

**Report for:** Health and Wellbeing Board – 12 September 2016

**Title:** Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy Consultation

**Report authorised by :** Dr. Jeanelle de Gruchy, Director of Public Health

**Lead Officer:** Fiona Dwyer, Violence Against Women and Girls Strategic Lead

**Ward(s) affected:** All

**Report for Key/  
Non Key Decision:** Non Key

**1. Describe the issue under consideration**

1.1 To present the draft Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy which is currently out for consultation for discussion and input by the Health and wellbeing board. The particular focus for the HWB discussion will be on the impact of VAWG on children and young people.

**2. Cabinet Member Introduction**

2.1 Not applicable.

**3. Recommendations**

3.1 The Health and Wellbeing Board members comment on the violence against women and girls strategy, and in particular how the Board can contribute to the delivery of the strategy.

**4. Reasons for decision**

4.1 Not applicable.

**5. Alternative options considered**

5.1 Not applicable.

**6. Background information**

**6.1 Introduction**

Haringey's Violence Against Women and Girls Draft Strategy sets out our 10 year ambitions (2016-2026) for addressing and preventing violence against women and girls in Haringey.

6.2 The consultation on the strategy runs from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2016 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2016. Our strategy covers 4 key priorities:

- Priority 1: Developing a Coordinated Community Response
- Priority 2: Prevention
- Priority 3: Support for victim/survivors<sup>1</sup>
- Priority 4: Holding perpetrators accountable

The Strategy will enable:

- All partners to be clear about our agreed priorities for the next 10 years and embed these within their own organisations and strategic plans, including joint plans
- All residents to understand and feel able to contribute towards making Haringey a safer and healthier place for all
- Victim/survivors to feel supported to seek help and empowered to lead safe lives, free from abuse
- Perpetrators to know that their behaviour will not be tolerated and where they can seek support for abusive behaviour.

The strategy has been developed in partnership with a wide range of statutory, voluntary and community organisations from across Haringey. We have utilised existing evidence around ‘what works’ in addressing and preventing violence against women and girls. We will ensure that we co-produce all of our action plans with communities and survivors to ensure that we deliver meaningful change.

### 6.3 What is Violence Against Women and Girls?

Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) is both a form of discrimination and a violation of human rights. Locally we have adopted the United Nations Declaration on Elimination of Violence against Women, which defines violence against women as:

*‘Any act of gender based violence that results in or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women [or girls], including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty’ (1993, Article 1)*

The definition incorporates a wide range of abusive behaviours including physical, sexual, financial, emotional and psychological abuse.

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<sup>1</sup> We use the term victim/survivor rather than ‘victim’ or ‘survivor’ to recognise the different stages that people who have experienced VAWG are at in their journey to recovery and independence.

It is important that Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) is not seen as a series of incidents or assaults which an individual experiences. Violence against women and girls describes violent and oppressive patterns of behaviour and practises, which achieve power and control over women and girls. It impacts on the physical safety, health and emotional well-being of individuals and impacts on families, carers, children and the community as a whole.

Violence against Women and Girls includes violence that is targeted at women or girls because of their gender or affects women and girls disproportionately. Examples of this type of violence are:

- Sexual violence, abuse and exploitation
- Sexual harassment and bullying
- Stalking
- Trafficking and forced prostitution
- Domestic violence and abuse
- Coercive and controlling behaviour
- Female genital mutilation
- Forced marriage
- Crime committed in the name of 'honour'

#### **6.4 The impact of violence against women and girls on children and young people's health and wellbeing**

The focus for the HWB discussion will be primarily on our response to the impact of VAWG on children and young people.

Abuse can affect every aspect of a child's life:

- Physical needs
- Emotional well-being
- Relationships with peers
- Relationships with others
- Leisure activities

Generally, preschool children are more likely to have physical symptoms of their anxiety, primary school children present their fears behaviourally and emotionally, and adolescents may try to gain relief through drugs, early marriage or pregnancy, running away or involvement in criminal activity.

Children and young people can be extremely affected by their experiences of living with domestic abuse. The impacts can be physical, behavioural, psychological or educational and they can also be long-term or short-term. The way that children can be affected depends on a wide range of factors including: age and developmental stage, gender, ethnicity, position within the family, sexuality, disability, their relationship with their mother, whether the abuse was direct or indirect, their access to safety and existence of support networks.

There is a growing recognition that experiencing violence in their home lives or their own relationships can have a significant impact on young people's ability to participate fully in school life and achieve academically as well as the huge impact on their physical and mental health from witnessing or experiencing abuse at home. Furthermore, children and young people are the next generation of potential victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse and wider forms of VAWG. We need therefore to have a strategic approach to prevention, with a clear focus on children and young people.

Working with schools and other youth settings is just one element of prevention. There is a need to embed longer term messages across the whole community through an integrated approach. The goal is to challenge attitudes that condone and underpin VAWG across the whole borough through a coordinated approach with all agencies. This is why a co-ordinated community response is also a priority in the new strategy. We need to make VAWG everyone's business.

## **6.5 What are we currently doing around prevention?**

Haringey has funded the development of an innovative prevention programme aimed at young people under 24 – the Protect Our Women (POW) project. The programme is a 12 week programme with a peer training element for young people to become accredited peer learners. About 100 young people have been trained by the project.

Solace Women's Aid, who are the organisation commissioned to run POW, have also obtained Big Lottery funding to run a much larger-scale prevention programme across Haringey and Islington for 5 years from September 2016, which will dovetail with the existing commissioned service.

Our Healthy Schools programme has a focus on Female Genital Mutilation and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE). Safer London provides two council-funded programmes aimed at schools and addressing child sexual exploitation (CSE).

Our newly commissioned perpetrator programme, which starts in September 2016, will also take referrals for young people who are exhibiting concerning behaviour towards partners or family members and will support the aim within the prevention priority of stopping violence against women and girls in the future.

## **7. Contribution to strategic outcomes**

The Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy links to Haringey Council's Priority 3: Clean and Safe under which there is a specific objective around preventing violence against women and girls. The work around the Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy also links to Priority 3 in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy: Improving Mental Health and Wellbeing.

## **8. Statutory Officers comments (Chief Finance Officer (including procurement), Assistant Director of Corporate Governance, Equalities)**

## 8.1 Finance

This report is consulting on a strategy, which would operate within whatever resources were available to support this area of work. The report is not seeking any additional funding.

## 8.2 Legal

There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations.

## 8.3 Equality

The Council has a public sector equality duty under the Equalities Act (2010) to have due regard to:

- tackle discrimination and victimisation of persons that share the characteristics protected under S4 of the Act. These include the characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex (formerly gender) and sexual orientation;
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share those protected characteristics and people who do not;
- foster good relations between people who share those characteristics and people who do not.

VAWG affects women regardless of age, ethnicity, sexuality or disability and has a detrimental impact on their health and emotional well-being. An Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) will be completed and will inform the final strategy.

## 9. Use of Appendices

9.1 Violence Against Women and Girls Consultation

9.2 The impact of abuse on children and young people

## 10. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

Not applicable.