



TACKLING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN & GIRLS

DELIVERY PLAN 2024 - 2027

Croydon Council is dedicated to creating a long-term delivery plan to safeguard women and girls and address the issues related to violence against them.

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 Together for a
Safer Croydon

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We need to do more to end Violence Against Women and Girls and prevent the devastating impact this crime has on families and children.

We dedicate this delivery plan to the ten Croydon residents murdered by an abusive partner or family member since 2020, families that have lost a loved one, and anyone currently experiencing violence towards women and girls.

FOREWORD

BY MAYOR JASON PERRY

I welcome this Delivery Plan which centres on strengthening prevention and earlier intervention, pursuing perpetrators, supporting, and protecting victims, survivors, and their families, and enhancing our coordinated community response to domestic abuse through partnership work.

Since 2020, ten residents of Croydon have been murdered by an abusive partner or family member. This tragic loss is more than just a statistic; it's a call to action. One life taken is one too many. We are dedicated to breaking this cycle, and Croydon's first-ever Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Delivery Plan signifies my Administration's unwavering commitment to addressing this critical issue reflecting the seriousness with which we approach violence against women and girls.

Our work is rooted in community engagement and collaboration. We have conducted public engagement sessions to ensure that this three-year plan is proactive and actionable, rather than just another document gathering dust. The plan was developed involving victims, survivors, and professionals in the police and NHS.

We have emphasised transparency and openness in these consultations, allowing those affected to share their experiences and contribute to shaping the services provided by Croydon.

In my Business Plan 2022-2026, I prioritised tackling VAWG, reaffirming my commitment to making Croydon a safe place to live and work. The voluntary, community, and faith sectors have played a crucial role in supporting victims and identifying local issues, enabling us to engage hard-to-reach groups within our borough.

Protection of our young people is also paramount. We acknowledge that even if they are not physically harmed, children may experience emotional and psychological damage from witnessing domestic abuse. We are committed to transforming life chances by placing children and young people at the heart of everything we do. We are implementing the Safe and Together model, which holds perpetrators accountable for domestic abuse involving children, whilst recognising and supporting the strengths of the non-abusing parent.

We also recognise the importance of engaging men and boys in the prevention of VAWG, and promoting initiatives that challenge harmful gender norms and encourage positive masculinity.

We will consistently use recommendations and insights to refine our partnership practices and actions in addressing domestic abuse and sexual violence. I am committed that in the delivery of this plan we will confront perpetrators of violence, addressing harmful mindsets and behaviours, and fostering a cultural change within Croydon to ensure the safety of women and girls.

Our goal is to enhance public understanding of domestic abuse and sexual violence, including coercion and control, and by promoting the principles of healthy relationships.

Together, we can and will make Croydon a safer, more supportive community for everyone.



Jason Perry
Croydon Mayor

FOREWORD

BY CHRISTABEL YEBOAH

As a women’s rights activist and gender-based violence specialist from a Black background, I am honoured to present this Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Delivery Plan.

This plan, centering culturally adaptive and sensitive solutions, recognises the unique challenges faced by diverse Black and minoritised groups in addressing and preventing violence against women and girls.

We know and understand that violence against women and girls affects all communities, and that irrespective of their ethnicities and backgrounds, experiences of abuse often remain hidden. However, women facing marginalisation and intersectional discrimination – such as racialised women, women with disabilities, sex workers, those of lower socio-economic status, experiencing homelessness, with precarious or irregular migration status, as well as people with diverse sexual orientation, gender identities and expressions and sex characteristics including trans and non-binary people, are among the most at risk of gender-based violence.

In addition to the challenges with abuse and the intersections with varying marginalisations and inequalities listed above, they are often the least protected and supported by existing efforts to prevent and tackle violence and other harm and often face additional barriers in seeking help and justice.

We cannot address VAWG in isolation from wider issues of gender inequality and racial discrimination. This delivery plan takes an intersectional approach,

recognising that to achieve freedom from abuse and protect fundamental rights for all, we have to address all forms of gender-based violence, in particular when linked to gender identity and expression, sex characteristics, sexual orientation, race and ethnicity, age, disability, class, religion and migration status. It also acknowledges that those who experience intersectional discrimination face greater vulnerability to all forms of gender-based violence and abuse, with an additional emphasis on harmful practices such as female genital cutting, “honour”-based abuse, forced marriage and more.

In addressing these challenges, the delivery plan emphasises the importance of training frontline professionals to work effectively with marginalised and minoritised victims and survivors. It also recognises the need to tackle institutional racism within the criminal justice system and other public services that interact with victims and survivors. As well as identifies cisnormativity in support services and its impacts on programme development, client experiences, and services offered.

Additionally, increasing global majority representation among staff and leadership in VAWG services is another crucial step toward building trust and providing culturally appropriate support.

With this delivery plan and embedded improved and intersectional approach, we are committing to challenging sexist, misogynistic and other harmful attitudes and behaviours that can lead to violence and abuse, while also empowering our communities to speak out and seek help. Additional specialist resources will reflect our dedication to enhancing understanding, support, and empowerment within our community.

Let this delivery plan be a catalyst for change, sparking difficult but necessary conversations within our families, communities, institutions and the VAWG sector itself. Together, we can break the silence surrounding VAWG and build a future where all women and girls can live free from the fear of violence.

I call on all members of our Croydon community to engage with this delivery plan. Violence against women and girls is not a “women’s issue”, harmful practices are not an “ethnic problem” – these are societal problems that require all of us to be part of the solution. By working together, raising awareness, and holding perpetrators accountable, we can create a safer, accessible and more equitable society for all women and girls.

Christabel Yeboah
Chief Vision Officer, **HERSANA CIC**
Chair - Croydon **BAME Domestic Abuse Partnership Forum**



FOREWORD

BY CLLR OLA KOLADE

I am committed to making the borough a place where violence against women and girls (VAWG) is no longer tolerated and everyone can live free from abuse.

Achieving this vision requires the Council to build trust within our community and acknowledge the importance of intersectionality in addressing our priorities.

Our three-year Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Delivery Action Plan outlines key outcomes shaped by the community's concerns and priorities. This is Croydon's first-ever VAWG delivery plan addressing the full spectrum of violence from street harassment to domestic abuse.

We are also transforming the Council's Family Justice Service to ensure sustained funding and improved service efficiency. This transformation aims to reduce repeat victimisation, lower high-risk cases, enhance partnership working, and raise awareness of this critical issue.

Supporting victims and survivors is at the heart of our efforts. We are committed to providing comprehensive support to those affected by VAWG while also relentlessly pursuing perpetrators.

By strengthening our collaboration with our policing partners and other agencies, we aim to hold perpetrators accountable and deliver justice for survivors. Our approach ensures that victims receive the necessary support and protection, empowering them to rebuild their lives.

This includes implementing externally funded targeted outreach in collaboration with local trusted partners to enhance public space outreach in high-priority areas for young girls who we want to feel safe wherever they are regardless of the time and place.

This plan is about delivering real-time interventions, such as placing independent Domestic Violence advocates at the Family Justice Service, police stations, and Croydon University Hospital to provide specialist trusted support.

Early intervention is a priority, which is why we are training all schools and GP practices to identify signs of VAWG, including domestic abuse and sexual violence, to ensure we respond quickly so that victims don't suffer in silence.

Last November, to mark White Ribbon Day which engages men and boys to end violence against women and girls, I was privileged to be involved in the launch of 16 days of action to raise awareness about domestic abuse and violence against women in Croydon.

It is key that we publicise the opportunities available for women and girls to access support, ensuring that everyone knows where and how to access the appropriate services.

Additionally, we are establishing a community ambassadors programme across minoritised communities and faith groups to ensure we are also engaging with diverse groups.

We are dedicated to creating a safer Croydon, where violence against women and girls is actively challenged, and support is readily available for all who need it.

Cllr Ola Kolade
Cabinet Member for
Community Safety



FOREWORD

BY CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT ANDY BRITTAIN

Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) significantly harms victims and our communities.

Sadly, these crimes are still far too prevalent and there are too many instances of victims and survivors being let down. Tackling VAWG is one of my highest priorities, it is my commitment, as South Area's BCU Commander to focus resources in this key area.

I stand with our partners and welcome this delivery plan, that will bring together all the key agencies, coordinating our approach and improving the outcomes for victims, survivors and their families. We will work closely to strengthen our prevention and intervention work ensuring the delivery plan provides an enhanced level of service.

Led by me, police officers from all areas of policing will work relentlessly to pursue offenders, rebuild trust and confidence in our communities and work to make Croydon a safe place for women and girls at home, online and in public.

All officers from our first responders on Emergency Response teams, to our Neighbourhood Policing teams, and our Public Protection teams are committed to effecting sustainable solutions to VAWG and bringing offenders to justice.



Andy Brittain
Chief Superintendent

We have introduced a dedicated VAWG officer and a full time Engagement team demonstrating our dedication; listening to what matters most to women and girls and working with them to respond with the consent of our communities.

Through a coordinated approach we will improve the safety of women and girls.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In recent years, across the country there has been several challenges which have put severe constraints on daily living. The effects of lockdown measures were particularly severe when it came to VAWG, and these issues still remain today.

Domestic abuse and sexual violence become a “silent epidemic” across the country and Croydon was no exception.

The national recognition of the challenges faced by victims and their families during lockdown measures were met with a swift response in Croydon. The response ensured that the Family Justice Service, Croydon’s VAWG service, remained open to provide urgent advice and support to victims. Collaborating with partners, spaces were created to allow victims to seek support. As a result, there has been an increase in the number of cases in Croydon being referred to the Family Justice Service as well as to the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC).

The mayor has endorsed the first-ever “Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Delivery Plan” in Croydon. This has been developed collaboratively with input from victims and survivors as well as professionals through our Croydon Voices consultation. The mayor felt strongly that the consultation should be open and transparent and as a result employed an independent organisation to deliver a 6-month consultation that provided space for victim/survivors and professionals to speak openly about their lived experiences with the

services that Croydon provides. The themes used by the independent consultant identified the underpinning principles which are referred to throughout this delivery plan – collaboration, trust building and intersectionality.

