

Strategy Boards & Committee:	Date:
Safer City Partnership	29/11/2021
Subject: Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls	Public
Report of: Andrew Carter, Director of Community and Children's Services	For Information
Author: Ayesha Fordham, Domestic Abuse, Vulnerability and Risk Policy Officer, Community Safety Team, Department of Community and Children's Services	
Summary	
<p>The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on current service delivery, actions and provision around Domestic Abuse (DA) and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG). The report will provide an update on VAWG Strategic Action Plan (SAP), VAWG services, business engagement, Modern Day Slavery (MDS) Insight Hour, Safer Streets Fund, Ask for Angela campaign, Good Night Out training sessions, 16 Days of Action Against Domestic Violence, and work with Afghan refugees. The report also includes data analysis from quarter one and two (Q1 and Q2) 2021/22.</p>	
Recommendation	
Members are asked to:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the report 	

Main Report

Background

1. There has been a significant increase in media coverage and momentum for VAWG and safety for women and girls in recent months. However, DA and VAWG are issues that the City of London Corporation (City Corporation) and partner agencies have been continuously committed to tackling and looking to improve and develop the response. The City Corporation, City of London Police (City Police) and wider VAWG partnership continue to work to a co-ordinated community response to DA and VAWG, ensuring that the City of London's whole community are protected and supported, and perpetrators are held accountable, as indicated through the City of London's VAWG Strategy 2019–2023.

Current Position

2. The Community Safety Team (CST) co-ordinates the quarterly VAWG Forum, which includes representatives from statutory, voluntary and commissioned organisations. The forum discusses a variety of work aspects within the City, such as service delivery, legislative development, awareness and outcomes of engagement work, as well as collating statistical information from stakeholders.
3. The CST are currently reviewing and updating the VAWG Strategic Action Plan (SAP) 2019-2021 for the next two years, as the existing VAWG SAP is now outdated. The SAP will be developed with the VAWG Forum and will be signed off by Members at the next meeting in January 2022. The updated SAP will include recommendations from Standing Together Against Domestic Abuse's DA Review. The current VAWG SAP 2019-2021 (appendix 1) has been updated to capture actions which took place in 2021 and actions scheduled to take place in the coming months which were not already included. This is to highlight the work that continues to be delivered by the VAWG partnership, in response to VAWG within the City of London whilst the outdated VAWG SAP is being reviewed and updated.
4. The Specialist Bangladeshi Advocate started in post on 6 September 2021. She is based within the Solace DA service in Tower Hamlets and has started receiving referrals from the City Police.
5. The Vulnerable Victims Advocate and City Police delivered a presentation to the City Corporation's Women's Inclusive Network on safety within the City of London. This joint presentation will also be delivered to businesses across the City of London, such as Lloyd's of London, UBS and Security at Broadgate Circle. The sessions will include information on: what men can do and how they can change their behaviour to help make women feel safer; what is being done within the City of London to increase feelings of safety; an overview of the City of London's response to DA; support services; and reporting to the police. There will be a consistent message delivered across all businesses, which has been agreed by City Police Chief Officers.
6. The CST facilitated an MDS Insight Hour in October to mark Anti-Slavery Awareness Day, which was attended by 40 professionals from within the City Corporation and external agencies. The event provided professionals with information on local MDS services and referral pathways, Operation Innerste and the role of the police, and a presentation from Shiva Foundation and STOP THE TRAFFIK on their small to medium enterprises (SMEs) toolkit and how to spot the signs of MDS.
7. The City Corporation successfully received funding from the Home Office Safer Streets Fund Round 3, to deliver Night Hubs at Liverpool Street station, on Friday nights throughout November, and Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights throughout December, except Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and New Year's Day. The hubs are being delivered in partnership with the CST, City Police, Victim Support and St John Ambulance. The hubs will provide a place

of safety for the City of London's whole community, with a particular emphasis on increasing safety and feelings of safety for women and girls.

