

LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN	WARDS: All
REPORT TITLE: Reducing violence and abuse for women and girls.	
REPORT OF: Cabinet Advisor on Safety for Women and Girls	
FOR SUBMISSION TO: Culture and Environment Scrutiny Committee	DATE 26 February 2024
<p>SUMMARY OF REPORT</p> <p>This report explores and sets out recommendations on how to ensure women and girls have the knowledge and confidence to navigate services, access support and create projects, and how our community can take practical action together to provide safer estates, streets, and venues.</p> <p>Local Government Act 1972 – Access to Information</p> <p>No documents that require listing have been used in the preparation of this report.</p> <p>Contact Officer: Hannah Bennai Cabinet Officer Corporate Services 5 Pancras Square London N1C 4AG Telephone: 020 7974 1750 Email: hannah.bennai@camden.gov.uk</p>	
<p>RECOMMENDATIONS</p> <p>The Culture and Environment Scrutiny Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Note the report of Councillor Nasrine Djemai Reducing violence and abuse for women and girls. b) Comment on the report and recommendations ahead of the report being considered by the relevant Cabinet Member and submitted to Cabinet. 	

Signed:



Councillor Nasrine Djemai, Cabinet Adviser on reducing violence and abuse for women and girls.

Date: 14/02/2024

1. Report Outline:

- 1.1. The Leader of the Council has established Cabinet Adviser roles to provide evidence-based policy support and make recommendations to the Cabinet on specific policy areas. The Cabinet Advisers are appointed by the Leader for a period of a year and the 2023/24 Advisers were appointed in June 2023.
- 1.2. The Cabinet Advisers are not members of the Cabinet and do not have decision making powers, but rather report to the Cabinet and relevant portfolio holder on their evidence-gathering and conclusions. They present their findings in a report to the relevant Scrutiny Committee for comment, after which their report goes on to Cabinet alongside a response from the relevant Cabinet Member outlining their response to the recommendations.
- 1.3. Councillor Nasrine Djemai has been appointed as Cabinet Advisor on reducing violence and abuse for women and girls. The role has encompassed a range of secondary and primary research to explore Camden's current approach to Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and sets out recommendations as to how to build on its work.

2. Introduction

- 2.1. It has been a great pleasure and privilege to have had this amazing opportunity to shape Camden's approach to safety for women and young girls.
- 2.2. For too long, Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) has been brought to our attention in response to tragic incidents. Over the course of 2020-22 countless women's lives were taken, as a result of male violence. Momentum grew within the community as we mourned every loss of another woman navigating her right to be present in public spaces. With that we, as women, reflected and shared our own experiences of VAWG with our families, friends and colleagues, and called for those in positions of power to commit to ensuring such incidents cannot happen again.
- 2.3. The UN described VAWG as a shadow pandemic, a consequence and result of lockdown restrictions. However, VAWG has been a plight on society for years. It was never hidden, society looked away. Just as quickly as these catastrophic cases were brought to our attention, they lost their space in mainstream media.
- 2.4. In 2023, national media outlets have reported that at least 100 women and girls aged 13 and over have been killed in circumstances in which a man or men are primary suspect. Jess Phillips made a powerful contribution on International Women's Day 2023 by listing the names of women who were subject to violence at the hands of male perpetrators. It should not have taken these tragic murders for institutions to realise the UK has an endemic issue with violence against women and girls. It should not have taken a pandemic, or the United Nations, to declare that we have the hidden endemic of domestic abuse, for institutions to develop support responses. It should not take a report from Baroness Casey to outline the

unfair treatment of women and girls within the police system. A responsive approach inevitably fails to prevent further tragedy from happening unless we are willing to learn from it. When we treat societal issues as trends, we are unable to give them the efficient attention and scrutiny to combat the challenges it presents.

- 2.5. During the research of this report, what was very clear is that Camden is doing work to tackle Violence Against Women and Girls. However, what became clearer both from speaking with residents, officers, young people, Camden Voices Against Abuse and other stakeholders, was that they felt that more could be done to raise more awareness of the work Camden are and should be doing, whilst acknowledging the work being undertaken is in its infancy. It was also clear that while traditional points of support such as the Camden Safety Net existed, there still is not enough accessible knowledge on what support is available and what campaigns and activities are happening in the Borough to raise awareness of the matter.
- 2.6. This report seeks to identify what work is currently taking place within the Council to address all aspects of safety for Women and Girls, and how we can further develop sustainable strategies to make Camden a safer place for us all.
- 2.7. Camden needs to continue to be the beacon of innovation, harnessing its rebellious spirit to tackle vital issues such as safety for women and girls.

3. Recommendation 1: Education, Education, Education: Establishing a Centralised Camden VAWG Network, Bespoke Events and Curriculum in Camden Secondary Schools

- 3.1. Too often, when it comes to VAWG, we find ourselves being more reactive than proactive. However, there is a commitment at both a political and officer level to changing this and developing a more intentional strategy. Part of our duty as a Local Authority and Leaders is to facilitate citizens engagement and build organizational capacity to prevent harm. Empowering our young women and girls, as well as young men and boys, is central to addressing the root causes of VAWG. Education must be a priority in this endeavor.

Workshops/Assemblies and PSHE

- 3.2. While there are resources in place to address elements of VAWG available, most of these are reactive. At present, the only form of proactive engagement taking place is the domestic abuse training Camden Officers receive along with trauma informed practice in our Primary schools.
- 3.3. Although this training is proactive, the learning tends to only be applied in response to scenarios, reactively. To overcome this obstacle, this report proposes the council supports primary and secondary schools to establish initiatives expanding on the Youth Assembly in June.

