

Strategic Delivery Plan for Violence Against Women and Girls (2022-2023)



City of London Police – Violence Against Women and Girls Strategic Delivery Plan (2022-2023)

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Foreword – From the City of London Police Commissioner

The murder of Sarah Everard by a serving police officer and other tragic deaths, such as those of Bibaa Henry and Nicole Smallman, Julia James, Gracie Spinks, Sabina Nessa and Bobbi-Anne McLeod have understandably sent shockwaves across UK policing and impacted upon the trust and confidence felt amongst the public.

We, along with all forces, have recognised the need to rebuild trust, raise standards and ensure that there is a positive, supportive, and healthy culture to demonstrate that any violence against women and girls is not acceptable, will not be tolerated and will be relentlessly challenged.

Our commitment to tackling VAWG and rebuilding trust and confidence is also fully reflected in our new Policing Plan. We have listened to our communities, our officers and staff, and have reflected this feedback into our new vision and values. A vision that sees us trusted by communities to deliver policing with professionalism, integrity and compassion.

This VAWG Strategic Delivery Plan outlines the work we will do to unremittingly tackle violence against women and girls, and to rebuild trust and confidence by ensuring we police at all times to the highest professional standards.

Angela McLaren

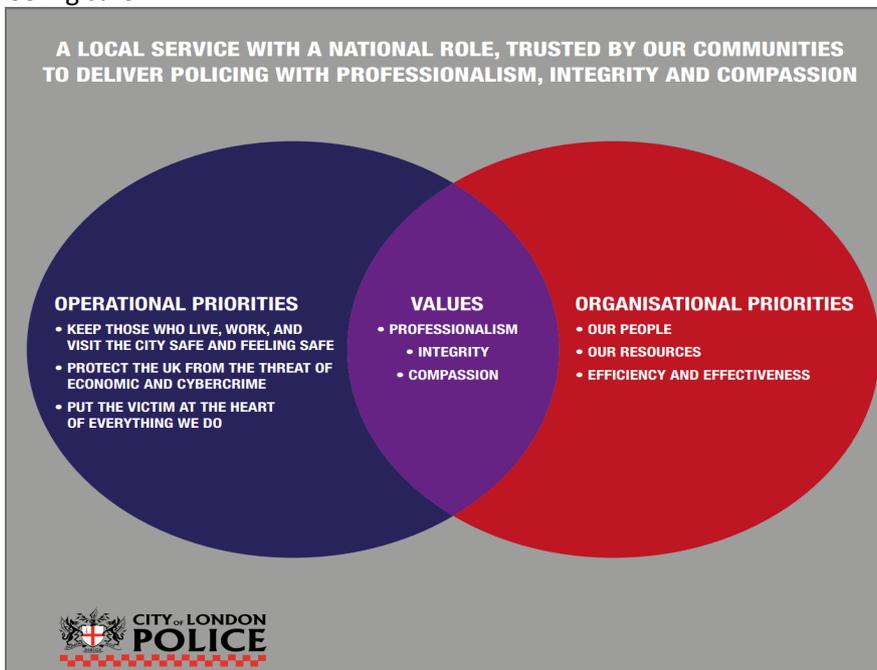


Context

The term ‘Violence Against Women and Girls’, often referred to as VAWG, relates to acts of violence or abuse that disproportionately affect women and girls. Crimes and behaviour covered by this term include rape and other sexual offences, domestic abuse, stalking, harmful practices (including female genital mutilation and forced marriage) as well as many others. These areas include offences and behaviours committed both in person and online.

The City of London Police (CoLP) has prioritised the delivery of a new strategy, in line with the National Police Chiefs’ Council (NPCC) framework. The National framework aims to coordinate and standardise the policing of violence against women and girls. The CoLP has already made great progress in this area, however our work will continue to deliver on the framework whilst also remaining bespoke to the needs of the City. How we will achieve this is outlined in this Strategic Delivery Plan.

