Preventing Violence Against Women and Girls

Strategy 2026-2030



Camden

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1. Foreword



Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) is one of the most significant injustices in our society. It violates the rights and the freedom of women to live safe, full and flourishing lives. In 2024, there were just over two serious sexual offences for every 1,000 women living in Camden. This was more than three times higher than the average across the rest of London (source: Metropolitan police VAWG data).

As the Chair of the Camden Violence Against Women and Girls Partnership Board, and the Cabinet Member for Community Resilience, I am clear that Camden will not stand by, and we will use our voice and our power to make our community safer for everyone.

We live in a society in which too often the response to risk is still to ask women and girls to change their behaviour – to walk home a different route, to go home early, to not speak out. Our Preventing Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy makes clear that the responsibility lies not with women, but with all of us. All of us need to challenge and dismantle the structures and attitudes that enable abuse. Men have a specific and important role not just as allies but as leaders in tackling these attitudes and behaviours.

In 2025, we marked the 25th anniversary of Camden Safety Net. Camden Safety Net is our borough's Independent Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Advocate service, and a lifeline for thousands of women, children and families. It provides safety, advice, housing support, and a pathway to recovery. Survivors describe Camden Safety Net as "life saving" because of the protection it offers, and the dignity and respect that underpin its approach. In our Strategy we are seeking to build on the work of Camden Safety Net and our other frontline services. We want to make sure that no one facing violence or abuse is left without help or support.

For Camden, tackling violence against women and girls is about keeping people safe as well as about enabling them to thrive. We want women and girls to be confident in public spaces, supported and safe in relationships and in their homes, and heard in all the rooms where decisions are made.

In 2021, our Camden Women's Forum produced a report on domestic abuse that was the catalyst for much of this work, and the Co-Chairs of the Women's Forum remain important stakeholders on our VAWG Partnership Board (which meets quarterly and includes other partner organisations) and by working with them Camden has already made important progress. This has included a deep dive into our data to understand what it is telling us and informs the development of our Needs Assessment, which underpins our Strategy. It also includes progressing our work to secure our Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation, and funding and building a new local perpetrator service. The Forum initiated thinking around survivor led engagement resulting in the formation of Camden Voices

This Strategy is rooted in Camden's Public Health-led VAWG Needs Assessment, which brings together local data, survivor voice, practitioner insight and evidence about inequalities in experience and access to support. It has helped us understand not only the scale of violence against women and girls in Camden, but also where our system needs to change.

I want to thank everyone who responded to our consultation, particularly survivors and victims and people who shared their lived experience, as well as community organisations and partners. We heard strong support for our overall ambition and approach, and people rightly challenged us to go further. Feedback has directly changed and strengthened this final Strategy – we have created a stronger focus on prevention and earlier identification of abuse, we have made clear that we recognise children as victims in their own right, we have responded to an ask for a focus on more long-term and holistic survivor support, and a stronger strategic focus on perpetrator accountability.

As we outline in our Strategy, our ambition is that we will continue to deepen our partnerships, strengthen our services, and make sure we are guided by those with lived experience. An example of this is that Camden Voices Against Abuse has worked closely with police officers across the borough to raise awareness around domestic abuse, coercive control, and risk, enhancing understanding so officers can respond with a focus on supporting survivors and building trust from the outset. We believe a joined-up approach between police, Camden Council, and our exemplary community organisations can prevent people from falling through the gaps, strengthen safeguarding, and reduce repeat harm.

Together, we can move from simply responding to abuse to helping break the cycle. Survivors have told us they want VAWG to be seen as a whole-society challenge. They want our Strategy to be a call for everyone to play their part. They have also been clear that the burden must not sit with women and girls to keep themselves safe. Our response must focus on changing harmful behaviours, challenging misogyny, improving systems and holding those who harm to account. If we want to end violence against women and girls, then prevention, justice and equity must be everyone's business.

This is our Camden commitment - that we not only identify what needs to change, but also the ways in which we must work across our communities to achieve that change.

Councillor Pat Callaghan,
Cabinet Member for Community Resilience

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Overview



2. Overview

This is Camden Council's first Preventing Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy emerging from years of commitment and tireless work by people both inside and outside the Council to make Camden safer for women and girls.

Ending violence and abuse isn't something any one organisation can do alone. It requires a united and coordinated community-wide effort. Partnership is central to this work, and through this Strategy we're strengthening our collective response, and enabling our future ambition for a truly shared partnership Strategy for 2030 and beyond.

In developing this Strategy, we have listened to feedback from survivors and victims, practitioners, partners and community organisations. They told us that they want Camden's response to recognise children as victims and address the experiences of women facing multiple and intersecting inequalities. They also emphasised the importance of culturally competent support and wanted us to understand the work needed to improve trust in services. They also asked us to make clearer how we will hold perpetrators and systems to account. These themes have been reflected throughout our priorities and will shape the implementation plan that sits beneath this Strategy.

Camden's ambition

We will end violence against women and girls through building safe, respectful and equitable communities.

Camden's approach

It's our aim to end violence against women and girls, so everyone feels safe at home and in our community. Our approach is rooted in Camden's Public Health-led VAWG Needs Assessment, which provides the core evidence base for this Strategy. We will use data, insights and evidence to understand local needs, identify inequalities and target support effectively. Survivors are at the centre of our work – we will listen to all voices of lived experience and consider their wellbeing and safety in everything we do.

We know that we cannot achieve our objectives alone. We will empower our professionals and actively share responsibility with our communities and build and maintain strong partnerships, working together to promote fairness, justice and better outcomes for all our residents.

Camden's strategic priorities

- **Prevention** – we prevent violence against women and girls before it happens by working with different partners and settings including teachers and schools and by seeking to understand and actively address inequalities
- **Earlier identification** – we identify women and girls in need and offer support as early as possible
- **Support** – we ensure victims and survivors of all ages experiencing any form of violence and abuse against women and girls can access essential support and advice when they need it and for as long as they need it
- **Holding those who harm to account** – we hold perpetrators to account and where appropriate offer support to change their behaviour
- **Working in partnership** – we build strong partnerships across Camden to deliver a coordinated community response to end violence against women and girls

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Scope of Strategy

3. Scope of our Strategy

Our Strategy addresses violence and abuse against women and girls across the life course, from pre-birth, babies, children, young people and adults of all ages.

Our Strategy adopts the United Nations definition of violence against women and girls:

> **"the term 'violence against women' means any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life"**

In line with the United Nations definition, the following forms of violence and abuse are covered by this Strategy. We also know that for many women and girls, their experience is of multiple and/or overlapping forms of violence and abuse that can take many forms. This includes physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, economic, coercive, digital and technology related harms, as well as the trauma survivors and victims may experience when systems and services respond poorly or inconsistently. Connecting all the forms of violence and abuse listed here (and central to our understanding of them) are the concepts of power, control and coercion.

Forms of violence and abuse covered:

Domestic abuse, including physical, controlling and coercive behaviours	Modern slavery	Sexual exploitation	Rape and sexual violence
Sexual harassment (in public, at work or at school)	Early and forced marriage	Faith-based abuse	Female Genital Mutilation
Honour-based abuse	Stalking	Online / technology-facilitated abuse	Re-traumatisation experienced by survivors when trying to access services ("system-induced trauma")

The breadth of the definition and scope of our Strategy reflects the findings of Camden's VAWG Needs Assessment. This assessment looked at local data and insights, and underscored that many victims and survivors experience multiple and overlapping forms of abuse, and that some forms of abuse (including sexual exploitation, stalking, honour-based abuse, forced marriage, Female Genital Mutilation and online or technology-facilitated abuse) need more attention from Camden and our partners.

All forms of abuse are connected through an emphasis on control and coercion. And more specific types of abuse are also recognised, such as economic abuse, and immigration abuse. The role of technology in facilitating many of these forms of violence and abuse is also recognised in our Strategy, while also recognising that technology can be a mechanism for survivors and victims to access support. Perpetrators and anyone who causes harm should and will be held accountable and, where appropriate, offered support to change their behaviour.

Across the forms of violence against women and girls, domestic abuse has received the most focus operationally and strategically. It remains a significant presenting issue for women seeking help from housing, and for families referred to children's services. More than half of the children currently on a Child Protection Plan have domestic abuse recorded as a risk factor in their family, either in the past or ongoing (Source: Mosaic, Children's Social Care and Early Help data).

Camden Safety Net remains a crucial source of support for adult survivors and victims identified as experiencing medium or high risk domestic and/or sexual abuse. Camden benefits from a strong voluntary and community sector which responds to domestic abuse and other forms of violence against women and girls, particularly those working with marginalised communities.

We have prioritised activities across housing and addressing the needs of women and girls facing multiple disadvantage, including multiple forms of violence against women and girls, through the Domestic Abuse Navigator service. This is a Mayor's Office funded service working with survivors experiencing multiple disadvantage and vulnerabilities. It is a new model where the service has low caseloads, providing intensive support at the survivor's pace and responding to needs in a holistic and trauma-informed way. There is also a significant focus, within the Council and working with partners, on preventing and responding to women and girls' safety in the public realm.

We recognise the need to proactively address system-induced trauma experienced by survivors and victims. This is highlighted by the Needs Assessment and previous engagement with survivors. This includes the criminal justice system, housing, child safeguarding and family courts. Experiences include repeated retelling of their stories, inappropriate or unsafe housing environments, and inconsistent or unsafe interventions. Survivors and victims have also reported feeling blamed and held responsible for their partner/ex-partners' behaviours within the child safeguarding system in response to domestic abuse.

As a council we recognise that many residents who experience violence and abuse are not covered by the definition of violence against women and girls or, importantly, they may not feel included. We appreciate the importance of recognising that men, boys, and people of all gender identities do experience violence and abuse. All survivors and victims deserve support. We therefore recognise the need for us to understand prevalence, the specific experiences and the barriers faced, to plan for further strategic action.

A note on terminology

The language we use matters. Survivors and victims have told us how important it is that we are clear about the terms we use especially when we are discussing experiences of abuse, and seeking to build trust with people and communities that may have felt ignored or unrepresented by our services. We also recognise that language can affect whether people feel seen, believed and safe to seek support.

Throughout our Strategy, we use the terms “survivor” and “victim” together to reflect the range of experiences and identities that people may hold. Some people identify as victims, particularly in the immediate aftermath of harm, when seeking acknowledgement of the injustice or harm of their experience or seeking recourse through the Criminal Justice System.

Others identify as survivors and feel that term better represents their resilience and agency. By using both terms, we aim to be inclusive, recognising that every individual’s experience is personal and their choice of language to discuss their experience matters.