- 3.4. Women and Young Girls at the Youth Assembly in June of 2023, both agreed that while a safe space for just women and girls to discuss their concerns around VAWG is welcomed, they wanted to go further and include young boys and men. We all agreed, the onus should not just be on women and girls to push for this shift in culture and attitude. Camden is already focusing on developing a shift in culture through holding VAWG focused sessions with young boys in schools facilitated by hopscotch (see point 3.24), they've even gone as far as to create a targeted focus toward those who commit acts of VAWG through their new bespoke perpetrator role who has been in post since November 2023.
- 3.5. Hosting yearly assembly's creates a space for safe conversations to take place. In between these yearly events, it is recommended that Camden work with schools to build on the current curriculum and introduce ways of addressing VAWG through the classroom.
- 3.6. We need to direct particular focus on personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) and Physical Education. PSHE provides the space to be able to work with students on identifying what is considered violence, increasing dialogue with both girls and boys on respect for women and how we can teach both to raise concerns they may have in a safe and confidential way.
- 3.7. Starting this work in schools is fundamental to making radical social change within the formative years. VAWG affects all of us, and it is in all our interests to ensure we are educating the future generation of young people on what is and is not acceptable in our stride to eliminate it from Camden, and more broadly in society. By taking a proactive, educational approach with residents from a young age we are shaping the development and evolution of our borough.

Self Defence Classes

- 3.8. We know there is a general discrepancy in participation within Physical Education. There are an array of reasons; from access to gym and leisure facilities to general lack of confidence in taking part. PE in school is a class students are expected to participate in.
- 3.9. This report recommends building on the current curriculum by introducing self-defence classes during PE. One can be designated for girls only, boys only, and a mixed class. The aim of self-defence will be to increase physical activity with its range of mental and physical benefits, boosting general confidence enabling our young people to navigate spaces confidently, and deterring perpetrators from attempting any form of violence or abuse. We know confidence is a deterrent that stop abusers from perpetrating crimes. This can take place either during class time or can be offered as an extra-curricular activity. Above all, it gives our young people the tools of knowing how to defend themselves if they ever find themselves in dangerous situations.

3.10. Along with Schools, work amongst Tenants and Residents Associations should take place to see how we can enhance the use of our resident's community spaces to introduce a self-defence initiative. This needs to be done with our Tenants, Residents Associations (TRA's), through means of consultation, led by our young residents.

Primary Research

3.11. Encompassing the young voices of Camden in this report was a key priority, which is why holding focus groups in schools has played a central role in this recommendation. Regents High School welcomed our questions and shared their commitment to supporting the safety of their students with particular focus on VAWG. The sessions were comprised of two groups, the first being girls only and the second boys and girls.

3.12. There was a sense of frustrated apathy growing amongst the girls only group, particularly around reporting any incidents to the Police. One young girl candidly said *'what's the point, it's not like they're going to do anything. Also, police officers tend to be men. I wouldn't feel comfortable reporting any harassment to a man'*.