Our new Policing Plan (2022-2025) [Policing Plan | City of London Police](#) wholly reflects the force’s commitment to VAWG and Rebuilding Trust with our communities. The Policing Plan has our values at its core, *Professionalism, Integrity and Compassion*, these are integral to our internal priority to create a culture of inclusion and high professional standards. These will ensure that our workforce is engaged, delivers the best service possible to the public and that they are also supported to report and challenge wrongdoing. Indeed, we are clear that we need to do even more to deal with violence against women and girls, and we recognise the direct link here with rebuilding trust in police standards. Whilst externally, we will remain committed to bring together the work of our partner agencies, in particular, optimising our close working relationship with the City of London Corporation (CoLC)¹, to develop and support a coordinated response to keep those who live, work and visit the city safe and feeling safe.



¹ The CoLC already has a VAWG Strategy in place (2019-2023) which we will remain closely aligned to and assist to support their vision that the “Square Mile is free from Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) and is a place that is safe for everyone to live, work, learn and visit”. [City of London Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy](#)

In line with the NPCC, Year 1 of this Strategic Delivery Plan has a prime focus on areas of policing which can help us improve immediately, whilst also highlighting our integral working relationship with the CoLC, particularly around our commitment to creating Safer Spaces. Indeed, we have already delivered on a number of initiatives with the CoLC, such as the implementation of our Ask for Angela campaigns across a number of licensed premises in the City, and the establishment of Night Safety Hubs for women and girls through the 2021 Christmas and New Year period.

Moving forwards, Years 2 and 3 of our plan will focus on the wider community and partnership approaches needed to deliver sustainable change. Correspondingly, this plan will focus on the activities of the CoLP, however it will evolve in time to include, in more detail, our close work with the CoLC and wider partners.

This strategy is based upon three pillars:

1. Building Trust and Confidence:

This pillar focuses on our commitment to improve internal and external trust and confidence. Our Policing Plan outlines our operational priority to keep those who live, work, and visit the city safe and feel safe. Consequently, we must do more to earn the trust and confidence of our communities, in particular that of women and girls. To achieve this, we must ensure that our officers and staff uphold the highest professional standards.

2. Relentless Perpetrator pursuit:

This pillar focuses on our ongoing commitment to bring more perpetrators of violence against women and girls to justice, working with partner agencies as a “whole system” response. This also includes work to reduce case attrition and also to address the concerns and experiences of the victims.

3. Creating Safer spaces:

This pillar focuses on protecting women and girls in public spaces, at home and online. We will continue to work closely with our partners and in particular the CoLC to protect women from victimisation in these spaces.

This Strategic Delivery Plan sets out specific numbered actions under each of the pillars. These actions are individually tracked through our force’s internal ‘VAWG Tactical Action Plan’ which outlines what we have already achieved and what our future action will be to improve trust and confidence. Recognising the need to balance public concern with achievable activities, we have prioritised some actions for immediate implementation, whilst others will continue with the support of partners and community groups in the coming weeks and months.

Building Trust and Confidence

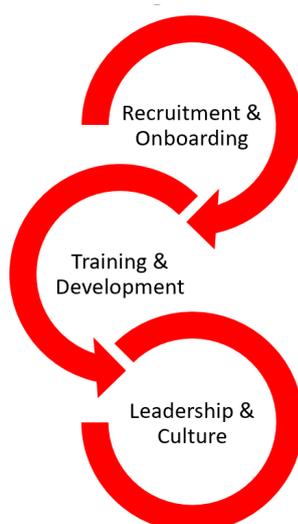
An overview of the framework for delivery for this pillar, commits the City of London Police to: -

1. Respond unequivocally to allegations of police perpetrated abuse, learning from mistakes and best practice.
2. Challenge and address sexism and misogyny within policing.
3. Involve women and girls, including those who are Black and minoritised, in scrutiny of force VAWG performance and practice.
4. Collect consistent local and national information on the availability of specialist VAWG investigators to build the right specialist capability and capacity.

