
Report to Communities, Highways and Environment Scrutiny Committee

24 November 2021

Crime & Disorder Background Report – Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse

Report by Head of Community Safety and Wellbeing/Director of Communities

Electoral division(s): All

Summary

Domestic and sexual violence and abuse (hereafter referred to as D&SVA) are devastating crimes - the effects are both far-reaching and long-lasting. There are approximately 2.4 million victims a year, the majority of whom are women. An effective partnership response to eliminating D&SVA in West Sussex is essential, creating a society where it is not tolerated and victims, professionals and our communities are empowered to challenge and speak out against this damaging behaviour – all people deserve to be and feel, safe in their homes and in public spaces.

Throughout this report, both 'victim' and 'survivor' have been used to describe individuals experiencing domestic abuse. (It should be noted that the terms domestic abuse and D&SVA are often used interchangeably).

If you, or someone you know, is or might be, experiencing abuse local and national help and support is available. Support is available through WORTH services in West Sussex Monday-Friday and can be contacted on 0330 222 8181. The national 24 hour domestic abuse helpline can be contacted on 0808 2000 247. Lifecentre support those living in West Sussex that have had an unwanted sexual experience. To access support, contact 01243 786349 or call the helpline on 0808 8020808. You are not alone.

Focus for Scrutiny

Scrutinise the Safer West Sussex Partnership arrangements for D&SVA in West Sussex in order to obtain a more coherent and detailed picture of the threats, harms, risks and vulnerabilities that impact our communities and residents.

In particular, that the Committee:

- (1) Support the current partnership approach to reducing harm from D&SVA
 - (2) Consider opportunities to engage with communities.
 - (3) Utilise networks to share public messages
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Proposal

1 Background and context

National overview – Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse

- 1.1 The UK Government's definition of domestic abuse is 'any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.
- 1.2 'Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, religion, socio-economic status, sexuality or background'ⁱ
- 1.3 D&SVA are often 'hidden crimes', which are under reported – frequently happening behind closed doors. On average victims will experience 50 incidents of abuse and will live with domestic abuse for up to 3 years before getting help.ⁱⁱ The governments 'Tackling violence against women and girl's strategy notes that for many girls and adult women, violence, abuse and harassment has simply become normalised. Nationally, there are some 2.3 million victims of domestic abuse every year aged 16 to 74 (1.6 million women and 77,000 men). Domestic abuse is also experienced by those aged 74 onwards, however this data is not collected by the Office for National Statistics. National figures show that two thirds of recorded victims are female. In West Sussex, from 1st January 2021 96.6% of victims engaged with the high risk IDVA service were female.ⁱⁱⁱ
- 1.4 10 years ago, in the UK, every 4 days a woman was killed by a man, most commonly, a current or former partner, or family member. The numbers, methods, and contexts in which women are killed has changed very little over a 10-year period.^{iv} In 2020 207 women were killed. In 2019, 241 women were killed, the highest number in a decade. To date, in 2021, 112 women have been killed by men (or where a man is the principal suspect) with a further 20 cases awaiting more information. ^v
- 1.5 More than 70% of women are killed in their own home, twice the figure for men.
- 1.6 For the year ending March 2020, the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) estimated that 1.6 adults had experienced sexual assault by rape or penetration. More than 1 in 20 women had experienced rape or attempted rape. There were just 59,000 reports made to police in the year ending March 2020, and in 2020 just 1495 people were convicted of rape. This was the lowest number since figures began being released in 2014.^{vi} There has been recent media attention on radicalisation and violent extremism regarding the INCEL movement in relation to misogyny and violence against women and girls. Some of the more extreme and violent strands have advocated for mass murder, state implemented wives and girls' programmes and mass rape. There is emerging evidence that links terrorism, domestic abuse, and misogyny, challenging traditional theories of ideology alone, speculating that many fatal terrorist attacks are in fact an escalation of violence that has been previously carried out or witnessed by the perpetrator.^{vii}

West Sussex Partnerships

1.7 The current priorities for the Safer West Sussex Partnership are;

- Violence and Exploitation
- Domestic and sexual violence and Abuse
- Substance misuse
- Social inequality and hate crime
- Digital Safety
- Preventing Radicalisation and Violent Extremism

