

Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)
Safer Merton Strategic Work Plan 2016 – 2020

What is VAWG?

Violence Against Women and Girls is a major social problem that has wide reaching consequences; impact on physical and mental health, drug and alcohol abuse, child abuse, homelessness, anti-social behavior, social exclusion and poverty. Not only are victims seriously affected but children, family, friends and the wider community is also affected; it touches individuals of all ages, cultures, genders, economic status and religious background.

In 2010 the Government published “Call to End Violence Against Women and Girls” (VAWG hereafter) strategy which provided the framework for a greater emphasis on tackling all forms of violence against women and girls. That document has been superseded by the Home Office Ending Violence Against Women and Girls 2016-2020 strategy. Both of these strategies form the basis of this action plan.



VAWG_Strategy_2016-2020.pdf

This action plan acknowledges that VAWG is an equality and human rights issue which forms the golden thread to delivering this action plan. The majority of victims are women and girls, however, the “Safeguarding our Future” Ending Violence Against Women and Girls, Strategic Plan 2014-17 recognises that men and boys can also be victims of the crimes listed under VAWG.

The Safer Merton Partnership has adopted the Home Office definition of Violence Against Women and Girls:

‘Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm of suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life’.

VAWG includes the following crime types:

- Domestic abuse
- Sexual violence
- Abuse and exploitation
- Stalking (and Harassment)
- Trafficking
- Prostitution
- Forced Marriage
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Crime committed in the name of ‘honour’
- Faith Based Abuse

Merton's VAWG strategic aims are to engender an integrated, evidence-based and outcomes-focused approach to tackling all forms of VAWG across the borough. Over the next four years the partnership will foster and develop an approach which coordinates strategic and operational planning alongside activity from a wide range of partners involved in addressing VAWG issues.

The strategic aims promote closer coordination in the areas of identification and reporting of VAWG, strategic planning, commissioning, delivery of interventions and services alongside monitoring of outputs and outcomes. In so doing, they strive to create effective and efficient responses to VAWG. We aim to meet the needs of all those who are victims/survivors and/or perpetrators of VAWG, as well as those who are at risk of the same.

The strategic aims outline four priority areas in tackling VAWG and domestic abuse, which are:

- **Preventing VAWG**

Prevention work should operate at a community, family and individual level. It should focus on awareness raising and attitudinal change to reduce acceptance of VAWG. Early intervention work should provide opportunities to prevent VAWG and to tackle its negative consequences. Work should focus on raising awareness of the risk factors and indicators of VAWG as well as how and where victims/survivors and those at risk can be supported. A key purpose of prevention and early intervention work is to break the cycle of violence in which patterns of victimisation and perpetration are repeated by generations of the same family and/or community. Universal services, such as healthcare, schools and children's centres, can play a significant role in delivering prevention and early intervention work.

- **Providing accessible, evidence-based, holistic support to people who have experienced or are at risk of VAWG**

This work support should deliver improved outcomes for individuals, families and communities by enabling people to access support addressing the risk factors and explaining the consequences of perpetrating VAWG.

- **Implementing effective systems and interventions for working with perpetrators.**

Our interventions should seek to identify perpetrators holding them accountable for their actions. We will also look to support them to understand the consequences of their behaviour and look to achieve behavioural change. Working with perpetrators and educating communities should, over time, lead to reduced numbers of victims, increased safety for pre-existing victims/survivors and a reduction in perpetration.

- **Fostering an integrated and coordinated approach to tackling VAWG.**

Undertaking work in this area will result in shared practice, shared policy decision making and writing and a more holistic, partnership lead approach to preventing and tackling VAWG within the London Borough of Merton.

The Strategic Plan

In order to deliver the four strategic aims this action plan is split into to four priority themes;

1. Coordination

Aim: Develop a coordination multi-agency approach

How: Ensuring that the response to VAWG is shared by all stakeholders, embedded into service plans and coordinated effectively.