The legitimacy and effectiveness of UK policing is built upon our relationship with the public, nationally this remains under strain, particularly amongst Black people and with women. Externally, we recognise that by improving all our community relationships, this will enhance our knowledge regarding any abuse or discrimination which is hidden or disguised as cultural or religious practice. Correspondingly, we will further reach out to our business, residential and visitor populations, in particularly women and girls who are black and minoritised to involve and empower them in our work to rebuild trust and confidence in policing. This not only includes our ability to gain a better insight from these communities, but also to ensure that we reflect on this in how we design our policing activities, training and processes.

Two internal forums have been hosted by the previous and current Commissioners, the feedback from our officers and staff supported our honest recognition that misogynistic attitudes and behaviours that exist in society, will also exist within policing too. In response, we remain committed to upholding the highest professional and personal standards, this is achieved through our Codes of Ethics and Standards of Professional Behaviour becoming a key priority in our strategy to improve trust and confidence, internally and externally.

Internally, the City of London Police is actively leading several initiatives to create a supportive workplace culture. Much of this work is captured within the organisations' Equality and Inclusion Strategy which can be broken down into individual workstreams, such as:



Recruiting the right people with the right skills plays a pivotal role in the growth of the organisation and further improving upon our culture. To ensure the effectiveness of these

initiatives, subsequent reporting cycles will be built into the Equality and Inclusion Strategic Board to monitor progress and delivery. This Plan also concentrates on how we create a supportive workplace culture for women who work for the City of London Police.

We have already prioritised and undertaken: -

- A series of Corporate Plan workshops to collectively explore our future values, vision and ambition.
- To continue to promote and encourage our staff to step forward and raise concerns through our well-publicised, internal and external reporting mechanisms. This will not only encourage reporting but will assist to ensure that all officers and staff understand the force's commitment to VAWG.
- A direction for our Professional Standards Department (PSD) and HR (Human Resources) to complete an urgent review of cases over the past 10 years (for significant allegations, the review period went beyond 10 years), against our officers and staff. This will ensure that those who raise concerns are being properly supported, investigations are comprehensive and sanctions in relation to violence against women and girls, reflect the seriousness of the misconduct.
- The request for a peer review of the above process by the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) to ensure transparency, PSD will also be adopting the MPS' comprehensive review process to ensure that there is a consistent approach across London.
- A strategy to communicate immediately, clearly, and then frequently that misogynistic, sexist and sexualised behaviour will not be tolerated by anyone in policing.
- Considerable progress towards being a more inclusive organisation, of note we have launched our Equality and Inclusion Strategy "Policing the Square Mile 2020 – 2025" with a subsequent reporting cycle to monitor performance and drive progress.
- Promotion of the use of processes and mechanisms open to staff and officers to raise concerns, whether it be a grievance or bullying and harassment. In this way we seek to encourage individuals to come forward so that we can support them and deal accordingly with the concerns raised.

Despite the above, we are aware that there are groups that still do not feel they belong and there is more to do to deliver the step change in culture we want to see.

Therefore, we will: -

- Seek perspectives and reflect upon the findings of our staff surveys and focus groups to address any disparity of outcomes across protected characteristics; specifically gender and race which will help us to direct our progress on improving organisational culture.
- Reinvigorate our commitment to the Police Code of Ethics and embed this at all levels to demonstrate to our workforce that we support a culture that is inclusive, both for our staff and the people we serve.
- Commence Leadership programmes and annual values, standards and ethics workshops early in 2022. This will underline the importance of everyone being more open and alert to challenging inappropriate behaviour or actions that undermine our culture.
- Establish and continuously improve our strong 'call it out' culture (including a focus on the importance of men being upstanders not bystanders), supported by safe

processes for reporting inappropriate behaviours, and swift interventions where necessary.

- Establish a continual programme of listening circles with women from across policing, thereby seeking to involve women in designing solutions.
- Establish regular independent scrutiny of force performance in responding to VAWG which will be aligned to internally audit our activity.
- Constantly seek to expand the reach of communications, including through engagement with third sector organisations that are working closely with different groups of women and girls.
- Provide clear and evidenced examples of how this involvement is used to change and improve practice, including incorporating the voices of those with lived experiences into training and raising awareness across the organisation.