1.8 D&SVA cuts across a number of these priorities, in particular serious violence, and substance misuse.

Strategic responsibility for the partnership response to D&SVA and the new statutory duties under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 sits within the Community Safety and Wellbeing service, with the D&SVA lead officer reporting to the Head of Community Safety and Wellbeing

1.9 In West Sussex the partnership response is coordinated through the Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Steering Group (DSVASG), which works closely with, and is represented on, the Sussex Domestic Abuse Board, the Sussex Serious Violence Steering Group (SRVSG) and the West Sussex Violence and Exploitation Reduction Partnership.

1.10 The Pan-Sussex Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategic Framework, co-produced with East Sussex and Brighton and Hove in 2020, sets out our strategic ambitions to make Sussex a safe place to live and work, and to ensure that those responsible for abuse are held accountable for their actions. Our joint commitment is a partnership of agencies, working together to provide robust, accessible, and supportive services to those experiencing abuse.

1.11 This framework will drive partnership work to reduce domestic and sexual violence and abuse whilst also noting that this can only be achieved by successfully 'bridging the gap' between services. There is clear acknowledgement of the correlation between co-occurring needs, particularly around women who are subject to multiple disadvantages. Partners must work together to ensure the best outcomes for families across the County

1.12 The strategy has four distinct priorities.

- Prevention and Early Intervention
- Service Provision
- Pursuing Perpetrators
- Partnership Working

- 1.13 The accompanying action plans for East and West Sussex reflect strategic and operational matters relating to the four priorities, aligned with the Domestic Abuse Act and National Violence against Women and Girls strategy.
- 1.14 The current Pan Sussex strategic framework can be viewed here; https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/media/14953/strategic_framework_domestic_sexual_violence_abuse_2020-2024.pdf

Service delivery in West Sussex

- 1.15 The partnership of D&SVA providers across West Sussex is made up of both voluntary and statutory stakeholders.
- 1.16 Nationally, the structure of service delivery varies by local authority. In East Sussex, D&SVA services are commissioned by the local authority and delivered by voluntary sector organisations. WSCC does not commission any services, however, works closely with voluntary partners, and the Office of Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner (OSPCC) to ensure informed funding decisions, and to encourage and sustain a joined-up approach to the delivery of support services. This approach has meant that WSCC has strong existing and historic relationships with the police, children's services and adults' services, ensuring robust information sharing, and risk management procedures.
- 1.17 WORTH services are an 'in house' service provided by West Sussex County Council (WSCC). WORTH services provide Independent Domestic Violence Advisor's (IDVA) support to high-risk victims. The service also provides Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVA) and specialist Young People's Violence Advisors (YPVA's) and IDVA support to the high harm perpetrator project. WORTH is located within the Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and countywide via the Early Help hubs. The way in which WORTH services is delivered is currently being reviewed through the implementation of the Family Safeguarding Model.
- 1.18 The Family Safeguarding Model is an innovative, whole-system approach to safeguarding children and young people. It was developed in 2014 by Hertfordshire County Council. The approach places a multi-disciplinary team of mental health practitioners, domestic abuse practitioner, probation workers and children's social workers together in a team to directly support parents.
- 1.19 Hertfordshire adopted this practice model in 2015 and have seen significantly improved outcomes for children and families. Adopting a 'whole family approach' has made access to specialist support easier, meaning that parents are not navigating the complex issues of mental health, domestic abuse or substance misuse alone, bettering the outcomes for them and their children.
- 1.20 Hertfordshire saw the number of children on child protection plans reduce by 55% in 30 months.
- 1.21 In West Sussex, 13 specialist domestic abuse workers will work in multi-disciplinary teams countywide delivering the model.
- 1.22 Operational responsibility for the delivery of the IDVA service and Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs) sit within the Early Help Service.

