

A Safer City for All Women and Girls

The Mayor's Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy 2026-29



Key information

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Foreword - Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London

Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London

My goal as Mayor has always been to make every woman and girl in London safer – and feel safer – in our city. While violence against women and girls (VAWG) may be deep-rooted, far too many people seem to think that this means it will be a part of our society forever - I couldn't disagree more. As far as I am concerned, one woman's life cruelly stolen or forever changed by VAWG is one too many. This problem is preventable, not inevitable - and work will not stop until we eradicate it in London once and for all.

Since 2016, I have overseen a record-breaking £318million of specific investment into tackling VAWG, addressing its root causes and supporting victims. That funding has delivered transformative results, proving that real change is possible.

Work led by MOPAC, my office for policing and crime, has delivered wholesale changes in the way rape and serious sexual offences are investigated through the pioneering Operation Soteria .

More visible local policing and specific intelligence-led, data-driven action has also been taken against 64 per cent of those identified through the VAWG 100 programme as the most dangerous VAWG offenders in our city since July 2023, resulting in 263 arrests and 208 convictions .

Overall, in the 12 months to July 2026, the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) more than tripled the number of rape investigations it solved - a 268 per cent increase, or 1,188 more cases – compared to the 12 months to July 2022 .

At the same time, I have both challenged and supported the MPS to embark on a path of far-reaching cultural reform – to increase public trust, reduce crime and achieve higher standards of integrity and professionalism. This includes stamping out misogyny and removing officers who are unfit to serve. I want to assure Londoners that I will continue to work with the MPS Commissioner, and hold him to account, to ensure our city gets the police service it deserves.

I know that, if we are to win the fight against VAWG, enforcement alone will not be enough – we need far-reaching cultural change. That's why we launched the multi-award winning 'Have a Word' and 'Say Maaate to a Mate' campaigns to challenge misogyny. Their success has shown that male attitudes and behaviours can change .

We have also delivered game-changing prevention and early intervention programmes through MOPAC and my Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) – delivering sessions on healthy relationships for tens of thousands of young people, and toolkits for teachers to help nurture healthy attitudes in the next generation of Londoners.

On top of this, we have worked with local authorities to put the voices of women and girls at the heart of safer public space design. Our Women's Night Safety Charter now has over 3,500 signatories. We will build on this work to support local authorities to transform public spaces across London for women and girls to feel safer and be safer.

Tackling VAWG also means transforming the way we support survivors. Through MOPAC and City Hall, we support specialist services for victims of VAWG – catering for minority and under-served communities and offering free legal advice and safe accommodation for victims and their families fleeing abuse. This is life-changing, and often lifesaving, work.

MOPAC has also pioneered the use of GPS tagging to protect victims and make sure domestic abuse perpetrators and stalkers comply with their sentences. This has significantly reduced violent reoffending in tag wearers .

Finally, we have worked tirelessly to respond to the organised sexual exploitation of young women and children, including group-based offending, often known as grooming gangs. This practice is utterly abhorrent, and anyone responsible for such vile criminal acts must face the full force of the law. I've demanded full transparency and asked the MPS to leave no stone unturned when investigating these appalling crimes.

In 2023, I personally requested that His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) look into child protection at the MPS, including the effectiveness of their response to child sexual exploitation. This led to the MPS delivering significant improvements to how child sexual exploitation is being tackled in London. My record investment in the police has also helped to train over 11,000 frontline officers to identify all forms of child exploitation, leading to a sustained increase in the identification and recording of child exploitation investigations. We must remain vigilant to emerging and changing threats around child exploitation, and I will continue to support and hold the MPS to account to ensure it does everything possible to tackle child sexual exploitation in London, including grooming gangs.

I am pleased we have a government dedicated to tackling the problem of VAWG with the urgency and energy it requires, and I welcome both its mission to halve VAWG nationally over the next decade and their 2025 strategy to deliver it. We will do all we can to support this in London and go further.

We will continue to innovate, advocate and convene to make tackling VAWG everyone's responsibility – for example, by collaborating with partners across policing, business, and charities to provide additional emergency accommodation for victims of domestic abuse and their families.

As Mayor, I have refreshed my strategy to tackle VAWG in every new term to ensure we are responding to the current landscape across the capital, the country, and the world. This Tackling VAWG Strategy sits alongside my Police and Crime Plan in setting the

direction for our work over the next three years.

We have made significant progress over the course of my last two strategies. But recent events – including the revelations of misconduct in Charing Cross Police Station, and the horrific offending by Simon Levy – underline why it is so important that we continue this work. My newly refreshed strategy is supported by an additional £37.4million investment and sets out how we will adapt, build on and accelerate our efforts – through our work in my current Mayoral term – to make our city safer for all women and girls. Because, ultimately, my goal remains the same: ensuring that every woman and girl can participate fully in the life of our great city without experiencing or fearing harassment, abuse or violence.

Foreword - Kaya Comer-Schwartz, Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime

Kaya Comer-Schwartz, Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime

As a born-and-bred Londoner, and a woman, I have always believed women and girls should be able to enjoy all the freedoms and benefits of our great city – just as men and boys can. All women – regardless of age, race, faith or class – should be safe, and feel safe, to go about their lives at all times of day and night, and online.

I am extremely proud to be working with the Mayor to tackle VAWG, and continue our vital work to make London safer – and feel safer – for all women and girls.

In developing this strategy, we have listened to women and girls across our city to ensure our work is rooted in their experiences, needs and wishes. We have also worked with the VAWG sector, front-line workers and other partners across City Hall and the GLA family,

local authorities and businesses. I am so grateful to everyone who has given their time, dedication and expertise in helping shape this.

Together we are already delivering real change – and this strategy reflects our ambition to go further, rooted in practical actions to make the biggest possible impacts now and in the long term.

London has thousands of amazing, committed and skilled people working around the clock to keep women and girls safe. It is a source of continued inspiration to me, and I hope that through this strategy we can continue to champion and support you.

We have a strong and motivated partnership – including MOPAC, the MPS, the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU), the GLA, Transport for London (TfL), the NHS, the criminal justice system, the VAWG sector, London councils, businesses and others. Our work is based on the shared understanding that preventing and reducing VAWG is everyone's business.

And we have seen real-world evidence that this work is making a difference. We've seen more men and boys empowered to reflect on and challenge misogyny in their peer groups; more predatory men brought to justice; more victims protected; better and more joined-up victim support services delivered.

Together, over the next three years, we will strive further to prevent VAWG by tackling its underlying causes, supporting the MPS to raise standards and hold perpetrators to account for their crimes; and ensuring victims and survivors are supported.

As Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, I will continue to do everything I can to support the Mayor and our partners across London as we strive to realise our goal of a London free from VAWG.

Our ambitious approach to change

This newly refreshed strategy to tackle VAWG reinforces the Mayor's commitment to making London safer for women and girls during his third term in office. It builds on what we have learnt while delivering the work of the Mayor's previous strategies; and responds to the evolving nature of VAWG. It recognises that VAWG disproportionately affects minoritised and marginalised communities; and the political and cultural landscape affecting attitudes and behaviours across the world.

We remain focused on increasing preventative efforts to tackle misogyny; improving the experience of victims of VAWG; and bringing more perpetrators of all types of VAWG to justice. In this way, we are contributing to the government's national mission to halve VAWG in the next decade, and the Mayor's long-term ambition to eradicate VAWG.

The Mayor's 2022-25 strategy was published in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis. These factors put significant strain on VAWG services, which responded to the increased vulnerability of victims under lockdown constraints with their abuser and the wider criminal justice system as backlogs increased. What we have learnt from responding to these challenges, and our new ways of working, shape this refreshed strategy to tackle VAWG through the Mayor's third term in office.

In 2022, we were also faced with a crisis of trust in the MPS following a raft of appalling revelations and the 2021 murder of Sarah Everard. The subsequent investigations into MPS standards and culture (from Baroness Casey), and into the failings that allowed serving police officers to commit abhorrent crimes (from Dame Angiolini), were under way, and we awaited their conclusions. We therefore addressed MPS reform in a stand-alone chapter of the 2022-25 strategy.

The resulting findings and recommendations of these reviews have paved the way for the Mayor and the MPS Commissioner to embark on a radical programme of reform within the MPS. This includes removing officers not fit to serve.

It remains more important than ever to ensure work to reform every part of London's police service is embedded into everything we are doing to tackle VAWG. This strategy covers our work across the three key areas – preventing VAWG; supporting victims; and stopping perpetrators.