Relentless Perpetrator Pursuit

An overview of the framework for delivery for this pillar, commits the City of London Police to: -

1. Relentlessly pursue and actively manage and target the most dangerous and prolific offenders.
2. Make better use of police powers to protect women and girls, and to manage and disrupt perpetrators.
3. 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.
4. Enhance supervision of VAWG investigations.

We are taking a whole system approach to targeting perpetrators, working across London with the CoLC, relevant local authorities, healthcare, education and other law enforcement agencies.

Nationally, there is a deeply felt, and long-standing concern from women, that the criminal justice system does not protect them when they are victims of violent or sexual crimes. As an organisation we will strive to improve our detection rates for key crimes including rape, serious sexual offences, stalking and harassment. We are also working hard with the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) to deliver the best criminal justice outcomes.

Currently, there is a lack of consistent method for the police or the criminal justice system to identify how it is performing in relation to VAWG related crime. This does present challenges in reporting on charge and prosecution rates at a force and national level. The HMICFRS recognise that there is a need for a defined set of parameters that can be used consistently by all forces, this will establish whether improvements are being made, and which approaches taken are the most effective. In the meantime, we will focus our future reporting on criminal offences of a sexual and violent nature which have been perpetrated against women and girls.

We have already prioritised and undertaken:

- A review to ensure each frontline police officer has received the appropriate skills and training to use the full extent of their powers to investigate, and where an offence has occurred, bring the perpetrator to justice. Vulnerability training is now

mandatory for all frontline officers and staff, the current training package has recently been redeveloped to include a greater focus on child protection. This will be continually refreshed to ensure that officers and staff are trained to appropriately respond to a wide range of offences, including behavioural crimes which are committed against women and girls.

- Domestic Abuse processes are well established in the organisation, they include the recent introduction of a '20 Point Plan' and mandatory supervisor attendance at all Domestic Abuse incidents to enhance opportunities for evidence led prosecutions. This has been shared nationally as best practice.
- In accordance with the National Police Chief's Council (NPCC) direction, the CoLP aligns its activity to the National Vulnerability Action Plan (NVAP). This means that VAWG offences are treated as a higher priority alongside other areas of vulnerability. This is underpinned at the monthly Tactical Tasking and Coordination Group (TTCG) which ensures that there is appropriate operational delivery across all vulnerability strands, based upon threat, harm and risk.
- CoLP has secured some significant convictions and sentences for sexual offences. Such as, the sentencing of a male to 108 months imprisonment in September 2021 for rape and kidnap offences. This underlines the importance of our committed working relationship with the London RASSO (Rape and Serious Sexual Offences) CPS lead to maximise all available opportunities for prosecution.

We will: -

- Look to report on prosecution rates across a breakdown of sexual offences by requesting a disaggregation of data currently combined with that of the MPS to provide us with a detailed reporting picture.
- Intensify work with our licensed premises to reduce incidents of drink spiking, working with national best practice from many other forces who have also seen an upward trend in reporting.
- Monitor referrals to appropriate specialist victim support services, taking action to ensure these are conducted consistently and quickly.
- Ensure force well-being strategies include an awareness of the effect of trauma on police officers and staff.
- Strive to increase the number of perpetrators brought to justice for violence against women and girls.
- Actively manage known perpetrators to reduce the prevalence of violent offending against women and girls by using a wide range of tactics. With the added aim that this will improve the level of trust and confidence which our City residents, workers and visitors have in how we respond to all forms of violence against women and girls.
- Improve training to frontline officers on Stalking and Harassment to ensure that all communities, including workers feel safe in the City.
- Improve processes and victim care across the criminal justice system to improve outcomes.
- Work to reduce the likelihood of women and girls becoming repeat victims.
- Increase women's confidence in the police, and in doing so, improve the reporting of crimes which disproportionately affect women and girls in London. To achieve this, training for officers and staff of all ranks will need to ensure that the importance of VAWG and the severity of its impact is widely discussed and understood.
- Intensify work to tackle sexual misconduct and domestic violence by officers and staff.

