

LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM

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

Date: 30/04/2025

Subject: H&F's Approach to Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)

Report author: Annabel Moores, Strategic VAWG lead and Caterina Giammarresi Castelán, VAWG Programmes and Partnerships Lead

Responsible Director: Mark Raisbeck, Director of Public Realm

SUMMARY

1. 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 Hammersmith & Fulham.
2. This report covers the financial period of 2023-2025.
3. In the meeting we will be joined by representatives from Standing Together Against Domestic Abuse (STADA) and Advance Charity. STADA provide multiple coordination services for the council to support our strategic response. Advance charity is the lead provider in our core VAWG service in addition to providing co-located services in the borough.
4. Representing STADA will be Sally Jackson, Head of Service, and representatives for Advance will be Liz Mack, Chief Executive and Amy Glover, Director of Services for Domestic Abuse. As key partners they will speak through their services, the journeys of the victim/survivors they support, and answer any questions from PAC members.
5. The report is also supported by a visual aid to explain our approach to ending VAWG and the various structures and services responding to this issue.

RECOMMENDATIONS

6. For the PAC 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 (where 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 disadvantaged residents in H&F and aim to improve the safety of residents affected by violence against women and girls (VAWG).
Doing things with local 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

7. *'Stopping Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) in all its different forms'*¹ is a H&F Labour manifesto commitment, and a priority for the Council.
8. In 2022, the Council published its first independent five-year strategy to tackle Violence Against Women and Girls.²

¹ [Putting all residents first](#)

² [Violence Against Women and Girls strategy 2022 to 2027 | London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham](#)

9. The Strategy was developed and co-produced with H&F victim/survivors, residents, third sector providers, community organisations, statutory services, and various council departments including Public Health, Housing, and Children's Services.
 10. The strategy has four main objectives:
 1. VAWG is prevented
 2. Survivors are supported
 3. Abusers are held to account
 4. Collaboration to create change
 11. Accompanying the strategy is a multi-agency 5-year action plan, reviewed annually, which details how we will be delivering against these shared objectives as a wider VAWG partnership.
 12. VAWG is a cross-cutting issue that effects multiple council departments including but not limited to Community Safety, Public Health, Children and Young People's services, Adult Safeguarding, Housing, Licensing, the Gang Violence and Exploitation team and the Law Enforcement Team. Equally our partners in the borough also play a vital role in responding to VAWG including Health and Education settings, Community services and local businesses
 13. Hammersmith & Fulham Council therefore take a Coordinated Community Response (CCR) approach to tackling VAWG.
 14. The CCR is based on the principle that keeping victim/survivors safe, holding perpetrators to account, and preventing further VAWG, is not the responsibility of one organisation, but is a shared responsibility that can only be achieved through a multi-agency approach.
 15. In 1997 H&F were the first borough in the UK to adopt the CCR. Many boroughs across the country have now adopted this model, nationally recognised as best practice.
 16. The CCR approach ensures a whole system response to a whole person. The [Government Tackling VAWG strategy 2021](#) highlights the need for "A 'whole system' approach with different professionals and agencies, local and national Government, charities, and others all working together to tackle VAWG".
 17. This report will provide an overview of the work of the VAWG team and wider VAWG partnership to deliver H&F's strategy to end Violence Against Women and Girls and our commitment to evidence-based best practice responses.
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DETAILED ANALYSIS

H&F VAWG Team Overview

18. As the demand for VAWG services continues to rise, over the last few years H&F's Community Safety Unit have successfully lobbied for, and secured,

additional resource (from internal growth and external grant funding) dedicated to delivering the VAWG Strategy.

19. Following recent budget planning meetings and investment made from the administration for 2025/26 the VAWG Team have successfully secured an additional £250,000pa of core Council funding to continue delivering our vital VAWG services.
20. This investment is very welcome and made at a time when Local Authorities face significant financial challenges in the face of rising delivery costs, increased cost of living, and financial pressures on the charity and public sectors. The Team is continuing to look for additional funding to maintain our current services and meet rising demand.
21. This report will provide an overview of these vital VAWG services, and will focus on H&F's:

- Coordination services
- Domestic Abuse Support Service (Angelou)
- Co-located Domestic Abuse Support Service
- Domestic Abuse Criminal Justice Service (Impact)
- Domestic Abuse Refuge (Safe Accommodation) Services
- Street Harassment Public Space Protection Order (PSPO)
- VAWG Prevention Work & Healthy Relationships with Young People
- Perpetrator Services
- Modern Slavery and Exploitation Services

