

# Gender-Based Violence Strategy

Summary of Commitments

June 2021 (Draft)

# Summary of Commitments

From 2021 Greater Manchester's approach to redressing gender-based violence will be defined by our key priorities.

## Our Key Priorities

- Tackle the attitudes and underlying inequalities that foster gender-based violence.
- Mobilise the public, employers, health service and educational institutions to work alongside the police and criminal justice system to protect victims and prevent violence and harassment.
- Make it as easy as possible for victims and survivors to access the support and guidance they need, and providing high quality, joined up victim-focused services across health care, criminal justice and other specialist providers
- Ensure all frontline staff understand anyone can become a victim of gender-based violence and that poverty, economic insecurity and other inequalities compound people's vulnerability to victimisation.
- Anticipate the threats posed to victims by online forms of abuse, while building investment in new technologies to increase reporting, open up access to services and provide evidence in criminal cases
- Reduce the risk of homelessness that forces many victims and their children to endure domestic abuse and increase the options for rehousing perpetrators to minimise the harm caused to victims.
- Develop a culture of reflective learning that builds on the work provided by specialist providers; enabling all frontline professionals to redress shortcomings in service provision at a system level and access the very best international research and evidence, so as to continually develop best practice.
- Provide state of the art training and risk assessment tools for those working with victims and perpetrators, which anticipate the diverse and complex needs of many service users.

- Work with employers, professional bodies and government inspectorates to set new professional standards for tackling gender-based violence and harassment, including responding to reports of it in the workplace, and by or against professionals working in the sector.
- Measure the effectiveness of our interventions and public engagement campaigns to ensure they increase safety for victims, change attitudes and behaviour, and reduce the prevalence of gender-based violence and the gendered inequalities underpinning it.
- Maximise accountability to victims and survivors, especially with regard to police and justice outcomes; while working with the public, especially young people, to tackle the norms, attitudes and inequalities that enable, justify and excuse gender-based violence; protecting those at risk of harm; and working with those at risk of perpetrating it.

Over the next ten years we will reduce the demand for crisis and criminal justice responses by prioritising primary prevention and early intervention. Our strategy will be led by a new Gender-Based Violence Board which will include victims and survivors with lived experience who will co-chair it alongside the Deputy Mayor.

## Mobilising Greater Manchester

We will change the story by:

- Developing a programme of public engagement that highlights how attitudes and inequalities contribute to gender-based violence, including a campaign directed at boys and men.
- Evaluating the impact of our public engagement activities and consulting directly with young people and faith groups to ensure campaign messages are understood as intended.
- Anticipating the demand generated by enhanced public awareness.
- Introducing a discrete emergency contact system for passengers using public transport and helping Local Authorities to secure public space protection orders.

- Promoting best practice processes for employers with respect to recording and responding to domestic abuse and sexual harassment, safeguarding those at risk of stalking, and equipping workers to call-out discriminatory attitudes and abusive behaviours without fear of repercussion.
- Requiring commissioned service providers address inequalities in opportunities for women and report annually on the gender pay gap and actions to redress it.
- Ensuring all third and public sector professionals have access to the best professional development programmes about gender-based violence and are committed to challenging the sexism, racism and homophobia that contribute to it.
- Work with government inspectorates to set new professional standards with regard to investigating reports of gender-based violence perpetrated by public sector professionals.

## Supporting Victims and Survivors

In Greater Manchester, we are committed to making it as easy as possible for victims to access support and aim to deliver a seamless service for from the first point of disclosure. From 2021 the Gender Abuse Board will ensure the views of victims and survivors inform all our measures of success. The Board will oversee:

- The introduction of a new Trusted Referrer's Scheme that will enable voluntary sector organisations, faith groups and schools to refer victims directly to health and criminal justice services.
- A review of how domestic abuse cases are managed by Greater Manchester Police to ensure victims in the criminal justice system are offered the very best service, kept informed, treated with dignity and listened to.
- A revamp of our IDVA and ISVA provision to ensure it meets the diverse needs of all survivors and victims in all areas of the of the city-region, alongside the development of bespoke action plan on male victims.

- A review our commissioning arrangements for rape and sexual assault services to increase access to immediate support and decrease waiting times for specialist services.
- Routinely collect and collate data on the rates and prevalence of various forms of gender based violence and abuse and hate crime within each local authority area, local demand for services and the needs of all communities and demographic groups with these areas.

We will also:

- Increase the capacity and capability of our victim advocacy services through the development of a Greater Manchester Advocacy Standards Framework compliant compliance with the Women's Aid's National Quality Standards.
- Recommission women's centres and appoint a Health Service Project Manager who will review existing pathways into health and well-being services for vulnerable women.
- Ensure our victim's services are fully signposted and accessible to all, irrespective of whether the complainant has contacted the police, has no recourse to public funds, and whatever their immigration status, complying with the Domestic Abuse Commissioner's call for 'firewall' services to protect those victims of gender-based violence who are of interest to immigration enforcement.
- Investing in services and risk assessment tools for people with learning difficulties and those who identify as neurodivergent to ensure services for victims of gender-based violence are properly signposted and professionals in both sectors can work effectively together in the best interests of their clients.
- Work with partner organisations with expertise in serving minoritised populations to ensure assessment procedures take full account of survivors' social, emotional and economic needs and anticipate the risks of targeted forms of abuse, racial and religious harassment and hate crime in particular localities.

