



The Safer Lewisham Partnership's
Reducing Violence Against Women and Girls Plan
2014-2017

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Foreword

Reducing crime is a priority for us all. The Council, the local Police, our public agency partners, and most importantly the residents of Lewisham, all share a deep commitment to prevent and tackle crime while addressing its root causes. We can do this most effectively by working in partnership.

This first Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Plan for Lewisham has been developed as a result of the excellent partnership work over the last few years with individuals, organisations and victims of violence.

The Plan sets out four important objectives for our borough;

- To develop a better understanding of VAWG and its impact in our borough;
- Early intervention and prevention of VAWG
- To ensure an improved access to the support and protection services offered to women and girls in our borough;
- To hold perpetrators to account.

Challenging the attitudes, behaviours and practices that allow VAWG to prevail is also key to this Plan, and this will be done in the context of a local, national and international commitment to eradicating violence against women and girls. Lewisham continues to offer a co-ordinated response to domestic violence and abuse, a strand of VAWG. Our provision of an effective Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) with a dedicated Lewisham Co-ordinator is one example. We will ensure that Lewisham continues to demonstrate strong leadership in tackling violence against women and girls.

In Lewisham, the practice of working together extends well beyond local public authorities. It is embedded in our community and exemplified by the work of the many individuals and groups working tirelessly across the borough.

The role of the Safer Lewisham Partnership remains the same: by working together we will do all we can to tackle crime in our borough – making Lewisham a safe place for all.

Sir Steve Bullock

Executive summary

Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) is both a form of discrimination and a violation of human rights. Locally we adopt the United Nations declaration on elimination of violence towards women, which defines violence against women as:

'Any act of gender based violence that results in or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women [or girls], including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty'

United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence towards Women (1993, Article 1)

This Plan is Lewisham's first Violence Against Women and Girls Plan and aims to build on the existing work incorporated in the Council's Domestic and Sexual Violence Action Plan and supports the Mayor of London's Mayoral Strategy on Violence Against Women and Girls 2013-2017, which was launched November 2013 and informs this Plan. This pan-London strategy forms part of the London's Police and Crime Plan which demonstrates the Mayor and Deputy Mayor's commitment to reducing the prevalence of VAWG and improving confidence of victims in London.

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Introduction

Lewisham Council has a long history of commitment to tackling domestic and sexual violence. This work is now supported by a unified and comprehensive approach to tackling violence against women and girls through a systemic VAWG Plan.

A needs assessment was undertaken in the summer of 2013 to look at the prevalence of VAWG locally and to determine what our priorities should be. We also consulted with our Council partners as well as residents and victims of VAWG. We now aim to have focus groups with our local resident women and girls, to ascertain wider feedback.

The needs assessment identified gaps in local knowledge in a number of areas; and proposes 3 key strands for local focus and priority:

- Domestic violence and abuse
- Rape and sexual violence
- Sexual exploitation with particular focus on children

As with all partnership intelligence development documents it is likely priorities may be revised as further information on all strands of VAWG becomes available. All local partners are committed to dealing with any aspects of VAWG and will be reviewing and reassessing areas annually.

The Plan has been drawn up with the following prime considerations:

Maximum Victim Impact

We have listened to the views of our residents and placed victims at the forefront of our plan. This is to ensure the broadest overlap with the Mayoral Strategy on VAWG 2013-2017 and to ensure the priorities chosen are calculated to have sizeable impact and easily understandable to our local residents.

Intelligence Led

Our selection of priority areas is based on a detailed analysis of current crime and disorder trends in the borough has utilised a wide range of data sources.

Strategic Relevance

Our Plan is also designed to take into account key changes in how we commission services, and any wider changes in respect of this agenda.

Objectives and Goals

VAWG is a multi-faceted issue that links to, and impacts on, a range of other social issues including poverty, unemployment, youth crime, homelessness, child abuse, health, and problematic substance use. A multi-agency, integrated approach to tackling these issues is therefore required.¹

The Plan sets out four important objectives and goals for our borough;

1. To develop a better understanding of VAWG and its impact in our borough;
2. Early intervention and prevention of VAWG;
3. To ensure an improved access to the support and protection of women and girls in our borough;
4. To hold perpetrators to account and consideration of rehabilitation provision.

¹ Mayoral Strategy on Violence Against Women and Girls 2013-2017

PART 1

What is Violence Against Women and Girls?

Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) is both a form of discrimination and a violation of human rights. Locally we adopt the United Nations declaration on elimination of violence towards women, which defines violence against women as:

‘Any act of gender based violence that results in or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women [or girls], including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty’

United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence towards Women (1993, Article 1)

VAWG includes violence that is targeted at women or girls because of their gender or affects women and girls disproportionately. The strands of VAWG as outlined by the government are;

- Domestic Violence
- Rape and Sexual Violence
- Prostitution and Trafficking
- Sexual Exploitation
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Forced Marriage
- Honour Based Violence
- Stalking and Harassment

This Plan is focused on the needs of women and girls and is a deliberate response to the disproportionate impact of VAWG crimes on women and girls.

This does not mean that men are never victims of, for example, rape, forced marriage, or domestic violence, or even that women are not sometimes perpetrators. The Council is equally committed to tackling the needs of men and to addressing all forms of violence and abuse across the borough. We will do this by ensuring the services we commission also provide support to male victims.

National and International basis for a VAWG Plan

The United Nations (UN) has a Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, which was adopted by the General Assembly in 1993. This was followed by a resolution of intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women in 2009.

In 2010, the Mayor of London published *'The Way Forward'*, a London-wide plan aimed to end all forms of violence against women in the capital. In 2011 the Coalition Government published its *'Call to End Violence Against Women & Girls'* which outlines the responsibility of Local Authorities to co-ordinate their response to VAWG issues. This strategy supports the vision and the principles set out by the government²

In November 2013, the Mayor of London launched a refreshed Mayoral Strategy on VAWG to ensure that VAWG issues remain a top priority in London. Elements of the Mayor's Plan are incorporated into this VAWG Plan.

Lewisham's VAWG Plan

Victims are at the forefront of the Council's wider Crime Reduction Plan, and this continues to be the focus within the VAWG Plan.

Although domestic violence and abuse has been a key priority for the Safer Lewisham Partnership over the last five years, more can be done to address all other strands of VAWG and how they affect each other.

We will be committed to awareness raising programmes on the issue of VAWG as well as training for all professionals in the borough, with targeted and supportive early intervention approaches.

We aim to ensure that victims of gender-based violence are provided with an effective multi agency approach through the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC), Multi Agency Sexual Exploitation (MASE) conference and other fora.

We also aim to continue to work with perpetrators to reduce future harm and all criminal justice partners working together to ensure that responses reduce risk of harm and contributes to victim safety.

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/ending-violence-against-women-and-girls-in-the-uk>

Good Practice

Annual Victims Day

In November 2013, the Council organised an event, which was hosted by the Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Janet Daby and included Lewisham's Mayor and the Chief Executive of Victim Support.

The event showcased the excellent and national-leading projects such as the Youth MARAC, and launched the Victim Manifesto.

A large number of agencies from both the statutory and voluntary sector were involved working together to improve services to victims.

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Prevalence of the strands of VAWG – nationally and locally

Domestic violence and abuse

It is estimated that :

- Nearly one million women in the UK experience at least one incident of domestic violence and abuse each year (British Crime Survey 2009/10)
- At least 750,000 children witness domestic violence and abuse (DoH 2002)
- 54% of victims of serious sexual assault were assaulted by their partners/ex-partners
- Repeat victimization rates for domestic violence and abuse are the highest for any crime type

Definition

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional

In extreme cases this could include murder.