Coordination services – delivering the CCR in H&F

22. H&F work closely in partnership with local Charity Standing Together Against Domestic Abuse (STADA) to deliver an effective CCR in our borough.
23. There are 12 key components that support the delivery of the CCR – see **Appendix A** for a visual aid to how we deliver the CCR in H&F.
24. In H&F we have a bold Ending VAWG strategy co-produced with survivors and a robust governance structure that supports delivery of the strategy.
25. We have a strong multi-agency partnership that delivers our response to VAWG. There is representation from all key agencies and specialist services at the H&F VAWG board and the operational groups that feed into this.
26. Survivor voice and an intersectional approach are central to everything we do, and we are committed to developing services that effectively meet the needs of a diverse community of survivors living and working in H&F.
27. STADA were pivotal in embedding the CCR in H&F and provide international training and consultancy on the CCR as subject matter experts. They deliver the following services on behalf of H&F:

28. **Coordination of the Domestic Abuse Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)** – 416 cases of high-risk domestic abuse were referred to the H&F MARAC in the financial year 2023-2024. This supports service delivery.
29. **Coordination of the H&F Specialist Domestic Abuse Court at Westminster Magistrates Court** – In 2023-2024 78% of defendants were subject to a pre-sentence report leading to more accurate and improved sentencing and a 75% conviction rate. This supports service delivery.
30. **Impact Performance and Review Coordinator** based at Charing cross police station – see 23. Domestic Abuse Criminal Justice service. This supports service delivery.
31. **Coordination of the Risk and Review Operational group** for the police Basic Command Unit area (H&F, RBKC and WCC) – this multi-agency operational group provides scrutiny and oversight of the criminal justice response and interventions to address high risk domestic abuse. This supports the H&F governance structure and service delivery.
32. **A part-time Harmful practices coordinator** who works across three boroughs to drive the strategic response to often over-looked victims of harmful practices including forced marriage, so-called “honour-based abuse”, female genital mutilation and conversion therapy. They coordinate the multi-agency Harmful Practices operational group. This supports the H&F governance structure and service delivery.
33. **Coordination of the Specialist services group** – a collective of local organisations working across VAWG – they provide vital insight into trends, gaps and challenges across the sector and provide feedback to the H&F VAWG board. This supports the H&F governance structure and service delivery.
34. Each of these projects collate qualitative and quantitative data to support informed decision making and develop and deliver bespoke multi-agency training.
35. In addition, STADA coordinate a Whole Housing Approach (WHA) service across three boroughs including H&F. H&F was a pilot site for the whole housing approach (WHA) from 2019 and contributed to the research and evaluation on this¹ The WHA is a framework that addresses the Housing and safety needs of victims of DA to reduce the number of victims made homeless because of DA.
36. Through the WHA service, funded via the Greater London Authority, they manage a flexible funding pot that H&F residents can access for additional support to prevent homelessness and an operational group of housing providers including housing associations.
37. One of the key elements of the WHA is Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation, the Mayor of London’s Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy outlines his proposal that all housing associations

and boroughs should have DAHA accreditation. H&F is in the process of becoming DAHA accredited by Autumn 2025. As part of this process, we have recruited a full time DA Housing coordinator and undertaken several activities to meet DAHA standards.

38. STADA also manage the H&F Sanctuary scheme to DAHA standards, providing security solutions to keep domestic abuse survivors and their children safe in their own home.

Domestic Abuse Support Service (Angelou)

39. H&F's main Domestic Abuse support service is provided by the Angelou Service. The Angelou Service is delivered by a consortium of VAWG organisations including:
40. [Advance](#) (lead partner)
41. [Al Hasaniya](#) (specialists in Black and global majority communities and harmful practices)
42. [Women and Girls Network](#) (specialists in sexual violence)
43. [Solace](#) (specialists in sexual violence)
44. [IKWRO Women's Rights Organisation](#) (specialists in Black and global majority communities and harmful practices)
45. [Galop](#) (LGBT+ communities)
46. Together the Angelou Service supports women and girls aged 13+ (including trans women) and gender non-binary people who are:
- Experiencing domestic abuse and sexual violence and assault including sexual exploitation and gang related 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 so- called "honour-based" abuse (HBA)
 - Experiencing multiple forms of VAWG

Our casework:

47. In 2023/24, Angelou supported 724 victim/survivors in H&F. 254 children were indirectly supported as a result of supporting their non-abusive parent.
48. **Outcomes:** 100% of survivors reported a reduction in risk and increased feelings of safety after working with Angelou. 100% of women reported improved confidence in reporting abuse and where to access help and support and 98% of women reported a reduction in social isolation and increased access to social networks.

