

London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham

# Social Inclusion and Community Safety Policy and Accountability Committee Minutes



Wednesday 30 April 2025

## **PRESENT**

**Committee members:** Councillors Nikos Souslous (Chair), Omid Miri, Sally Taylor and Lucy Richardson

**Other Councillors:** Councillor Rebecca Harvey (Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion and Community Safety)

## **Guests**

Sally Jackson (Head of Service, Standing Together Against Domestic Abuse)  
Liz Mack (Chief Executive, Advance Charity)  
Amy Glover (Director of Services for Domestic Abuse, Advance)  
Said Mohamud (Chief Executive Officer, Minaret Community Centre)  
Dominique Alexander (Member, GVEU Young People's Action Group)

## **Officers**

Mark Raisbeck (Director of Public Realm)  
Neil Thurlow (Assistant Director of Community Safety, Resilience and CCTV)  
Sina Moini (Community Safety Manager)  
Annabel Moores (Violence Against Women & Girls Lead)  
Caterina Giammarresi (VAWG Programmes & Partnerships Lead)  
Gemma Lightfoot (Manager, Gangs, Violence and Exploitation Unit)  
Nkechi Ampabeng (Community Development Outreach Worker, GVEU)  
Corinne Baker (Policy and Service Development Assistant, GVEU)  
Debbie Yau (Committee Coordinator)

## **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Andrew Dinsmore.

## **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

## **3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

### **RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the meetings held on 20 November 2024 and 4 February 2025 were agreed as accurate record.

## **4. VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS SPOTLIGHT**

Annabel Moores (Violence Against Women & Girls Lead) briefed members on H&F's work on ending VAWG, including the Coordinated Community Responses (CCR) , specialist domestic abuse court, co-located Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA), securing an additional £250,000 of core Council funding to continue delivering VAWG services, the VAWG Strategy 2022-2027 and its four main objectives, healthy relationships podcast series co-produced with young people and street harassment PSPO and perpetrators services.

Liz Mack (Chief Executive, Advance Charity) outlined the work of Advance and introduced the Angelou Partnership which was formed in 2015 to address the needs of women experiencing violence and abuse and delivered by a consortium of VAWG organisations with Advance being the lead partner. She highlighted the single point of access and shared referral process as well as the specialist workers under the current service model.

Amy Glover (Director of Services for Domestic Abuse, Advance) highlighted the uniqueness of Angelou and its services as well as other services in LBHF, notable trends and the forward plan to expand support for survivors.

Sally Jackson (Head of Service, Standing Together Against Domestic Abuse (STADA)) introduced the background of STADA and remarked that Hammersmith was the 'home' of STADA and the CCR in the UK. She outlined the CCR and the response in practice including the criminal justice system, housing and outcomes of specialist domestic abuse court. She also briefed members on the Impact Project and perpetrators services.

Caterina Giammarresi (VAWG Programmes & Partnerships Lead) briefed members on domestic abuse safe accommodation in H&F, local domestic abuse refuge provision and access, H&F's responses to challenges and DASA needs assessment.

### **NOTE: The combined presentation slides are attached in the Appendix**

Noting STADA was celebrating its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year, Councillor Sally Taylor asked about the extent of changes that had taken place since then. Sally Jackson remarked that women today were better at recognising domestic violence which had led to increased reporting year on year. Unlike then when the theme of health was not on the table, there was now more professional intervention from midwives, GPs, social workers and mental health teams, reflecting an increased understanding of

domestic abuse throughout the society. In addition, services could now engage people earlier at the beginning of a relationship such that women would ask questions that were regarded as super sensitive many years ago. There were also more challenges nowadays such as accessibility of pornography, education about a loving relationship and young men's view of masculinity.

On Councillor Taylor's further question, Sally Jackson referred to the murder statistics that about 30 men a year would be killed mostly by a male perpetrator because of domestic abuse. Men tended to be more violent in our society and hopefully going forward some men would be more confident to report if they were being subjected to domestic abuse.

The Chair asked about the anticipated changes in the next few decades. Amy Glover recalled when she first joined Advance, there was no perpetrator programme with the focus being on the survivor and the ways she could make herself and her children safe. Now there were two perpetrator programmes in the borough and she anticipated similar significant shift in the future narrative that domestic abuse survivors could get support from locally commissioned services and perpetrators could access funded behavioural change opportunities. Sally Jackson said she also hoped to see more focus on full recovery for both women and children through therapeutic support. Echoing her view, Liz Mack remarked successful therapeutic process would help break those intergenerational cycles.

Annabel Moores added that she hoped to see lots of positive role models and different versions of masculinity in the decades to come. Responding to the Chair's further question, she said the recent podcast series co-produced with the Youth Council were helping young people to identify toxic masculinity in schools and talk about positive masculinity. Alongside the podcast, lesson plans were being developed to complement the content.

Councillor Lucy Richardson was concerned about meeting the mental health needs of the survivors and their children upon leaving the refuge. She noted the process could be quite complicated and daunting.

Annabel Moores responded that generally domestic violence advocates would work with people around a whole range of needs, including mental health. That services worked with mental health colleagues and MH sat on the VAWG Board. Caterina Giammarresi added that robust plan was in place to help the survivors and their children to move on, including mental health referral within the same or to different borough. According to the resettlement support stated in the refuge contract, the refuge worker would continue offering floating support to survivors and their families for at least 3 months after they moved out.

Noting the lengthy waiting time for court hearings, Councillor Richardson was concerned about the arrangements for the survivors/children and the perpetrators during the waiting period. Sally Jackson shared the impacts of the backlog situations at courts as hearings could hang over for up to 5 years since the incidents occurred. Amy Glover referred to the Impact Project and highlighted that consistent communication, understanding and empathy it offered would help survivors not to disengage from the criminal justice process due to court back logs.