2. Prevention

Aim: Changing attitudes and preventing violence.

How: Raising awareness through campaigns; safeguarding and educating children and young people; early identification, intervention and training

3. Provision

Aim: Improve provision and specialist support services which are essential in enabling people to end violence in their lives and recover from the damaging effects of abuse.

How: Provide a range of services to meet the needs of victims and survivors; practical and emotional support, emergency and acute services; access to legal advice and support, refuge and safe accommodation

4. Protection

Aim: To provide effective response to perpetrators outside of and within the criminal justice system.

How: Effective investigation; prosecution; victim support and protection; perpetrator interventions.

Our vision

The VAWG strategic plan 2016-2020 is overseen and delivered by the Safer Merton VAWG board. Our aims are to reduce all forms of VAWG whilst increasing the public confidence to raise concerns, report and challenge of attitudes within the borough. To do this we will look to achieve:

- Year 1 –
 - The London Borough of Merton to be a fully accredited partner in a national campaign to tackle Domestic and Sexual Violence
 - The Safer Merton Partnership to launch our revised VAWG mission statement
 - The Safer Merton Partnership to work with victims of Domestic Violence and Abuse (DVA) and encourage reporting of incidents to achieve our ambition of increasing victims' access to services year on year
 - To undertake a full DVA profile for the borough
 - Maintain and build upon our successful work in Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
 - To review our VAWG outcomes and set targets for the coming year

- Year 2 –
 - Conduct a review of our VAWG offer to ensure that our offer(s) are fit for purpose and meet current and predicted needs
 - Develop and enhance stronger links with our third sector providers to improve the offer for our victims
 - Develop and implement action plans to improve our understanding of success, challenge and areas of growth across the VAWG spectrum ensuring that we respond to these needs appropriately
 - To review our outcomes achieved during 2016/17 undertaking relevant reviews as well as setting new targets for the coming year

- Year 3 –
 - Build upon the work achieved during years one and two and develop new action plans designed to achieve greater outcomes for survivors and greater sanctions against our offenders
 - Develop a revised communications strategy for all strands of VAWG
 - Undertake our annual review of outcomes and set targets for the coming year

- Year 4 –
 - The Safer Merton Partnership will conduct a full review of progress made across all strands of VAWG over the last four years
 - To develop a new VAWG work plan based on current needs analysis
 - To ensure that the new Wilson Centre, due to open in 2020, supports our work on VAWG

Theme 1 Co-ordination: Ensure that the response to VAWG is shared by all stakeholders, embedded into service plans and coordinated effectively

1.3	To undertake research and analysis to understand the evidenced levels of VAWG across all nine strands and to explore data to predict levels of prevalence based on LBM census data	Improved knowledge and awareness of communities affected (prevalence within the borough)	Detailed profile which breaks down potential victims and those potentially at risk	Safer Merton, CSF and specialist Police Units	Known data to be collated and shared – end of June 2017	Awaits the VAWG co-ordinator. Work to commence from mid-July
		Baseline of data is created to identify communities at risk of VAWG	Baseline data is agreed and targets set for improvement	Safer Merton	September 2017 VAWG board report to sign off	Awaits the VAWG co-ordinator. Work to commence from mid-July
		Improved understanding of need to facilitate targeted service commissioning in the future	Utilise at risk and evidenced reports to shape commissioning frameworks as required	To be completed by summer 2017	Ongoing	On track to meet commission timescales
1.4	To prioritise our response to VAWG based on resource and need	The partnership understand which strands of VAWG are to be addressed, by when and by whom	SSE to give direction as to which strands of VAWG are to be addressed as priority	SSE board chair with VAWG board input	Sign off by end of June	Awaits the VAWG co-ordinator. Work to commence from mid-July
Page 62	LBM to achieve White Ribbon accreditation status – taking a stand against DV (www.whiteribboncampaign.co.uk)	Merton becomes a recognised borough for its work to tackle DV and the wider VAWG agenda through a male lead approach	Completion of evidence document	VAWG board	All evidence submitted to White Ribbon by 31 August 2016 to achieve accreditation for November's days of activism	Awaits the VAWG co-ordinator. Work to commence from mid-July
			Identification of gaps and ways to address them	VAWG board		Awaits the VAWG co-ordinator. Work to commence from mid-July
			Partner agencies are identified and commit to support	VAWG board		Awaits the VAWG co-ordinator. Work to commence from mid-July
			Members and senior leads (male) sign up and lead their units to commit to the programme	VAWG board		Awaits the VAWG co-ordinator. Work to commence from mid-July