- 1.23 There are 4 MARACs in West Sussex covering Crawley, Horsham/ Mid Sussex, Worthing, and Chichester/Arun. Each MARAC is held once a month. The role of the MARAC is to facilitate, monitor and evaluate effective information-sharing regarding high-risk cases of domestic abuse to enable appropriate actions to be taken to increase public safety, the safety of the victim, and their children.
- 1.24 The MARAC report for 2020-2021 shows that a total of 1,155 cases were heard in West Sussex. Of these, 286 (24.7%) were repeat cases and there was a total of 923 children described as 'living in the household'.
- 1.25 In addition, MARAC Plus meetings are held monthly in West Sussex, where a strategic response is provided to the highest risk cases. Cases discussed at MARAC plus will have been heard at a MARAC meeting +3 times in 12 months, or will involve high risk, or serial perpetrators.
- 1.26 [My Sisters' House](#) women's centre provides step down and recovery support across Arun and Chichester. The service supports women experiencing multiple disadvantages by offering a community based drop-in service, advocacy support, group work and counselling.
- 1.27 [Safe in Sussex](#) provides 24 refuge spaces across Chichester, Littlehampton and Worthing alongside peer support groups and the Freedom Programme in Horsham, Worthing, and Bognor. Amber House refuge is located in Littlehampton, and is an innovative community-based model, offering accommodation and support to local women.
- 1.28 [Connect](#) is a community-based support service, providing advocacy support, group work and peer support across Crawley and Worthing. Connect has run as a three-year pilot in partnership with WSCC and is due to close in December 2021.
- 1.29 My Sisters' House, Safe in Sussex and Connect all provide domestic abuse recovery support for children and young people.
- 1.30 [Lifecentre](#) provides counselling, email counselling and telephone helpline support to people of all ages and genders across West Sussex who have had an unwanted sexual experience.
- 1.31 [Survivors Network](#) ISVA service provide information and support to people in West Sussex who have experienced sexual violence or abuse, no matter when it happened.
- 1.32 In West Sussex, there are specialist services which have been made available, in part, via funding from the OSPCC including women only services, 'by and for' services for black women, additional posts to support Eastern European victims, an additional post to support male victims and an additional post to support Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender, Queer (or questioning) and others (LGBTQ+) A pilot project has been funded pan-Sussex, commissioning the LGBT switchboard to train and provide 2 IDVAs to support victims via their service. The pilot will initially run in Brighton, with West Sussex following.
- 1.33 Additional posts have been funded via WORTH services to support 2 further IDVAs, working with those who are experiencing multiple disadvantages. Multiple disadvantages are broadly understood to include service users with support needs in two or more of the following areas;

- Domestic abuse
- Mental health challenges
- Substance misuse need
- Homelessness
- Children removed from care
- Involved in the criminal justice system

1.34 There is however a need for further development of specialist services, in order that those facing additional barriers to support are acknowledged and have access to support that best meets their needs. There are currently provisional gaps in specialist support services to meet the needs of

- Victims without recourse to public funds
- Ethnic minority communities
- Older people
- People with disabilities
- Adults experiencing child/adolescent to parent abuse

1.35 The current funding arrangements allow for provider autonomy, and enable an agile, needs-responsive model. There is challenge however in providing service stability and continuity due to limited long-term funding opportunities.

Perpetrator Intervention and strategy

1.36 In 2020, £1.220 million was secured to deliver a domestic abuse and stalking intervention programme in Sussex

1.37 The High Harm Serial Perpetrator Programme works with a cohort selected using police information. Referrals also come from other policing teams.

1.38 The programme is delivered by a multi-agency team to address multiple and complex needs.

1.39 There is an embedded police officer, which provides the capability to manage perpetrators who do not engage. The programme is based on 'Building Better Relationships', an intervention for male perpetrators of violence and abuse within (heterosexual) intimate relationships.^{viii}

1.40 Alongside the high harm perpetrator programme, an additional programme is being delivered by Crounston^{ix}. This is a 24-week rolling intervention delivered across Sussex called the 'Men and Masculinity Programme'. The programme challenges domestic abuse in all its forms and delivers a range of interventions specifically targeted at increasing victim/survivors' safety by challenging perpetrators of abuse to take responsibility for their behaviour. The programme is supported by an IDVA provided by WORTH services to ensure any victim risk is managed appropriately. The programme works on the belief that domestic

abuse is a learned behaviour and can therefore be unlearned. The programme is built to support the process of perpetrator change in order to protect their victim

- 1.41 The stalking intervention programme is the first of its kind in the country.
- 1.42 The programme works with high-risk stalkers, referred into the programme as a condition of a stalking protection order.
- 1.43 Victim advocacy is provided by specialist stalking service Veritas Justice.