Making women and girls safer by preventing VAWG

This work will involve:

- tackling misogynistic attitudes and behaviours
- ensuring public spaces feel and are safer
- preventing online and tech-enabled VAWG
- working in partnership across London.
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Supporting victims and survivors of VAWG

This work will involve:

- supporting the MPS to build a service that cares for victims and survivors
- maximising the impact of our investment in support for victims and survivors
- improving the experience of victims and survivors in the criminal justice system
- working in partnership across London.
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Stopping perpetrators and holding them to account

This work will involve:

- identifying, and intervening at, every opportunity to stop VAWG
- supporting the MPS response to tackling VAWG
- strengthening the management of perpetrators across the criminal justice system
- working in partnership across London.
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We will deliver this by:

- working with partners to make preventing, identifying and reducing VAWG everyone's business
- maximising the Mayor's and City Hall's convening powers to drive action, delivery and change
- demonstrating city-wide, national and international leadership
- prioritising early intervention and prevention to address the root causes of VAWG
- placing the safety and voices of women and girls at the heart of policymaking, service design and delivery
- using the Mayor's oversight powers to scrutinise and assure reform in the MPS.
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Making women and girls safer by preventing VAWG

The Mayor has always been clear that women should not have to change their behaviour – what they wear, where they walk, how long they stay out – to stay safe and feel safe in their own homes, communities and workplaces. His ambition to eradicate VAWG in the long term, and to support the government in their mission to halve VAWG by 2035, relies on immediate action to stop VAWG from happening in the first place.

In his first Police and Crime Plan, the Mayor pledged to robustly tackle unacceptable attitudes and behaviour to women and girls. Since then, he has continuously sought to:

- tackle the underlying misogynistic attitudes that enable VAWG
- educate young people on healthy relationships
- make public spaces safer
- engage widely with partners across London to make VAWG everyone's business and build prevention into policies across services and sectors.

This is why, in 2019, he set up England's first Violence Reduction Unit (VRU). Through this, he pioneered a public health approach, of prevention and early intervention, to tackle violence across London. His last Tackling VAWG Strategy, in 2022, went on to embed the public health, preventative approach, paving the way to innovation and collaboration. This has included:

- consulting with women and girls to make public spaces safer
-

bringing London's health partners together to improve and promote best practice

- holding our city's first ever international summit to tackle VAWG
- engagement with the tech sector to open a dialogue on how to collectively design out VAWG on their platforms.

In this refreshed strategy, we recognise that misogyny continues to be allowed to be spread on social media platforms, with automated bots and influential personalities profiteering from images and posts aimed at attacking and degrading women. We welcome the Government's commitment to go further on tackling tech-abuse and digital safety, recognising the challenging global discourse undermining women's rights.

The Mayor's campaigns to tackle misogynistic attitudes, and his work with young people, remain more relevant than ever. His work to embed the safety of women and girls in public spaces into planning and infrastructure projects, so they feel safer in London during the day and at night, is bearing fruit and must be expanded to benefit all of London. And his burgeoning work with the tech sector must be developed to better understand and prevent online and tech-enabled VAWG.

Tackling misogynistic attitudes and behaviours

Whether it's wolf-whistling, sexual harassment, online stalking, coercive control, domestic abuse, or sexual exploitation, the root causes of VAWG lie in harmful attitudes among men and boys, and in the societal and cultural norms and systems that enable them.

Our work to tackle these is already paying off. The Mayor's multi award-winning 'Have a Word' and 'Say Maaate to a Mate' campaigns have been proven to empower people to call

out misogynistic behaviour; and 80 per cent of young men who saw the 'Have a Word' campaign said they would now call out misogynistic behaviour if they saw it . His 'FGM Stops Here' campaign also continues to support and amplify community movement against this appalling crime .

The Mayor's long-standing public health approach to tackling violence involves intervening at key points in a young person's life – to help them build trusted relationships; to nurture positive attitudes; and to protect them from harm. We have therefore prioritised tackling misogyny in schools – delivering healthy relationships sessions for 26,500 young people – as well as mentoring, youth workers and specialised support.

One young man who had received training through the VRU's RE:SET programme said: *"I would like more workshops like this to encourage men to make the right decisions – to think about, who are your role models? Are they hurting or helping you?"*

The Mayor has also developed educational toolkits to support teachers in primary and secondary school settings. A headteacher at a North London Primary school, where every teacher has taken part in the training, said: *"Broaching issues like misogyny and sexism with young children can be really challenging and is something that we need to be prepared to deal with ... We now have expertly crafted, tried-and-tested tools and activities to safely and confidently teach this important subject matter."*

Over the next three years, the Mayor will take the following actions:

- **Collaborate on campaigns and interventions that challenge misogyny and harmful practices; promote healthy relationships; and showcase positive role models**

Alongside continued activity to counter misogyny online and across London, this work includes the Mayor's recently launched campaign to tackle the negative influences of the manosphere. The new campaign targets young men and boys to role-model positive attitudes and promote positive opportunities and behaviours. We will also support and amplify initiatives from partners including TfL – in particular, their 'act like a friend' campaign – as well as community groups, employers and other stakeholders.

- **Invest in educational programmes to promote respect and equality; and work with the government to embed long-term prevention programmes for all children and young people, including in all educational settings**

Through MOPAC, the VRU and TfL, this work will include supporting children affected by VAWG – including sexual violence, domestic abuse and child sexual abuse and exploitation. It will involve promoting positive home dynamics with families and parents (sharing learning from the VRU's parenting programmes); and helping parents understand online harms, so they can confidently discuss healthy relationships and consent.

- **Invest in programmes and support communities to counter harmful practices and ideologies**

This includes the Mayor's work with partners including tech firms, regulators, and every part of society to tackle the manosphere. We will also continue to deliver ground-breaking programmes through the Mayor's Shared Endeavour Fund , to directly counter all forms of hate and extremism including extreme misogyny.

To challenge and prevent practices such as forced marriage, female genital mutilation, breast ironing and dowry abuse, we will build on learning from the Harmful Practices Community Education Pilot. We will strengthen community allyship, and community-led solutions, in partnership with the MPS, health services, specialist VAWG sector agencies

and other key stakeholders.

Ensuring public spaces feel and are safer

Across the UK, 86 per cent of women and girls aged 18-24 have experienced harassment in public spaces . Londoners feel less safe in town centres, pubs and clubs, parks and open spaces, and on public transport, than they do in other environments such as at home or at work . In retail and hospitality – sectors employing large numbers of women – female staff face disproportionate risks .

Women and girls are disproportionately impacted by sexual offending and harassment as they travel, whether on public transport, walking, cycling or using taxis, private hire vehicles or pedicabs. The MOPAC Public Attitude Survey has consistently found women feel less safe than men when walking alone in their local area after dark.

Since 2016, the Mayor has prioritised work with the police, local authorities and businesses to make public spaces safer for women and girls at all times of day and night. He has worked to put the voices of women and girls at the heart of safer public space design - aligning with London's commitments under the UN Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces initiative.

Through his Women's Night Safety Charter (WNSC) , the Mayor provides over 3,500 venues (including shops, restaurants, nightclubs and football clubs) with training and resources to make women safer in and around their premises.

In 2024, MOPAC and TfL piloted Women's Safety Audits in multiple locations across five London boroughs. The audits involved training women and girls to become community researchers, and to undertake audits in their local areas. They used a variety of methods, including interviews and group discussions, to understand safety issues and provide

insights to be integrated into future urban design and policy decisions. Women and girls who participated were overwhelmingly positive about being involved and found the process empowering. One participant told us: *“Being in a room full of strong independent people ... to come together and share openly our experiences ... just made me realise that the problem is never me.”*

TfL has also used the WNSC and Women’s Safety Audits to successfully influence planning applications for proposed commercial sites.

The Mayor has also appointed Mayor’s Design Advocates (MDAs) as independent experts to champion quality and inclusion across Mayoral projects and decision making. Gender inclusion expertise has been strengthened within the new cohort of 53 MDAs, covering a range of specialisms including gender inclusive practice, inclusive design, participatory approaches, and public realm design. They have been actively involved across a variety of projects, helping to shape environments that deliver the best possible outcomes for women and girls.

Over the next three years, the Mayor will take the following actions:

- **Work with public, private and voluntary sector partners to make public spaces safer, and feel safer, by design – especially at night**

This work includes a £15.6m programme of new investment to give women and girls a voice in transforming public spaces across London to make them safer-by-design. It will build on the success of the Women’s Safety Audits pilot and provide grant funding for local authorities to make changes such as improved CCTV, layered lighting, and re-designing parks, paths and other public areas to ensure clear sight lines, remove blind spots, hiding places or obstructions.