We also use both “perpetrator” and “those who harm”. “Perpetrator” is a commonly used term, especially in criminal justice settings and we want to acknowledge that people who experience domestic abuse and VAWG do have crimes committed against them. “Those who harm” is used in some spaces to acknowledge that individuals can cause harm even if not formally charged or convicted, and to support behaviour change work. Some people may use different words to describe their experiences, particularly where they have experienced distrust, stigma, discrimination, immigration-related control, or poor responses from services. We have used both terms in this Strategy to reflect the range of experiences and outcomes that include both criminal justice, individual accountability and prevention.

Our approach is to respect the language people use about themselves while at the same time making sure that harm, risk and accountability are clearly named.

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How our Strategy was developed

4. How our Strategy was developed

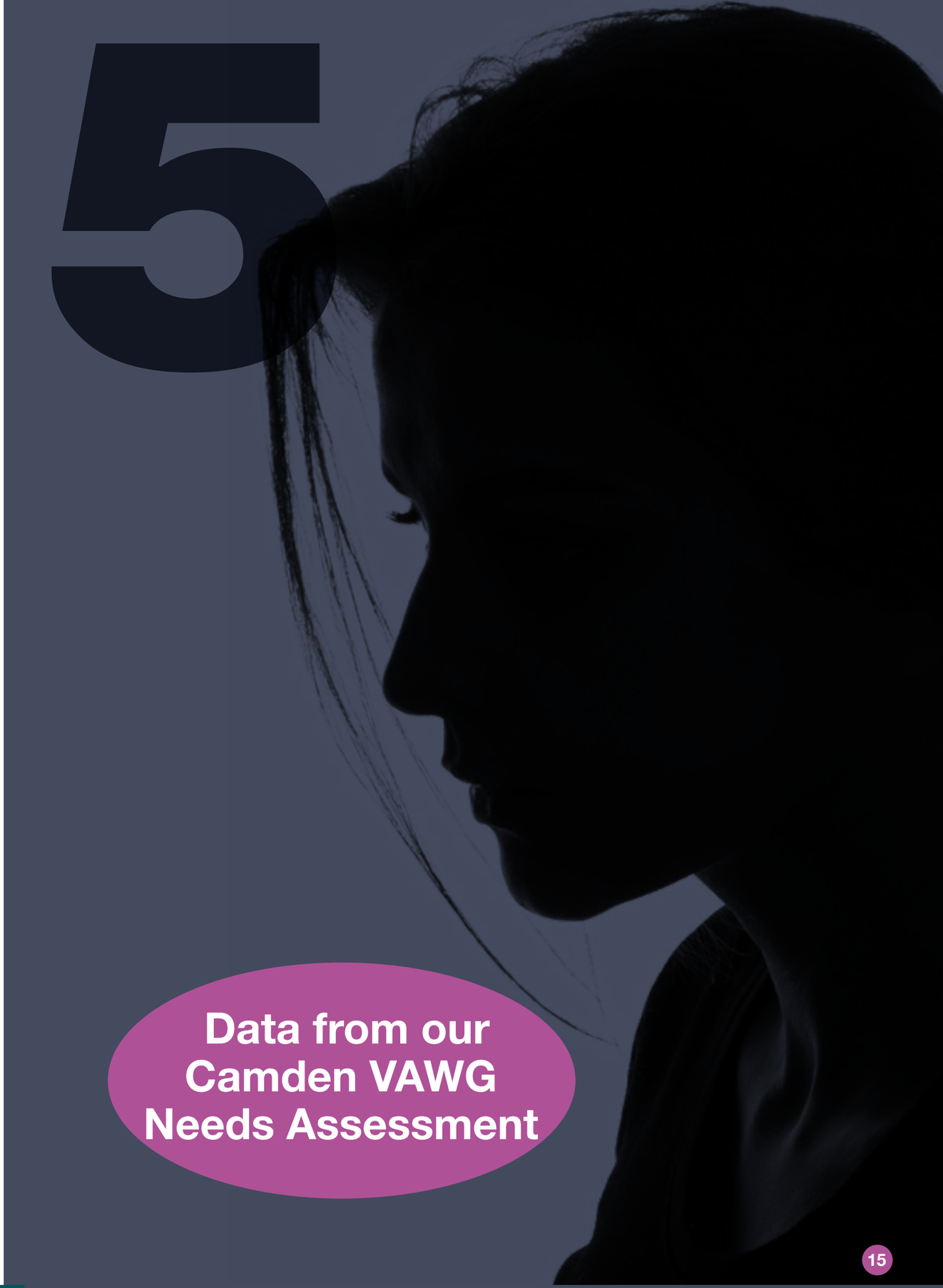
Our Strategy has been developed through engagement with survivors and victims and other stakeholders during 2025 to 2026. It is rooted in Camden Council's Public Health-led VAWG Needs Assessment, which brought together quantitative data, survivor voice, practitioner insight, service intelligence and evidence on inequalities. The Needs Assessment shaped the Strategy's priorities, objectives and outcomes, and provides the evidence base for the implementation plan that will sit beneath it.

The Needs Assessment, and this Strategy, incorporates previous work including the Camden Women's Forum Domestic Abuse Enquiry that took place in 2020 to 2021, and the extensive work undertaken from 2020 to 2025 by the Violence Against Women and Girls Partnership Board, the Council's Strategic Group and Delivery Group, and the internal teams that work in this area.

The voices of survivors and victims are central to our Strategy which draws on the feedback gathered during the completion of the Needs Assessment. Survivors and victims involved with Solace Women's Aid were invited to share feedback on an early iteration of the ambition, approach and vision, as were Camden Voices Against Abuse (CVAA). CVAA is a group of Camden residents who are survivors of domestic abuse who, by sharing and drawing on their lived experiences, aim to bring about change in how services and society engage with survivors and victims, ensuring they receive the help and support necessary for their safety and healing.

We also engaged with teams across the Council and external partners. The partnership Violence Against Women and Girls Board, senior leadership within the Council, and the Council's Strategic Group and Delivery Group, were also invited to share feedback on an early iteration of the ambition, approach and vision.

Our Strategy is evidence based, intersectional, and grounded in the lived experiences of our diverse communities and reflects the needs of all communities especially people with multiple protected characteristics and identities.



5. Data from our Camden VAWG Needs Assessment

Camden Council's Public Health-led Needs Assessment (2025) provided vital data, survivor voice and service intelligence to shape our Strategy. The findings confirm that violence against women and girls (VAWG) in Camden is both widespread and deeply unequal in impact and that early action, coordinated services, and inclusive support are essential.

The findings of our Needs Assessment have directly informed our five strategic priorities, the outcomes we want to achieve, and the areas where we know we need to strengthen delivery, partnership working and accountability.

Headline statistics

- **One in four adult women in Camden** are likely to experience domestic abuse in their lifetime. Camden's rates of sexual violence, stalking and harassment, physical or sexual abuse and violent or threatening behaviour were all significantly higher than London;
- **In 2024, 44% of high-risk Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) cases in Camden involved victims with children in the household** meaning that we know there is a significant degree of intergenerational harm;
- **Over 35% of Camden Safety Net clients** had experienced multiple forms of abuse, including coercive control, stalking and economic abuse;
- **Black women in Camden are disproportionately represented** in referrals to specialist services relative to population size and are also more likely to report a lack of trust in authorities and services;
- **Older women (60+) are underrepresented** and their cases are less likely to progress through support pathways despite being high-risk groups;
- **100% of women supported by the Domestic Abuse Navigator service in 2024** had experienced homelessness or housing instability.

Reflections from the Needs Assessment

- **Hidden harms remain under-detected –** survivors described how abuse is often overlooked when it does not meet a crisis threshold particularly for emotional, financial, and online abuse;
- **Intersectionality matters –** disabled women, LGBTQ+ and trans women, racially minoritised women, and women experiencing poverty or insecure immigration status who are victims and survivors face compounded barriers to accessing help — from language and cultural stigma, to inaccessible statutory systems;
- **Survivor voice is a strength –** survivors emphasised the importance of being believed, not having to repeat their stories, and receiving help from people who understand trauma;
- **Children are direct victims –** the assessment underscored the urgent need for specialist bespoke support for children who experience VAWG in the home or in their own relationships and called for a stronger link between domestic abuse, education, and therapeutic services.

Key recommendations incorporated into our Strategy

- **Strengthen early identification –** improve the ability of professionals across housing, health, and education to spot early signs of harm — particularly non-physical abuse and abuse experienced by marginalised groups;
- **Expand tailored support –** invest in services for groups underrepresented in referrals or poorly served — including older women, multiply disadvantaged and homeless survivors, disabled women, LGBTQ+ survivors, and those experiencing 'standard'[1] risk abuse;
- **Hold perpetrators accountable –** increase visibility and accountability for those who cause harm and roll out effective behaviour change programmes embedded in wider system responses where appropriate;
- **Build community confidence –** invest in communications, education, and public-facing interventions that shift norms, build allyship, and help survivors know where and how to seek support;
- **Improve multi-agency responses –** reduce survivor re-traumatisation by joining up services and embedding trauma-informed, anti-racist and culturally competent approaches across the Council and partners;
- **Recognise children as victims –** develop a trauma-informed offer across children's services, schools and youth settings to recognise and support child victims of VAWG and help them to thrive in Camden.



Adult survivors and victims

All adult women are at risk of experiencing violence against women and girls and are included in our Strategy. Women are not a homogenous group, and there are groups of women that are at heightened risk of experiencing such violence and harm, and/or face specific barriers when seeking help. In Section 11, summaries of these differences in experience are presented separately, but should be read with the understanding that women have multiple, intersecting, identities that impact on their experiences of violence and abuse and seeking help in relation to accessibility, cultural safety and overlapping discrimination.

1 Standard risk means that, based on the information available at the time of assessment, there are no identified indicators suggesting a likelihood of serious harm. However, this does not mean there is no risk of harm or that the victim is safe. Domestic abuse risk is dynamic and can change or escalate as circumstances and behaviours change. Ongoing monitoring, professional judgement and appropriate safety lanning remain essential. Practitioners can refer to the DASH risk assessment resources for professionals for further guidance on assessing and responding to domestic abuse risk.

Child survivors and victims

A life-course perspective requires Camden to address the needs of children and young people who are survivors and victims of violence against women and girls, including through their experiences with mothers who are survivors and victims. Whilst research doesn't show a direct, link between experiencing violence, abuse and trauma during childhood, and becoming a victim or perpetrator in adulthood, there is an association and increased risk, requiring our Strategy to attend to the complex interactions between different factors at the individual, family and wider community/structural levels that may influence vulnerabilities for girls and boys.