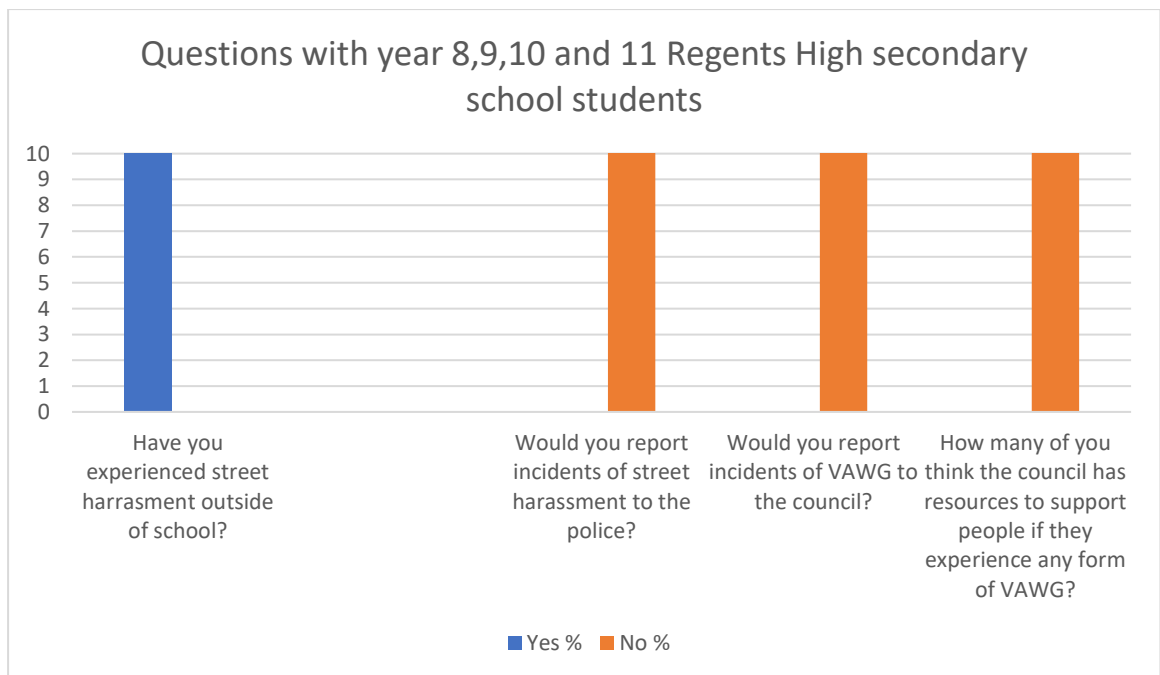


Figure 1 Questions with Regents High secondary school students

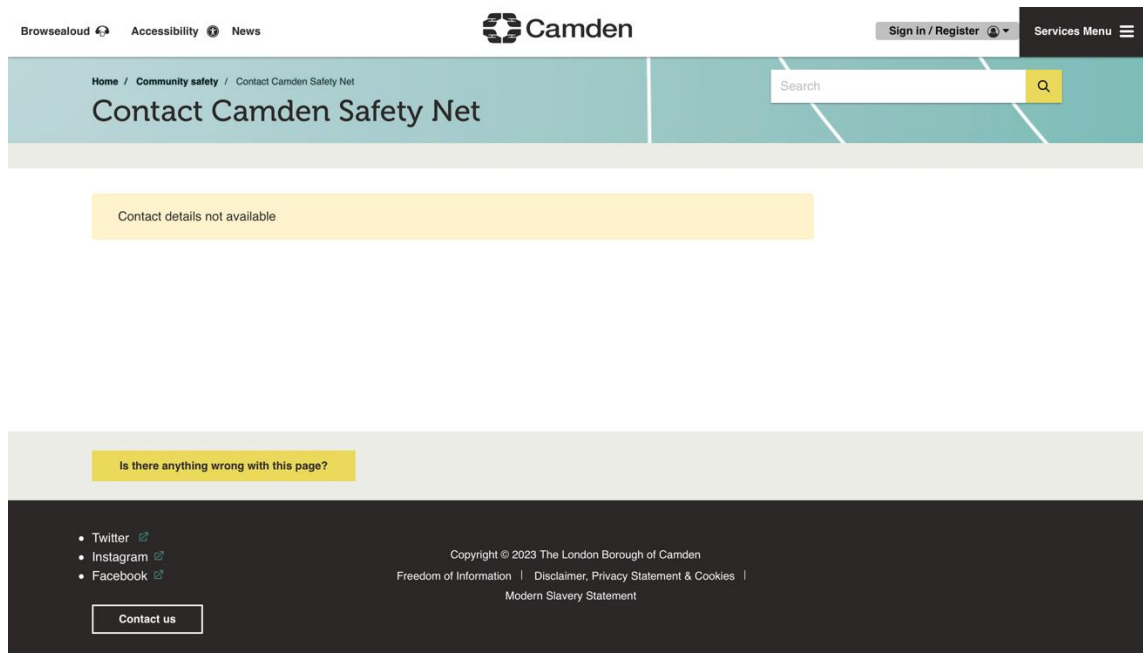
3.13. Figure 1 illustrates the responses to some of the questions posed to the students. It was quite clear that while all of the students had experienced harassment in different ways, none felt comfortable reporting the incidents. While the general reason for not reporting to the police was because of lack of action or male

dominance in the role, many had not considered the council could support residents who were dealing with VAWG.

- 3.14. None of the students were aware of any campaigns happening in Camden to raise awareness around Violence Against Women and Girls, Domestic Abuse, and other harassment related focuses.
- 3.15. When posed with the idea of increasing awareness both in schools and out of schools with posters, one group collectively agreed this would be a good way of developing positive behavior. The teacher present, welcomed the opportunity to have Regent High School be the first school to trial a poster campaign in school around harassment.
- 3.16. Students also welcomed the prospects of having VAWG awareness workshops in school, where both young boys and girls can participate in building awareness and flagging concerns most important to them on the topic.
- 3.17. There was also a desire from teachers to have a bespoke VAWG officer from Camden to attend schools and run school assemblies. It is recommended that we initiate a Borough wide conversation with all secondary schools in Camden with a designated VAWG officer visiting the schools on a frequent basis to host assemblies on different themes and topics surrounding VAWG. This will compliment the idea of hosting workshops in secondary schools.
- 3.18. It is important to bear in mind that the implementation of these recommendations need to be measured, and we need to constantly execute and assess what has been successful in such initiatives as workshops and assemblies.

Website

- 3.19. Throughout the research phase of this report, women, council officers, young people and other stakeholders noted that although there is a plethora of work underway and resources available, these resources are not accessible in one space.
- 3.20. The secondary response to developing VAWG action in schools will be to align all these initiatives, courses and events on the Council's website and social media. The current website is undergoing a redesign with a vision of making its service easier, clearer, and more inclusive and accessible. Until the redesign is published, officers will ensure the Camden Safety Net website areas have a shared reference to a new "Camden VAWG Network". Currently this site does not have any details and needs to be updated to reflect the contact details of Camden Safety Net.



- 3.21. The Camden VAWG Network needs to be a centralised online space that sets out all the tools for our communities to access support, events, partner organizations and campaigns all aimed at preventing VAWG and providing support. We need to ensure this is accompanied by a combined marketing plan across all Council mediums to ensure our residents are aware of the Network, spread the word, and encourage action and participation.
- 3.22. By having a Camden VAWG Network in place, this will then offer the space for schools and the local authority to access and sign post other ways of accessing support and events designed to tackle VAWG.
- 3.23. More events and support need to be directly offered to Schools, with an increase in dialogue with the local authority. We know there is already a trauma informed practice approach taking place within primary schools, so teachers are able to identify the signals of when potential domestic abuse is taking place.

Positive Masculinity

- 3.24. Hopscotch was awarded a fund of £54,969.00 by Camden Council to conduct focused sessions with young people in Secondary School. The grant lasts for one year and was awarded in May 2023. The charity works to meet the needs of some of our most vulnerable residents in Camden and focuses on supporting women from ethnic minority backgrounds who may face gender and racial inequalities.
- 3.25. The grant funds Hopscotch to undertake proactive engagement around VAWG in secondary schools. This encompasses offering bespoke sessions within Haverstock School on positive masculinity. A designated colleague is based in Haverstock and leads these sessions with young boys around the treatment of

young women and girls. While this initiative provides a proactive approach to VAWG, by instigating dialogue with young boys. If this work is to succeed in its goal to achieve *positive masculinity* it needs to be offered to all young boys.

- 3.26. It is also important that this initiative includes conversations with young girls and encourages the opportunity to broaden this conversation to a mixed group. In Camden's Youth Assembly which took place in June 2023, there was great desire by the young women and girls present to ensure that young boys and men were also involved in these conversations.
- 3.27. While this project is only funded for a year, its crucial Hopscotch consider innovative ways, with our support, to create a sustainable structure for schools to follow where they can then duplicate the work that has been undertaken in this pilot.
- 3.28. Ideas that came out of our discussions included devising a school's pack outlining the project, how it can be run and perhaps having this project turn into an accreditation which schools to take part in.

