

Lambeth Community Safety Briefing

Prostitution Briefing Notes

Background and overview

The Council has supported the development of the Safer Lambeth Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) strategy, despite the current financial climate, by committing to maintaining current patterns of provision in the borough and increasing investment over the life of the strategy.

Safer Lambeth produced first integrated VAWG Strategy in July 2011. Research, service user consultation and allocated funding underpins the strategy.

Commitment to a joined-up approach and integrated framework to tackle all forms of violence against women.

Lambeth previously had a more enforcement led approach to responding to women involved in prostitution i.e. ASBO however this did not have the desired effect or impact.

VAWG Strategy commits Lambeth to a new approach to how we address prostitution, and which is in keeping with the Mayor of London's approach to prostitution. See appendix 1 for our policy statement which is taken from the VAWG strategy. Policy statement underpins our response.

The Lambeth approach to prostitution, "the Lambeth model", has been identified as best practice by the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) and by the End Violence Against Women and Girls Coalition.

We have presented at the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on prostitution and global trafficking. The APPG is due to report to the Home Secretary in Summer 2013.

Lambeth is not thought to be a hot spot area for trafficking, however the Gaia Centre, our VAWG service, has a remit around supporting victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation. We are also rolling out targeted trafficking briefings and training across the partnership to ensure that we understand our role as a "first responder" and of the work and role that agencies such as the Salvation Army play. We are also looking at any emerging trends around forced begging, trafficking and prostitution as the Eaves report highlights as an area of concern.

Partnership activity

The focus of our activity is on addressing the demand side by targeting the buyers of sex while ensuring that the women involved in prostitution receive every support to exit. A partnership approach is crucial to what we do and we could not achieve alone. Key partners include Police, Council, Health, and Probation, Courts, Commissioned services, mental health and drug treatment services.

We take a four pronged approach:

1 Tackling demand

- Implementation of kerb crawler procedure (targeted joint funded kerb crawler operations) and kerb crawler escalation policy (see appendix 3)
- Media campaign "Thinking about buying sex? Thing again!" in hot spot areas and Brixton Tube

2 Supporting women to exit

- Increased use of “Inspectors authority” to drug test those arrested for prostitution to engage in treatment
- Funding of Trust (third sector specialist service) to deliver the Camberwell Green Magistrates Court Diversion Scheme, pro-active outreach, one to one work and group work
- Funding of St Mungo’s Chrysalis accommodation pathway-3 step model with 31 bed spaces
- The Gaia VAWG Centre-first integrated VAWG Centre in England for all victims of VAWG over the age of 13 years (females) and 16 years (male)
- Lambeth Prostitution Group (multi agency group to review most vulnerable/prolific individuals)

3 Prevention

- Earlier identification and improved response-Lambeth free VAWG training programme
- Young women’s scheme at Gaia Centre (focus on 13-17 year olds)
- Schools education and awareness work on VAWG
- Work in target services i.e. leaving care team and youth offending service

4 Community informed

- Media campaign “Thinking about buying sex? Think again!”
- Letters to residents in hot spot areas outlining our approach and providing information on how to report concerns
- Articles in council publications i.e. Lambeth Weekender and Up your street newsletters
- Safer Lambeth press release for launch of media campaign on International Women’s Day
- Engagement with community groups i.e. Josephine Action Group
- Briefing to Councillors in affected areas

Campaigns

Raising awareness of gender based violence is also critical to our approach. In the last year we have re-launched our two media campaigns outlining our zero tolerance approach to VAWG. These are the award winning and highly regarded media campaign on sexual violence, “Know the Difference” and our prostitution campaign “Thinking about buying sex? Think again!”.

Our prostitution campaign built on Know the difference campaign. It is aimed at sending a clear message to members of the public about our VAWG approach to addressing prostitution and our zero tolerance to kerb crawling. As part of the development we consulted with community groups, service providers and stakeholders to ensure the right message. The campaign has recently been adopted by Hounslow Council.

Our “Know The Difference” campaign has also been adopted by the British Armed Forces for roll out across the world. Both campaigns went live again in December 2012 in response to evidence that sexual violence increases over the Christmas and New Year period.

In May 2013 we launched a new campaign aimed at raising awareness of intimate partner abuse amongst younger people. The Home Office have given us permission to use their “This is abuse campaign” and this has been rolled out across schools, youth settings and other areas where young people go over the next financial year.