Theme 2 Prevention - Preventing VAWG and domestic abuse, and intervening early when people have experienced or are at risk of VAWG and domestic abuse

Objective	Outcome	Output/Actions	Resources		Progress Green/Amber/Red	
			Lead officer/agency	What's required and by when?	Comments and update date	
2.2 Page 63	Ensure that our children who are witness to, or are at risk of being victim to VAWG related crimes, are protected	Our schools police officers deliver sessions on personal safety and work alongside PSHE leads on health relationships	Safer schools officers to "map" offers in schools currently to prevent duplication or develop "add ons" to existing lessons	Police	Plan to be confirmed by August 2016	Awaits the VAWG co-ordinator. Work to commence from mid-July
		Greater co-ordinated response and offer to those high risk DV victims	Increased referrals to MARAC	All	Immediately	MARAC steering group in place and tracking of referrals constantly scrutinised
		Our schools police officers deliver sessions on personal safety and work alongside PSHE leads on health relationships	Increased range of options contained within related safety plans	MARAC chair	Immediately	Awaits the VAWG co-ordinator. Work to commence from mid-July
2.3	Ensure that our vulnerable adults who are witness to, are victims of, or are at risk of being victim to VAWG related crimes are protected as per SAB protocols	Greater co-ordinated response and offer to those high risk DV victims	Improved offers for victims and their families where appropriate	All	Immediately	Awaits the VAWG co-ordinator. Work to commence from mid-July
		Greater co-ordinated support to those vulnerable adults targeted by criminals	Reduced numbers of trap houses on borough	Safer Merton	Analysis to understand the scale- July 2017	Awaits the VAWG co-ordinator. Work to commence from mid-July
			Reduced ASB related to trap houses	Safer Merton	Analysis to understand the scale- July 2017	Awaits the VAWG co-ordinator. Work to commence from mid-July

Objective	Outcome	Output/Actions	Resources		Progress Green/Amber/Red	
			Lead officer/agency	What's required and by when?	Comments and update date	
Page 64	Greater co-ordinated support to those vulnerable adults targeted by criminals Greater understanding across the partnership of vulnerable adults with earlier sign posting to care for those who may be at risk	Improved safety for our most vulnerable residents	SAB	Awareness raising of risk and referral pathways	Year 2 for progress – timescales to be agreed at VAWG board	
		Increased referrals to adult social care	SAB	Awareness raising and training to be delivered	Training offer for 2017/18 to be confirmed by end of 2016/17	
		Increased understanding of elder abuse	SAB	Awareness raising and training to be delivered	Training offer for 2017/18 to be confirmed by end of 2016/17	
	Our adult survivors (18+ and non LAC) can access the best service possible – one that is tailored to their needs and delivered in the quickest time possible	Promotion of service and self-referral pathways	Safer Merton, Comms and Police CSU	Literature to be developed and distributed	Year 2 for progress – timescales to be agreed at VAWG board	
		Partners understand the “offer” and ensure referrals are made	MSCB training programme	Literature to be developed and distributed	Year 2 for progress – timescales to be agreed at VAWG board	
2.4	Ensure our survivors of DV are supported and can access service as easily and efficiently as possible	Our adult survivors (18+ and non LAC) can access the best service possible – one that is tailored to their needs and delivered in the quickest time possible Our child survivors (up to 18 or 21 where LAC) can access tailored support for their own, their relationships and/or their	Survivors feel supported, empowered and confident in their decisions – data collection	IDVAs	Literature to be developed and distributed	Ongoing work with IDVAs working at capacity