Alongside this, we will prioritise women and girls in growth and spatial planning across the GLA – using the Mayor’s Design Advocates , TfL, the Mayoral Development Corporations , the MPS, local authorities, health services and other partners, to influence plans, places, systems and infrastructure. This includes designing active travel routes, transport hubs and bus stops that are safe and welcoming.

We will continue to cascade this approach with developers, landowners and other stakeholders for local plans, masterplans and neighbourhood strategies – and we will work to provide safe and secure housing, and tackle homelessness .

- **Work with the MPS and other partners to identify VAWG hotspots and take preventative action, such as increased patrols or targeted public realm improvements**

This work will include supporting policing initiatives such as Project Vigilant , which deploys a mix of plain-clothes and uniformed officers in VAWG hotspots (predominantly in night-time economy areas) to disrupt, intervene and challenge predatory behaviour. We will also continue to work with London’s 32 local authorities, the City of London, police, businesses, London’s Business Improvement Districts and other partners to promote the use of Public Space Protection Orders.

Subject to Parliamentary approval and future consultation, the Mayor would like to use his proposed role in strategic licensing powers to ensure more premises are equipped to deal with safeguarding and vulnerability issues. He will work with the Safer Business Network to continue the expansion of the WNSC.

TfL, in partnership with the MPS and BTP, will continue to strengthen its activity to tackle VAWG through a holistic end violence against women and girls programme covering policing, planning, communications and engagement, staff training, innovation and

improvements to infrastructure.

- **Work with partners across London to ensure workplaces are safe for women and girls**

We support the government's approach to ensuring all employers do everything they can for victims and survivors of all forms of VAWG in the workplace. Across the GLA family, we will continue to embed the Workers Protection Act (amendment) and support the implementation of the strengthened duty under the Employment Rights Act 2025, which require employers to take steps to prevent and protect staff from sexual harassment and respond to domestic abuse. We will also strengthen partnerships between businesses, police and trade unions to stamp out violence against shop and frontline workers.

- **Work with partners to protect and support children and young people to navigate public spaces safely**

This will include our VRU working with schools to develop culturally sensitive guidance for pupils; and continued support for the work that TfL, the MPS and the British Transport Police (BTP) do to aid safer travel for young people.

The Mayor has also commissioned independent research into what young people across London do, and where there is for them to go – particularly at night. We will consider the findings and recommendations of this research; and work with partners to encourage opportunities for positive socialising across London. This will reduce their risk of social isolation, and becoming vulnerable to negative online influences.

Preventing online and tech-enabled VAWG

Online, harmful and misleading content and ideas are too easily amplified. Nearly two-thirds of young men in the UK regularly engage with so-called “masculinity influencers” ; extreme material is distorting young people’s understanding of sexual pleasure, consent and harm , and we know men in particular are spending more time online where they are exposed to regressive and often harmful practices .

At the same time, advances in technology have created new tools such as AI; deepfake and nudification apps; tracking functions; wearable devices; and remote-access utilities. These can all be exploited as instruments of control and abuse .

To tackle tech-enabled VAWG, the Mayor’s Shared Endeavour Fund has provided 2,500 young Londoners with safe spaces to explore online dangers, including extremism and harmful masculine content. His VRU has provided ground-breaking specialist training for young people on emerging trends and online harms training for parents and trusted adults, for example via the Social Switch Project (led by Catch 22). One parent described their experience: *“Insightful and highly relevant ... the training enhanced my understanding of various online harms like cyberbullying, grooming, radicalisation, and exploitation ... I found the real-life case studies, digital safeguarding checklists, and resources for parents and carers especially useful.”*

Over the next three years, the Mayor will take the following actions:

- **Continue to convene tech companies and VAWG-sector partners to share understanding of, and collaborate on, how to eliminate online and tech-enabled harms to women and girls**

We will develop new and stronger relationships with online, tech and gaming companies as vital partners – alongside specialists in the VAWG sector, women, girls, families and communities – to explore positive opportunities to help design out VAWG in tech. This will

build on the success of the landmark international Tech Abuse Conference hosted by the Mayor at City Hall in May 2026 and led by the Gender and Tech Research Lab at UCL, international leaders in research to tackle technology-enabled abuse. This includes continuing to engage international partners alongside leading academics to share expertise and work together to tackle this emerging issue.

- **Work with government to tackle new and emerging threats**

MOPAC will work with government, Counter Terrorism Policing and the National Crime Agency towards legislation on tech-enabled VAWG that is future-proofed and victim-focused – for example, to strengthen laws around intimate images (including deepfake abuse) to target platforms as well as individuals.

We will also work with the Home Office to meet its commitment to review the counter-extremism strategy, and consider classifying extreme misogyny as a form of extremism; and for this to be reflected in any new policy.

- **Convene national and international counterparts and partners to take collective responsibility for change**

This work will include the Mayor working with his international peers, so they can use their collective influence to advocate for action from governments across the globe. The aim is for governments to respond to the threat of tech-enabled VAWG; and create a safer online, AI and digital world for future generations.

- **Support ground-breaking research and training on emerging trends for our police, parents and communities**

The VRU will build on the findings of their recently published in-depth analysis of violent and misogynistic content online, how it fuels violence against women and girls and opportunities to intervene and prevent it . Supported by a £5m investment, they will deliver a targeted intervention programme through training for communities, parents and carers, and specialist frontline practitioners who work with young people. The VRU will also develop an emotional support and mentoring offer for girls and young women who are at risk of or are experiencing tech-enabled and online VAWG, building on the learnings of its successful mentoring programme for girls and young women aged 9-25 .

This work will also include supporting the MPS to develop and evolve resourcing and tactics – such as their digital elements training, which has been taken up by 14 other UK forces – to tackle online and tech-enabled VAWG and the unique policing challenges these crimes present.

Working in partnership

Last year, the Mayor – with the City Hub and Network for Gender Equity (CHANGE) – hosted London’s first ever international summit to tackle the global VAWG epidemic. It brought together leaders and advocates from several cities – including Amsterdam, Barcelona, Bogota, Freetown, Louisville, Nairobi, Quezon City, Paris, Renca and Stockholm – at City Hall, where they committed to an international declaration to tackle VAWG.

This declaration – based on parts of the Mayor’s 2022 Tackling VAWG Strategy – included:

“This is not a challenge that is unique to any single city, nor a task we can take on alone, but a mission we must pursue together with stakeholders inside our jurisdiction and partners around the world. Through this declaration, CHANGE cities commit to working together to tackle the root causes of gender-based violence. This involves exchanging on and improving public services, policies, the built environment, institutional responses,

governance, and attitudinal behaviour change.”

Over the next three years, the Mayor will take the following actions:

Galvanise partners across London and beyond to prevent VAWG

- MOPAC and the VRU will convene partners (across policing; transport; local authorities; the City of London; health services; housing; and the public, voluntary and private sectors) to embed a cross-sector, long-term VAWG Prevention Plan. This will be based on the Mayor’s published VAWG Prevention Principles. We will also continue to work with health partners to build on the set of principles for the NHS to tackle VAWG; these were launched at City Hall’s September 2023 summit.

As part of this work, we will continue to implement the Serious Violence Duty , led by the VRU on behalf of London’s 32 boroughs (and the City of London). We will also continue to coordinate the Young Futures Prevention Panels pilot across London; this identifies, at an earlier stage, children and young people at risk of involvement in violence.

Through MOPAC and the VRU, we will work with partners to embed:

- a more holistic, solution-focused response to violence and abuse within families
- the use of the Adult Child to Parent Abuse (ACPA) family needs and risks tool ,
- which acknowledges the additional complexity that parents face when experiencing abuse from their adult or adolescent children.

Our vital work also includes supporting the financial independence of women at risk of VAWG. This involves trialling and testing different approaches to improving confidence and skills – such as employment training and education opportunities – to help them overcome the economic barriers that prevent some women and girls from seeking safety .

By taking this approach over the next three years, the Mayor’s priority aims are to:

- deliver effective publicity campaigns to change male attitudes, and increase public awareness, about VAWG; and help people feel equipped to intervene
- support young people to develop healthy attitudes and relationships through MOPAC and the Mayor's VRU
- help women and girls to feel safer across London as measured by the Public Attitude Survey.

Supporting victims and survivors of VAWG

The Mayor has always been clear that victims must be at the centre of our work to tackle VAWG. This is why he created an Independent Victims' Commissioner for London – to drive improvements and ensure the voices of victims and survivors are heard.

This appointment was followed by:

- three Victims' Summits
- the London Rape Reviews
- a review of the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime in England and Wales
- the London Stalking Review
- the London Victim Attrition Review.
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The findings of these reports from the Independent Victims' Commissioner, and their continued advocacy, have helped to shape key initiatives and legislation. This includes Operation Soteria; and influencing the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, the Victims and

Prisoners Act 2024, and the forthcoming Crime and Policing Bill.

