



# Thurrock Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2020-2023



Making Violence Against Women and Girls Everyone’s Business - Protecting residents of all genders by working in partnership to prevent and respond to Violence Against Women and Girls crimes & associated behaviours

<b>CONTENTS</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
<b>1 Foreword</b>	3
<b>2 Executive Summary</b>	3
<b>3 VAWG Definition</b>	5
<b>4 Equalities</b>	6
<b>5 5. Strategic Context</b>	8-9
<b>5.1 Vision</b>	
<b>5.2 Cost of VAWG</b>	
<b>5.3 Momentum for VAWG</b>	
<b>6 Strategic Themes &amp; Objectives: Preventing and Responding to VAWG</b>	10-14
<b>6.1 Positive Communities</b>	
<b>6.2 Prevention</b>	
<b>6.3 Partnership</b>	
6.3.1 Locally	
6.3.2 Countywide	
<b>6.4 Provision</b>	15-19
6.4.1 <i>Support services for Domestic Abuse</i>	
6.4.2 <i>Domestic Abuse and Housing</i>	
6.4.3 <i>Support for victims of stalking</i>	
6.4.4 <i>Support for survivors of childhood and adult sexual abuse</i>	
<b>6.5 Protection</b>	19-21
6.5.1 Countywide	
6.5.2 Locally	
<b>7. Future activities and developments</b>	21-23
<b>7.1 Nationally</b>	
<b>7.2 Locally</b>	
<b>8. Closing comments</b>	23-24
<b>9. Definitions of offences</b>	25-26

## **1. Foreword to be agreed by portfolio holder**

Since the publication of our last strategy in 2017, much has changed. There is an increased public awareness of VAWG through the #MeToo and #TimesUp campaigns. These movements have highlighted and provided society with a better over-all understanding of the effects of these crimes and associated behaviours on victims, both physically and mentally.

Thurrock recognises that women are disproportionately represented in areas of both domestic and sexual violence. Whilst this strategy seeks to redress that issue, it also recognises that men and boys can be such victims too and therefore all Thurrock services are accessible for everyone when they are needed.

Despite the increase in greater awareness and understanding, it is widely acknowledged that these type of crimes remain under reported. It is through the brave victims who do come forward, demonstrating strength and courage in difficult circumstances, to report the crimes that have occurred that we learn from their experiences and voices.

We will achieve our planned objectives by raising public and professional awareness, providing early intervention, supporting victims and their families, and assist our law enforcement partners in bringing perpetrators to justice.

I would like to thank all our partners from the statutory, private and voluntary sectors for their on-going commitment in working together to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls in Thurrock.

## **2. Executive Summary**

Violence affects women and girls everywhere all over the world. Rooted in gender inequality, VAWG is a systemic and pervasive human rights abuse that has sadly been normalised into the way societies think and act. It stifles the lives and wellbeing of women and girls, and prevents them from accessing opportunities such as education, healthcare and jobs.<sup>1</sup>

A Home Office review of services indicated that 85% of victims of domestic abuse seek help from professionals at least five times before they receive the support that they need.<sup>2</sup> It is vital that better use is made of these critical opportunities for identification and support. We need to make every contact that we have with individuals meaningful and ask the right questions.

VAWG is also a public health and safeguarding issue. More than 50% of female mental health service users have experienced domestic violence.<sup>3</sup> More than 35% of abused women experience depression and anxiety disorders.<sup>4</sup>

Whilst physical injuries from violence are the most obvious impact, other health related issues can include gynaecological disorders, cardiovascular disease, adverse pregnancy outcomes and sexually transmitted infections. Violence can have direct consequences for health, and it can increase the risk of future ill health.

By responding to VAWG early on and even preventing it, we will reduce the harm it causes to victims, their families and the wider community and lessen the strain on local authority services.

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<sup>1</sup> Violence Against Women and Girls Newsletter Spring 2019

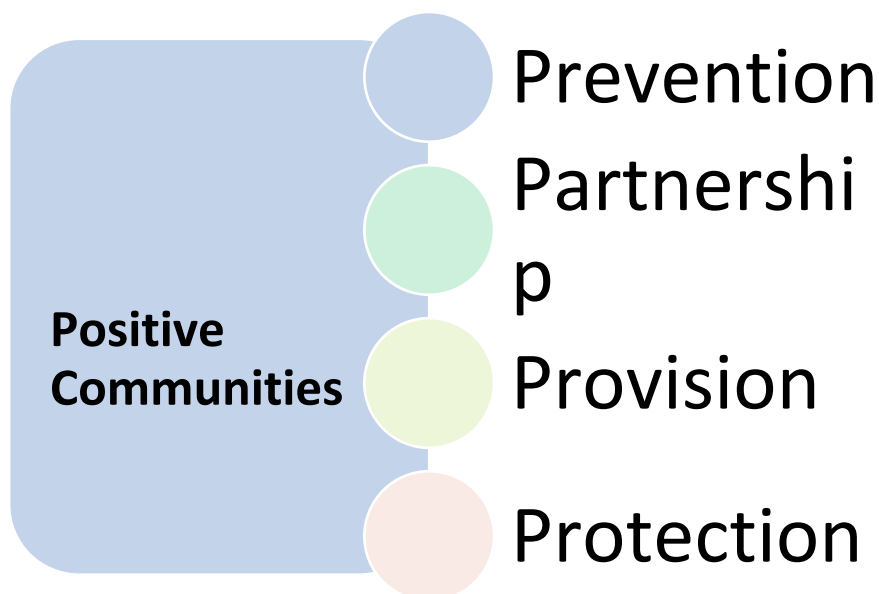
<sup>2</sup> Review led by Department of Communities and Local Government

<sup>3</sup> Department of Health 2003

<sup>4</sup> Astbury, 1999; O'Keane, 2000; Humphreys, 2003; Humphreys and Thiara, 2003; Vidgeon, 2003

The Thurrock VAWG strategy recognises the Government’s ‘Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2016 – 2020’, and its subsequent refresh in 2019<sup>5</sup> which focuses on service provision, prevention, pursuing perpetrators and partnership working; and the Home Office’s ‘Violence Against Women and Girls National Statement of Expectations’ (NSE) published in December 2016, which outlines the expected standards for local areas when commissioning services.

This strategy builds on our existing commitments by setting five priority themes and objectives for action over the next three years. These consist of engaging our support for victims, holding perpetrators accountable, engaging the community through challenging myths and attitudes surrounding these crimes and continuing to build on our strong partnerships. The action plan will be refreshed annually to take into account emerging trends, developments in legislation or working practices. The strategy will be implemented and monitored by the Thurrock VAWG strategic governance group which reports directly to the Thurrock Community Safety Partnership.



When properly understood, a gendered approach to VAWG crimes does not place one gender at a disadvantage compared to the other. In truth, a gender-neutral approach that fails to take account of the differences between men and women and assumes one size fits all can fail to meet the needs of any person suffering because these crimes are experienced differently depending on many factors, including gender. Having a gender-based approach is simply to recognise that the socially attributed norms, roles and expectations of masculinity and femininity which affect intimate relationships and family structures are integral to the use and experience of violence and abuse, whether perpetrated or suffered by men or by women. <sup>6</sup>

### 3. VAWG Definition

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<sup>5</sup>[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/783596/VAWG\\_Strategy\\_Refresh\\_Web\\_Accessible.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/783596/VAWG_Strategy_Refresh_Web_Accessible.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/jt201719/jtselect/jtddab/2075/2075.pdf>

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

*'Any act of gender based violence that results in or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women [or girls], including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty' (1993, Article 1).<sup>7</sup>*

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

VAWG can take place anywhere. It is important that VAWG is not seen as a series of incidents or assaults which an individual experiences. It impacts on the physical safety, health and emotional well-being of individuals and impacts on families, carers, children and the community as a whole.<sup>8</sup>

The Thurrock strategy covers the following forms of VAWG:

- Sexual violence, abuse and exploitation
- Stalking
- Sexual harassment
- Modern day slavery and human trafficking
- Domestic violence and abuse
- Female genital mutilation (FGM)
- Forced marriage
- So called 'Honour' based abuse.

