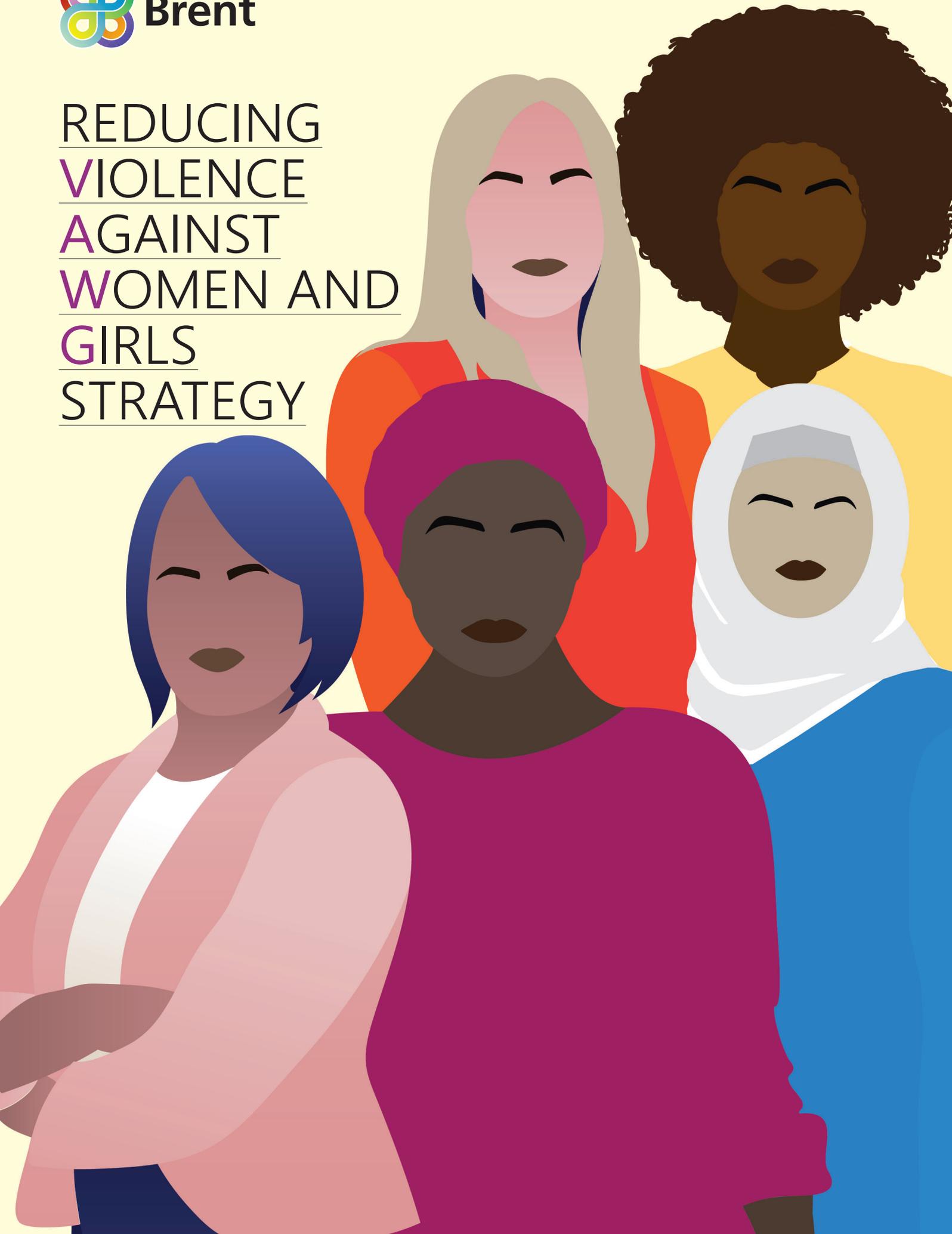


REDUCING
VIOLENCE
AGAINST
WOMEN AND
GIRLS
STRATEGY



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FOREWORD

In unveiling this comprehensive Violence Against Women and Girls strategy, we embark on a critical journey toward fostering safety, respect, and dignity for all individuals in our community. Domestic abuse is a pervasive issue that transcends demographics, impacting people from all walks of life. It is a societal challenge that requires our collective commitment, attention, and a united front to dismantle its roots. Tackling domestic abuse is everyone's business. This strategy underscores our understanding that only through collaboration, across our communities, organisations, and individuals, can we create a Borough where no one lives in fear.

In recent years, the epidemic of misogyny, exemplified by the rise of incel culture, has contributed to a climate of fear and violence against women. The tragic murders of Nicole Smallman and Bibaa Henry in Brent serve as a stark reminder of the urgent need to address the normalisation of such attitudes and behaviours within our society; highlighting the dangers faced by women and also the systemic issues that allow misogyny to thrive.

We also understand the unique challenges facing Black, Asian and minoritised ethnic communities. The experiences of these individuals are often shaped by a complex interplay of race, gender, and socio-economic factors, which necessitates a tailored and inclusive approach to support and intervention. And we will strengthen our response

to domestic abuse and address its negative impact on children.

In Brent, we understand that early intervention is vital to breaking the cycle of violence and exploitation. Our proactive approach aims to prevent intergenerational cycles of abuse, ensuring that future generations are free from the traumas that have affected too many in our community.

The health impacts of VAWG cannot be overstated. Adopting a public health approach allows us to view VAWG as a societal issue that affects not only individual victim-survivors but also our community's overall well-being.

Finally, we note that partnerships are integral to our success and by fostering trust and collaboration among local organisations, statutory services, voluntary sector, and community leaders, we can develop a coordinated response that meets the diverse needs of our residents. Together, we can create a supportive environment that prioritises safety and well-being ensuring that every woman and every girl in Brent feels valued, heard, and protected.



Councillor Ishma Moeen
Cabinet Member for
Community Safety
and Cohesion

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Our community should be a place where women should feel safe socialising, travelling, at work and at home; these are basic rights. However, many women and girls are impacted by violence, including domestic abuse and sexual abuse, leading to negative physical, psychological, and emotional consequences for victim survivors, their families and communities.

Brent's Reducing Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy (2026-2029) reaffirms Brent's commitment to creating a safe environment for all women and girls. We will act on priority areas highlighted in the Mayor of London's Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy (2022-25) and reflected in London's Police and Crime Plan (2022-2025). Addressing these widespread issues has been recognised as a key priority for the Safer Brent Partnership, enhancing community safety, trust and security.

Our strategy acknowledges the disproportionate impact of gender-based violence on marginalised communities and seeks to address their specific needs, acknowledging the systemic and intersecting challenges faced by some communities. It emphasises ongoing partnership, cultural competence, and continuous review to ensure that it meets the evolving needs of the community.