Objective	Outcome	Output/Actions	Resources		Progress Green/Amber/Red
			Lead officer/agency	What's required and by when?	Comments and update date
Page 65	family's needs whilst adhering to any relevant safeguarding legislation	The Safer Merton Partnership hears "the voice" of the survivors ensuring best outcomes are achieved and quality assured	Safer Merton	Utilising IDVA data undertake deep dives into casework – align with MSCB learning programme	Complete. Sam Spencer's work refers
		Young people can work with specialists who understand their needs	CSF and Safer Merton		Barnardo's to deliver training during 2017
		Young people's attitudes towards DV is challenged and improved	CSF, Safer Schools and Safer Merton	Schools awareness and training offer to be developed for next academic year	This is still in development. Awaits the VAWG co-ordinator. Work to commence from mid-July
	Our child survivors (up to 18 or 21 where LAC) can access tailored support for their own, their relationships and/or their family's needs whilst adhering to any relevant safeguarding legislation	Young people have a safe space to report DV where confidentiality is observed	Linked to the pan London NHS England work CSF to lead	TBC	Year 2 for progress

Theme 3 Provision - Improve provision and specialist support services which are essential in enabling people to end violence in their lives and recover from the damaging effects of abuse.

Objectives	Outcomes	Actions	Resources		Progress Green/Amber/Red	
			Lead officer/agency	What's required and by when?	Comments	
3.1 Page 66	Ensure that our front line offers to victims are of the highest quality and achieve the best outcomes possible to reduce risk to themselves and their families	VAWG board to oversee and scrutinise reports on in-house and locally commissioned services to review and challenge on outcomes and to assist in future commissioning.	VAWG board to request and forward plan reports which should be discussed	Dependent on report required	Subject to VAWG board forward plan	Ongoing with VAWG board consultation of DVA commissioning 2018-21(23)
	We maintain our One Stop Shop (OSS) service ensuring that it is one of the best in London	Consistency of offer is maintained beyond the current 6 year service	Safer Merton	In line with formal review	Service secured until 31 March 2018	
		We undertake a review of the OSS to ensure it remains fit for purpose and operating at the optimum level	All partners involved in OSS with an independent chair	Full review and recommendations for future work – Sept 2016	Complete. Sam Spencer's work refers	
	Our partnership has a range of highly skilled, highly knowledgeable, active DV champions	Partnership response to DV is strong with strategic SPOCs throughout	Safer Merton and MSCB training program	Training programme reviewed	Year 2 for progress	

Theme 4: Protection - To provide effective response to perpetrators outside of and within the criminal justice system.

Objectives	Outcomes	Actions	Resources		Progress Green/Amber/Red	
			Who? (Work plans etc.)	When?	Comments	
4.1 Page 67	To develop a suite of enforcement options to protect victims and reduce future risk	The Safer Merton partnership utilise all enforcement tools to protect victims and families via both civil and criminal routes	Criminal intervention use to be explored and increased resulting in better use of CBOs, DVPOs, non-molestation orders, protection notices etc.	CSU to lead on a task and finish group to identify work plan. Safer Merton ASB team to assist	In conjunction with ASB process review – Autumn 16	Work to be scoped with business continuity team – June 16
			Review numbers of “dropped” cases (DV) to understand reasoning and rationale i.e. CPS not prosecuting, lack of evidence, witness unwilling to proceed etc.	CSU and Safer Merton	In conjunction with MARAC review – September 16	To be incorporated into the DV profile – June 16
			Review court outcomes to understand successes and areas for improvement in courts serving Merton’s victims of VAWG	CSU and Safer Merton	In conjunction with MARAC review – September 16	To be incorporated into the DV profile – June 16
			Develop processes for LBM lead action to tackle perpetration via an Achilles heel approach looking at injunctions, NOSPs, CBOs, ABAs, parenting orders etc.	CSU and Safer Merton	In conjunction with MARAC review – September 16	Work to be scoped with business continuity team – September start

