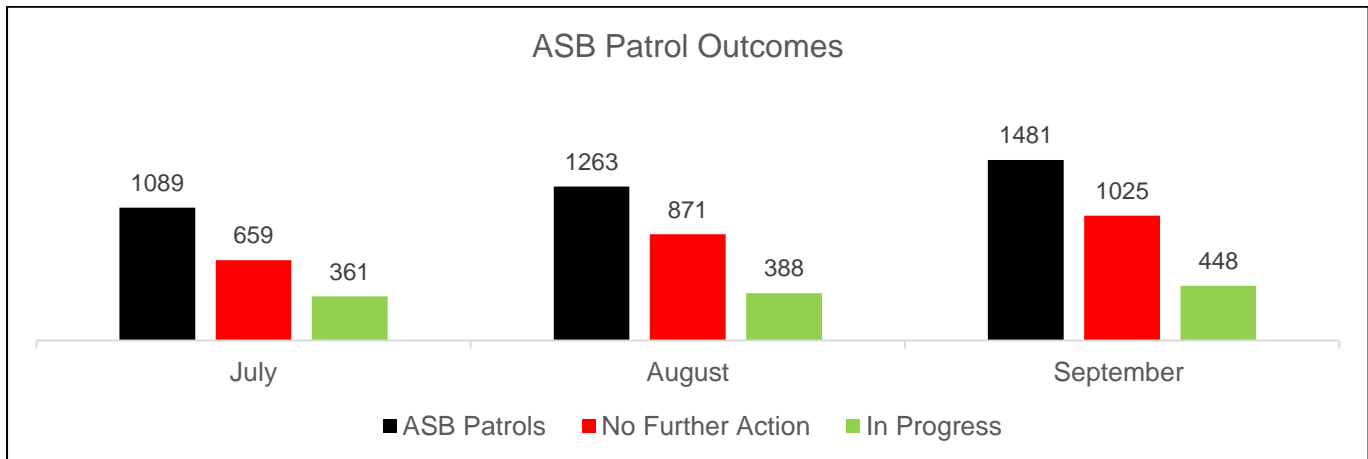
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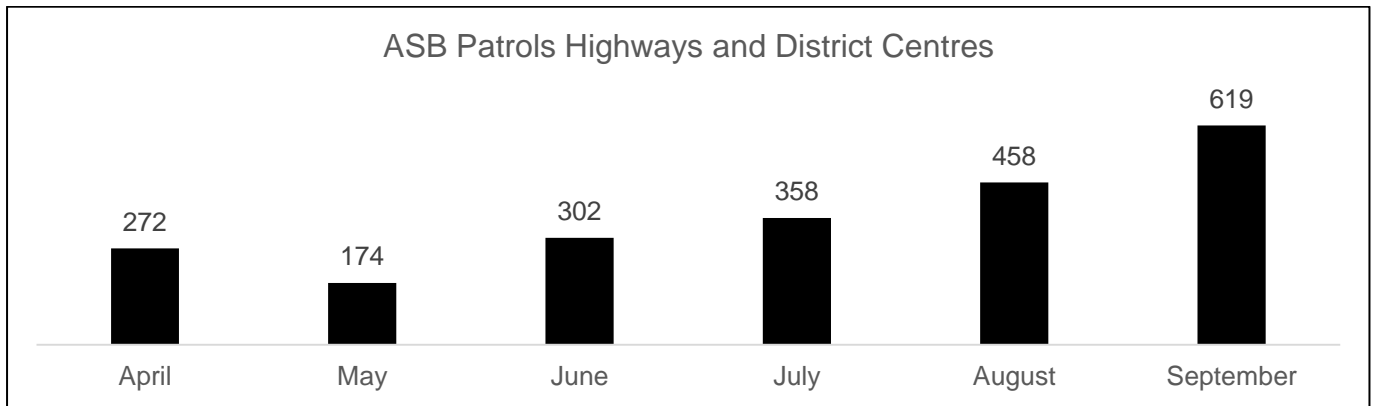
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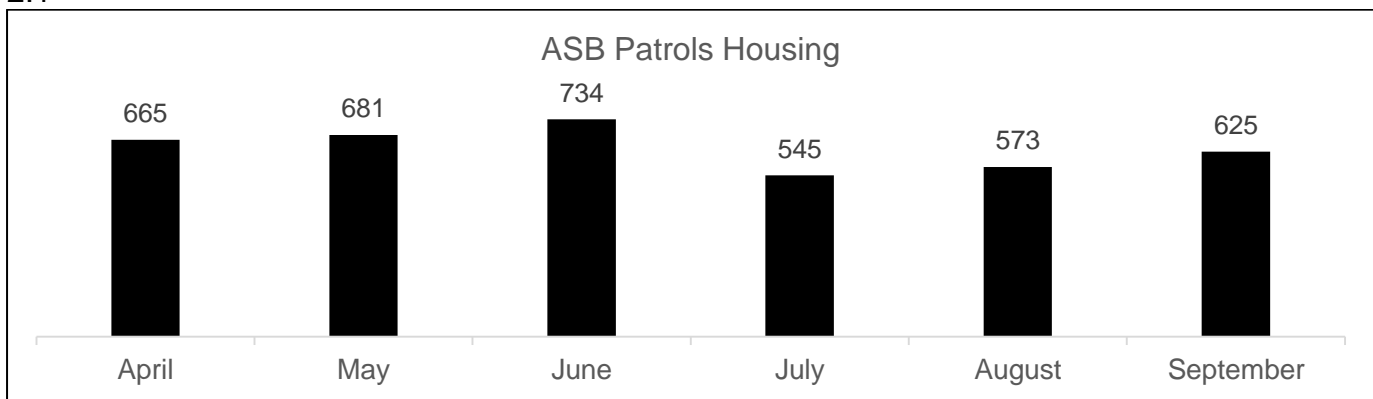
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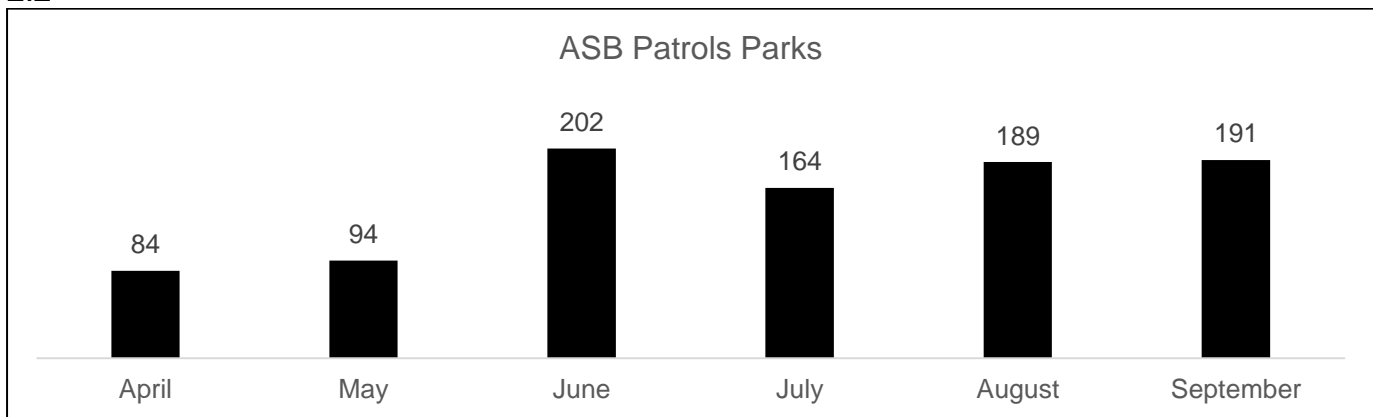
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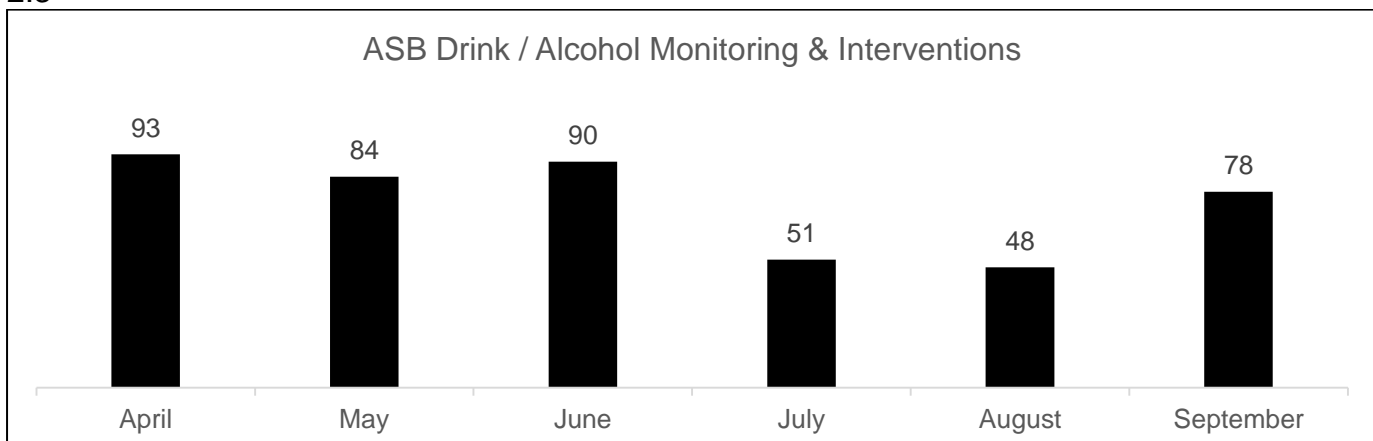
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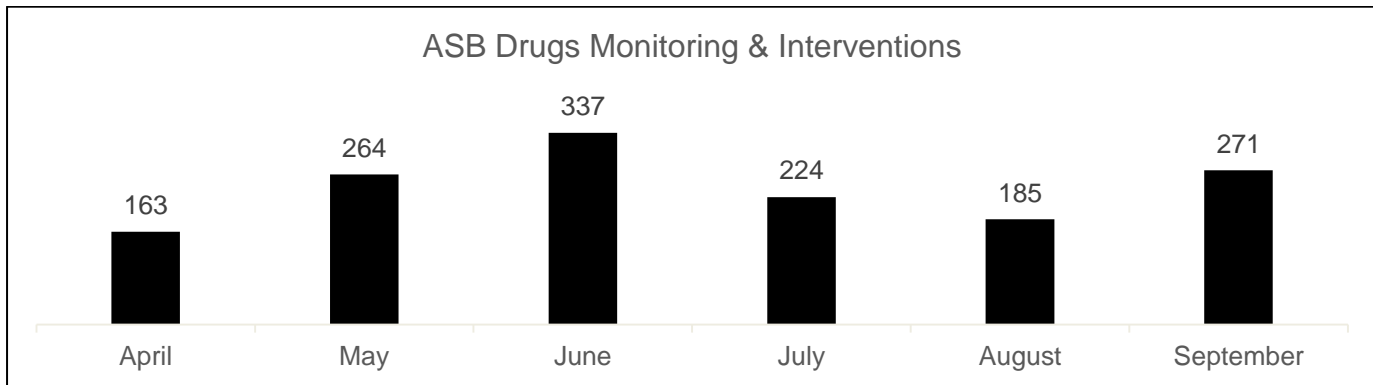
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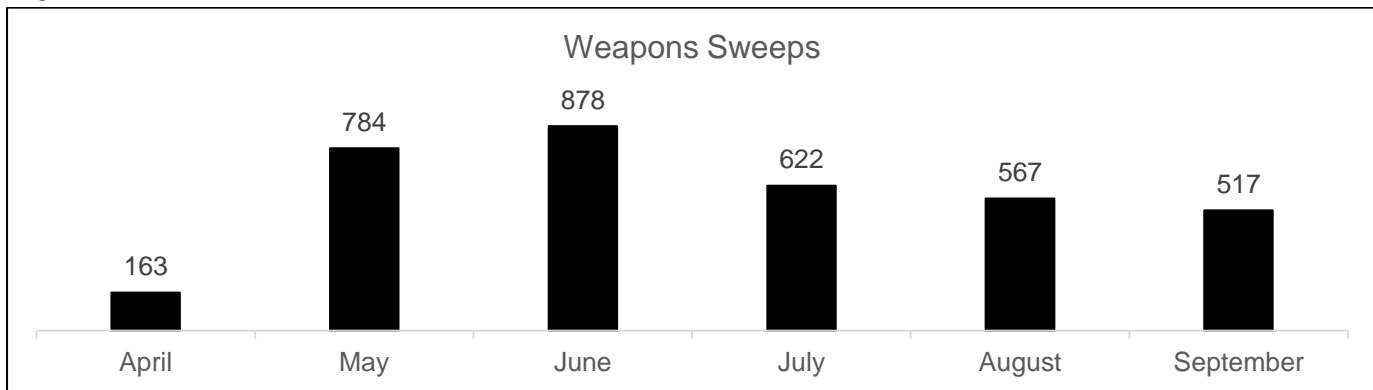
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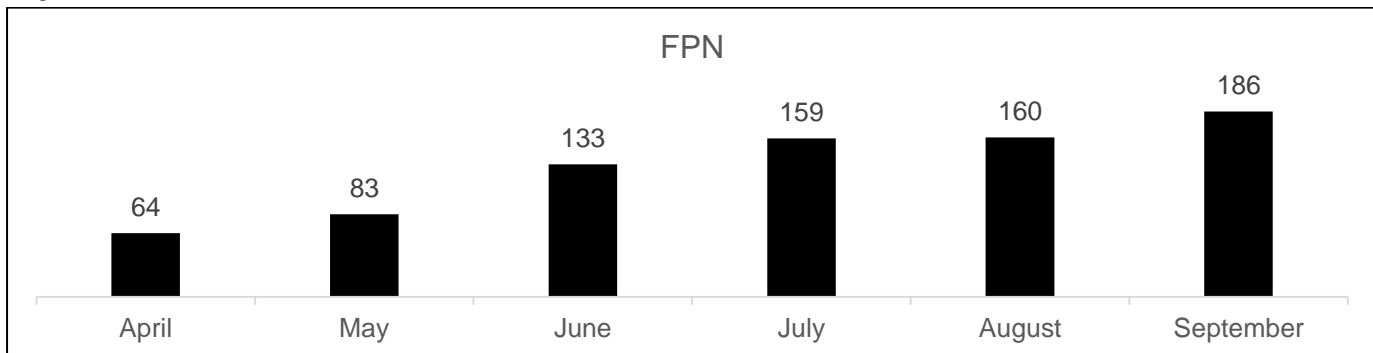
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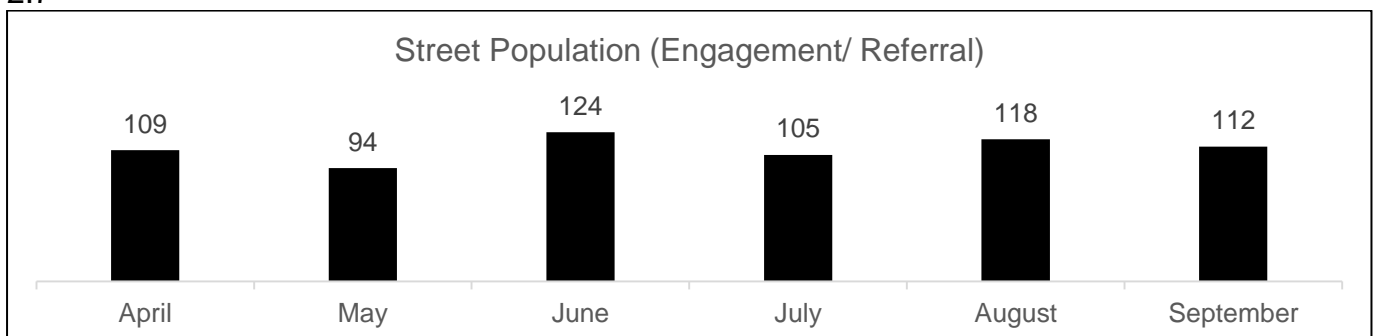
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LET Q2 Event Duties and Tasking