4. Recommendation 2: Addressing Violence in the Private Realm


- 4.1. Our Residents need to feel confident that we, as a Local Authority, will listen and act on their concerns when they come forward with their experiences of domestic abuse of any kind in their home. This needs to be done in collaboration with other stakeholders such as the Police.
- 4.2. 'Women's Homelessness in Camden – Improving Data, Strategy and Outcome' (2021) was written in collaboration with the University of York, Fulfilling Lives in Islington and Camden and Camden Council. It looks to analyse and reveal the experience for women who have become homeless in Camden, including their circumstances and background as to how they had become homeless. The report explains that '*the broad association between domestic violence and abuse, and women's homelessness is extremely well documented. Domestic abuse and violence is a major factor in the causation of women's homelessness*' – pg. 23.
- 4.3. The Camden Voices Against Abuse (CVAA) are an inspiring group of women with lived experience of VAWG who have helped the council shape their VAWG response through their bravery and courage to come forward and inform stakeholders, particularly the Police, of their experiences in fleeing domestic abuse.
- 4.4. It is imperative to remember when referring to domestic abuse, that this includes physical, psychological, coercive and financial abuse. Some of the women from the network mentioned initially they hesitated instigating fleeing domestic abuse, because they were manipulated into believing they were '*the issue*'. One member had gone as far as to seek hormonal replacement therapy from their GP as the coercion and gaslighting they had experienced lead her to blame herself for the

emotions and distress she was experiencing, rather than seeing it as a reaction to the systemic trauma faced at the hands of her perpetrator.

Current Camden Website

- 4.5. Bringing more awareness to the signs of domestic abuse is a crucial part of our strive to build capacity amongst residents to be able to identify implicit signs of domestic abuse, such as gaslighting. This can be done via the suggestion in point 3.19 above by developing a centralised Camden VAWG website that provides information such as the signs that indicate all forms of domestic abuse.
- 4.6. There are a range of online resources that identify the different types of domestic abuse and many local authorities such as the London Borough of Harrow, London Borough of Bexley and Walthamstow Council have webpages that identify different forms of domestic abuse.
- 4.7. The London Borough of Harrow for example, not only bullet points the different forms of domestic abuse, they also go on to explain the different scenarios in which each and every one can manifest itself through various comprehensive explanations.

Cover your tracks

if you're worried about someone knowing you have visited this website read [how to cover your tracks online](#) .

What is domestic violence?

Domestic abuse, also called domestic violence can include:

- physical abuse
- emotional abuse
- sexual abuse
- financial abuse
- coercive control
- forced marriage
- honour-based abuse
- female genital mutilation

It can happen in relationships, with family members or ex-partners. Domestic abuse can happen to anyone and anyone can be an abuser.

Find out about [our campaigns to tackle domestic violence and abuse](#) .

Image 1 Camden Council website-what is domestic violence

4.8. Image 1 is Camden's website and description of domestic violence. It is clear our website needs to and must go further to give full explanations and examples of each of the signs of domestic abuse.

4.9. The website also signposts the link to the 'know it's not too late' campaign. This campaign was launched in 2014, now 10 years ago. The website makes it seem as though no intermediate campaigns have taken place or been published on the website since then, although the landscape for challenging and addressing domestic abuse and violence against women and girls has changed. There is a clear need and opportunity to revive the need to campaign and raise awareness of domestic abuse.

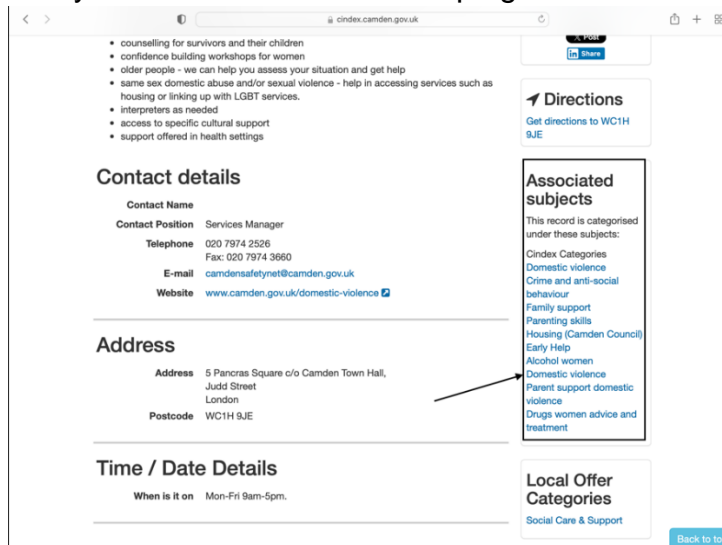


Image 2 Camden Council) Cindex

4.10. The members also raised the need for a centralised VAWG website and expressed a desire to collaborate and work with the council to ensure all relevant tools are easy to locate and accessible resources and support. It is recommended that Camden's Communication department work in direct collaboration with the Camden Voices Against Abuse (CVAA) to get their insight into what needs to be included within the Camden VAWG centralised website.

4.11. The members also flagged Camden's current website – CINDEX- does not reflect the change in terminology from *domestic violence* to *domestic abuse*, as implored in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. They felt very passionately about this detail as moving away from *violence* towards *abuse* ensures we do not adopt an implied rhetoric that domestic abuse only applies to physical violence. The images below were taken from the website and google search on the 2nd of January 2024. The members also raised this in November 2023.