Objectives	Outcomes	Actions	Resources		Progress Green/Amber/Red	
			Who? (Work plans etc.)	When?	Comments	
4.2	To identify perpetrators of VAWG and take swift action to prevent continued violence and/or prevent further victims	Known/evidence lead perpetrators identified, their associates identified and networks discovered allowing the partnership to design suitable responses for all of those on the risk scale	VAWG board to decide on priority for VAWG themes and further work to follow	Safer Merton analysts to shape boards direction	First profile to be completed for quarter one of 2017/18	This is still in development. Awaits the VAWG co-ordinator. Work to commence from mid-July
4.3	Provide professionals with the tools to work and challenge behaviours for those perpetrators of VAWG whilst being conscious of support needs	Increased numbers of professionals aware of VAWG and the implications of undertaking prohibited behavior	More DV perpetrator awareness training to be rolled out to staff	MSCB	Draft training programme developed	Year 2 for progress
		Professionals educated around all strands of VAWG increasing understanding of cultural Vs. religious contexts for these crimes and develop understanding of perpetrators and victim challenges	Develop a VAWG briefing offer with MSCB and VAWG board partners	VAWG board	Draft training programme developed	Year 2 for progress. Awaits the VAWG co-ordinator. Work to commence from mid-July
			VAWG is always considered in professionals case work	TFG to be developed to look at what's needed	Draft training programme developed	Year 2 for progress. Awaits the VAWG co-ordinator. Work to commence from mid-July
			Schools offer developed to raise awareness and prevention messages	TFG to be developed to look at what's needed	In time for new academic year 2017-18	Awaits the VAWG co-ordinator. Work to commence from mid-July
			Learning is shared at SCR/DHR learning events to raise awareness	Publish DHR and ensure learning is delivered	SAB	Autumn 2017

Objectives	Outcomes	Actions	Resources		Progress Green/Amber/Red	
			Who? (Work plans etc.)	When?	Comments	
4.4	Offer a bespoke DV service to perpetrators who wish to voluntarily look at their behaviours	To be developed	To be developed	To be developed	Out of scope of DVA commission due to funding	
4.5	Ensure that current commissioned provision is sufficient to meet the need and identify gaps for the future	The partnership fully understand areas of success and risk for perpetrators and gaps in service provision	Carry out a formal review with SWOT and gap analysis for services supporting perpetrators	VAWG board via TFG. Decisions made in Autumn	End of December	Work superseded and review completed to shape commissioning

Yea 1 completed areas of work

Objective	Outcome	Output/Actions	Resources		Progress Green/Amber/Red	
			Lead officer/agency	What's required and by when?	Comments and update date	
1.1 Page 70	Develop a new strategic approach to VAWG ensuring consistent coordination involving multiagency partners, with infrastructure to support the delivery of the VAWG strategy and action plan.	Borough wide understanding and support of VAWG is achieved	A fully, partnership lead action plan is created and approved	Safer Merton	June 2016 for first draft.	VAWG action plan being developed with clear aspirations being established (May 16)
					September for final sign off and publishing	Work on track for publishing (July 16)
	All partners review and adopt new legislation and guidance to support, protect and enforce against VAWG	All partners agree to lead and oversee delivery of aspects of the VAWG plan relevant to their area of business	All	October 16 for update on work progress	VAWG board consulted on and all agreed to support VAWG plan (June 16)	
1.2	Production, monitoring and delivery by the VAWG Board of an annual performance plan with SMART targets (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound) to deliver the VAWG strategic aims.	PIs all agreed with partners	VAWG board to consider PIs and ensure that their data is available	VAWG board	June 2016 for first draft (year 1)	PIs signed off, VAWG board to oversee from August onwards (July 16)
		Partners to share data they contain, collate, retain in formats requested by Safer Merton				
1.3	Commissioners lead review of the refuges on borough	Coordinated commissioning of the refuges	Retender process	PH lead reporting to VAWG	September 2016 for work to commence	Work underway

