

# **Police Crime Sentencing and Courts Act 2022**

## **Serious Violence Duty**

### **Strategy**

#### **London Borough of Ealing**

# Foreword

## **Councillor Jasbir Anand, Cabinet Member for Tackling Inequality and Chair of the Safer Ealing Partnership**

Ensuring the safety and well-being of our community is our top priority as we strive for a more equitable Ealing. In the face of persistent challenges, we have dedicated ourselves to curbing violence across the borough, from addressing violence against women and girls to prioritising the safety of our youth. Through years of attentive listening to the voices of those affected, we have meticulously crafted plans and executed actions tailored to local priorities and the unique challenges we face.

Our developed approach in Ealing has included noteworthy innovations like the Spaces Panel, a collaborative effort involving multiple agencies to manage spaces in the borough with a history of violent crime. This innovative approach highlights our commitment to finding creative solutions and forming partnerships that go beyond traditional boundaries.

While acknowledging our progress, we recognise there is more work ahead in combating violence. I am pleased to announce the launch of the Serious Violence Duty strategy, a positive step forward in strengthening our collaboration with partners and residents. This strategy reaffirms our commitment to addressing the root causes of violence and emphasises our dedication to fostering a safer environment.

Enforcement is crucial, but we also understand the importance of focusing on prevention and early intervention. By understanding the complex causes of violence and tackling disproportionality head-on, we ensure that our approach is not only effective but also compassionate. In doing so, we place communities at the heart of our efforts, recognising their invaluable role in shaping our collective safety.

# Introduction

This Strategy document has been produced as part of the requirements of the Serious Violence Duty (SVD), introduced by the Police Crime Sentencing and Courts Act 2022.

The duty places several requirements upon local areas, including agreeing a local partnership arrangement to lead on the duty, agreeing a definition of serious violence, having consistent data sharing, analytical processes to produce a Strategic Needs Assessment, and production of a Strategy to set out how the duty will be implemented locally.

The Duty requires specified authorities to work together to prevent and reduce serious violence, including identifying the kinds of serious violence that occur in the area, the causes of that violence, and to prepare and implement a strategy for preventing and reducing serious violence.

The responsible authorities (also known as ‘duty holders’) in the Serious Violence Duty will be:

- the police
- fire and rescue authorities
- justice organisations (youth offending teams and probation services)
- health bodies (Integrated Care Boards)
- local authorities

Educational institutions, prisons and youth custodial institutions will be under a separate duty to co-operate with duty holders, but they are not duty holders.

This strategy takes account of guidance issued by the government, as well as London guidance, developed by the London Violence Reduction Unit, in collaboration with London Councils, the Mayor’s Office for Policing and Crime, the Metropolitan Police, NHS London and Probation Service.

The strategy sets out the agreed definition of Serious Violence for the borough, summarises the key aspects of the Serious Violence Strategic Needs Assessment, the partnership arrangements that have been agreed locally to lead on delivery of the duty, the areas of activity to prevent and reduce serious violence, and activity to engage with voluntary sector organisations, communities - including young people, as well as businesses.

## Definition of Serious Violence

The Police Crime Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 provides that, for the purposes of the Duty, serious violence includes domestic abuse, sexual offences, violence against property and threats of violence, but does not include terrorism.

In considering serious violence within their area, specified authorities should encompass serious violence as defined for the purposes of the Government’s Serious Violence Strategy and include a focus on issues such as public space youth

violence. The Government's Serious Violence Strategy sets out specific types of crime of concern, including homicide, violence against the person which may include both knife crime and gun crime, and areas of criminality where serious violence or its threat is inherent, such as in county lines drug dealing. These crimes should be at the core of the serious violence duty for the purpose of its reduction and prevention.

Whilst the government guidance sets out types of violence that should be incorporated within the definition of serious violence, there is no definition provided and it allows each local area to define serious violence.