49. **Emerging needs:** 529 women and girls self-reported a mental health need. VAWG understandably has a detrimental impact on the health and wellbeing of victim/survivors. A recent consultation with Angelou service users highlighted the need for long term support and counselling to promote recovery and reduce revictimization. The team are continuing to look for funding opportunities to enhance the support we provide through Angelou to address these needs around mental health and wellbeing.
50. **Highlights:** In 2024-2025 we provided £9,500 funding to Woman's Trust to deliver vital counselling services and support to women affected by VAWG.
51. The next section explores additional commissioned services, outside of the Angelou Partnership, which support victims of VAWG:

Co-Located Domestic Abuse Support Service

52. In addition to the Angelou service, H&F also commission a co-located Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA) Service which embeds IDVAs directly into the following services: Housing, Children's Social Care, and the Criminal Justice Service.
53. Co-Located IDVAs offer enhanced support to victim/survivors accessing the above services in H&F, in recognition of the additional barriers and challenges often faced by victim/survivors when navigating these services. The IDVAs also provide specialist training and consultations to professionals working across these sectors, to reduce structural and systemic barriers and improve overall quality of support.
54. In 2024/25 to date³, the co-located IDVA service has supported 131 victim/survivors in H&F.
55. **Outcomes:** In 2024/25 to date, the co-located IDVA service has provided 154 consultations to professionals and delivered six bespoke training sessions to 88 professionals within Housing, Children's Social Care, and the Criminal Justice System in H&F. Professionals who attended the sessions have reported feeling increased confidence in supporting victim/survivors of domestic abuse.

Domestic Abuse Criminal Justice Service (Impact)

56. The Impact Project is designed to improve outcomes and experiences for victim/survivors of DA in the criminal justice system and ensure effective justice outcomes for perpetrators.
57. Impact supports victim survivors through:
58. A co-located Criminal Justice IDVA (from the co-located IDVA service contract)
59. A Specialist Domestic Abuse Court (SDAC – from the coordination contracts)

³ This excludes Q4 as it was not complete at the time of writing this report

60. A Performance & Review Coordinator who tracks cases through the CJS (from the coordination contracts)
61. DA-trained police officers in the Safeguarding Unit
62. The partnership includes H&F Council, Metropolitan Police Service (MPS), Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), National Probation Service (NPS), HM Court Service, ADVANCE, and Standing Together Against Domestic Abuse (STADA).
63. In 2023/24, the Impact CJ IDVA supported 104 victim/survivors through the criminal justice system in H&F.
64. **Outcomes:** Last year, 100% of victim/survivors who engaged with the CJ IDVA reported that following their experience with the Impact Project, they would report further incidents to the police, would go to court again, and reported feeling safer and at reduced risk of harm.
65. **Challenges:** Due to changes in how the Met Police allow partners access to their systems our providers face a new challenge regarding timely information sharing that can reduce risk to victim/survivors. This is not “just” a H&F issue but a London wide, and national one. We have been, and continue to, lobby for this issue to be rectified.
66. **Highlight:** The H&F SDAC at Westminster magistrates court is the only nationally recognised best practice model in the country.

Domestic Abuse Refuge (Safe Accommodation) Services

67. H&F commission three DA refuge services which operate across four buildings in the borough. Two of the services are specialist refuges, offering the only support of their kind available in the entire country.
68. The services provide 31 supported accommodation bed spaces to adults who have had to flee their homes because of domestic abuse. One of the services can also accommodate up to 15 children who have fled their homes with their mothers.
69. The Refuge services are one part of H&F’s response to supporting victim/survivors of DA to access safe accommodation. The team work closely with our Housing department to ensure we are delivering best practice in line

with our duties under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. As part of this, H&F are currently working towards achieving DAHA accreditation.

70. **Key Figures:** In 2023/4 our refuges supported 130 victim/survivors by providing them with safe accommodation and support.
71. **Challenges faced:** Unfortunately, the demand for refuge bed spaces is higher than the supply (in one of our specialist refuges, we receive approximately eight applicants every time one bed space becomes available). This is a national issue.
72. **Highlights:** In 2023, we risked losing both of our specialist refuge services because the landlord decided to sell the buildings. We presented a successful business case to purchase the buildings, worked with the Development Team to negotiate a deal which meant we got the buildings for half of the asking price, and were able to safeguard the services.
73. Now, as landlord of the buildings and commissioners of the services, we have greater control over the quality of the accommodation offered to victim/survivors, in line with our DAHA accreditation commitments.
74. **Highlights:** This year, the VAWG Team have been able to secure funding to provide culturally appropriate therapeutic support to the women living in H&F refuges, available in 5 different languages.