Noting that funding had been secured from the Council to provide therapeutic support to the survivors and their families, Councillor Omid Miri asked if private therapists or NHS were engaged for the purpose. Caterina Giammarresi noted the service was delivered by an in-house therapist hired by the charity and funding permitting, therapeutic support would continue to be provided to survivors.

Councillor Miri was concerned about perpetrators' programmes, in particular those for current perpetrators who were repeated offenders and needed deeper intervention and for future perpetrators who were now schoolboys. Annabel Moores said there was a range of different interventions for different types of perpetrators including adults, affected children and those in same sex relationships held in one-to-one or grouping format. There was drive for high harm and high risk perpetrators and the culturally informed family approach available in 20 languages. In case direct support or engagement of perpetrators was not feasible, other alternatives either to meet their needs or get the best criminal justice outcomes would be done to bring about behavioural changes and prevent recurrence. She noted about long-term positive impact brought by perpetrators' programme in terms of reduction in abusive behaviour. As regards whole school approach, Annabel noted following a pilot programme carried out in some H&F schools, the Council, upon securing the necessary funding, would roll out similar programme across the borough. Meanwhile, in addition to a couple of intervention activities co-produced with the Youth Council, a programme called the Bambu project was available which supported children affected by domestic abuse or those starting to exhibit some harmful behaviours.

Responding to Councillor Miri's further question, Caterina Giammarresi said so far, there was no trans people accessing the refuges but she did see a disproportionate amount of trans people in the sex industry seeking help. She noted that while the Supreme Court's ruling would have an impact on how the services were to be run by the local authority, they remained committed to protecting the rights and dignity of trans people. Annabel Moores added while the VAWG sector would take heed of the upcoming legal advice, they as well as and partners servicing LGBTQI would be committed to supporting all H&F residents.

The Chair asked about the challenges of Met Police changing the information sharing access (page 26). Caterina Giammarresi noted the Performance and Review Coordinator (PRC) of the Impact Project had previous connection to the Met Police information sharing system which allowed them to track the cases and make referrals according to the criminal justice outcomes. The disconnection about a year ago had greatly limited the functions of the PRC with much less information of the perpetrators' risks presented to the court and affected the outcomes. Sally Jackson added that lobbying efforts were being undertaken with the Head of IT to see if the Met Police, like other forces, could enable the voluntary sector to access the system for certain purposes.

Councillor Rebecca Harvey (Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion and Community Safety) said she was proud to note so much amazing work happening, and with the dedication from organisations delivering great services, women and their children in the borough could be really confident that they were safe. Their therapeutic support

had a huge impact to the survivors and the children in addressing their past trauma like post-traumatic stress disorder. Councillor Harvey reassured that the funding would remain in the budget for next year and she would continue to look at ways to increase the funding for the VAWG team to make a bigger impact.

The Chair thanked everyone who had contributed a lot to ending VAWG.

## **RESOLVED**

The Committee noted the report.

## **5. GANGS, VIOLENCE AND EXPLOITATION UNIT SPOTLIGHT**

Gemma Lightfoot (Manager, Gangs, Violence and Exploitation Unit (GVEU)) introduced the report.

Said Mohamud (Chief Executive Officer, Minaret Community Centre (MCC)) briefed members that MCC was a frontline charity established in 2009 located in Fulham. The Community Centre assisted the whole community but mainly focussed on the Horn of Africa community.

MCC aimed at bridging the gap between the community and the services they received. He said that the 'My Ends' project was developed to target at fewer people in a better way. Through the My Ends project the MCC had connected with the police, Law Enforcement officers and school representatives through workshops and events to tackle gangs and violence within the community. Sharing some cases, Said noted the year-long project, which shall end in the next quarter, was very effective as it created a secure environment for people to talk in confidence. He stressed that with everyone going for an extra mile, he believed children would be saved.

Dominique Alexander (Member, GVEU Young People's Action Group (YPAG)) shared the impact that the GVEU had had on her life, including:

- the benefits of having long-term support from an outreach worker;
- her experience on the GVEU's Rebel Records Project; and
- her experience as an ambassador on our newly-formed YPAG.

The Chair thanked colleagues in GVEU and the two representatives in sharing their incredible work.

On GVEU's future plans, Gemma Lightfoot noted the unit would continue with their innovation to become one of the best in London in terms of violence reduction. They also planned to continue with early intervention via enforcement in collaboration with the Police and Probation. With increased funding from public health, therapeutic teams could offer more timely intervention support to help the young people and community.

Regarding violence reduction across the borough boundaries, Gemma Lightfoot noted that unlike some boroughs having tensions with their neighbours, H&F was in the same Basic Command Unit with two neighbouring boroughs, i.e. Westminster City Council and Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and enjoyed excellent

working relationships at all levels with them. The outreach workers shared information and community contacts, held cross-borough intelligence meetings and joined each other's events. At this moment in time there was minimal cross border tensions. The GVEU also met with other neighbouring boroughs to discuss tensions and concerns.

Councillor Rebecca Harvey (Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion and Community Safety) appreciated the fantastic work of GVEU which had brought real changes and turned people's lives around.

Echoing her appreciation, the Chair also thanked the wonderful work done by the two representatives as a community leader and an ambassador to help the young people.

### **RESOLVED**

That the Committee noted the report.

## **6. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The Committee noted the next meeting would be held on 17 June 2025.

Meeting started: 7.01 pm

Meeting ended: 9.30 pm

Chair .....

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