Objective	Outcome	Output/Actions	Resources		Progress Green/Amber/Red	
			Lead officer/agency	What's required and by when?	Comments and update date	
1.5	LBM to become a partner for the "No More" campaign (http://www.hestia.org/uk-says-nomore/)	Merton becomes a recognised borough leading the way in supporting the new campaign	Increased reports of DV through to Merton based support	Hestia	Board to sign off commitment in Summer	Partner status granted in September 2016

Theme 2 Prevention - Preventing VAWG and domestic abuse, and intervening early when people have experienced or are at risk of VAWG and domestic abuse

Objective	Outcome	Output/Actions	Resources		Progress Green/Amber/Red	
			Lead officer/agency	What's required and by when?	Comments and update date	
2.1	To empower our communities and professionals to champion our VAWG work and to challenge negative behaviours associated with all strands of VAWG.	Merton sees an increase in reports of ALL strands of VAWG in the short-medium term as communities and professionals become more aware and confident in raising risk and/or reporting incidents	FGM and CSE strategies to be delivered by CSF alongside partners	MSCB Policy Sub Group Reports to MSCB & VAWG	March 2016	Strategies written and agreed by MSCB
			Safer Merton to identify leads and/or lead on work for all other strands	VAWG Board	September 2016	VAWG board to confirm and publish leads

Objective	Outcome	Output/Actions	Resources		Progress Green/Amber/Red	
			Lead officer/agency	What's required and by when?	Comments and update date	
Page 72		A minimum three campaigns to be ran per year of this strategy. Campaigns to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IWD • CSE awareness day • 16 days of activism • IDAHO • Trafficking awareness day 	VAWG board and Comms	Comms plan required by September 2016	Work plan to be presented in August VAWG board	
	Ensure that our children who are witness to, or are at risk of being victim to VAWG related crimes, are protected	Improved safety and awareness of our children in regard to VAWG	Increased VAWG training for those working with children	All and MSCB	Plan to be confirmed by August 2016	Barnardo's Training has been commissioned for CSC &YI around DV. MSCB committed to training for Children's Workforce.
		Children are protected by professionals who are more confident in challenging more difficult VAWG agendas	Direction is revisited for all LBM and statutory partners around safeguarding duties	All and MSCB	Plan to be confirmed by August 2016	Training offer is currently in place around VAWG issues for practitioners to heighten awareness

Objective	Outcome	Output/Actions	Resources		Progress Green/Amber/Red	
			Lead officer/agency	What's required and by when?	Comments and update date	
3.1 Page 73	Ensure that our front line offers to victims are of the highest quality and achieve the best outcomes possible to reduce risk to themselves and their families	VAWG board to oversee and scrutinise reports on in-house and locally commissioned services to review and challenge on outcomes and to assist in future commissioning.	VAWG board to request and forward plan reports which should be discussed	Dependent on report required	Subject to VAWG board forward plan	Year 2 for progress
		Review the performance of the MARAC	Regular reports on the MARAC's performance to be reviewed at the VAWG strategic board	Safer Merton and VAWG board chair	Oversee delivery of MARAC improvement plan	MARAC performance captured in Safer Merton governance
			Increased referrals to MASH and/or MARAC come from a range of services	MARAC chair	Twice yearly data breakdown noting training dates	Ongoing reviews. Full DV profile being developed and will incorporate this – June 16
			A range of DV events held – all well attended with champions committing to assist in hosting, facilitating etc.	VAWG board	Full range of events planned for days of activism '16	On track
			Increased DV reports pan borough	Met Police CSU	CSU to provide DV figures monthly	Will be incorporated into DV profile

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