Controlling behaviour is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

Local Picture

Historically, Lewisham has one of the highest rates of reported domestic violence and abuse incidents in London, with 2007/2008 reporting the highest number of offences in the last 5 years, the highest of any London borough at the time.

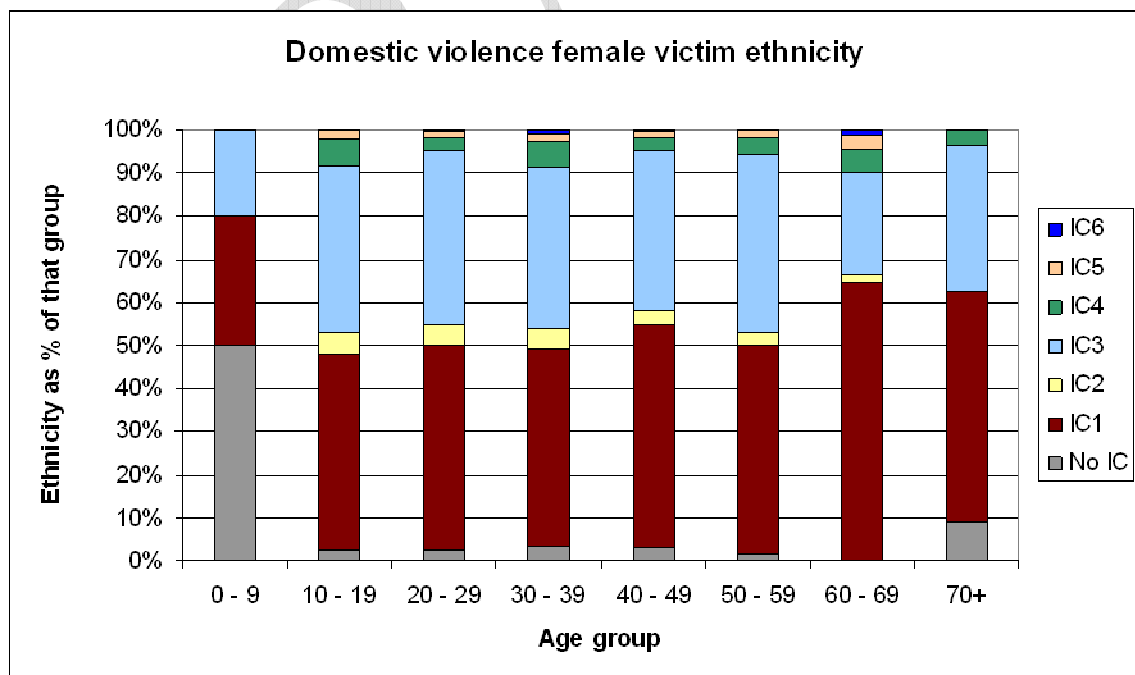
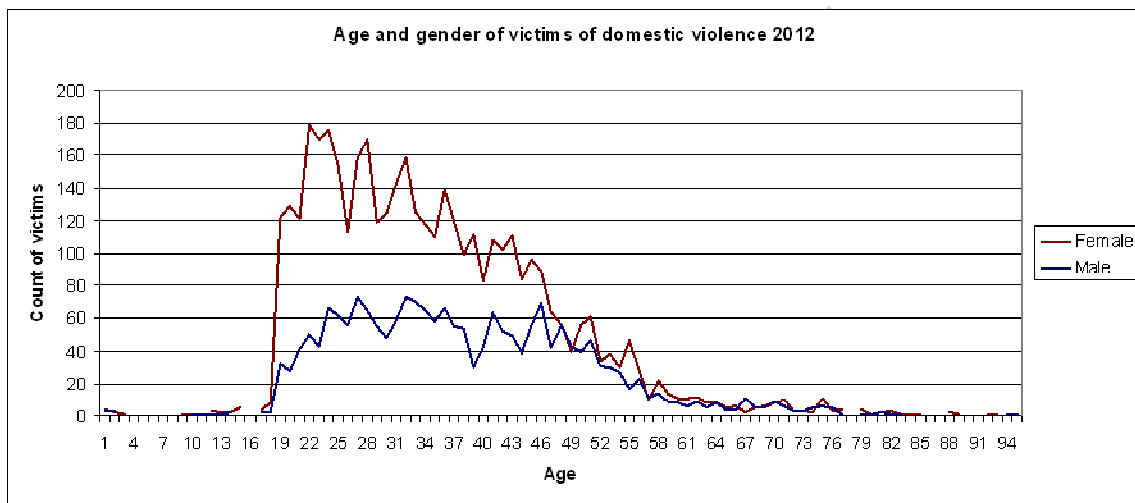
Since the Safer Lewisham Partnership (SLP) made domestic violence and abuse a strategic priority in 2008/2009, there has been continuous and consistent decreases in domestic violence and abuse figures, with the sharpest decrease observed after the 2009/2010 financial year (FY), when there were 593 fewer offences from the previous financial year, or a 19.8% reduction. However, latest figures from the Police show that in the year ending December 2013, rates of domestic violence and abuse increased 11%.

The partnership has invested significant funding and resources into tackling the issue of domestic violence and abuse, across three strands of prevention, provision and

protection and it is assessed that this work has contributed to a reduction in reported levels of domestic violence and abuse.

Victim Analysis

The tables below provide basic demographic information on victims. The victims are broadly representative of the local population. It is important to note that Domestic Violence definition was only extended to 16 and 17 year olds from April 2013 so these age groups are excluded from the analysis. To date the number of domestic violence and abuse offences flagged for this age group has been very low and few reach the MARAC (Multi Agency Referral and Assessment Conference for repeat and highest risk victims of domestic violence and abuse) threshold.



NB: IC codes are used by the British Police for self-defined ethnicity of individuals. **IC1** – White person, northern European type; **IC2** – Mediterranean European/Hispanic; **IC3** – African/Afro-Caribbean person; **IC4** – Indian, Pakistani, Nepalese, Maldivian, Sri Lankan, Bangladeshi, or any other (South) Asian person; **IC5** – Chinese, Japanese, or South-East Asian person; **IC6** – Middle Eastern person; **IC0, IC7 or IC9** – Origin unknown

Rape and Sexual violence

It is estimated that:

- Last year, 435,000 people suffered rape or sexual violence.
- Some 3.2 million women in England and Wales have been sexually assaulted at some point since the age of 16
- 9 in 10 cases of rape go unreported and 38% of serious sexual assault victims tell no one about their experience
- Each adult rape is estimated to cost over £96,000 in its emotional and physical impact on the victims, lost economic output due to convalescence, treatment costs to health services and costs incurred in the criminal justice system
- Overall sexual violence figures in Lewisham declined: between 2012 and 2013 rapes down by 15.6% and Other Serious Sexual Offences down by 7.7%. Sanctioned detection rates rose by 24.3% and 1.6% respectively.

Rape is defined in the Sexual Offences Act as the intentional penetration of the vagina, anus or mouth of another person without their consent and when the perpetrator does not reasonably believe that they consent. The term **sexual violence** encompasses a wider range of sexual assaults and coerced sexual activity

The first joint statistical overview of sexual offending in England and Wales estimates that there are 473,000 victims of sexual offences every year, of which 400,000 are women. This amounts to an average frequency rate of 2.5% for females and 0.5% for males. Within this category of sexual offences 0.5% were for the most serious offences of rape or sexual assault by penetration in the previous twelve months. These figures are based on aggregated data over three years from the Crime Survey for England and Wales and are not dependent on police recorded crime (the Stern Review estimates only 11% of rapes were reported to the police). The analysis adds that 90% of such victims knew the perpetrator.