This strategy seeks to address

the root causes of violence, hold perpetrators accountable, and create a supportive environment for survivors, all through partnership between local organisations. It aims to prevent abuse through early intervention programs and community education, protect victim survivors by improving support and pursuing perpetrators through the justice system, build resilience in affected communities, and help victim survivors recover through comprehensive support services.

Brent will take a public health approach to eliminating violence against women and girls (VAWG). Our approach emphasises collaboration; a combination of survivor and data-led decision-making and continuous engagement with communities and stakeholders. By expanding partnerships with local agencies, improving training for professionals, and ensuring that services are accessible and culturally responsive, Brent aims to reduce the prevalence of VAWG and provide a supportive environment for victim survivors.

Brent's vision is to eliminate VAWG and provide robust, trauma-informed support for victim survivors. Working in partnership across the borough, we can ensure women and girls are safe in public and private spaces and can thrive, free from the fear of violence.

DEFINITIONS

The London Borough of Brent uses the United Nation's definition of violence against women:

“ANY ACT OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE THAT RESULTS IN, OR IS LIKELY TO RESULT IN, PHYSICAL, SEXUAL, OR MENTAL HARM OR SUFFERING TO WOMEN, INCLUDING THREATS OF SUCH ACTS, COERCION OR ARBITRARY DEPRIVATION OF LIBERTY, WHETHER OCCURRING IN PUBLIC OR IN PRIVATE LIFE.”⁽¹⁾

Violence against women and girls can take a range of forms, including those described below.

Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse has a statutory definition, set out in the Domestic Abuse Act (2021). This definition has three sections, setting out the definition of domestic abuse, including the requirement to be 'personally connected' and acknowledge situations in which children would be victims of domestic abuse. The Act defines abusive behaviour as physical or sexual abuse, controlling or coercive behaviour, economic abuse, psychological, emotional or other abuse.

The Home Office sets out types of domestic abuse as: intimate partner abuse; teenage relationship abuse; abuse by family members; and child-to-parent abuse. The Domestic Abuse Act recognises that children under the age of 18 years who see, hear or experience the effect of domestic

abuse are themselves victims of such abuse.

Sexual Violence

The World Health Organisation defines sexual violence as “any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed, against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting”⁽²⁾. Sexual violence takes place without the victim's consent and includes rape, sexual assault and sexual abuse.

Image Based Sexual Offending

Sharing personal intimate and sexual images of a person or threatening to as an act of revenge and without the consent of the person has been a crime since 2015. Recent developments in addressing intimate image abuse include significant legislative changes under the Online Safety Act (2023), which broadened the scope of existing offences.

1 World Health Organisation, undated web page: [Violence against women](#)

2 World Health Organisation, undated web page: [Violence Info- Sexual violence](#)

Stalking

Stalking is a pattern of fixated and obsessive behaviour which is repeated, persistent, intrusive and causes fear of violence or engenders alarm and distress in the victim. It may include threatening phone calls, texts or letters, damaging property, and spying on and following the victim.

Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation (CSAE)

Child sexual abuse and exploitation (CSAE) is a form of sexual abuse; the victim survivor is groomed, deceived or forced into taking part in a sexual activity. CSAE can take place in person or online.

Exploitation

The World Health Organisation defines sexual exploitation as any

“actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially, or politically from the sexual exploitation of another”(3). Exploitation includes some forms of trafficking, where this includes the recruitment, transportation and exploitation of people for the purposes of prostitution and domestic servitude.

Harmful Practices

Harmful practices such as honour-based abuse, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced or early marriage are forms of VAWG. These practices can occur across different communities and are not exclusive to any one culture or religion; framing them as such risks reinforcing harmful stereotypes.



3 World Health Organisation, undated pamphlet: [sexual-exploitation-and-abuse-pamphlet-en.pdf](#)

CONTEXT – NATIONAL AND REGIONAL

Repeat offending and repeat victimisation

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) consistently shows similar trends, reporting that many victims endure multiple episodes of violence, with women being disproportionately affected(4).

The London Crime Annual Report highlights that domestic abuse is often underreported, and those who do report frequently suffer from ongoing abuse, necessitating comprehensive intervention strategies(5).

In 82% of cases where perpetrators pose a high risk of further harm or homicide to their victims, perpetrators will use multiple forms of abuse, including physical and sexual abuse, harassment and stalking and jealous and controlling behaviours(6).

Sexual violence

The number of police recorded

sexual offences has increased over the last decade. Across England and Wales there was an 8% increase in Year Ending December 2024 (205,465 offences) compared with the previous year (190,300 offences)(7). It is likely there remains substantial underreporting: findings published by the Victims' Commissioner for England and Wales found many women did not feel confident reporting to the police due to low conviction rates or not been taken seriously during the criminal justice process(8).

Domestic abuse

According to the Crime Survey for England and Wales(9), in the year ending March 2023, an estimated 2.1 million adults (aged 16+) experienced domestic abuse. Domestic abuse disproportionately impacts women, with 1.4 million women reporting having experienced domestic abuse. Over their lifetime, around 1 in 4 women will experience domestic abuse.

4 Office for National Statistics, Domestic abuse victim characteristics, 2024: [Domestic abuse victim characteristics, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics](#)

5 London Assembly, Press Release, 2023: [One in ten offences recorded by the Met involve domestic abuse | London City Hall](#)

6 SafeLives, How widespread is domestic abuse and what is the impact?, undated web page: [How widespread is domestic abuse? - SafeLives](#)

7 Office for National Statistics, Domestic abuse in England and Wales overview, 2023: [Domestic abuse in England and Wales overview - Office for National Statistics](#)

8 Victims Commissioner, 2022 Victim Survey, 2023: [2022 Victim Survey - Victims Commissioner](#)

9 Office for National Statistics, Domestic abuse in England and Wales overview, 2023: [Domestic abuse in England and Wales overview - Office for National Statistics](#)