The council will analyse the information collated from the consultation into positive action and provide support to some of the most vulnerable individuals in Croydon. The Delivery Action Plan is a response to the need for a coordinated partnership and a whole council approach to address VAWG, as evidenced by the Community Safety Strategy 2022-2024, the yearly Strategic Assessment and the Mayors Business Plan 2022/2026. The Domestic abuse and Sexual Violence Partnership board, Croydon’s Adult Safeguarding board and the safer Croydon Partnership will have the strategic oversight of this delivery plan.

The mayor also emphasised VAWG in his Business Plan 2022-2026, making it a high priority which will contribute to Croydon being a safe place to live and work. By enhancing our previous three-year strategy to address domestic abuse and sexual violence, the Council intends to address VAWG by listening to victim/survivors voices, collaborating with local businesses, statutory services and the

voluntary, community and faith sector and by striving to apprehend those who commit acts of violence.

Croydon Council will continue to listen to our residents and those in organisations that support women and girls in Croydon in tackling VAWG and continue to deliver good sustainable services, an outcome in the Mayors Business plan.

The VCFS play a huge role in Croydon in supporting victim/survivors and have supported us in identifying local issues as well as reaching some of the most marginalised victim/survivors in the borough. The Council plans to continue this by creating closer relationships, working with partners to support bids and bring new funding to the borough and empowering local VCFS organisations to bid for council contracts and opportunities.

Becoming financially sustainable as a council has been a cornerstone of the mayors plan since 2022 which means delivering essential services with a smaller budget. However due to the prevalence and seriousness of VAWG in Croydon the mayor remains financially committed to supporting the role of the FJS in tackling VAWG in the borough.

INTRODUCTION

Croydon Council is dedicated to creating a long-term delivery plan to safeguard women and girls and address the issues related to violence against them.

The Tackling VAWG Delivery Plan, the first of its kind in the borough, is built on a preventative model (as reflected in the action plan) and, more crucially, has been driven by the voices of victim/survivors. With a coordinated partnership response to VAWG and a whole council approach, the Council are saying “enough is enough”.

The Tackling VAWG Delivery Plan outlines Croydon’s three-year plan to making Croydon one of the safest boroughs in London for Women and Girls to live and work. It acknowledges that VAWG can affect anyone, with women, girls and children being disproportionately affected. The Delivery Plan emphasises that certain groups face extra challenges in seeking help and are at a higher risk of specific types of abuse.

These groups include older individuals, specifically older women, LGBTQ+ individuals, Black, Asian, and minority ethnic communities, refugees, and adults requiring care and support. We are dedicated to ensuring that our services are comprehensive and available to everyone.

The Council want to ensure that we take an intersectional approach to VAWG. In essence that means acknowledging that everyone has their own unique experience of discrimination and oppression. The Council understand it is crucial to recognise that victim/survivors have multiple, intersecting identities that shape their unique experiences and barriers to accessing support.

Data collated from the FJS highlights the low number of victims accessing support who are 65+ and female, from the Asian community and from the LGBTQi community. The Council understand that these group face unique challenges and there is a need to ensure that support services are accessible to all.

The Council understands that VAWG is often linked to gender bias and inequality. Our delivery action plan will take an intersectional approach which acknowledges that all aspects of a survivor’s identity including religion, age, poverty, racism, ableist attitudes, class and culture can contribute to their unique experiences.



INTRODUCTION CONTINUED...



Croydon offers support to all individuals experiencing VAWG, as a large and diverse borough we recognise that abuse can be experienced by anyone regardless of their identity, faith, ethnicity, sex, gender or disability.

The Council understands that we face challenges with some of the most minoritised groups of women.

The Croydon Voices consultation has led to the implementation of actions and processes in the delivery plan, ensuring that the underpinning principles have been considered and applied. The plan aims to integrate collaboration, trust building, and intersectional thinking, addressing themes identified by residents, professionals and victim/survivors.

The Council seeks to take tougher steps going forward to stop VAWG. In order to increase the safety of women and girls, we must confront and address the attitudes and behaviours of men and boys rather than requiring women and girls to change their behaviour. The Council must examine the underlying reasons and promote a culture of respect by increasing awareness and education, particularly of young males.

VAWG is a pervasive and devastating issue that affects millions of women and girls worldwide. Remembering that VAWG affects women of all ages it is an act of gender-based violence and includes the following strands:

- Domestic violence and abuse
- Coercive and controlling behaviour
- Sexual violence including rape
- Female genital mutilation (FGM)
- Forced marriage
- Crimes in the name of ‘honour’
- Stalking & Harassment
- Forced sex working and trafficking
- Sexual exploitation
- Girls and gang violence
- Revenge porn

Definitions are available to view at the end of this document

In 2021 the government released its VAWG strategy which was followed by the London Mayor’s VAWG strategy the following year. The government committed to transforming the response to domestic abuse, through the introduction of a Domestic Abuse Bill.

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 came into force on 29th April 2021. The act includes provisions such as:

- Creating a statutory definition of domestic abuse,
- Establishing the office of Domestic Abuse Commissioner,
- Prohibiting offenders from cross-examining their victims in person in the family courts.
- Provided a statutory basis for the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (Clare’s law) guidance
- Created a new domestic abuse offence in Northern Ireland to criminalize controlling or coercive behaviour.

The act was introduced to promote awareness of domestic abuse, protect and support victims and their families, and transform the justice process to prioritise victim safety and provide an effective response to domestic abuse across all local agencies and sectors.

Please see a link to the act [here](#)

OUR PRIORITIES

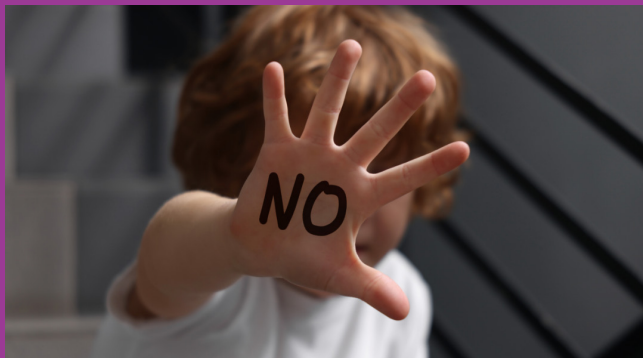
- 1** — Strengthening prevention and earlier intervention
- 2** — Pursue Perpetrators
- 3** — Supporting and protecting victim/survivors and their families
- 4** — Partnership Working and enhancing our coordinated community response to domestic abuse.

PRIORITY 1: STRENGTHENING PREVENTION AND EARLIER INTERVENTION

“The CSCP endorses the work of Croydon Council to co-produce the VAWG Delivery Plan alongside the wider partnership organisations. By working together, the goals to prevent and identify VAWG as well as intervene to reduce the impact, are attainable and will benefit victims and families affected by VAWG”.

The Croydon voices consultation highlights the need for more prevention and early intervention efforts in the area of VAWG. Despite numerous efforts in Croydon, there is still room for improvement in understanding and responding to VAWG in key services, requiring further action.

The Councils goal is to enhance our prevention approach to promptly identify and effectively intervene in cases of VAWG. The aim of preventing escalation and breaking the potential cycle of abuse and trauma, while considering the needs of the entire family.



OUR GOALS:

- Challenge sexist and misogynistic attitudes in Croydon by fostering confidence, promoting culture change, and eliminating any tolerance for abuse.
- Address the root cause of VAWG and address the harmful attitudes and behaviors that underpin these crimes and violence.
- Tackling harmful behaviors and attitudes requires a collaborative approach from organisation, professionals and communities working together to reduce gender inequality and discrimination.
- Enhance early identification of domestic abuse and VAWG by training professionals to understand the dynamics and risk factors.
- Provide accessible, evidence-based, holistic support services for those at risk of or experiencing VAWG, addressing housing, mental health, substance use, and other needs.
- Focus on early intervention targeting younger age groups to disrupt developmental trajectories towards violent behaviour.
- Foster collaborations between research, practice, and policy in designing, evaluating, and modifying prevention programs to ensure cultural appropriateness and address specific requirements of victim/survivors.

PRIORITY 2:

PURSUE PERPETRATORS

The Council heard from residents who overwhelmingly support the principle of holding those causing harm to account not only for domestic abuse but those using other harmful behaviors that impact women and girls disproportionately, and for behaviour change interventions to be available for those who were assessed as appropriate and motivated to engage with these.

“The CSAB supports the work around VAWG/DASV by seeking assurance from across the partnership on the work being undertaken but most importantly how this can be evidenced in the practice and services. The CSAB Annual Report is an example of providing assurance with updates on the work of the police, health and the FJS, all projects undertaken shared both in the report and updates provided at the quarterly meetings of the board and sub-groups”.

David Willaims, Independent Chair CSAB

“Croydon Council are working to end domestic abuse and protect victim/survivors by disrupting, challenging, and changing the behaviour of those who are causing harm. The FJS remains committed in holding perpetrators of domestic abuse accountable for their behaviour and continue to work with specialist organisations to support agencies in responding more effectively to all perpetrators of domestic abuse”.

Alison Kennedy, Strategic lead for Domestic Abuse,
Sexual Violence and Modern Slavery & Operations Manager FJS.

OUR GOALS:

- Protecting victims and preventing further abuse by removing perpetrators from the situation and issuing protective orders when necessary.
- Holding perpetrators accountable for their abusive actions through the criminal justice system sending a clear message that VAWG crimes are unacceptable.
- Providing rehabilitation programs and behaviour change interventions to address the root causes of the abusive behaviour and to prevent reoffending and re-victimisation.
- Raising awareness about domestic abuse and its impacts to shift societal attitudes and encourage reporting.



PRIORITY 3:

SUPPORTING AND PROTECTING VICTIM/ SURVIVORS AND THEIR FAMILIES

“Before coming into Refuge I was not aware of My rights. I am now financially independent after experiencing severe Domestic abuse and now understand, with the support of Hestia, why I felt the way I did, and what damage Trauma has caused”.

Survivor and Service User, Hestia.

