

Joint Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy Progress Updates

December 2022



Partners



Background

Our strategy, launched in June 2022, was informed by local and national strategies and is underpinned by North Yorkshire Police's operational VAWG strategy, released in March 2022, and North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service's VAWG Statement of Intent.

Whilst building on what we have achieved, our Strategy focuses on jointly identified gaps where work will be targeted to achieve meaningful and sustainable change at a local level to make a real difference to the lives of women and girls in North Yorkshire and City of York.

We have already started a number of projects and this update highlights just some of the key actions completed to date.

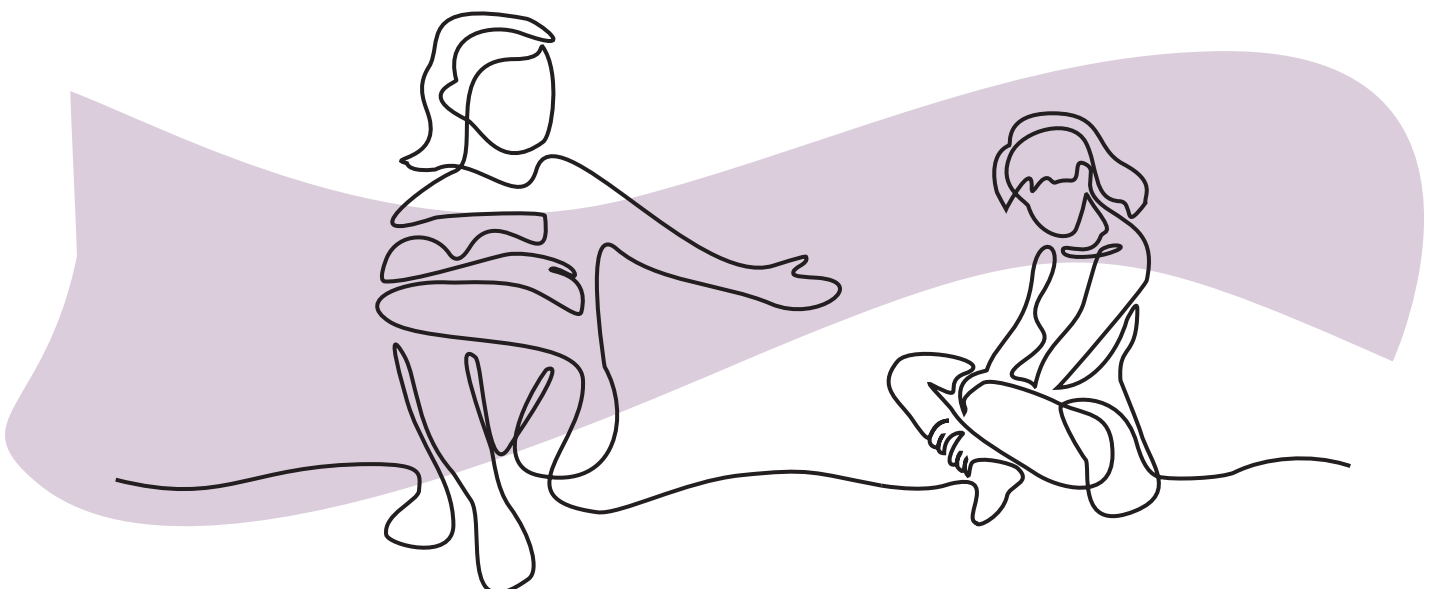
Governance and Accountability

A VAWG Professionals Sub-group has been established, made up of representatives from local organisations working with women and girls including the Youth Commission. A member of this Professionals Group will be a member of the Strategic Governance Board to ensure we continue to adopt a person-centred and trauma-informed approach.

We are continuing to engage with local Victim and Survivor Forums to ensure their experiences remain central to everything we do and continue to shape and drive our local delivery activities.

The Joint VAWG Delivery Group is made up of representatives from local statutory partners who have co-produced a detailed Delivery Action Tracker which sets out who will be responsible for leading different workstreams, with key Aims, Outcome measures and timescales to achieve the strategic objectives set out in the Delivery Plan.

Commissioner Zoë has established a VAWG Strategic Governance Board to monitor progress against our Strategic Objectives to provide transparency and accountability on how we are collectively improving the overall safety of women and girls.



Strategic Delivery Plan – Progress to Date

Objective 1:

Listening to All Women and Girls, including those from rural and under-represented communities, and proactively seeking feedback to inform continuous service improvements

Outcome: Proactive engagement with under-represented communities and seldom heard women

To achieve this Outcome, we **Aim** to regularly consult and proactively engage with all women and girls to ensure the voices of victims & survivors are heard & inform practice development.