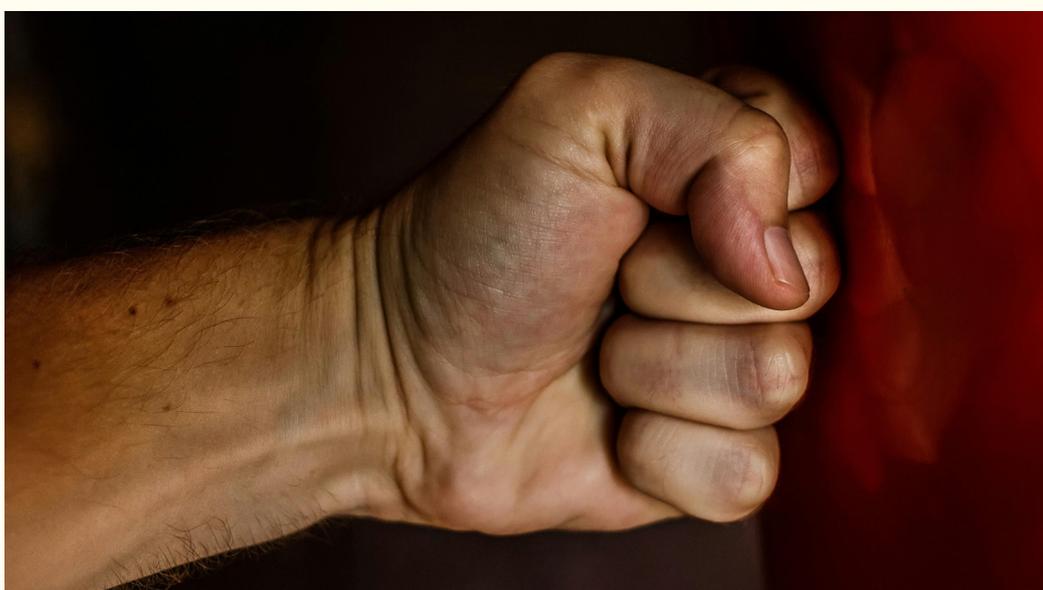


Image-based sexual offending

In 2024, the Home Office-funded Revenge Porn Helpline received 22,275 reports of non-consensual intimate image abuse – a 20.9% increase from 18,421 in 2023. The National Revenge Porn Helpline calculated incident reports to its helpline more than doubled between 2022 and 2023, reaching a total of 19,000 reports⁽¹⁰⁾.

The Voyeurism (Offences) Act (2019), criminalised upskirting (taking a sexual photo around another person’s skirt or clothing without permission). Between April 2019 and March 2022, the Metropolitan Police

recorded 228 upskirting offences⁽¹¹⁾.

Harassment and stalking

In March 2024, the Crime Survey for England and Wales estimated that 3.8% of 16–59-year-olds had experienced stalking⁽¹²⁾. A total of 436 interim and full Stalking Protection Orders (SPOs) were granted between January 2020 and January 2021⁽¹³⁾. Nationally, police recorded 700,236 stalking and harassment offences in the 12 months ending in June 2023⁽¹⁴⁾. Also in 2023, the Suzy Lamplugh Trust supported just over 19,500 victims of stalking through the National Stalking Helpline⁽¹⁵⁾.

10 Revenge Porn Helpline, Annual Report, 2023: [Helpline research and reports | Revenge Porn Helpline](#)

11 Metropolitan Police Service, Crimes of upskirting recorded by the MPS from 2019 to 2022, undated: [Crimes of upskirting recorded by the MPS from 2019 to 2022 | Metropolitan Police](#)

12 Office for National Statistics: [‘I feel like I am living someone else’s life’: one in seven people a victim of stalking, 2024](#)

13 Home Office, Review of Stalking Protection Orders, undated: [Review of Stalking Protection Orders](#)

14 Office for National Statistics, Crime in England and Wales, 2023: [Crime in England and Wales - Office for National Statistics](#)

15 Suzy Lamplugh Trust, National Stalking Helpline, undated web page: [National Stalking Helpline | Suzy Lamplugh Trust](#)



Child sexual abuse and exploitation (CSAE)

According to the National Police Chief's Council there were around 115,000 CSAE offences reported in 2023 in England and Wales⁽¹⁶⁾. Reported CSAE is heavily gendered, with males (82% of perpetrators), predominantly abusing females (79% of victims). Online sexual abuse is a growing issue, accounting for around one third of CSAE cases. The long-term effects of CSAE are extensive, potentially resulting in risky behaviours such as substance misuse and anti-social behaviour.

Honour-based abuse

In the year ending March 2024, there were 2,755 so called honour-based abuse offences recorded by the police in England and Wales. Of these, 398 (15%) were reported in London⁽¹⁷⁾.

Female genital mutilation

A mandatory reporting duty for female genital mutilation (FGM) requires regulated health and social care professionals, and teachers, in England and Wales to report known cases of FGM in under 18-year-olds to the police. In England, there were 6,655 individual women and girls who had an attendance where FGM was identified in the period April 2023 to March 2024 in England⁽¹⁸⁾. This represented a 15% increase from the previous year. The region with the highest recorded cases of FGM was London.

Alcohol & substance misuse

Domestic abuse, alcohol and substance misuse are often intertwined, though

one does not inherently cause the other. Alcohol and drug use can exacerbate existing abusive behaviours, with perpetrators using substances as an excuse or tool for control. Conversely individuals experiencing domestic abuse may use substances as a coping mechanism. This added to their lived experience highlights how intersecting factors - such as mental health, inequality, and systemic barriers can increase vulnerability and impact the support they need.

The National Police Chiefs Council released a report which involved a number of police forces drug testing individuals arrested for domestic abuse offences as part of a pilot to establish perpetrator profiles and offender rehabilitation opportunities to protect victims. Overall, across the pilot forces, 59 per cent of those tested were positive for cocaine and/or opiates⁽¹⁹⁾.

Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews (formerly Domestic Homicide Reviews) Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews (DARDRs) are statutory, multi-agency investigations that aim to identify and prevent future deaths by analysing the circumstances of domestic abuse-related fatalities. In addition to homicides, these include cases where victims die by suicide or because of coercive, controlling, emotional and economic abuse. Nationally, between 2018/19 and 2022/23, the reported number of Domestic Homicide Reviews undertaken increased by 74% from 94 to 165⁽²⁰⁾.

16 National Police Chiefs' Council, Press Release: [Second child sexual abuse and exploitation analysis, 2025](#)

17 Home Office, Statistics on so called 'honour-based' abuse offences, England and Wales, 2024: [Statistics on so called 'honour-based' abuse offences, England and Wales, year ending March 2024 - GOV.UK](#)

18 NHS England, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Enhanced Dataset, 2024: [Female Genital Mutilation \(FGM\) - Report - April 2023 to March 2024.pdf](#)

19 National Police Chiefs Council, August 2023: [Pilots find high levels of drug use in domestic abuse offenders](#)

20 Local Government Association, Domestic homicide review survey 2024: [Domestic homicide review survey 2024 | Local Government Association](#)

Mayor of London's Office for Police and Crime (MOPAC)

The Mayor of London's "Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls" (2022-2025)⁽²¹⁾ strategy outlines four key priorities to improve outcomes for women and girls affected by violence, these are preventing and reducing VAWG; supporting all victims and survivors; holding perpetrators to account; and building trust and confidence.

Metropolitan Police Service (MPS)

The MPS's Tackling Violence Against

Women and Girls Action Plan (2023)⁽²²⁾ identifies three pillars and 10 commitments, through which the police intend to improve VAWG outcomes. The plan identifies the need for criminal justice outcomes to be improved and for victim survivors to feel confident reporting incidents to the police. The pillars are building trust and confidence, relentless pursuit of perpetrators, and safer spaces.