In December 2025, the Mayor appointed leading VAWG and trafficking campaigner Andrea Simon to take the role forward with a focus on improving access to justice for all VAWG survivors.

During the Mayor's last term, in response to the crisis of trust in the MPS, he appointed Sir Mark Rowley as a reforming MPS Commissioner. Rowley is committed to wholesale cultural, systemic and organisational change. The Mayor welcomed the publication of the Baroness Casey Review into standards and culture at the MPS. He and the Commissioner have together embarked on a programme of reform. The Mayor will not rest until London has the police service it deserves – one that victims and survivors can feel confident in.

We also responded to the COVID-19 pandemic with the Mayor's Cost-of-Living Fund, launched in March 2023. It enabled 44 'by and for' VAWG organisations to help over 5,500 victims access the financial assistance they needed to seek safety.

Since then, MOPAC has worked with the VAWG sector, and wider partners, to redesign and recommission our services to support victims of VAWG. This ensures these services can better meet victims' current needs. We take these developments forward in this strategy with a focus on supporting services to innovate; build workforce resilience; and ensure they respond effectively to the disproportionate impact of VAWG on minoritised and marginalised communities across London.

Our mission is to eradicate VAWG in London in the long term; and to support the government in their mission to halve VAWG by 2035. This relies on continued action to improve the experience of victims and survivors when dealing with the MPS, and throughout the criminal justice system. It also seeks to reduce the number of victims whose legal proceedings are discontinued before they reach trial. This will help increase reporting

of VAWG; reduce exploitation and re-victimisation; and improve conviction rates so that perpetrators cannot continue to offend.

Supporting victims, survivors and their families helps to protect them - not only from immediate harm, but also the multi-generational experience of VAWG in households that drives future offending and victimhood.

Supporting the MPS to build a service that cares for victims and survivors

We want more victims and survivors to report VAWG to the police – but there can be multiple barriers to reporting. Concerns around the appalling, misogynistic and abusive behaviour of too many police officers should not be one of them.

The Mayor is clear that this behaviour must be stopped. Perpetrators of VAWG, and those that hold and share misogynistic views – as well as colleagues that enable and fail to challenge these abhorrent behaviours – do not belong in the MPS.

All victims and survivors in all our communities, including victims of grooming gangs or those working for the MPS, should feel confident to report. And they should feel confident that, when they do report, they will be cared for by officers who uphold the highest standards.

Other barriers can include the fear of losing custody of children in the family courts, or of losing a home. It is therefore essential that victims and survivors feel they can rely on officers to treat them sensitively; and to take their case forward effectively, without adding to their trauma.

Overall, in the 12 months to July 2026, the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) more than tripled the number of rape investigations it solved - a 268 per cent increase, or 1,188 more cases – compared to the 12 months to July 2022. However, ongoing challenges across the wider criminal justice system mean victims and survivors can still wait years before their cases are resolved; and many withdraw their complaint to protect their wellbeing .

The Mayor has invested £12m into the MPS Leadership Academy. Meanwhile the London Rape Reviews, which were led by London’s Independent Victims’ Commissioner, led to a national change in how rape is investigated and prosecuted through Operation Soteria.

The MPS was one of the pathfinders for Operation Soteria – a “once-in-a-generation” opportunity to truly transform the police response to rape and serious sexual assault investigation. Since the MPS began its journey in 2022, the number of people arrested and charged with rape offences has more than tripled .

Thousands of officers are working hard every day to change the MPS from within. Yet abuses such as those uncovered at Charing Cross police station last year highlight that there is still work to do.

Over the next three years, the Mayor will take the following actions:

- **Continue to support the MPS on its path to becoming more trauma-informed, anti-racist, anti-homophobic and anti-sexist**

We will support the delivery, and work with the MPS Commissioner to act on the findings, of the independent Fairfield Review that we have commissioned to examine culture, leadership, standards, and public confidence in the MPS. The Review is currently underway, working to assess progress made against the recommendations of Baroness

Casey in her 2023 report .

The Mayor will also continue to use his oversight function to support the delivery of the MPS's New Met for London plans; its VAWG Action Plan; its upcoming Inclusion and Victims' Strategies and its Children's Strategy, which ensures children under 18 are treated, from the beginning, as children in all their dealings with the police.

- **Advocate for safe reporting and protection for all victims and survivors of VAWG, including children and other vulnerable victims including those who work within the MPS**

This will include using MOPAC's oversight mechanism to ensure an appropriate and supportive MPS response to all victims of child sexual abuse and child sexual exploitation – including group-based child sexual exploitation and grooming gangs – regardless of when the alleged abuse took place.

We will work to improve data collection, whilst lobbying for improved legislation and a strengthened National Referral Mechanism to better support adult and child victims, and survivors, of human trafficking and modern slavery – including human trafficking, slavery, servitude and forced labour.

We will use MOPAC's oversight mechanism to support migrant victims and survivors to safely report. The Mayor will also continue to call on the government to introduce a 'firewall' between policing and immigration enforcement. In addition, he will support the delivery of recommendations made by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS), in response to the super-complaint from Liberty and Southall Black Sisters .

Similarly, we will use MOPAC's oversight mechanism to promote safe reporting of VAWG for women involved in prostitution, without them becoming criminalised, while supporting the MPS to target buyers of sex.

- **Support the MPS to build capability, consistency and culturally informed anti-racist approaches in response to VAWG**

This will include working with the MPS to ensure appropriate cultural sensitivity and anti-racist training and development is delivered to all staff – including those in the special constabulary, frontline supervisors, Police Community Support Officers, and leaders.

It will also include using the latest technological advancements – for example, a new resource to photograph and visualise bruising on victims of violence, particularly on darker skin, which is being rolled out across London.

- **Support the MPS to embed the views and care of victims and survivors of VAWG in their work**

This will include working with the MPS to ensure victims and survivors of VAWG continue to be supported by the Victim Focus Desk (VFD). Since 2023, the Mayor has invested £3m a year in the phone-based VFD. This is to improve the experience of victims who have already reported their crime to the police; and who require information and updates on their case, and assistance in accessing support services.

The work also includes embedding the views of victims and survivors into updated MPS practices, through the new Met Engage tool ; My Met Service feedback ; and 'walk and talk' sessions . We will also establish a VAWG-specific Victims' Voice Forum across the MPS, the City of London Police and the BTP.

Through the Mayor's oversight function, we will support more consistent, trauma-informed communication to vulnerable individuals around how their data and relevant past histories will be handled.

MOPAC will work with the MPS, National Centre for VAWG and Public Protection (NCVPP), the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC), the College of Policing and others to assess the impact of the rape and serious sexual violence operation model from Soteria. It will apply this learning to the response to domestic abuse through Operation Bright Light

Maximising the impact of our investment in support for victims and survivors

The Mayor has responsibility for commissioning vital specialist support services to help victims and survivors of VAWG across London. A regional approach has enabled support to be specifically tailored to the needs and demands of Londoners. The Mayor has also been able to test pioneering new initiatives. In 2024-25 alone, this way of working has helped support over 44,000 new victims and survivors

VAWG can have devastating, life-changing consequences for women and girls, and their families. The various pathways to support, reporting and justice can be overwhelming, and these services help victims and survivors to cope, recover and seek justice (should they choose to).

Black and minoritised women and girls experiencing VAWG are disproportionately impacted, often facing barriers to accessing support. This is why the Mayor has invested over £6m since 2020 in his VAWG Grassroots Funds which has provided funding to 57

organisations and benefitted over 56,800 women, girls and their families. After achieving safety thanks to the support offered, one survivor went on to establish her own charity supporting Romani Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller women and children to navigate life after abuse.

X is a Romani (Gypsy) in her early 40s who recently left her husband due to abuse, and is now a single mother to four children. She first engaged with the Grassroots Fund through social media, and was keen to get involved. She went on to attend many survivor coffee mornings, which she said gave her a *“new sense of community and support”* after her difficult experiences. She went on to become a peer researcher; she realised that many other women in her community had similar experiences, and this inspired her. She continues to engage with our services to develop new opportunities for herself, her family and others.

Over the next three years, the Mayor will take the following actions:

- **Continue to commission specialist support services for victims and survivors of all types of VAWG and advocate for the funding needed to meet demand across London**

This work will include delivering the new Pan-London Domestic Abuse Service. This has been designed to provide needs-led and risk-informed support through a partnership of 13 specialist organisations. Intensive, integrated and independent support packages will offer a dynamic, tiered approach – empowering survivors to make informed choices about their support journey, and to access support in the right place and at the right time for them.

