

VAWG

Violence Against Women and Girls



What is VAWG?

Type of Abuse	What does this mean?
Domestic abuse (including coercive control)	This is when a partner or family member has power and control over their victims and uses abuse to maintain it. Abuse can be physical, emotional, economic, psychological and/or sexual.
Rape and sexual violence	Rape is sex without consent. This means that rape isn't just people being physically forced into a sexual act, it also includes pressure that makes someone feel like they have no choice but to have sex or perform/receive a sexual act.
Female genital mutilation	This is the partial or total removal of external female genitalia for non medical reasons.
Early and Forced marriage	This is where one or both people do not (or in cases of people with learning disabilities or reduced capacity, cannot) consent to the marriage as they are pressurised, or abuse is used, to force them to do so.
So called "honour" based violence	This is abuse and violence which is carried out in order to protect or defend perceived "honour" of the family and/or community. We are clear that there is no honour in honour-based violence.
Faith-based abuse	This is when someone uses religion or faith to justify the abuse of another person, usually a child or vulnerable adult. It could be caused by the perpetrator's belief in witchcraft, spirit or demonic possession, ritual, or satanic abuse. It is not caused by religion or faith.

What is VAWG?

Sexual harassment	This is unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature which violates someone's dignity, makes someone feel intimidated, degraded, or humiliated and/or creates a hostile or offensive environment.
Stalking	This is a pattern of persistent and unwanted attention that makes someone feel pestered, scared, anxious, or harassed.
Modern Slavery	This is an umbrella term for human trafficking and servitude. It is used when somebody is forced or controlled to do something, and another person gains from this.
Prostitution and Sexual Exploitation	This is where someone is being coerced or forced into selling sex or performing sexual acts. Victim/survivors may also be trafficked into prostitution. Children, young people, and vulnerable adults may also be sexually exploited and coerced into receiving or performing sexual acts. Abuse of children and adults can include sharing pornographic images and the use of technology.

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VAWG Strategy

Merton has launched its new Violence against women and girls strategy on 6th December 2022.

This sets out what the borough will do to support anyone experiencing VAWG, domestic abuse, forced marriage and honour based violence, sexual violence, this also includes supporting men as victims.

The priorities are:

Partnership Objective 1: Raise awareness and coordinated partnership working

Partnership Objective 2: Prevent VAWG through early intervention

Partnership Objective 3: Support victims, survivors and their children

Partnership Objective 4: Hold perpetrators to account

Partnership Objective 5: Improve the safety of women and girls

<https://www.merton.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/crime-prevention-and-community-safety/vawg>

Domestic Abuse Definition

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

- Physical or sexual abuse;
- Violent or threatening behaviour;
- Controlling or coercive behaviour;
- Economic abuse;
- Psychological, emotional or other abuse.

This definition, is now a legal definition (DA Act), **includes so called ‘honour’ based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage**, and is clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group.

DA Act 2021

Domestic Abuse Support

In an emergency always call 999

- Merton Domestic Abuse service – **0207 801 1777**
- One Stop Shop – Mondays 9.30am – 12 noon, Morden Baptist Church

IDVA's support victims and survivors aged 16 years and over.

IDVA's support male and female victims and survivors

(Independent Domestic Violence Advocate)

Victim Support: Support line for free on 08 08 16 89 111, 24/7

<https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/help-and-support/get-help/>

The freephone, 24-hour National Domestic Abuse Helpline 0808 2000 247

<https://www.merton.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/crime-prevention-and-community-safety/domestic-violence>

Sexual Violence

In an emergency always call 999

If you have been a victim of sexual violence or harassment

- If something happens in a public place: If in danger always call 999, Non emergencies call 101

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If something happens on the transport network: You can text us on 61016 to tell us about non-emergency incidents, In an emergency always dial 999. <https://www.btp.police.uk/police-forces/british-transport-police/areas/campaigns/How-to-use-our-text-number/>

- Street Safe: <https://www.met.police.uk/notices/street-safe/street-safe/>

Sexual Violence Support

If you would like support because you have experience sexual violence or harassment:

- Rape and Sexual abuse support centre: National Freephone Helpline 0808 802 9999, 12:00 – 14:30 daily, 19:00 – 21:30 daily

<https://www.rasasc.org.uk/>

- Victim Support: call Support line for free on 08 08 16 89 111, 24/7

<https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/help-and-support/get-help/>

- Solace Womens Aid: Freephone 0808 802 5565

Improve the safety of women and girls

Our work is preventative, and we want to change culture, so men don't hurt women.