A key challenge in tackling sexual violence has been to improve victim confidence, and address the particularly high attrition rates in rape cases³. In 2010 the Stern Review made detailed recommendations to improve the response of the criminal justice system to victims of sexual violence and these have informed the government's response and subsequent MOPAC commitments to roll out rape crisis centres in the capital.

³ The official figure of 6% and its unique method of calculation has been the subject of some dispute. The term 'conviction rate' usually describes the percentage of all the cases brought to court that end with the defendant being convicted. In the case of rape this is measured atypically, as the *percentage of all the cases recorded by the police as a rape that end up with someone being convicted of rape*. If the conviction rate for rape is calculated as a proportion of those cases that reach court, then it rises considerably to 58%

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

- Sexual exploitation is child abuse and children and young people who become involved face huge risks to their physical, emotional and psychological health and well-being.
- In Lewisham since January 2013 there have been 37 identified cases of CSE,
- with 35 females and 2 males.
- Young people aged 13 and 14 make up over half of this number.
- Offenders target vulnerable young people and use their power over the child to sexually abuse them.

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a form of child abuse where victim is given something- food, money, drugs, alcohol, gifts- in exchange for sexual activity with the abuser. Offenders target vulnerable young people and use their power- physical, financial, emotional etc- over the child to sexually abuse them.⁴

The Pan London Child Sexual Exploitation Operating Protocol was published in March 2013 and was produced by the collaboration of the London Safeguarding Children Board, MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs), Barnardos, the NSPCC and the Metropolitan Police Service. It is an extremely useful document and sets out clear guidelines for a multi-agency approach to recognise and deal with CSE.

A common feature of CSE is that the child or young person does not recognise the coercive nature of the relationship and does not see themselves as a victim of exploitation. This means that they are unlikely to report the abuse so police and partners must be alert to the signs of CSE and actively look for victims. CSE can also occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition; for example being persuaded to post images on the internet/ mobile phones without immediate payment or gain.

There is not one type of victim or offender of CSE. CSE can take many forms in many settings. If we look at just one model, such as group or gang CSE, we risk missing other victims who do not fall into that category. There is also a risk that victims don't recognise their abuse as CSE because it doesn't fit a particular model.

Awareness and understanding of CSE has increased a huge amount in the last few years. Agencies have stepped up to face the challenges involved in tackling in CSE and are investing considerable resources to fund major investigations into CSE.

CSE is not an indictable offence but police and prosecutors can charge offenders with rape and other sexual offences as well as kidnapping and trafficking.

The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) has created a CSE action plan that aims to raise the standards in tackling CSE in all forces so that the police service are providing a consistently strong approach to CSE and protecting vulnerable young people from this crime.

⁴ Pan London Child Sexual Exploitation Operating Protocol (March 2013)

All chief constables have committed to delivering this action plan. The action plan includes all forces creating a problem profile of CSE in their area to tailor their response and guide national strategy and all forces identifying a lead officer for CSE to act as a single point of contact and drive forward the action plan in their area.

How do children and young people become involved?

The reasons can be due to a number of factors. Often vulnerable children and young persons are targeted by perpetrators; however, this is not exclusive to those who are vulnerable. Perpetrators frequently target children and young persons at venues such as hostels, food outlets, taxi ranks and outside schools. Young people who run away from home are recognised as being more at risk. However, statistics show that the majority of CSE victims in London are actually living with their families.

Local Picture

The Lewisham Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) has been tasked with leading on CSE in the borough. Update on the local CSE action plan and other developments show that on the 37 cases collated since January to May 2013;

- The victims are overwhelmingly female
- Just over 50% of victims of child sexual exploitation are aged between 13 and 14.
- Legal status of victims:
 - 10 out of 37 children are LAC to Lewisham.
 - 6 out of 37 are under a Care Order to London Borough of Lewisham
 - 4 out of 37 children are Looked After under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989
- The majority of referrals are via Children's Social Care and the Police
- The National Treatment Agency (NTA) collates figures on Young People with substance misuse problems. One of their indicators is young people involved in sexual exploitation.

Although this will not be a total for the borough, as it only includes young people engaging with substance misuse services, the figures for 2012/13 show that there were 5 YP who reported this (3% of the caseload), compared to nationally where there were 721 Young people reported (4% of the National total caseload).

Prostitution and Trafficking

- Trafficking involves the recruitment, transportation and exploitation of women and children for the purposes of prostitution and domestic servitude across international borders and within countries
- Peter Sutcliffe and Gary Leon Ridgway initially murdered sex workers before targeting other women

Definition

There is no universally accepted definition of trafficking for sexual exploitation and this has led to some confusion regarding strategic aspects of policy and enforcement.

It is important to note the UK's 2003 Sexual Offences Act²⁹ does not require coercion to be involved and uses the word sex trafficking to describe the movement of all sex workers, *including willing professionals*.

This notwithstanding the stated priority of the Metropolitan Police's specialist unit SCD9⁵ is on coercive trafficking. Given the inherently covert nature of this activity, and the difficulties in defining trafficking, estimates on its prevalence have to be treated with caution. The GLA report *Silence on Violence* raises important questions regarding the re-adjusting the balance between enforcement and supporting the victims.

The Victims

In relation to the profile of the workers themselves it is recognised that there are important distinctions to be drawn between off street and brothel prostitution, and these differences in turn tend to skew assessments of the demographic profile/needs of this population. Being more visible and more likely to come to public attention through complaints of Anti-Social Behaviour much of the policing and NHS led responses have tended to be directed at brothels and here the population profile is markedly different to that of street prostitutes. Also, modern slavery⁶ encompasses human trafficking, as defined in the UN Palermo Protocol and the Council of Europe Convention and as made illegal in UK legislation under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 and the Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants) Act 2004. It also includes cases of slavery and servitude as made illegal in the Coroners and Justice Act 2009, which criminalises holding a person in slavery or servitude or requiring a person to perform forced or compulsory labour. When referring to modern slavery, it encompasses all of the forms of human trafficking, slavery and servitude that have been defined in national and international laws and agreements.

Local Picture

Borough data on prostitution and on the violence experienced by sex workers is too limited to draw firm conclusions from. In over half the cases ethnicity/nationality was not captured making it difficult to confirm trends.

⁵ SCD9 is the Metropolitan Police Service's 9th Specialist Crime Directorate (SCD), which is the unit investigating trafficking offences.

⁶[http://www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/UserStorage/pdf/Pdf%20reports/CSJ_Slavery_Full_Report_WEB\(5\).pdf](http://www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/UserStorage/pdf/Pdf%20reports/CSJ_Slavery_Full_Report_WEB(5).pdf)

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

- Illegal since 1985
- Illegal to take girls abroad from UK for FGM since 2004
- There have been 0 prosecutions under this Act
- 2100 women and girls in Lewisham are at risk of, or have undergone, FGM
- In 2011 there were 320 births to women with FGM, representing 6.5% of live births in Lewisham that year
- There are currently 374 girls in Lewisham schools who may have undergone or are at risk of FGM
- NSPCC launched a helpline in June 2013 to help protect children from FGM

Definition

FGM has been a specific criminal offence since 1985, with the introduction of the Prohibition of Female Circumcision Act 1985. However a 'loophole' was identified in the legislation, in that taking girls who were settled in the UK abroad for FGM was not a criminal offence. It was this 'loophole' that the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 ('the Act') intended to close.