Whole Family Approach

- 1.44 Domestic abuse, much like children's safeguarding, is not the responsibility of one single agency. Domestic abuse is 'everybody's business'
- 1.45 Child protection responses and domestic abuse responses can become separated – this can mean that no one is seeing the bigger picture and interventions can be unsafe, ineffective, and unsuitable.
- 1.46 Under the Domestic Abuse Act children are recognised as victims in their own right. Alongside adult victim/survivors, children need access to the right support at the right time to keep them safe, and to help them recover.
- 1.47 Perpetrators are often invisible within safeguarding plans, which child protection approaches traditionally focusing on the victim's ability to protect, rather than addressing the risk posed by the perpetrator.
- 1.48 Social care teams can struggle to meaningfully engage with perpetrators, reducing the opportunity to address abusive behaviour before it escalates.
- 1.49 In West Sussex we are operating the 'One Front Door' model. One Front Door aims to support vulnerable adults and children to get a swift and effective response.
- 1.50 The One Front Door (OFD) model aims to integrate pathways into child safeguarding and domestic abuse services by organisations working together to identify and safeguard vulnerable families at the earliest opportunity.
- 1.51 The OFD model utilises a multi-agency specialist team to identify the needs and risks to all family members at the same time, facilitating early intervention and pre-emptive action. In this way, a team of co-located expert practitioners from a range of agencies will work collaboratively to assess risk in all its guises, whenever there is a safeguarding concern raised about any family member. By pooling expertise and sharing information at the earliest opportunity, we enable professionals to get the most comprehensive picture of risk for each family member.
- 1.52 Between November 2018 and December 2021, SafeLives have been working in partnership with WSCC to trial an innovative new approach to reduce inconsistencies that exist nationally in the response to domestic abuse. The approach has been piloted in West Sussex and Norwich.
- 1.53 Connect is a model co-produced with survivors with lived experience and national domestic abuse services. The project offers innovative interventions to improve outcomes for individuals and whole families. They are:
 - Support for adults and children experiencing 'medium risk' abuse

- Support for adults experiencing multiple disadvantage
 - Specialist support for each family member where couples want to stay together
 - Specialist support for children and young people
 - Recovery support that promotes healing and resilience.
- 1.54 The interventions form a package of support, taking into account the needs of each person experiencing domestic abuse and offering a tailored response. The pilot included training and guidance for professionals, enhancing skills and supporting agencies to work together to create a culture of engagement with the people and communities they serve.
- 1.55 The pilot will close in West Sussex in February 2022.

Domestic Homicide Reviews

- 1.56 Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) were established on a statutory basis under the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004. Guidance published in 2011 was replaced by new guidance in 2016 which can be found here ; https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/575273/DHR-Statutory-Guidance-161206.pdf
- 1.57 A DHR is a review of the circumstances in which the death of a person aged 16 or over has, or appears to have, resulted from violence, abuse or neglect by a person to whom he was related or with whom he was or had been in an intimate personal relationship or a member of the same household.
- 1.58 The victims voice and lived experience is reflected throughout the process. The primary objective of a DHR is to identify lessons learned from the death, and to influence practice to prevent further tragedies from occurring.
- 1.59 The management of DHR's in West Sussex is led by the Safer West Sussex Partnership. An independent chair and co-author are commissioned, with a review panel of statutory and voluntary sector organisations supporting the process.
- 1.60 The Home Office quality assures the final reports and accompanying action plans prior to publication.

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021

- 1.61 The Domestic Abuse Act (hereafter referred to as The Act) received Royal Assent, becoming law on 29th April 2021.
- 1.62 The Act is a landmark piece of legislation, designed to provide further protection to the millions of people that experience domestic abuse every year, alongside strengthening measures to tackle perpetrators.