It is important that there is consistency across London, to ensure that analysis of violence and the Strategic Needs Assessment are comprehensive and comply with the duty. The London Violence Reduction Unit has therefore collaborated with the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime, London Councils, the Metropolitan Police Service, NHS London and Probation Service to develop London Guidance to support local areas in how they implement the duty.

The London Guidance advises that Serious Violence for the purposes of the Serious Violence Duty in London, is defined as:

**Any violence and exploitation affecting young people under the age of 25, domestic abuse, and sexual violence. Within the context of these types of violence, it encompasses homicide, grievous bodily harm, actual bodily harm, rape, assault by penetration, sexual assault, personal robbery, threats to kill and violence against property caused during the commission of one of these offences.**

Domestic abuse is as defined in the [Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#).

In the London Borough of Ealing we have agreed to adopt this definition of serious violence for the purposes of the Serious Violence Duty.

## **Local Partnership Arrangements**

Within the Duty it is for the specified authorities to come together to decide on the appropriate lead and structure of collaboration for their area. The government guidance references the local Community Safety Partnership (CSP), or other partnerships such as the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, Criminal Justice boards or Health and Wellbeing boards. It also suggests it may also be the case that collaboration via several different partnership structures is preferred depending on the local context.

Of the statutory partnership arrangements, only the Community Safety Partnership has all the "duty holders" within its membership, and it is not restricted by the age criteria for children and adult safeguarding partnerships.

In the London borough of Ealing, we confirm that we are following the London guidance and the Safer Ealing Partnership, our local CSP, will be the lead partnership for implementation and ensuring compliance with the duty. This includes ownership over and monitoring of this strategy, which brings together and builds upon several existing strategies, as illustrated below:



## Summary of the Strategic Needs Assessment of Violence

The strategic needs assessment is intended to enable partners to identify current and long-term issues relating to serious violence and those most vulnerable to involvement in the local area. This provides a greater understanding of established and emerging serious violence trends, priority locations or other high-risk issues.

The strategic needs assessment has been developed following an evidence-based analysis of data relating to violence, as well as broader datasets including those in relation to deprivation and health.

The strategic needs assessment has looked at the critical areas of violence and vulnerability within the definition of serious violence, including violence affecting those under the age of 25, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

In assessing each of the critical areas, the analysis has looked at locations that have a higher risk of violence and temporal factors, such as the times of greater and lesser offending, including the times of day, days of the week and seasonal trends through the year. The analysis has also looked at the profile of victims and offenders of violence, in order to understand the risks and opportunities for prevention.

The following is a summary of the strategic needs assessment.

### **Violence and vulnerability affecting young people under 25**

There were 3026 offences in 2021 & 2022 within the scope of the SVD, i.e. serious violence involving at least one person aged under 25 (either victim or suspect.) Young people were involved as suspects or victims in 37% of the total of in-scope offences (3026 of 8120 crimes).

The type of violence with the greatest prevalence was actual bodily harm which accounted for 40% off all in scope offences within this critical area. Proportionally, 49% of all personal robbery offences and 51% of all in-scope rape and sexual assaults involved at least one young person under the age of 25.

There was no clear trend in offences across the 2-year analysis period, but wider information relating to all violence with injury indicates that this has been rising in the last year both in Ealing and across London.

<p>IN-SCOPE SVD OFFENCES</p> <p><b>3026</b></p> <p>involving at least one person aged under 25</p>	ABH	1207	39.9%
	Rape and Sexual Assault	571	18.9%
	GBH+	532	17.6%
	Personal Robbery	526	17.4%
	Threats to Kill	237	7.8%

Figure 1: Breakdown by volume of types of violence involving at least one person under 25 in 2021 & 2022

When recording criminal offences, the Police may flag specific elements of the crime if they are relevant. For the 3,026 in scope offences involving those aged under 25, the following was flagged:

- 20% (608) recorded as being domestic abuse incidents.
- 12% (363) involved a knife being used, threatened, or intimated (including 101 offences with an injury)

