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# TACKLING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

## Action Plan

## Message from the Commissioner

Throughout the world, one third of women and girls are affected by violence, making it the most prevalent and damaging form of abuse for both victims and wider society. In England and Wales, two women a week are killed by a former or current partner<sup>[1]</sup>, the police receive a domestic abuse related call every 30 seconds<sup>[2]</sup> and more than one in 20 women (6.2%) had experienced rape (including attempts) since the age of 16 years.<sup>[3]</sup> In the last 12 months almost 35,000 men are suspected of committing repeat offences against women and girls. Of these, almost 2,000 are rape suspects.

Our mission under the New Met for London Plan is to deliver More Trust, Less Crime and High Standards. With this plan, **we commit to transforming how we protect the public from harm and how we combat Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) largely committed by predatory men.**

At the heart of our plan are commitments to both solve more rapes, domestic violence, child abuse and other cases of predatory offending, and to target the most dangerous offenders to get them off the streets before they can harm again. We are determined to do all we can to ensure women and girls feel safe wherever they are. This is a tremendous task and one which the Met cannot achieve alone.

These commitments form the basis of our action plan. They have been developed using feedback, consultation and community conversations, but we know that effective engagement must be continuous.

This document sets out the Met's ambitions for how we will tackle VAWG over the coming years. These commitments will be supported by action. There is much that is already underway, but we will continue to listen and we will reform how we operate to meet these commitments.

In particular, our response will be firmly grounded in continued engagement with local people and those we work with.

We have much more to do, but we are working hard to change. **We are resolute in our commitment to protect women and girls.**



Sir Mark Rowley QPM | Commissioner

<sup>[1]</sup> [www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/domesticabuseandthecriminaljusticesystemenglandandwales/november2023](http://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/domesticabuseandthecriminaljusticesystemenglandandwales/november2023)

<sup>[2]</sup> [www.ncdv.org.uk/domestic-abuse-statistics-uk](http://www.ncdv.org.uk/domestic-abuse-statistics-uk)

<sup>[3]</sup> Nature of sexual assault by rape or penetration, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics.  
[www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/natureofsexualassaultbyrapeorpenetrationenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2020](http://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/natureofsexualassaultbyrapeorpenetrationenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2020)

## Your feedback

We published these commitments in draft to allow feedback and to make sure we kept listening to those affected by our plans. You broadly welcomed our commitments. We heard your concerns about making our commitments on domestic abuse stronger, about making sure training reflected the need for a more empathetic approach by our officers and staff and about a focus on prevention. You said that the commitments needed to be clearer on how we are recognising intersectionality and minoritised victim survivors' needs. We have made some changes both in this document, and also in the detailed activity plans that sit below it and are owned by senior leaders across the organisation.

## How we will show progress

You wanted to know how we will demonstrate success. These commitments are all about improving how we communicate with the public about what we are doing, and that includes sharing progress on our plans and being clear on what success means. Improved trust, safer places and better outcomes for victim survivors are at the heart of this plan. We have made some positive first steps but we know there is an extraordinary challenge ahead. We will publish a progress update on this plan after 6 months.

## First steps:

- We have spent time with women and girls across London to identify the places where we must improve safety, routinely directing police resources to these problems.
- We have worked with others to make festivals, events and night time venues safer for women, deploying officers to spot risks early.
- We are building bigger teams so that the officers who investigate domestic abuse and serious sexual offences are better equipped to do their jobs. When we have completed this work, over 500 more officers and staff will be working in public protection roles.
- We have charged 229 more cases of rape in the last 12 months compared to the previous year, as we increasingly target dangerous men. Our performance compared with other forces is significantly improved.
- We have developed new tools to identify people who pose a risk to women and girls and we have taken action by arresting and convicting them.
- Our response to stalking continues to improve; we have expanded the Stalking and Threat Assessment Centre, and significantly increased the number of Stalking Protection Orders: currently we have the highest volume of Stalking Protection Orders in place any police service in England and Wales, and the second highest per capita.
- Our detection rates for child abuse, including child sex abuse, are higher.
- We have accepted our deep rooted problems in relation to culture and standards and we have shared progress on how we are removing those inside our organisation who pose a risk, but we know how much more work is needed before we are confident that our culture is right.
- We are investing in new ways to listen to victims' experiences and we will develop these to ensure we are recognising the voices of victim survivors of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), particularly minoritised victim survivors.

## Pillar 1 – Building Trust and Confidence

### Commitment 1

We will work to eliminate police perpetrated domestic abuse and sexual offences and we will improve the effectiveness of our response to these crimes.

- More effective identification and targeting of police perpetrators, regularly publishing results.
- More effective support to victim survivors of police perpetrated Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG).
- Improvement to vetting processes for all police officers and staff where VAWG risk is present.
- We will ensure effective external scrutiny of our response to police perpetrated VAWG.

### Commitment 2

We will improve how we listen to those impacted by Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG). We will involve them in our plans, introduce external scrutiny of VAWG cases and share more data with the public. We will take specific action to understand how we can improve engagement with black and minoritised women and girls, taking into account the needs of different age groups and the impact of intersectionality.

- We will produce a VAWG engagement plan for London in collaboration with the VAWG sector and other partners, using a range of methods to hear Londoners' views to shape our VAWG response and understand its impact.
- We will share information with the public about our progress on VAWG commitments, and share more VAWG data in an interactive way.
- We will deliver targeted local engagement activity with partners across communities and boroughs.
- We will open up new routes for external scrutiny of VAWG cases, including the potential for funded work.