We acknowledge men and boys will also experience and be affected by the range of issues that encompass VAWG and so the strategy includes them within our response. However, we also acknowledge that the above issues disproportionately affect women and girls, which is highlighted in the table below, and our response must be tailored accordingly.

<b>Crimes/ Support offered to victims</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Males</b>	<b>Source</b>
Estimations nationally:	3.4 million	631,000	Crime Survey of England

<sup>7</sup> [https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocities-crimes/Doc.21\\_declaration%20elimination%20vaw.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocities-crimes/Doc.21_declaration%20elimination%20vaw.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> Barnet Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy

Experienced some type of sexual assault since the age of 16			and Wales
Estimations nationally: Aged 16-59 experienced sexual assault in the last year.	510, 000	138,000	Crime Survey of England and Wales
Experienced domestic abuse last year nationally	1,305,000	695, 000	Crime Survey of England and Wales
Supported victims of domestic abuse in Thurrock	377	22	Thurrock Housing safeguarding report: April 2018 to March 2019
Support for forced marriage	1322	297	Forced marriage unit statistics 2018
Estimated number of victims of stalking since aged 16: stalking by partner	1865	556	Crime Survey of England and Wales

We recognise that people may be impacted by more than one type of abuse and that the intersectional nature of each person’s identity will frame their experience and how they access support. Therefore, there is not a one size fits all solution for victims and survivors, but one that involves a bespoke, person-centred approach based on the principles of a multi-agency, partnership response to these issues.<sup>9</sup>

#### 4. Equalities

The Equality Act 2010 brought together over 100 separate pieces of legislation into one single Act, providing a legal framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity for all. The Act provides protection from unlawful discrimination in relation to the following characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy & maternity (which includes breastfeeding), race, religion or belief, sex, marriage and civil partnership, and sexual orientation.

Our approach is framed within a VAWG strategy because these crimes and associated behaviours disproportionately affect women and girls. However, we are committed to ensuring that all victims of these crimes receive appropriate response and the right support. Male victims and those impacted are included in all aspects of our strategy, particularly our prevention and protection themes of the strategy.

Other groups may face additional barriers that prevent them from seeking help - including those from black, Asian, minority, ethnic and refugee communities, disabled victims, elderly victims, the LGBT community and those with no recourse to public funds. Some groups also face language issues and are not able to express their feelings and experiences while some others experience the cultural expectations which may deter them from making reports. We seek through this strategy to ensure that all victims of these crimes can access the support they need.

GALOP has identified the prevalence and experiences of abuse within the LGBT+ communities that are reflected on a national basis. Research suggests that intimate partner violence occurs with equal or higher prevalence in same-sex relationships as in opposite sex couples. For example, Stonewall UK reports 25% of lesbian and bisexual women and 40% of gay and bisexual men have experienced at least one incident of domestic abuse from a partner. Transgender individuals are even at a higher

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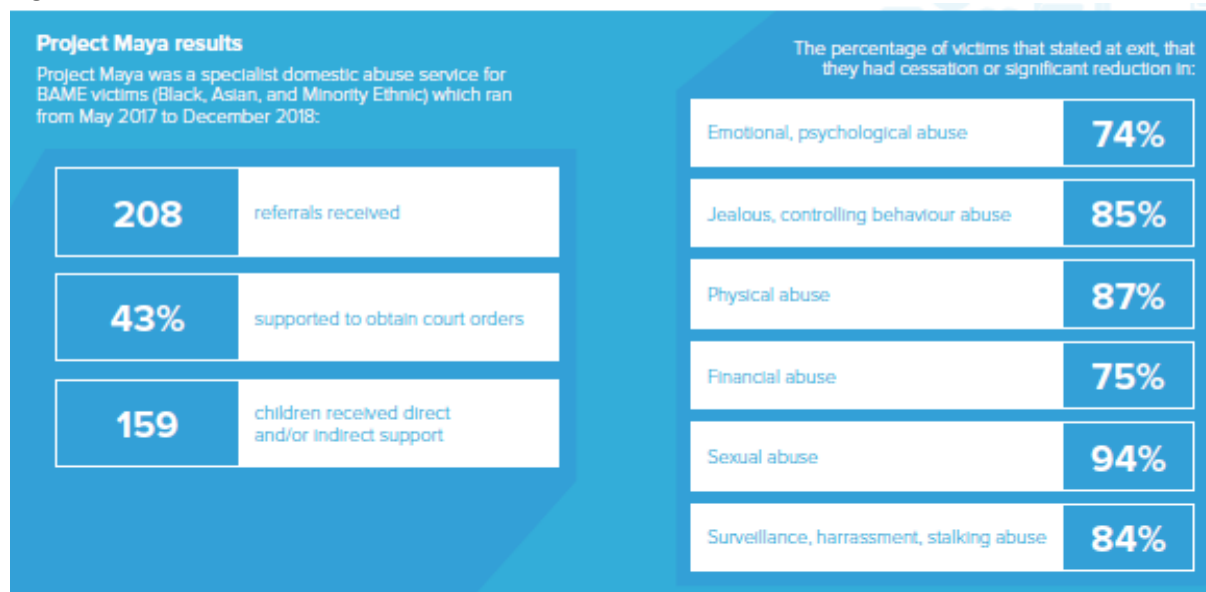
<sup>9</sup> Violence against Women and Girls 2018-2019 Addendum to the 2015-18 Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy

risk, as research from Scotland demonstrates up to 80% of transgender participants had experienced domestic abuse from a partner. Research suggests that under-reporting is a problem. Approximately 60% to 80% of LGBT+ survivors, have never reported incidents to the police or try to find advice, support, or protection from organisations and services.<sup>10</sup> We are aware that there are additional barriers for transgender people, how they define their gender and choose services that are appropriate to their needs. There is a need for further awareness and training in this area across all organisations that deliver a service that have an impact on VAWG outcomes. This will be addressed through our strategic objectives and action plan.

The previous action plan saw the delivery of Project Maya, named after Maya Angelou, the American poet and civil rights activist. This was a specialist domestic abuse service for BAME (Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic) individuals. Provider led, by SOS Domestic Abuse Projects (SOSDAP) and Changing Pathways (CP), it covers the South-East Essex corridor. The project aim was to be innovative in reaching BAME communities across the South-East Essex corridor. Key outcomes from the project are highlighted below, which demonstrates the range of issues identified that stretch across the VAWG agenda. Changing pathways are waiting for future funding outcome decisions to continue the level of intense support that this role requires. Our action plan will aim to address any equality issues and difficulties faced by victims and remove those barriers.

For further information on equalities and this strategy, the Equality Impact Assessment is at Appendix 1.

Figure 1 <sup>11</sup>



## 5. Strategic Context

### 5.1 Vision

<sup>10</sup> Magić, J. & Kelley, P. (2018). LGBT+ people’s experiences of domestic abuse: a report on Galop’s domestic abuse advocacy service. London: Galop, the LGBT+ anti-violence charity.