Moreover, children and young people exposed to violence against women and girls can face significant emotional and psychological difficulties, but these challenges do not inevitably determine their future wellbeing. Factors such as nurturing parenting, strong emotional skills, and reliable social support can strengthen resilience, while tailored interventions can lessen the impact of trauma.

Several forms of VAWG are also child abuse. This includes sexual exploitation, 'honour'- based abuse, early/forced marriage, Female Genital Mutilation, domestic abuse, sexual violence, stalking or harassment. When directed at a child or young person, these are most appropriately managed within child safeguarding systems, legislation and frameworks, working in partnership with specialist services and partner agencies. Our Strategy connects work on these areas internally and through the Camden Safeguarding Children Partnership.

When a mother is a victim of domestic abuse, her children are victims too, regardless of their sex and age. This includes being at risk of homicide, particularly in the context of post-separation abuse and child contact. Similarly, children of mothers experiencing stalking, 'honour'-based abuse, or forced marriage, are victims and their needs must be considered in a multi-agency and intersectional approach, recognising the trauma alongside cultural stigma where appropriate.

Throughout our Needs Assessment stakeholders said children affected by domestic abuse should be recognised as victims and given access to therapy and support in schools. Intergenerational trauma and the use of children by perpetrators as a form of control were key concerns, alongside the need to identify and offer support much earlier in children and adults' experiences of violence against women and girls.

Camden recognises the national lack of data and insights into the experiences of children and young people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer and other sexual orientations and other gender-diverse identities. Research suggests they experience high levels of domestic abuse in their relationships. Similar understanding is needed on the impact on children and young people with physical and/or learning disabilities or neurodivergence who experience violence against women and girls. We know that all these children and young people face additional risks in relation to their experiences and barriers to accessing support.

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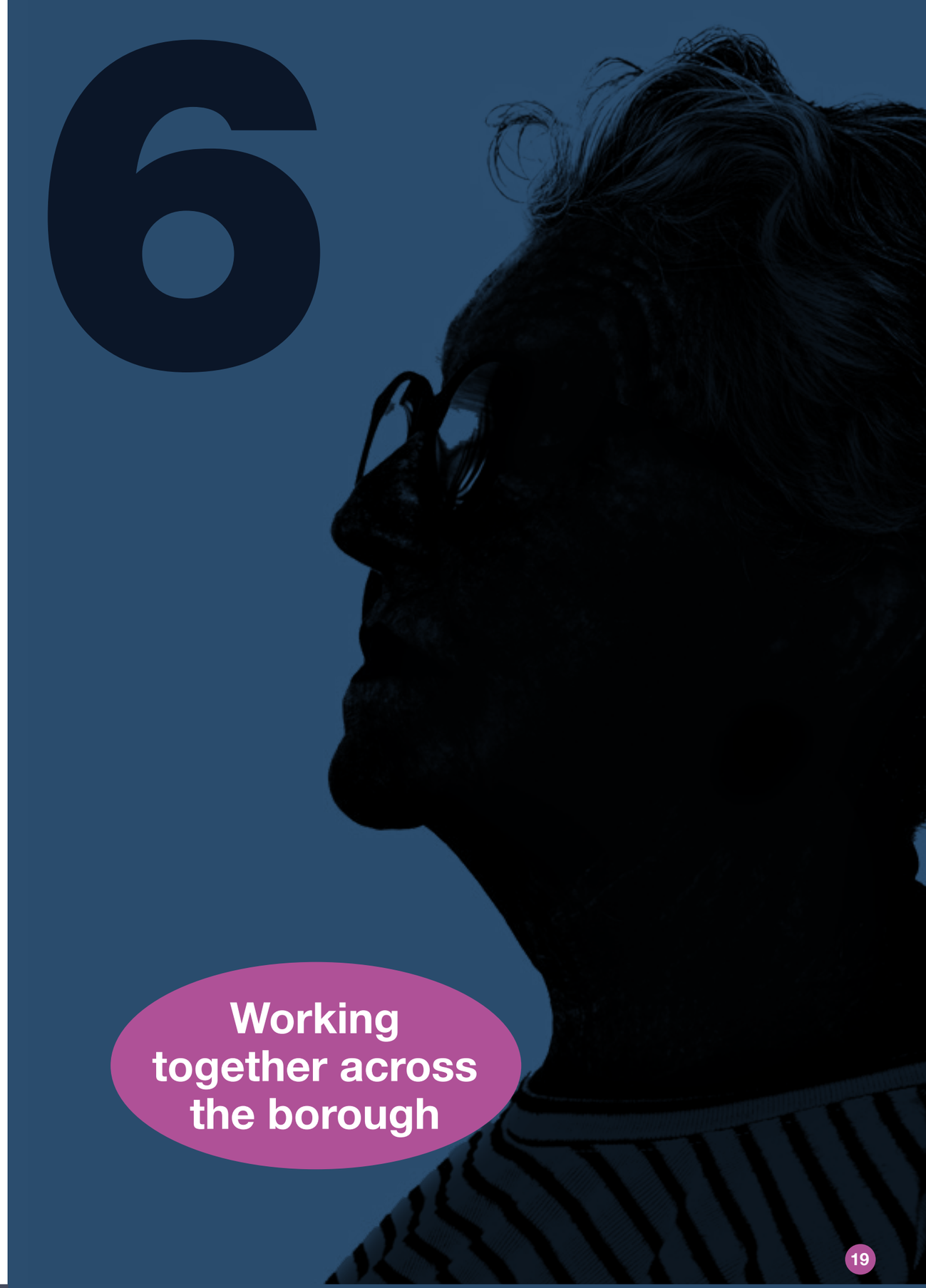


Working together across the borough

6. Working together across our borough

Violence against women and girls is a widespread issue that affects many parts of our community. No single organisation can tackle it on its own. That's why this Strategy is a call for everyone across the borough to work together, with clear leadership and accountability.

Our vision is grounded in the borough's wider ambition, set out in We Make Camden (2022). This states that we are a place which actively tackles injustice and inequality, creating safe, strong, and open communities where everyone can contribute. Residents told us directly that violence against women and girls whether in the home, on the streets, or online, is a significant concern.

Camden's partners across the criminal justice system, NHS, voluntary and community sector, education, housing, and beyond all play vital roles in prevention, protection and support. Our Strategy strengthens our expectation that all partners actively contribute to ending VAWG. We will continue to convene and support the Camden VAWG Partnership Board as our partner forum. The intention is that we continue to grow and develop this in the future.

The Needs Assessment shows that VAWG cannot be understood or addressed through one service lens alone. Data and insight from housing, community safety, children's services, adult social care, health, police, education and the voluntary and community sector all point to the need for a coordinated community response.

We are committed to transparency and learning. Over the next four years, Camden will:

- Develop a shared data and insight platform across partners to track progress, identify inequalities and improve service coordination;
- Establish clear reporting mechanisms from the VAWG Delivery Group to the VAWG Strategic Group and the VAWG Partnership Board, ensuring escalation and oversight;
- Create more formal and diverse routes for survivor participation to influence system change through decision-making, monitoring and other co-production opportunities;
- Publish regular progress updates, ensuring that residents and survivors can see how their voices and experiences are shaping action.

Our governance model (comprising the Delivery Group, Strategic Group and Partnership Board) will embed our Strategy across all parts of the system. We will also ensure close alignment with other cross-cutting priorities in Camden, including community safety, serious violence, safeguarding, youth justice, Public Health, and housing. Camden is mapping victim provision in the borough, with a view to developing a Victim's Strategy, which this Strategy will connect closely with through formalised governance mechanisms.

In establishing this Preventing Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy, Camden Council aligns itself regionally and nationally, and with its key partners. The Metropolitan Police Service has a Violence Against Women and Girls Action Plan in place. The Women's Health Strategy for England 2022-32 contains a priority to respond to the health impacts of violence against women and girls; and in London, health partners renewed their commitment to the Mayor's Strategy in 2023.

In September 2026, the Mayor of London published a Safer City for All Women and Girls: Tackling Violence against Women and Girls Strategy 2026-2029. Camden's approach is closely aligned with the Mayor's priorities and we will continue to work with the Mayor, The Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC), the Metropolitan Police Service and partners across London to support delivery of our shared ambitions.

Our Strategy is also closely aligned with the UK Government's National VAWG Strategy: Freedom from Violence and Abuse (2025). We fully support its ambition to halve the prevalence of VAWG within a decade. Our local approach reflects its three pillars:

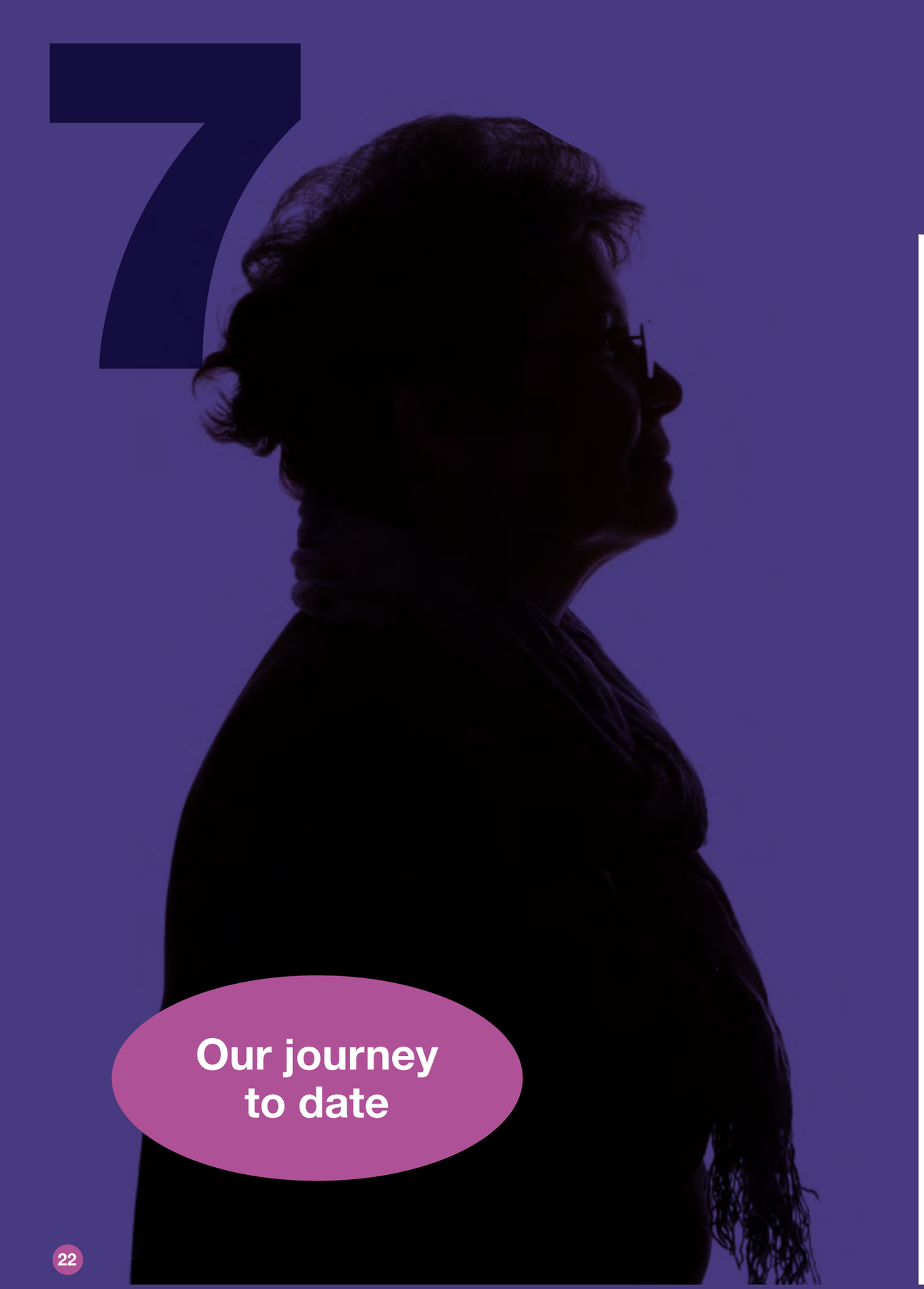
- Supporting all survivors and victims, particularly those facing multiple forms of disadvantage;
- Pursuing perpetrators and improving accountability, including strengthening police and court responses and embedding behaviour change programmes; and
- Preventing harm and intervening early, through education, awareness and cultural change.

