

Violence Against Women and Girls.

How do we tackle it ?

Overview

Local Data and Trends

Current Work / Strengths

Challenges

Recommendations

Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG)

Is any form of violence and/ or abuse disproportionately perpetrated by men against women and girls.

It is deeply linked to women's inequality.

Examples (VAWG) include:

Sexual offences Stalking & Harassment
Domestic Abuse Intimate Image Abuse
Female Genital mutilation Forced Marriage
Exploitation Honour Based Abuse
Abuse of women and girls in online spaces
Coercion and Control
List goes on and on

Definition

Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women and girls, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.

UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women

Dispelling the Myths VAWG

- Women are most likely to be raped after dark by a stranger, so women shouldn't go out alone at night.
- A women who's willingly drunk lots of alcohol or taken drugs shouldn't complain if they end up being raped or sexually assaulted.
- Men of certain races and backgrounds are more likely to commit sexual violence.

Misogyny

- Sexism, objectification, and the restrictive nature of traditional gender roles all feed into a culture of misogyny that create a barrier to women achieving equality – and perpetuate violence.

Individual acts of sexism may seem benign, but they create a climate of intimidation, fear and insecurity. This leads to the acceptance of violence, mostly against women and girls.” -

- The Council of Europe

Epidemic

VAWG is pervasive and impacts communities with considerable and devastating consequences at an individual, relationship, group and population level.

Male violence against women and girls profoundly affects women's physical and mental health as well as causing substantial negative social and economic impacts and costs.

Intersectionality

Despite the universal impact of violence against women on individuals from diverse backgrounds, not all survivors receive equal treatment in society.

Biases ingrained in our social fabric unfairly shape perceptions of survivors, creating daunting barriers that hinder their access to care and much needed support.

Barriers

There are still deep systemic barriers which survivors with protected characteristics face when seeking help, from underreporting, fear of judgment, gaps in service access and delays in legal protection.

- Migrant survivors
- Mental Health
- Disability
- Pregnancy
- Younger victims and in Later Life
- Suicide and Self Harm

Global Insight Data

- 1 in 3 women (estimated 840 million globally) – have experienced partner or sexual violence during their lifetime. This figure has barely changed since 2000.
- In the last 12 months alone, 316 million women – 11% of those aged 15 or older – were subjected to physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner.
- 12.5 million of those were adolescent girls 15-19 years of age

National Insight Data

- National police data 2.3 million adults aged 16 and over experienced domestic abuse in YE March 2024. 1.6 million women and 712,000 men.
- Police recorded 851,062 DA related crimes in YE March 2024
- DA crimes make up 15.8 of all crimes reported by police
- Women continue to be significantly more likely to experience repeated, prolonged, and severe abuse, including coercive control and sexual violence
- Approximately 1 in 20 people experienced domestic abuse in YE March 2024 (NCS)
- 20% of children have lived with an adult perpetrating abuse

National Insight Data

- National police data reported 2905 offences were recorded involving so called honour based abusing year ending March 2024
- 84 offences involving female genital mutilation
- 172 offences involving forced marriage

Cleveland Insight Data

- 20,355 domestic-abuse related incidents and crimes were recorded in Cleveland. Highest of all forces within the country.
- Of crimes recorded, only 9% were charged/summonsed and the majority of outcomes (62%) had evidential difficulties where the victim did not support the action.
- Cleveland has a lower arrest rate per 100 domestic abuse related crime compared to national rates (Cleveland 37 arrests per 100 crimes, national 44 arrests per 100 crimes)
- 41% of cases that were discussed at MARACs were repeat cases, which puts the force at the 4th highest repeat cases rate in the country.

Cleveland Insight Data

- Across 3 forces within the North East, Cleveland had the highest rate of sexual offences per 1,000 population.
- In the latest rate of sexual offences per 1,000 population Middlesbrough rated at 5.3/1,000, the mean for the other LA's in the North East was 3.9/1,000, and the mean for other local authorities within the same IMD decile as Middlesbrough was 4.2/1,000.
- Cleveland Police 2024/25 recorded 8,689 cases of stalking and harassment. 42% of all stalking and harassment offences were domestic abuse related. This is the highest of all forces in the country.