Street Harassment Public Space Protection Order (PSPO)

75. Following feedback from residents, H&F introduced a public spaces protection order (PSPO) prohibiting street harassment across the whole borough.
76. This new PSPO was designed to reduce incidents of antisocial behaviour and improve the safety for all those who work, live or visit the borough - particularly women and girls who are disproportionately impacted by sexual harassment and stalking in public spaces.
77. **Highlight:** H&F was the first Local Authority to implement a borough-wide Street Harassment PSPO in the UK, with other boroughs now following our example of best practice.

VAWG Prevention Work and Healthy Relationships with Young People

78. In 2024, the VAWG Team collaborated with the Youth Council and Children's Services to co-produce and launch a new podcast series called Let's Talk About It. The series engages in conversation with key VAWG service providers and covers a variety of topics including healthy relationships, sexual harassment, masculinity, and sexual health.
79. **Highlight:** The podcast series was co-produced by and for young people and is available on [Soundcloud](#).

Perpetrator Services

80. H&F commission and work in partnership with a variety of services which aim to hold perpetrators of VAWG to account these include the Impact project, and the Specialist Domestic Abuse courts outlined above. We recognise there are multiple ways to hold abusers to account for their behaviour beyond the criminal justice system and we provide opportunities for behaviour change to break the cycle of abuse.
81. **Safe & Together:** H&F have adopted the Safe & Together model in children's services with a coordinator who provides extensive training for social workers and other professionals. The model encourages social workers to partner with the non-abusive parent to keep the child safe and together with that parent whilst holding the abuser accountable for their behaviour and action or inaction as a parent.
82. **Culturally Integrated Family Approach - CIFA:** H&F are part of a consortium of boroughs who have commissioned RISE to deliver CIFA (Culturally Integrated Family Approach). CIFA is an intersectional family and community approach to tackling domestic abuse in 10 boroughs, focusing on integrated victim safety support, 1:1 perpetrator delivery, adult to parent familial domestic abuse intervention, LGBT+ delivery and outreach work. It is a culturally informed service available in 20 languages funded through the Home Office Domestic Abuse Perpetrator fund.
83. **Drive:** In 2023, Drive was rolled out across London and began delivery in H&F. Drive, also funded through the Home Office Domestic Abuse Perpetrator fund, works with high harm perpetrators to reduce abuse and increase victim/survivor safety. It is delivered in partnership with Respect, SafeLives, RISE and Social Finance in collaboration with PCCs, local authorities, and service providers. Drive focuses on supporting the needs of the perpetrator to effect behaviour change which leads to a long-term reduction in VAWG. The service also uses disruption as a tool, putting barriers and obstacles in place to prevent abuse, including working with the criminal justice system and local agencies. H&F have a police-led Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Panel (DAPP) to oversee high risk perpetrators including those suitable for drive.

Modern Slavery and Exploitation (MSE)

84. H&F has a dedicated strategy to tackle Modern Slavery and Exploitation. Our work to end MSE is linked to our VAWG workstreams where there is overlap in areas of exploitation that disproportionately affect women and girls such as

sexual exploitation (sex industry), forced marriage, and certain types of forced labour such as domestic servitude.

85. **Sex Industry:** H&F works closely with the other local authorities in our police BCU (RBKC and WCC) to identify and minimise risk of exploitation and harm in the sex industry.
86. In 2022 we established a Sex Industry Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) and in 2023 we commissioned a scoping exercise to get a better understanding of the sex industry in H&F.
87. As a result of this work, in 2025 we are commissioning a new outreach support service specifically for Brazilians within the sex industry to improve their access to health services and support.
88. **MSE Licensing visits:** Licensing teams are trained to spot the signs of MSE and there are SPOCs in each regulatory services team. We have worked with licensing to ensure that displaying Stop the Traffic (STT) information posters is a condition of special treatment licenses.
89. The VAWG Team conduct joint licensing visits to pubs and venues with the Ask for Angela scheme to perform spot checks and provide information on harassment and drink spiking. The VAWG Team also go on outreach visits with the licensing team to an adult entertainment club in the borough to check in on the wellbeing of the employees.

Next Steps and Priorities for 2025/26

90. Unfortunately, across the nation as well as locally, providing VAWG services is more urgent than ever. VAWG and misogyny continue to be prominent features in society, and the prevalence of social media makes this an ever-evolving problem, particularly for young people today.
91. As the VAWG Team continue to deliver against H&F's VAWG Strategy, there are a few aims and ambitions we wish to highlight:
92. Improve and increase our engagement with young people, schools, and other non-educational settings for those not in education or employment
93. Strengthen our relationship with the police to align our approaches to ending VAWG both strategically and operationally
94. Continue to improve opportunities for engagement with victim/survivors and local communities so that they remain at the heart of what we do

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A – the Coordinated community response in H&F – a visual aid.