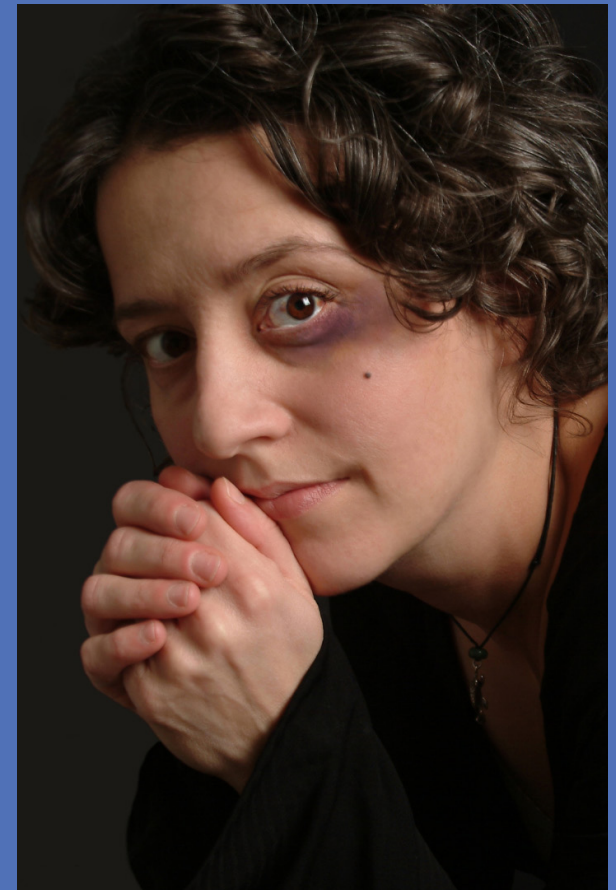
The Council acknowledges that every situation for victim/survivor is unique, and a personalised approach is necessary to provide the right support, at the right time for those experiencing VAWG.

OUR GOALS:

- Ensuring their immediate safety and providing access to safe refuge/housing away from the abuser. Refuges and safe temporary accommodation play a crucial role in this.
- Providing emotional support and counseling to help victim/survivors process the trauma, build self-confidence, and overcome the effects of abuse.
- To provide comprehensive support services for children who have witnessed abuse, ensuring they receive the necessary care to effectively address and overcome the impacts of their experiences.
- To compile and analyse comprehensive, up-to-date demographic data on abuse patterns in the local community, specifically focusing on identifying trends and correlations between demographic factors and abuse incidents experienced and perpetrated.
- Complete a comprehensive mapping of services in Croydon specific to VAWG support including by and for organisations.

“Timely, empathetic, person-centred support can make a huge difference to a survivor’s story. It can help survivors to live free from abuse sooner, and ultimately, it can save lives”.

CEO, BCWA.



PRIORITY 4:

PARTNERSHIP WORKING AND ENHANCING OUR CO-ORDINATED COMMUNITY RESPONSE TO DOMESTIC ABUSE

The Council acknowledges that all forms of VAWG are a collective issue that everyone has a responsibility to address. We want to equip our partners, the voluntary, community and faith sector and residents with the tools they can utilise to support victim/survivors, ensuring that we build on community resilience and focus on systemic change rather than short term solutions.

OUR GOALS:

- Establish robust governance mechanisms such as steering groups, operational groups, and partnership boards to drive integrated working.
- Ensure a collective commitment from all partners to provide co-leadership, pool resources and actively engage in meeting shared aims.
- Work with local business to increase their understanding of the different types of VAWG and the role they can play in supporting the council to tackle it.



“The only way we can make Croydon safer is by working together. The best results come from the Council, the Police, Health, community groups, and our residents working together to stop Violence Against Women and Girls. Everyone has a role to play in tackling one of the most serious crimes our borough faces”.

Kristian Aspinall, Director of Culture & Community Safety.

DELIVERY OF OUR GOALS TO MEET OUR PRIORITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE

Violence against women and girls has far reaching consequences that affect families, communities, and society as whole.

The implementation and success of the Croydon tackling VAWG delivery plan will rely on the collaborative efforts of a wide range of partners including our dedicated elected officials, the professional staff within our council departments, the invaluable input of our local residents, individuals with lived experiences and key stakeholders.

DOMESTIC ABUSE AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE PARTNERSHIP BOARD

The DASV board is a key part of Croydon Council's efforts to combat domestic abuse and sexual violence. It will monitor progress against the Tackling VAWG Delivery Action Plan and will secure high-level commitment across multiple agencies. The board ensures domestic abuse and VAWG are included in policy and strategy development across Croydon and reports into the Safer Croydon Partnership



SAFER CROYDON PARTNERSHIP

The Safer Croydon Partnership (SCP) is the statutory Community Safety Partnership for the London Borough of Croydon, established in accordance with the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. Its primary purpose is to work collaboratively to reduce crime, anti-social behaviour, and reoffending in Croydon. The Safer Croydon Partnership aims to create a safer environment for Croydon residents by coordinating efforts across various agencies and community groups to address crime and safety issues in the borough. The SCP will take ownership of the tackling VAWG Delivery plan and have oversight of the action plan.

CROYDON SAFEGUARDING ADULT BOARD (CSAB)

The Croydon Safeguarding Adults Board plays a crucial role in coordinating efforts to protect vulnerable adults in Croydon and ensure that agencies work together effectively to prevent and address abuse and neglect. They ensure that lessons are learned from serious incidents and that safeguarding practices are continually improved across all relevant agencies.

THE CROYDON PARTNERSHIP SAFEGUARDING CHILDRENS BOARD (CSCP)

This board is a statutory multi-agency organisation that brings together local agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people up to the age of 18 in Croydon. By bringing together local agencies and coordinating their efforts, the CSCP aims to create a comprehensive system for protecting children and promoting their well-being in the Croydon area.

DELIVERY OF OUR GOALS TO MEET OUR PRIORITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE CONTINUED...

CROYDON VAWG NETWORK

The Croydon VAWG Network plays a crucial role in the borough's efforts to address and reduce violence against women and girls, serving as a platform for collaboration and information exchange among relevant professionals and organisations. The network comprises practitioners and volunteers from the VAWG sector in Croydon, who possess valuable knowledge and directly support victims/survivors and will influence our work through the DASV board.



BAME DOMESTIC ABUSE PARTNERSHIP (BDAP)

The BAME Domestic Abuse Partnership Forum creates a collaborative space for VAWG practitioners, advocates, grassroots activists, and BAME-led Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence services to address issues affecting Black and Brown people in Croydon. It brings together statutory services and voluntary organisations to prevent, identify, and respond to DASV within BAME communities by pooling resources, sharing best practices, and working collaboratively. The forum shapes local policies and resources, such as safe spaces, while advocating for capacity-building and funding support. Importantly, it amplifies the voices of BAME/Black and Brown women, working towards a structural shift in how BAME women are supported. BDAP is a member of the DASV board and contribute towards policy development.

EXPERT BY EXPERIENCE FORUM

The forum, led by residents with lived VAWG experiences in Croydon, will collaborate with the wider partnership through the DASV board. This forum will be made up of survivors who have personally experienced various forms of gender-based violence and abuse, it will provide a platform for survivors to share their insights, contribute towards policy development and help shape services and responses to VAWG. The participation in this forum is voluntary and measures will be taken to ensure the safety and well-being of the members, recognising that sharing experiences can be both empowering and potentially challenging for survivors.



CROYDON'S VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH VAWG SECTOR

Croydon's Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector (VCFS) is a diverse and vibrant network of socially-driven, not-for-profit organisations that play a crucial role in supporting the local community. This sector encompasses a wide range of voluntary and community groups that provide various services and support to Croydon residents who have experienced VAWG and work and support victim/survivors directly.

THE NATIONAL PICTURE

- 1 in 4 women in England and Wales will experience domestic abuse in her lifetime.
- On average, 2 women are killed by a current or former partner each week.¹
- 93% of perpetrators in domestic abuse cases being male and 84% of victims being female.²
- In addition to the human cost, domestic abuse also has significant economic implications, costing the UK an estimated £23 billion per year.³
- UK data shows that in the year 2018-2019, the rates of domestic abuse amongst BAME communities were higher than their white counterparts.⁴
- The prevalence of domestic abuse within the LGBTQ+ community in the UK is also a significant concern as is the lack of data available, with limited official figures available.
- Data from the Crime Survey for England and Wales shows that up to 700,000 women are stalked each year, with 1 in 5 women and 1 in 10 men experiencing stalking in their adult life.
- According to the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW), an estimated 1.1 million adults (798,000 women and 275,000 men) have experienced sexual assault.
- The CSEW also revealed that only around 15% of those who experience sexual violence report to the police, and approximately 90% of those who are raped know the perpetrator prior to the offense.⁵
- 35% of black women who experience domestic abuse experience it more than once, compared to 26% of white women. Black women are also more likely to experience severe forms of abuse such as strangulation.

- Disabled women are twice as likely to experience domestic abuse and twice as likely to suffer assault and rape compared to non-disabled women.
- Nearly half of older victims have a care and support needs, compounding the impact of abuse.
- The crime survey for England and Wales found that around 1 in 30 people aged 60-74 and 1 in 50 aged 75+ reported experiencing domestic abuse in the past year. This equates to over 400,000 older victims in England and Wales alone.⁶



1 The Facts - Refuge
2 The Facts - Refuge
3 The Facts - Refuge

4 Domestic Abuse in Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Groups | Interventions Alliance

5 Sexual offences in England and Wales overview - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)

6 www.ageuk.org

CROYDON LANDSCAPE

There are a number of plans across the partnership that interact with the “Tackling Violence against Women and Girls Delivery Plan” and will directly contribute to making the borough safer for our residents, visitors and communities:

- Youth Safety Plan
- Croydon Community Safety partnership strategy
- Thematic Review
- Croydon 11-25 strategy
- The Mayors Business Plan 2022-2026

There are also strategic external influences which have driven our ‘tackling violence against women and girls’ delivery plan’:

- The Mayor’s Office for Police and Crime’s (MOPAC’s) Police and Crime Plan 2021-25
- MOPAC’s Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy 2018-2021
- The government’s Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy July 2021
- The Office of the Domestic Abuse Commissioner
- Serious Violence Duty
- Equalities Act 2010

THE LOCAL PICTURE

- Figures show us that domestic abuse, sexual violence and harassment are the most widespread forms of VAWG in Croydon.
- Police data informs us that domestic abuse is the most prevalent crime within the borough.
- An estimated 82,043 people in Croydon have experienced domestic abuse (50,771 women: 31,272 males)
- 1.6% of this number have used the Local Authority’s domestic abuse and sexual violence service, the FJS, between April 2023 and January 2024
- In 2023-2024 there were 3 domestic homicide notifications, all of which progressed to Domestic Homicide Reviews.
- In 2022-2023 there were 1296 referrals to the council’s domestic abuse and sexual violence service, the FJS.