Cleveland Insight Data

- Domestic Homicides 10 in 2022 1 in 2023 0 in 2024
- Cleveland police recorded 10 incidents of HBA and 24 recorded offences in the year ending March 2024
- 0 reported incidents of Forced Marriage or Female Genital mutilation

Local Service Data 2024

- MARAC 417 Referrals 280 cases heard 137 of those Repeat
- Children known to services at risk of DA 1127
- MSP 3177 Referrals 3290 IDVA Support of those 207 had protected characteristics 655 MH issues, 269 homeless, 101 suicide risk, 8 substance misuse 239 accessed counselling
- Safe Accommodation 350 Referrals
- 625 women and children received specialist support in safe accommodation
- ARCH SV Counselling 609 referrals

National challenges

- Labour 2024 manifesto included a pledge to halve VAWG in a decade
- No consistent definition of VAWG
- Lack of oversight of VAWG prevention spending
- Limited progress on VAWG prevention measures
- They do not know what works in relation to preventing VAWG
- Lack of good national data/standards for measuring public attitudes towards women and girls, misogyny and equality.
- Real term funding cuts, chronic underfunding/ short term

It is not about telling women and girls to keep safe !!!!

Institutions meant to protect must
demonstrate they are taking the
fundamental steps

This is not about street lighting, safety apps.

It is about predatory men and systematic misogyny

Middlesbrough Council

- We take the problem of violence against women and girls seriously and we work with partners and local communities to make women and girls feel safer
- Male violence against women and girls is everybody's business and we work together to better support victims and build services that keep people safe.

Strategic Oversight

- Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment 2025
- Domestic Abuse Strategy 2025-2028
- TSAB Adult Exploitation Strategy 2025 -2035
- OPCC Teeswide Perpetration Strategy 2025-2028
- Sexual Harms Pathway
- Workplace Domestic Abuse Policy
- Effective procurement of services that meets statutory guidance and meets needs of all survivors

What we do well !

- High quality accredited services for VAWG victims/ survivors in both community based and safe accommodation
- Effective local partnerships that mitigate risk and support victims
- Investment in prevention work Community Ambassador Scheme / work in schools and colleges
- IRIS Work in primary care and hospitals
- Survivor Panel
- Flexible Flee Fund
- Dedicated analyst and dashboard so we have a consistent way of recording VAWG information

Supporting Victims and Survivors

- **Protect and Support** Independent Domestic Violence Adviser/ Economic Support / Housing related support, Counselling Children and Young People Service,
- **Safe Accommodation** Refuge, Dispersed & Sanctuary scheme, Navigator
- **Hidden Victims** IRIS /Flexible flee Fund / Translation Services/ By and For Framework/ Immigration Advice

Schools & Colleges

Gendered expectations / Equality /Challenge socially constructed views

- 29 of 49 Primary Schools have taken part 3605 pupils

Explore elements of a 'toxic' relationship

Respect/ Boundaries/Consent/ Healthy relationships

- 6 of 8 Secondary Schools have taken part 2173 pupils
- **Social Action Projects**
- x 2 Colleges and University

Training for Professionals

- Mandatory training across adult and children's services so trained to provide effective, timely and appropriate responses to victims and survivors of domestic abuse.
- Middlesbrough LA Lead led on development of E Learning Guidance on MARAC which has been rolled out across partnership

Town Centre Partnership

- Safety campaigns particularly aimed at public safety and VAWG.
- Ask Angela initiative training staff in licensed premises, including an e-learning training package and poster campaign.
- Work with Colleges and University Students
- Safe Routes' project implementing a series of measures and interventions across key routes through the Town Centre to improve safety. This coincides with some other projects to enhance and improve safety in town centre environment

What are Local Challenges ?

- Demand for services
- Uncertainty for specialist services rising costs/ inflation and no central ring-fenced funding from government for community-based provision and uncertainty future of Office Police Crime Commissioner
- Local cultural acceptance of VAWG
- Economic hardship/ housing Crisis
- Increasing number of young people YP experiencing DA and perpetrating DA Intimate Partner and Parents
- Engagement from schools
- Online VAWG
- Low engagement with Perpetrator Programmes

What could Scrutiny Do ?

- VWAG Self Assessment toolkit
- Apply for White Ribbon Accreditation is a commitment made by workplaces to work towards transformational culture change in their staff culture, systems and communities.
- Develop VAWG Communication Strategy so targeted and sustained communication campaigns
- Investment in Primary Prevention such as
Funding for training and toolkit for teachers and professionals working with young men and boys - Beyond Equality – gold standard promote a shift from restrictive masculinities to positive masculinities

What could Scrutiny do ?

- Workplace prevention
- Assess public attitudes around misogyny and sexism
- Digital Storytelling with men's groups
- Targeted awareness campaign of "The Man Box" & in general how restrictive gender ideals hurt men
- Student and workplace VAWG champions
- Being safe online lessons and literature – highlighting rise of "manosphere" and link between pornography and violence and misogyny
- Pathway/protocol for online abuse

Any Questions