21 Mayor of London, Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls, 2022: [Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls | London City Hall](#)

22 Metropolitan Police, Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls, Action Plan, 2023: [vawg-action-plan-2023.pdf](#)
[vawg-action-plan-2023.pdf](#)

CONTEXT – BRENT

We are proud of Brent’s cultural diversity and community cohesion, and our historic ability to welcome different cultures, support their integration, and create a borough in which people from different backgrounds and cultures feel welcomed.

2021 data evidences that, Brent’s population increased by 9.2% to 339,000. There has been an increase of 20.9% in people aged 65 years and over. This demographic transition presents both opportunities and challenges; as populations age and become more diverse, traditional gender roles and power structures may shift, potentially affecting the incidence of gender-based violence. For example, in some cultures, older women may have increased autonomy and decision-making power, which could lead to decreased rates of domestic abuse. However, in other contexts, the aging of populations may exacerbate existing

inequalities and vulnerabilities, particularly for older women who may be more isolated or dependent on caregivers.

Brent is one of the most culturally diverse boroughs in the UK. People from Arab, Black, Asian and other ethnic backgrounds make up 64% of the population. Brent has a large European population, around one in five Brent residents have EU nationality (20%). Cultural and linguistic barriers can hinder the reporting and response to VAWG; it is essential to ensure services are accessible and culturally appropriate to meet the needs of all women and girls in the borough. This involves providing culturally competent staff and promoting awareness of VAWG in different languages. Additionally, addressing VAWG in a culturally diverse context requires a nuanced understanding of the intersectionality of gender, ethnicity, and other social factors.



VISION AND STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Brent's vision is: Women and girls will thrive in Brent, free of the fear of gender-based abuse and violence.

Four strategic objectives accompany our vision:

1. Prevention through education and early intervention

We will expand the provision of early intervention and prevention initiatives, particularly those aimed at young people to educate them about healthy relationships and consent. We will challenge harmful stereotypes and educate our community about the impact of misogyny and violence.

2. Pursuit of perpetrators

Our partnership approach will be further developed to support the police in their central role of pursuing perpetrators of violence and other forms of abuse. This will improve the co-ordination of resources and increase the protection provided to victim survivors.

3. Provision of accessible services

We will expand the availability and

accessibility of support services for victim survivors, including for people who may not initially be ready to accept support from services. All services will be provided in ways which are culturally tailored and sensitive, multilingual and accessible to all.

4. Partnership work to expand knowledge and enhance delivery

We will continue to build upon our existing partnerships, including through our violence against women and girls forum, our strategic and delivery groups, and joint training, to identify emerging trends and challenges. We will ensure the voices of victim survivors are heard by our partners in planning, delivering and evaluating the delivery of our interventions.



Brent will realise its vision through implementing the following priorities and related actions.

Prevent: Tackle violent crime

We will reduce violent crime, and domestic and sexual abuse, suffered by women and girls through taking action to prevent these behaviours. This includes primary prevention, to stop violence occurring, and secondary prevention, to increase early identification and reduce repeat instances of violence.

We will commission services to deliver primary prevention. Interventions will include school-based workshops on gender stereotypes, respectful relationships, and the impact of gender-based violence, and workshop discussions in various places of worship addressing respectful communication and age-appropriate behaviours.

The Culturally Integrated Family Approach (CIFA) offers tailored services for minority communities, addressing issues which contribute to abusive behaviours.

RISE Mutual's Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Intervention Programme will support our objective to deliver secondary prevention. It aims to change offenders' behaviour through group and one-on-one interventions, helping perpetrators understand the harm they cause and preventing repeat abuse.

Protect and pursue: Challenge domestic abuse, sexual abuse and violence against women and girls

We will protect victim survivors through taking a partnership approach to pursuing offenders and providing support.

Brent has established dedicated police units to focus on violence against women and girls, providing training to officers on handling such cases sensitively. We will support the use of safe and accessible reporting options for victim survivors, and ensure they are supported and informed throughout the criminal justice process. We will sensitively share information on successful prosecutions to raise awareness and deter potential offenders.

Local partner organisations will work alongside the police to maximise the effectiveness of the Domestic Abuse Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences, identifying high-risk cases and developing strategies to protect victim survivors and address perpetrator behaviour.

Recovery: Protect those most vulnerable

We will protect our most vulnerable residents through providing holistic and accessible services to support their recovery.

We will increase access to multilingual services and support the provision of interpreters, where necessary, to enable women and girls to fully access services. We will continue to support projects tailored to women and girls from Caribbean and African heritage backgrounds, and those from a minoritised background. These projects provide services designed to meet identified local needs, including overcoming cultural barriers and providing multilingual counselling services.

Brent's Independent Sexual Violence Advocacy service will continue to make proactive attempts to reach vulnerable women who may initially be hesitant to receive support from support services. Our Domestic Abuse Housing Team will continue to prioritise victim survivors for the most suitable housing options, working within the confines of very limited housing stock.

Resilience: Focus on incidents impacting our community

We will work together as organisations operating in Brent, building a strong and visible partnership to reduce the incidence and impact of violence against women and girls.

Our collaborative approach will continue to receive support from the Safer Brent Partnership, which brings

together stakeholders to develop strategies aimed at reducing crime and improving community safety. By promoting open communication and shared objectives, these partnerships can improve shared understanding of the complexities of violence against women and girls.

Through the established VAWG Forum and regular meetings with commissioned service providers, we will ensure the voices of victim survivors are included when planning, delivering and evaluating the delivery of our interventions.

We will continue to support Advance, and our voluntary community sector partners, to deliver specialist training for professionals to raise awareness and improve responsiveness to victim survivors. The training will be provided to, amongst others, police, healthcare, and housing professionals.

We will continue to support and promote London North-West Hospitals' "How Safe Do You Feel?" campaign, aiming to make a meaningful impact for domestic abuse victims by encouraging early identification and intervention.

Brent will pilot new safe spaces and reporting hubs to remove barriers which currently prevent women from reporting violence and abuse.