The Act was brought into force on 3 March 2004 by the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (Commencement) Order 2004. The provisions of the Act only apply to offences committed on or after the date of commencement. For offences committed before 3 March 2004 the Prohibition of Female Circumcision 1985, as re-enacted in the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, continues to apply.

The Act affirms that it is illegal for FGM to be performed, and that it is also an offence for UK nationals or permanent UK residents to carry out, or aid, abet, counsel or procure the carrying out of FGM abroad on a UK national or permanent UK resident, even in countries where the practice is legal.

Despite this Act being in place for nearly ten years there have been no prosecutions under it. It is suggested that parents are circumventing legislation, as minors (largely under 10s) are the primary victims of FGM.

Estimate of FGM Prevalence in Lewisham

There is limited data available on FGM in Lewisham, but using methods previously applied nationally we estimate that:

- 2100 women and girls in Lewisham are at risk or have undergone FGM
- In 2011 there were 320 births to women with FGM, representing 6.5% of live births in Lewisham that year
- There are currently 374 girls in Lewisham schools who may have undergone or are at risk of FGM

This figure was derived using three methods, using UK demographic data and international prevalence rates.

Country	Lewisham Female Population 2011 (all ages)	FGM Prevalence (aged 15-49) (%)	Number of Women & Girls Affected or At Risk
Kenya	344	27.1	93
Somalia	549	97.9	537
Ghana	1423	3.8	54
Nigeria	4777	29.6	1414
North Africa	590	0-91	
Other Southern and Eastern Africa	1988	0-93	
Other Western and Central Africa	2181	0-95	
Total			2099

There is evidence to suggest there is high likelihood of some women and girls in Lewisham who have undergone (or are at risk of) FGM. It is estimated that there are about 2000 girls and young women who have or are at risk of undergoing FGM in the borough. Although there are significant limitations with this estimate it is useful to have some idea of the numbers of women affected to guide strategy, interventions and services to tackle FGM in the borough.

Forced Marriage

- In 2012 the Forced Marriage Unit dealt with 1485 cases worldwide
- The youngest victim was 2, the oldest 71
- 13% were under 15
- Within the UK, 21% of cases were in London

Definition

A forced marriage is where one or both people do not (or in cases of people with learning or physical disabilities, cannot) consent to the marriage and pressure or abuse is used.⁷

An arranged marriage is very different from a forced marriage. In an arranged marriage, both parties enter into the marriage freely. Families of each spouse take a leading role in arranging the marriage and this usually includes the choice of partner. However, the choice of whether or not to accept the arrangements remains with the prospective spouses. In forced marriage, one or both spouses do not (and in the case of some adults with support needs, cannot) consent to the marriage, and duress is involved. Duress can take the form of overt behaviour, for example assault, or more subjective factors which may depend on the victims' perception of the situation.

Forced marriage situations could involve, for example, the specific offences of:

- Kidnap/False imprisonment;
- Common assault, actual/grievous bodily harm;
- Threats to kill;

Data from the Forced Marriage Unit suggests that from January to December 2012:

- The FMU gave advice or support related to a possible forced marriage in 1485 cases.
- Where the age was known, 13% involved victims below 15 years, 22% involved victims aged 16-17, 30% involved victims aged 18-21, 19% involved victims aged 22-25, 8% involved victims aged 26-30, 8% involved victims aged 31+. The oldest victim was 71 and the youngest was 2.
- 82% involved female victims and 18% involved male victims.
- The FMU handled cases involving 60 different countries, including Pakistan
- 114 cases involved victims with disabilities.
- 22 involved victims who identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT)

Local Picture

There has been a low number of cases of known or suspected Forced marriages reported to authorities, however this VAWG Plan will seek to ensure that more agencies are aware of the referral routes of forced marriage cases and record them appropriately.

⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/forced-marriage>

Honour Based Violence (HBV)

- There are an estimated 12 honour killings per year in the UK
- 2800 incidents of HBV reported in the UK last year
- By 2010 HBV in London had risen to more than 5x the national average with 495 incidents
- It is estimated that:
 - 5000 honour killings internationally per year.
 - 1000 honour killings occur in India
 - 1000 honour killings occur in Pakistan
 - 12 honour killings per year in UK
- London has the highest rates for an area in the country

So-called honour based violence is a crime or incident, which has or may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community⁸

It is a collection of practices, which are used to control behaviour within families or other social groups to protect perceived cultural and religious beliefs and/or honour. Such violence can occur when perpetrators perceive that a relative has shamed the family and/or community by breaking their honour code. Women are predominantly (but not exclusively) the victims of 'so called honour based violence', which is used to assert male power in order to control female autonomy and sexuality. "Honour Based Violence" can be distinguished from other forms of violence, as it is often committed with some degree of approval and/or collusion from family and/or community members.

Examples may include murder, un-explained death (suicide), fear of or actual forced marriage, controlling sexual activity, domestic abuse (including psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional abuse), child abuse, rape, kidnapping, false imprisonment, threats to kill, assault, harassment, forced abortion. This list is not exhaustive.

Such crimes cut across all cultures, nationalities, faith groups and communities. They transcend national and international boundaries.

Additionally, honour based crimes could include:

- Attempted murder;
- Manslaughter;
- Procuring an abortion;
- Encouraging or assisting suicide;
- Conspiracy to murder;

Local Picture

By having a streamlined VAWG Plan, all agencies will work together to identify cases and incidents of HBV and work collaboratively to safeguard vulnerable victims.

⁸ http://www.cps.gov.uk/legal/h_to_k/honour_based_violence_and_forced_marriage/#a02

Stalking and Harassment

- Nationally, it is estimated that after reaching the age of 16 stalking affects around one in five women.
- A third of victims said they had lost their job, or relationship or had been forced to leave their home because of stalking
- The most common perpetrator in incidents is an estranged partner
- Most acts of stalking are dealt with by the police using the criminal offence of Harassment

Currently the law relating to stalking⁹ is covered principally by the Protection from Harassment Act, which prohibits harassment, was brought into force on 16 June 1997, and has been amended several times. The legislation was always intended to tackle stalking, but the offences were drafted to tackle any form of persistent conduct which causes another person alarm or distress.

Section 1(1) of the 1997 Act states a person must not pursue a course of conduct:

- which amounts to harassment of another, and
- which he knows or ought to know amounts to harassment of the other

Whilst there is no strict legal definition of 'stalking', section 2A (3) of the PHA 1997 sets out examples of acts or omissions which, in particular circumstances, are ones associated with stalking. These include: physical following; contacting, or attempting to contact a person by any means (this may be through friends, work colleagues, family or technology); or, other intrusions into the victim's privacy such as loitering in a particular place or watching or spying on a person.

Local Picture

Analysis of police data indicates only a comparatively small number of stalking offences, however the picture is not helped by the very broad crime definition of 'Harassment' used in most cases. Over the last twelve months there have been 11 reports relating to incidents of or behaviour conducive to stalking. The majority of these type of allegations are harassment and fall within the definition of domestic violence and abuse where partners/estranged partners make unwanted contact with the individual by telephone, letters or home address visits. As such, there is little evidence to suggest these crimes cannot be targeted as an integral part of DV risk management protocols

⁹ The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 created two new offences of stalking by inserting new sections 2A and 4A into the PHA 1997. The two offences are in force from 25 November 2012 and provide further options for prosecutors to consider when selecting charges. The Home Office has issued guidelines and this can be accessed via the following link: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/about-us/corporate-publications-strategy/home-office-circulars/circulars-2012/018-2012/>.