The GLA and MOPAC will continue to work together with partners across London to deliver the Mayor’s Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy 2025-28 . We will also

continue to commission new services to make transitional spaces available across London for victims and survivors, including children, to safely make decisions about their future support – aiding independence and dignity. This includes an £18m grant fund for ‘led by and for’ services, and specialist services, until 2029.

Health services play a vital role in supporting victims and survivors, including children. We will continue to support health service partners in responding to VAWG; and champion tailored referral pathways for victims and survivors, including improved access to mental health services. We will also continue to co-commission – with NHS England – specialist medical and forensic services for anyone who has been raped or sexually assaulted, regardless of whether they report to the police.

We will build on the pioneering work of the Lighthouse – the UK’s first ‘Child House’ – which was set up by the Mayor and partners in 2018 to provide multi-agency support for victims and survivors of child sexual abuse and exploitation in a single child-friendly environment. It remains the first of its kind in England and Wales and has supported over 2,000 victims and survivors across five north London boroughs.

A new £2.4m package of support for victims and survivors of child sexual exploitation (CSE) will directly fund new Independent Sexual Violence Advocates and expand counselling provision. The funding will boost capacity across the Mayor’s existing specialist services for children, young people, and adults who have experienced any form of sexual abuse or violence.

We will also build on the work of the Mayor’s Violence and Exploitation Service and continue to commission child-first services for girls in gangs, or at risk of violence and sexual exploitation, including by group-based child sexual exploitation or grooming gangs. These services (managed by MOPAC and the VRU) will specifically challenge the

adultification of children, which – particularly for Black girls – increases their exposure to harm and denies them protection.

We will also oversee the delivery of a new pan-London specialist service for victims of sexual violence. This has been co-commissioned by MOPAC and NHS England; and co-designed with victims, and those expert in supporting them. It is run by an alliance of specialist sexual violence organisations. It marks a significant milestone in the Mayor's commitment to improving outcomes for victims. This transformative model delivers a trauma-informed, equitable system that empowers survivors to access the support they need at any stage of their cope-and-recovery journey. A collaborative alliance of specialist providers, and a consistent, needs-led approach to support that makes better use of technology, will enable advocacy, counselling, holistic care, peer support, and improved navigation through the criminal justice system.

In May 2026, the Mayor hosted a landmark international conference at City Hall, led by the Gender and Tech Research Lab at UCL, to address the global epidemic of tech abuse, where he announced a new £6m fund to tackle the proliferation of tech facilitated abuse in all forms of VAWG. We will build on the success of UCL's conference and continue to collaborate with victims and survivors and the VAWG sector, UK government and regulators, international stakeholders from the technology industry, academia and civil society to spearhead an urgent new approach to provide better support for victims and survivors of tech-enabled abuse. This includes MOPAC and the VRU working together to commission a new service to provide information and support for victims alongside building the capabilities of professionals to respond effectively to tech facilitated VAWG.

Too often, the on-going cost-of-living crisis makes it more difficult for survivors of domestic abuse to rebuild their lives, forcing them into debt and in some cases to stay with their abusers. Financial independence offers women and girls the freedom to live life on their

own terms and the opportunity to rebuild their confidence and sense of self, as well as reducing the risk of re-victimisation. The Mayor is investing an additional £3m to design and commission a new specialist service to help victims and survivors to improve their skills and remove barriers to employment so they can become financially independent of their abusers – breaking the cycle of coercive control, financial and physical abuse. The service will include three core elements. The first will focus on building the capabilities of existing VAWG practitioners to better identify and respond to economic abuse. This will provide the foundations for the second element, a focus on specific support for survivors to help them separate safely from the perpetrator by establishing independent income sources and building strong financial capability. The third will then provide support for victims to move towards education, employment and training to create long term economic independence.

Our new pan-London specialist service for victims of stalking – co-designed with the input of victims and survivors, the VAWG sector, and other partners – will help meet the evolving nature of VAWG, including cyber-stalking. It also offers specialist provision for young people aged 11 and over, who are disproportionately victims of serious stalking offences.

Alongside calling on the government to help provide the funding needed to meet demand across London, we will work with VAWG-sector partners – including our VAWG Expert Reference Group (ERG) – to build a sustainable workforce development strategy that addresses recruitment, retention, capacity, specialist skillsets, growth, and resilience in the VAWG sector.

- **Ensure support is available for all victims and survivors of VAWG – including the most marginalised**

This will include a new £6m investment for London's grassroots response to VAWG for minoritised victims and survivors, with a new round of the Mayor's VAWG Grassroots Fund. This fund will build on the work of the previous two funds to improve sustainability of organisations and help them to reach thousands more of the most vulnerable victims and survivors in our communities.

It will also include promoting best practice guidelines to ensure equal and fair access to the support that's needed by migrant victims and survivors; victims and survivors of harmful practices; those involved in sex work; and those with no recourse to public funds. Fears of criminalisation, combined with limited access to available housing, welfare, and cultural and linguistic support, can exacerbate vulnerability to, and reluctance to report, VAWG.

Nearly 60 per cent of women in prison report experiencing domestic abuse , whilst 82 per cent report poor mental health , and around half leave without secure accommodation . Our work to better safeguard women within the criminal justice system will include continuing to co-commission essential services for women in prison, on remand, on probation and at risk of offending. This work aims to promote recovery and ensure referral to specialist support. We will also continue to deliver London's Blueprint for a whole-system approach to women in contact with the criminal justice system, in order to tackle the root causes of reoffending; and work with partners, including the MPS, to divert women into community support.

Improving the experience of victims and survivors in the criminal justice system

To encourage fewer victims and survivors to withdraw from the criminal justice process , we need a system that will support them to come forward and disclose their experience – whether to the GP, support services or the police. We need a system that will continue to

support them throughout their criminal justice journey – from the initial allegation to the final criminal justice outcome.

In 2024, the Mayor launched a free legal-advice service for victims of rape and serious sexual offences. The pilot paved the way for a national ambition to roll out similar provision across the country. One survivor explained what a huge difference this support made to her: *“I was the victim of several separate assaults including rape and physical assaults ... I needed support. Looking at a case on your own and fighting the system can be very daunting ... It [the legal advice] made me feel empowered ... I had someone who could explain everything ... The advice I would offer survivors who are struggling with the legal system is that you don’t have to do this alone. If you can get access to legal advice, it will help you a huge amount. I think it will empower you.”*

Over the next three years, the Mayor will take the following actions:

- **Work to strengthen support for victims and survivors of VAWG as they navigate the criminal justice system**

This will include continued investment in Independent Sexual Violence Advocates, Independent Domestic Violence Advocates and case workers, who provide much-needed support for victims and survivors navigating the criminal justice system.

It will also include taking forward learning from the sexual violence legal advice service and transitioning the Mayor’s London pilot into the government’s national model with the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), while ensuring there is no gap in provision.

- **Convene partners to establish a programme of improvements to the way victims and survivors are treated across the criminal justice system**

This will include working with London's Independent Victims' Commissioner to convene agencies (including the MPS, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), and HM Courts and Tribunals Service) to tackle the multifaceted issues that survivors experience. These include poor communication, adjournments, and lengthy delays to court proceedings. This work will ensure that survivors, and the organisations that support them, are heard.

It will also include work with agencies across London to uphold changes from the Victims and Prisoners Act 2024 – including safeguarding the confidentiality of counselling records and pre-trial therapy.

We will work with partners to promote system-wide improvements that are still required if we are to drive up conviction rates for rape, domestic abuse and stalking. MOPAC will make the case to government for better use of Stalking Protection Orders; and for a new Stalking Protection Notice, as exists for domestic abuse, that can be imposed as quickly as 48 hours after the request. This can offer some immediate protection whilst a full order is applied for, improving experience of victims and survivors across the criminal justice system.

Working in partnership

A more streamlined, coordinated and transparent system, that better serves victims and survivors, is only possible through improved multi-agency working.

To truly eradicate VAWG, we must look more broadly to make VAWG everyone's business. This means working collaboratively across all of London's authorities, agencies, councils and bodies – including businesses, employers and communities and all those around them – to create better support for victims.

Over the next three years, the Mayor will take the following actions:

- **Convene system leaders, through the MOPAC Partnership Boards and other partnership forums, to drive improvements across the MPS and the wider criminal justice system**

This will include encouraging partners to take forward the recommendations from our reports on managing high-harm domestic abuse, and on understanding and responding to ACPA abuse .

MOPAC will also lead the implementation of the upcoming Duty to Collaborate for London. This includes developing a joint strategic needs assessment for victims; and a co-commissioning strategy, including for victims and survivors of domestic abuse and sexual violence.