CURRENT DOMESTIC ABUSE AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE SUPPORT PROVISION

Croydon Council remains committed to funding its VAWG service including advocacy and refuge.

THE ROLE OF THE FJS

The Family Justice Service (FJS), formerly known as the Family Justice Centre (FJC), has been a central part of the Councils work with victim/survivors for over a decade and will continue to be crucial in the future.

The service offers a multi-disciplinary approach to support victims of violence against women and girls (VAWG) and their children. It aims to provide comprehensive support to prevent individuals from having to seek help from multiple agencies repeatedly. The service is provided by a multi-agency team, offering various forms of support, including legal advice, access to emergency accommodation, and specialised services for victims and their children.

Referrals to the service are received from internal and external partners as well as self-referrals from victim/survivors. When referrals are received contact is made with the victim/survivor where immediate advice and safety planning is given. All victim/survivors are offered a full assessment of needs and risk.

The FJS also works to raise awareness of VAWG crimes and coordinates the response to high-risk cases of domestic abuse and sexual violence.

The FJS will continue to raise the profile of VAWG crimes in Croydon by utilising the strong partnerships built with both statutory and non-statutory partners. The service, alongside the MET coordinate the council's response to the most high-risk cases of domestic abuse and sexual violence through the multi-agency risk assessment conference also known as MARAC.

Services are accessible from several co-located sites within the council, Croydon University Hospital and the Police station. Domestic abuse practitioners within the service, called IDVA's, have the necessary skills and expertise required to reflect the demographics of communities in Croydon and understand the challenges they face in accessing support. The council recognises that all staff should improve their understanding and knowledge of what it means to be culturally competent.

The public consultation Croydon Voices provided us with the positives and strengths relating to the FJS as well as the deficits and gaps.

'Those who had utilised IDVA support via the FJS expressed positive communications with the housing department in general, specifically when supported through that process by an IDVA'.

Croydon Voices consultation.

POSITIVES AND STRENGTHS RELATING TO FJS:

- Range of knowledge and specialisms within a One-Stop-Shop environment
- Quick response to initial referral, and open door policy
- Alignment with social care enabling quicker solutions regarding housing and child protection
- Highly experienced IDVAs enabling effective responses, referrals, and signposting
- Face-to-face meetings

CURRENT DOMESTIC ABUSE AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE SUPPORT PROVISION CONTINUED...

DEFICITS AND GAPS RELATING TO FJS:

- Lack of consistent promotion and awareness of the service amongst residents of Croydon – few people had heard of the FJS prior to reporting their experience to the police or other statutory agency, and none of the 16-18 year olds were aware of its existence.
- Alignment with statutory services creates a trust barrier for some people, particularly regarding fear of child protection involvement.
- Language used on literature and in person was not responsive to the wide range of those spoken in Croydon, or for the deaf community, or tailored to LGBT+ experiences.
- Capacity does not meet demand.
- Limited by its centrality and lack of local hubs providing similar service, as well as limited outreach since the pandemic lockdown – time and expense of getting into town centre.
- More resources required for refugees, people at risk of suicide, specific faith communities, full range of harmful practices and to enable responses across all Equality Act protected characteristics.
- Perceived by some not to be as gender-informed as it could be and male IDVA allocation may not be suitable for female victims.
- Insufficient response to child sexual abuse and other impacts on children and young people.
- Training is needed for volunteers linked to the FJS.

With the strengths of the FJS being noted and therefore a collective desire for this to continue as the Councils IDVA service, suggestions were put forward as to how improvements and developments could be made as part of a local VAWG response, these have been incorporated into the delivery action plan.

- Research data to be provided to the FJS regarding Croydon demographics and prevalence of different forms of VAWG to inform their planning and responses that reflect the reality of local victims and survivors.
- More locality based drop-in services across the borough, incorporating FJS staff, police, housing specialists and legal advisors. To base these in accessible and well-utilised community spaces, or mobile “pop-ups” in various places.
- Expansion of the current short term crisis service, to include longer term support, more Freedom Programmes beyond the single existing one, and more funded counselling provision.
- Better collaborative working with the range of community-based By and For groups, organisations, statutory agencies and faith groups, as well as supporting education in schools, towards a cohesive, person-focused response to VAWG; also having improved awareness of the range of support that an individual can be signposted to beyond the FJS.
- Use a gender-informed lens to review impact on female victims of male IDVA allocation.
- Clear and proactive promotion of the FJS offer through user-friendly Council webpages, posters, leaflets and publicity initiatives, investing in language translation and accessibility of the service for all.

“Just through that positive experience, you know, I was actually heard because it was quite serious and they did actually make me feel sane... they would follow up with me, making sure that I’m okay. You know, that was amazing. I really have to big up Family Justice Service for that.”

Female survivor.

“The person is doing his job 100%, we need more people like that.”

Elderly male victim, referencing his male IDVA.

PROGRESS MADE SO FAR

- Continue to maintain funding for specialist refuge provision in Croydon providing support for migrant women with no recourse to public funds and reducing barriers to accessing refuge for some of the most vulnerable victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence/VAWG. In 2022/2023 120 survivors received support.
- Supported health colleagues in maintaining IRIS funding for 2024/2025 ensuring that our GP's continue to receive specialist training in identifying and responding to patients who experience domestic abuse.
- On average the FJS continues to train over 200 practitioners a year from a wide range of statutory, voluntary and community settings in domestic abuse, sexual violence and identifying risk.
- Maintained funding for over 5 years for a Volunteer Coordinator who has successfully implemented a volunteer program to offer support to victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence as well as other forms of VAWG.
- In 2018 Croydon was the first London borough to secure funding to deliver a high harm, high risk perpetrator intervention programme and has continued the delivery to date.
- For over 5 years the FJS has continued to provide specialist Independent domestic abuse advocate support in the community, the local Police station and Croydon University Hospital in order to meet the diverse needs of the borough.
- The FJS established the Croydon VAWG Network to support both statutory and voluntary organisations to prevent, identify and tackle VAWG within Croydon.
- The FJS have successfully embedded MARAC coordination within the FJS for over 10 years maintaining close working relationship with the Police and other statutory services.
- For over 8 years the FJS have provided a safe pathways for victims of VAWG who have a secure tenancy to access safe housing.
- The FJS continue to deliver a wrap around, multi-agency VAWG hub who on average receive 1500 annual referrals into the service. The referrals received are from both internal and external partners as well as self-referrals from victim/survivors.
- The FJS continue to successfully deliver Sanctuary Scheme providing urgent property safety measures for victims of VAWG.
- Over 5 years collaboration with the Police in testing the 'Ask Angela' Initiative in Croydon.
- FJS worked in partnership with Tesco, Sainsburys, Waitrose, Asda and Lidl in Croydon during the pandemic to provide Safe Spaces for victim of VAWG.
- FJS worked in partnership with 74 pharmacies in Croydon during the pandemic to display posters on where to get help.
- FJS support the BAME DA Forum, the first of its kind in Croydon.
- FJS represent the council at grassroot VAWG events in Croydon.
- FJS continue to offer support for victim/survivors who have No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) by providing a specialist NRPF IDVA.
- FJS continue to represent the council at the Pan London VAWG Coordinators quarterly meeting.
- The FJS continue to work with the Home Office and MOPAC in developing sustainable perpetrator intervention programmes.

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WHAT IS VAWG?

Croydon Council have adopted the United Nations declaration on elimination of violence against women. The United Nations defines violence against women as:

“Any act of gender-based violence that results or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, that is directed at a woman because she is a woman or acts of violence which are suffered disproportionately by women.”

VAWG describes the various forms of violence that are primarily perpetrated against women and girls. VAWG encompasses a wide range of harmful acts including physical, sexual, psychological, and economic abuse. While VAWG primarily targets women and girls, it is not exclusive to them.

Men and boys can also be victims of some of the forms of violence included in VAWG. However, the term specifically highlights the disproportionate impact and prevalence of violence against women and girls, as well as underlying gender-based power imbalances and discrimination that contribute to this violence.

The Council recognises that VAWG is rooted in gender inequality and the unequal distribution of power between men and women, as well as adherence to rigid gender roles and norms that condone or tolerate violence. It violates women and girl’s fundamental

human rights and has far reaching consequences for individuals, families, and society. Ending VAWG can only happen if perpetrators stop their abuse.

Violence and abuse can affect everyone differently but there are varying experiences and factors which can affect how some people access services. The Council recognises that to prevent and tackle VAWG we must also work together as a partnership and with the community to challenge myths and attitudes that work to minimise the abuse that takes place and create services that ultimately hold perpetrators to account for their actions.

Croydon Council recognises that people with certain protected characteristics are disproportionately impacted by VAWG in the UK including disability, age, gender, ethnicity, pregnancy/maternity and sexual orientation.

Evidence highlights that individuals with these protected characteristics often have different needs and face unique challenges when accessing support services as evidenced by our Croydon Voices consultation, which revealed a lack of involvement with some of these groups, Croydon Council is aware that we need to be doing more to support victims and survivors who fall within these protected characteristics.

CROYDON'S PARTNERSHIP APPROACH TO TACKLING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

The Council recognises that, in-line with the Mayors Business Plan 2022–2026 and the Community Safety Strategy, one of our top priorities is collaborating with local businesses, statutory services, and the voluntary, community, and faith sectors to support residents who are victims of VAWG

VICTIM/SURVIVORS

Croydon Council is committed to ensuring that we have a coordinated partnership response to VAWG alongside a whole council approach. This means ensuring that we not only continue to build upon the pathways already in place in Croydon for victims and survivors but also ensure that they have a voice in how we deliver our services and what they look like.