Outcomes/outputs

As part our VAWG strategy we set a number of headline outcomes/targets which the VAWG Operational group monitor on a quarterly basis. For prostitution these are:

- **Increase the number of those arrested for street based prostitution who are referred for a mandatory drug test through Inspectors Authority.**

In 2012/2013 we arrested 67 women and 100% were referred for drug testing (81% increase on previous year) and diverted them into our support services.

- **Increase the activity focused on those buying or attempting to buy sex**

In 2012/2013 we ran 22 targeted operations (83% increase on previous year)

- **Increase the number on of individuals moving on from the Chrysalis supported housing scheme for women involved in street prostitution**

In 2012/2013 fifteen women exited the pathway (50% increase on previous year)

- **Increase referrals to Gaia Centre**

In 2012/2013 the Centre received 1571 referrals across all VAWG strands

Police Targets

Clear agreed partnership policing indicators/ targets in the VAWG Strategy around prostitution which for 2012/2013 were exceeded as below:

- We delivered 22 kerb crawler operations
- We issued 102 kerb crawler warning letters
- We arrested 67 women for soliciting for the purpose of selling sex and drug test 100% of those arrested
- We arrested 50 men for soliciting for the purpose of buying sex

The way forward January 2014-Women's female offending service

We have secured funding from MOPAC which we will match fund to develop and deliver a women's offending service. Building on the success of the Gaia Centre model, the service will pull together our approach around female offending. We are clear that to reduce female offending we need to work on the root causes such as violence and trauma experienced as well as addressing the offending. This service will incorporate elements that are currently being provided across a number of existing services as well as developing new interventions.

Lambeth have commissioned Women in Prison and Eaves to deliver this brand new service for women at risk of and/or involved in the CJS. The service builds on the Corston recommendations (into female offending), the women's centre model and the Gaia Centre (Lambeth's integrated VAWG service)

This is an innovative service that will combine the work of Probation, YOS, prison in-reach and IOM and will deliver one referral pathway and one service from point of contact with the CJS until the end of contact. The service will start on 1 January 2014.

The aims of the service are:

- To reduce reoffending amongst women
- To divert women from the criminal justice system and from custody
- To prevent family breakdowns through custody or offending

To offer holistic support which addresses the needs that often drive offending including domestic and sexual violence/VAWG.

The service will include:

- A women only space to foster safety and a sense of community
- Pro-active case management including psycho-social interventions to increase empowerment and self-esteem and promote problem solving/motivation
- Prison in-reach and through the gate service
- Peer mentoring and full service user involvement in service development
- Childcare and crèche arrangements to promote engagement
- Links to specialist treatment services to develop women only provision
- Effective links to Courts to improve diversion
- Prostitution outreach

Appendix 1 Prostitution policy statement

The Safer Lambeth Partnership recognises street prostitution as a significant social problem in the borough, which affects women, families and communities. As with other social problems the Partnership has a lead role to play in tackling the causes and the impact of prostitution. The Partnership is therefore publicly stating its commitment to taking action on this issue, which blights the lives of many Lambeth women.

The majority of women involved in prostitution are residents of this borough who find themselves socially excluded and unable to participate in the life of the borough. Their views are not heard and their needs are not addressed. This Partnership is determined to take a proactive and radical approach to women involved in prostitution and to social exclusion. This Partnership supports the development of a strategic, long term approach through the Violence against Women and Girls Strategy and in the context of the Partnership's Objectives and other policies such as Social Inclusion, Equality and Community safety.

Violence, experience of abuse, homelessness, poverty and drugs are at the root of street prostitution in Lambeth. The Partnership absolutely rejects the view of prostitution as work, which merely requires legalising and regulating. The Partnership absolutely rejects the argument that prostitution is a civil right – no woman wants the right to be sexually exploited, abused and demeaned.

Women are often involved in prostitution because of their need to fund drug use and because they have no other viable or legitimate means of earning the amount of money which they require. There is overwhelming evidence that the money which women make in prostitution primarily goes straight to those supplying drugs and that women themselves do not benefit apart from ensuring their own and their partner's drug supply.

The Partnership is particularly concerned that it is the women involved in prostitution who are consistently blamed for the existence and continuation of prostitution. Women's accounts of involvement in street prostitution are harrowing and involve a range of abusive behaviour by men. The Partnership will work to ensure that men who use women in prostitution to be called to account and that the action of these men be recognised as anti social and consequently diminishing the quality of life of the borough.

The Partnership is committed to working towards eliminating street prostitution in the borough whilst providing support to, and opportunities for, women involved in prostitution and their children. It is the view of the Partnership that prostitution is one form of commercial sexual exploitation.