Camden is already doing work to address some of these national priorities — including building on our Bronze DAHA accreditation toward Gold, investing in specialist services like Camden Safety Net, DA Navigators and the Insight perpetrator team, and developing trauma-informed support across council services.

Our Strategy builds on that foundation to drive deeper and more coordinated change. We are clear that by 2030, Camden's next Preventing VAWG Strategy must be a fully co-owned partnership Strategy that is shaped, delivered and monitored by all agencies with a role to play.







Our journey to date

7. Our journey to date

Camden Council's commitment to tackle violence against women and girls comes through clearly in the work captured in this section. Our recent Needs Assessment has served to strengthen our resolve, gathering data, insights and analysis, mapping the Council's current response to VAWG, and laying the foundation for our Preventing VAWG Strategy.

Camden Council activities

Many services in the Council are actively engaged in ongoing initiatives to address violence against women and girls, evidencing the commitment and dedication of practitioners in these areas. Our Strategy brings these activities together to ensure that as they continue, and new activities develop, the Council maintains a clear and comprehensive strategic approach. We recognise that responding to VAWG is a shared responsibility across the Council and every service has a role to play, whether in prevention, early identification or signposting, even where VAWG is not a core part of the service's function.

This work will build on existing partnership working, including in neighbourhoods, with police, health services such as district nurses, maternity and health visiting, and voluntary and community sector organisations.

Some significant work has occurred over the last five years to respond to VAWG as an organisational priority including:

- In April 2025 the Council established a VAWG service with a dedicated Head of Service bringing together much of the Council's VAWG offer to strengthen our response;
- In response to a recommendation by the Women's Forum Inquiry 2021, the Council has invested in a team to work with those who harm (perpetrators) making them visible and holding them to account;
- We launched the Domestic Abuse Navigator service, providing intensive support to survivors experiencing multiple disadvantage, homelessness, and VAWG;
- The Debt and Financial Resilience team has identified domestic abuse survivors and victims as in need of specialist and targeted responses in relation to finances and debt, aiming for earlier identification of their need for support;
- Public Health has led and delivered the violence against women and girls Needs Assessment, and violence against women and

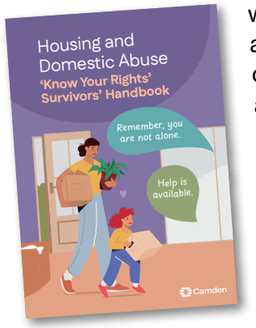
"There's no advertisement… If I didn't end up in refuge, I'd never have known what was available."
Survivor, Solace Women's Aid

"DA is not just physical violence… it can present in emotional abuse that is harder to spot."
Practitioner, Solace Women's Aid

"When Universal Credit is paid directly into claimants' bank accounts, it can increase the risk of financial control in cases of DVA."
Practitioner Money Advice Camden (MAC)

girls has been recognised in other, overlapping areas (drugs, alcohol and sexual health) within plans and strategies;

- There has been a significant investment within Housing, to develop and implement training, policies and procedures that support earlier identification of survivors and victims during their journey through the system, alongside data gathering and analysis and achieving DAHA accreditation at Bronze level. In 2024, over a quarter of the people who applied to join the housing register were affected by domestic abuse. This has more than doubled since 2019, showing a steady rise over the past five years. Domestic abuse is also a major cause of homelessness. In 2025, almost one in five homelessness applications were linked to domestic abuse, and for most of these people it was the main reason they had to leave their last home;



- The Community Safety Partnership Plan 2024-27 established an Action Plan for Women's Safety in the Public Realm, covering multiple actions including the Camden Safety Bus, which provides support, advice and a safe space for anyone who needs it whilst on a night out;
- The Council regularly conducts Women's Safety Walkabouts and they are an opportunity to listen to residents' concerns about women's safety in their area and jointly develop solutions to make improvements;
- The Council is supporting businesses to be trained on 'Ask for Angela', and the WAVE (Welfare and Vulnerability Engagement) training helping to create safe spaces at night;
- The ongoing campaign 'In Camden we call it out' encourages everyone to safely challenge and intervene when they witness sexual harassment and any type of inappropriate behaviour;
- Guided by the views of young people within the youth service, the Camden Youth Assembly has taken forward work on violence against women and girls in the public realm; and
- There have been several internal campaigns aimed at council staff, including promoting awareness of the Staff Domestic Abuse Policy and providing training to managers on how to implement this. Mandatory training for all staff in the Council to identify and support people experiencing domestic abuse is in place.



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Summary of our Strategy

8. Summary of our Strategy

It's our aim to end violence against women and girls, so everyone feels safe at home and in our community. We will use data, insights and evidence to understand local needs, identify inequalities and target support effectively. Survivors and victims are at the heart of our work. We will listen to all voices of lived experience and consider their wellbeing and safety in everything we do. We know that we cannot achieve our objectives alone and we will empower our professionals and actively share responsibility with our communities and build, and maintain strong partnerships, working together to promote fairness, justice and better outcomes for all our residents.

Some of the changes needed like improving mental health support for people at every stage of life are big, long-term goals. They involve changing whole systems, and that takes time. The scale and complexity of these challenges means we won't be able to achieve everything within the lifetime of this Strategy. The work we will do over the next few years is essential and will make a difference to people by laying the foundations for system transformation, with key priorities continuing and developing into the next phase of our partnership work in 2030.

The priorities, objectives and outcomes below have been shaped by the findings of the Camden VAWG Needs Assessment. They respond to the need for earlier identification, more inclusive and culturally competent support, stronger recognition of children as victims, improved housing and trauma support, greater perpetrator accountability, and better use of data and survivor voice to drive change.

Priorities	Objectives	Outcomes
Preventing harm before it happens	Take a preventative life-course approach, informed by the RESPECT framework, to tackle inequalities, improve safety in public spaces and on our Estates, and work in settings such as education to change/prevent harmful behaviours and the attitudes that enable them, including working with men and boys as allies.	Children and adults in Camden understand what healthy, respectful relationships look like in their daily lives. Messages are communicated clearly to residents through different communication channels that challenge harmful attitudes. Children and adults in Camden are empowered to recognise, prevent, and respond to online harms including those caused by violent or degrading pornographic content. Residents receive clear, accessible messages in multiple languages and formats (including BSL), delivered through diverse channels, helping to challenge harmful attitudes and enabling people to find support when needed.
	Embed women and girls' experiences, needs and safety in the planning, design and delivery of the built environment and publicly accessible spaces.	Women and girls see themselves represented and valued in the teams shaping the built environment in Camden. Decisions about the built environment consider and respond to women's and girls' needs from the outset. Women and girls feel safe, welcome, and included in homes, public spaces, and the wider built environment.
Earlier identification and support	Embed psychologically informed, trauma-aware and anti-racist and culturally sensitive practice across the Council workforce.	All survivors and victims who speak to staff, feel listened to, respected and supported, including if they are from a marginalised community. Survivors and victims are identified and supported earlier than before (pre implementation of the Strategy).
	Build a cross-service response for people experiencing violence against women and girls.	Services work together around survivors and victims, so they don't have to repeat their stories and they experience less trauma.
	Ensure child survivors and victims are recognised early and receive age appropriate support that reduces vulnerability later in life.	Child survivors and victims are identified earlier and get the right support to feel safe, cope and recover. Those who harm are identified across all forms of VAWG as early as possible and offered support to change their behaviour.
Supporting all adults and child survivors and victims	Strengthen and expand specialist VAWG services, using data and lived experience to remove barriers and ensure equitable access.	Survivors and victims can access services whatever type of abuse they are experiencing. Barriers to support for marginalised survivors have been addressed/removed. Survivors and victims feel safer because services and agencies work together.
	Develop high-quality, trauma-informed mental health support for survivors and victims of all ages.	The mental health of all survivors and victims is treated as a priority and there are no barriers to access support.
	Deliver a survivor-led housing response that enables safety, stability and choice.	When survivors and victims seek housing help, they feel supported and have safe options without being forced to move unnecessarily.
	Recognise and respond to the needs and experiences of all boys and men who are survivors and victims.	Boys and men's experiences are understood and they can access appropriate support.

Priorities	Objectives	Outcomes
Holding perpetrators to account	Take a whole system approach working in partnership to hold perpetrators to account and support behaviour change which centres survivor and victim safety.	People who harm others are held accountable and supported to change. The partners/ex-partners/other family members of perpetrators feel safer.
	Ensure whole-family approaches prioritise the safety of child and adult survivors and victims.	Families feel safer and better supported when services work with them – including post-separation.
Working in partnership	Put diverse survivors and victim's voices at the heart of shaping the actions and implementation of Camden Council's Preventing VAWG Strategy.	Survivors and victims can see their voice influences decisions, services and strategic direction.
	Use data, insight and evidence to drive a public-health prevention-based approach to VAWG and address inequalities.	People can see how the Council uses data to improve support and tackle inequality. Clear, published information helps residents, survivors and victims and partners in the community to hold the Council to account.
	Build a coordinated community response with partners, residents, survivors and victims.	Residents and community partners know how to engage with the Council. The next Camden preventing VAWG Strategy (from 2030) is developed with partners as a partnership Strategy.

