

Haringey Violence against Women and Girls Partnership: Briefing: Responding to violence against men and boys

Contents

Introduction:	1
Why are men and boys not explicitly included in the Violence against Women and Girls strategy?	2
What about women as perpetrators?.....	2
What about under reporting?	3
What about victims who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT)?	3
What provision is there for male victims in Haringey?	3
Conclusion	4

Introduction:

This briefing sets out Haringey Council's approach to addressing violence against men and boys as part of its wider [Violence against Women and Girls \(VAWG\) strategy, 2016-2026](#). In Haringey, we have adopted the United Nations Declaration on Elimination of Violence against Women¹, 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)

Examples of this type of violence are:

- Sexual violence, abuse and exploitation
- Sexual harassment and bullying
- Stalking
- Trafficking
- Domestic violence and abuse⁴
- Coercive and controlling behaviour
- Female genital mutilation
- Forced marriage
- Crimes committed in the name of 'honour' (so-called 'honour' based violence)

The term violence against women and girls can often cause concern about the exclusion of men and boys from services and a lack of recognition that men and boys can also experience these forms of violence and abuse. The UN Declaration is based on the concept of disproportionate impact. We understand the gendered nature of these types

¹ United Nations Declaration on Elimination of Violence towards Women (1993), <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/48/a48r104.htm> (last accessed 27.06.16)

of abuse and crimes, and also that men and boys are sometimes victims of these types of abuse and crimes.

Why are men and boys not explicitly included in the Violence against Women and Girls strategy?

Any victim of violence and abuse deserves to access support and help. It is important that men and boys are included in all aspects of our work on all forms of violence against women and girls (particularly work on prevention and awareness raising). We are committed to ensuring that any victim will receive a sensitive and appropriate response, according to their needs. However, the VAWG strategy reflects that gender based violence is predominately a pattern of behaviour perpetrated by men against women. This does not mean that men are never victims of violence, or that women are not sometimes perpetrators. However, local and national prevalence data reveals a clear disproportionality along gender lines. This is especially true of some forms of VAWG, such as Female Genital Mutilation, where victims are only women and girls.

The oft-cited statistic for women and men experiencing abuse is that one in four women and one in six men will experience domestic abuse in their lifetime.² This figure has led to some organisations positing that domestic abuse affects nearly as many men as women. However, the new analysis of the data from the Crime Survey³ has shown that once the cap on repeat incidences⁴ is removed, an increase in violence crime is shown, with domestic abuse crimes increasing by 70% with women being disproportionately affected.

Table 1⁵: Estimated number of violent crimes (violence against the person and sexual offences) by sex of the victim; capped and uncapped.

Domestic:	Female:	Male:
Estimated number of offences 'capped'	246,000	103,000
Estimated number of offences 'uncapped'	419,000	170,000
Ratio uncapped to capped	1.7	1.6

What about women as perpetrators?

Haringey Council recognises that both men and women can be perpetrators of abuse. It is important to highlight that when women are the perpetrator, in the majority of cases

² This figure is based on the Crime Survey for England and Wales figures. The current figures show an increase to 30% of women but are static for men at 16% (1 in 6). ONS (2014) 'Chapter 4: Intimate Partner Violence and Partner Abuse', in *Crime in England and Wales, Year Ending September 2014*, available at: www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171776_352362.pdf (last accessed 20.03.17)

³ Walby, S., Towers, J. and Francis, B. (2014) 'Is the rate of domestic violence decreasing or increasing? Analysis of the Crime Survey for England and Wales', *Violence and Society*, November 2014, available at: http://eprints.lancs.ac.uk/72272/4/Violence_Society_Research_briefing_1.pdf, (last accessed 20.03.17)

⁴ Repeat incidences of violent crime are capped at a maximum of 5 within the survey.

⁵ Walby *et. al.* (2014) Table 6.

this is within the context of a lesbian relationship. Research by Marianne Hester⁶ shows, that in the cases where the offender was female, only 5% were in heterosexual relationships.

What about under reporting?

It is sometimes believed that men are less likely to report abuse as there may be a fear of being embarrassed or not being seen as a 'real' man for disclosing. However, studies have shown that men are more likely than women to report to the police, to press charges, and less likely to drop them.⁷ Research by Marianne Hester has also found that women are arrested to a disproportionate degree given the fewer incidents where they were perpetrators. During a six year study period, men were arrested one in every ten incidents and women were arrested one in every three incidents.⁸

What about victims who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT)?

In LGBT relationships, the picture of VAWG looks different and here it is clear that both men and women can be victims and perpetrators.⁹ Haringey MARAC data shows, that in 2015-16, just over 3% were LGBT cases; this is compared to the national average of 1%.

What provision is there for male victims in Haringey?

We provide a range of services to male victims of domestic abuse in Haringey, including a floating support service for medium-risk male victims, run by Hearthstone, which is a holistic domestic abuse and housing service. From July 2015, we also assigned an externally funded Independent Domestic Violence Advisor/Advocate (IDVA) to work with high risk cases where there are male victims or where either men or women had experienced family violence.

We have also recently commissioned a service (Identification and Referral to Increase Safety) that works with GP practices to build their capacity to respond to domestic

⁶ Hester, M., (2009) *Who does What to Whom? Gender and Domestic Violence Perpetrators*, Bristol: University of Bristol in Association with the Northern Rock Foundation.

⁷ Kimmel, M. (2002) "Gender Symmetry" in *Domestic Violence: A Substantive and Methodological Research Review*, *Violence Against Women*, 8(11), pp.1332-1363; Dragiewicz, M. and DeKeseredy, W.S. (2012) 'Claims about women's use of non-fatal force in intimate relationships: A contextual review of Canadian research', *Violence Against Women*, XX(X), pp.1-19; Lea, S. and Lynn, N. (2012) 'Dialogic Reverberations: Police, Domestic Abuse, and the Discontinuance of Case', *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, XX(X), pp.1-24

⁸ Op. Cit., Hester (2009), footnote 6.

⁹ Donovan, C., Barnes, R. and Nixon, C. (2014) *The Coral Project: Exploring Abusive Behaviours in Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and/or Transgender Relationships*, Interim Report September 2014, available at:

<https://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/criminology/documents/coral-project-interim-report> (accessed 22/02/17);

Bowen, E. and Nowinski, S. N. (2012) 'Partner violence against heterosexual and gay men: Prevalence and correlates', *Aggression and Violent Behaviour*, volume 17 (1), pp36-52; Goldberg, N. & Meyer, I. (2013) 'Sexual orientation disparities in history of intimate partner violence results from the California Health Interview Survey', *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 28(5), pp.1109-1118.

violence victims. This service, which has just started, will work with both men and women.

To ensure that we support women and men proportionally, we have ensured that all of our prevention programmes focus equally on young men and young women. Our commissioned prevention programme currently works with 45% young men and 55% young women.

Conclusion

Haringey Council believes that anyone affected by VAWG is entitled to support. Our response to VAWG, however, is based on presenting need in the borough where 96% of total high-risk victims of domestic abuse are female. Our [2016-2026 Violence against Women and Girls Strategy](#) highlights our approach and outlines how we want to create a coordinated community response to make the borough safer. It is important that men and boys are included in all aspects of our work on all forms of violence against women and girls (particularly work on prevention and awareness raising). We are committed to ensuring that any victim will receive a sensitive and appropriate response, according to their needs.