Queens Funeral	Market compliance checks at all sites
Shepherds Bush illegal encampments	Road traffic accident traffic management and marshalling duties
Notting Hill Carnival Tasking	Caxton Village inspections and patrols
Shepherds Bush Fun Fair Tasking	ASB reduction tasking at Shepherds Bush Green
Illegal traveller encampment x 1	ASB reduction tasking at parks
8 x Fortnightly ward based 24-hour operations	Thames Path EScooter and Bike engagement project
Hate Awareness week	Noise nuisance tasking
North End Market Festival	White City PSPO engagement tasking
Dispersal of Unlicensed Music events	Shepherds Bush Green engagement / enforcement tasking
Remembrance Day duties	Fulham Broadway engagement / enforcement tasking
Kings Proclamation marshalling duties	Hammersmith Broadway engagement / enforcement tasking
Sands End Community Centre Events	West Kensington Estate marshalling engagement / enforcement tasking
Football duties at all three stadiums with trading standards	CCTV Van Launch
Autumn Nights Tasking with Police from 17 October to 6 November	Normand Park engagement / enforcement tasking
Met Police Crime reduction tasking	Waste management fly tip reduction tasking
Missing Persons tasking	Suicide Prevention at Furnivall Gardens
Street population engagement / referral	Beggars and Street drinker's engagement / referral
PSPO engagement / enforcement tasking	Weapons sweeps
Emergency Planning support 3 x Fire incident, 2 x Tree damage and obstruction	Sheltered accommodation engagement / enforcement tasking
Shepherds Bush crowd dispersal October	



Collaborative
work with Police



CCTV Van launch

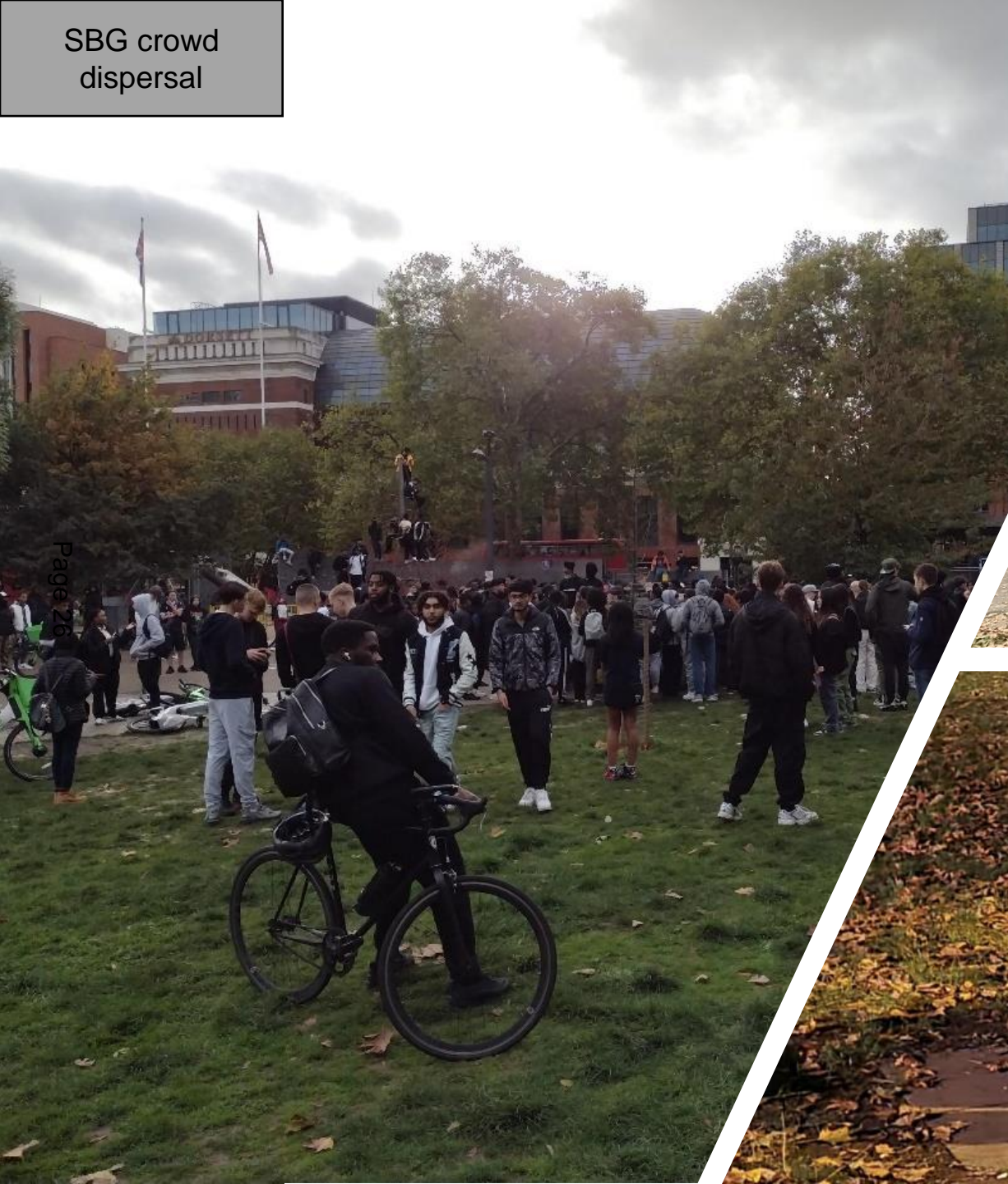


SBG fun fair
tasking





SBG crowd
dispersal



Carnival tasking



Street population
engagement and
referrals



SBG Night
taskings



SBG 24 Hour
operation



7 Sep 2022 08:21
33 Shepherd's Bush Gr
Greater Lon
Engl

SBG collaborative work with Thamereach



Aug 5, 2022 3:18:54 PM



Waste clear up



SBG encampment tasking

Bishops Park



Sep 28, 2022 11:36
Greater L
E

Wormwood
scrubs



Ravenscourt
Ward



Councillor walk about



24 Hour operation



Page 30
Queens Funeral duties



Kings
Proclamation
duties







Come along and meet

Hammersmith & Fulham's Law Enforcement Team

Saturday, 6th August 10.30am - 1.30pm, Shepherds Bush Green



LET Colouring
competition



Kids can sit in the
LET car/van



Face painting



Have your say about issues
in your neighbourhood

A chance to meet your local officers and have your say about issues in your area, and see how they might help you.

Enjoy a chat with your local LET officers over a free snack and drink. Bring your friends, family or neighbours, everyone is welcome.



LET Engagement
event SBG



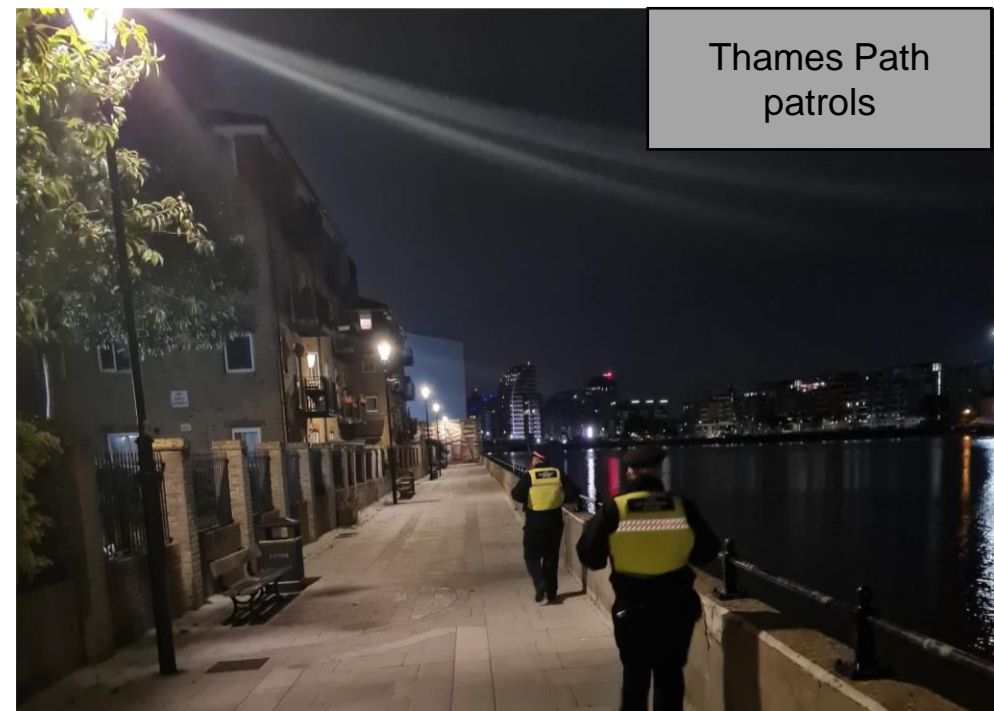
LET Engagement
event
Ravenscourt Park



Councillor walk
about







Agenda Item 5

LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM

Report to: Social Inclusion and Community Safety Policy and Accountability Committee

Date: 22/11/22

Subject: Progress Report on the Gangs, Violence and Exploitation Unit

Report author: Gemma Lightfoot, Gangs, Violence and Exploitation Unit Manager and Elliot Williams-Fletcher, Gangs, Violence and Exploitation Unit Analyst

Responsible Director: Matthew Hooper, Chief Officer, Safer Neighbourhoods and Regulatory Services

SUMMARY

This report provides PAC Members with the opportunity to scrutinise the work and performance of the Council's Gangs Violence and Exploitation Unit (GVEU) reviewing its work and progress since its establishment in September 2020.

There are no decisions required from this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For the committee to note and comment on the report and its contents.

Wards Affected: All

Our Values	Summary of how this report aligns to the H&F Values
Building shared prosperity	A safer borough increases opportunities for all. Encouraging young people to lead healthy and fulfilling lives with aspiration leads to prosperity.
Creating a compassionate council	The GVEU is a front-line service for parents / carers and young people, many of whom are in crisis and require long term support.
Doing things with residents, not to them	The GVEU listens to young people, parents / parents and voluntary and community sector (VCS) partners to develop the opportunities and projects they require
Being ruthlessly financially efficient	The GVEU works hard to deliver a financially efficient service and projects and has also received over £125k funding from external sources

Taking pride in H&F	The GVEU works to tackle serious youth violence in the borough to make the borough a safer place
Rising to the challenge of the climate and ecological emergency	The GVEU has worked closely with the climate change team by linking them in with the communities we work with to further raise their profile and aims

Background Papers Used in Preparing This Report

None.

1. Background

2. The Gangs, Violence and Exploitation Unit (GVEU) was introduced in September 2020, due to a recognition by the Leader and the Deputy Leader of the Council concerning increased serious youth violence on the borough.
3. The focus of the GVEU is to work with young people involved in, or at risk from gangs, violence or exploitation who are 10-25 years old of age. Further areas of work include working with families affected by serious youth violence, residents, and the voluntary and community sector (VCS).
4. The initial development of the GVEU began in the difficult period of the pandemic. The team completed training in systemic and trauma informed practice. This time was used to develop our relationships internally, and to develop long term relationships with external partners, many of whom are in the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS), with whom we have worked to develop and enhance our strong relationships.
5. It was important to the GVEU from the outset to listen to the community, parents / carers and young people. At an induction event held to inform the Unit of its mission, purpose and importance, the former Deputy Leader spoke, as did two parents from the borough whose children have been affected by gangs, violence and exploitation. Feedback from the parents and other attendees was extremely positive. Siraad Aden, a bereaved mother, said of the induction: "You encouraged me to speak up about me and my family's feelings. You gave me the opportunity to speak about the problems with society today. Me and my children thank you, for helping me get to this stage. Thank you."
6. It is a credit to the team that in 2021, as a result of the GVEU's success and achievements, the Unit was the recipient of the Team of the Year at the Council's Star Awards.

7. Team overview

8. The team consists of a manager who is responsible for leading and managing the Unit, a Policy and Service Development Officer, four gangs outreach workers, two ASB co-ordinators, a dedicated GVEU analyst alongside a team of six council-funded police officers.

9. Our GVEU workers are assigned cases and work with young people, and their families, to build trust, understand the needs of the young person and the risk(s) they face as we work to support them away from gangs and/or serious youth violence.
10. The outreach workers have been trained in systemic and trauma informed practice. One to one work and family visits are conducted with young people affected by serious youth violence, gang-related violence and exploitation on a weekly basis, whereby the outreach team assist to manage the risks they face and work towards their aspirations. The outreach work is not time bound.
11. Our two ASB Co-ordinators lead on our enforcement action with our police colleagues, along with leading on housing moves for families within our cohort.
12. The GVEU Analyst provides data support to the GVEU which largely revolves around providing, both proactive and reactive, criminal network analysis alongside performance analysis. Crime analysis is also provided in the form of reports and dashboard for the GVEU.
13. Our Policy and Service Development Officer (PSDO) is responsible for the development and the implementation of policy initiatives through high level project work and partnership working with both operational, senior colleagues and other partners. The PSDO also identifies new areas of opportunity and innovation for the GVEU.
14. The Police Officers within the unit act on intelligence received with their proactive team colleagues. They provide a daily intelligence briefing, lead and participate in police operations, lead on child criminal exploitation reports and apply for Criminal Behaviour Orders.
15. **Key principles**
16. The Unit has the following key principles:

Community Participation - Our communities, particularly our young people, are engaged and active in designing the services they use

Community Support - Communities and families are well supported to tackle issues of exploitation and know where to look for help

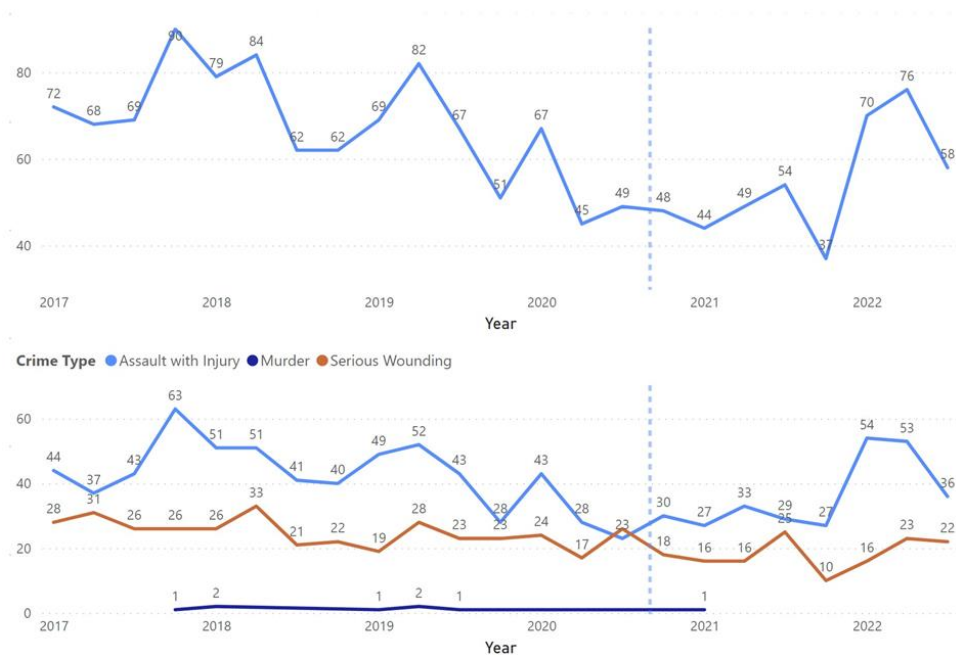
Community Resilience - Working with communities and the third sector to build an anti-violence culture

Early Intervention - Our service is trauma-informed and targeted at dealing with vulnerabilities early to reduce the impact of adverse experiences

Prevention - Our young people are provided with the best youth services in London which encourage positive activities and appeal to everyone

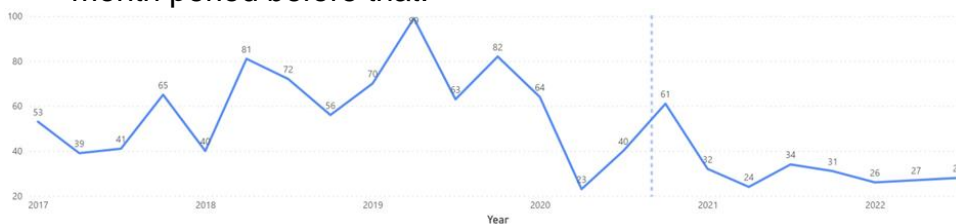
Protection - We will use all available legislation to ensure our communities are protected from criminal behaviour

17. **Key Performance Indicators** - The Unit's KPI's are as follows:
18. ***To increase the number of referrals made to the GVEU***
There have been 79 referrals since the GVEU was established. There have been 38 from October 2021 to September 2022.
19. ***To increase the number of education and awareness sessions delivered to residents (young people & parents/carers)***
Since the GVEU was established there have been 65 GVEU led training and awareness sessions, with a total of 937 attendees. 38 GVEU led training and awareness sessions with a total of 671 attendees have been held from October 2021 to September 2022. Additionally, the GVEU has commissioned a total of 17 Street Doctors Sessions with a total of 126 attendees, of which 8 have occurred from October 2021 to September 2022 totalling 53 attendees.
20. There have been 120 Detached Outreach Sessions delivered since the project was launched with 1,479 attendees. From October 2021 to September 2022, there were 73 Detached Outreach Sessions with 891 attendees in total.
21. ***To increase the number of Hammersmith and Fulham and police enforcement interventions***
As a service the GVEU has overseen the investigations and delivery of:
32 Child Criminal Exploitation reports,
16 Criminal Behaviour Order applications, and
9 recalls to prison
23. The data below covering crime and ambulance call outs covers all incidents involving young people aged 10 to 24 that occurred in Hammersmith and Fulham. This means therefore that much of the included data will relate to incidents outside of the scope of the Gangs, Violence, and Exploitation Unit.
24. ***To reduce the number of violent crimes committed by young people***
251 non-domestic violence assault with injury, serious wounding, or murder offences were committed by young people aged 10 to 24 from October 2021 to September 2022.
25. This was 29% higher than the previous 12 months and 13% higher than the 12-month period before that. There have been no murders since 2021. Serious Wounding has seen a 5% reduction compared to the previous 12 months and an 18% reduction compared to the 12 months before that. Whilst Assault with injury saw a higher rate in Q1 and Q2 2022 this fell in Q3.