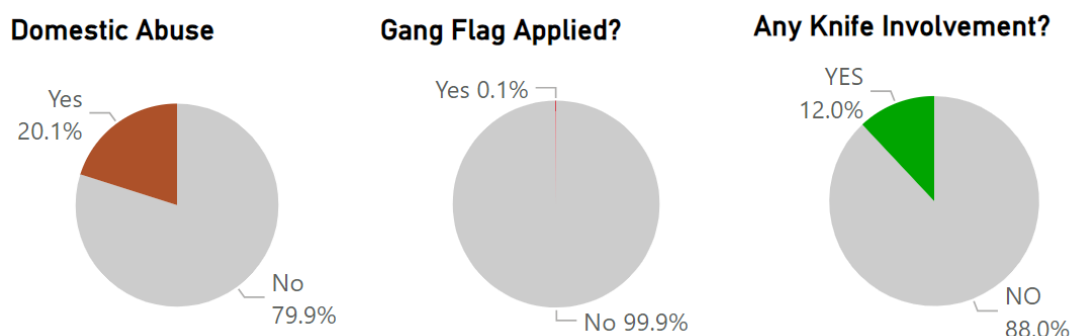


Figure 2: Graphs showing flagged elements of offences involving one person under 25 in 2021 & 2022

While the SVD places the focus on violent crimes that involve younger people, overall under-25s in Ealing make up 27% of victims and 30% of suspects in the types of violence assessed.

The three wards with the highest volume of serious violence affecting under 25s were: Ealing Broadway, Southall Broadway and North Acton – generally larger, busier town centre areas with multiple transport links.

Furthermore, males made up over 80% of suspects, but were only slightly more likely to be victims than females (54% and 46% respectively.) More suspects were aged 18-24 than under 18, while victims were more evenly split between the two age categories. For both victims and particularly suspects, black individuals were over-represented compared to borough demographics.

Of the 3,026 in scope offences, 855 offences (28%) featured **both** a victim and suspect aged under 25, including 194 personal robberies (over 18% of the total

personal robberies in the borough.) Robbery is the only offence type which tends to involve multiple suspects and there is a concentration of these in central Ealing.

### **Domestic Abuse**

There were 2,306 offences in 2021 & 2022 within the scope of the SVD which were flagged as domestic abuse (DA). The scope of the SVD means that it includes only 19.4% of all incidents/offences flagged as DA (2,306 out of 11,893 offences.) Over half of in-scope DA offences were classified as actual bodily harm (ABH.)

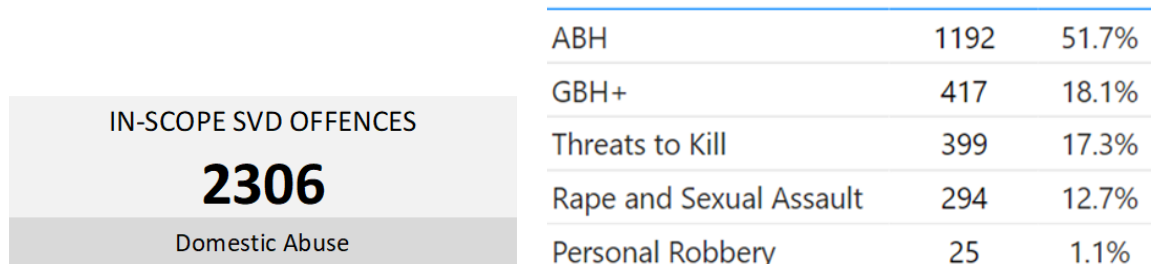


Figure 3: Breakdown by volume of types of violence flagged as DA in 2021 & 2022

There was no clear trend in the volume of offences across the 2-year analysis period. The longer-term trend for all domestic abuse violence with injury offences shows no directional trend in Ealing and a slight fall across London during the last five years, but early signs of a potential increase in the last few months.