- **Bring charities, businesses and other partners together to explore innovative ways to provide additional support for victims and survivors**

This will include working with businesses and charities to pilot the provision of additional and much-needed respite accommodation for victims and survivors and their children.

By taking this approach over the next three years, the Mayor's priority aims are to:

- improve the experience of victims and survivors throughout the criminal justice system as measured by police and other partner data
- reduce the number of victims who choose to discontinue legal proceedings before they reach trial – an issue known as victim attrition. We will measure this using police data.

Stopping perpetrators and holding them to account

Since he came to office, the Mayor has pioneered innovative programmes and approaches to identify and manage perpetrators; increase reporting and convictions; and reduce reoffending.

Delays in the criminal justice system, brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, have made this work more necessary and challenging than ever. In recent years, the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime has convened partners, through the London Criminal Justice Board, to tackle the funding and capacity crisis. This work remains a priority in this Mayoral term, as we also grapple with new forms of perpetration – such as tech-enabled VAWG.

To achieve our goal to eradicate VAWG in London in the long term, and for London to play its part in the government's mission to halve VAWG in a decade, action to stop perpetrators, hold them to account and prevent them from reoffending is essential.

Identifying and intervening at every opportunity to stop VAWG

The Mayor is clear we must take every opportunity to identify VAWG perpetrators and intervene, no matter who they are, as we know they often go on to commit multiple VAWG offences .

Since its launch in 2021, the ground-breaking Culturally Integrated Family Approach is working across 13 boroughs to address intimate partner and familial abuse in minoritised ethnic and marginalised groups . The latest evaluation shows it is addressing a critical gap in services by embedding an intersectional approach that shapes families; influences wider systems and social norms; and enhances victim and survivors' feelings of safety and empowerment .

MOPAC has also pioneered system-change work – for example, through London’s Safe and Together programme , which since 2021-22 has equipped police and social care professionals to identify domestic abuse as early as possible. One practitioner told us:

“Without Safe & Together ... this could have escalated to the child being removed from his mother’s care. The model allowed us to re-evaluate the situation through a lens of perpetrator accountability and survivor strengths ... We were able to reflect that the mother’s parenting was more than good enough. Despite the abuse she was enduring, she was doing an excellent job of keeping her child’s development on track ... This approach allowed us to focus our safeguarding efforts where they were most needed – on the perpetrator ... The mother received specialist domestic abuse support, the child has not witnessed violence for 13 months and now enjoys safe, supervised contact ... The family is thriving, with strong ties to extended family and no ongoing child protection involvement.”

Over the next three years, the Mayor will take the following actions:

- **Work with partners across London to empower practitioners to recognise abusive behaviour and identify high risk individuals with greater accuracy**

In line with our child-first approach, we will work with London Councils, and directors of children’s services across London, to empower practitioners to recognise abusive behaviour from parent perpetrators and support children to remain with their non-abusive parent – and advocate for this approach to become integral to children’s social care in London. This will be easier to navigate with the recent announcement of the upcoming change in the law on parental contact. This will include working with the same partners to ensure the most effective response to identifying child sexual exploitation, including group-based offending, across London.

We will also support the Stalking Threat Assessment Centre (S-TAC) and MPS VAWG 100 programme to identify and prioritise high-harm perpetrators.

To assess and respond to risk more effectively, we will support practitioner training, consistent guidance and improved data sharing, as part of better multi-agency working. For example, we must improve how we collectively assess and understand the risk of harm in relation to domestic abuse. This includes supporting the MPS to strengthen its response to counter allegations in domestic abuse cases.

Other identified risk factors include non-fatal strangulation in domestic homicide and suspected victim suicides following domestic abuse. In 2024, for the second year in a row, there were more suspected suicides following domestic abuse than there were homicides involving current or previous partners.

We will build on our work to better understand VAWG perpetrators, and bring together experts in harmful practices to improve our collective response. This will include working with agencies across the city to remove the systemic barriers that prevent perpetrators of harmful practices from being identified and held to account.

Support and improve the multi-agency management of VAWG perpetrators

• This includes continuing to support London's Drive programme. Since its pilot in 2018, the programme has worked with over 2,600 perpetrators; supported over 1,250 victims and survivors of domestic abuse across London – including more than 2,000 children; and been shown to substantially reduce abusive behaviour. We have extended the programme across every London borough, and the government has now committed to roll it out across England and Wales.

We will also continue to work with the government to develop and deliver more multi-agency intervention programmes across London – so we can reach and reform more VAWG perpetrators; help reduce offending; and stop all forms of VAWG.

It also includes supporting the vital work of Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) and Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Panels across London to deliver targeted, effective, multi-agency provision and systems change. This will include ensuring that MAPPA is used more effectively and consistently to safeguard victims at high risk from domestic abuse and other forms of VAWG.

We will also work with the London Office of Technology and Innovation, and London Councils, to explore the development of a London-wide multi-agency data sharing protocol. This means we can better identify, and manage the behaviour of, VAWG perpetrators; and protect victims and survivors.

MOPAC will also closely follow the IOPC investigation into failings in the multi-agency management of Simon Levy, convicted for the murder of two women and for a number of other serious offences. The Mayor, London's Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime and London's Victims' Commissioner will continue to work with the MPS, the government and partner agencies to ensure that all steps are being taken to understand, learn from and act on lessons learned to ensure this never happens again.

- **Continue to pioneer innovative approaches to managing, disrupting and restricting VAWG perpetrators in the community**

This includes GPS tagging and advocating for it to be available for all VAWG perpetrators – for as long as is needed to manage their risk – as a part of introducing the new Sentencing Act.

It will also include victim proximity monitoring; stronger and more impactful restrictions to prevent tech-enabled abuse and exploring the use of SmartWater and voluntary interventions for those suspected, but not convicted, of sexual offences.

- **Work with partners to develop and invest in new specialist interventions that help cope with the issues created by capacity challenges across the criminal justice system**

This will include considering the recommendations from the Leveson review and the Sentencing Act 2026 .

It will also include continuing to trial, and learn from, our recently launched domestic abuse diversion pilot for first-time offenders. This prioritises the safety of victims and survivors; the intention is to roll it out across London .

We will lobby for specialist and effective VAWG interventions to meet demand throughout the criminal justice system, including in prisons and for those on probation. Programmes across London should provide tailored and combined responses that consider offender needs – such as trauma, mental health, neurodiversity, substance misuse, and relationship/attitudinal factors. All programmes should be underpinned by appropriate support for victims and their children.

Supporting the MPS response to tackling VAWG

For the MPS to effectively respond to VAWG, it must first be staffed with officers that uphold its values; believe in its reform; and commit to ensuring London's streets are safe for women and girls, and a hostile place for VAWG perpetrators.

Since the MPS launched its Professional Standards Domestic Abuse and Sexual Offences unit in 2022, over 110 unsuitable officers and staff have been removed . Long-overdue reforms to police vetting mean any officer who fails background checks is now automatically dismissed. The Mayor and the MPS Commissioner will continue to drive forward this work. This will include action on recommendations from the ongoing Dame Angiolini Inquiry .

Since coming to office in 2016, the Mayor has doubled City Hall funding for the MPS. His Police and Crime Plan prioritises neighbourhood policing; and TfL is directing additional funds to the police to enhance activity to tackle VAWG on the transport network and improve women and girls' confidence to travel.

The MPS has worked hard to embed Operation Soteria across its rape and sexual violence investigations. The Mayor and the MPS Commissioner are determined to continue this work in response to all VAWG .

A concerted effort is needed to tackle and drive down the highest-volume VAWG offences: domestic abuse (which makes up around a third of violence against the person recorded by the MPS), sexual violence and stalking.

This will include supporting the MPS to further build on and develop the data-driven VAWG 100 approach, to continuously prioritise and charge the highest-harm offenders. This model has, since July 2023, led to more visible local policing; and specific intelligence-led, data-driven action against 64 per cent of those identified as the most dangerous VAWG offenders in London. This has resulted in 263 arrests and 208 convictions .

The Mayor has demanded full transparency and asked the MPS to leave no stone unturned when investigating the utterly abhorrent individuals or gangs who exploit children for sex. In 2023, he asked HMICFRS to investigate child protection at the MPS, including

the effectiveness of their response to child sexual exploitation. This led to the MPS delivering significant improvements to how child sexual exploitation is being tackled in London. They have also embedded a new 'Child First' approach to safeguarding – including an enhanced approach to dealing with vulnerable missing children – to ensure child sexual exploitation is treated with the seriousness it deserves. The Mayor's investment in the police has also helped to train over 11,000 frontline officers to identify all forms of child exploitation, leading to a sustained increase in the identification and recording of child exploitation investigations.