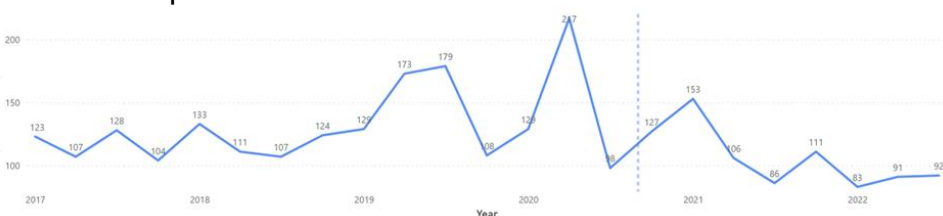
26. **To reduce the number of robberies committed by young people**
 There were 112 robbery offences committed by young people aged 10 to 24 from October 2021 to September 2022.

27. This was 26% lower than the previous 12 months and 46% lower than the 12-month period before that.



28. **To reduce the number of drug related offences committed by young people**
 377 drug offences were committed by young people aged 10 to 24 from October 2021 to September 2022.

29. This was 20% lower than the previous 12 months and 32% lower than the 12-month period before that.



30. ***To reduce the number, and seriousness of injuries, caused by youth violence***
Data on ambulance call outs for September 2022 is not yet available. In the previous 12 months for which we have data available, September 2021 to August 2022, there were 32 ambulance call outs for young people aged 10 to 24.
31. This was 39% lower than the previous 12 months and 62% lower than the 12 months period before that.
32. *Data note - The data used for the KPI's above is correct as of 24/10/2022. The Unit was established in September 2020, during the period of rolling national and regional lockdowns to prevent the spread of COVID-19 that occurred between 23/03/2020 and 22/02/2022. These lockdowns limited the Unit's ability to provide training and outreach work, meaning that lower numbers of education and awareness sessions could be provided than anticipated. Reduced professional interactions with young people, because of the pandemic infection control, will also have reduced the number of referrals to the Unit. The restrictions also reduced the number of offences generally and will have impacted A&E admissions. The Unit is a priority service and continued to come into the office and deliver a service to the best of its ability during the pandemic.*
33. **Further operational work**
34. The GVEU has developed a Vulnerability Tracker. Professionals recognised a clear trajectory for young people who are affected by GVE. We have, therefore, created a vulnerability tracker to identify those young people we need to work with at the earliest opportunity. In partnership with the police and Children's Services we assess young people across 5 subcategories: welfare, victim of crime, criminal behaviour, county lines and other risk factors. In total we score across 25 categories which include, amongst others, mental health, whether the young person is currently wanted / missing, whether they are in employment, education or training and whether they associate with others who are being exploited. There has been hugely positive feedback from partners that the tracker is welcomed and impressive.
35. The GVEU has developed and implemented a Risk & Aspiration Plan. It is our single assessment and development framework which we use for every young person referred to the GVEU.
36. The GVEU has produced Gangs, Violence & Exploitation awareness sessions. A session is appropriate for parents, carers and professionals and develops their awareness of GVE and issues surrounding it. This is delivered in partnership with Resilience (the young person's arm of Turning Point). The GVEU consulted with the Anti-Tribalism Movement (VCS organisation) on the presentation, which has now been delivered to the Parenting Awareness Programme and Parent / Carer Champions, amongst others, with great feedback. There is also another awareness session which is aimed at Year 6 children which, again, has been delivered to great success and feedback.
37. The GVEU has built partnership working as we recognise that sharing our intelligence, ideas and professional experience is critical to effectively reducing

risk and best supporting families and young people. Therefore, the GVEU sits on: Risk & Wellbeing Panel, Safeguarding Adolescents at Risk Panel, Out of Court Disposal Panel, Cuckooing Panel and No Further Action (NFA) Panel (discussion to provide support for young people who have been NFA'd for a serious offences). The GVEU also convenes the Ending Gangs, Violence and Exploitation Panel which discussed over 18's who are at risk / involved in GVE.

38. Projects

39. The GVEU also develops and funds several projects:
40. Detached outreach project – the GVEU utilises the uplift grant we receive from the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) to match fund Harrow Club to deliver the detached outreach service in the borough. There are fortnightly partnership meetings attended by the GVEU, Harrow Club, Anti-Social Behaviour Unit, Youth Justice Service and the Exploitation lead from Children's Services where we inform Harrow Club of the areas we want the detached outreach to focus on. They engage with young people and encourage them to participate in diversionary activities such as music, sport, youth club.
 41. South Fulham Capacity Building project - Following a successful bid to the VRU the Unit received £68k in grant to deliver a project to build resilience to violence within a community. The area chosen for the project was South Fulham. The project is being delivered by the GVEU in conjunction with Harrow Club and ASE and funds several projects in the area.
 42. We have empowered the community to utilise Sands End Arts and Community Centre (SEACC) which they felt detached from, and they now meet there on a weekly basis for parent / carer coffee mornings, which have included training on first aid and trauma informed approaches. Parent and carers have found this a safe space to talk about the issues affecting them and their children which then feeds into the monthly meeting where professionals attend and are themed with topics such as housing, ASB, hate crime etc.
 43. The parents / carers developed their confidence to host their own even event assisted by ASE to celebrate Eid which was attended by residents and community partners with great feedback.
 44. In response to listening to parents / carers the grant funds late-night youth project running on Friday's from 9pm until midnight at Sands End Youth Club.
 45. The Rebel Records project has also been delivered as part of the wider project. Rebel Records are an independent record label in Sands End made up of writers, producers and sound engineers, many of whom grew up in Fulham and are achieving great success. Their studio is state of the art, and they are committed to early intervention with young people and working with them to achieve their aspirations. We have completed a 10-week programme that runs Saturday all day for a group of 5 young people. There is a learning programme that enables the young people to learn about all aspects of music such as production / engineering, writing, marketing, management and financial skills. Due to the success the young people wanted to continue and a phase 2 of the

project was developed for them for an additional 10 weeks. Another initial 10-week programme has commenced for another group of young people.

46. The project also funded a residential for young people led by Harrow Club in October half term. The residential also provided the time for a listening session to take place so we could listen to the needs of young people to take on board when developing future projects and was attended by another one of our partners, Lyceum Gym, to develop this.
47. Following the success of the project the GVEU received an additional £25k funding from the VRU to continue aspects of the project.
48. Mentoring Project - The Gangs Unit successfully bid for funding from the Home Office via the Violence Reduction Unit which has provided for 40 mentoring spaces which are being delivered by the Harrow Club. The mentoring lasts for 6 months and has a very broad remit and can range from early intervention through to advanced stages of youth violence involvement. The reasons for requesting mentoring have been wide ranging from confidence building, request for a male role model, expanding their horizons to getting involved in activities. The Gangs Unit analyst is providing analysis of the mentoring to the Home Office.
49. Notting Hill Carnival / Bank Holiday Weekend - In advance of the Carnival weekend the GVEU led on the partnership work to identifying young people (children and adults) who we would have concerns about attending carnival. As per previous years we identified the young people and tasked a named practitioner to have a conversation with them about their attendance and provided a safety conversation guide for practitioners. Additionally, the GVEU funded a project on the Bank Holiday Monday in conjunction with People Arise Now whereby young people attended a FIFA challenge event and could watch a film and discuss afterwards.
50. The GVEU funded additional sessions of the late-night project to run on Saturday and Sunday and additional youth club sessions to run at White City Youth Club on Sunday and Monday.
51. The purpose of the additional events was to provide diversion and intervention to young people.
52. As part of Carnival planning an outreach worker worked in the CCTV Unit over the Bank Holiday period to identify any concerning activity on the borough involving young people and worked closely with the police, police youth engagement team and our colleagues from the Violence Intervention Project who were based in the youth custody suite for Carnival in Wandsworth.
53. The Gangs Unit are pleased to report that there was only 1 incident of concern to the Unit.
54. Fearless - From our annual VRU funding the GVEU has recently completed a campaign with the Crimestoppers youth brand, Fearless. The aim of the targeted campaign was to encourage and persuade young members of the community to speak up about and report crime. The campaign developed

communications and messaging to engage with young people across the borough with the target of raising awareness of the Crimestoppers / Fearless anonymous service via advertising and promotion.

55. The campaign was largely completed via messaging on social media networks that young people utilise. The Youth Mayor was utilised as an ambassador for the campaign, and he released an advert on social media encouraging reporting to occur within LBHF.
56. The target audience was young people aged 11-16yrs. A campaign landing page and a professional toolkit for partners was also arranged and sent out to the local partnership. The campaign webpage also included downloadable links to campaign materials if required.
57. The campaign has recently completed so we are now waiting for the results to see whether it did encourage anonymous reporting from young people in our borough.
58. Women and Girls project - The Unit further successfully bid for the VRU's preventative critical incident grant (£5k) and was match funded by the wider Community Safety Unit. The funding was allocated to the Women and Girls Network (VCS organisation) for a project to work with women and girls to discuss violence and exploitation concerns with them and advise them where they can seek support and help. The project was delivered in both education and community settings. The key points of focus were emotional wellbeing, goals, aspirations and self-esteem. This project was developed following initial sessions in a school with a girls group led by a Gangs Unit outreach worker and the feedback from that.

59. Future work

60. The GVEU are concerned about the South Fulham and White City areas with regards to gangs, violence and exploitation and are working with the police, external partners and the community to understand and map the issues and take enforcement action where necessary alongside support to families and young people.
61. The GVEU will continue to develop our project work, with plans underway to work with another VCS partner, Gloves not Gunz, to put in place two sport and dance activities in White City and a further dance and wellbeing project for parents / carers. All of these projects will also allow a safe space for young people / parent / carers to discuss their concerns and any support required.
62. We also have project plans underway with Lyceum Gym (based at Sands End Arts and Community Centre) and Lyric Theatre.
63. The GVEU currently take the lead with the Community Safety team on developing our local violence and vulnerability and action plan which has received a "good" rating from the Violence Reduction Unit. Legislation is due to come into force (Serious Violence Duty) which will require specified authorities to work together to prevent and reduce serious violence, including identifying

the kinds of serious violence that occur in the area, the causes of that violence and to prepare and implement a strategy for preventing and reducing serious violence. The GVEU will play a critical part in responding to the duty.

64. The GVEU has recently introduced a case management system, ECINS. This will lead to improved data reporting from our outreach work.

Agenda Item 6

Report to: Social Inclusion and Community Safety Policy and Accountability Committee

Date: 22/11/2022

Subject: Violence Against Women and Girls

Report author: Neil Thurlow, Assistant Director of Community Safety, and Beth Morgan, Community Safety Manager

Responsible Director: Matthew Hooper, Chief Officer Safer Neighbourhoods and Regulatory Services

SUMMARY

This report provides PAC Members with the opportunity to scrutinise the council's approach to responding to and preventing Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) in H&F. In particular this report focuses on the support services provided to women and girls experiencing domestic abuse.

There are no decisions required from this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For the committee to note and comment on the report and its contents.

Wards Affected: All

Our Values	Summary of how this report aligns to the H&F Values
Building shared prosperity	The council's VAWG strategy contributes to the council's commitment to end violence against women and girls and make H&F a safe borough for residents. Commissioned support service providers are asked to deliver social value (were required) and to confirm that the staff involved in delivering the services will not be subject to zero-hour contracts, and will have suitable employment terms and conditions, including the payment of the London Living Wage.
Creating a compassionate council	The council's VAWG strategy and commissioned support services support some of the most vulnerable residents in H&F and aim to improve the safety of residents affected by violence against women and girls (VAWG).
Doing things with residents, not to them	The council's VAWG strategy was co-produced with H&F victims/survivors, residents, third sector providers, community organisations and various council departments including public health,

	housing and children's services.
Being ruthlessly financially efficient	When commissioning VAWG services, the council follows a competitive procurement process to ensure all contracts represent good value for money.
Taking pride in H&F	The council's VAWG strategy contributes to the council's commitment to end violence against women and girls and make H&F a safe borough for residents.

Background Papers Used in Preparing This Report

1. Background

2. Stopping different forms of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) was named as a key priority in the council's 2022 manifesto commitments, which stated "We will deliver our new, locally-focused strategy to tackle Violence Against Women and Girls."
3. The council's new 2022-2027 [Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy](#) was published in March 2022. The strategy was developed and co-produced with H&F victims/survivors, residents, third sector providers, community organisations and various council departments including public health, housing and children's services.
4. The strategy has four main objectives:
 - a. VAWG is prevented
 - b. Survivors are supported
 - c. Abusers are held to account
 - d. Collaboration to create change
5. Accompanying the strategy is a 5-year action plan, reviewed annually, which details how we will be delivering against these objectives as a wider VAWG partnership. Included within this are the following commitments outlined in the manifesto:
 - a. Increasing the number of VAWG Law Enforcement Officer women's champions across the borough
 - b. Extending our work with residents, partners, the third sector and victims to provide a comprehensive programme of zero tolerance of VAWG: and
 - c. Ensuring that all perpetrators of VAWG are brought to justice in partnership with the police and key stakeholders.
6. In September 2021, the council increased its investment in VAWG funding, and recruited a dedicated Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Lead to oversee the delivery of the strategy and action plan and to further strengthen and enhance our response to VAWG.
7. Given the breadth of work being undertaken across the partnership to tackle the different forms of VAWG, this report will focus on the following key priority areas:
 1. Council funded domestic abuse refuge provision, provided by Refuge Charity
 2. Council funded domestic abuse support services, including Independent Domestic Abuse Advocates (IDVAs); Independent Sexual Violence Advocates (ISVAs) and the Impact Project
 3. Council funded survivor consultation, being delivered by Women and Girls Network
 4. Activities to recognise 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence in November-December 2022

8. Refuge provision

9. The new Domestic Abuse Act 2021 places a duty on local authorities to provide accommodation-based support to victims of domestic abuse and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation, and to ensure that this support is tailored and meets the diverse needs of victim/survivors.
10. Hammersmith & Fulham have multiple refuge providers operating within the borough who receive funding from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities via the Greater London Authority.
11. One of these providers, Refuge Charity, is commissioned and part-funded via the council to deliver safe accommodation to single women and women with children affected by domestic abuse in H&F. As part of this contract Refuge also provide IDVAs, a children's worker, access to group work and counselling, and support to move on to independent living.
12. The service was recommissioned and awarded to Refuge Charity in July 2022 via a competitive procurement process and provides 14 spaces for single women and women with children affected by domestic abuse. The value of this contract to the council is £121,400.35 per annum and the contract was awarded for a minimum contract term of 3 years.
13. The service aims and objectives are:

Service Aims

- Provide high quality, safe accommodation for women, fleeing or at risk of domestic abuse and in immediate danger
- Deliver effective support interventions that enable survivors to exercise life choices that enable them to secure safe, settled accommodation.
- Deliver a service which reflects the needs of its residents including underrepresented groups
- Enable women and children affected by domestic violence to rebuild their lives and make the transition to a settled home and to training or employment.