PART 2

Public Consultation - The views of stakeholders and local residents

To help develop this plan, a consultation was produced to seek the views of a wide range of partners in the borough between November 2013 and January 2014. This consultation involved the following;

1. Consultation with professionals and partners through our local violence against women and girls professional networks.
2. An on-line consultation with professionals and service users.

The key stakeholder organisations and agencies were:

- Members of the Safer Lewisham Partnership
- LBL Children's Social Care
- LBL Adults' Social Care
- Lewisham Children's Safeguarding Board
- Lewisham Adults' Safeguarding Board
- The Metropolitan Police Service
- Public Health Services and The NHS
- LBL Housing Options Centre
- Lewisham Victim Support
- Refuge
- The Lewisham Muslim Centre
- LBL Drug and Alcohol and Supporting People
- The South London Rape Crisis Steering Group
- London Probation Trust
- University Hospital Lewisham
- South London and Maudsley Mental Health Services
- The Cassell Centre
- Registered Social Landlords
- Crown Prosecution Service
- Voluntary Action Lewisham
- Second Wave
- Members of the Lewisham Domestic and Sexual Violence Forum
- LBL Children's Centres
- The Havens
- Sexual Exploitation Group (NSPCC)
- LBL Youth Offending Team
- LBL Youth Services
- LBL Community Safety Team
- Millwall Football Club
- Lewisham Community Police Consultative Group (LCPCG)

Consultation Summary

Lewisham's Crime Reduction Service conducted a consultation with local residents and stakeholders between November 2013 and January 2014 regarding their views on whether shifting to a VAWG strategy would be welcomed in the borough. A total of 79 responses were received with a summary provided below.

The next steps will be to hold a further consultation of this draft plan simultaneously with a series of focus groups held with local residents to examine the experiences and safety concerns of the local population.

The respondents comprised¹⁰:

- 10 male (13%) and 64 female (81%)
- People aged from under 18 to 69, with the majority in the 30 to 59 bracket
- Service users, residents, police, probation, housing providers, community and voluntary sectors, council and faith groups

When asked what the most important issues are, the responses were:

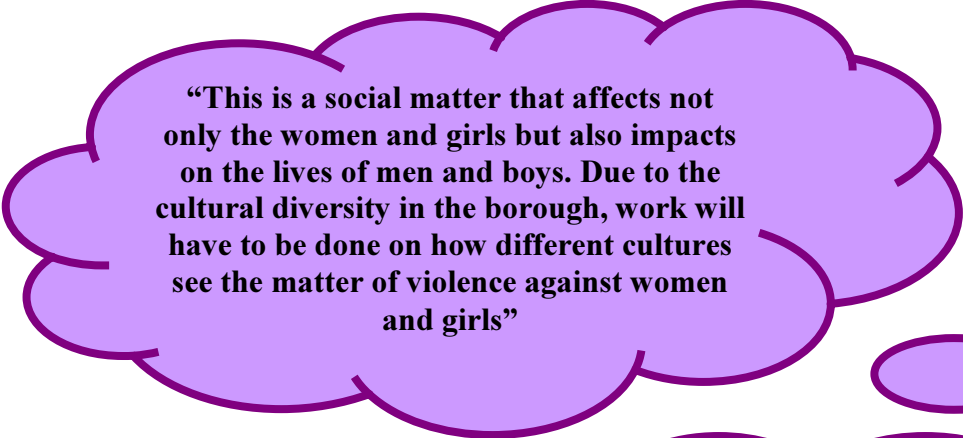
Most important issues	% Total	Count
Domestic violence and abuse	15.07%	74
Rape and sexual violence	14.46%	71
Stalking and harassment	12.42%	61
Sexual exploitation	11.81%	58
Prostitution and trafficking	10.79%	53
Female Genital Mutilation	10.59%	52
Forced Marriage	10.39%	51
Honor Based Violence	10.39%	51

26 people (33%) said that for them other issues were also important and gave examples such as:

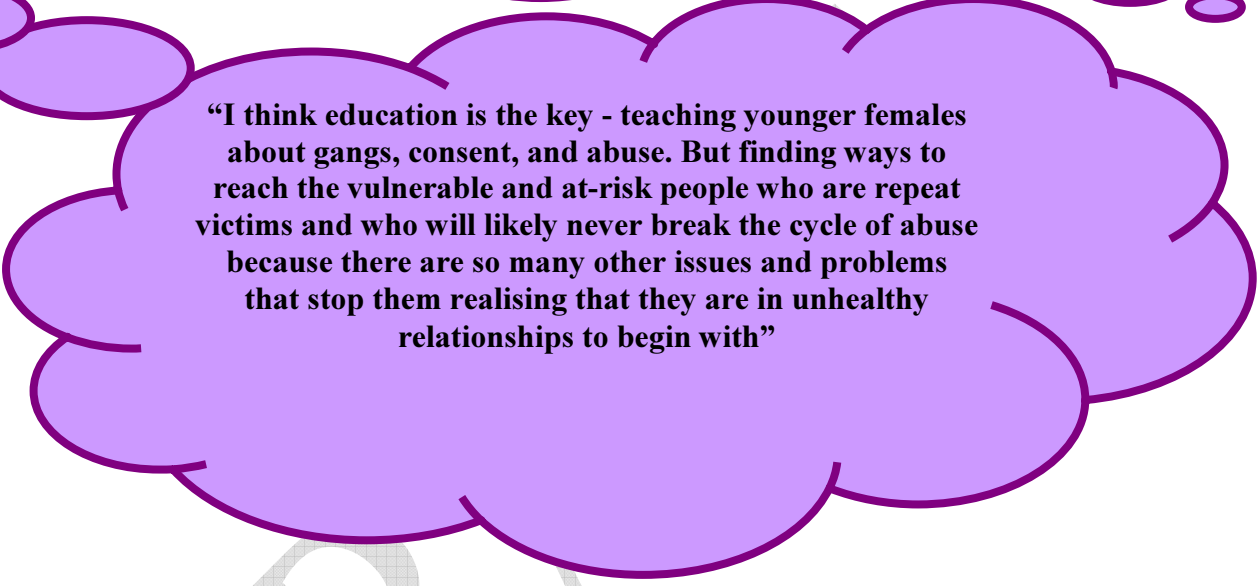
- Gangs
- Murder (domestic)
- Older women and domestic violence and abuse
- Lone working
- Support for male victims of these issues
- Online harassment

'Gangs' was the most commonly suggested topic, with 9 people putting this forward. Murder was mentioned by 2 people.

¹⁰Some respondents did not answer all questions, or answered 'rather not say'.