Over the next three years, the Mayor will take the following actions:

- **Work with the MPS to apply a more targeted approach to prioritise reducing offending – including repeat and serial – amongst domestic abuse, sexual violence and stalking perpetrators**

This will include supporting the MPS to further build on and develop the data-driven VAWG 100 model; and encouraging partners and others to play their part in identifying and responding to a much wider group of VAWG suspects, as part of their business-as-usual work .

It includes continued investment in S-TAC; overseeing the rollout of our commissioned Stalking Awareness E-Learning Package for the MPS; and monitoring its impact on frontline practice via S-TAC. There is a particular focus on case classification, positive case outcomes and Stalking Protection Order numbers.

It also includes supporting the Commissioner's continued work to root out police-perpetrated abuse and ensure all MPS officers are fit to serve.

- **Support the MPS to protect and strengthen visible neighbourhood policing**

This will include championing the rollout of the new Met Engage tool, which provides crime-prevention advice; updates on ongoing incidents and investigations; and information about successful outcomes and operations.

We will continue to track the confidence that women and girls across London have in the MPS; we will do this through MOPAC's Evidence and Insight Unit. The MPS will continue to use other location data to identify high-risk areas. This data will help inform multi-agency partnership-working across local authorities, policing, transport, businesses and more. Outcomes include, for example, an increased police presence at certain times and locations; targeted public realm improvements; and other evidence-based interventions.

- **Continue to support and hold the MPS to account to ensure it does everything possible to tackle child sexual exploitation and grooming gangs**

The Mayor is committed to remaining vigilant to emerging and changing threats around child exploitation, and we will continue to support and hold the MPS to account to ensure it does everything possible to tackle child sexual exploitation in London, including grooming gangs.

It includes supporting the MPS in their commitment to reassess historic cases of child sexual abuse, exploitation and grooming gangs under Operation Beaconport – the national policing operation to review closed cases of group-based child sexual exploitation between 2010 and 2025 that were not prosecuted by the police or CPS.

Through the Mayor's oversight, it includes holding the MPS to a continued 'child first' approach to safeguarding– including an improved response to dealing with vulnerable missing children – to ensure child sexual exploitation is treated with the seriousness it deserves.

It also includes ensuring the MPS continue to train frontline officers to identify all forms of child exploitation, so that child exploitation investigations are appropriately managed and properly recorded.

Support the MPS to improve its approach to VAWG offender management

This will include working with the MPS – through the Mayor’s oversight function – to implement the offender management recommendations, as set out in the HMICFRS PEEL Inspection 2023-25 ; and any recommendations arising from the upcoming assessment of progress made following the Casey Review.

We will work with the MPS to improve its response to all VAWG across all of London’s communities – including the LGBTQI+ and Black and minoritised communities. This includes strengthening the tools at its disposal to intervene positively across London’s diverse communities.

We will support the MPS commitment to prioritise civil and criminal protective orders for VAWG offenders, to proactively target perpetrators – including those suspected of being high-risk. We will work in partnership with the MPS to ensure these orders are better used; effective; and robustly enforced. This includes Stalking Protection Orders and the pilot of Domestic Abuse Protection Orders.

We will continue to support the MPS to apply the successes of Operation Soteria to perpetrators across other forms of VAWG. We will also continue to support the MPS, the BTP and the City of London Police as they implement the new Sex-based Harassment in Public Act 2023 legislation and guidance.

We will continue to support the local and national inquiries into group-based child sexual exploitation as they develop. And we will work with the Government and the MPS to ensure the effective and transparent delivery of the London element of Operation

Strengthening the management of perpetrators across the criminal justice system

The Mayor is clear that we must work together towards a world in which the perpetrator is expected to change and stop their behaviour – rather than the victim. A world where professionals in the criminal justice system feel confident and able to hold perpetrators to account, regardless of any political or cultural sensitivities; and where a comprehensive range of tools, sanctions and interventions are used to protect women and girls.

A recent evaluation of the Mayor's pioneering GPS tagging pilot for domestic abuse offenders, compared tag wearers in the two years before the tag was fitted, with the same tag wearers two years after the tag started. Those released from prison and fitted with the Mayor's GPS tags were 45 per cent less likely to be charged with an offence in the 12 months after being fitted with a tag compared to the 12 months before being tagged. This reduction increased to 63 per cent for violent offences . Feedback from probation officers involved in the pilot highlighted the great value of the tags in risk management, and in providing reassurance to professionals and victims.

Over the next three years, the Mayor will take the following actions:

- **Convene partners to explore better collaboration to improve outcomes across the criminal justice system**

This will include exploring how data sharing between the MPS, the CPS and the family courts system could be improved to ensure safe decision-making in cases involving perpetrators of VAWG.

Through the London Criminal Justice Board and MOPAC, we will support the implementation of the Leveson recommendations to prioritise high-harm cases, reduce Crown Court backlogs and use more diversionary and early-intervention programmes for lower-risk cases.

- **Make the case for national changes and reform to improve outcomes in key areas**

We will lobby for further investment for tackling perpetrators across the criminal justice system, to increase capacity for those convicted and sentenced; and those who are not convicted, but still pose a significant risk to women and girls.

This will include supporting the expansion of GPS tagging for those released from prison and testing proximity monitoring in London, to ensure effective monitoring is in place for as long as necessary to manage the risk they pose to women and girls. We will also call for a central approach to developing national guidance with the NPCC regarding tech-enabled abuse and online harms.

Working in partnership

An improved criminal justice system, that ensures perpetrators are held to account at every stage of the criminal justice journey – from the initial allegation to the final criminal justice outcome – is only possible through improved multi-agency working to take every opportunity to reduce the risk of further VAWG offending.

Over the next three years, the Mayor will take the following actions:

- **Advocate for a more consistent and coordinated multi-agency approach to tackle VAWG**

This will include promoting ongoing practitioner training and upskilling throughout the system, to promote effective enforcement; swift justice; improved information sharing; and a proactive response to VAWG and the harmful attitudes that enable it.

MOPAC will work with partners to coordinate and deliver the Domestic Abuse Joint Justice Plan between the CPS and the MPS to improve timeliness and quality of investigations, leading to more prosecutions and convictions. This will also include work to drive changes and speed up justice – including advocating for the establishment of specialist domestic abuse courts.

By taking this approach over the next three years, the Mayor is working towards the following priority aims:

- Increase reporting of VAWG offences, as measured by Police Recorded Crime.
- Strengthen identification, successful intervention and management of VAWG perpetrators. We will measure this through commissioned services data and reductions in reoffending, where possible.
- Reduce sexual offence reoffending, as measured by MoJ data.
- Increase positive outcomes for rape and other sexual offences, domestic abuse, and stalking and harassment. We will measure this using Police Recorded Crime data.
- Reduce the length of time it takes to reach a conviction in rape offences. We will measure this using:
 - Home Office police recorded outcomes data for average days taken for police to charge an offender
 - CPS quarterly data on average days from police referral to charge
 - Criminal Court Statistics, on average days from arrival to case completion at the Crown Court.

How we will deliver a safer city for women and girls

MOPAC will convene partners from across London including the VAWG sector to drive collaboration and oversee delivery of the Mayor's VAWG Strategy 2026-29. This will be supported by the work of the London Criminal Justice Board, chaired by the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, and its sub-boards.

As part of this, MOPAC will continue to invest in the VAWG Voluntary and Community Sector Expert Reference Group (ERG). The VAWG ERG is an independent, non-statutory group of VAWG-sector experts, whose role is to provide collective and strategic input and expertise. Their contribution ensures that the needs and experiences of women and girls, victims and survivors, and their organisations in London, are represented and amplified at decision-making levels.

The Victims and Prisoners Act 2024 introduced a Duty to Collaborate. This is a joint statutory duty for Police and Crime Commissioners, Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) and Tier 1 authorities (in London, this is the GLA) to work together when commissioning support services for victims of domestic abuse, sexual abuse and serious violence. This will improve support for victims by providing a more cohesive and victim-centred journey through a range of local services. MOPAC will work with ICBs, the GLA and London boroughs to carry out a needs assessment to inform the development of a joint commissioning strategy for London. MOPAC will then work with partners to implement that strategy.

Delivery monitoring, evaluation and reporting

This strategy is underpinned by a delivery plan and an outcomes framework. MOPAC will use a mixture of quantitative and qualitative measures to monitor its delivery. The delivery

plan will set out how MOPAC and partners will deliver the aims set out in this strategy over the next three years. The plan will be updated and refreshed annually. It will enable MOPAC to track progress and provide timely updates on delivery to the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, and partners.

The outcomes framework is published alongside this strategy. The outcomes within the framework for this strategy are for the whole of the London system – not just the MPS and MOPAC. Making progress on them will require partnership working across organisations.