For the 2,306 in scope DA offences, the following was flagged:

- 26% involved at least one person aged under 25
- 12 offences (0.5%) recorded as being so-called ‘honour-based’ abuse
- 5.6% of the offences (129) involved a knife being used, threatened or intimidated (including 41 offences where injury was caused by a knife.)

Domestic abuse offences tend to involve older parties, with most victims and suspects aged 30 or older. Most offences feature male suspects (over 80% of all suspects) and female victims (over 75% of all victims.) Across ages and ethnicity categories, there is a tendency towards homogeneity with victim and suspect demographics often the same.

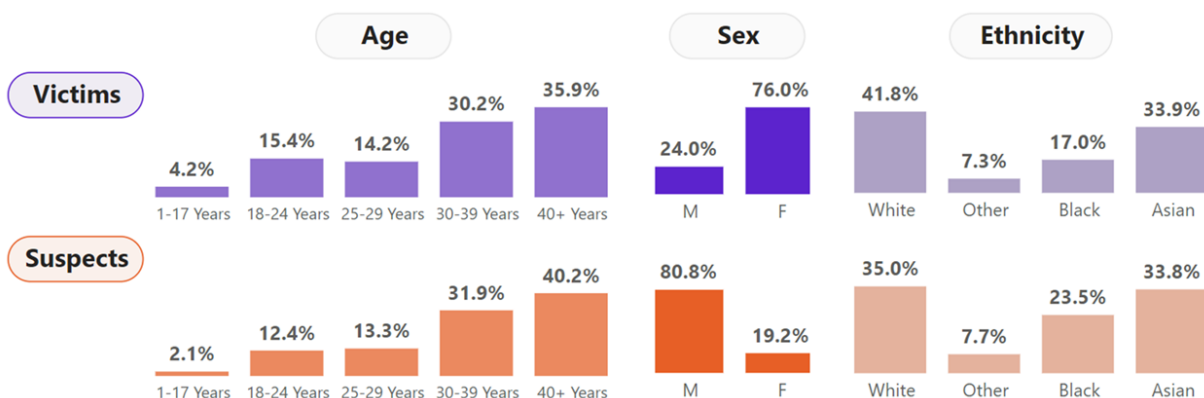


Figure 4: Demographic information of victims and suspects from the in-scope DA offences in 2021 & 2022

Almost two-thirds of suspects were either the current or former partner of the victim and a further 24% were direct family members.

The wards with the highest volume of DA offences are Greenford Broadway, Northolt West End, Southall Green, Norwood Green and North Acton. There is a strong correlation between areas with higher levels of deprivation and rates of recorded domestic abuse offences.

## **Sexual Offences**

There were 1,129 sexual violence offences within the scope of the SVD in 2021 & 2022. Over 70% of these were either sexual assault on a female aged 13 and over, or rape of a female aged 16 or over. A further 19% of offences involved the rape of a child aged under 16, or the sexual assault of a child aged under 13.

IN-SCOPE SVD OFFENCES			
<b>1129</b>			
Rape and Sexual Assault			
	Sexual assault on a Female aged 13 and over	426	37.73%
	Rape of a Female aged 16 and over	386	34.19%
	Sexual Assault on a Female Child under 13	98	8.68%
	Sexual Assault on a Male aged 13 and over	49	4.34%
	Rape of a Female Child under 16	45	3.99%
	Sexual Assault on a Male child under 13	33	2.92%
	Assault on a female by penetration.	31	2.75%
	Rape of a Female Child under 13	29	2.57%

*Figure 5: Breakdown by volume of types of sexual violence offences in 2021 & 2022.*

There was a general upward trend in the volume of recorded offences across the 2-year analysis period. Looking at the longer-term trend using the closest indicative measure (all rape offences), there has been an increase in reported/recorded offences in Ealing and across the MPS over the last five years, although figures up to Autumn 2023, suggest this increase may be levelling off.

Of the 1,129 total in scope sexual violence offences, the following detail was flagged:

- Over half (51%) involved at least one person aged under 25.
- 26% were categorised as incidents of domestic abuse.