<sup>11</sup> Changing pathway statistics, image from SETDAB Annual Report 2018-19

We know that the impacts of VAWG are far reaching and can be seen across a wide range of council services, including Community Safety, Education, Housing, Employment and Health. This is not a one agency solution, it will require many to help change this trend, therefore our vision is:

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*Making VAWG Everyone's Business - Protecting residents of all genders by working in partnership to prevent and respond to VAWG crimes and behaviours*

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## 5.2 Cost of VAWG

The cost to individuals is incredibly difficult to measure, on the other hand the costs of violence and abuse to the economy can be calculated and are considerable. Sylvia Walby's report estimates that providing public services to victims of domestic violence and the lost economic output of women affected costs the UK £15.8 billion annually. The cost to Health, Housing and Social Services, Criminal Justice and civil Legal services is estimated at £3.9 billion.<sup>12</sup>

Violence against women costs society upwards of 2% of global GDP, according to a new report by CARE International. Survivors bear the highest costs - as much as six times the cost to the state. Governments pay the bulk of the service provision costs and the private sector bears significant costs in terms of lost productivity. Losses from stress and sexual harassment in the workplace are estimated at 1% to 3.5% of GDP over a range of countries.<sup>13</sup>

The Home Office has published a report into the economic and social cost of domestic abuse which reveals the crime cost England and Wales £66 billion in 2016 to 2017. The estimated cost for a single victim of domestic abuse is £34,015. According to the research, the vast majority of this cost (£47 billion) was a result of the physical and emotional harm of domestic abuse, however it also includes other factors such as cost to Health Services (£2.3 billion), police (£1.3 billion) and victim services (£724 million).<sup>14</sup>

The effects of sexual violence and abuse also incur vast socioeconomic costs which manifest as both tangible and intangible costs as well as direct and indirect costs. The tangible costs of sexual violence and abuse (SVA) are taken to include direct costs such as; medical, physical and mental health costs as well those related to housing, police investigations and criminal prosecutions. Indirect costs may also occur through employee's loss of productivity and income and personal financial losses due to injury or inability to work. Intangible costs are taken to include the psychological pain and suffering of victims/survivors, and a generalised, heightened fear of victimisation which may impact on ability to function normally and achieve aspirations. It is important to recognise that these costs can stretch on for years and decades following an incident of SVA. Providing survivors with prompt access to services that support them to recover in the immediate aftermath and beyond is not only ethical but also likely to be highly cost effective.

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<sup>12</sup>[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/522166/VAWG\\_Strategy\\_FINAL\\_PUBLICATION\\_MASTER\\_vRB.PDF](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/522166/VAWG_Strategy_FINAL_PUBLICATION_MASTER_vRB.PDF)

<sup>13</sup> Counting the Cost: The Price Society Pays for Violence against Women (March 2018)

<sup>14</sup> Oliver, R et al. 2019. The economic and social costs of domestic abuse: research report 107. Home Office.



## 5.3 Momentum for VAWG

In recent years, tackling violence against women in girls in all its forms, has been recognised and has resulted in new legislation. An example of some changes to the legislative landscape are summarised in figure 2.

*Figure 2*

2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National cross government paper: Call to End Violence against Women and Girls - followed by annual action plans</li> </ul>
2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduction of Domestic Homicide reviews (enactment of S9 Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004)</li> </ul>
2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thurrock Council Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2012</li> <li>Amendments to the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 which makes stalking a specific offence.</li> </ul>
2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The definition of domestic violence is expanded to cover more victims. Young people aged 16 to 17 and coercive control. Pattern of controlling behaviour included for the first time.</li> </ul>
2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Forced marriage is introduced as an offence under the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime &amp; Policing Act 2014</li> <li>The Care Act 2014 which included new duties to protect vulnerable adults affected by gender violence</li> <li>The Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (known as Clare's Law) is rolled out</li> </ul>
2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Serious Crime Act 2015 strengthens the law against Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and domestic abuse</li> <li>The Modern Slavery Act 2015 which can be used to address the cross border issues linked to Trafficking</li> <li>SETDAB Joint Commissioning Strategy for Domestic Abuse 2015-20</li> </ul>
2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National Strategy: Ending Violence Against Women and Girls 2016-20</li> <li>National Statement of Expectations</li> </ul>
2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thurrock Council Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2017-2020</li> </ul>
2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NHS England published their 5-year Strategic Direction for Sexual Assault and Abuse Services</li> </ul>
2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stalking Protection Act</li> <li>Voyeurism (Offences) Act</li> <li>National Strategy: Ending Violence Against Women and Girls strategy refresh 2016-20 (March 2019)</li> <li>3rd update report on UK ratification of the Istanbul Convention</li> </ul>
2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Domestic Abuse Bill is anticipated early 2020</li> <li>Compulsory Relationships Education for primary pupils and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) for secondary pupils from September</li> </ul>

**Locally** - VAWG is situated within the Thurrock Community Safety Partnership (TCSP) and forms part of the TCSP plan for 2019/20 under priority 2, violence and vulnerability<sup>15</sup> which states: -

- Support all victims of domestic abuse, sexual offences including rape, child exploitation and abuse, stalking and honour based abuse i.e. forced marriage and
- Female Genital Mutilation and target the perpetrators of those offences
- Tackle Violence Against Women and Girls in line with current strategy

### Domestic Homicide Reviews

Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHR/'s) were established on a statutory basis under the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004. A DHR is undertaken when the death of a person aged 16 or over has, or appears to have, resulted from violence, abuse or neglect by a person to whom he was related or with whom he was or had been in an intimate relationship or a member of the same

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/sites/default/files/assets/documents/tcsp-plan-2019-v02.pdf>

household as himself. They are also undertaken where a victim took their own life (suicide) and the circumstances give rise to concern, for example it emerges that there was coercive controlling behaviour in the relationship. Sadly, the number of people killed as a result of domestic violence in the UK is at its highest level in five years.

Last year, 173 people were killed in domestic violence-related homicides, according to data obtained by the BBC from 43 police forces across the UK - an increase of 32 deaths on 2017. In England and Wales, between April 2014 and March 2017, around three-quarters of victims of domestic killings by a partner, ex-partner or family member were women, while suspects are predominantly male. Whilst both men and women are killed by domestic violence, the vast majority of victims are women. One criminologist described them as "invisible victims of knife crime".<sup>16</sup>

It is the responsibility of the Community Safety Partnership to establish a DHR and appoint an Independent Chair and/or Report Writer. The DHR process in Essex was centralised and streamlined in July 2017 with the Southend Essex Thurrock (SET) Domestic Abuse (DA) Team taking over any cases from local Community Safety Partnerships (CSP) that started between April 2017 and June 2017. The SET DA Team coordinate the process while working closely with the CSPs. Differing levels of reviews were introduced with a core group structure to consider any notifications received. Since the introduction of this legislation, Thurrock have not had to conduct a DHR. However the community safety partnership continue to learn from the reviews that have already been published, nationally and across Essex.

## **6 Strategic Objectives: Preventing and Responding to VAWG in Thurrock**

The following five themes will be the focus for tackling VAWG in Thurrock. Each theme has an underlining objective that will drive delivery. The themes detail the comprehensive nature of work that will contribute towards tackling these issues. The themes should be considered as overarching guidance due to many of the strands of work overlapping with each other.

### **6.1 Positive Communities**

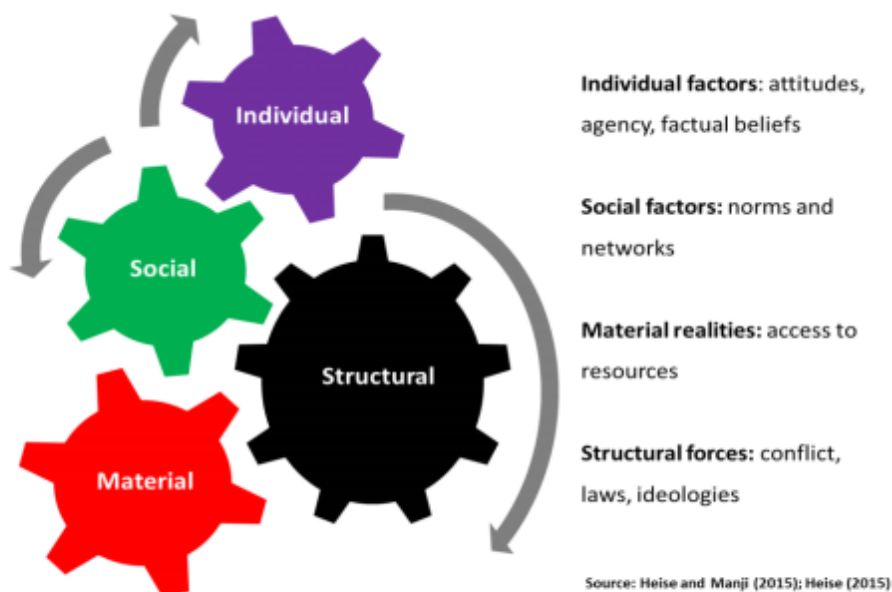
**Engage our local communities through training and awareness of VAWG crimes and associated behaviours, enabling them to stand up and say 'no' to these crimes in their community.**

'No single factor alone causes VAWG. It is caused by a combination of drivers operating at different levels of the social ecology. These risk factors include a person's genetic predisposition, developmental history and attitudes or beliefs; their relationships and household dynamics; community factors such as social norms and levels of poverty; and macro-level factors such as religious ideologies, gender regimes, and market forces that affect realities at all the other levels.' (Source Heise (1998; 2011))<sup>17</sup>.