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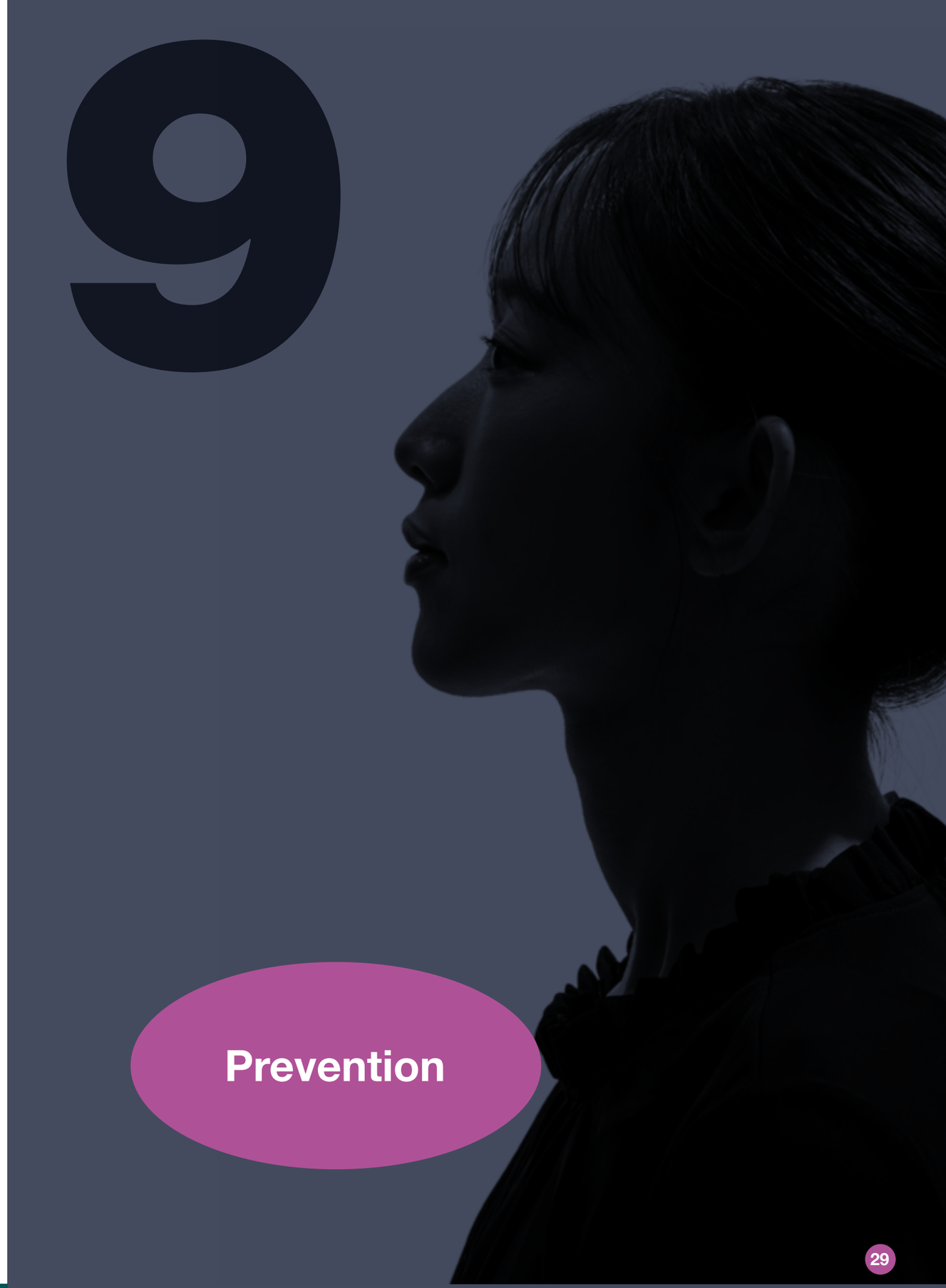


Prevention

9. Prevention

Preventing violence against women and girls means confronting the conditions that allow or enable it to happen in the first place. That means changing attitudes, dismantling harmful norms, and building a culture in which misogyny, sexism, and abuse are never tolerated. Our ambition is not just to respond after harm occurs, but to create a Camden where abuse is less likely to happen at all.

Our prevention work focuses on education and system-wide messaging because schools, services, public spaces and digital platforms all shape the norms and behaviours that people grow up with. Our prevention work will place a stronger focus on challenging misogyny in all its forms from casual sexism to violent online content and supporting boys and men to actively reject harmful behaviours and champion respect and equality.

Prevention must focus on men and boys, not on changing women's behaviour. Camden recognises that too often, efforts to prevent violence against women and girls have placed responsibility on women to manage risk through how they behave. This approach is ineffective, unfair and harmful.

Violence against women and girls is caused by the attitudes, behaviours and choices of those who perpetrate it, and by social norms that excuse, minimise or ignore that harm. Camden's prevention work therefore focuses explicitly on changing male behaviour, peer cultures and the conditions that allow violence to happen. Preventing violence against women and girls requires more than discouraging harm. Camden will actively promote positive, nonviolent masculinities that reject entitlement, control and dominance.

We know women and girls are disproportionately targeted by online harassment, image-based abuse, misogynistic content and coercive control through digital platforms. As part of our prevention efforts, we are committed to educating children, young people and adults about online safety.

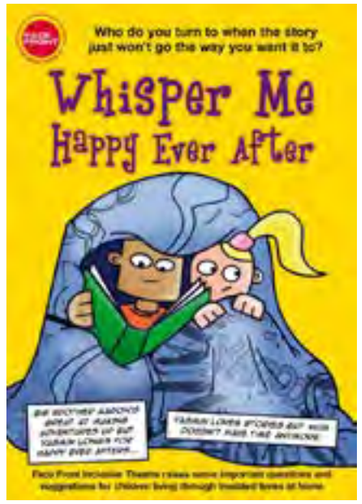
As part of this work, Camden recognises growing concerns about the influence of violent, misogynistic and degrading pornography, alongside other harmful online content, on attitudes towards women and girls. We know that exposure to this kind of content can contribute to harmful gender stereotypes, normalise abusive behaviours, and shape young people's understanding of relationships, consent and respect. We will continue to support schools, youth services, parents and communities to promote healthy relationships, positive masculinities, digital literacy, and strong understanding of consent, equality and respect.

By embedding gender equity and healthy relationships education from an early age, and by challenging harmful attitudes wherever they surface (through things like public campaigns, peer-led work, and professional practice) we can make Camden a place that actively challenges violence, harassment and control. We want Camden to be a place where respect is learned, allyship is expected, and everyone plays a role in ending VAWG. This work is not about labelling boys as potential perpetrators but about challenging harmful norms early, before they become embedded, and supporting boys to develop respect, empathy, accountability and healthy ways of relating to others.

Camden will promote the education of girls and boys together on healthy relationships, consent, and unacceptable or unlawful behaviour, recognising the importance of a shared understanding of respect and boundaries. We will continue work to support girls to recognise abusive, coercive or controlling behaviours, addressing the normalisation of misogyny and ensuring they are better able to identify and seek support.

Preventing harm before it happens – working with children and young people	
We want to build on existing activity and develop a comprehensive education programme for children and young people that addresses gender inequality, stereotypes and attitudes that lead to violence against women and girls. We will establish an evidence-informed foundation to guide Camden Council's development of a comprehensive approach to online safety for children and young people.	
Objectives	**Outcomes**
Take a preventative life-course approach, informed by the RESPECT framework, to tackle inequalities, improve safety in public spaces and on our Estates, and work in settings such as education to change/prevent harmful behaviours and the attitudes that enable them, including working with men and boys as allies.	• Children and adults in Camden understand what healthy, respectful relationships look like in their daily lives. Messages are communicated clearly to residents through different communication channels that challenge harmful attitudes. • Children and adults in Camden are empowered to recognise, prevent, and respond to online harms. including those caused by violent or degrading pornographic content.

Whisper Me Happy Ever After



Children are often the hidden victims of domestic abuse either experiencing abuse directly or witnessing it at home. Exposure to domestic abuse can affect children's mental health, behaviour, learning and relationships. It can lead to anxiety, trauma, difficulties at school, and problems forming healthy relationships later in life.

Camden Council supported the Whisper Me Happy Ever After (WMHEA) theatre tour, delivered by Face Front Inclusive Theatre, to reach primary school children in Years 5 and 6. Between February and April 2025, the production visited 22 schools across seven London boroughs, reaching 1,914 children. The play uses drama, music, humour and storytelling to explore domestic abuse in a sensitive, age appropriate way.

Children were highly engaged and gained a better understanding of domestic abuse and how to stay safe. The project created safe spaces for children to speak up:

74 **children spoke about concerns**

18 **cases required safeguarding checks**

6 **urgent cases were acted on immediately**

Early intervention helps prevent future harm, break cycles of abuse and build safer communities.







In Camden we call it out

We want Camden to be a safe place for everyone, but sadly, we know too many women and girls don't feel safe when they're out and about on our streets.

Women and girls should be able to walk our streets without fear or intimidation and shouldn't have to change their behaviour to feel safe. That's why our campaign 'In Camden we call it out' is a call to action for everyone to safely challenge and intervene when they witness sexual harassment and any type of inappropriate behaviour.

Launched in July 2024, the campaign was informed by the experiences of local women and insights from organisations, including Camden Voices Against Abuse, Solace and Hopscotch. Supported by schools, businesses, community groups and the police, it has strong local support and a united effort behind it.

Campaign materials direct people to our website where there is advice and information on how to report incidents and over the first six months of the campaign we saw engagement on our web page rise to 82%. There was also a slight increase of 8% in reported incidents over this same period which could be attributed to greater awareness.



Preventing harm before it happens – engaging our communities	
Develop a communications plan, working with partners to continue to challenge attitudes and inequalities that engender violence against women and girls, including targeting men and boys as potential allies.	
Objectives	**Outcomes**
Take a preventative life-course approach, informed by the RESPECT framework, to tackle inequalities and work in settings such as education to change/prevent harmful behaviours and the attitudes that enable them, including working with men and boys as allies.	• Residents receive clear, accessible messages in multiple languages and formats (including BSL), delivered through diverse channels, helping to challenge harmful attitudes and enabling people to find support when needed.