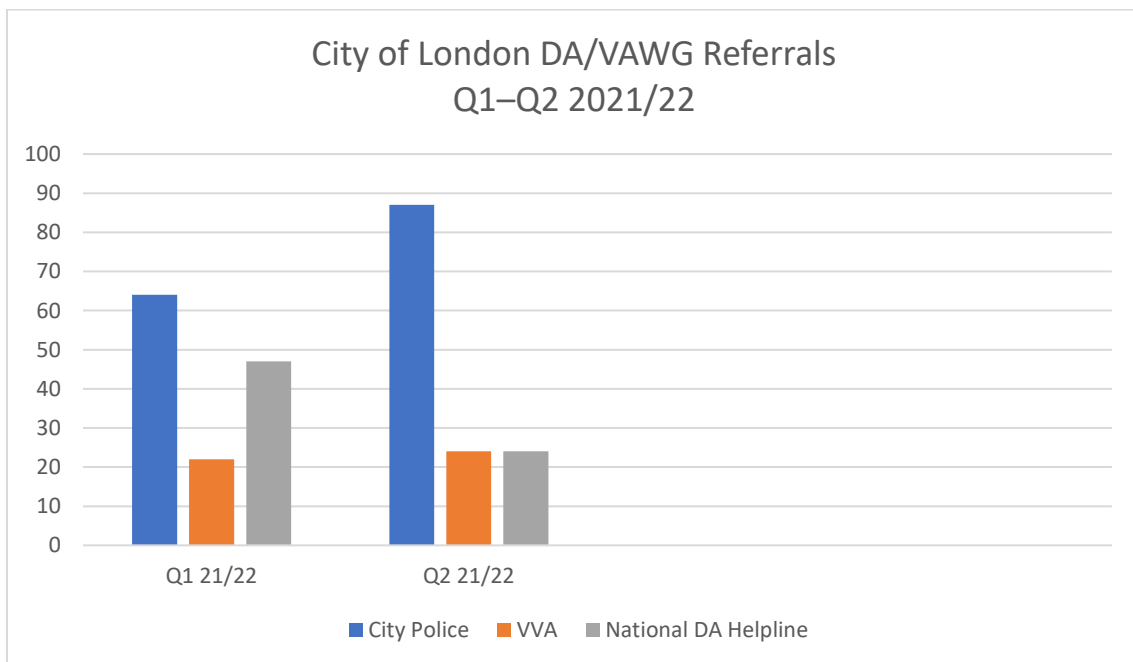
8. The City Corporation, City Police and Safer Sounds launched the Ask for Angela campaign with an event attended by around 100 licensed venues. The City Corporation submitted a bid to the Home Office Safety of Women at Night fund for £50,000 for Safer Sounds to deliver Welfare and Vulnerability Engagement training to 300 licensed venues across the City of London. The bid was unsuccessful, however the CST and City police are exploring alternative funding options.
9. The remaining four sessions on tackling sexual harassment to be delivered by Good Night Out have been scheduled for once a month in November 2021 and January, February and March 2022. These sessions are being promoted by the CST and the City Police Licensing team.
10. The date 25 November marks the start of 16 Days of Action Against Domestic Violence, where the City Corporation, City Police and wider VAWG partnership are working together to run vulnerability surgeries, covering VAWG, Prevent, hate crime and MDS. An article on coercive control will be issued within the City Corporation's residents' newsletter December edition, highlighting what coercive control is and how residents can access support. There will also be an internal communications campaign within the City Police and City Corporation to promote support services that are available to employees and a DA Insight Hour with a focus on housing, for professionals to attend.
11. The City Police, City Corporation and wider VAWG partnership have been working with Afghan refugees to provide information and support around domestic abuse and their rights within the UK. The City Police and Victim Support have provided initial sessions to men and women separately, highlighting what constitutes domestic abuse, the law in the UK, accessing support and reporting to the police. Posters in Farsi and Dari are displayed in the women's toilets and communal areas within residents' hotels to tell people how to access support.