LOCAL BUSINESSES AND THE VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH SERVICES (VCFS)

Croydon Council is also committed to working more closely and listening to those professionals working in local businesses and the VCFS sector in Croydon.

The council heard from these groups about a lack of comprehensive awareness of the range of groups and initiatives in Croydon that are contributing towards addressing VAWG, this was echoed further from individuals who took part in the Croydon Voices consultation who had no clear idea of how or where to seek help outside of the police or through a friend or relative advising them.

The online surveys echoed this as well, with not only the majority of victims and survivors having little to no knowledge of community-based services, but nearly half the professionals who completed their survey also not knowing where to signpost people and indicating they would rely on the internet for information.

Croydon Councils delivery plan will address these issues over the next 3 years and we will start to improve on ensuring that the services we offer and those that the VCFS offer are easily accessible by residents who need them the most.

“The boys’ focus group was asked to look online for a resource that could help them if a friend were to disclose domestic or sexual assault or harassment, most had no idea where to start and those who did, focused on searching for mental health support helplines rather than specialists in gender-based violence and abuse”.

Croydon Voices consultation

CROYDON'S PARTNERSHIP APPROACH TO TACKLING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS CONTINUED...

In Croydon, the FJS has a strong working relationship with the police and works in partnership to enhance the protection of victims and survivors of VAWG. The multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC) is chaired by the police and the FJS has placed a IDVA within the Police station. Through the Croydon Voices consultation we know that many victims were positive about their engagement with the Police and in most cases were then referred into the FJS where they received appropriate crisis support.

“The people who actually are supporting me and I’ve been very suprised by it is the Croydon Police. It’s actually the police that have been supporting me because of harrassment and domestic abuse... I’ve had a, like, a box fitted into my bedroom for, like, emergencies, you know, I press a button and they show up... I’m always in conversation with so many different police officers, but they are supporting me.”

“My ex turned up drunk demanding to see the children, when I refused, he smashed a window. When the police came, they sided with him. The male police officer told me ‘Well you did stop him seeing his children...”

The council also heard from some victims and survivors of their reluctance to report abuse formally to the police at all, reasons given echoed those known throughout national research into what victims of domestic and sexual harm say – that they fear being blamed, not being believed, repercussions from the abuser, lack of confidence in what the police can do and anxiety about Child Protection involvement.⁷

The council also heard from the young people that took part in the Croydon voices consultation who were virtually unanimous in their assertion that they would be unlikely to report any form of abuse or harassment to the police after an event and that for some of them this was linked with anticipated or actual experiences of racism and/or being disbelieved due to their youth.

Croydon Police are fully committed to providing a safe and supported space for victims of VAWG. The council will continue to work together to re-establish trust within the community to increase referrals rates to support services and hold perpetrators to account.

Croydon is facing a challenging time with the availability of safe accommodation for victims and survivors of DASV/VAWG. The limited supply of suitable accommodation for people experiencing domestic abuse in particular, and also for those perpetrating it where removal from the family home was the preferable option, was referenced by several professionals and survivors in the Croydon Voices consultation.

⁷ Croydon Voices Consultation – Tackling VAWG Delivery Plan

We also heard from residents that had challenging interactions with the housing teams and we understand that more needs to be done to support staff to work in a trauma informed way, ensuing they understand the dynamics of VAWG when supporting victim/survivors.

“I was involved in something I told the police about once, they didn’t really listen to me, didn’t understand things from my perspective”

Girl aged 16-18

“If a boy or a girl told the police that a girl had been assaulted, they probably wouldn’t believe it, especially if the girl had been drinking.”



CROYDON'S PARTNERSHIP APPROACH TO TACKLING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS CONTINUED...

Children are now recognised as victims in their own right in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, this recognition marks a crucial step in ensuring that children affected by domestic abuse receive the appropriate care and support from the relevant services including children's social care and education. It underscores a commitment to safeguarding their rights and well-being, aiming to break the cycle of abuse and provide a safe environment for young victims to heal and thrive.

“So, my social worker would ask why are the arguments happening? ... Because he's cheated and I don't want to be with him anymore, and he can't take 'No', so he starts smashing things up... And she tells me OK so you really need to work on your anger, so you don't wind him up. Have you thought about counselling so you can learn to co-parent with him?”

Through the Croydon Voices consultation the Council heard from victims and survivors who had previously been or still were involved with children's social care due to their experience of domestic abuse. The themes that recurred through most of these responses included feeling a lack of compassion or understanding of their experiences on the part of the social workers, and that there was a heavy emphasis put on the expectation that they must prevent or otherwise manage the abusive partner / ex-partner's harmful behaviours.

“It's a tick-box, that's all I am to them. There's no compassion.”

Croydon Council is currently implementing the Safe and Together model. This model reframes the focus of accountability for domestic abuse involving children, onto the perpetrator of the harm whilst recognising and supporting the strengths and achievements of the non-abusing parent.

The Council recognises that for this model to be successful and for victims and survivors to feel empowered there must be a conscious change in language and processes by Children's Services practitioners on a day-to-day level with each family, but equally importantly, on a departmental, systemic level to enable consistent and sustained culture, policy and process change across the borough.

Croydon Council children's services currently employ an IDVA to assist in identifying and responding to violence against Women and girls at the earliest opportunity by working across childrens services including Early Help and the Youth Justic Service.

Where threshold for a children's services intervention is met the IDVA will work closely with the social work teams and the FJS to ensure robust safety planning and assessment, ensuring a multi-agency, joined up approach to tackling violence against women and girls.

“I was told not to let him back into the property or I'd get evicted and have to pay a fee, so he broke a window when I stopped him. Housing then tried to get me to pay for the repair.”



“I get on really well with my current social worker, she's not like the previous ones, she listens to me and so I'm doing the things I'm supposed to do now.”

CROYDON'S PARTNERSHIP APPROACH TO TACKLING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS CONTINUED...

Adult social care plays a crucial role in responding effectively to victims and survivors of VAWG in Croydon. The Care Act 2014 and Domestic Abuse Act 2021 have strengthened social care's statutory responsibilities in this area, formally recognising domestic abuse as a safeguarding issue for adults. The VAWG delivery action plan acknowledges the need for improved response to older adults experiencing domestic abuse, emphasising the importance of early identification for safeguarding vulnerable adults.

'A resident from the Croydon voices consultation referenced the lack of clarity over support from Adult Social Care whom he said had contacted him a year earlier because of his abusive son's learning disability, vulnerability to being financially exploited, use of substances and other related support needs. There had been no follow up to that initial communication until the son reoffended and was given a custodial sentence'

Education also plays a crucial role in addressing violence against women and girls. Educational interventions are essential in changing attitudes, behaviours, and harmful gender stereotypes that perpetuate violence.

In Croydon, primary and secondary schools are kept up to date with organisations nationally and locally that can support them to deliver teaching around healthy relationships. Schools are also able to access domestic abuse and sexual violence training through the FJS and are encouraged to identify staff as Domestic abuse and Sexual Violence Leads. During the pandemic all Croydon schools agreed to act as Safe Spaces for victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence and have continue remaining safe spaces.

SPOTLIGHT ON GOOD PRACTICE

Healthy Relationship Advisory Forum (HRAF)

The forum is an opportunity for schools and colleges to discuss concerns about a child or young person's behaviour within the relationships they have. This could be friendships, personal relationships, and family relationships. The aim is to prevent the concerning behaviours from developing further and becoming abusive in their adult life.

'The forum was extremely useful. I would highly recommend to colleagues. Thank you to the HRAF team. Some of the resources recommended have been used by staff members for the child that we presented and for other children in our setting. These were very beneficial. I was extremely impressed with the support and advice offered by the team on the HRAF and their knowledge of appropriate services to support the child and family.'

Headteacher, Croydon school

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CROYDON'S PARTNERSHIP APPROACH TO TACKLING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS CONTINUED...

Health also has a crucial role to play in responding to VAWG. Identifying changes in someone physical or emotional state, or injuries that cannot be explained may be a sign of domestic abuse.

Victims of domestic abuse in hospital are often in the immediate aftermath of a crisis, severe physical assault, drug/alcohol related medical needs, attempted suicide, or self-harm. The risk of immediate harm must be reduced; particularly when hospital release is imminent.⁸

Health partners continue to be one of Croydon Councils strongest partnerships and the Council remains committed to providing a specialist hospital IDVA to deliver practical support, empathy, and early identification at the point of crisis.

Health continue to fund and deliver IRIS in the borough providing specialist training for GPs on earlier identification and responding to victims of domestic abuse.

Victim/survivors and their children are often reporting or demonstrating severe and enduring poor mental health and displaying symptoms of trauma associated with the abuse that they are experiencing. It is difficult for victim/survivors, and children to access the right support at the right time due to extended waiting lists for both adults and children in mental health services.

⁸ About hospital-based Idvas | Safelives

SPOTLIGHT ON GOOD PRACTICE

IRIS (Identification and Referral to Improve Safety)

Our health partners continue to maintain funding to deliver the IRIS project in Croydon. IRIS delivers specialist domestic abuse identification training to GP practices to support them to identify and refer women who are experiencing domestic abuse at an early stage before it reaches crisis point. Core areas of the programme include ongoing training, education and consultancy for the clinical team and administrative staff in GP practices, care pathways for primary health care practitioners and an enhanced referral pathway to specialist domestic violence services for patients with experience of Domestic abuse.

During 2023 54 women have received IRIS support and 14 GP practices have been delivered training by IRIS.

‘Very informative, learned lots of new things and tips which will help me to identify the victims of DVA in my career as GP’

‘AE has been the greatest help you have made me feel that I am not alone, calmed my anxieties and helped me understand my confusing feelings and thoughts. Knowing that I can contact you I when I need to is extremely valuable and comforting. My confidence has increased so much since being in contact with you and IRI’.

In the Croydon Voices Consultation victim/survivors talked about the lack of therapeutic services for their children who have been impacted by domestic or sexual abuse and in some cases linked this to a wish for this to be more of a focus for Children’s Services involvement in Croydon. Others told us about their experience of having little structured mental health support to help them heal from their abusive experiences. Some of them had been informed of, or referred for counselling but there was a recognition that this was in response to the severity of their situations and that much earlier support for the impact of abuse would have helped both them and their children.