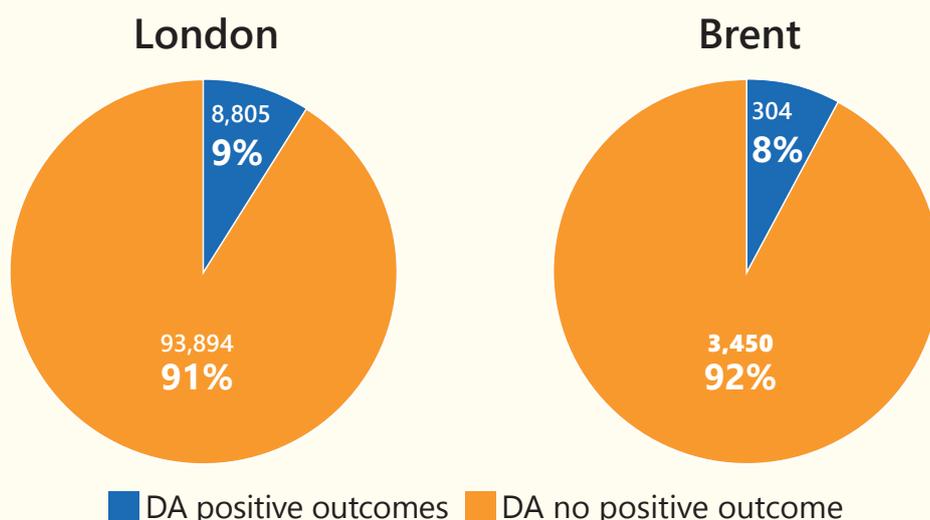
Local needs

Building a safer Brent involves responding to the changing needs of the community, identifying social settings where harm could be present, supporting vulnerable people, and reducing the effects of unmet needs.

Police data

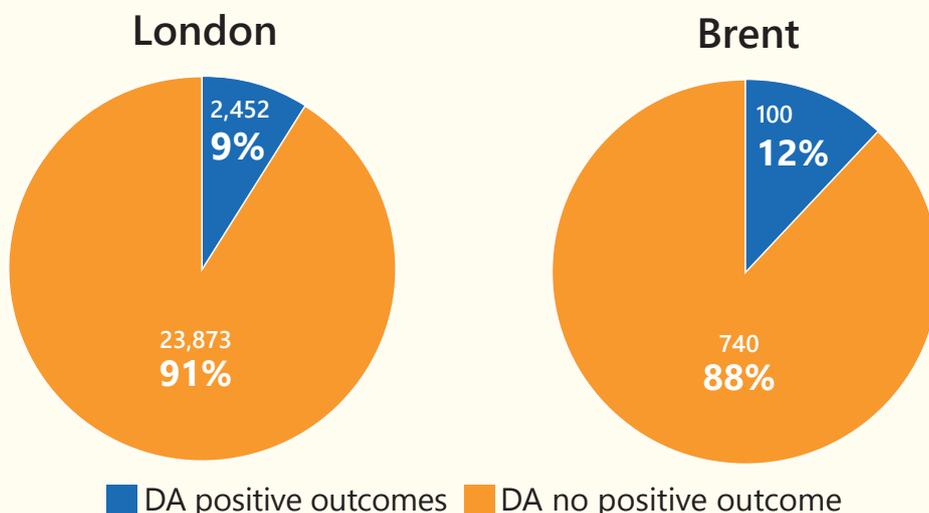
In the financial year ending March 2024, the Metropolitan Police recorded 102,699 domestic abuse offences, of which 3,754 occurred in Brent. Reported and recorded crimes represent a portion of violence experienced by women and girls;

many incidents go unreported due to reasons such as fear, shame, or lack of confidence in the justice system. The charts below show that positive outcomes of these cases in Brent (8%) are close to the London average (9%).



According to Metropolitan Police data, around 31% of domestic abuse victims in Brent report multiple incidents. These statistics emphasise the ongoing challenge of addressing VAWG and the critical need for effective prevention and support mechanisms, including early intervention, community support and robust legal protections for victims.

During the year ending March 2024, the Metropolitan Police recorded 26,325 sexual abuse offences, of which 840 occurred in Brent. The charts below show that positive outcomes of these cases in Brent (12%) are above the London average (9%).



Intersectionality

Intersectionality recognises that people are shaped by alignment or perceived alignment to multiple interconnected social identities, such as race, gender, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status, within a context of connected systems, structures of power, and systems of oppression or domination.

Intersectionality is crucial to addressing the multifaceted nature of violence and its disproportionate impact on marginalised groups. Black, Asian and minoritised women, for example, often face higher rates of domestic violence and sexual assault compared to their white counterparts. Research from the USA found over 40% of Black women reported experiencing domestic abuse in their lifetime, compared to 31.5% of all women(23), indicating a significant concern that warrants culturally responsive and targeted support.

National data suggests that women from the LGBT+ community are disproportionately affected by domestic abuse, with 14.6% of lesbian and bisexual women reporting domestic abuse compared to 6.3% of heterosexual women (ONS report published November 2024)(24). The same report suggested that 12.7% of women with a self-reported disability had experienced domestic abuse in the year ending March 2024, compared with 5.1% of non-disabled women.

Understanding and addressing intersectionality is a practical necessity for creating equitable and responsive policies that truly serve the diverse population of Brent. By adopting an intersectional approach, this strategy supports tailoring of our interventions to address the specific needs of our diverse residents and communities, ensuring that support services are accessible and effective.

23 Our Sisters' House, Statistics, undated web page: <https://www.oursistershouse.com/statistics/>

24 Office for National Statistics, Domestic abuse prevalence and trends, England and Wales: year ending March 2024: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/domesticabuseprevalenceandvictimcharacteristicsappendixtables>

Community Safety Strategy

Brent's Community Safety Strategy (2024-26) adopts a public health approach. It was based on the outcome of consultation with a range of partners and findings of the Brent Strategic Needs Assessment (2023), which highlighted key accessibility factors including language and cultural requirements. The strategy highlights four priority areas, of which one is "challenging domestic abuse, sexual abuse and preventing violence against women and girls." The strategy notes the aim to prioritise the safety and protection of victim survivors, both at home and within the wider community.

Following the tragic murders of Nicole Smallman and Bibaa Henry in Brent, and renewed national focus on violence against women and girls, Brent continues its commitment to ensuring women and girls are and feel safe from male violence within the borough. The Safer Brent Partnership has convened DARDRs (formerly named Domestic Homicide Reviews) since 2011. These are published on the Brent Council website⁽²⁵⁾. All reports are reviewed independently by the Home Office and an expert panel before publication. Brent Council, alongside local partners, will continue to use DARDRs as an opportunity to improve local service delivery; reviewing lessons learned, to pull together common themes such as risk management, information sharing and multi-agency working, to improve and where possible foresee and prevent future incidents.

Annually, Brent Council supports the '16 days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence' awareness raising campaign. Members of staff and people in the community take part in events to remember women who have lost their lives or have been affected by violence.

Intersecting Local Strategies

In addition to the Community Safety Strategy, this strategy intersects with several other local strategies and plans. These include:

- **Moving Forward Together Borough Plan 2023-27**

This strategy reflects Brent's overarching commitment to building a safer, fairer borough, within which tackling VAWG is a core priority. It's emphasis on strong, resilient communities and reducing inequalities aligns directly with the aims of the VAWG Strategy to support survivors and prevent abuse.

- **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy 2024-2028**

The EDI Strategy reinforces the borough's commitment to tackling the structural inequalities that often underpin experiences of gender-based violence. By embedding inclusive practice across services, it supports the VAWG Strategy's goal of ensuring culturally responsive, accessible support for all survivors, particularly those from marginalised groups.