Actions taken to date to support this Aim include:

- The VAWG Strategy was presented to the Student Health Network to ensure students experiences are captured. We are engaging with organisations who support local Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller communities to establish reciprocal and trusting relationships.
- In October 2022, a Victims of Rape Focus Group discussed and considered the proposed letters that are going to be sent from CPS (instead of the Witness Care Unit) to consider how we measure the impact of these letters, and also considered how victims would like to be represented at the Rape Scrutiny Panel.
- In November 2022, the OPFCC launched a new survey to better understand overall public trust and confidence in North Yorkshire Police, the findings of which will be used to inform any required additional actions under Objective 3 below.

Outcome: Parity of services across both urban and rural areas, and other isolated communities.

To achieve this Outcome, we **Aim** to expand the gender-specific support offer of York Women's Centre services into different areas throughout North Yorkshire and City of York, including rural and isolated areas.

Actions taken to date to support this Aim include:

- A women's group in Scarborough has been established, and work is ongoing to identify suitable premises to establish a Women's Centre 'Hub' in Scarborough.

Objective 2:

Tackling the root causes of VAWG through Prevention and Early Intervention

Outcome: Increased awareness to promote zero tolerance of all forms of gender inequality and VAWG

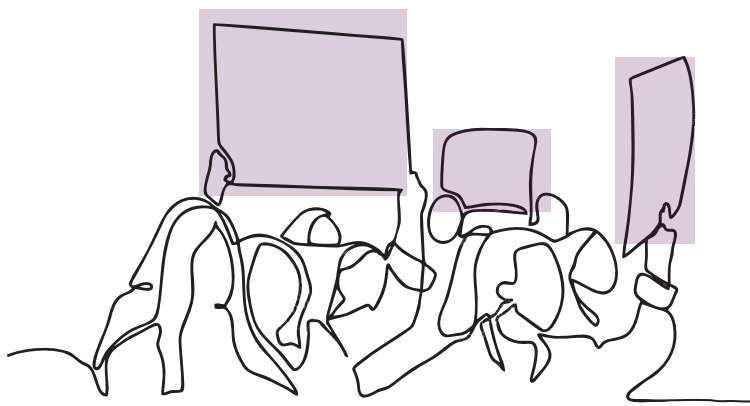
To achieve this Outcome, we **Aim** to:

- Develop age-appropriate materials to challenge misogyny from an early age.
- Develop campaign materials to raise awareness about misogyny, stalking and street harassment.
- Develop interventions for women to raise awareness and highlight the impact of Illegal Cultural Harms with the aim of enabling women to abandon harmful cultural practices and beliefs.
- Develop a network of Champions specialising in different VAWG issues to help raise awareness and ensure victims can more easily access help and advice at the earliest opportunity.

Actions taken to date to support these Aims include:

- A number of awareness raising events and activities were completed throughout October including:
 - Designated (School) Safeguarding Leads Conference covering topics such as Radicalisation / Prevent / Hate Crime / Prejudice based incidents, Illegal Cultural Harms, Exploitation and Contextual Safeguarding.
 - North Yorkshire Youth held a series of events challenging misogyny including the delivery of 'Wake Up Call' exploring toxic views on women in Skipton Academy, Youth Club sessions on misogyny and a Flash Mob event in Richmond.
 - Hate Crime Awareness Week (8-15 October) focussed on Misogyny this year with #LetsEndMisogyny used throughout the campaign.
- An easy read leaflet on misogyny has been jointly developed by North Yorkshire Police and the North Yorkshire Learning Disability Partnership as well as a One Minute Guide for practitioners to increase accessibility of information on Misogyny as a Hate Crime.

- The OPFCC has secured Safer Streets Funding to raise awareness of how stalking and harassment can manifest in rural communities as well as more urban environments. This will include the production of a short film and campaign resource pack aimed at young people aged 16 to 25yrs.
- The Halo Project have been commissioned by the OPFCC to deliver specialist Illegal Cultural Harms Support Services including education and awareness raising to reach hidden victims within our Black and Minority Ethnic communities.
- The OPFCC has signed up to be a White Ribbon UK Supporter Organisation (as it has less than 250 employees) and City of York Council has recently become a White Ribbon Accredited Organisation. Both North Yorkshire Police and North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service are preparing a proposal to become White Ribbon Accredited Organisations in 2023.
- We are supporting the UN 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence annual campaign that started on 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and White Ribbon Day, through to International Human Rights Day on 10 December. There are a series of awareness raising events and activities over this period including a series of short films showcasing the support services available to women and girls, including interviews with service users, to encourage others to come forward and seek help.