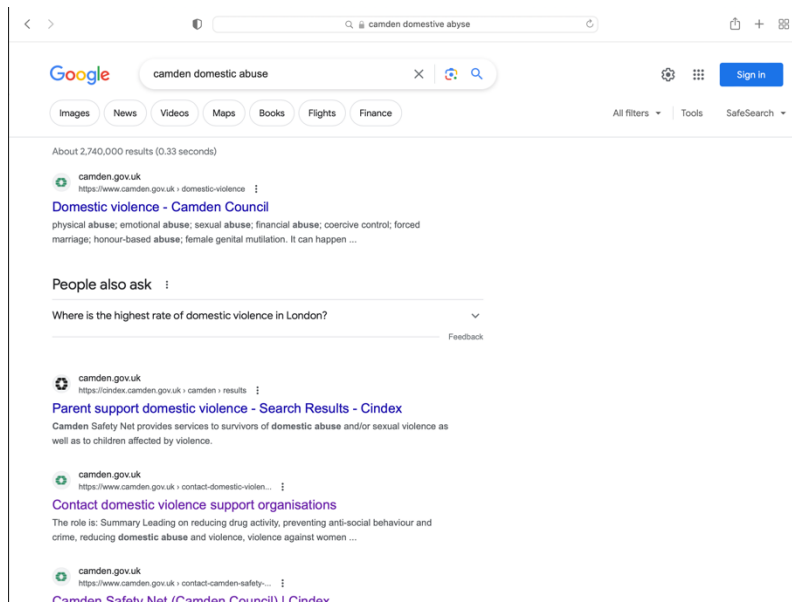


Image 3 google search “camden domestic abuse”

4.12. All Council platforms need to be in sync. While some webpages and content refer to domestic abuse, others refer to domestic violence. This reflects the overall systemic criticism the Council faces when it comes to communications not being consistent, up to date and followed up. Image 3 Google search results for “Camden domestic abuse”

4.13. Alongside having accessible online mediums available, it is also imperative to remember that those attempting to flee domestic abuse or seek help may not necessarily have access to a computer or smart phone. Furthermore, they may be more concerned about searching for these resources should they be in a coercive relationship where the partner monitors their online movement.

4.14. Just as it is important for residents to be able to find the relevant resources they need when reaching out for help, it is crucial we avoid asking women to repeat their trauma through navigating switchboards to get them through to someone who can help them. Currently, there is no switchboard number for domestic abuse. It is recommended that the council explore including this via Contact Camden to give residents the option of seeking help through other mediums such as telephone. Time and time again digital exclusion has been repeatedly raised by residents regardless of their circumstances which is why having accessible telephone options is vital to the service. This is particularly important when dealing with something as sensitive as a resident fleeing domestic abuse.

Council support in place

Housing

4.15. In May 2023, Camden’s housing department began the journey of acquiring the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance Accreditation. The accreditation was first

launched in 2014 and has since been praised for being a pillar of best practice through the Domestic Abuse Statutory Act 2022.

- 4.16. The total course runs for 2 years. While this is a brilliant stride, it reflects the infancy of the work Camden are undertaking in their stride to address domestic abuse. This also emphasizes that we have the opportunity to ensure our response to this issue is as robust and effective as possible.
- 4.17. It must be noted that while there are many recent initiatives taking place, the members heavily praised the work Camden Safety Net do, one even going as far as to say they saved her life. Camden Safety Net (CSN) was established in 2000. It is made up of 13 staff members and has been the bedrock of all things to do with Violence Against Women and Girls in Camden. It is with great hope that as we welcome new initiatives, this will not only support our residents, but it will also compliment and enable CSN to continue the life changing work they do.
- 4.18. Work is currently underway as part of the Housing Transformation project, to review and develop how harassment points are being awarded, in particular, reviewing the gap between how harassment points are awarded. Someone who applies for harassment points can be eligible for anything between either 75 or 600 points.
- 4.19. Further review of how harassment points are being allocated along with the criteria to meet the requirements must be explored and full public access to this policy must be made available at the earliest moment.

5. Recommendation 3: Addressing Violence in the Public Realm

- 5.1. We need to enhance our public spaces to ensure they are also safe spaces women and young girls can navigate, from our streets on our estates to the bus stops in our Borough.
- 5.2. In line with our vision set out in We Make Camden's mission, where all Camden residents can and should lead safe and prosperous lives, this recommendation sets the ambition of enhancing our public spaces. Creating safe public spaces in the borough is of paramount importance for the Council. There are several existing initiatives and new initiatives launching to build on making the entirety of our Borough a safe space, particularly for women and girls.

Walkabouts

- 5.3. Currently, the community safety team alongside the cabinet member for safer communities hold bi-monthly walkabouts in different areas of the borough which have been identified as locations that have seen an upsurge in crime and anti-social behavior.

- 5.4. In March 2022 the Council, along with other stakeholders such as the Police and the local MP, held a Borough wide community safety walk about, with members of the community. This was well received by many members of the community and Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer. However, since then, the momentum for community safety walk abouts have declined and residents as well as community groups have vocalized their concerns that the walkabouts since 2022 have not been as well advertised as they could be.
- 5.5. Members of the CVAA rightly flagged the concern they had about the current shape of the walk abouts stating while they will always welcome this initiative, they have to take place in locations that residents are flagging as hotspots. Many of them mentioned that they were taking place in areas that were otherwise considered relatively non problematic, therefore not making efficient use of anyone's time.
- 5.6. It is recommended the Camden Community Safety Team revive the momentum seen in 2022 by ensuring a walk about is done in each ward every year, targeting, and focusing on hotspots as and when identified. There should also be efforts directed to organise yearly themed community safety meetings on a borough wide level as part of our effort to increase awareness and public discourse in the borough. This should be done by visiting communities and ensuring invitations are sent in a timely manner to allow residents the opportunity to make the necessary arrangements to enable them to attend.
- 5.7. Camden Community Safety team should work in collaboration with the Housing department to seek support from on-site staff such as neighborhood housing officers and caretakers, both of whom are trusted representatives of the Council, to further promote upcoming walk abouts by putting up posters in communal areas.