25 Brent Council, Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews, 2024
[Domestic Homicide Reviews | Brent Council](#)

- **Brent Digital Strategy 2022-2026**

Technology connects people improves access to information and services and creates opportunities for innovation and business growth. However, rapid change has left some of the most vulnerable members of society digitally isolated and has seen many traditional businesses and skill sets become outdated. This strategy presents an opportunity to support survivors by improving digital access to services, safeguarding online spaces and using data ethically to enhance early identification and prevention of abuse.

- **Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025**

We believe that everyone in Brent deserves a safe, stable place to call home and are committed to preventing and tackling homelessness across the borough. As a result of a national shortage of secure and affordable homes, homelessness has increased in recent years. This strategy acknowledges the links between domestic abuse and housing insecurity. Strengthening pathways between housing and VAWG services can ensure that victim survivors – particularly women fleeing abuse – are supported with safe accommodation and wraparound support.

- **Brent Youth Strategy 2025-2028**

This strategy aims to empower young people by creating opportunities for their involvement

in local decision-making and providing skills training to enhance employability and other opportunities. The Youth Strategy plays a critical role in early intervention and prevention by embedding education around healthy relationships, consent and gender-based violence. Aligning it with the VAWG Strategy helps protect young people at risk and promote a borough-wide culture of respect and safety.

- **Brent Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2027**

This strategy contributes to tackling VAWG by recognising domestic abuse as a public health issue. Integrated health and care pathways can identify survivors earlier, respond to trauma and support recovery through mental health and community wellbeing initiatives.

This VAWG Strategy aligns with child protection policies and procedures, ensuring children who are victims of or witnesses to domestic abuse or violence are identified, safeguarded, and supported in line with the Domestic Abuse Act (2021). The strategy also aligns with adult protection and risk assessment policies and procedures, ensuring adults at risk of or experiencing abuse are identified, protected and supported. It promotes interagency collaboration to support residents.

CURRENT SERVICES

Support for victim survivors

Brent Council commissioned nia, a borough-specific Independent Sexual Violence Advocacy (ISVA) service, from 2022 to 2026. The council also works with West London Rape Crisis and The Havens Sexual Assault Referral Centre, which provide support for people in London who have been sexually assaulted.

Brent Council has a specialist domestic abuse housing team. The team supports people affected by abuse to move into safe accommodation, in line with the Domestic Abuse Act (2021). The housing crisis in London creates a challenge in balancing the priority of supporting victim survivors of domestic abuse with the need to manage very limited housing stock.

In cases where there is a high risk of repeated domestic abuse, professionals can refer the victim survivor to the domestic abuse Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC). Agencies such as the police, healthcare, domestic abuse

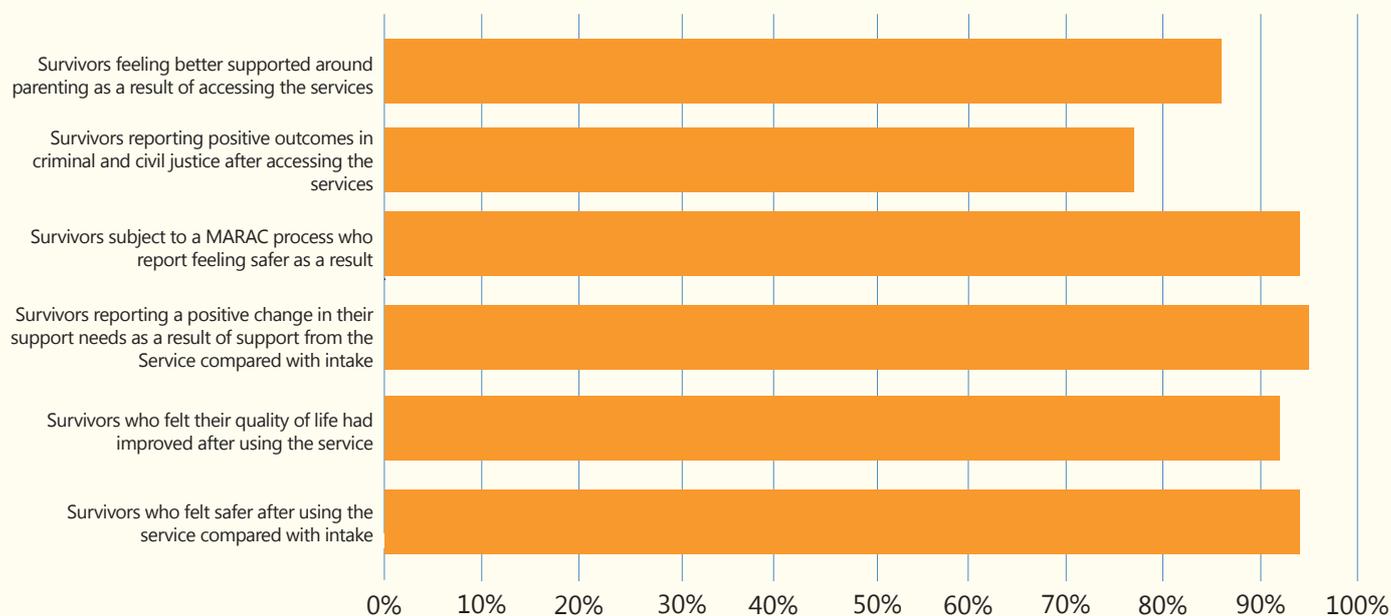
professionals, social care and housing share information, discuss the needs of the victim survivor, and create a shared safety and support plan.

Independent Domestic Violence advocates (IDVAs) build positive relationships with victim survivors of domestic abuse and ensure connection to services that can provide long-term support. Brent Council commissions Advance to deliver a service supporting the victim survivors of domestic abuse. The service provides safety planning, supports people through legal proceedings, and provides advocacy and housing advice. Each quarter, the service requests feedback from clients, ensuring their voices are heard. Feedback for the year ending March 2024 is shown below.

Advance also delivers domestic abuse training for professionals in Brent. This helps staff identify vulnerable people, understand the dynamics of domestic abuse, and learn how to best support victim survivors.



Advance Client Feedback, April 2023-March 2024



Support for children

Brent's Early Help and Social Care teams in the Children & Young People's Department work together with families and co-located IDVAs to improve outcomes for children. The team provides support programmes to families as needed.

Government strategies such as Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan 2022 and The Children's Social Care Implementation Strategy 2023 emphasise the need for early, preventative interventions, supporting families at the earliest signs of domestic abuse to avoid escalation into crisis and statutory intervention.