More than 70% of sexual violence offences flagged as domestic abuse were rape offences, whereas for non-domestic abuse offences this is just over 20%. This data suggests there may be a relatively large number of unreported 'lower' level sexual assaults occurring within domestic abuse settings.

Sexual violence offences tended to involve older suspects (64% aged over 30) and younger victims (57% aged under 30) with far fewer suspects aged under 25 than victims (25% of suspects vs 46% of victims.) The vast majority of suspects are male (over 95%) and the vast majority of victims are female (almost 90%).



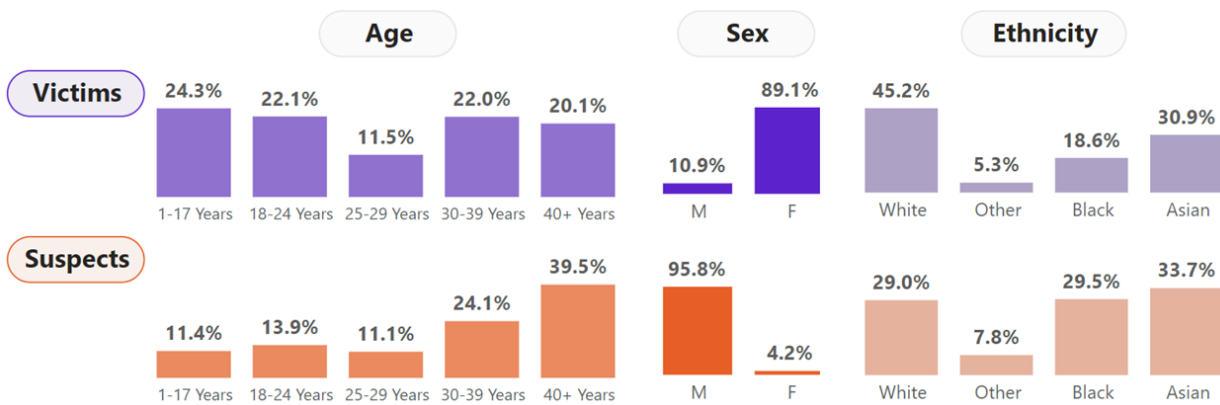


Figure 6: Demographic information for victims and suspects from the in-scope sexual violence offences in 2021 & 2022.

The relationship between the victim and suspect in the in-scope sexual violence offences is set out below:

- A third of suspects were not recorded as being known to the victim
- 23% were the current or former partner of the victim
- 18% were described as a friend, acquaintance or schoolmate
- 12% were a family member

The wards with the highest volume of sexual violence offences is Ealing Broadway, North Acton and South Acton. Other wards which experience higher offence levels were Southall Green, Southall Broadway and Norwood Green.

### Wider considerations

There are some wider considerations which impact the critical areas of violence set out above and may reflect possible drivers and/or causes of violence. Following consultation with partner services with specialist knowledge of broader factors impacting violence, below are some insights to consider:

**Pupil suspensions and exclusions** have increased year-on-year as we have emerged from the disrupted pandemic period. In secondary schools in 2022/23, there were 58 permanent exclusions and 1,767 fixed-term suspensions. The most common reasons were persistent or general disruptive behaviour, and physical assault against a pupil.

The **local substance misuse landscape** in Ealing is a complex picture. Ealing has a substantial opiate misuse population, with the highest prevalence and majority of those in treatment being in the 35-64 age group. The estimated prevalence of problematic alcohol users is higher in the borough than in London, and the unmet need is relatively high. Ealing also has the highest rate of alcohol-related hospital admissions of any London borough. Overall numbers in treatment had been falling in the post-pandemic period (when fewer people than normal were discharged) but has recently started to increase again.

The **population on probation** in Ealing is predominantly male (94%) with a proportionally higher representation of black ethnicity (28%) as compared to the borough's overall demographics. Over three-quarters of the population on probation is aged 45 or under, with those aged 26-35 being the single highest age bracket

(32%). The majority of offences were either violence-related (37%) or related to illegal drugs (21%).