Objective 3:

Increasing Public Confidence and Trust in the Police

Outcome: Increased confidence in reporting VAWG offences

To achieve this Outcome, we Aim to:

- Support police officers to adopt a trauma aware response to ensure the right support is offered when victims report to the police.
- Better identify and respond to VAWG 'gateway offences', Illegal Cultural Harms, and stalking offences at an earlier point.

Actions taken to date to support these Aims include:

- Trauma-aware approaches are included in training courses for sexual offences, child protection and domestic abuse investigations and victim interview skills undertaken by North Yorkshire Police. In addition, Stalking Clinics hosted by the Stalking Team provide trauma-informed investigative support and advice to officers and supervisors investigating stalking offences. The clinics also raise awareness of the specialist support services available.
- North Yorkshire Police have launched the Pathways App to increase officer knowledge of support services and referral pathways with specialist teams including the VAT/MAST and Domestic Abuse teams reviewing Public Protection Notices and signposting to specialist services where required if not completed during the initial reporting.
- North Yorkshire Police have adopted the Safe Lives DA Matters Change Programme which included establishing a network of 84x DA Matters Champions within North Yorkshire Police, and over 1,000 North Yorkshire Police First Responders trained plus 20x Police Trainers to provide sustainability longer-term and ensure approaches are firmly embedded.
- Subject matter experts in child sexual and criminal exploitation, domestic abuse, missing persons, and child protection provide training to new recruits, front line officers and newly promoted sergeants within North Yorkshire Police.

- North Yorkshire Police officers work alongside Children's Social Care in 'No Wrong Door' hubs at Harrogate and Scarborough, where the team support early interventions with children and young people in care or on the edge of care who are at increased risk of child sexual and/or criminal exploitation and county lines.
- Commissioner Zoë has supported a pledge with the Suzy Lamplugh Trust to increase the number of stalking cases reported to North Yorkshire Police. To support this, her Office have secured funding to commission an independent victim-focussed review of current practices linked to stalking investigations and make recommendations where appropriate to improve processes linked to stalking and harassment.
- The Halo Project have been commissioned to deliver specialist Illegal Cultural Harms Support Services including a 'by and for' support service for victims from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities, a specialist advice line to support BME women and girls who are at risk of or experiencing Illegal Cultural Harms and delivery of specialist accredited training to enhance safeguarding and protection of BME victims.
- North Yorkshire Police have trained 24 response officers to be specialist Sexual Offences Liaison Officers (SOLOs) to provide an enhanced service to the victims of rape and other sexual offences for both recent and non-recent incidents. North Yorkshire Police's ambition is to increase this number of trained SOLOs with two further training courses planned for 2023.
- The Rape Investigation Improvement Group established in May 2022, and the subsequent introduction of the RASSO checklist within North Yorkshire Police has already seen an improvements and consistency in case file submissions to the CPS.

- IDAS worked with North Yorkshire Police to inform their Domestic Abuse Pledge launched earlier this year to support officers or staff who are victims of Domestic Abuse, and five Domestic Abuse Practitioners (IDVAs) within our commissioned support services have received additional training jointly delivered by North Yorkshire Police's Safeguarding and Professional Standards departments to ensure they are fully aware of police complaints and disciplinary processes, with reciprocal training delivered by IDAS to the Professionals Standards team to ensure they are aware of the support available to victims and facilitate positive working relationships in case of police perpetrated domestic abuse.

Outcome: Identification of learning opportunities to ensure continuous service improvements

To achieve this Outcome, we Aim to:

- Develop the Rape and Domestic Abuse Scrutiny Panels to review cases which have not attained the required evidential level for prosecution or otherwise resulted in a failed prosecution

Actions taken to date to support this Aim include:

- A review of the Scrutiny Panels to ensure learning from both panels is consistently shared at an organisational level to continuously drive improvement in Domestic Abuse and Rape investigations
- We are speaking with victims and survivors of Domestic Abuse and Rape to establish how they would like to be involved in these panels to ensure their experiences are considered.



Objective 4:

Strengthening the Multi-Agency Approach to Address VAWG

Outcome: Improved joint Safeguarding and Risk Management Approaches

To achieve this Outcome, we **Aim** to:

- Develop and expand multi-agency work focussed on identifying and safeguarding victims of all forms of VAWG
- Develop and expand multi-agency work focussed on identifying and manage risk from perpetrators of all forms of VAWG

Actions taken to date to support these Aims include:

- Establishing a MARAC / MATAC Steering Group, which reports to the Domestic Abuse Partnership Boards and subsequently the Community Safety Partnership; as a result of recommendations from this Steering Group, MARACs are now held at least weekly and an additional MARAC Coordinator has been employed by North Yorkshire Police to meet the increasing MARAC caseload.
- A multi-agency partnership group has been established to safeguard and offer support to those involved in sex work, survival sex or at risk of sexual exploitation.