- Integrate support for those who are victims of harmful practices within the clinical service provision for people who have undergone trauma.
- Develop and evaluate integrated approaches to housing and law enforcement that prioritise moving perpetrators rather than victims wherever possible. We will also introduce a cross-border protocol to establish a system of co-operation across local authorities with regard to the provision of housing, care and support services for victims and survivors of domestic abuse who move across the city-region's boroughs.
- Work across voluntary and statutory sectors to build on innovative practice developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, to support the safe return of adult victims and their children to stable accommodation whenever refuge places have been needed.
- Ensure the Greater Manchester Homelessness Prevention Strategy addresses the ways in which housing insecurity compounds the risks of gender-based violence women and children face and that rough sleeping initiatives adopt gender and trauma informed approaches that are sensitive to the diverse needs of women, LGBTQ+ populations and disabled people.
- Routinely upskill all health, social care, and criminal justice personnel in the implications of new criminal and civil legislation.
- Establish a quality assurance and capability inspection process to review the effectiveness and efficiency of our service provision.

## Meeting the Needs of Children and Young People

Primary prevention activities that empower young people to recognise abuse and seek support when it infringes on their own relationships, together with early interventions to minimise the harm gender-based violence causes young people, are the keys to reducing prevalence in the long term. This is why we will continue to support the many third sector organisations that come into schools and colleges to inform young people about dating violence, peer abuse and bullying, mental health,

alcohol and substance use, sexual diversity, sexual health services, and services for victims of domestic and sexual abuse.

It is also why we are investing in the children's social care system and bespoke initiatives to reduce the risk of harm to young people exposed to gender-based violence. From 2021 we are:

- Extending Operation Encompass so that schools are notified the next morning when the police attend domestic abuse incidents where anyone aged 18 or below is present.
- Revising protocols for schools to stop abusers exploiting their right to information about their child's education in ways that are coercively controlling.
- Inviting teachers to the many training events for professionals tackling gender-based violence held in the city-region and liaising with head teachers to ensure examples of best practice within schools are shared and celebrated.
- Increasing the accessibility of long-term support services for young people who have experienced domestic abuse as children, by developing online self-referral services for those who are at risk of or engaging in gender-based violence.
- Increasing investment in children and young people's mental health services so that mental health support for children and young people becomes readily accessible through educational institutions, while relieving pressure on police and emergency services.
- Mapping the range of provisions therapeutic services for children and young people who are living in homes affected by domestic abuse and extending access to pre-existing adult services to older teenagers at risk of intimate partner violence and/or peer-on peer abuse.
- Supporting a pilot intervention for young people involved in intimate partner violence while exploring the potential for a Community Perpetrator Programme looking at both family service based referrals and criminal justice mandating.

We are also investing in many targeted support programmes for families at risk of or experiencing specific forms of gender-based violence. These include:

- The *No Wrong Door* initiative, which enables dedicated child protection teams to work closely with foster carers and residential care homes where there are risks of harm to adolescents who do not necessarily see themselves as victims.
- The *Achieving Change Together (ACT)* programme, which has embedded specialist workers into Complex Safeguarding Teams to provide intensive support to children who have been exploited.
- The *Trusted Relationships* initiative, which embeds psychotherapists in Complex Safeguarding Teams.
- The *Greater Manchester Campaign Against Sexual Exploitation*, which facilitates exchange between grassroots organisations giving voice to survivors and other professional service providers.

## Responding Effectively to Perpetrators

The establishment of a Greater Manchester Probation Service aligned with the geographical remit of other statutory service providers, combined with government investment in a catalogue of perpetrator programmes offered through the third sector and bolstered by GMCA's commitments to an extensive public engagement campaign and a system of governance that prioritises accountability to victims and survivors, provides a unique opportunity to respond effectively to gender-based violence perpetrators. From 2021 we will:

- Extend the geographical reach of provision for men who have been abusive in heterosexual relationships.
- Extend current one-to-one provision for women who have been abusive in heterosexual and same-sex relationships.



- Commission a new intervention for men who have been abusive in same-sex relationships.
- Commission a new DRIVE programme to work with high harm perpetrators of abuse
- Pilot a new intervention for those who are not fluent English speakers.
- Devise a victim-led framework to identify where alternatives to criminal justice are appropriate, safe, and just means of responding to perpetrators.
- Develop a framework for facilitating restorative justice options for young people and very vulnerable adults who have perpetrated gender-based violence in the context of being victims themselves.
- Evaluate and develop post-sentence restorative options to help victims recover from serious and complex cases and road-test new approaches that enable them to explain to perpetrators the harms they have caused.