*Figure 3: Factors sustaining VAWG and preventing change*

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-49459674>

<sup>17</sup> Violence against women: an integrated, ecological framework, Heise (1998)



Communication is of upmost importance, especially within local communities. Communities are the eyes and ears of local activity and can often engage people when statutory services are unable too. Community engagement is vital to the ongoing prevention and awareness-raising activities around VAWG issues. In order to tackle harmful social norms, interventions need to create new shared beliefs within an individual’s reference group, which in turn changes expectations around behaviour.

18

Training and information will give communities the confidence to challenge certain behaviours, or think about their own behaviours and seek support for any concerns they have. This theme will focus on raising awareness and providing local residents and businesses with the knowledge and confidence to help themselves, or another friend, relative or stranger to access support.

An example of a successful community event was the jointly hosted women’s health event. A local event took place at the British Red Cross in Tilbury, 18 women attended. The event discussed FGM, domestic violence, breast examination and cervical smear tests. The feedback received was extremely positive and the women have requested coffee mornings to learn more. A survivor of Female Genital Mutilation shared her experience which left the other women feeling angry and passionate on her behalf. Key learning from the event was that women are reluctant to share any type of abuse suffered as they fear it will impact on their immigration status in the UK. This type of feedback is vitally important to help us to respond appropriately.<sup>19</sup>

Connecting our communities together through knowledge and empowerment is important if we are going to achieve change. The accompanying action plan will have a focus on improved community involvement and engagement through training and awareness raising. Our local providers and organisations will play a pivotal role in helping us to achieve this outcome.

<sup>18</sup>[https://www.oecd.org/dac/genderdevelopment/VAWG%20HELPDESK\\_DFID%20GUIDANCE%20NOTE\\_SOCIAL%20NORMS\\_JAN%202016.pdf](https://www.oecd.org/dac/genderdevelopment/VAWG%20HELPDESK_DFID%20GUIDANCE%20NOTE_SOCIAL%20NORMS_JAN%202016.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> Specialist FGM worker

## 6.2 Prevention

**Increased awareness and education of all VAWG crimes and associated behaviours within schools and across various professions. Implementing safeguarding and harm prevention activities.**

Prevention of these crimes from happening in the first place is essential to help stop the cycle of abuse. This strand will be closely linked to the positive communities.

The education of children and young people about healthy relationships, abuse, informed consent and raise awareness of key issues is a vital element to stop the beginning of abuse.

Education has a key role to play and schools have a large part to play in the delivery of this. The Department for Education is introducing compulsory Relationships Education for primary pupils and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) for secondary pupils from September 2020. The statutory guidance states that 'pupils should know the concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence and FGM, and how these can affect current and future relationships and Grooming, sexual exploitation and domestic abuse, including coercive and controlling behaviour, should also be addressed sensitively and clearly.'<sup>20</sup>

This early preventative work is welcomed and will assist and help children and young people in forming appropriate attitudes towards a range of topics. The guidance requests that assumptions are not made about the behaviour of boys and young men and that they are not made to feel that certain behaviours are an inevitable part of being male; most young men are respectful of young women and each other. The Thurrock VAWG strategic governance group will work closely with partners to assist schools in implementing this compulsory guidance into schools.

Sadly children will often be witnesses to domestic abuse and other crimes. Research shows that one in seven (14.2%) children and young people under the age of 18 will have lived with domestic violence at some point in their childhood. Between January 2005 and August 2015 (inclusive) 19 children and two women were killed by perpetrators of domestic abuse in circumstances relating to child contact (formally or informally arranged) <sup>21</sup>(Women's Aid, 2016).

Areas where prevention is paramount is within the crime of female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage. In 2018, the Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) gave advice or support related to a possible forced marriage in 1,764 cases.<sup>22</sup> Thurrock council have produced an internal e-learning module for staff to raise awareness of forced marriage and its links to so called 'honour' based abuse. Thurrock have a dedicated FGM specialist social worker embedded into social care service provision. Since January 2019 there have been 8 FGM cases that were new referrals. There is one ongoing Female Genital Mutilation Protection Order (FGMPO) in place, which requires the female to be seen no less than 6 times per year. The social worker provides advice and consultation to professionals in relation to FGM during the holiday periods, and lunchtime drop in sessions on Breast Flattening and specialist knowledge and resources to assess risk when working with families. There are also seminars on the FGM assessment tool and Child Abuse Linked to Faith & Belief.

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<sup>20</sup>[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/805781/Relationships\\_Education\\_Relationships\\_and\\_Sex\\_Education\\_RSE\\_and\\_Health\\_Education.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/805781/Relationships_Education_Relationships_and_Sex_Education_RSE_and_Health_Education.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.womensaid.org.uk/information-support/what-is-domestic-abuse/impact-on-children-and-young-people/>

<sup>22</sup> Forced Marriage Unit Statistics 2018

## 6.3 Partnership

### Effective multi-agency arrangements exploring VAWG crimes, sharing of information and good practice.

#### Locally

Across the county of Essex, there are governance arrangements in place for all working alongside each other helping victims of domestic abuse. Thurrock commit to these arrangements as well as delivering the VAWG agenda in Thurrock. Thurrock are the only authority in Essex to have a VAWG specific strategy. Thurrock VAWG strategic governance group deliver the action plan of this strategy. Updates on progress of delivery is provided quarterly to the VAWG strategic governance group and annually to the TCSP Board and Cleaner Greener Overview and Scrutiny. Partnership events, such as this years' VAWG conference attended by 100 professionals, are key to sharing our progress wider and seeking ideas for future development.

Thurrock have significant multi-agency arrangements in place who work together improving safeguarding for clients.

Thurrock Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) includes a wide range of statutory and non-statutory agencies, such as Children's Social Care, Health agencies, Police, Probation, Youth Offending Service, Housing, Early Help Services, Mental Health Services, Domestic Violence Service provider, Adult Social Care, Substance Misuse services. All partners work together to provide the highest level of knowledge and analysis to make sure that all safeguarding activity and intervention is timely, proportionate and necessary. Observing rolling year to date data, figures show that the Thurrock MASH team received 7367 referrals into the service. Of these, a total of 2482 referrals had a domestic abuse component. This equates to 33.7% of all referrals. This is a marked improvement from the previous figure of 40%. August data also showed an increase of transfer rate to the Prevention & Support Service, totalling 14.2%. This is a positive trend. This service provides integrated support to children, young people and their families. The key objective of the service is to offer practical advice, support and direct case work to families to prevent issues escalating and requiring statutory intervention.<sup>23</sup>

Thurrock Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) is placed within Thurrock MASH, meeting weekly to respond to all high risk referrals and MARAC to MARAC referrals. MARAC considers cases identified as high risk through the use of the Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Harassment and 'Honour'-based violence risk model (DASH). The number of cases heard at MARAC have increased from 2018. When looking at the repeat referrals over a two year comparison, there has been a large reduction in cases returning to MARAC, from 12% down to 3%. Referrals from agencies other than the police have also increased. Victim feedback is very positive. Feedback received of cases heard, report a positive impact from the multi-agency plans created within MARAC. The response rate to feedback from April 2019 is currently 59% and of those, 93% have reported feeling safer after their case was heard, meaning that a significantly high number of those who gave feedback felt they had benefited from the case being heard at MARAC.<sup>24</sup> There is a robust audit process of MARAC internally via random dip audits and across all MARACs countywide through the Southend, Essex & Thurrock (SET) MARAC Scrutiny Panel.