Where appropriate, the measures within this framework are aligned to those in the outcomes framework published alongside the Police and Crime Plan for London in March 2025. In line with the Mayor's commitment to identifying and addressing disproportionality, we remain committed to evaluating performance against core indicators through an intersectional lens, taking into account the diverse identities and protected characteristics of all individuals.

MOPAC continues to publish a wide range of data on its website via its suite of dashboards and publications on the London Datastore. This includes data on measures included within the outcomes framework for this strategy. MOPAC will explore what further data can be made available publicly over the life of the strategy.

MOPAC will continue to conduct evaluations on services and pilots commissioned to understand their impact and effectiveness – the findings of which will contribute to our future policymaking and commissioning.

We will work with partners (including the MPS, TfL and the VAWG sector) to review the significant challenges around accurately recording VAWG data; and to explore opportunities to strengthen data collection and information sharing. We will explore ways of ensuring that data better reflects the diversity of London and intersectionality of needs. In this way, we can address the current barriers and gaps in multi-agency work and information sharing.

Commissioning services

MOPAC uses the word “commissioning” to mean any activity that involves using the resources we have, to promote outcomes across London. Some of these resources might be funding, which can involve activity such as the procurement of services. However, often commissioning also involves using our time and expertise to work with partners and beneficiaries via a more joined-up, multi-agency approach to achieving outcomes.

We will continue to embed our commissioning principles within our work, seeking to champion collaboration and co-design; and build capacity and sustainability within the VAWG sector. This includes prioritising the voices of women and girls, and those with lived experience of VAWG; and working to ensure that we commission interventions that are responsive to the intersectional diversity and needs of Londoners.

MOPAC’s commissioning principles for the period of this strategy are set out in the Mayor’s Police and Crime Plan 2025-29 .

Appendices

What do we mean by VAWG?

VAWG, as set out by the United Nations, is any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.

Who is this strategy for?

This strategy is for women in all their diversity, recognising how the intersection of inequalities and differences combine to affect VAWG. Race and ethnicity, sexuality, age,

class, faith, gender identity, immigration status and disabilities all affect the forms of violence victims may be subjected to; what VAWG means to them; how others respond; and the support victims and survivors can access. It is for anyone experiencing VAWG.

While recognising that women and girls are disproportionately affected by crimes of a gendered nature – such as domestic abuse, sexual violence, online harms, coercive control, sexual exploitation including by grooming gangs, and harassment – MOPAC's wider work will continue to recognise and respond to the prevalence of, and impact on, male and gender-diverse victims of these abuses and crimes in London.

We firmly recognise the need for specialist services for those with protected characteristics. Throughout our work, we will continue to embed approaches that support an intersectional approach to equity, diversity and inclusion; and that continue to champion the role of grassroots 'led by and for' organisations.

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 recognises children as victims in their own right when they have experienced and/or witnessed domestic abuse in the home. We also recognise that, while not included in the Act, children can experience domestic abuse in their own relationships. We take a child-first approach, recognising how girls and boys are affected by adverse childhood experiences, the structural causes of VAWG, and the resulting risks of isolation and exploitation. This means working to support children affected by domestic abuse – through access to age-appropriate interventions, and support in developing healthy relationships.

Consulting with Londoners and the VAWG sector to inform our refreshed strategy

As part of our consultation work, we heard that most female Londoners felt safe at home, but were less likely than males to feel safe in public spaces – including parks, open spaces, pubs and clubs. Females were also significantly less likely than males to say they felt safe walking alone in their local area after dark. We also heard that many

Londoners feel sexual offences, domestic abuse, online harassment, sexual harassment, misogyny, stalking and harmful practices are 'a big problem' in London.

We heard that many Londoners had also been exposed to misogynistic content whilst online or on social media. Nearly half of those surveyed as part of our consultation work said they had seen content that was derogatory towards women or girls 'often' or 'sometimes' during the last month, whilst a quarter had seen content that actively encouraged violence towards women or girls. Females and younger Londoners were more likely to have been exposed to such content, with nearly two-thirds of those aged 18-34 saying they had seen misogynistic or derogatory content 'often/sometimes' during the last month (62 per cent). Londoners exposed to such content were also less likely to feel safe online, with this impact particularly detrimental for female safety. Only around half of females who had seen content that encouraged violence against women and girls said they felt safe online (56 per cent) compared with 71 per cent of males.

MOPAC also held an extensive consultation and engagement programme with external stakeholders from the VAWG sector to inform this refreshed strategy. These sessions highlighted the need to take a whole-systems approach with our full range of partners to prevent VAWG by tackling the root causes and emerging types of VAWG. It also highlighted the need to tackle under-served areas such as harmful practices, on-street sex work and survival sex; to address the many barriers that prevent victims and survivors from seeking and receiving support; and to stop perpetrators.

Acknowledgements

We want to thank everyone involved in the consultation for and development of this Strategy:

Victims/Survivors



- VAWG sector partners
- London's Independent Victims' Commissioner
- The London Policing Board
- London Councils
- The GLA Group
- The Metropolitan Police Service
- The NHS and other health partners
- Local authorities and City of London colleagues
- The British Transport Police
- The Probation Service
- The Crown Prosecution Service
- HM Courts and Tribunals Service
-

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References

MPS,

, July 2025 – MPS figures as of May 2026

The positive outcome rate has increased from 5% to 17%. Data Source: MPS Crime Dashboard Data

GLA,

GLA,

GLA,

GLA,

26,500 pupils, across 70 primary and secondary schools have participated in healthy relationship sessions through programming led by the VRU.

APPG for UN Women,
, March 2021

Data from YouGov Plc. from an online poll of 1,582 adult Londoners conducted as part of the Mayor's public consultation on the draft Police and Crime Plan 2025-29. Feelings of safety refer to those who said they felt 'very' or 'fairly safe' in each environment. It excludes those who responded 'don't know' and 'prefer not to say'. For more information, please see the Appendices.

BRC, , January 2025

According to Safer Business Network data, women make up 58 per cent of UK shopworkers. Clothing and cosmetics stores are often targeted by prolific offenders who believe they can intimidate staff without challenge. Offenders may live locally, heightening fear both at work and when travelling, and deterring reporting.

GLA,

GLA,
2022

, September

Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park,

GLA,

<https://www.college.police.uk/support-forces/practices/project-vigilant-preventing-sexual-violence>

November,

, 2025

Children's Commissioner,
, January 2023

End Violence Against Women

March 2026

CHANGE,

, May 2025

GLA,

, March 2025

GLA,

, July 2025

The positive outcome rate for rape offences increased from 4% in FY 2021/22 to 15% in FY 2025/26, an increase of 11 percentage points:

<https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/news/2025/01/avon-and-somerset-police-launches-project-bright-light-a-new-approach-to-addressing-domestic-abuse/>

Taken from MoJ and other grant management returns 2024-25

GLA,

Women in Prison, ,
March 2025, quoting: MoJ, , 27 June 2018

Women in Prison,
quoting: women and men comparator workbooks, HM Inspectorate of Prisons,
, 5 July 2023

Prison Reform Trust, , April 2025

GLA, , July 2025

GLA, , March 2025

See “How we will deliver a safer city for women and girls”, below which states: The Victims and Prisoners Act 2024 introduces a Duty to Collaborate. This is a joint statutory duty for Police and Crime Commissioners, Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) and Tier 1 authorities (in London, this is the GLA) to work together when commissioning support services for victims

of domestic abuse, sexual abuse and serious violence. This will improve support for victims by providing a more cohesive and victim-centred journey through a range of local services. MOPAC will work with ICBs, the GLA and London boroughs to carry out a needs assessment to inform the development of a joint commissioning strategy for London. MOPAC will then work with partners to implement that strategy.

Of the VAWG perpetrators identified by the MPS almost 60 per cent had committed previous offences, with an average of 4.5 previous offences per person. Almost half had offended against more than one person.

Barnet Council,

Safe & Together Institute,

Suzy Lamplugh Trust,

MPS,

July 2025

SafeLives,

Vulnerability Knowledge & Practice Programme,

MoJ,

Drive Partnership,
, July 2021

Gloucestershire Constabulary,
, 24 March 2025

Gov.uk,

, June 2025

CARA,

MPS data, June 2026

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, July 2025

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MPS,

July 2025

,

St Mary's University, Twickenham,
, 14 March 2024

MPS,

HMICFRS, , August 2024

Legislation.gov.uk, ,
September 2023

<https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2025-03/Police%20and%20Crime%20Plan%202025-29%20Performance%20Framework.pdf>

GLA,
, 28 March 2025

MOPAC,