Service Objectives

- Provide high quality, safe temporary accommodation for women and their children
- Assist women and their dependants to maintain personal safety and security
- Provide survivors with bespoke, specialist support based on an informed and ongoing assessment of need and risk
- Support women to access and maintain education, training or employment (where appropriate) and provide practical financial advice and support
- Support survivors to explore their accommodation options, such as management transfers and private sector housing options
- Support survivors and their children to move on into more suitable, sustainable settled accommodation
- Assist with a range of practical tasks associated with women fleeing their homes, belongings, jobs and support networks in an emergency
- Assist survivors to obtain specialist legal advice and seek remedies through the judicial system
- Enable children to identify and access the resources and services they need
- Promote a community support ethos within the refuge accommodation

14. Under the previous provider, in 2021-22, this service supported 42 women and 28 children.
15. The latest performance data for this service can be found in appendix 1.

Key challenges

16. The council and our service providers face two key challenges in delivering domestic abuse refuge accommodation in H&F - notably the security of funding and the availability of suitable accommodation/housing options.
17. With regard to the security of funding, the council currently has a core funding envelope of £121,400 per annum for domestic abuse refuge provision. This budget is secure and forms part of our confirmed annual budget. According to Women's Aid, 71.7% of refuge spaces are funded by local authorities nationally.
18. In H&F, local refuge providers also receive funding via the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Fund.
19. The council administers this DLUHC grant funding (which the council receives via the GLA) to various refuge service providers operating in H&F, including Refuge Charity.
20. However, this funding is only confirmed by DLUHC and the GLA on an annual basis, shortly in advance of the beginning of each financial year (in March). The council received confirmation that this funding would continue for Q1 of financial year 2022/23 on 30 March 2022. The funding for Q2-Q4 of 2022/23 was confirmed on 5 May 2022. We received the contract for signature on 13 September 2022. We have yet to receive the funding for this year 2022/23.
21. The uncertainty regarding whether this funding will continue year on year creates not only insecurity for our providers and their employees, but it also has the potential to have a negative impact on the quality of service provided and on our service users, who are amongst the most vulnerable in the borough.
22. Officers in community safety work closely with our refuge providers to communicate updates and manage risks associated with the precarity of this funding.
23. With regard to the second key challenge noted, it is recognised within the Ending VAWG Sector that best practice for domestic abuse refuge provision would involve secure, high quality, self-contained units within a space which also contains communal spaces which are purpose-built to improve wellbeing, support, and access to resources and skills (for example, rooms for counselling/group work/workshops, study spaces, play areas for children, space for socialising and building a sense of community). Ideally, these units and the buildings would also be accessible and able to meet the varied needs of victim/survivors and their children who are fleeing domestic abuse.
24. Given the challenges of the London housing market coupled with funding constraints, local authorities and charities across London (and also nationally) find it difficult to deliver refuge provision which fully aligns with the best practice framework.
25. We currently do not have any fully self-contained units in any refuge buildings in H&F, which can be particularly challenging for victim/survivors with children or those with disabilities who are required to share bathroom and shower facilities with a number of other residents. We also currently do not have any fully wheelchair accessible units.

26. The challenging housing market in London, which is particularly saturated in Hammersmith & Fulham, also makes it difficult to find suitable move-on accommodation for victim/survivors when they are ready to leave the refuge. We are seeing residents in the refuge staying for much longer periods of time than intended due to delays in finding somewhere to live. This results in new victim/survivors being unable to access the refuge because they remain at capacity whilst our providers struggle to find accommodation for victim/survivors to move on to.

27. Similarly, refuge charities often lease buildings from Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) to provide this provision. Officers are also working collaboratively with colleagues in Economy to explore opportunities to renovate alternative H&F owned buildings for use as refuges which would improve and expand our refuge offer in H&F.

28. Commissioned domestic abuse support services

29. The council currently commissions a range of services for survivors of VAWG.

30. The council's main VAWG support service is provided by the [Angelou Service](#) and was recommissioned for a minimum of three years in September 2021.

31. The Angelou Service is delivered by a consortium of VAWG organisations including:

- Advance (lead partner)
- Al Hasaniya (specialists in BAME communities and harmful practices)
- Women and Girls Network (specialists in sexual violence)
- Solace (specialists in sexual violence)
- IKWRO Women's Rights Organisation (specialists in BAME communities harmful practices)
- Galop (LBT+ communities)

32. The Angelou Service supports women (including trans women and gender non-binary people):

- Experiencing domestic abuse and sexual violence and assault.
- Experiencing stalking and harassment as part of domestic abuse.
- Who have been subjected to or at risk of harmful practices including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage (FM), and honour-based violence (HBV).
- Experiencing multiple forms of VAWG.
- Young women and girls aged 13-21 who are experiencing or are at risk of a range of issues including domestic abuse, sexual exploitation, gang related abuse and harmful practices.

33. The women supported include those from Black or global majority communities, women with multiple disadvantages, women with no recourse to public funds, women with disabilities and LBT+ women. Angelou provide support to victims regardless of whether they remain in a violent relationship, are seeking to leave a violent relationship or have already left a violent relationship.

34. Support is available from 9am to 6pm Monday to Friday with extended provision from 8am to 9pm one day a week. Women referred to the service are contacted within 1 working day of the referral being received and an initial phone assessment is completed. All service users are offered an initial appointment within a maximum of five working days of the receipt of a referral.

35. The support provided includes:

- Advice around housing, rights and options
- Criminal and civil justice processes
- Safety planning
- Benefits and welfare
- Emotional support
- Physical and mental health
- Substance misuse
- Immigration

36. Working as part of a Co-ordinated Community Response (CCR) to tackling VAWG, the service aims to deliver the following key objectives:

- To improve safety of victim/survivors of VAWG and their children
- To provide access to specialist support for victim/survivors who are from Black and Global Majority groups or who identify as LBT+
- To address wider forms of VAWG
- To improve access for victim/survivors experiencing multiple and intersecting disadvantage
- To reduce repeat victimisation
- To improve long-term outcomes and wellbeing for victims and their families
- To support young people and children affected by abuse

37. Since the service was recommissioned in September 2021, 471 H&F residents have received support through the Angelou Service and 285 children were also indirectly supported by supporting their non abusive parent.

- 58% of service users are aged between 25 and 44.
- 79% identified as straight, 14% chose not to disclose their sexuality, with only a small percentage of service users openly identifying as gay or bi-sexual.
- 56% of the women supported identified as Black or from a Global majority background.
- 34% of service users identify as having mental health needs and 10% stated they had a physical disability.

38. Since September 2021, 81% of service users were referred because of domestic abuse (as opposed to other types of VAWG).

39. In the most recent quarter (July to September 2022):

- 21% of service users experienced online abuse
- 15% experienced physical abuse
- 10% experienced sexual violence
- 11% experienced harmful practices such as FGM and honour-based abuse
- 10% experienced coercive control
- 9% experienced financial abuse
- 9% experienced stalking and harassment

40. The latest performance data for this service can be found in appendix 2.

41. In addition to the support provided by the Angelou service, the council is currently inviting tenders to bring together three other existing contracts and commission an enhanced specialist co-located Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy (IDVA) service to support women experiencing domestic abuse who are accessing

Homelessness services, Children's Social Care, and/or the Criminal Justice System in H&F from April 2023.

42. The specialist co-located IDVA service will seek to provide specialist on-site support to meet the varied needs of victim/survivors accessing these services (Housing, Children's Social Care, Criminal Justice) and to help break down the barriers victim/survivors often face when accessing statutory services. The service will include enhanced provision for those experiencing complex and multiple disadvantages, acknowledging that these victims/survivors find it disproportionately more difficult to engage with and receive support from statutory agencies. The service will also provide training and consultations to professionals working across the three co-location areas and multiple disadvantages to upskill them in working sensitively with victim/survivors of Domestic Abuse.

43. Survivor consultation

44. The council are currently working with Women and Girls Network (WGN) to undertake an extensive consultation exercise with survivors of VAWG in H&F. As part of this consultation exercise, WGN are exploring how to most effectively establish a H&F VAWG Survivor Forum.
45. When established, the VAWG Survivor Forum will act a resident advisory board made up of a diverse range of victim/survivors. As experts through lived experience, the Forum would help guide and influence the council and local partners' response to VAWG by reviewing our VAWG strategy and action plan, our policies and procedures and guiding our service redesign.
46. The Forum will seek to ensure that intersectionality, equity, diversity, and inclusion are considered and embedded throughout the consultation, strategy, and recommendations. A key focus of the consultation is therefore to identify how we can ensure that voices which are often missing, excluded, and marginalised within consultations are offered equal voice and participation within the Forum.
47. The survivor consultation launched in May 2022 and is due to be completed by February 2023. From the outset WGN have demonstrated their commitment to co-production working alongside their own Pan London Advisory board to develop all materials to be used for the consultation and members of the board will co-facilitate consultation spaces. WGN will provide various platform for survivors to engage and participate including online/ face to face- individual and group sessions. They will also consult with other representative stakeholders working with VAWG survivors. They will provide a range of opportunities to feed into the consultation e.g., online surveys and provide a thematic analysis of findings. Based on the findings they will compile a report outlining key recommendations along with an action plan. Determined by the report recommendations they will develop relevant resources including policies and procedures to safeguard the Advisory Groups recruitment and membership.

48. 16 Days Activism against Gender-Based Violence 2022

49. 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence is an annual international event that starts on the 25 November (the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women) and runs to the 10 December (International Human Rights Day). Each year a broad range of organisations, including the council, host events to raise awareness of VAWG for both professionals and residents.
50. During this year's 16 Days, the council will be delivering the following:

- A festive fundraiser in support of domestic abuse services across H&F
- Social media communications campaign to raise awareness our VAWG support services
- Dedicated engagement with businesses and night-time economy venues to promote the 'Ask for Angela' initiative and promote further training on the scheme
- Workshops, delivered in partnership with the Suzy Lamplugh Trust, on allyship, demonstrating simple and safe ways the community can intervene to address street harassment. [Register here](#).
- A webinar for professionals focusing on how different communities are impacted by and experience harmful practices including female genital mutilation (FBM), so-called 'honour' based violence (HBV), early and forced marriage and conversion therapy.
- An event hosted by the Council's Women's Network and Race Equality Networks to show solidarity with women in Iran and to discuss the human rights violations taking place. This is following Full Council agreeing a motion to condemn the Iranian regime and its treatment of women on 19 October 2022.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Refuge Service Performance Report

Appendix 2 - Angelou Service Performance Report

Appendix 3 - Domestic Violence and Abuse (DVA)

Appendix 4 - H&F Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2022 – 2027

Appendix 1

Refuge Service Performance Report

The table below shows the main Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the Refuge service alongside performance data from July-September 2022 (since the service was recommissioned under a new provider):

Key Performance Indicator	Provisional Target	Measured Through	Performance July 2022-Sept 2022
Occupancy rate	95%	Monitoring report – utilisation level	88%
Throughput	150%	Monitoring report – number of survivors accessing refuge	128% (18 women total)
Individual Support Plans (ISP) developed in partnership with each survivor which addresses risk, need and sets out objectives to be achieved within the support plan period	100%	Monitoring report - number of ISPs as compared with survivors accessing refuge	100% (all 18 women)
Reduced risk to survivors (and their children)	90%	Monitoring report – % of service users at reduced risk at case closure as measured by professional judgement, risk and needs assessment and closing assessments	100%
	90%	Exit survey - % of service users who reported improved safety	100%
	90%	Exit survey - % of service users who reported improved safety for their children (where applicable)	100%

	90%	Exit survey - % of service users who reported being at reduced risk	100%
Support to exit refuge and to secure safe and sustainable accommodation	85%	Monitoring report - % who exited within 9 months	75% (4 women exited, 3 women exited within 9 months or less, 1 woman exited within 9-12 months)
Completion of exit surveys	90%	Monitoring report - % of service users (excluding children) exiting refuge who completed Exit Survey	75%
Survivor wellbeing on exit	85%	Exit survey - % of service users who reported improved wellbeing	100%
	85%	Exit survey - % of service users who reported increased knowledge of rights and services	100%
	75%	Exit survey - % of service users who report feelings of reduced isolation	100%

Angelou Service Performance Report

The table below shows the main outcomes and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the Angelou Service alongside performance data from October 2021-September 2022:

Headline Outcome	Key Performance Indicator	Performance Sept 2021-Sept 2022
Improved safety of victims of VAWG and their children	% of service users who report increased safety and feelings of safety as measured by exit surveys.	86%
Work as part of a multi-agency coordinated response to supporting victims of VAWG	% of service users who report a reduction in abuse due to the support and advice received from services as measured by closing assessments.	97%
Service users are at reduced risk of repeat victimisation and supported to live free of violence.	% of service users who are at reduced risk at case closure following the support of the services as measured by professional judgement, risk and needs assessments and closing assessments.	85%
Service users can access support and services that corresponds with their needs and identity.	% of service users from minority communities who may have additional/complex needs, experiencing multiple and/or intersecting disadvantage, and/or; protected characteristics who are meaningfully engaged in services.	56%
Service users can implement individualised safety and support plans which result in improved outcomes and quality of life for them and their children.	Following meaningful engagement with the services, % of service users who report that their quality of life has improved as measured by exit surveys and closing assessments;	85%
Service users have increased emotional and psychological well-being.	% of service users who report improved confidence in reporting abuse and/or where to access help and support as measured by exit interviews and evaluations.	97%

Police VAWG Data

Domestic Violence and Abuse (DVA)

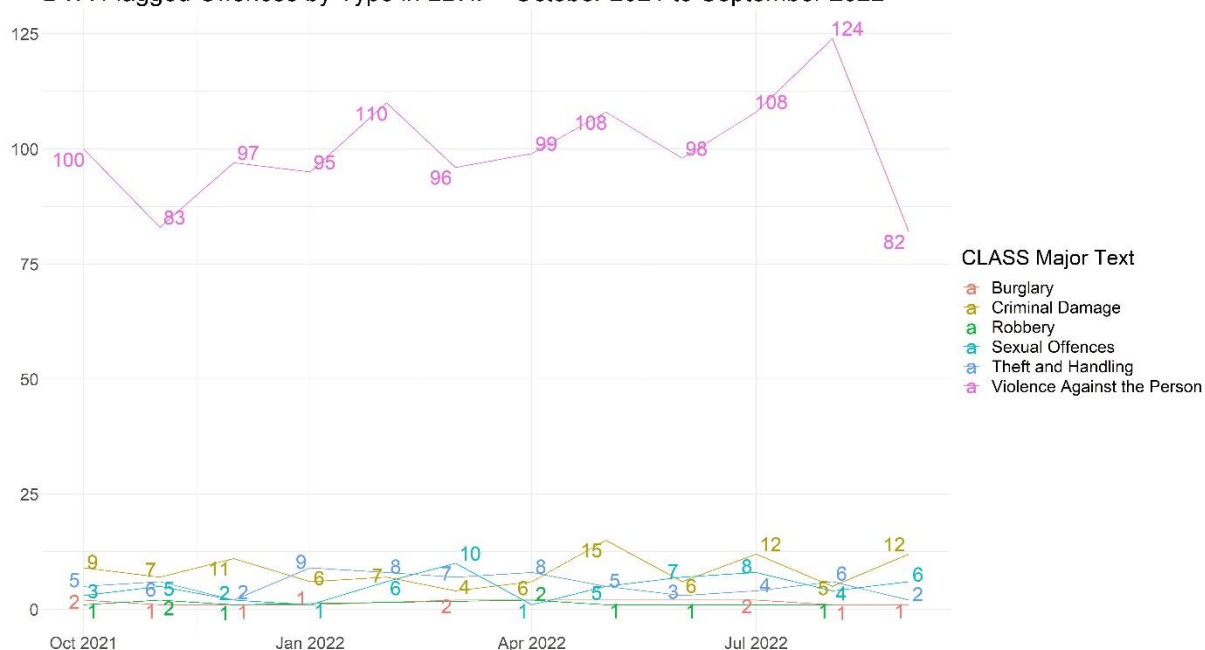
There were 493 DVA flagged offences in Hammersmith & Fulham from October 2021 to September 2022.