Police Partnership

- 5.8. In October 2023, the Metropolitan Police launched their revised strategy to tackle Violence Against Women and Girls. This strategy has been designed through 3 pillars, which encapsulate 10 commitments:
 - Building trust and confidence
 - Relentless pursuit of perpetrators
 - Safer spaces
- 5.9. While strides from the Met will always be welcome to ensure our borough is the best it can be, it was unfortunate that this particular event, which was meant to consult and engage communities on their new plan, was not widely or effectively advertised.
- 5.10. While this report sets out recommendations for the Council, this also provides the opportunity for the Council to set out best practice on an organizational level on how we work in partnership with institutions such as the Metropolitan Police to ensure we are working together to tackle violence against women and girls and how we do

it. I hope as the Met continue to develop and implement their new strategy, that the Council is as involved and informed as possible.

Public Transport

- 5.11. A regular motif that emerged through conversations with women and young girls was the issue of harassment on public transport. Camden has a proud reputation of being a place with a rebellious spirit, where people can come and fulfill their potential, thrive; the limits are endless.
- 5.12. We have one of the most vibrant day and night time economy's in the Capital; from going to a gig in KOKO, enjoying lunch by the Lock or enjoying street performances in Covent Garden, we are fortunate to be in a borough that has something for everyone. However, particularly during the winter months when it gets dark by 4pm, women and young girls have flagged that it is travelling to and from the borough is what worries them the most.
- 5.13. In the Full Council meeting in November 2023, Councillors Umeadi and De Ayala Parker gave testimony and shared the concerns that women still worry about navigating our streets, particularly at night.
- 5.14. We have one of the most accessible, efficient transport networks in the world. Under the Labour Mayor, Sadiq Khan, we have seen a significant shift in attitudes on our Underground and Overground Network with the launch of his campaign posters designed to identify and call out all forms of harassment.
- 5.15. What emerged through conversations with women and young girls was that while the poster campaigns are welcomed and positive shifts have taken place, more can be done to enhance the effectiveness of this campaign. They noted that as there is limited cellular service on different parts of the Underground, it makes it near impossible to follow poster advice and report a crime via phone call. They felt that between the time of harassment happening and reporting it, the perpetrator would have left.
- 5.16. Therefore, writing to Sadiq in his capacity as chair of Transport for London (TfL) was necessary to ensure these issues were flagged and raised to ensure TfL continues to build on the effectiveness of the campaign. In flagging the lack of network connection across the underground, lack of campaign on buses/bus stops and the proposal to establish an identifiable safe space at stations for those who have witnessed or experienced harassment to report and speak to a member of staff, the recommendations were well received (appendix 2 and 3). A key positive outcome of this was that the mayor noted the lack of official safe spaces at stations and agreed that Transport for London will look into exploring this suggestion and how it can be implemented. Following the engagement with the mayor, there is a clear opportunity to use our bus stops in Camden to promote upcoming campaign material that the Council have developed.

5.17. Camden's Communication department is in the process of developing a communications strategy with the Violence Against Women and Girls Lead. It is recommended that once this strategy and campaign has been established, that all bus stops, communal areas, Camden Schools, and any other Council associated public spaces and assets are used to promote the official campaign.

Light up our estates

5.18. Camden's current VAWG campaigns need to consider ways in which it can bring out the best of our public realm and estates in order to engage with the community, as part of the effort to raise awareness as effectively as possible. The campaign needs to be done *with residents* and not *to residents*, as too often we hear from residents that they are not involved in the creation process. This will provide the chance to bring them along for the journey. Lighting on our estates, particularly in the darker corners of our estates, has had criticism.

5.19. As Camden is known as a vibrant borough, renowned for the artists we produce, it is only fitting that we identify a way to merge the two so that in the process not only are we improving lighting on our estates, but we are also providing the future generation with the opportunity to be exposed to creative ways of designing their communities.

5.20. It is recommended that the Council adopt a public realm arts project called '*light up our estates*' that identifies spaces on estates where lighting currently exists, reaches out to artists/young people within the community, and uses ecologically friendly glow in the dark paint to transform estates so they literally glow when it is dark. Shoreditch and Brick Lane are known for their art filled streets. This is an initiative that is not and has not been done anywhere else. We can become renowned for our creative way of designing out crime in our estates.

Venues

5.21. As the above recommendation concentrates on designing out crime in our estates and making them as safe as possible, attention must also be directed to our efforts to address safety and women and girls in our nighttime venues.

5.22. In response to the written question to the Cabinet Member for New Homes, Jobs and Investment on the 20th November 2023, it was rightly stated that 'promoting women's safety in evening and night time venues remains a key priority for Camden Council and the Camden Community Safety Partnership'. The response made clear the current plans underway to encourage venues to adopt 'Ask Angela' as part of best practices. This is also something Camden are looking to encapsulate as part of licensing applications. Groups such as the Women's Safety Working Group and the Evening and Nighttime Economy Citizens Assembly are also involved in discussions surrounding best practice for venues.

- 5.23. The Metropolitan Police have an initiative called 'Project Vigilant' which see's covert officers take our streets to tackle sexual violence in our nighttime economy as well as prevent it. There is an opportunity to incorporate the work Camden is doing alongside the Police to develop a strategy with nighttime economy venues that specifically addresses either known perpetrators or those exhibiting behaviors which may lead to potential sexual violence.
- 5.24. What has traditionally occurred is that once a perpetrator has been removed from a venue, there is no longer any obligation on the part of the venue to pursuit them any further. They then become free to transfer the aggression displayed in one venue on to the streets or potentially another venue.
- 5.25. Establishing a point of communications through nighttime venues will further develop and build capacity in sharing information that will avoid perpetrators navigating and accessing entry from one venue to another unhindered. This can be done by utilizing a device as simple as a handheld receiver, where all nighttime venues in Camden share a channel between each other and the police to flag a potential perpetrator who has left one venue with the potential intent of entering another.
- 5.26. This recommendation aims at further increasing engagement between Camden, night-time venues, and the Police, to ensure that information is being shared as strategically and effectively as possible to prevent further assault on women and girls.