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<sup>23</sup> K Quantrill Team manager: November 2018-4<sup>th</sup> Dec 2019

<sup>24</sup> Thurrock Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) Report and Development Plan 2019

## Countywide

There is a large amount of countywide partnership working that will assist and influence the Thurrock VAWG agenda.

The Southend, Essex and Thurrock Domestic Abuse Board (SETDAB) is made up of representatives from agencies and organisations working to join up and better facilitate Southend, Essex and Thurrock's vision where everyone lives a life free from domestic abuse. SETDAB provides strategic leadership to address domestic abuse by providing a multi-agency framework, common ethos and co-ordinated approach to innovate, drive change and address domestic abuse across Southend, Essex and Thurrock. Closely linked is the Southend, Essex and Thurrock Domestic Abuse Board (SETDAB) and the delivery of the Board's 'Joint Commissioning Strategy for Domestic Abuse, 2015-20'.

Thurrock are an active member of the Sexual Abuse Strategic Partnership. The Board is represented by a range of relevant partners recognising the importance of each organisation's response to Sexual Violence and Abuse. The Sexual Abuse Strategic Partnership Board will utilise the multi-agency framework and ensure it coordinates the approach to innovate and drive change in order to deliver against the strategy.<sup>25</sup> This group is also the Governance for the Regional NHS England, 5-year Strategic Direction Plan for Sexual Assault and Abuse Services.

Thurrock Local Safeguarding Children Partnership has joined with its Southend and Essex Board partners to develop an Essex wide Child Sexual Exploitation strategy that supports children from across the County. The strategy outlines the overarching approach to tackling child sexual exploitation across Southend, Essex and Thurrock, and provides a coherent Essex-wide response which is both needs-led and outcomes-focused. Sexual exploitation of Children and Young People under 18 involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people (or a third person or persons) receive 'something' (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of them performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities. Child Sexual Exploitation can occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition; for example being persuaded to post sexual images on the Internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain. In all cases, those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child or young person's limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Southend, Essex and Thurrock Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy 2020-23

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.thurrocklscp.org.uk/lscp/professionals/child-sexual-exploitation-cse>

## **6.4 Provision**

### **Support victims of VAWG crimes with the appropriate service for their need**

There is a huge amount of energy and commitment to deliver across the VAWG agenda in Thurrock. There are a number of services of support. According to the Crime Survey for England and Wales year ending March 2019, an estimated 5.7% of adults (2.4 million) experienced domestic abuse in the last year. The police recorded a total of 1,316,800 domestic abuse-related incidents and crimes, of these, 746,219 were recorded as domestic abuse-related crimes, an increase of 24% from the previous year. As the survey showed no significant change in the prevalence of domestic abuse, the increase in police recorded crime may reflect improved recording by the police and increased reporting by victims.

#### **6.4.1 Support services for Domestic Abuse**

- A countywide service provides support for ‘high risk’ adult victims of domestic abuse. In Thurrock, this is delivered by the specialist domestic abuse support provider, Changing Pathways. Advisors work in partnership with statutory and voluntary services which supports victims, facilitating access to relevant services and information as well as completing risk assessments and safety plans.
- A health focused Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA) is also within Basildon University Hospital.
- 74 Thurrock contacts to the IDVA service since April 2019<sup>27</sup>

The current IDVA service is commissioned by the Essex Police and Fire Crime Commissioner and Essex County Council, with a contribution from Thurrock Council, it commenced in April 2019.

#### **6.4.2 Domestic Abuse and Housing**

The Housing Safeguarding (HS) Team work with reports of domestic abuse (DA), sexual abuse (SA), honour based crimes and forced marriage. The team started working within the Housing Service from 1st July 2015 and the Sanctuary Scheme was brought in-house. The team includes a Housing Safeguarding Manager and a Domestic Abuse Officer, who are both IDVAs. They have oversight of the Thurrock Women’s Refuge provided by Changing Pathways. The contract was renewed in 2019 for a further four years. The refuge is for female victims and their families fleeing Domestic Abuse. There are two Community Liaison Officers, who provide community outreach and work with survivors leaving Thurrock Women’s Refuge and help them resettle back into permanent accommodation. This support is a much needed investment, given the startling figure that 70% of children living in UK refuges have been abused by their father. (Bowker et al., 1998)<sup>28</sup>

The team work with survivors by assessing the risk level and ensuring appropriate safety planning is put in place to keep survivors safe. They work to support vulnerable residents who require additional support to access Housing Services. Resident’s disclosure of domestic or sexual abuse are supported by a victim centred approach and are assisted in a confidential, sensitive and non-judgemental manner.

The team work closely with Thurrock MASH and are also a core member of the Thurrock MARAC. They are core members of the South Essex Domestic Abuse Hub with partners from Basildon, Brentwood, Tendring, Castle Point and Rochford. The team also work with internal partners within

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<sup>27</sup> Statistics from Changing pathways November 2019

<sup>28</sup> Bowker et al., 1998 <https://www.ncjrs.gov/App/Publications/abstract.aspx?ID=119050>

the Housing Options Team to carry out risk assessments for those who approach the service as homeless applicants who are survivors.

The Sanctuary Scheme supports victims of domestic abuse, sexual violence or hate crime by providing professionally installed security measures to allow those experiencing these crimes to target-harden their homes. It is a method of homelessness prevention, offering additional security measures to allow survivors to remain at home should they wish. This enables them to remain in their own homes, where it is safe for them to do so, and they so wish to do. In Thurrock the Council offers this service to victims of all tenures and work with registered providers in the borough to safeguard all survivors. From Feb 2018 to Dec 2019 there were 136 sanctuary interventions.

From April 2018 to March 2019, the team have assisted 399 survivors, of which 377 were women (94.5%) and 22 were men (5.5%), non-binary was 0%. A total of 6 cases were for sexual abuse which represents 1.5% of all cases. The team do not utilise Domestic Abuse Stalking and Honour-Based (DASH) risk assessments for measuring levels of risk in sexual abuse cases, instead they use the South Essex Rape Incest Crisis Centre (SERICC) referral form more specific to identifying the level of risk to this particular client group. The average number of cases the team receive monthly, is reflects that there are three areas in Thurrock identified as having the most number of disclosures: Grays 40%, Tilbury 15%, and South Ockenden and Aveley 22 %. The survivors who fled from outside the Thurrock borders have continued to increase over the period. This number represents 9% of disclosures, up 1% from last year. The areas of Purfleet, Stanford Le Hope and Corringham represent 5% and 9%, respectively. The domestic abuse casework figure represents those referrals received from Adult Social Care, Tenancy Officers, self-referrals and community outreach.

Category	2018/2019
Domestic Abuse Stalking Honour-Based Risk Assessments	393
South Essex Rape Incest Crisis Centre (SERICC) referral forms	6
Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference cases	169
Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub	145
Domestic Abuse Casework	143
Sanctuary Scheme	66
Homelessness advice	65
Sexual Abuse	6
Reciprocal applications	5

The team have delivered two workshops with our contractor Mears. Twelve survivors living at the Thurrock Women’s Refuge attended the sessions on basic electrical training. Further enrolment in the Mears trade school are planned for 2020.<sup>29</sup> The service will also be working with the VAWG strategic governance group to seek the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation. This is viewed as the benchmark for how housing providers should respond to domestic abuse in the UK.

<sup>29</sup> Housing safeguarding report April 18-March 19



### **6.4.3 Support for victims of stalking**

Stalking impacts on all areas of the community from the individual victim, extending out to friends, family, work colleagues and other associates. If the victim has children, the stalking can also have an impact on them.