Outcome: Improved experiences of those going through Civil and Family Court Proceedings

To achieve this Outcome, we **Aim** to:

- Work with the legal professionals, court staff and judges to prevent further victimisation within the family court process

Actions taken to date to support these Aims include:

- IDAS have established a dedicated multi-agency Domestic Abuse & Family Court Working group which aims to improve information sharing between family courts and police.
- We have secured funding to employ a dedicated Domestic Abuse Practitioner (IDVA) who will support victims/survivors going through Family Court processes.

Objective 5:

Enhancing Support Services for Victims

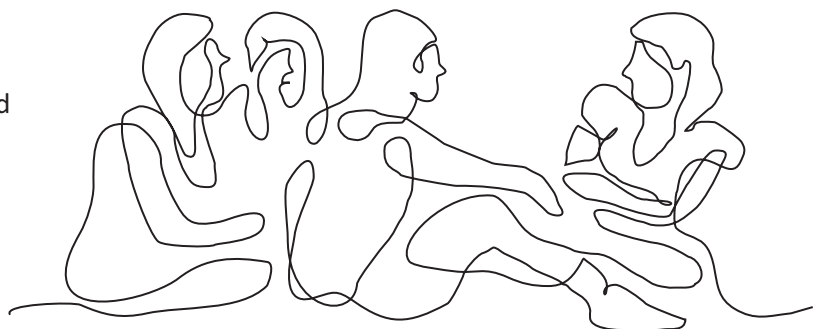
Outcome: Ensure high quality services are available to everyone at their time of need

To achieve this Outcome, we **Aim** to:

- Explore options to jointly commission where possible a range of services to offer trauma-aware support for victims of all forms of VAWG
- Create a new Victims' Centre including dedicated, modern Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) and Child Sexual Assault Assessment Service (CSAAS) facilities, and Video Recorded Interview (VRI) suites to provide an improved service for all victims of sexual violence or abuse
- Consider the gendered nature of exploitation and implement practice development locally where appropriate

Actions taken to date to support these Aims include:

- Secured additional £905k funding to increase capacity of local Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence victims specialist support services including a new dedicated 'By & For' BME ISVA service and New Beginnings Peer Support for Domestic Abuse.
- Commissioner Zoë purchased a property in May 2022 for the new victim centre and the OPFCC has worked with local stakeholders to input into architectural plans to ensure the new facilities will meet the needs of victims using the new centre.
- We have secured funding to employ a 'net reach' worker to identify women who advertise sexual services online to help understand local and national trends and reach out to women to offer support.



Objective 6:

Facilitating Behaviour Change by Perpetrators

Outcome: Increased availability of interventions for perpetrators of VAWG offences that focus on both enforcement and rehabilitation

To achieve this Outcome, we Aim to:

- Develop a range of services and interventions for perpetrators of Stalking.
- Develop an appropriate domestic abuse perpetrator service offer for those who are high risk but don't meet the criteria for a statutory programme.
- Pilot interventions for perpetrators of online sexual offending.

Actions taken to date to support these Aims include:

- A Specialist Stalking Team within North Yorkshire Police was established last year to review reported stalking incidents, offer safeguarding and support to victims, and support officers investigating stalking cases; recently an additional Detective Sergeant has been temporarily seconded to the team to provide more robust oversight of investigations, increase applications for Stalking Prevention Orders (where appropriate) and liaise with other forces to identify good practice.
- We secured funding to employ a Stalking Project Worker to be co-located with the police stalking team from January 2022 to offer the +Choices Perpetrator Programme to low risk perpetrators who are willing to voluntarily address their stalking behaviours.

- The OPFCC has completed research into perpetrator programmes and interventions available/delivered nationally, including those for High Risk and/or repeat perpetrators of Domestic Abuse and online sexual offending. As a result, an options appraisal has been completed to inform delivery of pilot programmes / interventions to meet gaps in current service provision from 2023.

Outcome: Increased availability of interventions for those with Dual Status and those with Multiple Unmet Need

To achieve this Outcome, we Aim to:

- Seek to divert women that offend or are at risk of offending from the criminal justice system (where appropriate) where their offending is linked to any VAWG they have been subjected to

Actions taken to date to support this Aim include:

- The Crossroads Diversion Scheme uses gender specific needs assessment for women who offend to identify common intersectional needs to improve the local evidence base of underlying and contributory factors to offending, including any VAWG they may have been subjected to.