The safeguarding leads from South London and Maudsley Trust (SLaM) provide specialist advice within MARAC and in the domestic abuse perpetrator panel (DAPP) to inform safety plans and offer appropriate mental health support.

‘My child’s trauma symptoms emerged sometime after the abuse stopped, as Post Traumatic Stress, services were not readily available for the child at that time, and CAMHS did not offer help when needed’.

CROYDON VOICES FINDINGS

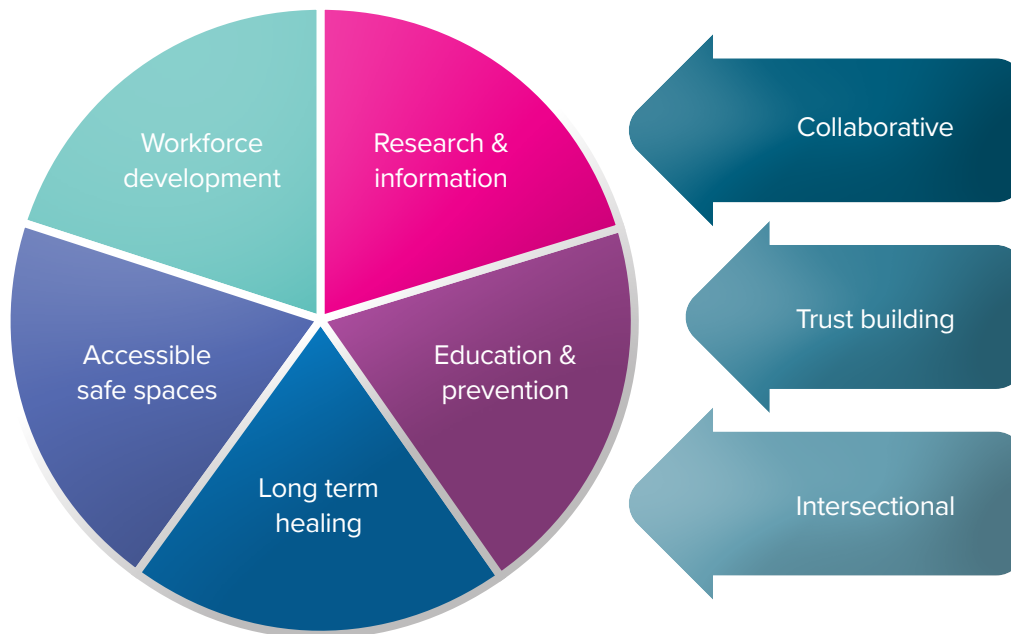
WORKSHOP FEEDBACK

To shape the Tackling Violence against Women and Girls Delivery Plan it was crucial that the lived experiences and voices of victims, survivors, children and young people were included as mentioned in the Mayors business plan 2022-2026. Workshops took place to gather opinions from experts, communities, and survivors in support of this which has helped the Council to develop our priorities.

The sessions have built a strong foundation on which to truly comprehend what must be implemented and how victim/survivors in Croydon feel about services they use when experiencing VAWG.

KEY FINDINGS/THEMES

The consultation process provided us with a range of repeated themes which stood out, some of which have been grouped into specific actions and processes in our delivery action plan and others which constitute underpinning approaches and values which have usefully permeated throughout the tackling VAWG delivery plan and action plan. These are summarised in the following graphic, the activities shown in the segments of the circle on the left and the ideal underpinning approaches in the arrows on the right.⁹



“For the London Borough of Croydon to create and implement a meaningful Violence Against Women and Girls Delivery Plan within the inevitable financial constraints that are present in the borough, it will be important to focus on systemic change rather than short term solutions.”

“Croydon Council, should also combine the observations made in this report with any known historical patterns of local experience and feedback that has previously been voiced regarding these issues, to add evidential weight to areas that are consistently positive and those that are of repeated concern, and to note what has shifted forwards or backwards in its progress. Space should be created to celebrate successful achievements that have taken place, whilst also acknowledging the emotional toll on communities of voicing their needs repeatedly with no meaningful change.”

9 Croydon Voice – local consultation to inform a Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Delivery Plan

ACTIVITIES

RESEARCH AND INFORMATION

- Research to gather current data on local demographics, the extent of each form of reported violence and abuse perpetrated and experienced by different genders, ages, ethnicity, disability and area of the borough
- Comprehensive mapping of services, both specific domestic and sexual abuse support, plus By-and-Fors that incorporate community support and can be viewed as safe spaces for disclosure and community healing
- Central, easily navigable and well promoted council webpage identifying all relevant services, including a phone app version, with clear referral pathways for residents and professionals and accessible in as many locally used languages as possible.

EDUCATION AND PREVENTION

- Active promotion of all schools' involvement in Healthy London Healthy Relationships as part of a renewed commitment to a whole schools' approach to early education around healthy relationships and challenging gender inequality; ensuring methods of learning are genuinely engaging for most children
- Co-creation with youth groups and young people not accessing schools and colleges of alternative ways to explore and learn about the range of issues that contribute towards violence against women and girls, including gang affiliation; developing social media-based campaigns and resources
- Long term support and commitment to the provision of a range of perpetrator interventions and other accountability measures, including early motivational engagement with people who harm (of all ages) and the normalisation of day to day conversations that challenge abuse, misogyny and related behaviours and attitudes.

ACCESSIBLE SAFE SPACES

- As part of mapping services, identification of physical building spaces across the borough that offer emotional and physical safety for people to talk about and receive support following violence or abuse, outside of the formal FJS structure
- Support for the public promotion and staffing of these spaces as part of normalising conversations that name and challenge harmful behaviours.

LONG TERM HEALING

- Review of current funded or subsidised therapeutic services available in the borough (can be done as part of the mapping process) to identify gaps against demand
- Specific consideration of provision for children's therapy following domestic abuse, alongside parental healing, rather than only viewing these separately
- Research into additional or alternative less formalised community healing processes, via research into other initiatives with positive outcomes elsewhere in the UK.



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- Standardising long term consultation and other expert support for professionals beyond standalone training courses, such as the Safe and Together model being invested in further to enable systemic culture change in Children's Social Care
- Comprehensive training on the full range of violence against women and girls-related issues, their local prevalence, relevance and available support
- Current legislation awareness, including children as victims. Building in longer term refresher and updates training, Train the Trainer schemes to minimise ongoing reliance on external expertise, normalising reflective practice and internal consultation so all the workforce feels informed and supported through their responses.

UNDERPINNING APPROACHES

COLLABORATIVE

- Proactive agreement at strategic level to work together with individuals and communities to achieve common aims and be action-focused in realistic, achievable ways
- Sharing of knowledge across groups, organisations and departments, reciprocal training, combining resources, co-creation of services and support, making the most of people resources rather than competing for scarce money or paying externals to deliver training or schemes, cross-sector arrangements, By-and-Fors alongside statutory agencies
- Citizen level collaboration and genuine co-creation of meaningful initiatives, with overt valuing of these at council level, a moving away from presumption that solutions will continue to be provided by communities with no local authority support or value
- Avoid reinventing wheels: research, learn from and adapt other boroughs' successful initiatives and solutions.

TRUST-BUILDING

- An overt naming of the role of all statutory authorities in reporting safeguarding concerns and its impact on reporting by victims, so honest and transparent conversations can be conducted with people across communities in how and why disclosures will be responded to. With the police, many of those victims who do report and engage with them have had positive experiences. The trust-building therefore needs to have a particular focus on active listening to the fears and other barriers identified by those people who are not reporting
- Overt recognition by public services of the institutional power they hold and its impact on minoritised communities' trust in reporting abuse and other harmful behaviours, and in accessing services
- Genuine valuing of the achievements of small community groups, By-and-Fors and informal structures of support, as well as recognition of positive outcomes from commissioned services such as the FJS. Public services trusting communities to identify their own solutions and then asking what they need to achieve this
- Training for the police in trauma-informed approaches to victims of domestic and sexual violence, within the context of recent reputational damage from police officers perpetrating violence against women.



INTERSECTIONAL

- Seeing individuals, families and communities within an ecological model and reflecting the various layers of local people's experience where violence against women and girls issues intersect.
- Enabling people to be responded to according to all the issues they present with, not just one problem for one response.
- Creation and valuing of safe spaces for general conversation and disclosures where people state they feel most comfortable and that are genuinely accessible
- Base layer of awareness training for all Council public-facing staff regarding disability, LGBT+ responsivity, race and cultural competency, reflecting protected characteristics under the Equality Act.

LOCAL REFUGE SERVICES

The Council recognises the importance of funding refuge accommodation for women and our commissioned service provides 25 bed spaces for women and 10 children’s bedspaces locally.

The Council also maintains funding for 12 specialist refuge provision for migrant women in Croydon. Through this funding and in partnership with Bromley and Croydon’s Women Aid we are able to support 120 women each year.

Refuges are crucial for domestic abuse survivors and provide immediate safety and protection for victims fleeing dangerous situations, offering a secure, confidential environment for survivors and their children to escape threats and break the cycle of abuse.

Refuges provide essential support services for recovery and rebuilding lives, including emotional counselling, legal advocacy, financial planning assistance, and job training programs, addressing the complex needs of survivors, and empowering them to regain independence.

Refuges also offer specialised care and support to children exposed to domestic abuse, including counselling and educational programs to help them process their experiences and mitigate long-term trauma. Refuge services are often underfunded and face challenges in meeting demand.

Croydon will continue to work with the government to ensure sustainable funding for this life-saving support.

SPOTLIGHT ON GOOD PRACTICE

Bridging the borders

The ‘Bridging the Borders’ project has been developing domestic abuse work funded across Croydon since 2016. The project strengthens domestic abuse services across Croydon by:

- Maximising the capacity of spaces by improving access to and move-on from refuge.
- Reducing barriers to accessing refuge by employing a specialist Referral Case Officer.
- Improving access for women with diverse needs seeking refuge.
- Providing specialist support for BAME women, women with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) and EEA nationals.
- Removing barriers to accessing immigration advice and support for the above client groups to enable them to access DDV Concession.