6. **Conclusion:**

- 6.1. Throughout the journey of delivering this report, it was clear that the discussions and initiatives being explored and delivered to address violence against women and girls are in their early life. Camden is at the beginning of a long road of developing and executing strategies that look to achieve a safer borough for our women and young girls, whether it be at home, on our estates, in our schools or our night time venues.
- 6.2. The report begins with the recommendation of 'education, education, education' because education is the key pathway to establishing a solid foundation for our residents, staff, young people, and other stakeholders to be able to confidently identify and call out violence against women and girls. This educational process does not only happen in classrooms, but through this report it is recommending this process continue in our estates, at our bus stops, in our night-time venues, all via a strong and comprehensive, visible campaign in the Borough that makes perpetrators think twice before committing any act of violence.
- 6.3. The estates/TRA recommendation is particularly important to me as I was fortunate enough to have access to Amptill Tenants and Residents Association Hall on a

Saturday when I was 10 – 11. They had martial arts classes available to the community for an affordable price, which meant I was able to take part in a sport and boost my confidence at a young age without it being unaffordable for my parents.

- 6.4. It is clear that taking a consistent approach across council services is the only way we can deliver support to residents that is reliable, dependable and sustainable. It is also the way forward in beginning to deter behaviour that may lead to harm, as council services demonstrate their ability to be consistent and visible.
- 6.5. Above being a councilor or cabinet adviser, I am a Camden resident. This means that Camden public spaces are of equal importance to me as to those I spoke to throughout this report. I am particularly excited about the potential of setting up a lighting up estates initiative. Having grown up and lived on a Camden estate my entire life, I know and share the concerns of lighting. However, when this is something you are familiar with and have navigated your whole life, you become accustomed to adapting your journey to avoid poorly lit areas. As we move towards more ecologically friendly ways of living, we need to explore more innovative, energy friendly ways of making our estates and streets better lit.
- 6.6. The recommendations set out in this report will not have all the answers to the endemic issue of domestic abuse, harassment and violence against women and girls. However, they are a set of simple ideas, which if executed effectively alongside residents and stakeholders, does have the potential to create a Camden that is known for its zero-tolerance stance to any form of violence and harassment against women and girls, whether that be at home or on our streets.
- 6.7. When I met with different stakeholders, particularly those sharing their lived experience, I emphasized that while I was writing this report, really and truly this was their report; I was just amplifying their voices. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has been part of this journey; from the young women and girls I met at Camden's Youth Assembly, Regent High School to Camden Voices Against Abuse, and many others. This report would not have been possible without their contribution and time.
- 6.8. We need to act as a beacon of best practice for our partners, this could influence a systemic change nationally. It is imperative that any decisions taken, need to be done with and not to residents. This is the only way we can secure a lasting cultural shift in how the best public services are provided for our residents.

7. Finance Comments of the Executive Director Corporate Services

7.1. The Cabinet Member and the Cabinet will need to take these into account in the context of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy when considering their response to the report. Any decisions to implement recommendations would be taken in accordance with the Council's governance arrangements and take into account the impact on budgets.

8. Legal Comments of the Borough Solicitor

8.1. In exercising Council, functions members must take into account the Council's equality duties. In summary, these legal obligations require the Council, when exercising its functions, to have 'due regard' to the need to: eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act; to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not; and foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not (which involves tackling prejudice and promoting understanding). Under the Duty the relevant statutory protected characteristics are: Age, Disability, Gender reassignment, Pregnancy and maternity, Race, Religion, Sex, Sexual orientation. In respect of the first aim, the protected characteristic of marriage and civil partnership is also relevant. In discharging the Duty the Council has also given a public commitment to give due weight to evidence in relation to key local characteristics relating to specific groups of people (given the strong probability that many people within those groups will have protected characteristics) . The relevant groups are Foster carers, Looked after children/care leavers, Low-income households, Refugees and asylum seekers, Parents (of any gender, with children aged under 18), People who are homeless, Private rental tenants in deprived areas, Single parent households and Social housing tenants.

9. Environmental Implications

9.1. A recommendation in this report suggests using ecologically friendly glow in the dark paint to transform the dark parts of streets and estates and make Camden's public spaces safer for women and girls.

9.2. No further elements of this report contain significant environmental implications for Camden.

10. Appendices

10.1. Appendix 1- Letter to Mayor of London, Chair of TfL, Sadiq Khan.

10.2. Appendix 2- Response from the Mayor of London, Chair of TfL, Sadiq Khan

Appendix 1 - Letter to Mayor of London, Chair of TfL, Sadiq Khan



Mayor Sadiq Khan
City Hall
The Queens Walk
London
SE1 2AA

London Borough of Camden

Camden Town Hall

Judd Street

London WC1H 9JE

To: mayor@london.gov.uk, PA

carl.ridgers@london.gov.uk

CC: AndyLords@tfl.gov.uk

ExternalAffairs@btp.police.uk

Date:

5th October 2023

Email: Nasrine.Djemai@camden.gov.uk

Dear Sadiq,

RE: Violence Against Women and Girls – Transport for London Poster Campaign

I am writing to you in my capacity as Councillor and Cabinet Advisor on Safety for Women and Young Girls for the London Borough of Camden regarding the poster campaigns Transport for London are currently using to address violence against women and girls on public transport.

I want to start off by saying this initiative is very much welcome. As a young woman who uses public transport, it is encouraging to see how we are using our public spaces to tackle and address violence against women and girls.

It has been brought to my attention that many women and girls also welcome the campaign but feel more can be done to ensure it is as effective as possible in our strides to eliminate violence against women and girls within the public realm.

I would like to use this letter as an opportunity to bring to your attention some of the recommendations women and girls have put forward to improve the campaign further.