Stalking can occur in many forms and is a serious crime, despite common misconceptions. Stalking is also becoming more common through the use of technology and is often referred to as cyberstalking. It is a pattern of unwanted, fixated and obsessive behaviour which is intrusive and causes fear of violence or serious alarm or distress. 1 in 5 women and 1 in 10 men will experience staking in their adult life (Home Office) 2009/10.<sup>30</sup>

Changing Pathways Independent Stalking Advocacy Service is a local service within Thurrock to help victims of stalking. They have four training anti-stalking caseworkers, two are Independent Stalking Advocacy Caseworkers (ISAC). The number of stalking referrals since Jan 1st 2019 from Thurrock has been 33.<sup>31</sup> The team consist of stalking case workers (ISACs), a group titled, 'Talking Stalking' and IDVAs trained in Stalking across the partnership. Further funding is currently being sourced to continue this specialised service.

This year there was a multiagency supported stalking awareness campaign across Southend Essex and Thurrock. The campaign, was led by the tagline 'Stalking is a crime: if you see the signs, we'll see the bigger picture', and was promoted by all councils and partners. Support for survivors of childhood and adult sexual abuse.

### **6.4.4 Support for survivors of childhood and adult sexual abuse**

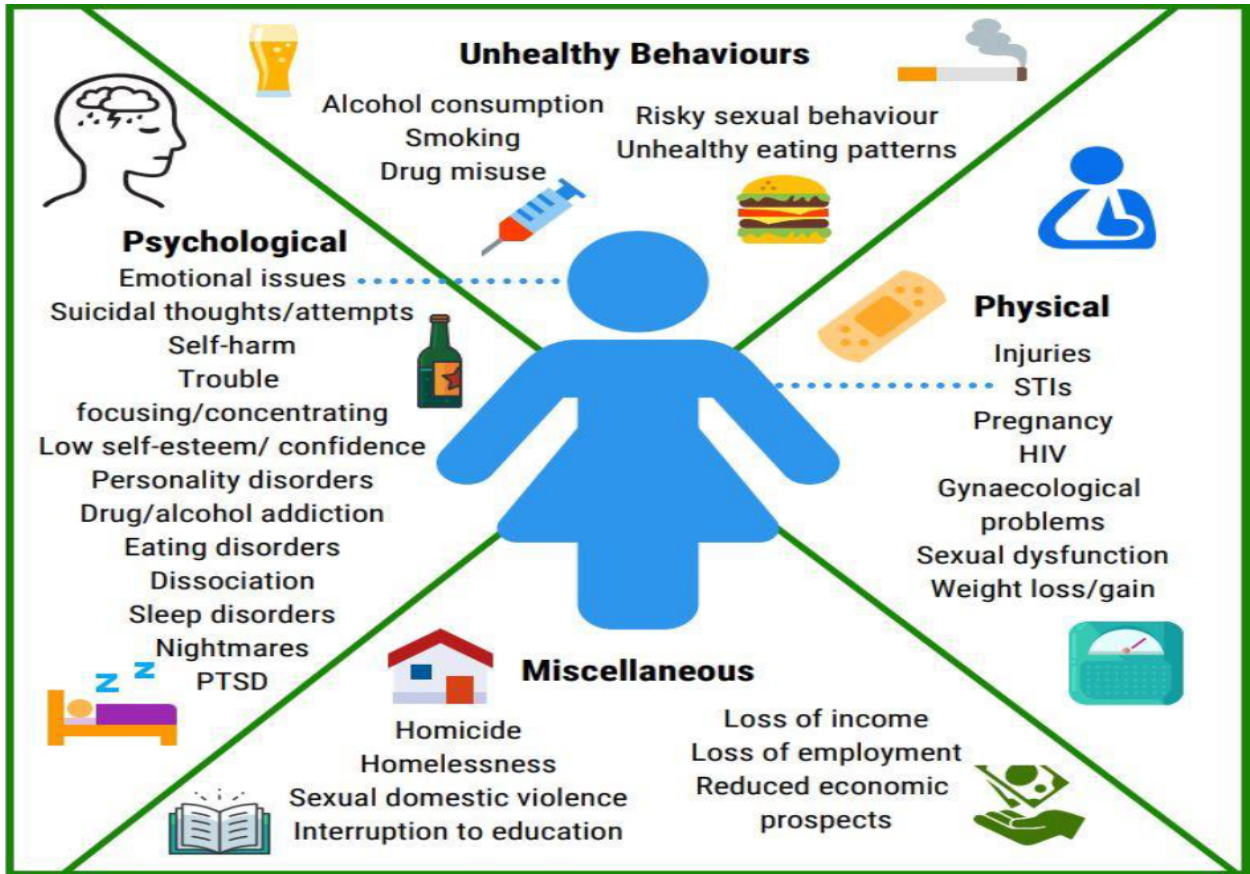
A key piece of work in helping us with our understanding of sexual violence is the recently completed 'Sexual Violence and Abuse: A Thurrock Joint Strategic Needs Assessment' (JSNA). The needs assessment led by Thurrock Public Health sought to further our understanding of the nature, prevalence and types of sexual violence and abuse occurring locally in Thurrock. This assessment is a unique piece of work, engaging with local survivors and professionals. It is believed to be the first JSNA nationally to solely focus in this depth on sexual violence and abuse. Application of the national estimates from the Crime Survey for England and Wales to local Thurrock population figures suggests that 10,116 females and 1,985 males have experienced sexual assault since the age of 16. It is estimated that locally approximately 2,718 Thurrock residents of all ages, experienced some form of sexual violence or abuse in the last 12 months. The disparity between estimated victims and actual reporting is a concern. The Crime Survey for England and Wales showed that around 83% of victims did not report their experiences to the police, this mirrored locally with only 316 victims reporting SVA crimes to Essex police in 2018/19. The impact of these crimes is multifaceted some of these issues are highlighted in the image below.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Home office 2009/2010

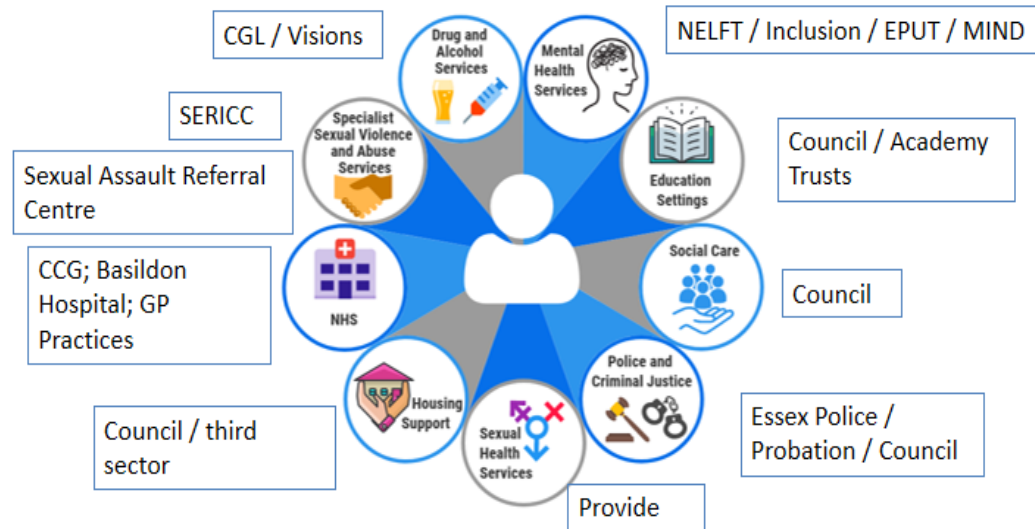
<sup>31</sup> Changing pathways

<sup>32</sup> Thurrock Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategic Needs Assessment.



When victims do come forward, there are a range of support services available. The summary of Thurrock provision for sexual violence and abuse is detailed in the image below.