MEN, BOYS AND VAWG

Croydon Council recognises the importance in engaging men and boys as allies in preventing VAWG, the Council will aim to promote initiatives which have been developed to challenge harmful gender norms and promote positive masculinity.

It is important to involve men and boys in conversations about consent, respect and gender equality. The Council recognises that men can also be victims of domestic abuse and the council's VAWG service, the FJS, supports all victims of domestic abuse regardless of sex or gender.

Men and boys can play a crucial role in addressing violence against women and girls by actively creating safe environments, challenging toxic masculinity, and raising children with gender-equitable values. They can listen to women's experiences, support women's organisations and services, and serve as positive role models by rejecting harmful masculinities and promoting mindful ones. Men in positions of influence, such as local politicians, police officers, and healthcare providers, can also speak up about their responsibility to prevent and combat gender-based violence. Engaging men and boys in Croydon as allies is essential for lasting change in the fight against VAWG.

“A boy is insecure in himself and takes it out on girls because he thinks they are weaker than him.”

Girl aged 16-18

HOW CAN MALES SUPPORT VAWG IN CROYDON

Males can take proactive steps to end VAWG in Croydon and support the Councils delivery plan to stand by women and girls impacted by VAWG. The Council recognises the work that is already taking place in Croydon to actively engage with boys including mentoring.

Below are some of the ways men and boys can make a difference in Croydon:

- Be role models
- Be a mentor to boys in the borough
- Educate yourself
- Speak out
- Challenge traditional masculinity
- Engage others
- Talk about consent
- Intervene

During the consultation Croydon Council engaged with males and boys to seek their thoughts about VAWG and how it impacts them as well as the women and girls in their lives.

Men and boys can play a crucial role in addressing violence against women and girls by actively creating safe environments, challenging toxic masculinity, and raising children with gender-equitable values. They can listen to women's experiences, support women's organisations and services, and serve as positive role models by rejecting harmful masculinities and promoting mindful ones. Men in positions of influence, such as local politicians, police officers, and healthcare providers, can also speak up about their responsibility to prevent and combat gender-based violence. Engaging men and boys in Croydon as allies is essential for lasting change in the fight against VAWG.



“Hearing from role models, people with experiences. I've never walked out of an assembly and thought about the topic afterwards when it's one of our teachers.”

Boy, aged 16-18

RESPONDING TO PERPETRATORS

The Council heard from residents who overwhelmingly support the principle of holding those causing harm to account not only for domestic abuse but those using other harmful behaviours that impact women and girls disproportionately, and for behaviour change interventions to be available for those who were assessed as appropriate and motivated to engage with these.¹⁰

“What can we do as women to keep safe? How about educating the perpetrators? How about that? I cannot begin to tell you the amount of women that I speak to in organisations with the work that I do that will say to me... they don’t want to go out for lunches or they don’t want to go to the christmas parties because somebody is going to be handsy and it’s normally the CEO or somebody of power. Why are we not educating the men?... I had to cancel my gym membership because I had to walk across a field to get there. So as soon as the clocks went back.. I was not going to walk across that field at 6am in the morning where I should be able to, but there’s no way on the this planet I was going to do that.”

Female survivor



Accountability and behaviour change options for perpetrators was also requested by some of the victims / survivors who filled in the online survey, with more than half stating their view that perpetrators are not held to account effectively.¹¹

The Council understands that working with perpetrators is an opportunity to place them in the centre of any multi-agency response, changing the narrative from asking the victim/survivor to leave and start asking the perpetrator to stop, holding the perpetrator to account for their behaviour.

The Mayor has also committed to challenging perpetrators of violence, tackling problematic mindsets and behaviour and promoting cultural change within Croydon to keep women and girls safe.

The mayors plan involves a multi-pronged approach, including community involvement, partnership with agencies, building on existing services, and challenging the root causes of VAWG through cultural change/ competency and addressing perpetrators.

The perpetrator’s primary goal is to achieve power and control over victim/survivors. In order to do so, perpetrators often plan and utilise a pattern of coercive tactics aimed at instilling fear, shame, and helplessness in victims.

The VAWG delivery plan will emphasise the need to engage perpetrators in appropriate behaviour change interventions in order to reduce offending and thus reducing the risk to victim/survivors and their children.

¹⁰ Croydon Voice – local consultation to inform a Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Delivery Plan - Liz Ostrowski

¹¹ Croydon Voice – local consultation to inform a Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Delivery Plan - Liz Ostrowski

RESPONDING TO PERPETRATORS CONTINUED...

The role of Croydon's Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Panel (DAPP) is pivotal in providing a multi-agency response to deciding whether a perpetrator is suitable for a behaviour change intervention. The panel will assess risk to the victim/survivor and will make recommendations in relation to formulating actions to disrupt the behaviour of the perpetrator and monitor the risk.

The Council knows that more need to be done to build awareness of what existing funded services are available to people causing harm in Croydon and shouldn't focus only on adult perpetrators of intimate violence and abuse.



SPOTLIGHT ON GOOD PRACTICE

Drive

Drive addresses the behaviour of high harm domestic abuse perpetrators to target the root cause of the abuse and improve outcomes for adult and child victims. The key outcomes of the Drive response are to:

- **Reduce the number of serial perpetrators of domestic abuse.**
- **Reduce the number of repeat and new victims.**
- **Reduce the harm caused to adult and child victims.**
- **Intervene earlier to safeguard families living with high harm domestic abuse.**

The project shifts the focus to addressing the behaviour of the perpetrator and aims to knit together services and complement and enhance existing interventions – including crucial protective

work with victim-survivors. Addressing the issues that underlie domestic abuse is at the heart of the Drive Project which combines intensive one-to-one case management (differing from the traditional group work settings of some of the earlier cited studies) and delivery of multi-agency services to challenge and change perpetrator behaviour, and address support needs to remove obstacles to the change process.

Disruption activity is also a central feature of the Drive model – ensuring that the behaviour of perpetrators who choose not to engage in the process is addressed.

'...before there wasn't anything for them and now there is. And you do have to provide something, ... they are the ones wreaking the most havoc, and causing most harm, so you've got to fill that gap'

“My ex turned up drunk demanding to see the children, when I refused he smashed a window. When the police came, they sided with him. The male police officer told me ‘well you did stop him from seeing his children..’”

Croydon Council is deeply committed to tackling violence against women and girls (VAWG) by taking a proactive and comprehensive approach outlined in this new Tackling VAWG Delivery Plan.

The council aspires to make Croydon one of the safest boroughs in London for women and girls by listening intently to those with lived experience and working hand-in-hand with partners and the community. Croydon Council is resolute in its commitment to addressing this devastating crime and supporting all those impacted by gender-based violence.

The council's unwavering goal is to provide the right support, at the right time, to women and girls at risk or experiencing VAWG in the borough. Croydon Council extends its heartfelt gratitude to all those who have shared their experiences and insights to shape this vital plan of action.



Croydon would like to thank the following organisations for their support in the consultation and for their dedication and hard work in tackling Domestic Abuse, Sexual Violence and Violence Against Women and Girls and ensuring that women and girls can live their lives free from fear and abuse.

- Africa Advocacy
- Against Domestic Abuse
- Anima Youth
- Another Night of Sisterhood
- Better Lives Foundation
- Be Inspired UK
- BME Forum
- Bromley and Croydon Women's Aid
- Cassandra Centre
- Changez Life
- Croydon Voluntary Action
- Every 3 seconds
- FORWARD
- Freedom Together
- HERSANA
- Hestia
- IRIS
- Lioness Circle
- Mind in Croydon
- Orchards UK
- RAKKHA
- RASASC
- Skye Alexandra House
- South BCU
- Soul Purpose
- Walk with me
- Women and Girls Network

DEFINITIONS

Sexual violence

Sexual violence is any unwanted sexual act or activity. There are many kinds of sexual violence that exist including, but not limited to rape, sexual assault, child sexual abuse (CSA) and sexual harassment. Perpetrators range from total strangers to relatives and intimate partners. It can happen to anyone, anywhere – in the family/household, workplace, public spaces, social settings – and at any point in life. Sexual harassment is often first experienced by women when they are girls and young women are at increased risk of sexual violence. Sexual violence can occur online in the form of grooming, sharing intimate images of someone without their consent and using technology such as apps, websites and other online platforms to coerce or distress a victim or survivor.

Female genital mutilation (FGM)

Female genital mutilation (FGM)/cutting is a procedure where the female genitals are deliberately cut, injured, or changed, but where there is no medical reason for this to be done. This is a traditional practice in some communities and is sometimes portrayed as a religious requirement although there is no basis for this. It is also known as female circumcision, and by other terms such as sunna, gudniin, halalays, tahur, megrez and khitan, among others

Forced marriage

A forced marriage is a marriage in which one or both spouses do not (or, in the case of some adults with learning or physical disabilities, or those under the age of 18, cannot) consent to the marriage and duress is involved. Duress can include physical, psychological, financial, sexual, and emotional pressure. This is a form of domestic abuse but can involve people other than family or intimate partners and can be an element of so-called ‘honour’-based abuse affecting victims and survivors of all gender identities.

Crimes in the name of ‘honour’

So-called ‘honour’-based violence is a collection of practices used to control behaviour within families to protect perceived cultural, spiritual, and religious beliefs and/or ‘honour’. It is often linked to family members or acquaintances who mistakenly believe someone has brought shame to their family or community by doing something that is not in keeping with the traditional beliefs of their culture. This is a form of domestic abuse but in most so-called ‘honour’-based violence cases there are multiple perpetrators from the immediate family, sometimes the extended family and occasionally the community at large. It is important to note that since the concepts of ‘honour’, ‘purity’ and what is ‘natural’ exist across cultural borders, so-called ‘honour’-based violence has been witnessed and reported in every community.

Stalking & Harassment

Stalking is unwanted, repeated, obsessive and/or controlling behaviours that make someone distressed or scared. There are many ways stalking can be perpetrated and it is most likely to be someone the victim or survivor already knows well such as an ex-partner. The law states that harassment is when a person behaves in a way which is intended to cause distress or alarm. The behaviour must happen on more than one occasion. It can be the same type of behaviour or different types of behaviour on each occasion.