Total DVA Flagged Offences in LBHF - October 2021 to September 2022

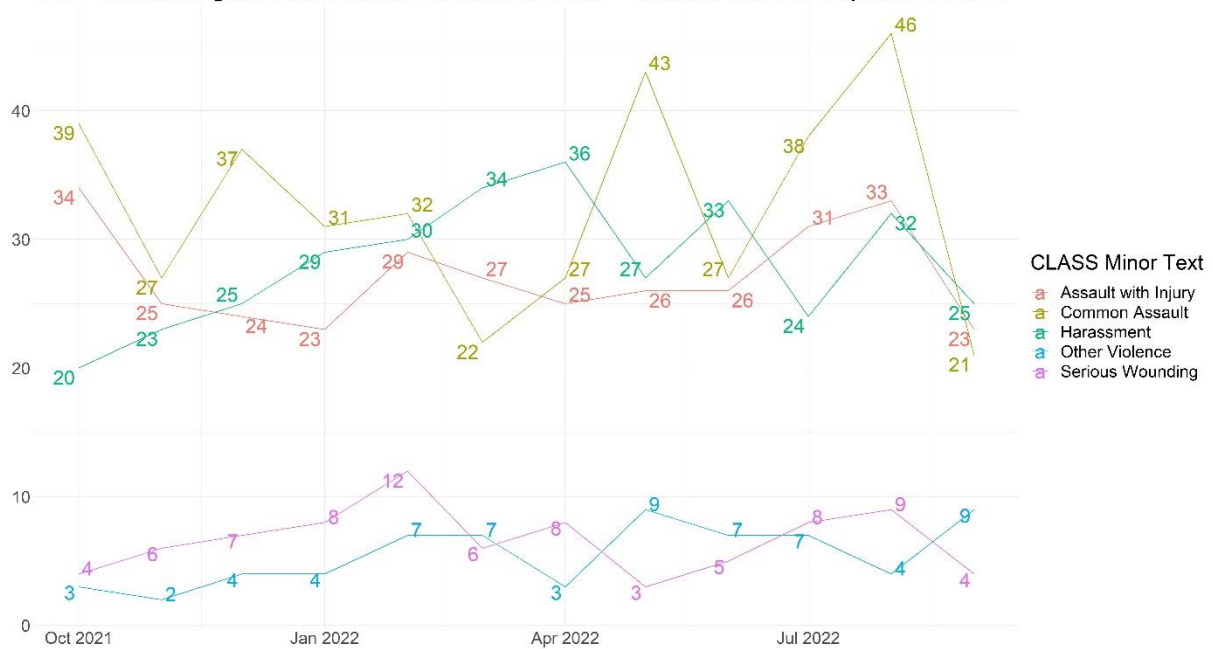


83% of total DVA flagged offences reported to the MPS are Violence Against the Person.

DVA Flagged Offences by Type in LBHF - October 2021 to September 2022



DVA Violence Against the Person Offences in LBHF - October 2021 to September 2022



33% of DVA flagged Violence Against the Person offences reported to the MPS are Common Assault.

28% of DVA flagged Violence Against the Person offences reported to the MPS are Harassment.

27% of DVA flagged Violence Against the Person offences reported to the MPS are Assault with Injury.

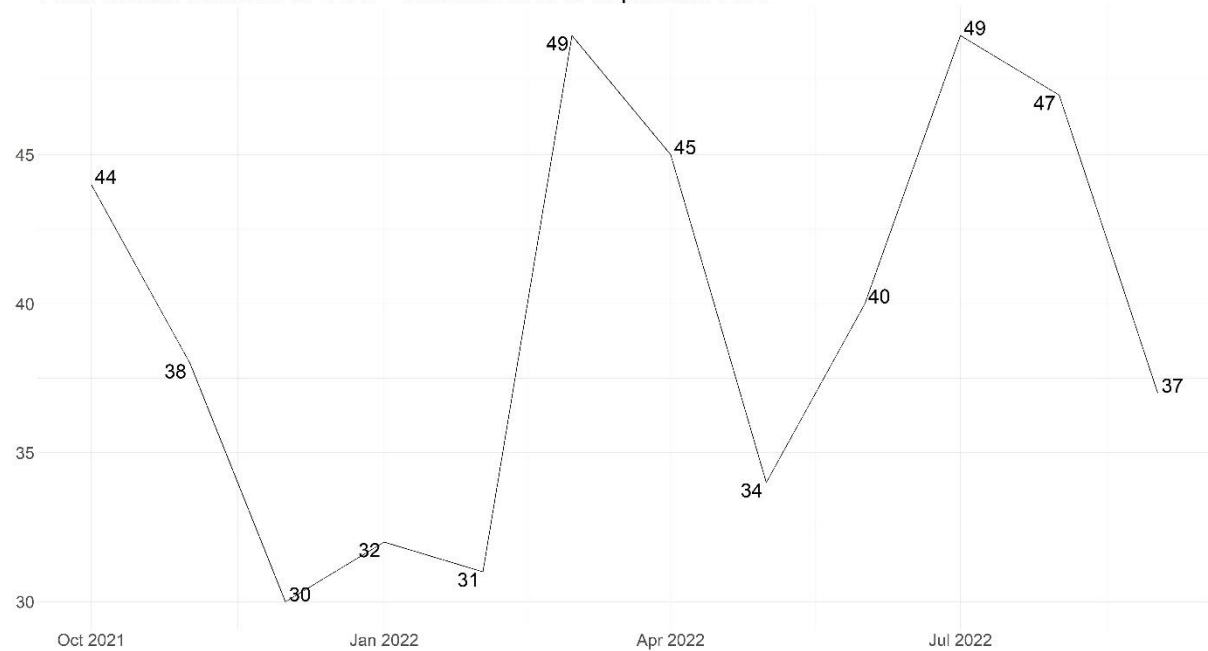
7% of DVA flagged Violence Against the Person offences reported to the MPS are Serious Wounding.

6% of DVA flagged Violence Against the Person offences reported to the MPS are Other Violence.

Sexual Offences

There were 476 Sexual Offences in Hammersmith & Fulham from October 2021 to September 2022.

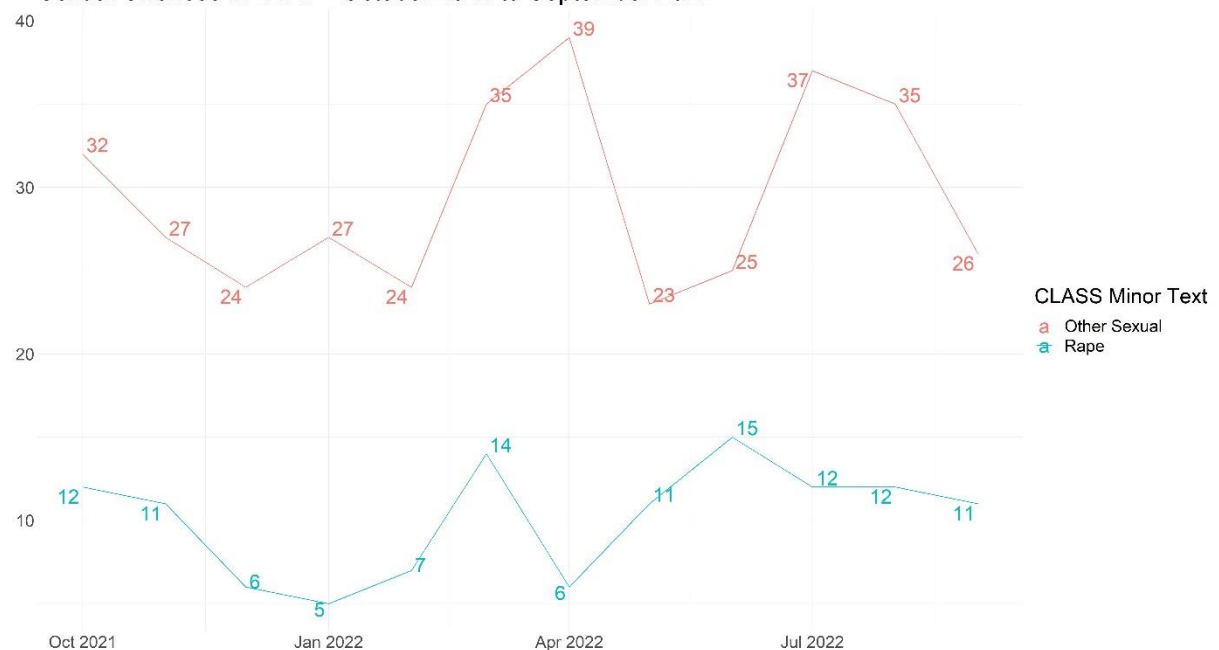
Total Sexual Offences in LBHF - October 2021 to September 2022



74% of Sexual Offences reported to the MPS are Other Sexual Offences.

26% of Sexual Offences reported to the MPS are rape.

Sexual Offences in LBHF - October 2021 to September 2022



Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2022 – 2027





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1. Introduction

Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) is a fundamental human rights violation, which harms the lives of millions of adults and children. It is recognised as a worldwide issue of epidemic proportions and it is something that is happening here in Hammersmith & Fulham (H&F), affecting around one in three women and girls. In many instances VAWG remains hidden, but it is not inevitable and collectively we can end it. No one agency can end VAWG alone and this strategy sets out the role we can all play in ending VAWG as part of a coordinated community response (CCR). H&F were the first borough to adopt the coordinated community response model in the UK. This strategy builds on the nationally recognised best practice that has been happening in H&F since the launch of our first VAWG strategy in 2015 and affirms our continued commitment to ending violence and abuse.

This strategy has been co-produced by partners, including survivors, residents, and local businesses, and sets out our collective vision to make our borough safe for anyone who is living, studying, working, and travelling in H&F.

This strategy will be accompanied by a robust action plan which will outline the actions we will take as a partnership to achieve our objectives. The strategy and action plan will be the foundation for our approach to ending VAWG, a key priority for H&F.



2. What is Violence Against Women and Girls?

Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) is the umbrella term used to describe a range of violent and abusive acts and behaviours, which are predominantly, but not exclusively, directed against women and girls. This term is used to describe abuse against all genders but highlights the disproportionate impact on women and girls.

Locally and nationally, we have adopted the United Nations definition of VAWG, which defines VAWG as:

"Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life."¹

There are multiple forms of VAWG, whether physical, sexual, psychological, or economic. This can include violence in public places, such as sexual harassment, or within the private sphere such as intimate partner violence, which can often lead to homicide. Two women are killed every week by a partner or ex-partner in the UK. Some forms of violence are technology based, such as internet stalking, or driven by economic factors such as international trafficking of women and girls. Others are the result of harmful practices, such as Female Genital Mutilation, Forced Marriage, and virginity testing. These abuses can differ in how they are experienced, but all are the result of the misuse of power and control.

¹ United Nations. Declaration on the elimination of violence against women. New York: UN, 1993.



Type of Abuse	What does this mean?
Domestic abuse (including coercive control)	This is when a partner or family member has power and control over their victims and uses abuse to maintain it. Abuse can be physical, emotional, economic, psychological and/or sexual.
Rape and sexual violence	Rape is sex without consent. This means that rape isn't just people being physically forced into a sexual act, it also includes pressure that makes someone feel like they have no choice but to have sex or perform/receive a sexual act.
Female genital mutilation	This is the partial or total removal of external female genitalia for non-medical reasons.
Early and Forced marriage	This is where one or both people do not (or in cases of people with learning disabilities or reduced capacity, cannot) consent to the marriage as they are pressurised, or abuse is used, to force them to do so.
So called "honour" based violence	This is abuse and violence which is carried out in order to protect or defend perceived "honour" of the family and/or community. We are clear that there is no honour in honour-based violence.
Faith-based abuse	This is when someone uses religion or faith to justify the abuse of another person, usually a child or vulnerable adult. It could be caused by the perpetrator's belief in witchcraft, spirit or demonic possession, ritual, or satanic abuse. It is not caused by religion or faith.
Sexual harassment	This is unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature which violates someone's dignity, makes someone feel intimidated, degraded, or humiliated and/or creates a hostile or offensive environment.
Stalking	This is a pattern of persistent and unwanted attention that makes someone feel pestered, scared, anxious, or harassed.
Modern Slavery	This is an umbrella term for human trafficking and servitude. It is used when somebody is forced or controlled to do something, and another person gains from this.
Prostitution and Sexual exploitation	This is where someone is being coerced or forced into selling sex or performing sexual acts. Victim/survivors may also be trafficked into prostitution. Children, young people, and vulnerable adults may also be sexually exploited and coerced into receiving or performing sexual acts. Abuse of children and adults can include sharing pornographic images and the use of technology.



3. What causes VAWG?

Many different reasons are given as to why VAWG happens. This includes blaming substances, mental ill health, anger issues, growing up in an abusive household, cultural practices, and stress. These issues might have an effect, but none of these issues CAUSE violence or abuse. Instead, evidence has shown that gender inequality is a key driver of VAWG.² The Council of Europe give three factors which lie at the root of the problem:³

Cultural Factors	Legal Factors	Political Factors
Sexist views and the idea that men can have more power over women and children, results in abuse being used to maintain this power. Gender stereotypes reinforce this inequality and creates an acceptance of violence and abuse.	Although abuse is illegal, sadly we see many victims blamed for the abuse and low sentences for abusers. This results in low reporting and abuse being allowed to continue.	The under-representation of women and minority groups in power and politics means they have fewer opportunities to shape the discussion and to affect changes in policy, or to adopt measures to end VAWG.
For example: Sexist attitudes like believing men must be tough, strong, and always in control can result in them exerting control over a partner or family member. These attitudes are harmful to all genders.	For example: Rape convictions remain low and have got worse in recent years, with only 1.6% nationally leading to conviction in 2020. Survivors have told us that this sends a terrible message that rapists can 'get away with it' and allows abuse to continue.	For example: Rape in marriage only became a criminal offence in 1991 and coercive control only became an offence in 2015. Both happened because of lobbying by women's groups.

We also know that experiences of racism, classism, ageism, homophobia, transphobia, and ableism can make people more vulnerable to abuse and they may face additional barriers in accessing support. We know that disabled people including those with mental ill health are twice as likely to experience abuse and 80% of trans people have experienced emotional, sexual, or physical abuse from a partner or ex-partner. The Oxford dictionary defines Intersectionality as "the interconnected nature of social categorisations such as race, class, and gender, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage". It can also give some people advantage and opportunities that others don't have access to. Our strategy recognises the need for an intersectional approach which understands the barriers people face and how these connect with each other and with their experiences of abuse.

² General Recommendation 19, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women: UN, 1992.

³ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/gender-matters/what-causes-gender-based-violence>



4. What are some of the common myths about VAWG?

✗ **Myth: To stay safe, women should not go out late at night**

✓ Women should not have to restrict their lives to be safe. We need to tell abusers to stop the abuse, not tell women to restrict their freedoms. Telling women this is victim blaming.

It is important to note that staying at home doesn't necessarily mean women will be safe either. Statistically, women are more likely to be harmed in the home than on the street. Telling women to change behaviour does not address the root cause of abuse and will not result in change.