- 1.63 It sets out a statutory definition of domestic abuse and for the first time, identifies children as victims. A full description of measures with the Act can be found in Appendix 1.
- 1.64 The Act places a statutory duty on tier one local authorities relating to the provision of support to victims of domestic abuse and their children residing within refuges and other safe accommodation^x. Additional statutory duties are set out, and have been actioned, as follows:
- Appoint a multi-agency Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board which it will consult as it performs certain specified functions. In Sussex, the three Tier One local authorities agreed to form a Pan-Sussex Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board which will meet on a quarterly basis and have an independent chair. Please see Appendix 2 for details of the objectives, role, and membership of Local Partnership Boards;
 - Assess the need for accommodation-based domestic abuse support in their area for all victims or their children, including those who come from outside the area;
 - Develop and publish a strategy for the provision of such support to cover their locality, having regard to the need's assessment. In consultation with the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board and over 70 key stakeholders, a project team prepared this strategy to provide an overview of the needs assessment findings and make recommendations as to how the new burdens funding could be best spent to increase future provisions;
 - Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy;
 - As a minimum, West Sussex County Council, will report on the progress of implementation on an annual basis. The needs assessment will be reviewed and refreshed every three years.
- 1.65 In October 2020, a £6 million Domestic Abuse Capacity Building Fund was announced as part of a series of steps the government took to ensure local authorities could prepare for the duty proposed under the Domestic Abuse Bill. The funding ensured that local authorities could undertake preparation work ahead of the new duty. The fund was allocated equally across tier 1 local authorities in England, with West Sussex receiving £50,000. This capacity funding was used in part to commission a project team to complete a Sussex-wide needs assessment of accommodation-based support.
- 1.66 In February 2021, it was announced that following the outcome of the Spending Review, £125 million 'new burden funding' would be allocated to local authorities to cover the costs of the new duty for the provision of support within domestic abuse safe accommodation services for 2021-2022. The additional funding is intended to ensure that victims and their children are able to access lifesaving support in accommodation. The Government has committed to funding past 2021-22 but future allocations will be subject to the governmental Spending Review. The review is carried out by HM Treasury and will set out the plan for how public spending will deliver the people's priorities over the next three years. The amount allocated to West Sussex is £1,498,174

1.67 The draft strategy was published on the 26th October 2021 and can be found here: <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/fire-emergencies-and-crime/crime-prevention/safer-west-sussex-partnership-swsp/> a 10 week public consultation survey can also be found here, closing on the 19th December.

1.68 The final strategy will be published on the 5th January 2022.

Impact of Covid

1.69 Domestic abuse has been described as the 'shadow pandemic' of Covid-19 or 'an epidemic, within a pandemic'. Domestic abuse escalated alongside measures taken to control the Covid outbreak. In the UK, 14 women and two children were killed in the first 3 weeks of lockdown, the most in any 3-week period for 11 years. Two of these women, and both children, resided in West Sussex.

1.70 Between April 2020 and February 2021, calls and contacts to the national Refuge helpline were up 61%, pulling into sharp focus the impact that lockdown had on those trapped with their abusers. All activity across Refuge's specialist services increased significantly during this period.^{xi}

1.71 Research published by the charity Women's Aid at the end of August 2020 showed that three quarters of survivors living with the perpetrator said that they felt that they could not leave due to the pandemic.

1.72 In the first weeks of lockdown, WORTH services saw a reduction in referrals to the service. This is likely to have been a result of victims navigating lockdown measures, increased childcare responsibility due to school closures and experiencing fewer opportunities to safely access support.

1.73 Local service providers experienced immediate challenges around service delivery. In West Sussex, the provider market includes small and medium sized charities - some of the challenges faced included practical issues, such as a lack of IT equipment, making home working impossible, alongside the restructure of 'in person' services being delivered online.

1.74 On 11 April 2020, the Home Secretary announced £2 million to immediately bolster online services and support. By July 2020, £1.2m of this had been allocated to service providers.

1.75 A further funding announcement followed on 2 May 2020, when the Government pledged £76 million emergency funding to support vulnerable people. £25 million of this went to domestic abuse services, including £10 million to fund safe accommodation. The Government also launched a public awareness campaign, #youarenotalone, aiming to reassure survivors of domestic abuse that police and specialist services remained open.