### Range of specialist and non-specialist services



The offer of specialist sexual violence support services including:

- Independent Sexual Violence Advisers (ISVA) providing specialist support and advocacy for victims and survivors throughout the Criminal Justice System.
- Sexual Violence Advocacy Support providing sexual violence advocacy in relation to homelessness, debt, interruption to employment/education and independent living.
- Specialist Sexual Violence Counselling Service offering specialist, confidential counselling and support to anyone who has experienced any form of sexual violence.
- Children and Families providing direct work with children and young people that have experienced sexual violence/abuse and the wider family members, including siblings and parents who are impacted by sexual violence.

Oakwood Place is a Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC), jointly commissioned by NHS England and Essex Police Fire and Crime Commissioner. The centre offers a service to men, women and children who have been raped or sexually assaulted. This may be acute or non-recent. This service includes immediate care such as forensic evidence collection and medical care. The service can be accessed by the police, an outside agency or the client themselves. In the period, April 1st, 2016 to March 31st, 2017, Oakwood Place received 298 referrals. Of these referrals, 22 were self-referrals. This is a marked increase compared to the previous year's total of only 1 self-referral. 93% of total clients were females, males were 6% and transgender were 1%.<sup>33</sup>

The JSNA made a number of recommendations which require a robust partnership approach to improve the current landscape for survivors of SVA crimes. The recommendations are going through a governance process and so cannot be detailed here at this time. The VAWG strategic governance group will work closely with our partners to implement the agreed recommendations and make the necessary improvements for those who need the services the most.

## **6.5 Protection**

**Appropriate intervention for all individuals displaying concerning behaviours. Seeking sustainable behaviour change in identified perpetrators. Perpetrators are brought to justice.**

The Home Office VAWG strategy recognises the need to work with perpetrators, stating 'we cannot simply arrest our way out of domestic and sexual violence.' 'Through supporting interventions that lead to sustainable behaviour change in perpetrators themselves we will drive an overall reduction in prevalence of VAWG crimes and reduced rates of re-offending.

Nationally there are programmes available which are delivered at a local level by the Essex Community Rehabilitation Company, such as Building Better Relationships, which is also run in Thurrock for Brighter Futures, to work with perpetrators of domestic abuse.

### **6.5.1 Countywide**

Consequently, it was extremely encouraging to see that SETDAB were successful in a countywide bid to the VAWG Transformation Fund and secured £450,000 to deliver a host of VAWG perpetrator

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<sup>33</sup> Essex SARC annual report 2016-2017

pathways aimed at tackling perpetrators of domestic abuse. These focused on the following key areas:

1. The Community Perpetrator outreach programme (The Change Project) delivered by the Change Project. This project provides expert services for cases in which domestic abuse (DA) is a feature. This is in the form of a consultation service and workshops to upskill practitioners working with families, and a voluntary one-to-one perpetrator intervention that agencies can refer to.
2. The Bystander Intervention (Bringing in the Bystander) delivered by the University of Essex and Anglia Ruskin University. This intervention is delivered to staff and students, and is delivered in a workshop format which teaches bystanders how to safely intervene in situations in which sexual violence, DA or stalking are occurring, or are at risk of occurring.
3. The Prison-based intervention (CHOICES Programme) delivered by The Essex Community Rehabilitation Company Limited. CHOICES is a voluntary 12-session, group-based programme for adult male prisoners for whom DA is identified as an issue. The programme aims to equip participants with the understanding and skills to promote healthy relationships and behaviours.
4. The Male-mentoring programme (The Good Man Project) delivered by Essex County Council Youth Services. This is a 5-week programme that can be delivered in a group or one-to-one, for young men aged 13-18 who are at risk of entering into abusive relationships. The programme aims to educate participants to show respect in relationships, and what differentiates a healthy relationship from an unhealthy one.<sup>34</sup>

The evaluation of these interventions highlighted positive outcomes from all programmes. The funding for this suite of interventions will end in March 2020, therefore these programmes are currently under review.

### **6.5.2 Locally**

In 2018 Thurrock Council seconded a Domestic Abuse Advisor into post, based within Thurrock Children's Services for 9 months. The success of this role as a lead for domestic abuse and undertaking direct work with perpetrators highlighted a gap in this area. Thurrock made a permanent role of and employed a Domestic Abuse Interventions Manager in July 2019. The aim of the position is to provide guidance and support to Thurrock Children's Services in cases linked to domestic abuse, development and oversight of MARAC, interventions for perpetrators, victims and their children and training to multiple teams, with the aim to upskill front line staff in direct work.<sup>35</sup>

Thurrock utilise the Domestic Violence Interventions Programme delivered over a 26-week period, this is a RESPECT accredited perpetrator programme for men. Importantly, it also provides support for (ex) partners regarding practical and safety issues.

Another area of work is the response we can offer when finding victims and perpetrators of modern day slavery and human trafficking. Our main focus would be in the preventative and positive community objectives, but we have a lot to learn from the statistics of these crimes across Essex. The table below demonstrates the investigation demand on West LPA (Thurrock is within this grouping). Females are suffering most from sexual exploitation and domestic servitude, males from

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<sup>34</sup> <https://setdab.org/resource/vawg-evaluation-report/>

<sup>35</sup> Thurrock Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) Report and Development Plan 2019

labour and criminal exploitation. Thurrock will be an active member of the Antislavery partnership which Thurrock will host its inaugural meeting in January 2020. By working together we will be better informed to protect the victims and bring the perpetrators to justice.

**Table 2 - Investigation Demand**

LPA	Year to Date (01/01/2019 - 30/10/2019)	Previous Week (24/10/2019 - 30/10/2019)	Last Week (31/10/2019 - 06/11/2019)
North LPA	145	0	3
South LPA	83	3	0
West LPA	100	1	1
Force	0	0	0
Out of Force	1	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>329</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>

**Table 3 - Referrals**

Referral Type/Status	Year to Date (01/01/2019 - 30/10/2019)	Previous Week (24/10/2019 - 30/10/2019)	Last Week (31/10/2019 - 06/11/2019)
<b>MS1</b>	58	2	0
<b>NRM</b>	217	2	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>275</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>

**Table 4 - Exploitation Type V Gender**

Exploitation Type	Year to Date (01/01/2019 - 30/10/2019)			Total
	Female	Male	Unknown	
Criminal exploitation	14	95	0	<b>109</b>
Domestic servitude	16	0	0	<b>16</b>
Labour exploitation	14	68	5	<b>87</b>
Sexual exploitation	85	3	0	<b>88</b>
Unknown or Other	12	7	0	<b>19</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>319</b>

In line with our partners and their current review of services, Thurrock will be examining our future options for perpetrator intervention programmes. Thurrock will consider the options available and will be seeking sustainability from financial fluctuations to strengthen our approach to this objective.

## 7 Future activities and developments.

The Thurrock VAWG group will continue to deliver the action plan that accompanies this strategy, whilst having regard for a number of significant developments expected nationally and locally throughout the time period of this document.

### 7.1 Nationally

The Istanbul Convention is a comprehensive legal framework that sets out the minimum standards for countries to adhere to in combatting Violence Against Women and Girls and addresses sexual abuse as well as domestic violence, child marriage and Female Genital Mutilation. Countries that incorporate the treaty commit to ensuring survivors of these crimes can have access to specialist support services and refuges, monitoring data about gender-based violence and having age-appropriate education at schools. The UK signed the convention in 2012 however are yet to ratify it.

The progress report released October 2019, the government stated that in most respects, the UK already complies with or goes further than the Convention requires. Examples given were that we have significantly strengthened the laws and introduced a range of new tools and measures to protect victims. They acknowledged that there is more to do, including the issue of support for migrant victims of domestic abuse.<sup>36</sup>

The draft Domestic Abuse Bill aimed at supporting victims and their families and pursuing offenders will continue its progress through parliament and is expected to receive royal assent in 2020. It will introduce the first ever statutory government definition of domestic abuse to specifically include economic abuse and controlling and manipulative non-physical abuse. The appointment of a Domestic Abuse Commissioner is expected to drive the response to domestic abuse issues.