The Partnership will seek to minimise the harm done to women involved in prostitution and their families whilst also seeking to reduce the number of women entering prostitution and increase the number who leave. The Partnership recognises and acknowledges the complex issues surrounding prostitution and the need for public agencies to work together in addressing the situation in Lambeth. The key elements of this approach will be:

- Respect for women involved in prostitution
- Concern for women's safety and well being
- Recognition of the harm done to women and their families through prostitution
- Recommending that Partnership services take a non-judgmental and confidential approach to women involved in prostitution and ensure that attitudes to prostitution do not adversely affect the service which women receive e.g. child care, housing allocation
- Preventative strategy, particularly aimed at young women which recognises that young women are victims of sexual exploitation

- Concern about men's use of prostitution and other forms of commercial sexual exploitation
- Interagency working with other public, private and voluntary sector agencies.

Appendix 2 Additional information on our work

- **Lambeth Prostitution Group**- multi agency risk assessment conference (MARAC) style approach to providing protection and support for women who engage in prostitution and for those seeking to exit. Women involved in prostitution are no longer discussed by anti-social behaviour panels and any enforcement activity will be sanctioned by the LPG and have clear social inclusion objectives. The group is chaired by the Violence Against Women and Girls Programme Manager, Community Safety, Lambeth Council.
- **Implementation of the Standard Operating Kerb Crawler Procedure** – increased focus on tackling the demand side of prostitution. This will involve sending a clear message to the buyers of sex in order to ensure that they are fully aware of this approach. Those who persist in engaging in this abusive practice will be subject to both the law but also to other targeted activity as outlined in our Standard Operating Kerb Crawling Procedure. This approach will also include regular kerb crawling arrest activities led by the Lambeth Police Vice Team, and referrals to the Change course.
- **Chrysalis Project**. A key element in our response to addressing prostitution is the Chrysalis Project. The project is a stepped support accommodation pathway for Lambeth women who are/or who where engaged in Prostitution. We recognise that women who are working towards exiting prostitution require a more targeted and gender specific support service. In order to meet the needs of those involved in street based prostitution, and as part of our VAWG strategy, we re-commissioned and remodelled three existing accommodation schemes to create an integrated three step model to assist women exiting prostitution.

The Chrysalis project, which is a unique service to Lambeth, consists of 31 units of specialist accommodation and provides specialist services ranging from 24 hour on site support to visiting support in semi-independent flats. The scheme also has an emergency bed space which has proved invaluable in providing a quick time response to some of our most vulnerable women.

- **Increased use of 'Inspector's Authority' to drug test those arrested for prostitution** – if women test positive for either cocaine or opiates they are required by law to attend two treatment appointments- the aim of enabling/encouraging women to access treatment for their drug misuse.

Appendix 3 2013/2014 VAWG Training Calendar

April	
Date	Course title
18 April	Domestic Violence Awareness
24 April	Prostitution Awareness

May	
Date	Course title
8 May	Diversity Issues within Domestic Violence
16 May	Sexual Violence Awareness
22 May	Domestic Violence Awareness
29 May	Young People and Violence Against Women and Girls

June	
Date	Course title
5 June	Introduction to the Violence Against Women and Girls Agenda (<i>half day</i>)
11 June	Working with Perpetrators of Intimate Partner Violence
20 June	Forced Marriage and 'Honour'-based violence
25 June	Female Genital Mutilation (<i>half day</i>)

July	
Date	Course title
18 July	Domestic Violence Awareness

September	
Date	Course title
18 September	Young People and Violence Against Women and Girls
26 September	Trafficking - for the purposes of sexual exploitation (<i>half day</i>)

October	
Date	Course title
3 October	Prostitution Awareness
16 October	Female Genital Mutilation (<i>half day</i>)

November	
Date	Course title
7 November	Domestic Violence Awareness
12 November	Forced Marriage and 'Honour'-based violence
19 November	Working with Perpetrators of Intimate Partner Violence

December	
Date	Course title
4 December	Young People and Violence Against Women and Girls
12 December	Sexual Violence Awareness

January	
Date	Course title
22 January	Trafficking - for the purposes of sexual exploitation (<i>half day</i>)

February	
Date	Course title
5 February	Domestic Violence Awareness
27 February	Prostitution Awareness

March	
Date	Course title
11 March	Female Genital Mutilation (<i>half day</i>)
20 March	Forced Marriage and 'Honour'-based violence

NB. LSCB DV as a child protection issue and advanced skills course dates are to be added to calendar once confirmed.