In terms of **contextual safeguarding** and **children known to social care**, there were 2,400 children in need in the borough in 2022/23 and 297 children looked after, which represented a decrease of 9.5% on the previous year. Of the 257 vulnerability screening tool completions in the last year, 70 included a concern regarding serious youth violence, but this is rarely the only concern and often crosses over with other issues such as exploitation and gang association/affiliation.

In relation to **youth offending** and **youth justice**, 38% (20 of 53) of the Youth Justice Service (YJS) caseload are open to social care as either looked after children or children in need. In the 19 months to October 2023, 360 offences were committed by 136 young persons. There is a long-term trend with fewer young people being arrested now as compared to ten years ago.

## **Action to Prevent and Reduce Serious Violence**

In Ealing, we recognise that tackling both the root causes and instances of violence requires a partnership approach – led by and for the local community. Although the causes and drivers of violence are complex and challenging to address, it is not inevitable – patterns of violent behaviour and incidents can be predicted and prevented.

Our partnership approach is also informed by a ‘public health’ model of violence reduction. This model sees violence, not simply as a criminal justice matter but, as a public health issue with broad health and wellbeing consequences for the general population and those directly affected. Like a disease, it is contagious, with clusters of incidents linked by varying factors, and it is distributed unequally across the population, connected to underlying inequalities.

London’s Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) highlights the following factors of a public health model of violence reduction:

- Focussing on a defined population
- With and for communities
- Not constrained by organisational or professional boundaries
- Focussed on generating long-term as well as short-term solutions
- Based on data and intelligence to identify the burden on the population, including any inequalities
- Rooted in evidence of effectiveness to tackle the problem

Taking account of the Strategic Needs Assessment, the principles of a public health model and other relevant, existing local strategies, the local partnership has agreed the following strategic objectives for the next 12 months to prevent and reduce serious violence:

### **1. Prevention of serious violence and reoffending**

- 2. Support victims and those disproportionately at risk**
- 3. Minimise the impact of serious violence on the community**
- 4. Increase trust, confidence and involvement of communities**

The table below explains in more detail what these strategic objectives entail.

Objective	Further explanation
Prevention of serious violence and reoffending	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through education and access to a range of diversionary activities and opportunities alongside targeted interventions to those at most risk of committing violence.</li> <li>• Predicting, preventing and breaking patterns of violent behaviour and supporting repeat offenders to move away from crime.</li> </ul>
Support victims and those disproportionately at risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing coordinated, high-quality support and interventions.</li> <li>• Raising awareness of services available and reducing the barriers to support</li> </ul>
Minimise the impact of serious violence on the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By co-ordinating and scaling up partnership response to contain violence, better regulate spaces/places and provide reassurance.</li> </ul>
Increase trust, confidence, and involvement of communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reducing gaps in confidence between different groups through meaningful engagement</li> <li>• Empowering communities to strengthen their own resilience, building knowledge and capacity in the community to lead and collaborate on preventing serious violence.</li> </ul>

In order to effectively prevent violence, these four objectives also encompass a focus on victims, offenders, and locations as the three factors needed for an incident of violence. This means that whether it is prevention activity or activity to empower communities, our approach is focused on reducing harm in the context of these three factors (victims, offenders, and locations.)

The partnership has agreed a range of activity to reduce the risks of violence and vulnerability, in support of the strategic objectives. These are set out within a Violence and Vulnerability Reduction Action Plan. This plan contains information for

which disclosure would or would be likely to prejudice the prevention or detection of crime or the apprehension or prosecution of offenders.