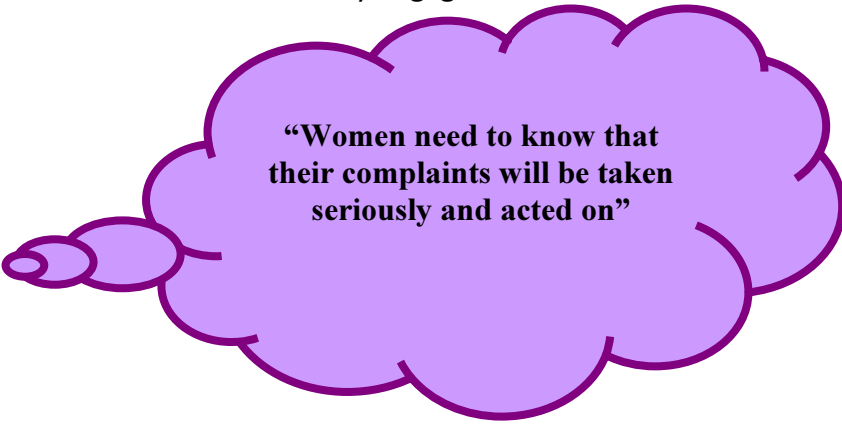
“This is a social matter that affects not only the women and girls but also impacts on the lives of men and boys. Due to the cultural diversity in the borough, work will have to be done on how different cultures see the matter of violence against women and girls”



“I think education is the key - teaching younger females about gangs, consent, and abuse. But finding ways to reach the vulnerable and at-risk people who are repeat victims and who will likely never break the cycle of abuse because there are so many other issues and problems that stop them realising that they are in unhealthy relationships to begin with”

Addressing Issues - How can the Safer Lewisham Partnership work more effectively to address the issues identified above?

- Providing more information
- Extend SLP meetings to other agencies
- Lessons in school e.g. equality, unhealthy relationships
- Advertising e.g. Lewisham Life, safe havens or bus stops
- Multi agency work including training e.g. ‘working with girls’
- Better communication between council departments such as adult social care and crime reduction
- Community engagement



“Women need to know that their complaints will be taken seriously and acted on”

“It seems to be acceptable in so many communities”

“There needs to be another option for people to ring so the male partners don't get arrested but they can still escape it - I think many women still feel too much guilt about giving partners a criminal record”

Better Protection - How can the Safer Lewisham Partnership ensure better protection for women and girls who are at risk from violence?

- Safe havens
- Communication & signposting
- Self esteem workshops
- Free phone help or emergency numbers, and numbers that don't show up on phone bills
- Professionals being aware of cultural issues
- Effective training on DV and diversity issues
- A broader programme for rehabilitating perpetrators
- Prompt police response, outreach by police so that women know it is being taken seriously
- 'Claire's Law' should be adopted

“Underage perpetrators are still children & need help as well”

PART 3

Our Principles and Priorities

The government's approach to ending VAWG involves a number of actions¹¹, including, but not limited to:

- widening the definition of domestic violence and abuse following a public consultation, to include coercive control and to cover 16 and 17 year olds
- publishing a pocket sized declaration opposing female genital mutilation document for girls and women to carry when abroad, explaining the law and potential criminal penalties
- running the teenage relation abuse and teenage rape prevention campaigns to prevent teenagers from becoming victims and perpetrators of sexual violence and abuse and directing them to places for help and advice
- providing protection for victims of stalking by introducing two new specific criminal offences, along with additional related police search powers and training for police and prosecutors
- signing the Council of Europe's convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence - the 'Istanbul Convention'

Lewisham's Principles

The Partnership is committed to delivering an integrated provision for VAWG, working to achieve the following goals and objectives:

1. To develop a better understanding of VAWG and its impact in our borough;
2. To ensure an improved access to the support and protection of women and girls in our borough;
3. To hold perpetrators to account.

WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE

Within the principles outlined and with a clear commitment as set out in the Safer Lewisham Plan 13/14, we want to achieve the following;

- Reducing key crimes with particular reference to VAWG and serious youth violence.
- Ensuring all public services work collaboratively and with communities to prevent crime support victims and reduce re-offending and improving confidence across all criminal justice agencies.

Our identified VAWG priorities are:

- **Tackling and reducing incidents of domestic violence and abuse year on year.**
- **Tackling and reducing rape and sexual violence year on year.**
- **Tackling sexual exploitation with specific focus on children.**

¹¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/ending-violence-against-women-and-girls-in-the-uk>

PART 4

What will the partnership do?

Leadership

- Work with partners to develop a shared vision, strategic priorities, outcomes and targets for gang-associated women and girls across the partnership and allocate resources accordingly.
- Work with local communities and voluntary sector groups to understand the specific issues in relation to VAWG, develop an open and transparent dialogue about how VAWG impacts against the protected characteristics, specifically gender, race and religion.
- Progress and improve delivery of prevention and education interventions in schools and colleges. This work will be in relation to healthy relationships and violence at home and cover gang-associated women and girls.
- Improving access to VAWG specialist and universal services for victims and their families.
- Continue to develop the work with victims and Health impacts in relation to VAWG
- Ensure that any policies and strategies relating to children and young people also address gang-associated women and girls.

Partnership

- Developing and working with partners to deliver training for professionals in aspects of VAWG; both in terms of early identification, and support for victims, as well as putting in place strategic-level training around gang-associated women and girls for senior staff and members of the CSP to support the partnership in developing an effective approach across all agencies.
- Work with key partners, particularly specialist VAWG sector partners, to risk assess gang-associated women and girls for sexual violence and exploitation, domestic violence and other forms of VAWG including forced marriage and HBV.
- Lewisham Safeguarding Children's board to coordinate/develop training for key frontline professionals on gang-associated women and girls to raise awareness of the risk indicators, how to respond and local referral pathways.

Understanding and mapping the problem

- Ensure that we integrate and address the needs of gang-associated women and girls in local ending gang and youth violence strategies and through service commissioning:
 - Maintain and Develop Girls & Gangs partnership work
 - Maintain links between gang & WAWG boards and professionals, ensuring that there is at least one representative from the gangs sector sitting on VAWG strategic partnership
 - Improving partnership working between the gangs, VAWG, health, education, housing and safeguarding sectors and improve awareness of the issues facing gang-associated women and girls by coordinating networking events, workshops and training for practitioners.

- Develop local information-sharing protocols to enable the safe sharing of information between sexual health, other health services (mental health, GPs and substance misuse) the VCS and statutory agencies.
- consider commissioning a piece of research to address any evidence gaps to better understand the extent, profile and needs of gang-associated girls in Lewisham.
-

Identification, assessment and safeguarding

- Flagging risk within agencies with clear processes for referrals and next steps to safeguard, information sharing protocols and systems in place to share relevant information between relevant risk assessment panels - Multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARAC) (Multi-agency Public Protections Arrangements (MAPPAs), Multi-agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH) and Integrated Offender Management (IOM).
- Continue the zero tolerance approach to VAWG and working closely with CPS and HMCTS in relation to developing areas such as FGM and Forced Marriage.
- Safeguarding, health and community safety partners will work together to put in place specialist training for MASH staff on indicators of gang-associated VAWG and sexual exploitation and which datasets to check to identify any further information about possible risks and dangers faced by gang-associated girls.

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Tackling and reducing incidents of domestic violence and abuse

Reducing domestic violence and abuse has been a key strategic priority for the borough for the past 5 years. Whilst analysis of key linked offences involving non-familial forms of violence against females (particularly GBH and Sexual Violence) show declines, the rising number of Domestic Violence offences more than offsets this downward trend.

Given the gravity of crime and its large hidden harm caused to children and families the Partnership has decided to re-prioritise this area and will continue to work with support services such as Refuge and Victim Support. Key policy changes have also shaped this decision. Since March 2013, 16-18 year old young people are now included within the domestic violence and abuse definition. Lewisham has reviewed a number of domestic homicides and lessons learnt from these will need to be considered and changes made where appropriate, which will be overseen by a multi-agency Task and Finish Group.