✗ **Myth: Leaving an abusive relationship means the abuse will end**

✓ There can be many barriers to leaving an abusive relationship, and access to support and resources plays a role. Survivors should not be blamed if they do not leave, this is victim blaming.

We also know that risk escalates when survivors leave so survivors must be supported to leave safely if they choose to.

Even after leaving, survivors can still be at risk. Survivors recall abusers continuing to stalk them and even using institutions, such as the family courts, to continue abuse. Support for survivors must therefore always be long-term.

✗ **Myth: Violence against women and girls only affects certain groups of women**

✓ Research has repeatedly shown violence can affect women from all social, economic, cultural, and family backgrounds.

There is no evidence to suggest that violence is more prevalent in some communities than others. Instead, barriers to accessing support can increase vulnerability. Experiencing racism, ableism, or homophobia can influence someone reaching for support. This is why an intersectional approach is important.

✗ **Myth: Abuse is the result of an anger problem, use of substances or mental ill-health**

✓ There is no research to support this. Abuse and violence are about power and control. Abusers often choose when they abuse, often where there are no witnesses. We know that substances or mental ill health do not cause abuse. Many people who use substances or have a mental health condition do not abuse.

However, substance use or mental ill health can make existing abuse worse. It's important to offer abusers wider support, but there should be no excuse for abuse.





❌ **Myth: VAWG is mainly about physical violence**

✅ VAWG extends beyond just physical violence. Instead, VAWG is about the different ways that victims are controlled, intimidated, humiliated, or threatened.

VAWG is about being denied human rights, to achieve this, abusers may use physical violence, but they also use methods such as psychological, emotional, and economic abuse. They may also use reproductive abuse whereby abusers prevent the survivor from making their own choices about pregnancy and having children. These types of abuse can be just as harmful as physical abuse.

Abusers may use children to abuse the non-abusive parent making a partner or ex-partner feel guilty about their children, using the children to relay messages, using children to monitor and report on the survivor's movements, using contact arrangements to harass their partner, or threatening to take children away.

❌ **Myth: Abusers can still be good parents**

✅ Children are recognised as victim/survivors in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 because where children are exposed to domestic abuse this is a form of psychological abuse. They do not have to witness the abuse to be affected by VAWG. However, many children do see and hear abuse taking place within the home and children may also be physically harmed by the abuser particularly if they are trying to defend the non-abusive parent.

"An estimated 90% of children whose mothers are abused witness the abuse. The effects are traumatic and long-lasting. When a child witnesses domestic abuse this is child abuse. Between 40% and 70% of these children are also direct victims of abuse". (Women's Aid)

Where there are children the onus should not be put on the mother to protect her children, abusers must be held to account for their behaviour and challenged on their parenting responsibilities.





✗ Myth: There is nothing we can do to stop violence against women and girls

✓ VAWG is the product of learned attitudes and behaviour and harmful gender norms.

By eliminating gender stereotypes and promoting a culture of respect and equality at home, at work, in communities, and across society we can work together to end VAWG.

✗ Myth: Women involved in prostitution can not be raped or sexually assaulted

✓ Sexual violence is any sexual act that a person did not consent to or is forced into against their will. Women involved in prostitution do experience rape and sexual assault.

Women involved in prostitution face discrimination and are often blamed for the abuse.

This is not acceptable, and we believe everyone should be supported to access support.

✗ Myth: Forced marriage only happens in South Asian communities

✓ Forced marriage affects a wide range of communities from different cultural backgrounds. It affects men and women all over the world, regardless of race, ethnicity, or religion.

Labelling it as a problem for 'certain' communities creates harmful stereotypes and can create barriers for people accessing support.

✗ Myth: Violence against women and girls is an issue that only concerns women and girls

✓ It is important to note that men, boys, and non-binary people also experience the types of abuse set out in this strategy.

Although we recognise that VAWG disproportionately affects women and girls, abuse can affect anyone, and our approach will be inclusive of everyone who needs support. Men and boys also play an important role in ending VAWG.

✗ Myth: Sexual violence is more likely to be committed by a stranger

✓ At least two thirds of sexual assaults are committed by someone known to the survivor.

According to some studies only 2% of abusers are complete strangers. 97% of women who contacted Rape Crisis said they knew the person who raped them.

✗ Myth: If a young person accepts drink, drugs, or money for sex its their choice to do so

✓ This is a form of exploitation and usually the people supplying alcohol, money and gifts have the power in this relationship and will use this to their advantage.

Often the victims may not recognise what they are experiencing as abuse and may have misplaced loyalty to the person abusing them.



5. The local picture: what we already know?

The difficulty of capturing an accurate statistical picture of VAWG is nationally recognised. This is for a range of reasons including the hidden nature and consistent under-reporting of VAWG issues, alongside inconsistent approaches to data collection across organisations. Our data picture is therefore only the tip of the iceberg. However, we do know that:

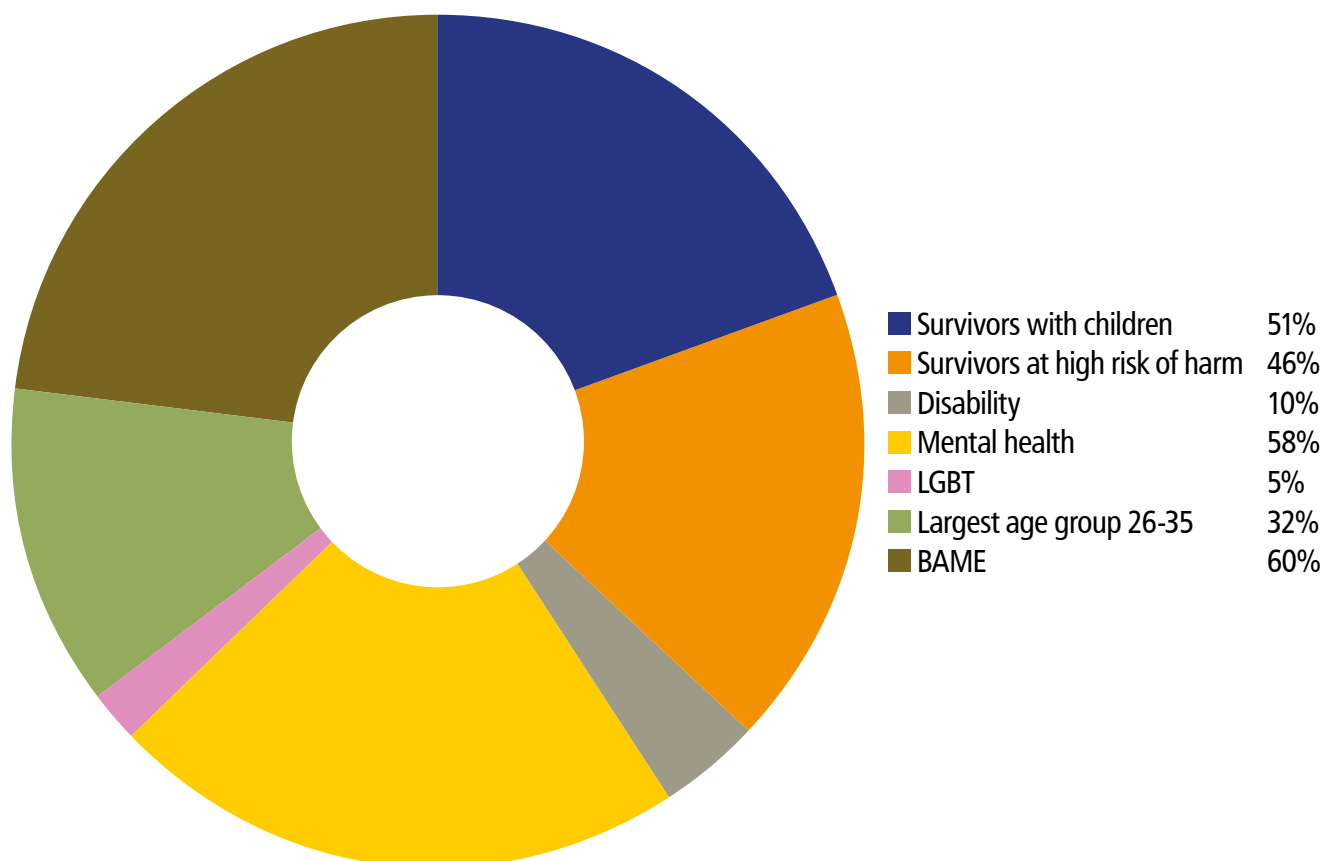
- 1 in 3 women will experience domestic abuse at some point in their lives. **23,285** women in H&F have experienced domestic abuse.
- **2,983** women living in H&F are estimated to have undergone FGM (it is not known where the FGM took place).
- 1 in 5 women will experience stalking or harassment at some point in their lives. **15,523** women in H&F have experienced stalking or harassment.
- **34%** of the cases referred to children family service's "front door" were referred because of domestic abuse.
- **373** people approached H&F housing because of domestic between 2019 and 2020. **23%** had a disability or physical health issues and **33%** had mental health issues.
- In 2020 – 21 there were over **1000** referrals to the Angelou VAWG services who support victims/survivors, over **50%** of survivors had children.
- **58%** of the women referred to the Angelou service reported poor mental health.





Figure 1.

Demographics of Women accessing Angelou VAWG services



We also invited residents to share their thoughts so we could better understand concerns and needs in our communities.

- **52%** of those who responded told us that they had witnessed a woman being harassed by a man/group of males in public between one and two times in the last year.
- **11%** of those who responded told us that they had witnessed a woman being harassed by a man/group of males in public between six and ten times in the last year.
- **57%** of those who responded told us that they personally experienced street harassment.
- **26%** of those who responded told us they felt either fairly unsafe or very unsafe in the borough at night.
- **78%** of those who responded said it should be a priority to provide support to women when they need it for as long as they need it.



6. What did survivors with lived experience tell us?

Hearing directly from survivors from a range of backgrounds, with different experiences, is important in shaping this strategy and our direction. In developing this strategy, we spoke to survivors with lived experience about what they felt was important in developing our approach for the next five years. Their thoughts covered four main areas:

1. Asking the Question:

- Survivors told us that professionals need to be curious about abuse.
- Survivors should not be stereotyped as there is no 'type' of survivor.
- The right response is also important. They want to be believed and supported. They don't want to have to prove themselves.
- Support should be made available sooner, not when survivors reach crisis.
- It can take a while for abuse to be identified.

We need to make sure professionals, friends and family can identify abuse and understand how to ask and respond.

2. Sustainability of support:

- There needs to be long-term support, not just a response to crisis.
- There should be awareness of the increased risk after separating.
- Services need to work together better so that survivors don't have to keep telling their story.
- Services need to see the whole person and meet wider equality needs.
- There needs to be understanding of the links between experiencing abuse, using substances to cope and impact on mental health.

Support needs to be long-term, intersectional and needs led. Professionals need to work together so that the right support is in place.





3. Training for Professionals:

- Survivors emphasised the need for widespread training so that awareness could be raised on a range of VAWG issues.
- Training must include key messages on not blaming victims for the abuse and on holding abusers to account.
- Understanding coercive control, and abuse beyond physical violence, is key. Survivors felt there should not be a hierarchy of types of abuse.

Training and awareness need to be raised amongst professionals but also more widely, so everyone understands the issue.

4. Responding to children:

- Survivors felt it was a priority to educate children about abusive behaviours and recognise where they are victims of abuse. They need a voice for themselves.
- They wanted boys to learn about empathy and opportunities for them to see what a healthy relationship looks like.
- Schools and education settings need to be part of the coordinated community response to VAWG.

The needs of children and young people must be recognised within the strategic response. Their voices must be heard and shape provision.

Survivor is a nationally recognised term to describe someone who has been a victim of abuse but who has continued to live, it is a positive term of empowerment and therefore used throughout the strategy.





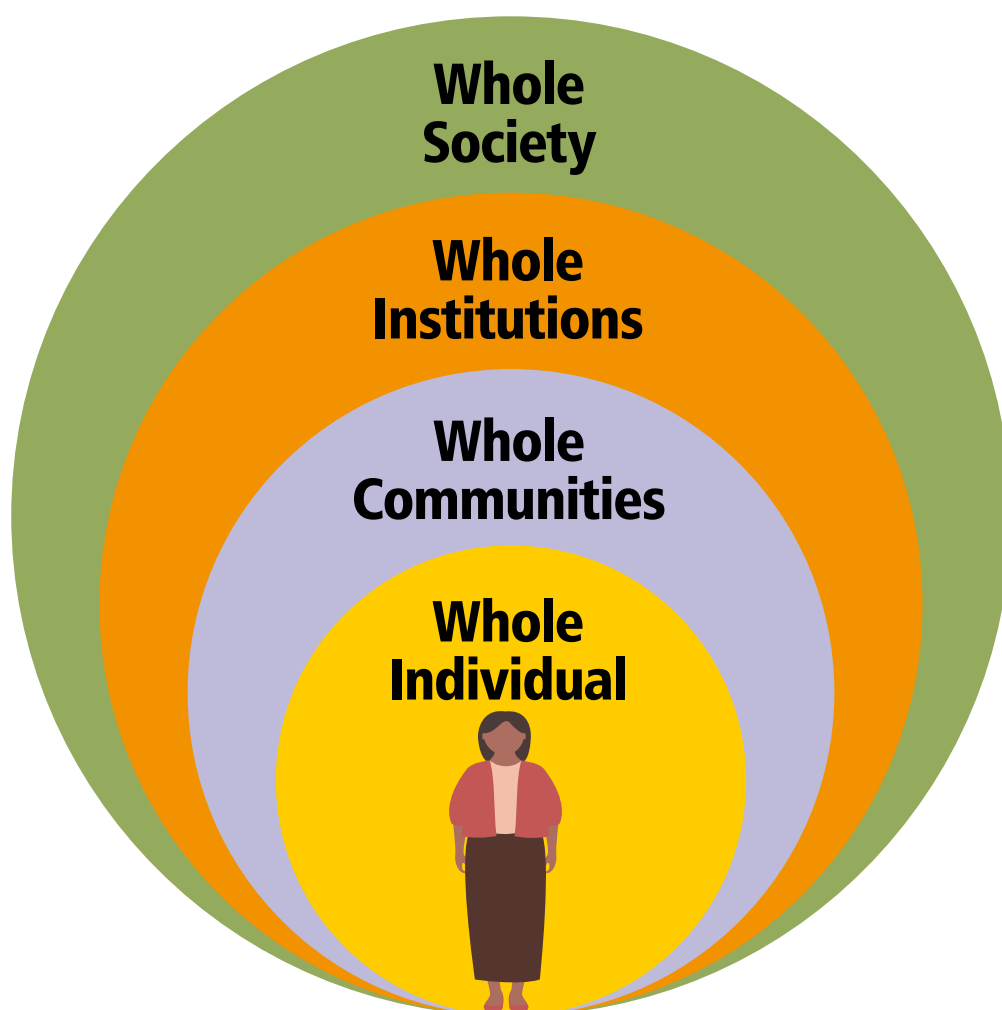
7. Our approach

The Coordinated Community Response:

We recognise that real change in responding to and ending VAWG can only be achieved when all agencies, residents, and communities work effectively together. On a survivor's journey, they are likely to encounter a number of services, organisations, and individuals. Each will hold vital information and can help build a picture of what support is needed so survivors do not have to navigate services to get the help they need.

Ensuring everyone knows the role they play in responding to VAWG and how they work with each other is a process known as the Coordinated Community Response (CCR). Our CCR approach ensures a whole system response to a whole person. The following diagram shows some of the different agencies and groups who need to be involved in the response:





The Ecological Model:

Our approach to VAWG is also based on the ecological model on violence prevention. The ecological model looks at developing interventions across multiple levels – the individual, the community, the institutional and societal. When working closely across these levels, we are able to address the wider context in which VAWG happens and make wider cultural change.

The ecological model explains how improving responses across communities, institutions, and wider society, can better support individuals. By understanding the challenges that an individual faces at these levels, we are also better able to respond to survivor's needs. Change requires an enabling environment where VAWG is increasingly unacceptable. Understanding what this looks like on different levels ensures that everyone plays their part in changing the culture in which VAWG happens.