Safer Spaces

An overview of the framework for delivery for this pillar, commits the City of London Police to: -

1. Immediate and unequivocal prioritisation of VAWG.
2. Focus prevention work on the most dangerous online, private, and public spaces.

We are working alongside the CoLC and other partners to create safer spaces, so that women and girls both are safe and feel safe. We will achieve this by increasing our understanding of hotspot locations where women and girls feel unsafe, correspondingly we will work with the CoLC and partners to design-in safety, whether this is in public spaces, at home or online.

We recognise the need for greater comprehension regarding the data and evidence in relation to the challenges presented by VAWG. Consequently, we are working to improve the detail around our current force intelligence picture, in addition to how this compares across the national landscape.

We have already: -

- Commissioned and resourced the creation of an intelligence profile, considering all information available over a 3-year period to identify where violent criminality tends to occur.
- Completed Hot Spot data analysis over a 3-year period to identify where violent criminality tends to occur.
- We have increased our visibility by patrolling public spaces and night-time economy venues to ensure people are safe and feel safe.
- Included an officer from Public Protection within the previously held Night Safety Hubs to provide specialist support to any female reporting a concern.
- Launched a project with CoLC to re-introduce Police Boxes into the Square, to provide a network of physical safe havens and emergency contact points.
- Successfully refreshed the 'Ask for Angela' campaign to raise awareness regarding how all employees at hospitality venues, can help tackle behaviours which make women and girls feel unsafe and provide them with immediate support.
- Piloted a new online tool called StreetSafe (launched by the Home Office and National Police Chief's Council) which enables the public, particularly women and girls, to pinpoint an area within the city where they feel unsafe and asks them to explain why. Thereby enabling us to identify how we can work with partners to make these areas safer.

In addition to the above we will: -

- Build VAWG into our priority plan, and into internal and external policies and processes, ensuring appropriate equality impact assessments are conducted and in place.
- Embed the new Serious Violence Duty into partnership VAWG plans.
- 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.

- Use profiles to target prevention activity, inform offender management, and increase the understanding and needs of our most vulnerable victims.

Governance

The CoLP Renewing and Rebuilding Trust and Confidence Board, chaired by Assistant Commissioner Paul Betts, will drive progress against the delivery framework objectives which we have set out in this plan under each of the pillars. To achieve this, the CoLP has a Tactical Action Plan that sets out the activities which will take place to deliver against these objectives, this Action Plan will also be sent to the HMICFRS² for independent review.

Achievement will be scrutinised through independent review of our performance metrics to ensure that there is objectivity and transparency. This will take the form of regular consultation with our Independent Advisory and Scrutiny Group (IASG) and more formally, through the CoLC Police Authority Board (PAB). Key milestones and significant activity will also be highlighted to PAB and also shared with partners.

The CoLP will also regularly feed into a number of NPCC National Working Groups to share learning and best practice amongst all other Police Forces in England and Wales. Similarly, the CoLP is also engaged in a regional Trust and Confidence Strategic Working Group with the Metropolitan Police and the British Transport Police.

We will regularly review our Strategic Delivery Plan to ensure that it implements new recommendations from the NPCC as they are announced.

Next Steps

Using a Nationally agreed performance framework, we will report against the progress of our crucial work to rebuild trust internally and externally. We will document this through our quarterly business plan updates which are published, as well as through a range of other mediums to enable independent oversight and scrutiny.

Feedback

We value the views of our communities and partners on this plan, you can provide feedback online at VAWGFeedbackPublic@cityoflondon.police.uk. We want to hear views on the plan as well as any ideas regarding what else you would like to see the City of London Police doing in relation to Violence Against Women and Girls.

² Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) independently assesses the effectiveness and efficiency of police forces and fire & rescue services – in the public interest. [HMICFRS - Home \(justiceinspectors.gov.uk\)](http://justiceinspectors.gov.uk)