Women's Safety and the Public Realm

Design and planning are crucial tools in keeping women and girls safe in public and private spaces. Using the knowledge and experiences of women and girls through research and meaningful engagement is also vital to inform the design of buildings and public realm. Doing so can lead to safer, more equitable spaces, that tackle violence and abuse and increase participation in public life. We are committed that design and planning should build on Camden's existing initiatives that strive for inclusion and representation in public spaces, such as the Strategy for Diversity in the Public Realm. Design should also be informed by guidance that already exists, such as the GLA's Women, Girls and Gender Diverse People Safety in Public Space guidance.

Preventing harm before it happens – designing safe and welcoming communities	
Objectives	**Outcomes**
Embed women and girls' experiences, needs and safety in the planning, design and delivery of the built environment and publicly accessible spaces.	• Women and girls see themselves represented and valued in the teams shaping the built environment in Camden. • Decisions about the built environment consider and respond to women's and girls' needs from the outset. • Women and girls feel safe, welcome, and included in homes, public spaces, and the wider built environment.

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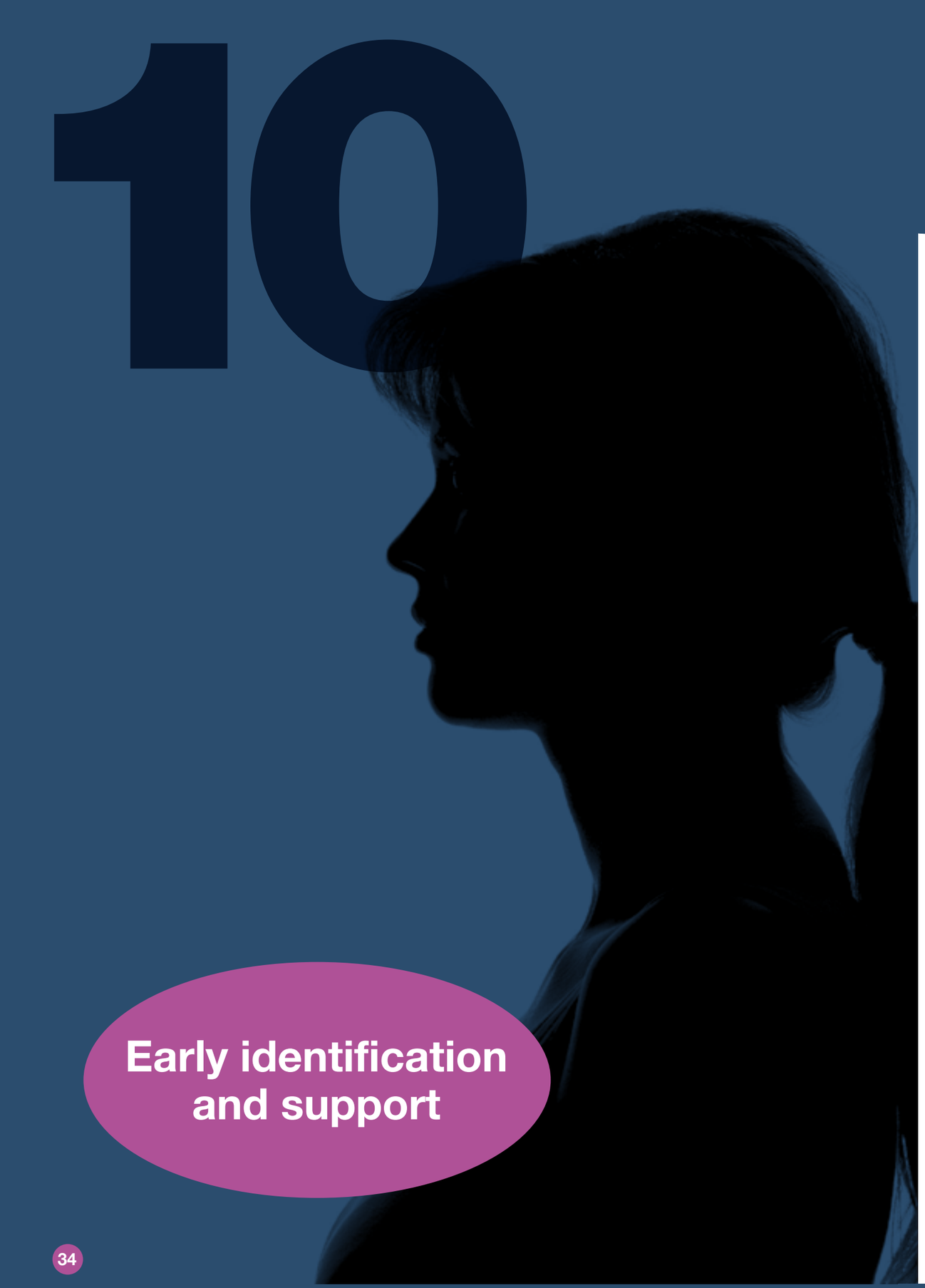


Early identification and support

10. Early identification and support

The Camden VAWG Needs Assessment made clear the need for the Council to develop earlier identification of violence against women and girls, leading to earlier offers of support for those affected, across the life course. This strategic priority is relevant across all areas of the Council. Camden's approach is to 'empower our professionals' to have best practice responses across the whole council. Informed by survivors, this best practice is psychologically and trauma informed, anti-racist, intersectional and culturally sensitive.

"When GPs or other professionals recognised the signs of DVA and made referrals to services such as Camden Safety Net (CSN), women described the impact as 'transformative' and 'lifesaving'."
Camden Voices Against Abuse (CVAA) listening & engagement session

"Referral pathways are often slow, unclear, or unresponsive, delaying access to essential support."
Money Advice Camden (MAC) insight session

Early identification and support	
Objectives	**Outcomes**
Embed psychologically informed, trauma-aware and anti-racist and culturally sensitive practice across the Council workforce.	• All survivors and victims who speak to staff, feel listened to, respected and supported, especially if they are from a marginalised community. • Survivors and victims are identified and supported earlier than before (pre implementation of the Strategy).
Build a cross-service response for people experiencing violence against women and girls.	• Services work together around survivors and victims, so they don't have to repeat their stories and they experience less trauma.
Ensure child survivors and victims are recognised early and receive age appropriate support that reduces vulnerability later in life.	• Child survivors and victims are identified earlier and get the right support to feel safe, cope and recover. • Those who harm are identified across all forms of VAWG as early as possible and offered support to change as appropriate.

Strengthening workforce capability

A confident and informed workforce is essential to improving early identification and response to violence against women and girls. All Council staff have a role to play in recognising abuse, responding safely, and supporting access to specialist services.

To support this, Camden requires all staff to complete a 30-minute Domestic Violence and Abuse (DVA) e-learning module every two years, with completion also required as part of staff induction. Developed with Camden Safety Net, the module builds awareness of different forms of abuse, early warning signs, and the impact on victims and families, alongside practical guidance on safeguarding and appropriate responses.

This training supports the Council's commitment to embedding trauma-informed and inclusive practice across the workforce, strengthening the consistency and quality of responses across services. Over 5,000 staff (96% of the workforce as of April 2026 had completed the training, with content reviewed regularly to ensure it remains current and effective).

11



Holistic support for all adult and child survivors and victims

11. Holistic support for all adult and child survivors and victims

Every person who experiences violence and abuse deserves timely, compassionate and effective support. Camden is committed to building a holistic, trauma-informed system that recognises the full range of needs that survivors and victims may have. This might include emotional recovery and mental health, to housing, financial stability and safety planning.

Our Strategy sets out our commitment to breaking down those barriers, expanding access, and ensuring that all survivors and victims feel seen and supported. All victims and survivors of VAWG includes but is not limited to those who are LGBTQ+, Black or from other minority ethnic groups, deaf and/or disabled, older, from refugee and migrant communities, children and babies and men and boys. Whether someone is seeking housing help, mental health care or simply to be believed, they should find a response that meets them with dignity and understanding.

"Specialist services and survivor-led peer networks provided validation, safety, and essential guidance through complex systems, often described as 'lifesaving'."
Camden Voices Against Abuse (CVAA) listening & engagement session

We recognise that recovery from VAWG is not linear and may require sustained, long-term trauma support, not only crisis intervention. Our aim is that survivors and victims can access support that is appropriate to their needs, safety, identity, rights and circumstances for as long as they need it.

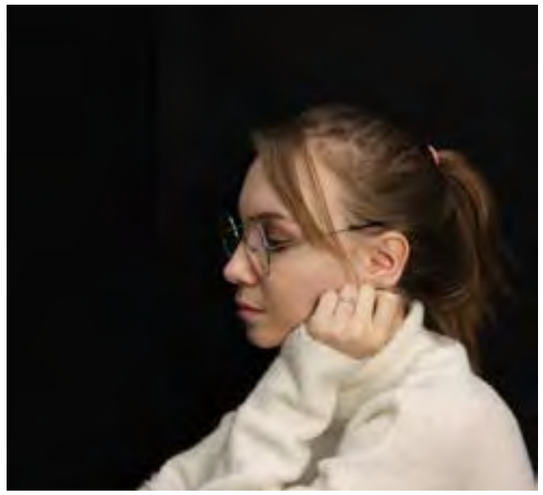
Too often, marginalised survivors (including disabled women, LGBTQ+ people, trans women and older women) face additional barriers to support or feel invisible in mainstream services. We have outlined below some of the data and evidence we have regarding the experiences of marginalised women in accessing support or experiencing VAWG, drawn from our Needs Assessment.



Supporting all adults and child survivors and victims	
We want to ensure that survivors are at the heart of all our work, and that our frontline workforce is skilled and compassionate.	
Objectives	**Outcomes**
Strengthen and expand specialist VAWG services, using data and lived experience to remove barriers and ensure equitable access.	• Survivors and victims can access services whatever type of abuse they are experiencing. • Barriers to support for marginalised survivors have been addressed/removed. • Victims and survivors feel safer because services and agencies work together.
Develop high-quality, trauma-informed mental health support for survivors and victims of all ages.	• The mental health of all survivors and victims is treated as a priority and there are no barriers to access support. • Survivors and victims feel improvements in their wellbeing because of the support they receive
Deliver a survivor-led housing response that enables safety, stability and choice.	• When survivors and victims seek housing help, they feel supported and have safe options without being forced to move unnecessarily.
Recognise and respond to the needs and experiences of all boys and men who are survivors and victims.	• Boys and men's experiences are understood and they can access appropriate support.