The following items have been raised as points of improvement:

- While there are posters around sexual harassment on the Underground, it is important to recognise this is not the only TfL space where sexual harassment takes place. Women continue to experience male violence on the overground, buses and at bus stops, which is why it's important to make this campaign as comprehensive as possible and expand its messaging to all spaces TfL manage.
- The campaign posters encompass details travellers can use to report incidents of sexual harassment to the British Transport Police by texting or calling them. However, as there is no signal underground, it means people are only able to submit reports once reaching a place with signal. More often than not, this means that by that time, perpetrators may have left the tube or the woman/girl has had no choice but to disrupt their journey by changing carriages or tubes all together. At this point, many either feel deterred or demoralised to submit a report, as there is a sense that no consequence will come out of reporting. I would encourage you to consider providing an option for women to report instances of harassment online so that reports can be submitted when connected to a Wi-Fi network between stations.
- Safe spaces within stations where women and young girls can go and report incidents

I would welcome your support on the recommendations raised above and urge you to consider ways in which we can implement them to make positive, tangible change to our transport system for all commuters.

I look forward to receiving your response.

Yours Sincerely,

Councillor Nasrine Djemai
Cabinet Advisor on Safety for Women and Young Girls
London Borough of Camden

Appendix 2-Response from Chair of TfL Sadiq Khan

MAYOR OF LONDON

Cllr Nasrine Djemai
Cabinet Advisor on Safety for Women
and Young Girls
London Borough of Camden
Nasrine.Djemai@camden.gov.uk

Our ref: MGLA171023-8605

Date: 13 December 2023

Dear Nasrine,

Thank you for your support for the action that Transport for London (TfL) and I are taking to make the network the safe place it should be for women and girls. Thank you for also taking the time to share valuable feedback and suggestions on how we can improve our activities to tackle violence against women and girls. I'm pleased to say that we're making good progress against your recommendations.

The safety of women and girls is an absolute priority for me. Last year, I published my refreshed Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy, which set out my ambition to ensure women and girls can participate fully in life in our city without experiencing or fearing harassment, abuse or violence from men. The strategy places a strong emphasis on targeting the behaviour and actions of perpetrators of abuse and violence and making sure they are the focus of change.

We must recognise that violence starts with words and attitudes, and it's vital that we challenge the behaviour that makes women feel unsafe and can lead to violence. Last year, I launched the 'Have a Word' campaign, which puts the responsibility on men to challenge sexist behaviour and harassment amongst their peers. Building on that, I launched a further campaign this summer, which focused on men saying "maaate" to their friends as a means of challenging sexism and misogyny in society.

I'm pleased to say that my priorities are fully shared throughout TfL. TfL has a programme of activity underway that builds on its partnership work with the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS), City of London Police, and British Transport Police (BTP) to tackle violence against women and girls and improve their confidence to travel.

In 2021, TfL launched its zero tolerance for sexual harassment campaign. This was developed in partnership with other transport operators, policing partners, and experts in the fields of sexual violence reduction and victim support. I'm pleased to confirm this campaign includes posters across TfL's various public transport modes – not just the Underground – as you point out, it is important to reach both perpetrators and survivors. The messages are amplified in a wider campaign, including social media, podcasts, editorials, PR and face-to-face engagement activities. The campaign aims to challenge this behaviour and, in line with my wider strategy, puts the focus on offenders and makes clear their behaviour will not be tolerated on TfL's network.

In January of this year, TfL launched a complementary new campaign that is aimed at bystanders. It provides clear and simple guidance on how bystanders can safely play a role in de-escalating incidents, supporting victims and reporting incidents. This helps to respond to research by London Travel Watch that showed 63 per cent of Londoners wanted to intervene in such incidents but did not know how.

We know that the education of young people will be key to tackling violence against women and girls. TfL funds the London Transport Museum to deliver award-winning Project Guardian sessions in schools. These aim to promote awareness and help young people recognise sexual harassment on public transport. It empowers students to respond appropriately and safely, encourages the reporting of incidents and increases confidence that reports will be acted on. The target audience is all Year 9 students aged 13-14, and schools are prioritised based on intelligence from policing partners, reported incidents and stakeholder feedback. The sessions also cover the campaign messaging about zero tolerance, bystander intervention and reporting information.

You raise an important point about the ability of people to report incidents while deep underground on the Tube. I've been getting regular updates on the rollout of 4G and 5G underground and excellent progress is being made on my commitment to improve connectivity on the Tube network. Almost all London Underground stations are covered by Wi-Fi, and TfL is working with all four mobile operators to provide mobile coverage to all London Underground stations and for the first time within the tunnels. At the end of this year, 33 stations and their connecting tunnels will have coverage, increasing to 40 by spring 2024, including the Bank branch of the Northern line from Euston to Camden Town. I hope this reassures you that rapid improvements are being delivered. Passenger help points and alarms are also available across the Tube and rail networks, which connect customers to TfL's control centres or a member of staff in emergencies.

Where reporting is more challenging, TfL also encourages people to report to a member of transport staff if that's the option that works best. TfL is training frontline transport staff in zero tolerance to sexual harassment so they are better equipped and more confident to support customers who may have experienced or witnessed sexual harassment on TfL's public transport networks. While it will take some time for all frontline staff to undertake this training, in the meantime, TfL is providing briefings and guidance to frontline staff. This helps them understand how they can support customers sensitively and with compassion, which I hope means anyone who reports to our transport staff will get the support they need. Frontline staff on TfL's public transport networks, including bus drivers, also have direct communications to TfL's 24/7 control centres, where they can request guidance or police assistance.

I thank you for your suggestion of TfL's sites being 'safe spaces' to report incidents and have passed this suggestion to TfL. Through its range of activities, including training frontline staff to respond to such incidents, we hope to make the entire network a safe space for women and girls. We want the TfL roundel to become a 'symbol of safety' across the capital through our efforts. TfL continues to undertake research and community engagement to understand more about what is important to women and girls and how TfL can make its network feel like a safe space for women and girls.

I thank you for your productive suggestions and your efforts to support our shared goal of eradicating violence against women and girls. Should you wish to meet the TfL staff who are helping to progress this work, Abbas Raza of TfL's Local Community Partnerships team would be happy to arrange something for you. He can be contacted at AbbasRaza@TfL.gov.uk.

MAYOR OF LONDON

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sadiq Khan', with a small number '2' written below the name.

Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London