The success of the partnership's efforts will be evaluated by reductions in the following linked offences;

- Violence against females¹²
- Domestic Violence incidents and offences

GOOD Practice – DV MARAC

The MARAC aims to safeguard the highest risk victims of domestic violence and abuse as well as their children, whilst making links with other public protection arrangements in relation to perpetrators and vulnerable adults and to safeguard agency staff. This is achieved by an information sharing and action planning process at MARAC with case management and specialist support before, during and after the meeting provided by the Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVA).

Lewisham MARAC is routinely cited by CAADA as an "example MARAC for best practice", with professionals from across the country attending to observe the Lewisham MARAC in operation. After every visit, the Chair and Coordinator of the Lewisham MARAC meet with the visiting professionals to share best practice procedures.

Lewisham MARAC has also recently been selected to participate with CAADA in a Home Office study on the support given to victims of domestic violence and abuse who are 16 and 17 year old and referred to the MARAC. The outcomes of this study will be shared on a national level, as well as with partners across the council.

¹² All offences within the Violence with Injury crime group to be included

Reducing rape and sexual violence

Rape and Sexual violence impacts significantly physically and psychologically and access to services is critical for victims. In the 2013 report *Beyond the Labels* women and girls commented on reasons that influenced their access to services which are an important focus for Lewisham in respect of this area:

- Fear and lack of information about services – not feeling confident about how to go about seeking help, potential violence repercussions, feeling trapped, isolation, self-blame, not being believed, and being judged.
- Coercion and pressure from family members and other individuals – additional impact of death threats, pressure, rejection and coercion
- Not recognising the violence – perception that violence had to be physical,
- Travelling out of the borough of residence
- Language
- Asylum and immigration

We will also continue to work with support services such as Havens and South London Rape Crisis Centre.

The success of the partnership's efforts will be evaluated by reductions in the following linked offences

- Violence against females¹³
- Rape and Sexual Violence incidents and offences

GOOD Practice

The Safe Domestic Abuse Training and Education (DATE) Project visits schools in Lewisham to deliver workshops on domestic and sexual violence awareness, as well as the warning signs on sexual abuse. This campaign is done in partnership with Lewisham Council's Neighbourhood Community Safety Service and aims to support young people by highlighting the extent of abuse in the society, and was to seek help and support.

Some of the topics covered by the Safe DATE Project are;

- Workshop discussion on relationships. Students are encouraged to express a word that describe a good or bad relationship
- Case studies which are in the public domain are used to illustrate specific aspects of abuse including same sex violence, male victims, honour based killing and teenage relationship violence.
- Each student is given a Safe DATE pack which includes information on where to get further help and advice.

With a new VAWG Plan, this area of work will be expanded to cover as many schools as possible but also ensuring referral pathways are clear and easily accessible.

¹³ All offences within the Violence with Injury crime group to be included

Tackling Sexual Exploitation, with particular focus on children

Following from the findings and recommendations made in the Rochdale Serious Case¹⁴ review in 2013, Lewisham has developed further understanding of the issues and delivering a comprehensive approach to tackling Child Sexual Exploitation.

Victims of CSE are not exclusive to females, but are the predominant group. The exclusivity is not only within gangs; however there is again some clear links where this does exist. Lewisham has started to develop a good intelligence picture and is beginning to work in a multi agency manner in improving reporting, improving support for the victims and tackling robustly the enforcement of perpetrators.

There are many links outside of the borough boundaries which is opening up a wider picture of the issues in South East London. There is also senior support for this area across children's and adult services provision, and Lewisham has piloted an approach to map networks and links called Multi Agency Sexual Exploitation (MASE) Group.

The success of the partnership's efforts will be evaluated by reductions in the following linked offences

- Violence against females¹⁵
- Child sexual exploitation cases being brought to justice seeing an increase year on year.

GOOD Practice

CSE Multi Agency Sexual Exploitation (MASE)

Lewisham has been chosen as a pilot area on CSE by the Metropolitan Police which arose out of recognition that multiagency intervention in cases of child sexual exploitation needing to be radically overhauled following a highly publicised case in Rochdale. The pilot started on 7th May 2013. The pilot requires the police to set up specialised child sexual exploitation units. These units hold monthly interagency meetings attended by Children's Services such as Education, Children Social Care, Youth Offending Service and Sexual Health Services to share information on cases of CSE plan and track actions. This pilot will be evaluated in 2014.

¹⁴ <http://www.rbscb.org/UserFiles/Docs/YP1-6%20SCR%20RBSCB%2020.12.13.pdf>

¹⁵ All offences within the Violence with Injury crime group to be included

PART 5

Next Steps

The VAWG agenda cuts across a wide range of different operational service areas including health, housing and community safety. The VAWG agenda cannot be delivered in isolation and relies on a broad range of agencies working in partnership.

An initial VAWG action plan will be developed in partnership to reflect the priorities outlined and will form part of a mechanism of monitoring outcomes achieved year on year.

This action plan will be reviewed on a quarterly basis at the VAWG Operational Group, which will be newly established. It is also recommended that it is reviewed and reported on annually at the Safer Lewisham Partnership (SLP), with links being maintained to Boards such as the Children and Young Peoples Board, Lewisham Safeguarding Children's Board, Lewisham's Safeguarding Adults Board, and the Health and Well being Board. Also, the Domestic and Sexual Violence Forum will be converted into the VAWG Forum from April 2014, with the Chair and Vice Chair from the voluntary and community sector forming membership of the VAWG Operational Group, representing the Forum.

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PART 6

Finance and Resources

There are a number of significant changes in the funding and resourcing for all aspects of the Criminal Justice system both locally and regionally. These are likely to have an impact on the range of services and ability to deliver.

All partners are committed to working collaboratively and to support funding applications where appropriate to continue the support required to deliver on the areas identified as priorities for 2014-2015.

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Further Information

Further copies of the Plan can be obtained on request to the Crime Reduction and Supporting People Services within the Council.

If you would like the information in the document translated into a different language, provided in large print or in Braille or the spoken word, please contact us on:

Tel No.: 0208 314 9569

Post: Crime Reduction and Supporting People Division
London Borough of Lewisham,
Laurence House,
Catford Road,
SE6 4RU

The Partnership is committed to ongoing improvements in the services we deliver. We would welcome any feedback, suggestions or proposals from individuals or organisations.

Email: communityservices@lewisham.gov.uk

For practical advice in relation to community safety and crime prevention, please visit the website:

www.crimereduction.gov.uk or www.lewisham.gov.uk/vawg

Call Crime Stoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111 to give information about a crime

For information on your local Safer Neighbourhood Teams please visit:

<http://www.met.police.uk/teams/lewisham/index.php>

APPENDIX A

The below are the questions asked in the borough;

1. What are the most important issues for the Safer Lewisham Partnership to address in tackling violence against women and girls in Lewisham? Please select all that are most important for women and girls in Lewisham.
 - a) Domestic violence and abuse
 - b) Rape and sexual violence
 - c) Stalking and harassment
 - d) Forced Marriage
 - e) Honor Based Violence
 - f) Female Genital Mutilation
 - g) Prostitution and trafficking
 - h) Sexual exploitation
 - i) Other – please use free-text box
2. How can the Safer Lewisham Partnership work more effectively to address the issues identified above? (Free-text box)
3. How can the Safer Lewisham Partnership provide better services for women and girls who have been victims of violence? (Free-text box)
4. How can the Safer Lewisham Partnership ensure better protection for women and girls who are at risk from violence? (Free-text box)
5. Do you have any other comments about violence against women and girls in Lewisham? (Free-text box)

Appendix B**Themes from the consultation**

Lewisham's Crime Reduction Service conducted a consultation with local residents and stakeholders between November 2013 and January 2014 regarding their views on whether shifting to a VAWG strategy would be welcomed in the borough. A total of 79 responses were received with a summary provided below.