Across this strategy, we will look at how we can meet our objectives by better understanding the actions individuals, communities, institutions, and society can take to meet our aim to end VAWG.



8. Our Objectives:

Our vision is to end VAWG through our coordinated community response approach. Our theory of change shows how we will meet this goal through the following four objectives. Our theory of change also shows the problems and barriers we want to address in achieving our goal:

Goal	To end violence against women & girls through our coordinated community response.			
Objective achieved	VAWG is prevented.	Survivors are supported.	Abusers are held to account.	Collaboration to create change.
Outcomes	Increased knowledge and Understanding across communities. Awareness raising through campaigns and activities. Stakeholders understand their roles in responding to and ending VAWG.	Partners follow duties and best practice. Referrals are made. Trauma informed and inter-sectional support.	Professionals safely challenge abusers. Abusers will be provided support to reform. Root causes of abuse are tackled.	All agencies see VAWG as their “core business.” A shared understanding of need and response. Increased knowledge, skills and capacity in responding. Working with survivors to create change.
Barriers	Lack of understanding of the social and economic impact of VAWG.	Lack of awareness around VAWG and intersectionality. Risk prioritised over need. Victim blaming.	Limited funding for programmes. Lack of established best practice model. Victim blaming and abuser invisibility.	Competing priorities. Limited resources and capacity. Clashing cultural approaches. Victim blaming.
Problem	Violence against women & girls (VAWG), and the threat of such violence, exercised through individuals, communities and institutions in both formal and informal ways, violates women and girls human rights, constrains their choices and agency, and negatively impacts on their health and ability to participate in, contribute to and benefit from development.			



9. Objective One: Violence Against Women and Girls is prevented

Prevention of VAWG must always be our first priority. In order to prevent VAWG we must address the root causes of the problem. As VAWG is the result of gender inequality and discrimination, we will work collaboratively with agencies and communities in tackling the harmful behaviours and attitudes that underpin abuse. This approach must include challenging sexist and misogynistic attitudes. We want to build confidence across H&F by creating a culture change and a zero-tolerance approach to abuse in all its forms. We must also promote the rights of women and girls, including their fundamental human right to live free from abuse in their homes and in public places.

We must also recognise the intersecting experiences of abuse and discrimination that survivors may experience based on but not limited to their age, ethnicity, sexuality, gender identity, religious beliefs, and disabilities. We must therefore challenge discrimination in all its forms.

The behaviours and beliefs that can lead to VAWG are often manifested in early years. We will work preventatively with children and young people in schools and other settings to promote healthy relationships, gender equality and respect. This work is important, but our response must be wider – working with adults, both professionals and residents is key. We want to support people to be allies in ending abuse, to provide early intervention and to be active in improving our response to VAWG.

We recognise that children living within a family where there is abuse are also victims and by providing support to survivors and their families, we can prevent further harm to children and educate families around abuse.

Our theory of change shows how we will do this:

End VAWG through our CCR Approach		
Objective One	How will we achieve our outcome?	What difference will this make?
VAWG is Prevented.	<p>Increased knowledge and understanding across communities through training and events.</p> <p>Awareness raised through campaigns and activities</p> <p>Preventative work with young people.</p>	<p>Residents and professionals are supported to better identify and respond to VAWG.</p> <p>Communities can come together to challenge harmful attitudes.</p> <p>Everyone understands their role in responding to and ending VAWG.</p>

What survivors have told us about why this objective is needed:

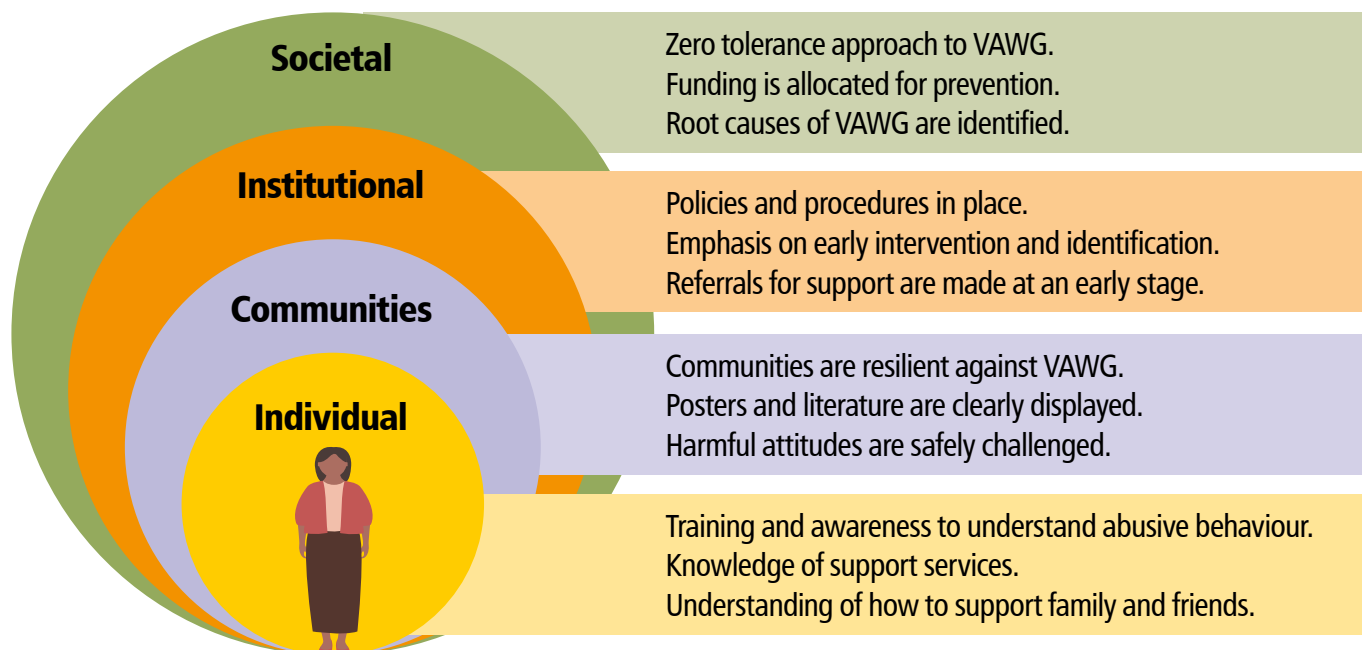
"A big campaign is needed to educate about reality of abuse."

"We need to stop victim blaming. Professionals need to be more clued up."

"I asked my doctor for support. I was given a leaflet but there needs to be more knowledge and awareness."



What does this outcome look like across the coordinated community response?



Spotlight on best practice:

Women and Girl's Safety

H&F recently invested over £4million to increase public safety through its Law Enforcement Team (LET), doubling the numbers patrolling the street and increasing the service to 24 hours a day. Police and the Safer Business Network provide training for Local bars and restaurants so that they can support women who may feel unsafe or be at risk of abuse. H&F's Night Time Economy working group has also developed women's safety as part of its action plan. H&F are doing a review of lighting and public space across the borough and will be trialling a passive lighting system that increases light when it detects human movement, this will improve the environment for residents when out at night. In addition, we are delivering sessions on women's safety for officers across Transport and Highways. We also made a successful bid for the Safety of Women at Night funding and have been awarded over £100,000 towards initiatives aimed at improving the safety of women including:

- A VAWG/Women's Safety campaign
- Delivery of a programme for young women to become leaders of change in their community
- Business/community women's safety champions to improve identification and access to safety
- An independent women's safety audit to enable us to deliver evidence-based solutions
- Specialist by-stander training to create women's safety champions within the LET
- Increased homelessness outreach provision to increase identification and pathways to support for women as part of our street population.



10. Objective Two: Survivors are supported

We recognise that survivors need a range of support at different stages of their journey. We understand that survivors not only need specialist support for the abuse they have experienced, but may also need support with housing, mental health, substance use, child care, immigration, and other support. We are determined to create a joined-up approach with services working together, so that survivors are provided the right support at the right time. This support must be led by the needs of survivors, be provided immediately and be long-term, holistic, and intersectional. We must also consider the needs of children and young people as survivors of VAWG whether they experience abuse within their home, from family members, at school, in public or in their young intimate relationships.

Survivors have told us that they want to be asked about their experiences in a non-judgmental way, they want to know what support is available, and they want therapeutic support, not just a focus on crisis response. Long-term support is vital to support the journey towards recovery. This includes access to training and employment, support groups, and opportunities for wider development. We recognise that survivors with lived experience are key stakeholders, and they have told us that they need more spaces where they can talk to other survivors and to “give back.”

Our theory of change shows how we will do this:

End VAWG through our CCR Approach

Objective Two	How will we achieve our outcome?	What difference will this make?
Survivors are Supported.	Agencies follow duties and best practice. Referrals are made to the right support, when needed. Trauma-informed and intersectional support is in place. Creation of Survivor Forums.	Abuse is identified and support is offered. A joined-up approach is created with agencies working together. Survivors' holistic needs are met. Survivors' voices are heard and shape responses.

What survivors have told us about why this objective is needed:

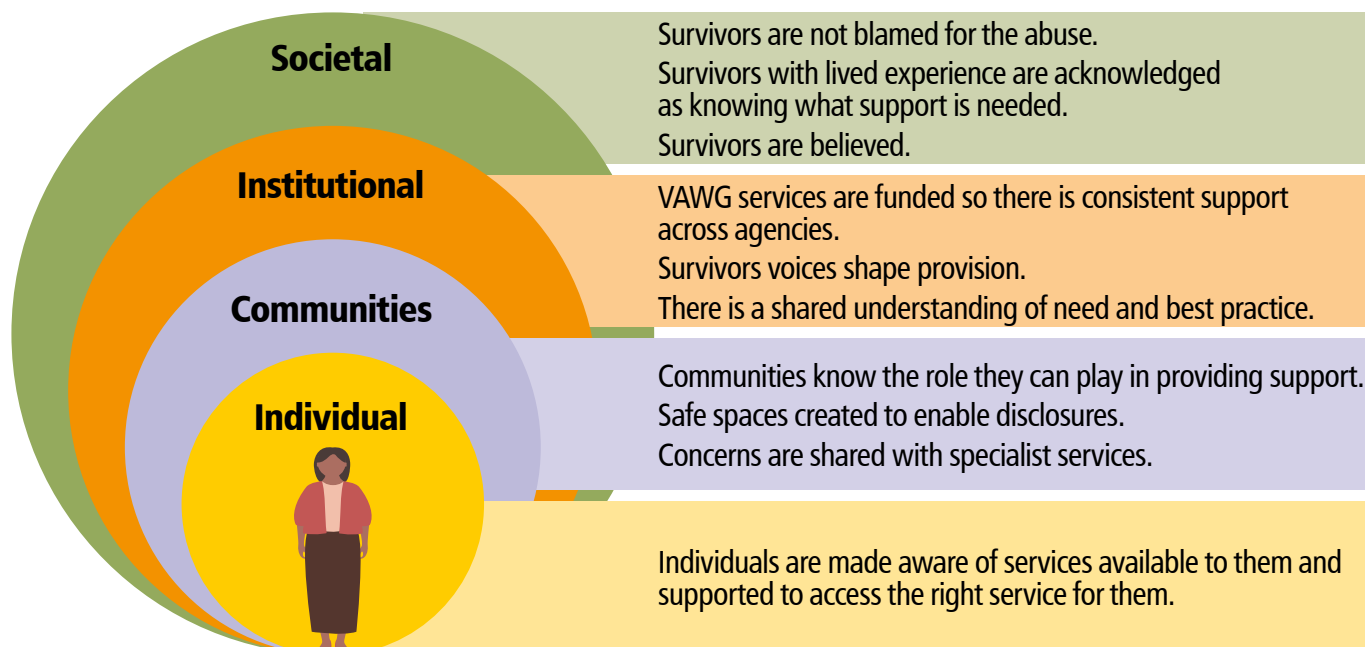
“You should not have to tell your story repeatedly.”

“The stereotype of a ‘victim’ needs to be challenged – especially if a survivor ‘looks okay.’”

“They should be asking about and making the connections between trauma, substance use and mental ill-health.”



What does this outcome look like across the coordinated community response?



Spotlight on best practice

Al-Hasaniya

Maria (not her real name) was referred to Al-Hasaniya's domestic abuse project as she needed practical and emotional support around her experiences of domestic abuse. An Advocate who spoke Maria's language contacted her and arranged an assessment. Maria disclosed that she was being subjected to harassment and stalking from her estranged husband and that this had been ongoing for many years. Previous incidents of abuse included threats of acid attacks, threatening her with a knife and an attempt to strangle her. She also expressed her concern, fear, and anxiety at the impact it was having on their children, particularly where one of them was now living with her estranged husband. He would regularly attend the family home, loiter, and bring his friends to intimidate her. He asked their children to inform him of what was happening in the household and what she was doing. Maria was referred to Children's Social Services and a referral to the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) was made. Safety plans were made with Maria and the children. Maria was supported to report incidents to the Police and to apply for a non-Molestation Order. The Non-Molestation Order allowed Maria to feel protected and safe enough to apply for a divorce. The Advisor liaised closely with the Social Worker and the children's schools to ensure safety plans were in place for the children there. With the help of a therapist, the children were able to confide their feelings, their relationships were strengthened, and all the children were reunited in Maria's care as the safe parent. By services working together, the family started to come together, feel safe and stable. "I've been suffering for so many years and never thought this nightmare would end. Without your support, advice, and help, I would still be stuck, and my child would be away from me. Thank you so much for all your help. No matter what I say, I cannot express how grateful I am for you!"



11. Objective Three: Abusers are held to account:

Ending VAWG can only happen if perpetrators stop their abuse. Our strategy recognises that we must address the root causes of VAWG. This involves holding abusers to account and providing intervention and support for them to change their behaviour. This should include support for young people who are displaying signs of abusive behaviour providing intervention at the earliest opportunity.

Holding abusers to account must happen across the board. Abusers may have contact with multiple services and professionals must be trained in identifying abusers, accurately assessing the risk they pose to others, safely challenging their behaviour, and using their power and influence to hold them to account. Employers also have a responsibility to challenge any sexist or abusive behaviour amongst employees. They should have firm policies and procedures in place if an employee is identified as an abuser, using the appropriate disciplinary action where required and proportionately sharing information to ensure the safety of others.

Our response also means having a fit-for purpose criminal justice system which holds abusers to account. Victims of abuse deserve justice and it is important that this is reflected by an increase in prosecutions and convictions. However, justice is wider than just the criminal justice system. Abusers must be held to account by all sections of society, by the services working with them and within the systems that govern us.

Our theory of change shows how we will do this:

End VAWG through our CCR Approach		
Objective Three	How will we achieve our outcome?	What difference will this make?
Abusers are held to account.	Professionals are confident in holding abusers to account. Abusers will be provided support to reform. Root causes of abuse tackled.	Justice for survivors. Abusers know that their behaviour will not be tolerated. Abusers will change their behaviour, reducing harm to others. Everyone's equal human rights are upheld.