## Improving Policing and Criminal Justice

Radical improvements in the police and criminal justice response to gender-based violence are forthcoming. From 2021 Greater Manchester Police will:

- Require police officers attending domestic abuse incidents to secure all the relevant evidence and use body worn cameras consistently.
- Ensure all frontline police officers know how to request to talk to victims on their own so that they feel safe to disclose abuse and speak clearly to children exposed to abuse.
- Record misogynistic hate crime incidents in the same way as they record racist and homophobic incidents.
- Ensure that abuse cases involving serious harm and risk are subject to bail conditions that protect victims and that risk assessments are revised and the Crown Prosecution Service notified before suspects' bail statuses change or they are released under investigation.

- Promote the due consideration of all cases that proceed to court for restraining orders to be attached.

Through the Office of the Deputy Mayor, the Police and Crime Commissioner will:

- Seek sustained improvement in the quality of police investigations and their outcomes in cases of gender-based violence.
- Ensure victims and witnesses are regularly consulted on how the criminal justice response to gender-based violence can be improved.
- Routinely monitor whether criminal justice reforms are improving victim satisfaction and justice outcomes or resulting in detrimental impacts on women at risk of abuse and minority ethnic communities.
- Ask Greater Manchester Police to demonstrate how investment in key technologies is improving justice outcomes for victims.
- Assess the potential to use multi-disciplinary panels to improve responses to victims of all gender-based violence and increase the speed and efficiency of information sharing practices across Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs.
- Improve the police response to stalking by deploying multi-disciplinary scrutiny panels; engaging with Paladin, the world's first national stalking advocacy service, to develop advocacy for those who are victims of stalking; and considering the case for establishing new Stalking Assessment Centres.

GMCA will ensure that:

- All criminal justice personnel are trained in the powers the new criminal and civil legislation confer, with an immediate focus on the Domestic Abuse Act and the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme, commonly known as Clare's Law, and an enduring focus on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.
- Work with the Court service, Magistrates' Association and wider criminal justice system to promote the use of alternative means of presenting evidence, such as pre-recorded cross-examinations and the use of Victim Personal Statements.

- Ensure sentencers, the police and offender managers are aware of the full range of sanctions that can be imposed on perpetrators as new legislation comes into force.
- Ensure that victims are referred to the statutory Probation Service Victim Contact Scheme when those who have abused them receive custodial sentences of 12 months or more.

The Greater Manchester Probation Service will:

- Invest in victim liaison services and the upskilling of frontline staff to fulfil the Victim Contact Scheme that requires probation staff to keep victims informed about the disposals those who abused them are subject to.
- Ensure perpetrators receive the most appropriate sentences by collating relevant information for inclusion in pre-sentence reports.
- Deliver a range of effective and responsive group work and one-to-one interventions that address the complex needs of those supervised by them.
- Work across sectors to ensure the transference of skills and expertise among those working with perpetrators of gender-based violence and that knowledge is shared between those specialising in domestic abuse interventions and those working with sex offenders and hate crime offenders.

Greater Manchester's criminal justice professionals and GMCA will work in partnership to:

- Engage continuously with those with organisations working with survivors to ensure all work with perpetrators prioritises the protection of victims and survivors, including children and young people.
- Sustain women's centres in line with the Greater Manchester Integrated Health and Justice Strategy.
- Capitalise on Greater Manchester Probation Service's *Homelessness Prevention Taskforce*, the Mayor's *A Bed Every Night* and the Good Landlord Scheme to increase the protection available to victims of abuse and minimise the disruption to them and their children posed by perpetrators.

# Integrating Health & Social Care

Victims and survivors often find it easier to disclose gender-based violence to health and social care professionals than criminal justice professionals than to criminal justice professionals. This is why, in Greater Manchester, we are integrating health and social into our responses to gender-based violence. To meet this aim we will:

- Introduce minimum standards for domestic abuse training for clinical and clerical staff working in primary care.
- Extend the provision of hospital based IDVAs and ISVAS to enable early identification of potential victims.
- Undertake a scoping exercise to identify gaps in our current counselling service provision for victims and survivors.
- Ensure all services are fully accessible by building on innovations in technology, implementing greater outreach with victim services, and proactively pursuing user engagement with vulnerable women and victims identified within Primary Care Networks.
- Promote the Pride in Practice initiative that provides training to General Practice, Optical Practices, Dental Practices and Pharmacies to ensure that practices effectively and confidently meet the needs of LGBTQ+ patients.
- Support the Indigo pilot scheme that enables NGO providers of social support to assist patients at our gender dysphoria clinic at risk of gender-based violence and transphobia, while further integrating pathways of support and social care for LGBTQ+ populations.
- Ensure that appropriately trained and impartial translators are available to help those whose first language is not English access support.

In the context of social care and services for children, we will:

- Develop a new training to enhance understanding of gender-based violence among social workers and CAFCAS officers, with a specific focus on the need to support mothers who have lived with abuse; develop systems that do not

allow abusive men to evade intervention; and upskill those working with young people in the principles and practices of contextual safeguarding.

- Introduce a new framework to facilitate family group meetings that prevents abusers from using them to further intimidate victims.
- Review national and international approaches to preventing harmful traditional practices to understand what works, for who and in what contexts.