Sexual exploitation

Sexual exploitation is when one person or a group of people abuse or attempt to abuse a position of vulnerability, power, or trust, for sexual purposes. This includes but is not limited to profiting financially, socially, or politically from the sexual exploitation of another. It is child sexual exploitation when the victim

Revenge porn

The sharing of private, sexual materials, either photos or videos, of another person without their consent and with the purpose of causing embarrassment or distress.

TACKLING VAWG DELIVERY ACTION PLAN

Croydon Council want Croydon to be a place where VAWG is no longer tolerated and where everyone can expect to live free from abuse. This can only be achieved by collaborative working with not only victim/survivors but with partner agencies and the VCFS. The Council needs to build trust and acknowledge intersectionality in order to meet our priorities. Under each of our priority areas there are a number of outcomes that the Council want to achieve through our three-year Tackling Violence against Women and Girls Delivery Action Plan.

Priority 1: Strengthening prevention and earlier intervention

	Outcomes (ACTION)	Underpinning Principle	Lead Service / Organisations	Timescale	Performance measures
1.1	Deliver training and promotion on the Safelives DASH risk assessment and the MARAC to ensure agencies understand how to refer, when to refer and the purpose of the MARAC.	Collaborative Intersectional	Croydon Council Voluntary Sector	Ongoing	Quarterly report including number of attendees and breakdown of services attended
1.2	Use recommendations and learning from domestic homicide reviews to improve partnership practice and actions to tackle domestic abuse and sexual violence	Collaborative Intersectional Trust-building	Croydon Council	12 months	Monitored in the DHR Action Plan
1.3	Enhance public knowledge of domestic abuse and sexual violence and all forms of VAWG including coercion and control, sexual abuse and healthy relationship	Collaborative Trust-building	All partners	Ongoing	Development of the attendees at the VAWG Forum and DASV Board
1.4	Promote awareness and understanding of Right to Know and Right to Ask (Claire's Law)	Trust-building	Metropolitan Police	Ongoing	Met Police data
1.5	Improve support to victims/survivors with protective characteristics who face additional barriers in accessing services	Intersectional	All Partners	Ongoing	FJS quarterly reporting
1.6	Provide training for organisations working with victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence and raise awareness to increase understanding of this crime and ensure that it remains everyone's business.	Collaborative Trust-building	All Partners	Ongoing	Partners to provide number of training sessions arranged and number of attendees

TACKLING VAWG DELIVERY ACTION PLAN CONTINUED...

Priority 1: Strengthening prevention and earlier intervention

	Outcomes (ACTION)	Underpinning Principle	Lead Service / Organisations	Timescale	Performance measures
1.7	Ensure that all schools and GP practices receive training to identify signs of violence against women and girls, including domestic abuse and sexual violence, and arrange appropriate responses	Collaborative Intersectional	Croydon Council Health	24 months	IRIS programme monitoring
1.8	Externally funded Targeted Outreach: Working with local trusted partners to enhanced public space outreach in high priority areas for young girls	Collaborative Intersectional	Voluntary sector Croydon Council	24 months	Successful bids and outreach delivered
1.9	Provide information on services that is accessible to partners and residents	Collaborative Trust-building	Croydon Council	12 months	Accessible information available
1.10	Promotion of schools' involvement in-cluding colleges and alternative educational provision in the Healthy London, healthy relationship programme	Collaborative	Croydon Council	12 months	Number of schools signed up/social media campaigns & resources
1.11	Implement a community ambassadors programme across minoritized communities and faith groups	Collaborative Intersectional Trust-building	Croydon Council Croydon VAWG network	12 months	Number of ambassadors identified and trained

TACKLING VAWG DELIVERY ACTION PLAN CONTINUED...

Priority 2: Pursue Perpetrators

	Outcomes (ACTION)	Underpinning Principle	Lead Service / Organisations	Timescale	Performance measures
2.1	Work with perpetrators through the appropriate perpetrator intervention programme to end their abusive behaviour (Drive & Restart)	Collaborative Intersectional Trust-Building	Croydon Council Metropolitan Police Voluntary sector	18 months	How many perpetrators are engaged/ referrals received
2.2	Target the most prolific DASV offenders in Croydon	Collaborative	Metropolitan Police Service	12 months	Police Data
2.3	Deliver the Domestic Abuse Protection Orders (DAPO)/DAPN Pilot	Collaborative	Metropolitan Police Croydon Council Home Office	24 months	Home Office Key Performance Indicators
2.4	DAPP (Domestic abuse perpetrator panel) commitment to monitoring and disrupting high harm, high risk individuals	Collaborative	Metropolitan Police Croydon Council	Ongoing	Referral rates into DAPP/number of disrupt actions
2.5	Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) to tackle behaviour that impacts women and girls in public spaces	Collaborative	Metropolitan Police Croydon Council	24 months	Number of PSPO's issued in relation to VAWG

TACKLING VAWG DELIVERY ACTION PLAN CONTINUED...

Priority 3: Supporting and protecting victim/survivors and their families

	Outcomes (ACTION)	Underpinning Principle	Lead Service / Organisations	Timescale	Performance measures
3.1	Create a communications plan to promote key interventions provided to raise the profile of VAWG within Croydon	Collaborative	Croydon Council	Ongoing	Social media data Accessible information available
3.2	Identify funding streams to help bolster current provision around domestic abuse, sexual violence & VAWG	Collaborative Intersectional Trust-Building	Croydon Council	Ongoing	Identify 3 funding streams per year
3.3	Improve access to information about available DASV/VAWG services in Croydon	Trust-Building	Croydon Council	12 months	Social media data Accessible information available
3.4	Increased number of referrals to MARAC from underrepresented partners	Collaborative Intersectional	All partners	Ongoing	FJS quarterly data report
3.5	To be DAHA (Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance) accredited. To ensure appropriate responses to providing safe, appropriate accommodation for Victim/survivors	Collaborative Intersectional	Croydon Council	3 years	Key performance indicators required as part of the accreditation
3.6	Continue to provide and fund refuge and other safe accommodation to victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence	Collaborative Intersectional	Croydon Council	Ongoing	Key performance indicators
3.7	Gather current data on local demographics, the extent of each form of abuse experienced and perpetrated by genders, ages, ethnicity and disability	Collaborative Intersectional	Metropolitan Police Croydon Council	Annual collation	Strategic Assessment
3.8	Mapping of services specific to domestic abuse support delivered by by-and-for organisations indicating the level of community healing	Collaborative Intersectional Trust-Building	Voluntary sector Croydon Council	3 years	Development of a directory
3.9	Provision of children's therapy where they have been identified as victims of domestic abuse	Collaborative Intersectional	Croydon Council	2 years	Number of children referred
3.10	Address the lack of knowledge and understanding in relation to disabled victim/survivors of domestic abuse, to better recognise and respond	Collaborative Intersectional Trust-Building	Croydon Council	Ongoing	Measured in relation to training

TACKLING VAWG DELIVERY ACTION PLAN CONTINUED...

Priority 3: Supporting and protecting victim/survivors and their families

	Outcomes (ACTION)	Underpinning Principle	Lead Service / Organisations	Timescale	Performance measures
3.11	Support the Bame domestic abuse partnership to continue to address the issues that are affecting victim/survivors. Include specific responses to supporting victim/survivors from the South Asian community	Collaborative Intersectional Trust-Building	All partners	Ongoing	Reporting to the DASV board
3.12	To better support and respond to victim/survivors who experience poor mental health	Collaborative Intersectional Trust-Building	South London and Maudsley Trust	Ongoing	Increased referrals to FJS/MARAC
3.13	Childrens social care ensure that all staff understand the dynamics of domestic abuse and respond in a trauma-informed way whilst removing the need to victim blame	Intersectional Trust-Building	Croydon Council	Ongoing	Number of trauma informed training attendees from CSC
3.14	Develop tailored primary prevention activities that address older women's experiences, such as financial literacy and challenging internalised ageism	Collaborative Intersectional Trust-Building	Croydon Council	Ongoing	Increase in referrals to FJS and MARAC

TACKLING VAWG DELIVERY ACTION PLAN CONTINUED...

Priority 4: Partnership Working and enhancing our coordinated community response to domestic abuse

	Outcomes (ACTION)	Underpinning Principle	Lead Service / Organisations	Timescale	Performance measures
4.1	Increase number of licensed venues accessing WAVE/ASK Angela Training	Trust-Building	Metropolitan Police	12 months	DASV Board monitoring performance
4.2	Work with local businesses to sign up to the Women's Night Safety Charter	Collaborative	Croydon Council	12 months	5 more businesses signed up
4.3	Increase the number of accessible safe spaces for women and girls, ensuring collaboration with victim/survivors and communities	Intersectional Trust-Building	Croydon Council	3 years	All schools/all libraries
4.4	Develop a domestic abuse specialism in Croydon Health Services NHS Trust's safeguarding team to develop practitioners' knowledge and skills across the organisation	Collaborative Trust-Building	Health	Ongoing	Number of training sessions and attendees/referral numbers
4.5	Place Independent Domestic Violence Advisors at the FJS, police stations and Croydon University Hospital to provide specialist support	Collaborative Intersectional Trust-Building	Croydon Council	Ongoing	FJS quarterly report
4.6	Ensure that training for new police officers includes trauma informed responses and build on existing community trainers	Collaborative Intersectional Trust-Building	Metropolitan Police Croydon Council Voluntary sector	Ongoing	Number of session and attendees
4.7	Language and literature to be responsive to a wide range of languages spoken in the borough including those from the deaf and LGBT+ community	Intersectional	All partners	2 years	Creation of literature /promotion within a wide range of communities.
4.8	Improve integrated responses across all partners and services to increase opportunities for disclosure, referral and support for victim/survivors with protected characteristics	Collaborative Intersectional Trust-Building	All partners	3 years	Increase in referrals to FJS/MARAC
4.9	Establish an Expert by Experience panel in collaboration with victims and survivors	Collaborative Intersectional Trust-Building	Croydon Council Voluntary Sector	12 months	Panel TOR's and integration into the SCP governance framework

TACKLING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN & GIRLS

DELIVERY PLAN 2024 - 2027

Croydon Council is dedicated to creating a long-term delivery plan to safeguard women and girls and address the issues related to violence against them.

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Safer Croydon