What survivors have told us about why this objective is needed:

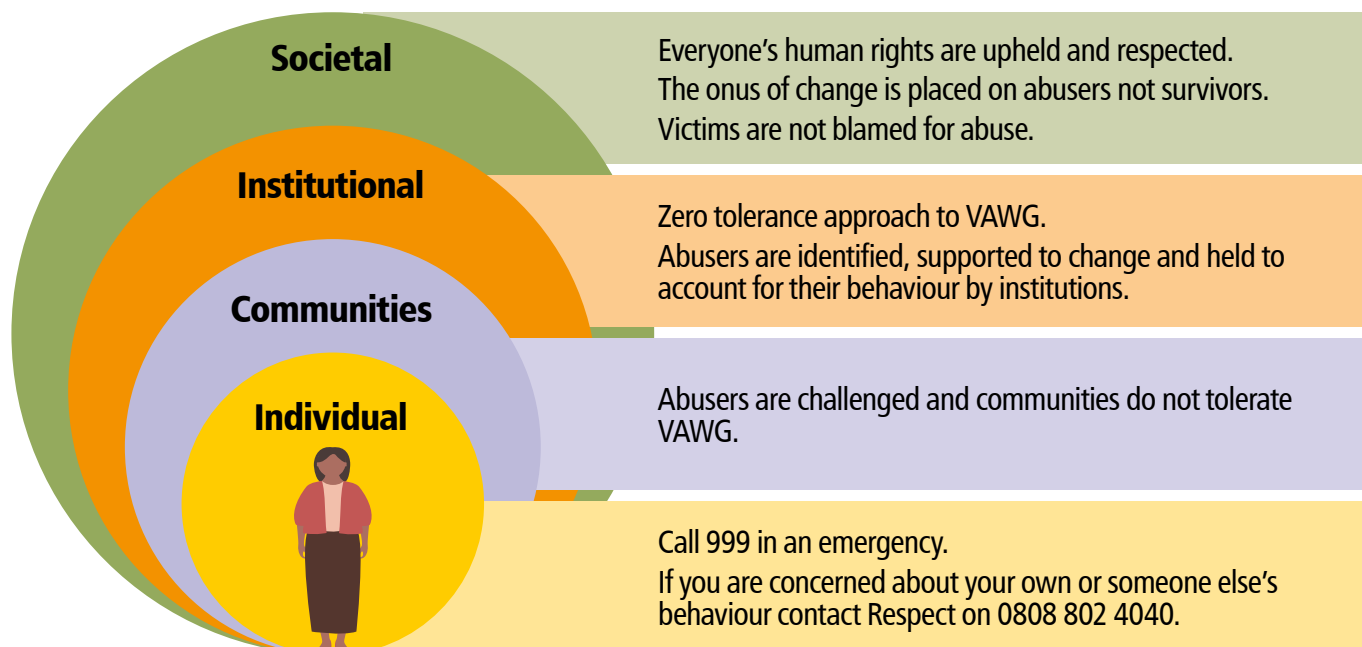
"They (professionals) need to be more clued up – something like Safe & Together."

"Justice needs to be served, so that those [that] are being abused are actually getting justice. A lot of people get away with it – what kind of messages does this send victims and survivors?"

"Stop blaming those who experience abuse."



What does this outcome look like across the coordinated community response?



Spotlight on best practice

The criminal justice response for survivors in H&F – Advance & Standing Together

There is a specialist domestic abuse court (SDAC) in H&F which is now a national mentor court of best practice for managing domestic abuse cases. The H&F Impact project enhances the support provided by the SDAC. There is a Coordinator who ensures that all relevant information is available to the court to improve victim safety and swiftly progress cases through the courts, avoiding delays. There are also domestic abuse (DA) advocates who are co-located alongside the police to ensure that victims are offered support. The SDAC and the Impact Project work closely with the Police, CPS, the courts, Magistrates, and probation to ensure that at every stage of the criminal justice journey the survivor is supported and interventions reduce the risk posed by abusers, ensure that abusers are held to account and increase victim's confidence in the criminal justice response. Survivors consistently report that after the support they have received they are at reduced risk and have improved safety. Many also report having a positive experience of the criminal justice process and the police. The interventions provided by the Impact project, the SDAC and criminal justice partners have also had a positive impact on conviction rates. The conviction rate for Hammersmith & Fulham is consistently above the London average. We also see that a variety of sentencing options are used by DA informed magistrates at the SDAC as demonstrated by use of rehabilitative sentences as opposed to fines or unconditional discharge. "I think I felt empowered when I left court at the end of the trial (when he was convicted). I felt validated, that I am not mad...the support I received from Advance, the police, the prosecutor, and my family practitioner: that made me feel safe"



12. Objective Four: Collaboration to create change

We will build on the success of the Coordinated Community Response (CCR) model to bring survivors, services, and the community together. We will create a culture change to address the issues that cause VAWG and develop services that meet the intersecting needs of survivors and their families. In H&F we are committed to working collaboratively with our partners and recognise that survivors are a key partner in developing the response to end VAWG. Our CCR approach addresses prevention, early intervention, crisis response, and long-term recovery and safety. We work with a wide range of services, pathways, and systems so survivors can access support where and when they need it. The CCR works across systems including health, housing, social care, education, criminal justice, and communities.

An effective partnership will have robust ways of working to ensure it is meeting its objectives, has a shared understanding of what best practice looks like, has respect between agencies and is informed by the voice of survivors. We recognise that there are challenges to working effectively in a partnership. This includes limited resources and capacity, competing priorities and different ways of working. However, the model of a coordinated local partnership to tackle and ultimately prevent VAWG is proven to be effective. A key indicator of a successful partnership is the effect it has on improving and delivering services to survivors and their families. We will continue to develop and improve services for survivors, with survivors. In H&F, survivors are at the heart of what we do and through collaboration and co-production they will also be at the forefront driving our response.

Our theory of change shows how we will do this:

End VAWG through our CCR Approach

Objective Four	How will we achieve our outcome?	What difference will this make?
Collaboration to create Change.	<p>All agencies see ending VAWG as core 'business'.</p> <p>A shared understanding of need and response.</p> <p>Informed by the experience of survivors.</p> <p>Increased knowledge, skills, and capacity in responding.</p>	<p>Survivors can access support through multiple routes.</p> <p>Processes are in place to ensure a positive initial response and referral to appropriate specialist if needed.</p> <p>Professionals are well trained and feel competent and confident to respond.</p>

What survivors have told us about why this objective is needed

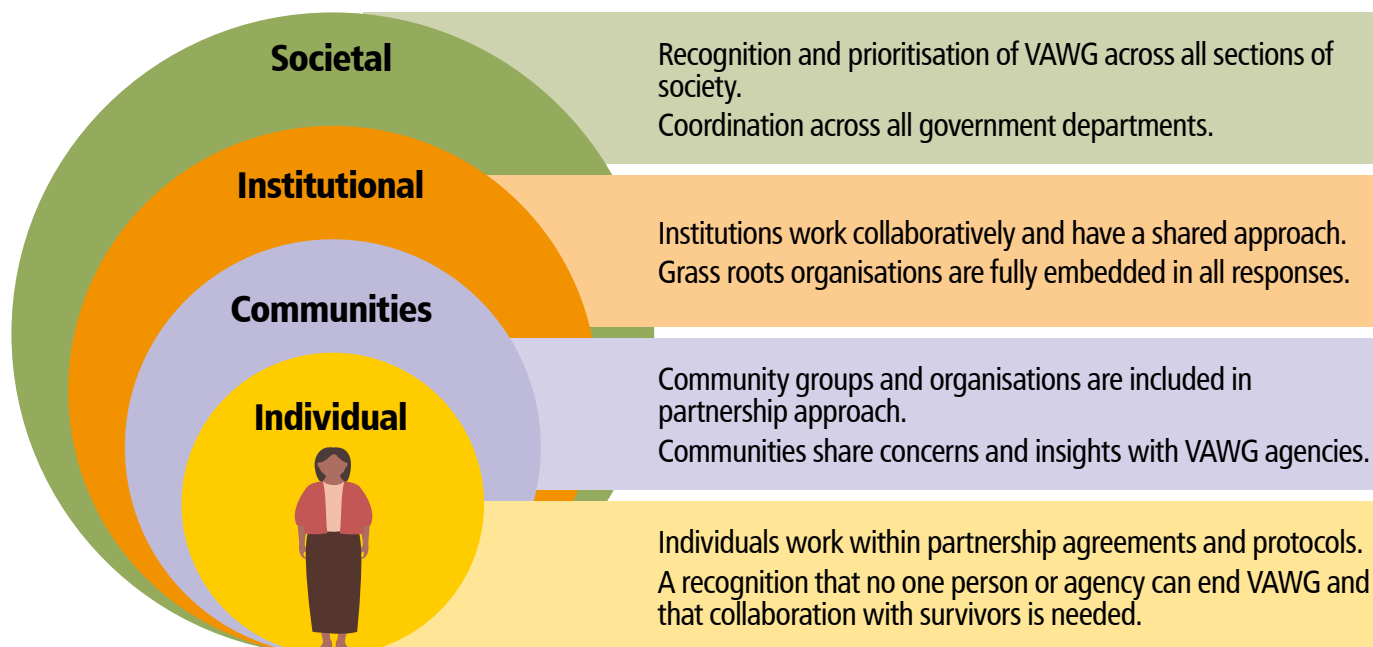
"Information should be easily accessible. Information in one place."

"Services follow safeguarding when they see bruises not when seeing coercion."

"Sometimes people don't look like us and don't speak our language and don't understand our needs. We don't want to feel judged; we want to be helped."



What does this outcome look like across the coordinated community response?



Spotlight on best practice:

A Whole Health Approach to Domestic Abuse:

Survivors have often told us about the negative impact experiencing VAWG has had on their physical and mental health. Indeed, evidence tells us that 80% of women experiencing domestic abuse seek help from health services and these are often their first, or only, point of contact.

In order to meet the needs of survivors, a partnership approach was established to improve responses to domestic abuse across the health economy. H&F were a key partner in the 'Pathfinder Project' – a project which looked to improve the responses in mental health services, GP surgeries, and Acute Services across multiple sites. A steering group was set up which included domestic abuse charities, local authority representatives and health partners. Over 18 months, the partnership trained a range of health professionals, our health partners held conferences and events to raise awareness and health partners developed policies to make sure their whole organisation understood the role they play. The project trained 180 NHS staff on domestic abuse which resulted in the recruitment of 60 domestic abuse ambassadors and a new domestic abuse coordinator in mental health. The success of the project led to us setting up a health focused operational group to continue this work going forward and through the IRISi (Identification and Referral to Improve Safety) programme domestic abuse experts are now co-located in GP surgeries in the borough to provide on-the-spot support for survivors. This includes specialist domestic abuse experts who work with Black and Asian women and women from Ethnic Minority backgrounds (Global Majority). There are also co-located Independent Domestic Abuse Advisors (IDVAs) in Housing, Children and Family Services and Criminal justice settings in H&F to meet the intersecting needs of survivors and provide survivors with independent support to navigate these systems.

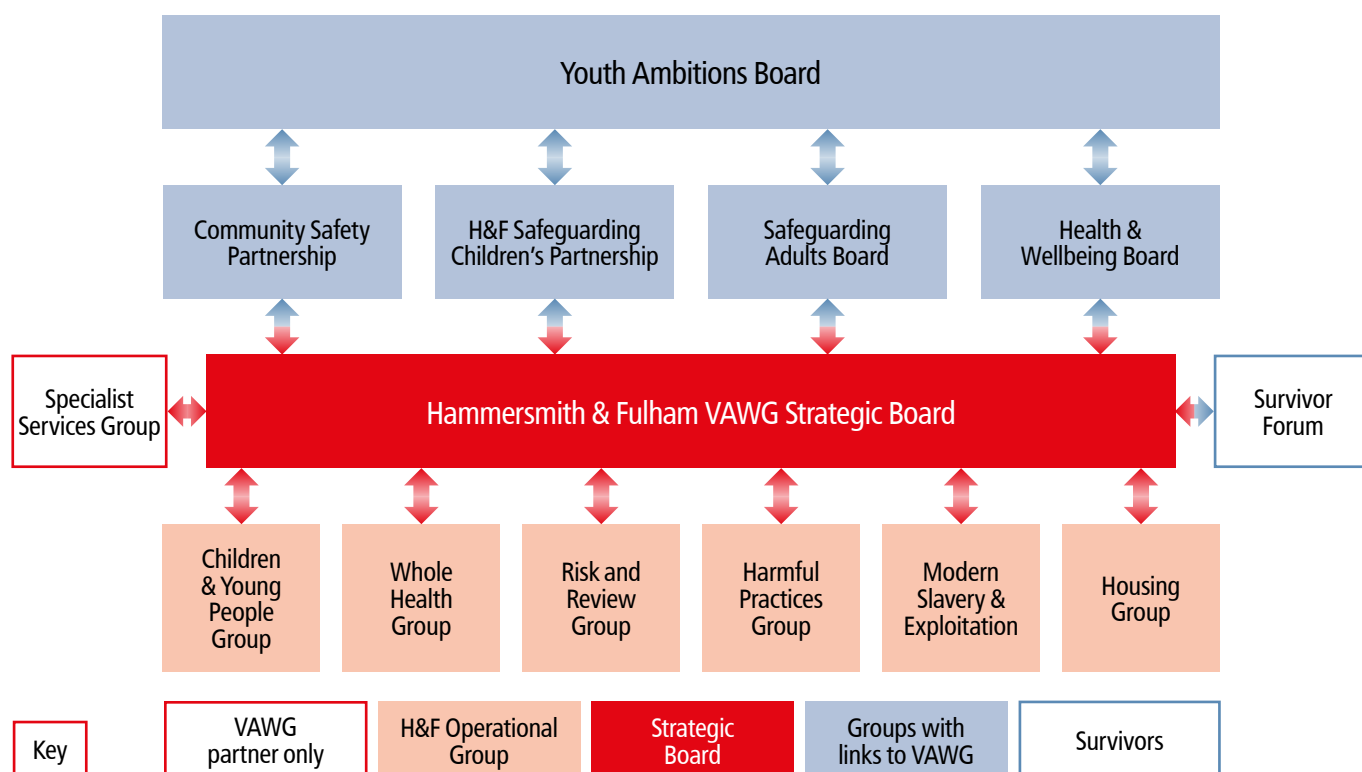


13. How we will deliver this strategy

We will deliver this strategy through our coordinated community response where everyone plays their part in responding to and ending VAWG. The strategy will be reviewed and held by the H&F VAWG Board which is attended by senior representation from voluntary, statutory and community organisations working to tackle VAWG across the borough. The Board will be influenced by 6 Operational Groups that each have a coordinator and a chair who oversee a specific area of work in accordance with a detailed action plan based on our strategic objectives. Our governance structure will be underpinned by dedicated spaces for specialist services and survivors with lived experience. This will ensure that our work is meeting best practice and identified need.

Below is our VAWG partnership structure which will oversee and support the delivery of our strategy:

Proposed H&F VAWG Governance Structure



To ensure that we can deliver this strategy it is important that we have funding in place to achieve our four strategic objectives. We commit to commissioning specialist VAWG service to support survivors. However, we know that more always needs to be done. Our partnership will continue to identify and apply for funding to meet need. We will also pool resources and work together collaboratively to ensure the right support is available to prevent abuse, support survivors and their children, and to hold abusers to account.



14. The Way Forward: A Call to Action

This strategy sets out our vision for ending violence against women and girls. This is an ambitious vision which will be realised through a robust action plan. We are working closely with residents, survivors, and multi-agency partners to develop this in order to address our four strategic objectives:

- Objective One: Violence Against Women and Girls is prevented
- Objective Two: Survivors are supported
- Objective Three: Abusers are held to account
- Objective Four: Collaboration to create change

An action plan will be published later in the year setting out the steps to be taken. Initial conversations suggest that these actions will include:

- work with schools in a preventative capacity,
- projects helping to make our streets safe,
- focused work with survivors from minoritised backgrounds and those who experience multiple disadvantage,
- focused work on how to meaningfully engage with a diverse range of survivors including children and young people,
- work in changing abuser behaviour,
- and a focus on improving systems and referral pathways.

The emphasis of the action plan will be on our coordinated community response and the role we can all play in ending VAWG. The action plan will also build on best practice work that we have been delivering across the borough. This includes commissioning commended services such as the Angelou Partnership, a partnership of ten agencies who provide a single front door of support for survivors of abuse; co-located Independent Domestic Violence Advisors working across a range of services and Housing First which looks to meet the needs of rough sleeping women affected by domestic abuse and multiple disadvantage. This strategy and the action plan will link with and support other strategic priorities to increase safety, including ending serious youth violence, promoting safeguarding, addressing Modern Slavery, and embedding equality, diversity, and intersectionality.

15. Conclusion

Together we can end Violence Against Women and Girls

We are determined to end Violence Against Women and Girls and believe that this can be done best if we work in partnership and as part of our coordinated community response. This strategy sets out the role we can all play in responding to and ending VAWG. We welcome professionals, residents, and survivors to join us in achieving our four objectives. Together, we can work to make our borough safer for everyone who is living, studying, working, and travelling in H&F.