1.76 All domestic abuse services, including refuge provision, remained open and operational throughout lockdown. During this time, new 'online chat' services were introduced by voluntary sector providers, and WORTH services offered extended hours to cover weekends and bank holidays.

1.77 WSCC launched a countywide campaign to run alongside the national #youarenotalone campaign^{xii}. This included a comprehensive social media campaign, highlighting differing examples of domestic abuse, including case studies using male, ethnic minority, and LGBTQ+ victims and service availability. The campaign utilised a variety of static and video digital messaging. The

domestic abuse direct messaging engagement videos have been viewed by nearly 23,000 people.

- 1.78 Alongside a digital campaign, information and awareness leaflets were placed in all food parcels provided to vulnerable residents. Posters were placed on 34 refuse vehicles across West Sussex, promoting the #youarenotalone campaign, with information and phone numbers to WORTH services, the 24 national domestic abuse helpline, and the MASH (multi-agency safeguarding hub) for any concerns relating to children's safeguarding.
- 1.79 Across Sussex, national helpline information was placed on all independent pharmacy bags, as pharmacies remained open throughout the duration of lockdown.
- 1.80 Nationally, the vital role of pharmacies was recognised, as the 'Safe Spaces' initiative was launched by UK charity UK Says No More, offering a safe space for victims of domestic abuse in pharmacy consultation rooms, to access help and support. This initiative has grown to include Boots, Morrisons, Superdrug, independent pharmacies, and TSB bank.
- 1.81 Locally, information was provided to all pharmacies in West Sussex to ensure that information on services in West Sussex was available.
- 1.82 In January 2021, the government launched 'Ask for Ani' (assistance needed immediately) campaign to compliment the safe spaces initiative. This campaign provided further national promotion, and utilised the establish imagery, ensuring that participating pharmacies would be easily recognisable. Training packages were made available to pharmacies to ensure that an immediate and emergency assistance could be offered.
- 1.83 Post-lockdown, WORTH services have received higher than average rates of referrals, and this has remained consistent. In October 2021, WORTH services received between 103-139 referrals into the service per week. In October 2019, the service had received 63 referrals overall.
- 1.84 Since the introduction of lockdown measures, WORTH services have experienced an increase in more complex and serious cases, with higher levels of physical violence and coercive control. For many victims of domestic abuse, lockdown has had an adverse effect on mental and physical health and has presented additional challenges in areas such as housing, and delays with courts, meaning additional and complex advocacy and support has been required. Lockdown presented a number of additional risks for victims of domestic abuse. These included, but were not limited to:
 - Reduced access to everyday safeguarding measures, and opportunities to seek help;
 - Increased monitoring and control by perpetrators;
 - Perpetrators using lockdown as an excuse to move in with the victim;
 - Exploitation of decline in victim's mental health;
 - Decline in perpetrator's mental health;
 - Increase in alcohol consumption.

Violence against women and girls

- 1.85 The United Nations rightly defines violence against women and girls (VAWG) as 'any act of gender-based violence that is directed at a woman, because she is a woman, or acts of violence which are suffered disproportionately by women, that results in, or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm to a woman or a girl, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.
- 1.86 VAWG refers to the following crime types:
- Domestic violence and abuse
 - Sexual offences
 - Stalking
 - Female genital mutilation
 - So called 'honour' based violence and abuse
 - Forced marriage
 - Prostitution
 - Trafficking for sexual exploitation
 - Exploitation of girls by gangs
- 1.87 VAWG has rightly become a national focus – following the murder of Bibaa Henry, Nicole Smallman, Sarah Everard, and Sabina Nessa, all approached in public spaces, and murdered by men.
- 1.88 Whilst the above cases have shone a spotlight on VAWG, they are not the only women to have lost their lives as a result of men's violence. Since the abduction of Sarah Everard on 3rd March 2020, a further 80 women have been killed where a man is the principal suspect.
- 1.89 The West Sussex VAWG forum brings together statutory and voluntary organisations^{xiii}, all working with women and girls, supporting the fundamental right of every woman to live free of the fear of violence, and every girl to grow up knowing she is safe. The aim of the forum is to increase understanding in society about the problem of violence against women and girls and its impact.
- 1.90 The Safer West Sussex Partnership has representation at local level at the West Sussex Women's Safety Group and Female Genital Mutilation Service Planning Group, and at Sussex level at the VAWG forum, and the Sussex Sexual Violence Steering Group and Harmful Practices working group.

