

Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)

Joint Audit and Ethics Committee
14th March, 2022

Chief Superintendent Stasia Osiowy



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Areas to cover

- Recent events
- Definition
- National Task Force and National Framework
- What are we doing? Ongoing work
- Your Voice Matters survey
- Going forward – National next steps

Recent Events / Developments

- The Home Office ran a two phase strategy 'Call for Evidence on Violence Against Women and Girls' - 180,000 responses showing that every day, women have bad experiences at work, school, on the streets, on public transport and at home.
- Tragic murders of Sarah Everard, Julia James, Bibaa Henry and Nicole Smallman
- HM Government – Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls (July 2021)
- NPCC published 'A Safe Place' national strategy
- HMICFRS inspection in Sept 2021 found inconsistencies in the service provided to women and girls across England and Wales and recommended a fundamental shift in prioritisation, aimed at bringing greater consistency and higher standards
- A national NPCC task force to co-ordinate and standardise the policing of VAWG
- CoP/NPCC – Policing violence against women and girls – National Framework for Delivery: Year 1 (December 2021)

Home Office Definition

The term 'violence against women and girls' refers to acts of violence or abuse that we know disproportionately affect women and girls. Crimes and behaviour covered by this term include rape and other sexual offences, domestic abuse, stalking, 'honour' –based abuse (including female genital mutilation, forced marriage, and 'honour' killings), as well as many others, including offences committed on line. Whilst we use the term 'violence against women and girls' [...] this refers to all victims of any of these offences.

National Framework

National task force launched strategic intent document followed by framework

Actions will be completed under three overarching objectives:

- Build trust and public confidence in policing
- Relentless perpetrator pursuit
- Safer spaces

Ten main strands containing thirty four actions

Build Trust and Confidence

- Respond unequivocally to allegations of police perpetrated abuse, learning from mistakes and best practice – June 2022
- Challenge and address sexism and misogyny within policing - immediate
- Involve women and girls, including those who are black and minoritised, in scrutiny of force VAWG performance and practice - immediate
- Collect consistent local and national information on the availability of specialist VAWG investigators to build the right specialist capability and capacity – 3 months then 6 monthly updates

Relentless Perpetrator Pursuit

- Relentlessly pursue and actively manage and target the most dangerous offenders – quarterly returns
- Better use of police powers to protect women and girls and manage/disrupt perpetrators – quarterly returns
- Adopt a trauma aware approach at all levels, to better support victims through the criminal justice process and focus on evidence led prosecutions where appropriate quarterly returns
- Better supervision of VAWG investigations – quarterly returns

Safer Spaces

- Immediate and unequivocal prioritisation of VAWG
 - Build VAWG into every force's priority plan, internal and external policies and processes and ensure appropriate equality impact assessments
 - Develop and implement a communications and engagement strategy to set out how this prioritisation will affect police behaviours and practice, and how it will be monitored
- Focus prevention work on the most dangerous online, private and public spaces
 - Promote the use of the National Streetsafe app with community and use the information provided to inform the problem profiles

Force Governance and Ongoing work

- Strategic VAWG Governance group – links across all work
- Action Plan based on National Framework
- Development of problem profile - Incorporating safer streets and your voice matters survey outcomes – recommendations to BCU's
- Comms and Engagement Plan
- Safer Streets Funding Bids coordination with CSP's
- Op Soteria – national RASSO programme – dedicated teams
- Focus on use of preventative orders and perpetrator programmes

Ongoing Work

- Training - DA matters and Sexual Offences
- DA Action Plan response to incidents / crimes
- Review of all PSD data in line with national and performance frameworks
- 'Call It Out' development
- Development of independent scrutiny group
- Digital App VAWG – safer online spaces
- Development of Night Guardian hotspots / universities
- Ensure that operational supervisors are aware of toolkit and utilise it in operational decisions [Violence against women and girls toolkit | College of Policing](#)

Your Voice Matters Survey



The Your Voice Matters survey took place between 17th November and 10th December 2021. The survey aimed to collect the thoughts, feelings and experiences of personal safety of women and girls living in Lancashire.



Women and girls aged 13+ who live in Lancashire (including Blackpool and Blackburn with Darwen) were invited to take part.

Respondents self-selected to participate in the research. This may mean results are not representative of a wider population.



A total of 7054 respondents completed the survey. 98% were women and girls; the rest identified as men or other identities.

All questions were optional to complete. This has resulted in a different base size for each question.



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Executive Summary

Feelings of safety

- Just over two thirds of respondents feel safe
- Of those feeling unsafe nearly half felt less safe to 12 months ago
- Those under 30 feel the most unsafe – impacted through media (79%) and social media (77%) and report being followed / approached
- Feelings of safety greatly decrease at nighttime, particularly in parks and open spaces

Experiences of crime

- Two thirds of those who answered had experienced an incident that made them feel unsafe, with those under 30 more likely to have experienced an unwanted experience (89%)
- 7% had been a victim of a violent crime in the past year, with two thirds of those reporting it to the police

Police taking action

- **Just over two thirds of residents are confident in police's ability to act when dealing with serious and violent crime**
- **Increasing police presence was the leading action that respondents thought would improve females' safety**



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Recommendations



What additional measures people want

Increased police presence

More CCTV in town/the city centre

Improved lighting, particularly in alleyways



How to improve reporting process

Empathy, making victims feel supported and understood when making a complaint

Updating victims on progress

Which would lead to more feeling comfortable to report crimes



How to better support the under 30s

Work with local universities and schools more closely – introduce liaison officers and education sessions in local schools

More likely to use public transport – increased police presence at bus stops/taxi ranks/train stations



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National: Next Steps

- National delivery plan, milestones, completion dates – February 2022
- Publish a Performance outcomes framework – April 2022
- Work with forces to support delivery of the framework
- Engage with stakeholders on progress (VAWG sector, Victim's Commissioner, DA Commissioner, APCC, HO, HMICFRS and other Government Departments)
- Develop broader actions including prevention involving national partners (CJ, Education, Health) focussed on CJ recovery, on line harms and sexual harassment in schools
- Integrate VAWG work to other DA, RASSO and CJ recovery work and prevention agenda
- Ensure co-ordination with HMICFRS over VAWG recommendations and actions
- Maintaining collaboration with all NPCC portfolios

Questions?



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