Young women

Most victims of violence against women and crimes reported to police in Camden in 2024 were aged between 18-24 years. The Camden Youth Assembly in 2024 heard from girls and young women aged 13-19 (extending to 25 years for vulnerable groups) who expressed feelings of fear, distress and anxiety relating to their safety, and experiences of harassment. As girls got older, they felt increasingly unsafe in school and their communities in places such as bus stops and journeys to school. Additional vulnerabilities were identified for young carers and young women of colour.









Racially minoritised women

Locally, White victims make up the greatest proportion when compared to other ethnicities but lower than the Camden population, whereas survivors and victims from Black, Black British, Caribbean or African backgrounds are significantly over-represented when compared to the population data. Hopscotch gathered feedback from women from a range of racialised minorities. This feedback highlighted 'hidden abuses' including 'honour'- based abuse, forced marriage, Female Genital Mutilation, harassment, stalking and reproductive coercion were felt to be normalised or silenced due to 'cultural stigma and fear'. Distrust of services, in particular police, was common; community-based services were preferred, and there is a need for culturally sensitive support relating to violence and abuse.

Disabled women

Research shows disabled women are twice as likely to experience domestic abuse than those without a disability. Reporting and referral rates for disabled women are low, and they tend to experience abuse for longer before accessing support services. Disabled women are also more likely than non-disabled women to experience sexual violence. Women with learning disabilities are found to be more at risk of experiencing forced marriage.

Older women

While overall prevalence may be lower, older women face specific complexities within their experiences and face unique barriers to accessing support. The needs assessment identified underrepresentation within the 60+ years age group in police reporting and Camden Safety Net referrals/clients. Within Adult Social Care Safeguarding (2024), those aged 60+ and drawing on care made up 50% of all referrals for violence against women and girls linked concerns.

Lesbian and bisexual women

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence NICE (2014) reported that 38.4% of bisexual, gay, and lesbian respondents said they had experienced domestic abuse. Galop research found that many lesbians and non-binary people felt they were targeted for sexual violence due to 'being gender non-conforming'. Lesbian and bisexual women may experience violence against women and girls alongside, and/or intersecting with, identity abuse, conversion practices, and homophobia.

Women experiencing poverty

Within Camden Safety Net data for the needs assessment, between 30-36% of clients were recorded as unemployed; 100% of clients of the Domestic Abuse Navigator service had experienced homelessness in the year prior to accessing the service or were homeless at the time of accessing the service. Research suggests there is an increased risk of experiencing domestic abuse for women in low-income households; domestic abuse can also be a driver of women's poverty, including through economic abuse, which has been experienced by one in seven women in the UK. Poverty can also increase women's vulnerability to other forms of violence against women and girls such as trafficking and sexual exploitation.

Women experiencing multiple disadvantage

Multiple disadvantage includes but is not limited to mental health needs; physical health; substance (mis)use; homelessness; offending behaviour; migration needs; removal of children/ care affected; English as a second language; involved in prostitution/safety sex; neurodiversity. Feedback to the Needs Assessment showed they are likely to have experienced multiple forms of violence against women and girls, experience acute barriers to accessing support; and are more likely to be involved in prostitution/sex work.

Women with migration needs

Women with migration needs (including women with insecure or no status, and women with complex migration histories) experience additional barriers to accessing essential support. The 'no recourse to public funds' (NRPF) condition can prevent women and child victims from accessing safe accommodation. In addition to complex legal and administrative barriers, refugee and migrant survivors can experience acute social barriers; with many survivors reporting that fear and distrust of services prevented them from accessing support. This precarity can be exploited as a technology of control in the context of VAWG, with many refugee and migrant survivor's experiencing 'immigration abuse'. Many survivors are unaware that there are immigration routes and protections specifically intended to support victims of domestic abuse and other forms of VAWG. Camden will ensure survivors can access clear, accessible information about the options that may be available to them.

12



Holding perpetrators to account

12. Holding perpetrators to account

Ending violence against women and girls requires a clear and uncompromising approach to those who cause harm. Survivors and residents have been clear that accountability must come first. Camden's approach centres survivor and victim safety and prioritises consequences for harmful behaviour, and ensures that any intervention with perpetrators is proportionate, evidence based and never at the expense of those harmed.

Camden recognises the necessity of addressing those who harm through strategic and operational activity within the Council and with partners. Without this, Camden cannot move towards its ambition of ending violence against women and girls. This strategic priority encompasses the need to hold perpetrators to account for their behaviours and the harm they cause as well as ensuring opportunities for support through behaviour change are available within a whole system response that empowers all professionals to have a best practice response to those who harm.

As a landlord, a survivor-led housing response must combine safety and choice for survivors with clear consequences for perpetrators. Where appropriate, Camden will use the full range of available housing, tenancy, enforcement and legal tools, alongside police and criminal justice partners, to prevent further harm.

As with survivors and victims, perpetrators and those who harm are not a homogenous group; routes towards harming and motivations for doing so vary. While anyone can cause harm, VAWG is overwhelmingly perpetrated by men and is rooted in gender inequality, misogyny, power and control. Our response must therefore address individual behaviour, the social norms that excuse or minimise abuse, and the systems that fail to hold perpetrators to account. Nevertheless, it is clear from data, insights and research that the majority of perpetrators are men; this demands recognition of the role of gender inequality in driving violence against women and girls.

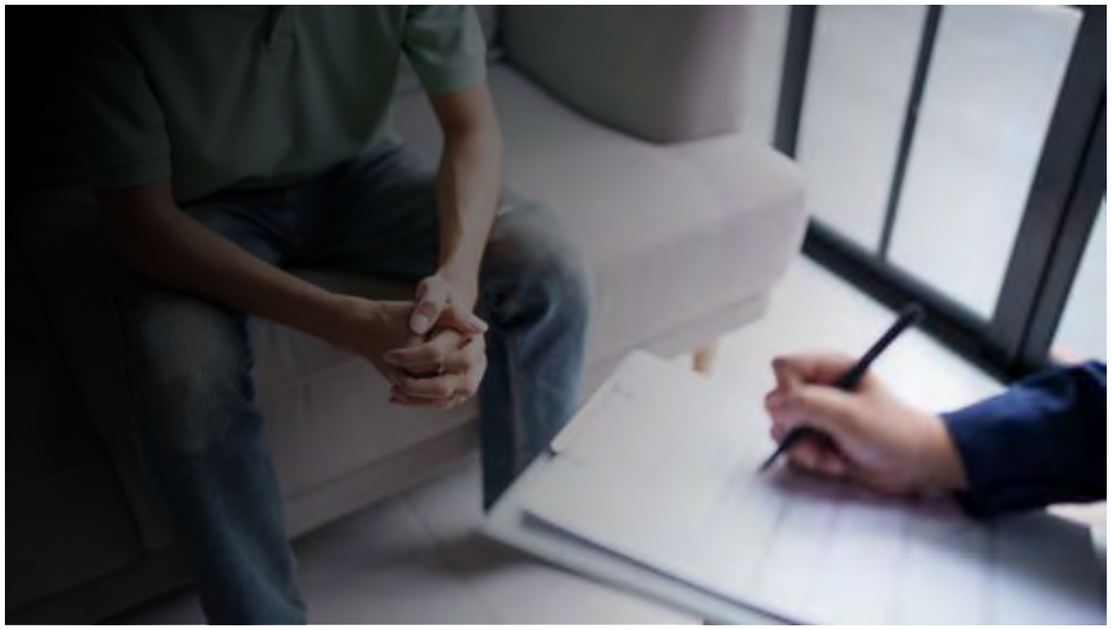
The Crime Survey of England and Wales (2024) found that 92.4% of defendants for domestic-abuse related prosecutions were male. 91% of people prosecuted for sexual offences are men aged over 18 years, six in seven rapes against women are carried out by someone they know, and one in two rapes against women are carried out by their partner or ex-partner. Women can cause harm, and this is important in understanding lesbian and bisexual women's experiences of violence and harm. In relation to 'honour'- based abuse, faith-based abuse, early/forced marriage, and Female Genital Mutilation, there may be multiple perpetrators within the family and/or the community.

Our perpetrator approach also includes those who exploit, facilitate, profit from or create demand for sexual exploitation. Tackling sexual exploitation requires us to focus not only on support for victims and survivors, but on disrupting perpetrators, networks and enabling conditions.

Taking a life-course approach, our Strategy recognises that children can also cause harm, including domestic abuse against family members (Child and Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse) and/or intimate partners and sexual harassment/violence against peers. Research shows that boys who were victims of domestic abuse in their families are at increased risk of gang involvement and using/experiencing serious violence.

A "whole-family approach" means we look at the needs of the individual and the people around them. We know families can look different, and what matters most is everyone's safety and wellbeing. Our focus is on understanding how domestic abuse can show up and affect adults and children in different ways, and making sure the right support is in place for each person.

Holding perpetrators to account	
To enhance survivor and victim safety and reduce harm, we need to ensure that a behaviour change pathway for perpetrators is embedded ensuring the model is evidence based, informed by local need and aligned with national standards. We will create a learning and reflective practice culture across agencies to strengthen multi-agency collaboration and early identification of those who harm. We will strengthen our partnership with the Police and the wider criminal justice system to ensure that perpetrators are consistently held to account, that survivor safety is prioritised, and that justice responses are joined-up, trauma-informed and equitable.	
Objectives	**Outcomes**
Take a whole system approach working in partnership to hold perpetrators to account and support behaviour change which centres survivor and victim safety.	• People who harm others are held accountable and supported to change. • The partners/ex-partners/other family members of perpetrators feel safer.
Ensure whole-family approaches prioritise the safety of child and adult survivors and victims.	• Families feel safer and better supported when services work with them – including post-separation.



13

Working in partnership

13. Working in partnership

Ending violence against women and girls requires a whole system, whole-community response. We cannot deliver our Strategy alone. We need to work hand in hand with victims and survivors, statutory agencies, voluntary and community partners, and residents. Our partnership approach is rooted in building trust and shared responsibility. We will ensure that survivor voices are not only heard, but also shape decisions, services and strategic direction at every level.

For many survivors and victims, justice is an essential part of safety and recovery. We will work with the police, criminal justice partners and specialist services to improve confidence, support survivors through reporting and court processes where they choose that route, and strengthen accountability for those who harm. This includes aligning local partnership work with MPS Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Action Plan and A New Met for London Phase 2 (2025-28).

Through better use of data, clearer accountability, and more inclusive ways of working, we will build a system that the community can both engage with and rely on. Over the next four years, we will develop a fully co-owned partnership Strategy by 2030. Ultimately, we want our Strategy to reflect the collective commitment of Camden's institutions and communities to make this borough a place where women and girls are safe and thriving.