The law around non-consensual taking, making and sharing of sexual images is currently under review, it commenced July 2019 and is expected to conclude in the summer of 2021.

A review of the National Statement of Expectations is expected imminently.

## **7.2 Local developments**

Roll out of Operation Encompass is expected in 2020. This is a multi-agency approach to give early notification to schools, academies, colleges and nurseries that a child or young person has been present, witnessed or been involved in a domestic abuse incident. Nominated key adults within local schools will receive information from Essex Police and Thurrock Council Children's Services to afford them the opportunity of assessing the needs of the child during the school day and, should it be deemed appropriate to do so, to provide early support.

Countywide the National Roll-Out of the Cross Criminal Justice System Domestic Abuse (DA) Best Practice Framework. Thurrock will continue contributing to this to ensure that the victims of domestic abuse receive the help they need as they progress through the criminal justice system.

Thurrock have recently embraced the Blue Light project as part of a multi-agency group within the community safety partnership. This is Alcohol Change's national initiative to develop alternative approaches and care pathways for treatment resistant drinkers who place a burden on public services. The project aims to challenge the belief that nothing can be done with resistant drinkers who 'do not want to change'. It aims to challenge this by showing there are a range of positive strategies that can be used to manage risk, reduce harm and promote change.<sup>37</sup> DHR's nationally have revealed both the role of problem drinking and the challenge of managing it in the context of domestic violence. DHRs offer a level of detail that was previously unavailable which has given professionals a greater understanding of the role of alcohol within relationships.

A new countywide group looking at women in the criminal justice system, the Women's Service Action Team, led by the Essex Community Rehabilitation Company. The make-up of women in the Criminal Justice System, such as the overrepresentation of BAME women, means that certain groups experience particular challenges in accessing help and support. The best available evidence

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<sup>36</sup> Istanbul Convention Ratification: 2019 Report on Progress: Written statement - HCWS58

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.alcoholpolicy.net/2015/01/blue-light-project-alcohol-concern-release-manual-for-working-with-change-resistant-drinkers.html>

suggests that to reduce reoffending and keep women safe, we should invest in gender-informed.<sup>38</sup> A delivery plan is currently in development looking at matters such as the experiences of women in custody and the community, and trying to stop/address the gender inequality that women are facing, such as custody for certain crimes, prison for non-payment of TV licencing, for example. Research shows that reductions in reoffending are more likely when approaches and services are rehabilitative rather than punitive.<sup>39</sup>

Project Goldcrest is designed to help young people who have been identified by professionals (such as doctors, teachers, and social workers) who have concerns for the welfare or safety of the young person being at risk from exploitation. If the individual is a victim of a sexual assault and they do not want to report to the police or self-refer to the SARC, this project enables them to provide evidence of their experiences, without involving the Police. The samples are kept (anonymously) for 25 years or until the young person is ready to talk to the police about what happened.

## 8 Closing comments

There is a lot of work to be done and we look forward to making progress on some of the following elements. A fully detailed action plan will be agreed with the Thurrock VAWG strategic governance group.

Theme	Objective	Area for progression
Positive Communities	Engage our local communities through training and awareness of VAWG crimes and associated behaviours, enabling them to stand up and say 'no' to these crimes in their community.	Host community events to raise profile of VAWG crimes and associated behaviours  Host J9 domestic abuse training in the community
Prevention	Increased awareness and education of all VAWG crimes within schools and across various professions. Implementing safeguarding and harm prevention activities.	Offer Thurrock schools support to meet the RSE requirement. Learn from the outcome of the early adopter scheme to better support primary schools.
Partnership	Effective multi-agency arrangements exploring VAWG crimes, sharing of information and good practice.	Learn from good practice on completed DHR's nationally and countywide Work with partners to assist in the implementation of the JSNA recommendations.
Provision	Support victims of VAWG crimes with the appropriate service for their need	Survivor feedback to shape future provision.  Thurrock Housing Safeguarding obtain DAHA accreditation

<sup>38</sup>[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/719819/female-offender-strategy.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/719819/female-offender-strategy.pdf)

<sup>39</sup> Transforming Rehabilitation: a summary of evidence on reducing reoffending

Protection	Appropriate intervention for all individuals displaying concerning behaviours. Seeking sustainable behaviour change in identified perpetrators. Perpetrators are brought to justice.	Explore future options for perpetrator interventions
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VAWG remains widespread and has a devastating impact on victims and families. Thurrock Violence Against Women and Girls strategic governance group remains committed, through its members and partnership to develop and implement innovative programmes to tackle these crimes. The appointment of a VAWG Coordinator demonstrates the Council commitment to VAWG. We cannot do this alone, our multi-agency groups, both locally and Essex wide are established to tackle operational and strategic issues that impact the VAWG agenda. Through working collaboratively in partnership we will strengthen processes to help victims of these crimes. Every victim matters.



## 9. Definitions of Offences

**Domestic Abuse, including Intimate Partner Violence** has since March 2013 been defined as:

“any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.”

This can encompass, but is not limited to the following types of abuse: psychological; physical; sexual; financial; emotional”

Family members are defined as: mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister and grandparents whether directly related, in-laws or step-family.

“Controlling behaviour” is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependant by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving the, of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

“Coercive behaviour” is: an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim

**Forced Marriage** is a marriage conducted without the valid consent of one or both parties where duress is a factor

**Honour Based Violence/Abuse** (so called) is an international term used by many cultures for justification of abuse and violence. It is a crime or incident committed in order to protect or defend the family or community “honour”; this can often, but not always, go hand in hand with forced marriages.

**Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)** refers to procedures that intentionally alter or cause injury to the **female genital** organs for non-medical reasons

**Sexual Violence and Abuse** **Sexual Violence and Abuse** can be defined as any behaviour perceived to be of a sexual nature which is unwanted and takes place without consent or understanding:-

- **Rape** is defined as penetrative sex with another person against their will. This includes vaginal, anal and oral penetration.
- **Sexual assault** covers any other sort of sexual contact and behaviour that is unwanted, ranging from touching to any other activity if it is sexual.
- **Child Sexual Abuse** Child sexual abuse is the involvement of a child in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend, is unable to give informed consent to, or for which the child is not developmentally prepared and cannot give consent
- **Sexual Harassment** is unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

**Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)** Sexual exploitation of children and young people involves exploitive situations, contexts and relationships where young people (or a third person or persons) receive

“something” (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts money) as a result of them performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities. (This can include forms of grooming)

**Sexual Harassment** is unwelcome **sexual** advances, requests for **sexual** favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a **sexual** nature.

**Sexual Exploitation including trafficking for sexual exploitation** the forcible or deceptive recruitment of woman, men and children, for the purposes of forced prostitution or sexual exploitation:

**Stalking.** Whilst there is no strict legal definition of 'stalking', The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 created two new offences of stalking by inserting new sections 2A and 4A into the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 section 2A (3) and sets out examples of acts or omissions which, in particular circumstances, are ones associated with stalking. For example, following a person, watching or spying on them or forcing contact with the victim through any means, including social media. The effect of such behaviour is to curtail a victim's freedom, leaving them feeling that they constantly have to be careful. In many cases, the conduct might appear innocent ( if it were to be taken in isolation), but when carried out repeatedly so as to amount to a course of conduct, it may then cause significant alarm, harassment or distress to the victim.

**Human trafficking** is the movement of people by means such as force, fraud, coercion or deception, with the aim of exploiting them. It is a form of modern slavery.

**Modern Day slavery-** The following definitions are encompassed within the term 'modern slavery' for the purposes of the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

- slavery' is where ownership is exercised over a person
- 'servitude' involves the obligation to provide services imposed by coercion
- 'forced or compulsory labour' involves work or service extracted from any person under the menace of a penalty and for which the person has not offered himself voluntarily
- 'human trafficking' concerns arranging or facilitating the travel of another with a view to exploiting them.