### Commitment 3

We will demonstrably prioritise Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) by **investing resources to improve capacity and capability**. This means having the right number of officers and staff in the right places (capacity) and the right skills, equipment and training to best protect women and girls wherever you work in the Met (capability).

- We will increase the resources dedicated to VAWG and public protection via our New Met for London Plan.
- We will treat VAWG as a 'whole Met response', not just for those in dedicated roles, and this will include identifying the learning and development needs across the whole workforce.
- We will take immediate steps to prioritise VAWG in current training cycles recognising that the empathy of officers is critical to the confidence of women and girls.
- Under the Strengthening Public Protection Programme, we will drive a significant increase in training to all Public Protection teams.

### Commitment 4

We will tackle sexism and misogyny in the Met.

- We will implement a new programme to transform the Met's culture, with specific focus on sexism and misogyny.
- We will ensure the Met is training all new and current officers and staff to identify and call out sexism and misogyny.
- We will use the data collected from intelligence and reporting to better identify and manage internal cultures of sexism and misogyny.
- We will ensure individual records reflect behaviours or sanctions so that problems are tracked precisely and repeat patterns are spotted and stopped, wherever an individual is, or moves to, within the Met.

### Commitment 5

We will look outside the Met for ways to improve our response to Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and we will be innovative and precise; testing new approaches, learning what works and tackling gaps in our data.

- We will seek to identify and implement approaches that are working well in wider policing. We will particularly work to understand and improve the online threat to women and girls, working in conjunction with national partners.
- We will try new things, and we will actively seek new approaches through engagement.
- We will deliver the activities required to meet our Open Data Strategy; prioritising VAWG as an area for wider and more transparent access to our data, insight and findings.
- We will apply data science and analytics to key areas and knowledge gaps to enable more precise activity against VAWG.

## Pillar 2 – Relentless Pursuit of Perpetrators

### Commitment 6

We will do much more to identify and tackle the most dangerous and prolific perpetrators of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG).

- We will make tackling VAWG perpetrators the job of the whole of the Met, understanding how we target central and local resources more effectively to reduce the harm they pose.
- We will improve our overall performance for bringing more VAWG perpetrators to justice and reducing repeat victimisation.
- We will increase our forensic intervention, contribution and speed in support of public protection operations.
- We will deliver Operation Soteria learning by ensuring a context led, suspect focused and victim centred approach to rape investigation and prosecution.

- We will use new approaches (for example the Top 100 initiative) to identify harmful and repeat offenders and mitigate the risk they pose, implementing what works.
- We will change our systems to better identify precursor offences that are not automatically categorised as VAWG, so that risky offenders can be identified much earlier.

### Commitment 7

**We will make better use of police powers to protect women and girls** from perpetrators, such as civil orders and protection orders. We will work closely with partners to explore and maximise the use of wider powers.

- We will train more officers to understand and use civil orders.
- We will increase the number of orders in place for victim survivors.
- We will work with local authority Community Safety Leads and our thirty two borough Superintendents to widen good practise, for example in relation to Public Space Protection Orders.

### Commitment 8

**We will take action to improve support and care for victim survivors of domestic abuse and other Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) offences** through the criminal justice process to ensure a consistent and compassionate service everywhere in London.

- We will put victim survivors first by improving referral rates and through trauma informed practice.
- Working with MOPAC, charities and partners, we will improve VAWG victim survivor care through a new multi-agency victim hub, and through use of expert support such as ISVAs and IDVAs.
- We'll bring in external expertise and challenge from victims' organisations to understand cases which can prove difficult, to drive early intervention and reduce repeat victimisation.
- We will improve how we receive and analyse feedback from VAWG victim survivors at multiple stages of our service.
- We will seek to understand and address any disparity in our service to, or confidence of, VAWG victim survivors, acknowledging the higher levels of victimisation experienced by black women.
- We will seek to deliver proportionate outcomes for victim survivors, using the new Out of Court Disposal framework for defined VAWG offences, putting victim survivors first and where there is an evidence base for effective intervention.

## Pillar 3 – Safer Spaces

### Commitment 9

**We will identify high risk and high harm locations** for Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), and target resources to those places to improve the safety of women and girls in London's public spaces.

- We will be more determined to hear and act on what women and girls are saying about where they do not feel safe in London through local engagement and technology.
- We will provide our local leaders with more regular and more actionable intelligence analysis on VAWG problems and we will help officers see live data about VAWG problems when they patrol.
- We will improve how we collect and publish data to improve insights about women's safety, to better target the Met and partnership responses to it. Where possible it will be informed by anonymised non-police data about unreported crime.
- We will work with others to create more Safe Space initiatives across London and make planned events (like festivals) safer for women.
- We will work with our partners locally to share information on problems and create joint solutions that improve the safety of women and girls in public spaces, pushing for planning, licensing and public space management to be VAWG centric.

### Commitment 10

**We will focus on preventing Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) through our Strongest Ever Neighbourhoods programme**, including prevention work in schools and with young people to protect them and reduce harmful behaviours in private, in public and online.

- We will work in local partnerships to support delivery of VAWG related prevention activities in schools and with young people including online harm, stalking, the VAWG toolkit, and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).
- We will establish VAWG prevention as a key responsibility for neighbourhood teams, tracking local VAWG problem solving initiatives as an indicator of performance.
- We will define more clearly the role of Safer Neighbourhood Teams in protecting victim survivors and in managing offenders.