The respondents comprised¹⁶:

- 10 male (13%) and 64 female (81%)
- People aged from under 18 to 69, with the majority in the 30 to 59 bracket
- Service users, residents, police, probation, housing providers, community and voluntary sectors, council and faith groups

Ethnicity:

African	8.86%	7
Any other Asian background	2.53%	2
Any other Black/ African/ Caribbean background	2.53%	2
Any other White background	10.13%	8
Caribbean	10.13%	8
English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	43.04%	34
Indian	1.27%	1
Irish	8.86%	7
Other ethnic group	2.53%	2
Pakistani	1.27%	1
White and Asian	1.27%	1
White and Black African	1.27%	1
White and Black Caribbean	2.53%	2

Religion:

None	46.84%	37
Christian (all denominations)	30.38%	24
Buddhist	2.53%	2
Hindu	0.00%	0
Jewish	1.27%	1
Muslim	3.80%	3
Sikh	0.00%	0
Any other religion/ belief	1.27%	1

¹⁶Some respondents did not answer all questions, or answered 'rather not say'.

Sexuality:

Straight/ heterosexual	70.89%	56
Gay/ lesbian	3.80%	3
Bisexual	3.80%	3
Other	2.53%	2
I'd rather not say	15.19%	12

“This is a social matter that affects not only the women and girls but this impacts on the lives of men and boys. Due to the cultural diversity in the borough, work will have to be done on how different cultures see the matter of violence against women

When asked what the most important issues are, the responses were:

Most important issues	% Total	Count
Domestic violence and abuse	15.07%	74
Rape and sexual violence	14.46%	71
Stalking and harassment	12.42%	61
Sexual exploitation	11.81%	58
Prostitution and trafficking	10.79%	53
Female Genital Mutilation	10.59%	52
Forced Marriage	10.39%	51
Honor Based Violence	10.39%	51

26 people (33%) said that for them other issues were also important and gave examples such as:

- Gangs
- Murder (domestic)
- Older women and domestic violence and abuse
- Lone working
- Support for male victims of these issues
- Online harassment

‘Gangs’ was the most commonly suggested topic, with 9 people putting this forward. Murder was mentioned by 2 people.

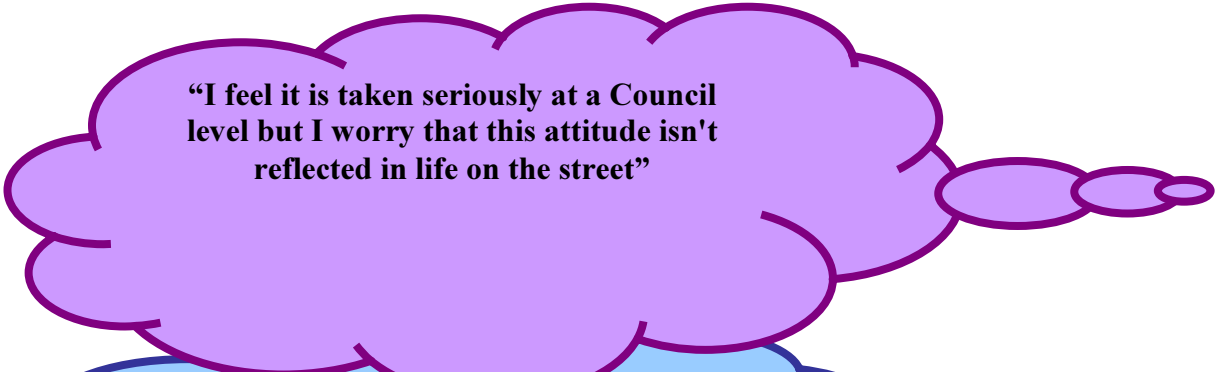
“I think education is the key - teaching younger females about gangs, consent, abuse. But finding ways to reach the vulnerable and at-risk people who are repeat victims and who will likely never break the cycle of abuse because there are so many other issues and problems

Addressing Issues - How can the Safer Lewisham Partnership work more effectively to address the issues identified above?

- Providing more information
- Extend SLP meetings to other agencies
- Lessons in school e.g. equality, unhealthy relationships
- Not being embarrassed by addressing 'cultural differences'
- Advertising e.g. Lewisham Life, safe havens or bus stops
- Multi agency work including training e.g. 'working with girls'
- Better communication between council departments such as adult social care and crime reduction
- Community engagement

Better Protection - How can the Safer Lewisham Partnership ensure better protection for women and girls who are at risk from violence?

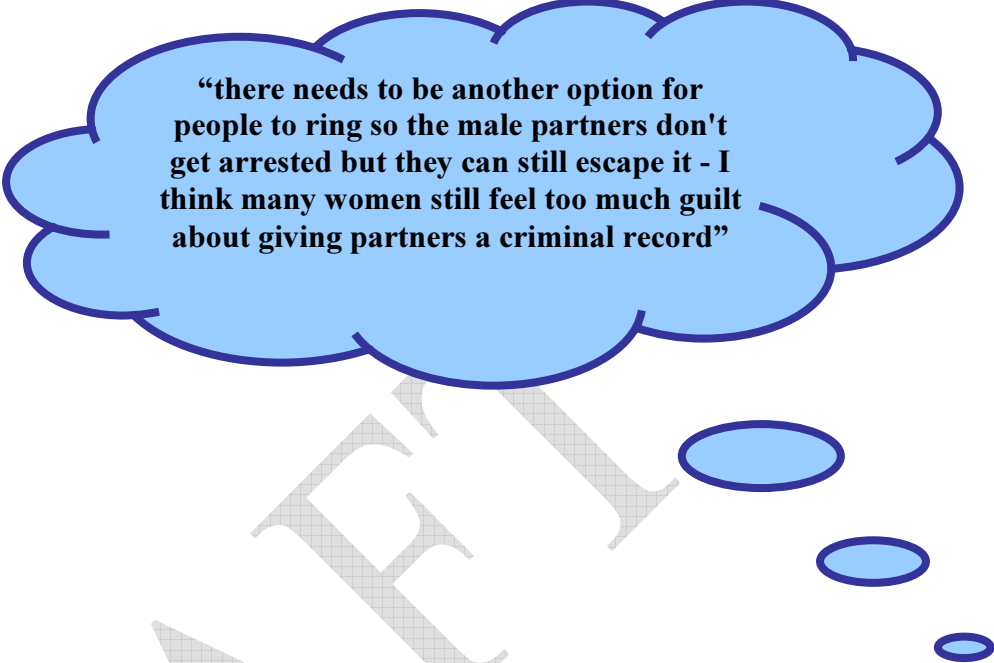
- Safe havens
- Communication & signposting
- Self esteem work shops
- Free phone help or emergency numbers, and numbers that don't show up on phone bills
- Professionals being aware of cultural issues
- Effective training on DV and diversity issues
- A broader programme for rehabilitating perpetrators
- Prompt police response, outreach by police so that women know it is being taken seriously
- 'Claire's Law' should be adopted



“I feel it is taken seriously at a Council level but I worry that this attitude isn't reflected in life on the street”



“Underage perpetrators are still children & need help as well a sanctions”



“there needs to be another option for people to ring so the male partners don't get arrested but they can still escape it - I think many women still feel too much guilt about giving partners a criminal record”

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