

Barnet Domestic Violence & Violence against Women and Girls Forum (DV & VAWGF) Terms of Reference December 2014

1. Remit of the Barnet DV and VAWG Forum

The Barnet Domestic Violence & VAWG Forum is a forum that will work to support victims of domestic violence and abuse and VAWG issues and aim to eradicate and reduce domestic violence and abuse and VAWG in the borough.

The Forum has adopted the following definition as a guide.

Domestic violence and abuse

“Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or 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. This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse: Psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional.”

“Controlling behaviour is: a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

“Coercive behaviour is: an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.” *

** This definition, which is not a legal definition, includes so called 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage, and is clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group.*

“Domestic violence” is part of the wider violence against women and girls (VAWG) agenda, which includes, among other things, forced marriage, honour based violence and female genital mutilation.

An adult is defined as any person aged 18 years or over. Family members are defined as mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister, and grandparents, whether directly related, in laws or stepfamily.

The UN defines violence against women as “any act of gender based violence that is directed at a woman because she is a woman. Alongside domestic violence and abuse, VAWG strands include;

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), Forced Marriage, Honour Based Violence, Prostitution and Trafficking, Sexual Violence and Rape and Sexual Exploitation.

The Forum recognises that there is a disproportionate impact on women and girls but that men and boys are also affected by these issues.

Overall aims:

To co-ordinate and develop quality services to effectively meet the needs of Barnet residents. These include direct service provision to domestic violence and abuse and VAWG, victims/survivors, perpetrators and their children, holding abusers to account and work to reduce the tolerance of domestic violence and abuse and VAWG issues amongst the general public.

The responsibilities of the BDV & VAWGF will include the following actions:

- 1.1 To work with representatives of agencies across sectors to prevent violent and abusive behaviour within intimate partner, former partner and family relationships in Barnet by working with victims and perpetrators.
- 1.2 To review the priorities for the BDV & VAWGF in Barnet and to make recommendations regarding policy and practice to the Barnet Domestic Violence & VAWG Delivery Board (DV & VAWG DB). To receive updates via the DV Coordinator's reports relating to the activities and outcomes of the DV & VAWG Delivery Board meetings.
- 1.3 To raise awareness and understanding of domestic violence and abuse and VAWG amongst the general public with the aim of reducing its tolerance of violence towards women and children and to educate and inform young people, to enable them to construct and maintain relationships built on trust and respect.
- 1.4 To identify gaps in service provision and make recommendations for the development of services in Barnet to improve the effectiveness of services in providing protection and support to people experiencing or affected by domestic violence and abuse & VAWG, including children in households where such abuse is taking place.
- 1.5 Develop and improve ways of addressing the behaviour of those responsible for domestic violence and abuse and VAWG, by means of enforcement, including prosecution, and support for behaviour change. To identify mechanisms whereby perpetrators can be held accountable for their behaviour; i.e. via the commissioned Perpetrator programme.
- 1.6 To ensure the voices of victims and survivors of domestic violence and abuse and VAWG are heard.
- 1.7 To offer support, advice and strategic direction.
- 1.8 To provide and share specialist knowledge, support and advice within and outside scheduled meetings.

2. Objectives

These will be achieved by:

- 2.1 The BDV & VAWGF has a common understanding and will work within the definition of domestic violence accepted by the forum.

“Domestic violence”

“Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or 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. This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse: Psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional.”

- 2.2 Ensuring that all policies, practices and procedures will not disadvantage or discriminate on the basis of race, faith, nationality, culture, gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, social or economic status, educational level or health issues.
- 2.3 Understand and communicate the role and responsibilities of the individual agency in the inter-agency processes and referral pathways.
- 2.4 Promoting and maintaining co-operation and joint action to increase awareness of domestic violence and abuse and VAWG in the community and agencies at events such as International Women’s day and November Month of Action of Violence against Women (White Ribbon).
- 2.5 Identify training needs for staff and agencies to develop a consistent response and approach and facilitate if necessary.
- 2.6 Identifying and feeding back to the relevant forums the creation of new services and preventative measures, to end the abuse of women and their children in the home.
- 2.7 The Chairperson to represent and attend the Domestic Violence & VAWG Delivery Board (DV & VAWG DB) meetings on behalf of the BDV & VAWGF. With the proviso that parts of these meetings may be closed, private and confidential to them.
- 2.8 Participate in the development of the Barnet Multi-Agency Domestic Violence & VAWG Strategy and corresponding action plans as appropriate.
- 2.9 Participate in the development of evaluation of the effectiveness of the inter agency approach, both in its direct impact upon the lives of women and its indirect effect through better co-ordinated provision.

3. Membership

- 3.1 The full membership of the Forum will be reviewed once every two years by the DV Coordinator.