The plan template contains seven different themes each with a set of mandatory actions as well as a menu of optional actions. The themes within the local plan are:

1. **Governance**- this provides an oversight of the leadership and governance of violence reduction locally, detailing the senior leadership structure as well as interoperability between Community Safety Partnership, Safeguarding Children Partnership, Adults Safeguarding Board and the Health and Wellbeing Board, to support a public health approach to reduce violence
2. **Analysis and Enforcement**- understanding of how analysis and local enforcement tactics are used to disrupt violence locally, including the Strategic Needs Assessment, monthly tasking meetings and using wider public health data
3. **Reducing Access to Weapons**- how partners are working jointly to minimise access including using Trading Standard initiatives and weapons sweeps
4. **Safeguarding and Educating Young people**- contains actions that include focussing on reducing exclusions, contextual safeguarding, support for children in care and care leavers, working with parents and carers and ensuring schools are safe and inclusive spaces
5. **Working with Communities and Neighbourhoods to Reduce Violence**- ensuring that local delivery works closely with communities to reduce violence including the Voluntary and Community Sector and in particular young people, who are most adversely affected by violence
6. **Supporting Victims of Violence and Vulnerability**- ensuring co-ordinated referral and support to victims and those who are most vulnerable to being exploited
7. **Positive Diversion from Violence**- recognising that children and young people should be offered interventions which help them before or to move away from criminality

In Ealing, a [Male Violence Against Women and Girls \(MVAWG\) strategy](#) was published in 2023 setting out the strategic vision to address abuse and violence experienced disproportionality by women with a strong emphasis on prevention. The MVAWG strategy considers the wider context of violence against women and girls, including behaviours or offences such as, forced marriage, sexual harassment and female genital mutilation/cutting.

A dedicated MVAWG action plan will be published in 2024, including a range of actions being undertaken to address domestic abuse and sexual violence within the scope of the SVD as well as the broader context of violence against women and girls.

## **Engagement with the voluntary and community sectors, young people and local business**

Local communities, the voluntary and community sector (VCS), local businesses and young people have an important role to play, in violence reduction. Our local violence and vulnerability action plan contain a range of activity that involves communities and neighbourhoods in reducing violence and the action within these should support the strategy.

In developing the local strategy to reduce serious violence, we have consulted with:

- Over 3,000 women and girls across two stages of the *A Safer Ealing for Women – Listening Exercise*
- With statutory agencies and VCS partners through a series of workshops and working group meetings

There is still more to be done in ensuring meaningful involvement of communities, VCS, and businesses in violence reduction locally. One off consultation exercises do not reflect the important role these local stakeholders can and should play.

Therefore, we are exploring options for how they can be involved in an ongoing and dynamic way, this could include:

- Working with the travelling youth forum or youth champions to co-develop engagement plans
- Creating a young person advisory group dedicated to violence reduction
- Creating a community resilience advisory group with membership including businesses and VCS.

### **Funding our approach**

Across the local partnership, resources are being invested in work to reduce serious violence and support vulnerability reduction.

Partners have all agreed to work collectively to identify and maximise resources by making best use of external grant funding streams and core financial investment.

### **Next Steps**

The Safer Ealing Partnership (SEP) will take overarching responsibility for this strategy as the lead for reducing violence in Ealing.

Our first step will be to update our partnership violence and vulnerability reduction action plan, focusing on bringing together the wide variety of violence reduction actions from across the partnership, as well as highlighting gaps or opportunities in provision that have been identified through the development of our strategy.

We will then work to develop a clear summary action plan of the things which have the greatest impact on reducing violent crime and offer the community the most reassurance. This plan will enable us to robustly monitor our progress, and ultimately

our impact, towards our overarching vision to make Ealing a fairer, safer borough for all while holding the partnership to account.

Actions will be delivered by partners across the SEP and short-term progress on actions and objectives monitored by the SEP's working sub-groups. Long term progress will be reviewed annually with an accompanying report.

The SEP strategy will be refreshed and renewed in 2024, highlighting the approach developed in this SVD strategy but, also encompassing concerns beyond the focus on serious violence which also impact the community's perceptions of safety.

#### **Date for review/annual review mechanism**

This Strategy document will be reviewed annually, with the next review due by 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025.