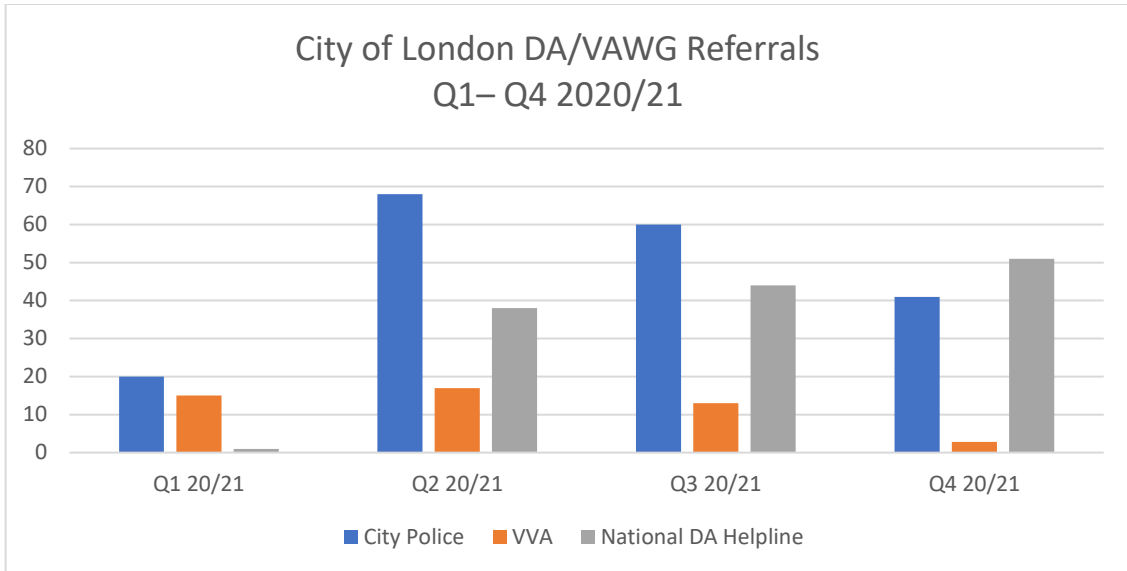
Data Analysis

12. The City Police saw a 56% increase in recorded DA crimes and incidents in Q1 2021/22, in comparison to Q4 2020/21. A total of 23% of recorded crimes and incidents involved residents, which is a decrease from the previous quarter when 51% of reports were from City residents. This could be due to an increase in people returning to the City of London for work and visiting the night-time economy. The number of DA crimes and incidents recorded in Q2 2021/22 increased by 36% from Q1, with 28% involving City of London residents.
13. The number of referrals to the Vulnerable Victims Advocate has increased in Q1 and Q2 2021/22 in comparison to 2020/21. The service received 22 referrals for VAWG crime types during Q1 and 24 referrals for VAWG crime

types during Q2. This could be due to the increase in police reports, and that the Vulnerable Victims Advocate service is full time, therefore community engagement, awareness-raising and visibility of the service has increased.

14. The number of calls to the National DA Helpline has decreased since 2020/2021. However, the figures are still unusually high, at just under four times higher per 1,000 population than other London boroughs for Q1 2021/2022. This figure decreased again by nearly half in Q2, however this is still two times higher per 1,000 population than other London boroughs. As previously stated, Refuge, who provide the National DA Helpline, indicated that they only request information for the area in which the service user resides, not a postcode or address. They suggested that the reason for calls from the City of London being significantly higher than other boroughs could be a result of: increased promotion and awareness; a safety measure where service users stated the City of London if they worked (rather than lived) in the Square Mile; or service users saying they reside in the City of London when they are referring to wider London.





Strategic Implications

15. All of the work noted in this report contributes to the Safer City Partnership's aims:

- Vulnerable people and communities are protected and safeguarded
- People are safe from violent crime and crime against the person
- People are safe and feel safe in the night-time economy.

Conclusion

16. The VAWG partnership continues to work together to deliver and enhance the City of London's response to DA and VAWG. This report has outlined some of the initiatives that have taken place over the past quarter, through events, training and awareness-raising.

Appendices

- City of London VAWG Strategic Action Plan 2019-2021

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