- We received funding across the 4 boroughs, Wandsworth, Kingston and Richmond from the Home Office Safer Streets fund
- Police and council are running 'Walk and Talk' sessions to find out what concerns women have
- Police are also running a 'Street Safe' survey to identify areas of concern: <https://www.met.police.uk/notices/street-safe/street-safe/>

Safer Streets Funding

Merton, Richmond, Kingston and Wandsworth completed a joint bid for funding and was successful. Funding ended 31st March 2023. A showcase event was held with partners to look at the sustainability of the projects.

This has funded projects to ensure people feel safe on our streets with the theme around women and girls safety and changing cultures.

This work included:

- Boys to men training for professionals working with young men
- Night time economy staff training to help them identify vulnerability and anti sexual harassment
- Business Tool Kit
- Male accountability survey
- Survivors focus groups
- Bystander Training for the community (there will be train the trainer sessions)

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Safer Streets

<https://www.merton.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/crime-prevention-and-community-safety/vawg/safer-streets>



Night Time Economy

- Night time economy staff online training to help them identify vulnerability and anti-sexual harassment
- Night time economy strategy currently being written and the Womens night time audit has fed into that work.

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Women's Safety Business tool kit will be shared during the 16 days campaign and is on our website.

- Ask for Angela
- Merton is signed up to the London Mayors Night Time Charter

White Ribbon Accreditation

The simple but vital mission behind White Ribbon Day is to prevent violence by men, against women and girls. Why? Because it is a long time coming that something needed to change. Change of long, established, and harmful behaviours around masculinity that perpetuated gender inequality and men's violence against women.