Safer Streets Funding

- 1.91 In June 2021, the Government announced further Safer Streets funding, enabling local authorities and Police and Crime Commissioners to bid for funds to support projects with a particular focus on reducing VAWG crimes and increasing the safety of women and girls in public spaces.

- 1.92 After an extensive consultation period, including among professionals, survivors and the wider community, West Sussex County Council has been successful in securing a share of £976,781.
- 1.93 Working in partnership with the OSPCC, Sussex Police, Brighton and Hove City Council and East Sussex County Council, the money will be used to campaign, educate and train individuals to help support residents' safety in West Sussex and in the wider Sussex area.
- 1.94 A full programme of support will include:
- A whole-school, preventative approach for West Sussex educational settings to facilitate learning that underpins relationships, gender stereotyping and protective behaviours building on the Education for Safeguarding (E4S) programme.
 - Developing and Launching a Safe Space Sussex app which will allow people to find safe spaces, record sound and video and generate contact with a friend or family member.
 - 'Bystander to upstander' sessions targeted in key locations to support members of the public to feel more confident in recognising and challenging misogynistic behaviour in their everyday lives.
 - Running schemes to provide volunteers, such as street pastors, street angels and beach patrols with equipment to provide safe spaces and a presence in key locations to reduce offences. In West Sussex, these schemes will take place in Crawley, Worthing, East Grinstead and Billingshurst.
 - A Sussex-wide violence against women and girls campaign targeting men and boys, managed by the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner, in partnership with local authorities and Sussex Police.
 - Provision of eight deployable CCTV units for crime hotspot locations, which are considered areas where incidents are more likely to take place.
 - Three VAWG community navigators who will provide each local authority area in Sussex with a dedicated individual to support the Safer Streets programme in that location.
- 1.95 In addition, we have also applied to the Safety of Women at night fund, which focuses on preventing violence against women and girls in public spaces at night, including in the night-time economy, and are awaiting the outcome of this bid.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: The Domestic Abuse Act 2021

The act will:

- create the first statutory definition of domestic abuse, emphasising that domestic abuse is not just physical violence, but can also be emotional, controlling or coercive, and economic abuse
- establish in law the office of Domestic Abuse Commissioner and set out the Commissioner's functions and powers
- provide for a new Domestic Abuse Protection Notice and Domestic Abuse Protection Order
- place a duty on local authorities in England to provide accommodation based support to victims of domestic abuse and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation
- prohibit perpetrators of abuse from cross-examining their victims in person in the civil and family courts in England and Wales
- create a statutory presumption that victims of domestic abuse are eligible for special measures in the criminal, civil and family courts
- clarify the circumstances in which a court may make a barring order under section 91(14) of the Children Act 1989 to prevent family proceedings that can further traumatise victims
- extend the controlling or coercive behaviour offence to cover post-separation abuse.
- extend the offence of disclosing private sexual photographs and films with intent to cause distress (known as the "revenge porn" offence) to cover threats to disclose such material
- create a new offence of non-fatal strangulation or suffocation of another person.
- clarify by restating in statute law the general proposition that a person may not consent to the infliction of serious harm and, by extension, is unable to consent to their own death
- extend the extra-territorial jurisdiction of the criminal courts in England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland to further violent and sexual offences
- provide for a statutory domestic abuse perpetrator strategy
- enable domestic abuse offenders to be subject to polygraph testing as a condition of their licence following their release from custody
- place the guidance supporting the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme ("Clare's law") on a statutory footing.
- Provide that all eligible homeless victims of domestic abuse automatically have 'priority need' for homelessness assistance
- ensure that where a local authority, for reasons connected with domestic abuse, grants a new secure tenancy to a social tenant who had or has a secure lifetime or assured tenancy (other than an assured shorthold tenancy) this must be a secure lifetime tenancy
- prohibit GPs and other health professionals in general practice from charging a victim of domestic abuse for a letter to support an application for legal aid
- provide for a statutory code of practice relating to the processing of domestic abuse data for immigration purposes.