Brent will be delivering an early help offer over the next two years to support children and young people (CYP) who are victims of domestic abuse. The project will deliver one-

to-one support for survivors aged 5-18 years old who have witnessed domestic abuse perpetrated from one parent to another and/or have themselves experienced domestic abuse. Underpinning their practice will be a trauma-informed approach and commitment to ensuring the 'voice of the child' is considered in all assessments, support plans and advocacy. The project will enhance the provision within the delivery of the One Stop Shop (OSS) with a specific focus on families. This will also increase local community access to support victims through Family Wellbeing Centres.

As part of our ending risky behaviours programme Brent commissioned Beyond Equality in 24/25 to deliver workshops to year 10 boys on healthy relationships, stereotypes and expectations on how they can become an ally in the

fight against violence against women and girls.

This year, Brent will develop a training package to upskill teachers and professionals within schools to spot the signs on risky behaviours and reinforce healthy relationships.

The National Audit on Group-Based Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse was commissioned by the Prime Minister and Home Secretary in February 2025. Led by Baroness Casey and completed in May 2025, the three-month rapid audit aimed to assess the national understanding of the scale, nature, and causes of group-based child sexual exploitation (CSE) in England and Wales.

The report highlights the significant role of online platforms and social media, noting how initial contact used to be made primarily in shopping centres, parks or takeaways, but is now likely to start on social media platforms.

The Brent Contextual Safeguarding & Violence Reduction Strategic Group will play a critical role in shaping Brent's approach. Consideration will be given to:

- Mapping existing support pathways for CSE victims and survivors to identify access gaps, duplication or under-utilisation of services
- Reviewing local data gathering processes in respect of group child sexual abuse, survivors and perpetrators

- Implement consistent recording of ethnicity, nationality, and perpetrator/victim profile aligned to national definitions and codes
- Assessing the partnership approach to early identification, support, prevention, disruption, and prosecution
- Strengthen trauma-informed practice across frontline teams, including support for victims navigating the criminal justice system
- Developing support and training for staff and local communities on group-based CSE
- Development of a local implementation plan, ensuring alignment with
 - National policy developments
 - Brent Safeguarding Children Partnership and Safer Brent Partnership activity
 - Existing strategies

Street safety and the night-time economy

Brent Council is committed to developing and maintaining safer environments for women and girls through initiatives like the Women's Night Safety Charter. Women's street safety, particularly within the night-time economy, is a priority for the council. As part of this commitment, the council is developing a comprehensive

policy in response to the Worker's Protection Act (2023). This mandates employers to take proactive steps in preventing sexual harassment in the workplace, including by third parties such as customers. The Act requires businesses to implement measures such as staff training and reporting mechanisms to ensure safer working environments. Council departments such as Licensing, Anti-Social Behaviour, and Public Health are developing collaborative approaches to support local businesses, particularly those operating at night, to comply with the Act.

The Council's Public Health department regularly leads awareness campaigns around substance misuse, spiking and how this exacerbates harassing and violent behaviours, particularly in night-time environments. The Council works with local venues to encourage responsible service practices. The Council works alongside policing partners, and local transport authorities, to enhance safety measures such as street lighting, CCTV coverage and patrols in key areas such as event days in Wembley.

By working closely with hospitality venues, late-night transport providers, and entertainment establishments, Brent will work towards ensuring the safety of women working and socialising within the borough. This coordinated approach will reinforce the council's commitment to women's safety and contribute to

building a safer and more inclusive night-time economy in the borough.

Perpetrator services

High quality perpetrator programmes are known to have a positive impact. Brent aims to provide a high volume of programme places, including those for high harm perpetrators. This increases the opportunity to enhance each perpetrator's motivation to change, reducing the risk to their victim survivors.

RISE Mutual delivers domestic abuse perpetrator support services to Brent residents, including:

- Supporting professionals to identify perpetrator's needs and change harmful behaviours
- Culturally Integrated Family Approach (CIFA), a perpetrator programme specifically aimed towards marginalised and minoritised families providing culturally specific and coordinated responses
- Child to parent violence programme (CAPVA), which seeks to change the behaviour of young people (aged 9-17) showing violence towards their parents and carers
- Adult children to parent abuse (ACPA), which aims to change behaviours of adults (18+) showing violence towards their parents and carers
- Drive Programme, an intervention for people causing harm in their relationships to prevent abusive

behaviour and protect victim survivors. Service users have been assessed as posing a high-risk, high-harm level of domestic abuse to the people with whom they are in intimate or family relationships

Partners and ex-partners of perpetrators on the programme are offered support by a Domestic Abuse Support Advocate (DASA) throughout the perpetrator's time accessing support from RISE Mutual.

Prevention of repeat victimisation

Several legal and protective mechanisms, alongside coordinated offender management, are employed to prevent repeat victimisation of victim survivors in Brent. These include:

- Domestic Abuse Protection Notices (DAPNs) and Domestic Abuse Protection Orders (DAPOs): These can prohibit a perpetrator from contacting or approaching the victim survivor. They provide immediate protection, preventing reoffending while victim survivors access longer-term support, and encompass physical, psychological, emotional and economic abuse
- Clare's Law (Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme): Clare's Law allows individuals to inquire about a partner's history of abusive behaviour. It can prevent repeat victimisation by informing potential victims about a partner's past, empowering them to make informed decisions and seek help before the perpetrator's abuse begins or escalates

- Integrated Offender Management (IOM): IOM provides a framework for managing repeat offenders by bringing together multiple agencies to monitor and intervene with high-risk perpetrators. The goal is to prevent reoffending by offering interventions like rehabilitative support, while enforcing compliance with legal measures. IOM enables more effective tracking of offenders to reduce risks of reoffending and mitigate ongoing threats to survivors

- Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA): MAPPA oversees the management of high-risk offenders, including those who commit serious domestic abuse or sexual offences. By coordinating efforts between police, probation and other agencies, MAPPA closely monitors and manages repeat offenders. Swift action is taken when breaches occur, including restrictions and intervention requirements

Exploitation

- The Exploitation, Violence and Vulnerability Panel (EVVP) identifies and supports people involved in or on the cusp of gang-related activity or exploitation, prioritising early intervention and targeted support. Through joint intelligence-sharing and action planning, the EVVP works to disrupt cycles of violence and vulnerability that often overlap with VAWG-related incidents
- The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is a framework for identifying and referring potential

victim survivors of modern slavery and ensuring they receive the appropriate support; the NRM is in operation in Brent.

- The EVE Project, commissioned by Brent Council, provides support for women in Brent who are involved in the sex industry, offering confidential, non-judgmental support to women. The service signposts women into a range of services, including alcohol and substance misuse, domestic abuse, housing and sexual health etc.

Drug and Alcohol Support

The drugs and alcohol service New Beginnings commissioned by Public Health offer a range of interventions to support women with their alcohol and drug use. Dedicated women only groups offer women a safe space on a weekly basis within the service for women to build positive relationships and provide support to one another. The New Beginnings service supported by Public Health will continue to develop pathways linking women who may present with a wider range of needs including mental health and domestic abuse as part of an integrated care plan that addresses health and social care needs.