Delivery Plan - Next Steps:

To progress the VAWG delivery plan further over the next six months we will focus on:

Expanding our Gender- Specific Service Offer

- identify suitable premises to establish a Women's Centre 'Hub' in Scarborough
- pilot outreach and mobile provision in rural and other isolated communities

Work with Educational establishments to raise awareness of VAWG, including Street Harassment

- City of York Council are developing resources that will aim to increase awareness of Domestic Abuse, providing practical examples of different forms of abuse such as coercive control to be shared via local partnership boards and local stakeholders with schools, colleges, and universities
- All About Respect - Active Bystander Pilot to be launched with colleges and universities in York and Selby supported by an All About Respect Summit planned for February 2023

Facilitate a VAWG Community Champions Network or Forum

- VAWG Professional sub-group will map and review scope / specialisms of existing Champions Schemes and specialisms
- Develop training content and supporting materials based on specialisms across different locations and settings including workplaces, faith-based and educational settings

Develop 'Safe Spaces' to keep women and girls safe both in person in our city and town centres and online

- Roll-out Vulnerability Training for workers in the night-time economy county-wide

Improve the experiences of those going through Criminal Justice processes

- To be discussed at the Local Criminal Justice Partnership to identify appropriate actions to be undertaken
- Consultation with local courts to explore options for establishing Court Observers Panels to observe rape and sexual abuse trials and/or domestic abuse cases with a view to highlighting best practice and providing constructive feedback

Pilot programmes / interventions for Offenders to meet gaps in current service provision

- Pilot provision for an Out of Court Disposal route for perpetrators of Domestic Abuse
- Pilot delivery of the Halo Project's 'Talk, Listen, Change' Illegal Cultural Harms programme
- Roll out the 'Beyond Violence' trauma informed group programme for women who commit violent offences
- Develop a trauma-informed, end-to-end dedicated pathway for women who offend in need of support, including those living in rural or isolated communities.



VAWG Strategy Delivery Plan on a Page

Objectives

Outcomes

1. Listening to All Women and Girls



1. Proactive engagement with under-represented communities and seldom heard women
2. Ensure parity of services across both urban and rural areas, and other isolated communities

2. Tackling the root causes of VAWG through Prevention and Early Intervention



1. Increase awareness and promote zero tolerance of all forms of gender inequality and VAWG
2. Increase availability of Early Help and Community-led Interventions

3. Increasing Public Confidence and Trust in the Police



1. Increase confidence in reporting VAWG offences
2. Identify learning opportunities and ensure continuous improvement

4. Enhancing Support Services for Victims



1. Improve Safeguarding and Risk Management Approaches
2. Improve the experiences of those going through Criminal Justice Processes
3. Improve the experiences of those going through Civil and Family Court Proceedings

5. Enhancing Support Services for Victims



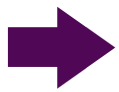
1. Ensure high quality services are available to everyone at their time of need

6. Facilitating Behaviour Change by Perpetrators

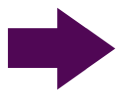


1. Increase availability of interventions for perpetrators of VAWG offences that focus on both enforcement and rehabilitation
2. Increase availability of interventions for those with Dual Status and Unmet Needs

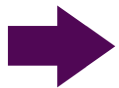
Aims



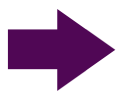
Regular consultation and engagement with women and girls.
Engage regularly with under-represented communities.
Expansion of the York Women's Centre.



A range of age-appropriate materials, interventions, and campaigns to challenge misogyny, stalking and street harassment, illegal cultural harms and a network of VAWG Champions.
Explore the development of 'Safe Spaces' and apps and other initiatives.
Facilitate Vulnerability and 'spiking' awareness training.



Support police officers to adopt a trauma aware response.
Better identify and respond to VAWG 'gateway offences', Stalking, illegal cultural harms, rape and police perpetrated domestic abuse.
Use Rape and Domestic Abuse Scrutiny Panels to review cases that had a NFA outcome.



Multi-agency work focussed on identifying and safeguarding victims and identifying and manage risk from perpetrators.
Availability of special measures in court and Work with the Crown Prosecution Service to support evidence-led prosecutions.
Explore options for establishing Court Observers Panels.
Work to prevent further victimisation within the family court process.



Explore options to jointly commission services to offer trauma-aware support for victims.
Use support services to better identify victims of modern slavery & consider the gendered nature of Exploitation.



Develop a full suite of perpetrator services including for domestic abuse & stalking.
Seek to divert women at risk of entering the criminal justice system.

Produced by



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