- 3.2 Member(s) from agencies from the statutory and voluntary sector that work or have an interest in this arena can attend the Forum. All applications for new members will be considered if you live, work or study in the borough as an individual or agency. Then all members will complete an expression of interest (form) that should be sent to the DV Co-ordinator in the first instance to process.
- 3.4 Members will be responsible for cascading information to their colleagues.
- 3.5 Members will seek approval from relevant officers in their agencies to progress any developments in inter-agency working recommended or undertaken by the BDV & VAWGF.
- 3.6 The circulation list consists of all members and any other practitioners who wish to receive information about the BDV & VAWGF. The list is managed by the Domestic Violence Co-ordinator (DVC) who may add members on request.
- 3.7 Every member of the BDV & VAWGF has the right to place items on each meeting's agenda. Each item must be received by the DVC, who is responsible for co-ordinating the work of the BDV & VAWGF with the BDV & VAWGF Chair, no later than 14 days before the date of the next meeting.
- 3.8 The BDV & VAWGF is a non-decision making body.

4. Chairperson and Vice Chairperson

- 4.1 The role of the Chair will be formally written up stating skills required and the key accountabilities in a job description.
- 4.2 All Expressions of Interest for the Chair and Vice Chair roles must be put in writing to the DV Co-ordinator before the said closing date, outlining skills and reasons why they would like to be appointed.
- 4.3 The Forum will elect a Chair and Vice Chair once every two years, when the existing Chair and Vice Chair will be asked to step down.
- 4.4 Elections will take place for the Chair and Vice Chair positions. All nominees will present their application at the stated meeting and a secret closed ballot will take place to elect the Chair. The person in second place will be elected as Vice Chair. The DV Coordinator will lead on the count and appointment of the new positions. If the counts are equal then a 'lot' will be drawn to ensure there is a fair selection.
- 4.5 All members will be entitled to one vote per team.
- 4.6 The elected Chair must become a member of the BDV & VAWGF and work, study or live in Barnet.
- 4.7 The Vice Chair can deputise for the Chairperson in their absence of attending meetings, when delegated by the chairperson to do so. The Chairperson retains the overall responsibility and decision making powers to delegate as and when appropriate to the Vice Chair.

- 4.8 If the Chairperson resigns, the Vice Chair will automatically be appointed to the position of the Chairperson, until the next due elections.

5. Structure of the BDV & VAWGF

- 5.1 The BDV & VAWGF directly reports to the DV & VAWG DB who, in turn, keep the BDV & VAWGF regularly updated about their work. The DV & VAWG DB supports the work of the Safer Communities Partnership Board to align the work of DV and abuse and VAWG issues across the various partnerships, committees and forums. It provides governance and scrutiny to all the partners delivering on DV and VAWG work.
The DV Co-ordinator also works and links with the Specialist Domestic Violence Court (SDVC) Management Group, the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferencing (MARAC) Steering Group, and Safeguarding Children's Board, Safeguarding Adults at Risk Board and all other relevant DV Partnerships and reports back to BDV & VAWGF.
- 5.2 The Chairperson will attend the DV & VAWG DB meetings as a representative of the BDV & VAWGF.
- 5.3 The BDV & VAWGF will form time limited steering and sub groups for specific projects, consultations etc when required.
- 5.4 The BDV & VAWGF holds no formal decision making powers. It is a forum that will share, support and encourage good practice to support the overall aims.
- 5.5 The BDV & VAWGF will operate on principles of professional conduct, mutual respect, trust and co-operation at all times. Any differences will be managed internally and confidentially.
- 5.6 The BDV & VAWGF meets every three months.

6. Agencies/Organisations represented

- 6.1 Although this list is not exhaustive, member(s) will be encouraged to act as representative from each of the following agencies/organisations including:
- BAMER Groups
 - Children's Services
 - Community Safety Unit - Police
 - Connexions
 - Crown Prosecution Service
 - Community Groups
 - Community Psychology Services
 - Disability Groups
 - Domestic Violence and VAWG Specialist Agencies
 - Education Services
 - Faith Groups
 - Financial/Legal Advice Services
 - Housing and Homelessness Services
 - Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender Groups

- London Fire Brigade
- Mental Health
- Metropolitan Police
- NHS
- Older People Groups
- Primary Care Trust
- Probation Services
- Safeguarding Units
- Substance Misuse
- Vulnerable Adults Services
- Youth Services
- Victim Support
- Individuals

6.2 Each member should identify a nominated substitute to attend in their absence, to ensure consistency and continuity.

6.3 The Terms of Reference will be reviewed once every two years and any changes reported to the DV & VAWG DB.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

Progress towards the stated aims and objectives will be reviewed once every two years.

8. Code of conduct guideline

Members of the Barnet Domestic Violence and VAWG Forum are expected to act with integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and respect for one another. All members are requested to be at the meetings on time.