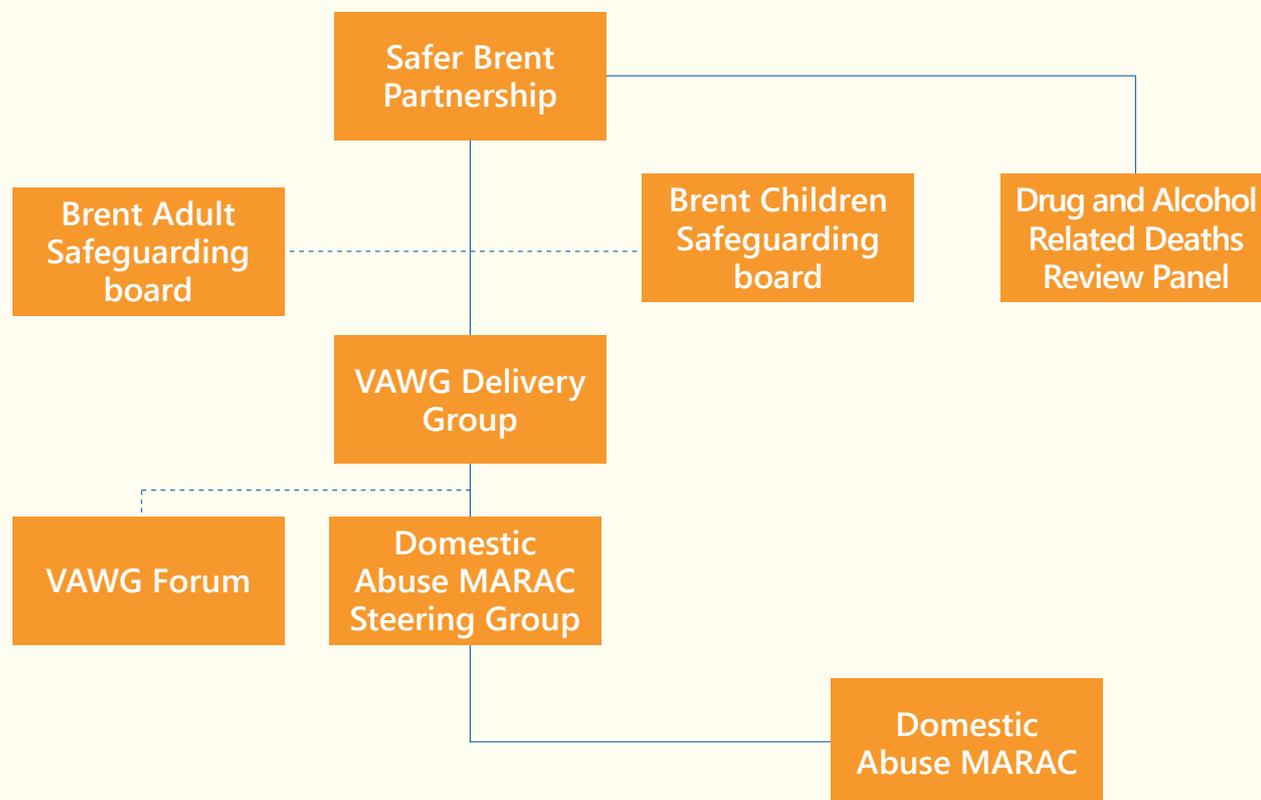
Female genital mutilation

The National FGM centre works alongside Brent Council to raise awareness and provide support through a specialist social worker. The Brent Hibiscus Clinic, and Northwick Park Hospital and Central Middlesex Hospital's antenatal clinics are FGM specialists. The clinic can provide women with emotional support, advocacy, physical health interventions and onward referrals to specialist support services like FORWARD.

Harmful Practices

Local specialist support organisation, AWRC, leads on the P&ACT (Prevention & Action through Community Engagement and Training) Ending Harmful Practices Project, a pan-London specialist VAWG Partnership of 12 BME 'by and for' services, funded by MOPAC. AWRC also provide the Pan-London Ascent Safe Accommodation – Single Point of Entry/ Helpline for survivors with No Recourse to Public Funds, funded by Greater London Authority.

GOVERNANCE AND DELIVERY STRUCTURE



The Safer Brent Partnership (SBP) has overall responsibility for the borough's approach to reducing violence against women and girls. The SBP is a multi-agency, strategic board which aims to reduce crime and improve cohesion and safety within Brent's neighborhoods. It is also responsible for convening a local drug and alcohol related death review panel. The SBP, via the VAWG Delivery sub-group, will be responsible for measuring the impact of this strategy; this will be through monitoring delivery of the action plan and the development of metrics against which progress can be reliably measured.

Brent Adult Safeguarding Board (BASB) works with agencies to

protect vulnerable adults and reports to the Brent Health and Wellbeing Board. It aligns with Social Services and Public Health to ensure effective safeguarding. Brent Children Safeguarding Board (BCSB) focuses on child protection, coordinating with agencies including schools, the police, and social services. It reports to the Brent Safeguarding Children Partnership and Children's Services. Both boards feed into the council's decision-making processes and are represented at boards such as the Safer Brent Partnership.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility – whether working directly with children, adults, families or communities. In Brent,

this shared duty is upheld through the coordinated efforts of the Safeguarding Boards. If you have any concerns about a child or adult's safety or wellbeing, contact Brent Social Care directly via the links below, as early intervention is essential to safeguarding at all levels.

[Adult Social Care - Protecting Adults from Risk of Abuse](#)

[Children, Young People & Families - Keeping Children Safe](#)

The VAWG delivery group reports and is accountable to the Safer Brent Partnership, which in turn supports the delivery group when barriers to the strategy's implementation arise. The delivery group provides strategic governance to the MARAC group and process, and supports the VAWG forum, though the forum is not accountable to the delivery group.



CONCLUSION

We are committed to eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls in Brent, creating an environment in which women and girls are, and feel, safe to thrive. National, regional and local data shows us that violence against women and girls is a widespread and underreported issue. Local data shows around one third of victims report multiple instances of victimisation.

We will support victim survivors through the provision of accessible and trauma-informed service which meet the specific needs of women and girls, including those from marginalised communities. Our approach will build upon current services to support survivors and prevent further victimisation. We will ensure the voice of victims is heard when planning and delivering our services.

We will achieve our objectives through:

- Improving prevention by providing education and early intervention
- Pursuing perpetrators
- Providing accessible and trauma-informed services
- Working as a partnership to expand our shared knowledge

Our governance structure will ensure delivery of the strategy is supported by a range of partners and progress is regularly reviewed.

Together with existing organisations, we will work tirelessly to bring our vision into an everyday lived reality; women and girls in Brent thriving in a safe and supportive environment.

For further information,
please contact:

Community.Safety@brent.gov.uk