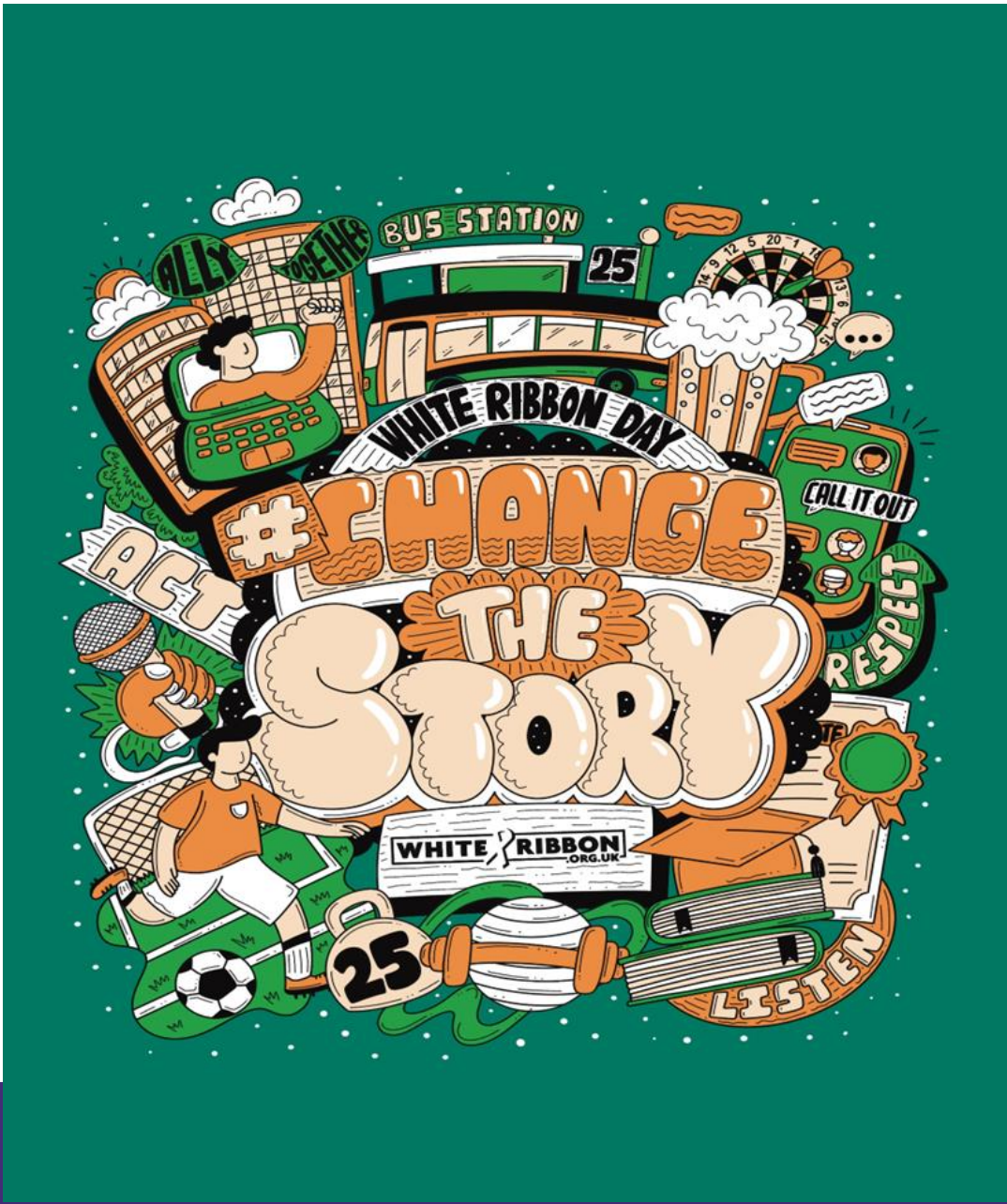
The history behind choosing the date of 25 November was apparently to honour the three Mirabal sisters. They were three political activists from the Dominican Republic who were brutally murdered in 1960 by order of the country's ruler, Rafael Trujillo after opposing his dictatorship. He ordered their assassination on the 25 November.

White Ribbon

We can all make a difference – but sometimes we are not always sure what to do or where to start. White Ribbon Day offers men and women specific ways of making a difference for this important movement. You can:

Make the White Ribbon Promise: Please go online and make the promise - encourage others to do the same – this promise is for all men **to never use, excuse or remain silent about men’s violence against women.** By doing so, you’re becoming part of this wider movement to end violence.

<https://www.whiteribbon.org.uk/promise>



Safe Zone



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Wimbledon Safe Zone will continue the first Friday of every month and there will be extra dates over Christmas.

Merton Street pastors will be piloting a **Safe Zone in Mitcham** on 8th December with the aim that Mitcham's runs on the last Friday of the Month in the Town Centre from 8pm – 12 midnight

Womens Walk and Talk

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25th November – meeting at Toby Carvery in Mitcham for 10am
29th November – Meeting at the gym in Morden rec for 6pm

Bystander work

This training looks at how we can all safely intervene or call out someone for derogatory language.

We had several professional sessions and sessions for residents.

Merton, Kingston, Richmond Youth Parliament come together on 23rd September to have bystander training.

Bystander train the trainer training in November. Merton has 4 volunteers to be trainers.

Hold perpetrators to account

PAC – Prevent and Change

The PAC project runs over 7 boroughs, £2 million funding over 2 years. Lambeth are the lead borough.

PAC worker (Richmond Fellowship)

PAC IDVA (Refuge)

The criteria: must have been discussed at MARAC, Drugs, alcohol, homelessness, ADHA, autism

Since June, there has been 20 men identified to be referred to the PAC worker

16 days campaign

The 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence is an annual international campaign that kicks off on **25 November**, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and runs until **10 December**, Human Rights Day.

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