Appendix 2: Domestic Abuse Act: Local Partnership Board

Strategic objectives:

- To improve delivery across all agencies involved in supporting victims, survivors, and witnesses of domestic abuse so that they experience high quality services and are able to cope and recover from the impact of what has happened to them.
- To implement the new Section 58 duty in the Domestic Abuse Act, for local authorities and partners to establish a Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board for the purposes of providing advice to the Sussex authorities about the exercise of their functions under section 57 of the legislation.

Role:

- Take a multi-agency approach to delivering improvements for victims, survivors, and witnesses of domestic abuse as they enter, travel through and exit services in Sussex. All agencies play a crucial role in ensuring the 'victim and survivor voice' is at the centre of service delivery.
- Have strategic oversight and ultimate accountability for the delivery of actions that flow from the Sussex needs assessment to support commissioning of safe accommodation for those affected by domestic abuse, the Strategic Framework for Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse, community engagement work and the Equality Impact Assessments that accompanied the recommissioning of specialist services during 2019 and 2020.
- Ensure learning and practice recommendations from Domestic Homicide Reviews, and any other learning reviews in which domestic and sexual violence are a factor, are shared across Sussex.
- Include a focus on ensuring that people do not fall between the gaps in systems; collectively identifying pressure points and working collaboratively to ensure the system responds efficiently and proactively with a view to influencing structure and broader system responses to domestic and sexual violence and abuse.

Membership of the group

- Tier One local authorities (West Sussex County Council, East Sussex County Council and Brighton & Hove City Council)
- Sussex Police
- The Office of the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner
- Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service
- Crown Prosecution Service
- Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service
- Citizens Advice - Witness Service
- IDVA Services in West Sussex, East Sussex and Brighton & Hove
- Specialist providers of accommodation-based services for victim/survivors of domestic violence and abuse in West Sussex, East Sussex, and Brighton & Hove
- At least one person to represent the interests of persons who provide, or have functions relating to, health care services in its area
- At least one person to represent the interests of victim/survivors of domestic abuse

- At least one person to represent the interests of children of domestic abuse victims/survivors
- At least one person to represent the interests of Tier Two local authorities in West Sussex
- At least one person to represent the interests of Tier Two local authorities in East Sussex

Other partners invited specifically as appropriate by agreement with chair.

Background references/bibliography

ⁱ [Domestic abuse: how to get help - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/urls/domestic-abuse-how-to-get-help)

ⁱⁱ Safelives (2015) Insights IDVA national dataset

ⁱⁱⁱ Safelives Insights data reports WORTH services

^{iv} <https://www.femicidecensus.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Femicide-Census-10-year-report.pdf>

^v <https://kareningalasmith.com/2021/02/08/2021/>

^{vi}

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/natureofsexualassaultbyrapeorpenetrationenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2020>

^{vii} <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/aug/05/many-terrorists-abuse-women-research-extremist-attackers-violent-misogyny>

^{viii}

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/225199/glossary-programmes.pdf

^{ix} <https://www.cranstoun.org/services/domestic-abuse/>

^x <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-abuse-bill-2020-factsheets/local-authority-support-for-victims-of-domestic-abuse-and-their-children-within-safe-accommodation-factsheet>

^{xi} Refuge's national helpline – 'A year on from lockdown'

^{xii} <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/home-secretary-announces-support-for-domestic-abuse-victims>

^{xiii}

Lifecentre	Brighton's Women's Centre
Safe in Sussex	Connect
West Sussex Community Safety	Crawley Social Prescribing
My Sisters House	Healthwatch West Sussex
Relate	Probation Services
Streetlight	RISE
Yada	The Daisy Chain Project
Chichester University	Change Grow Live
Emerging Futures	Turning Tides
Western Sussex Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	Adur and Worthing Council Communities Team