"There should be a specific priority on community and survivor leadership – moving beyond engagement into genuine co-production"
Camden Voices Against Abuse

Working in partnership	
Continue to invest in and build strong partnerships which enable us to share data and insights and ensure that survivor engagement is meaningful. We will refresh our VAWG Partnership Board membership and clarify its purpose and ways of working to optimise our ability to deliver a coordinated community response to end violence against women and girls.	
Objectives	**Outcomes**
Put diverse survivors and victim's voices at the heart of shaping the actions and implementation of Camden Council's Preventing VAWG Strategy.	• Survivors and victims can see their voice influences decisions, services and strategic direction.
Use data, insight and evidence to drive a public-health prevention-based approach to VAWG and address inequalities.	• People can see how the Council uses data to improve support and tackle inequality. • Clear, published information helps residents, survivors and victims and partners in the community to hold the Council to account.
Build a coordinated community response with residents, survivors and victims, and partners.	• Residents and community partners know how to engage with the Council. • The next Camden preventing VAWG Strategy (from 2030) is developed with partners as a partnership Strategy.

Working with the Police

Camden will continue to work closely with the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) and expects local practice to reflect the commitments set out in the MPS Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Action Plan and A New Met for London Phase 2 (2025–28). These include clearer standards, better performance monitoring, improved data transparency, and stronger accountability for progress on VAWG.

We will also continue to work in partnership with the Crown Prosecution Service and the courts to support effective investigations, fair decision-making and better outcomes for survivors.

Women and survivors told us clearly that trust in the police and criminal justice system has been negatively impacted. Many described experiences of not being believed, not being protected, or feeling retraumatised when they sought help. Camden recognises these experiences and is clear that rebuilding trust requires acknowledging past failures and setting clear expectations for improvement.

Along with Camden Voices Against Abuse (CVAA) and other partners, we recognise the significant progress made by local police teams in strengthening their response to violence against women and girls. This has led to meaningful changes in both practice and culture, and partners noting early signs that trust in the police is beginning to improve among survivors.

Camden and the police have worked together on visible commitments, such as the 2025 White Ribbon Day and 16 Days of Action campaign, to challenge violence against women and girls. However, trust is built through everyday interactions and through how people are treated when they ask for help. Our Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) which meets fortnightly develops safety plans for high risk survivors and victims. This is chaired by Police colleagues and each case is risk assessed through Police lens. Camden Safety Net works intensely with our criminal justice partners in keeping survivors and victims safe.

Our commitment is to work with police and criminal justice partners to drive real, measurable improvement, so that women and girls in Camden can seek protection and justice with confidence.

14

Governance

14. Governance

Our Strategy marks a milestone in Camden's long-term commitment to ending violence against women and girls. To make real change, we need clear plans, governance and accountability. These foundations ensure that the Council, partners, and communities know what is happening, why it matters, and how they can both support and challenge the work.

This Strategy sets the direction for Camden's work to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls. A separate implementation plan will sit beneath the Strategy and will set out the actions, lead services and partners, milestones, measures of success and reporting arrangements needed to deliver our priorities. This will allow the Strategy to remain clear and accessible, while ensuring delivery is specific, coordinated and accountable.

For survivors and victims, accountability must be visible, measurable and easy to access. Survivors and those who support and stand with them have said that they must be able to see and feel the progress our Strategy is driving. Accountability will be continuous, creating regular, safe, and meaningful opportunities for dialogue between survivors, residents, communities, and partners. We will develop a data and outcomes framework to help us understand impact, identify inequalities, track delivery and focus attention on the outcomes that matter most to survivors and victims.

We recognise that some survivors and victims, particularly those from marginalised communities, have experienced disbelief, blame, delay or unsafe responses from statutory systems. Our governance arrangements must help drive changes in practice, strengthen cultural competence, reduce system-induced trauma and rebuild trust. This means creating regular, safe and meaningful opportunities for survivors, residents, communities and partners to influence delivery, scrutinise progress and raise concerns.

We will strengthen leadership across the local authority, building collaborative ways of working that ensure responsibility is shared, upheld, and never diluted. Survivor voices, already integral to the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Partnership Board, will continue to shape decisions and survivors have been invited to co-chair the board. We will continue to strengthen routes for diverse survivor participation so that lived experience shapes decision-making, implementation, monitoring and future priorities. This includes ensuring that the voices of women and girls who face additional barriers to support are heard, including Black and racially minoritised women, disabled women, LGBTQ+ survivors, older women, refugee and migrant women, women experiencing multiple disadvantage, and child survivors and victims.

Governance will also provide clear routes for escalation and shared problem-solving. Where barriers to delivery are identified, or where survivors and partners raise concerns about gaps, poor practice or emerging risks, these will be escalated through the Delivery Group, Strategic Group and Partnership Board. This will help ensure that issues are addressed early, learning is shared across the system, and accountability is held at the right level.

Governance structure

Violence Against Women and Girls Partnership Board

Purpose: strategic partnership for Camden including the Council, police, health, voluntary sector and survivor partners. Receives updates from the Strategic Group, facilitating partnership working. The Board will scrutinise progress, identify system-wide barriers, support partnership accountability and help shape Camden's longer-term ambition for a fully co-owned partnership Strategy by 2030.

Camden Council Violence Against Women and Girls Strategic Group

Purpose: accountable for the delivery of our Strategy; delegates delivery of objectives to (and receives escalations from) the Delivery Group. The Strategic Group will oversee the implementation plan, monitor progress against agreed milestones and outcomes, ensure alignment with related strategies and boards, and provide senior leadership where risks, barriers or gaps in delivery are identified. The strategic group will solicit advice and contributions from VAWG subject matter experts.

Camden Council Violence Against Women and Girls Delivery Group

Purpose: responsible for the delivery of the objectives in our Strategy (may delegate to teams/services or establish task and finish groups as needed). The Delivery Group will bring together relevant services to drive action, monitor progress, identify operational barriers, share learning and establish task and finish groups where needed. It will ensure that delivery is joined up across council services and connected to the work of partners.

The Delivery Group will establish a mechanism to keep all staff involved in VAWG-related services informed, connected, and able to raise emerging trends or challenges directly with both the Delivery and Strategic group. This helps ensure issues are addressed early and that learnings are shared widely. This is how we build a coordinated community response that is accountable, transparent, and led by the voices of survivors.

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Next steps

15. Next steps

Through our Strategy, Camden sets out its ambition to end violence against women and girls. Through a clear vision, commitment and leadership, and integrating the voices of survivors and victims, our Strategy provides direction and cohesion to our activities.

Survivors and victims who engaged with the development of our Strategy welcomed Camden's overall approach, highlighting the need to connect the Council's broad ambitions and scope to the reality of survivors and victims' lived experiences. Intersectionality, cultural inclusion and addressing systemic inequalities are essential factors across all strategic priorities, recognised in Camden's approach of promoting 'equity and justice' through data and insights and listening to the voices of those with lived experience.

The clearly defined scope for violence against women and girls articulated in our Strategy will underpin the Council's focus to strengthen responses across the system. Camden is committed to going beyond previous efforts to ensure every form of violence is prevented, identified earlier and met with support. Through embedding a coordinated community response, we want to facilitate shared community action that ensures Camden becomes a place where women and girls can live safely.

The Strategic Group and Delivery Group, supported and informed by VAWG subject matter experts demonstrate Camden's commitment to leadership in eradicating violence against women and girls. Building on our Strategy, these groups will become more purposeful and interconnected. Coordinated operational activity will be strengthened through ensuring all relevant teams and services are involved in actively driving improvements. Strategic connections will be expanded with other partnership boards covering community safety, children, adults, health and wellbeing, youth justice, and serious violence, facilitating a strategic, cross-sectoral response in Camden.

As outlined elsewhere, Camden Council maintains strong, collaborative relationships with its partner organisations (including the police and criminal justice system, health commissioners and providers, and the voluntary sector) and is determined to elevate these partnerships at a strategic level, recognising their existing strategic and operational work in this area. Our Strategy sets a clear aspiration that by 2030, the borough will enact a partnership Strategy towards embedding truly integrated, cross-sector approaches that ends violence against women and girls.



"Seeing that women are actually reaping the benefits, that's how we'd know the Strategy is working"
Solace Women's Aid

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Support and contact details

16. Support and contact details

If you are experiencing domestic abuse, or know someone who is, please know you are not alone.

Camden Safety Net, our Independent Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Advocate service, provides confidential support and advice for anyone at risk of, or experiencing domestic abuse.

You can contact Camden Safety Net on **020 7974 2526**. Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm. Outside these hours you can contact the National Domestic Abuse Helpline (run by Refuge) 24/7 on **0808 2000 247**.

Community organisations include:

- Hopscotch: supports women from ethnic minorities experiencing abuse
- Jewish Women's Aid: provides advice and therapy services for Jewish women experiencing abuse
- SignHealth: provides advice and support for deaf people experiencing abuse
- Solace: runs the Silver Project for older women experiencing abuse
- Men's Advice Line: domestic abuse helpline for male victims
- Galop: LGBTQ+ and anti-abuse charity
- Latin American Women's Aid: support for Latin American women experiencing abuse
- IKWRO Women's Rights Organisation: support for Middle Eastern and North African women experiencing abuse
- Southall Black Sisters: support for Black and minoritised women experiencing abuse
- Maya Centre: offers free, culturally sensitive counselling and group work
- Sistah Space: supports African and Caribbean heritage women
- Young Women and Girls Services: provides specialist support to girls and young women form 13 to 24 years old
- Women at the Well: provides listening support and referrals for domestic and sexual abuse

National organisations include:

- Refuge: contact the National Domestic Abuse Helpline
- Women's Aid: information and support for victims of domestic abuse
- Paladin Service: advice if you are being stalked
- Coram: children's legal centre
- Rights of Women: free confidential legal advice

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References

References

The following documents and evidence sources have informed the development of the Preventing Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy. Most importantly, this Strategy has been shaped by the voices of survivors and victims who shared their experiences, insights and recommendations throughout the development process. Their lived experience has challenged us to strengthen our ambitions and has directly influenced the priorities and commitments within this Strategy.

Alongside this, the Strategy draws on Camden Council's Public Health-led VAWG Needs Assessment, local data and evidence, practitioner expertise, community feedback, and the contributions of partners across the borough.

It builds on the work of the Camden Women's Forum, Camden Voices Against Abuse (CVAA), and the Violence Against Women and Girls Partnership Board, while also aligning with We Make Camden and wider regional and national strategies to end violence against women and girls.

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Notes

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