

Gender-Based Violence Strategy

September 2021

Preface

To be completed following consultation.

Awaited from Mayor

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1. Key Priorities

A Transformative Approach

The next ten years will see a radical transformation in Greater Manchester's approach to gender-based violence. Our aim is to lead a comprehensive, responsive programme of service delivery that enhances the safety of women and girls, while preventing gender-based violence, challenging the attitudes and inequalities that promote it, and enabling those perpetrators who want to change to do so. This Gender-Based Violence Strategy will be vital to delivering on Greater Manchester's Our People, Our Place commitments to being a place where 'people are proud to live', where 'all children are given the best start in life', and 'where all voices are heard'.¹

The ambition, reflected in this Gender-Based Violence Strategy, is to challenge the attitudes and social conditions that sustain or excuse gender-based violence and deliver whole system improvements in responses to those affected by it. These will fundamentally change the story of Greater Manchester over the next ten years, in terms of what it delivers with regard to safety for women and girls, gender equality, challenging misogyny - the contempt that follows from ingrained sexism - and holding perpetrators of gender-based violence - the majority of whom are men and boys - to account. Our strategy is informed by ten key priorities:

1. Working to tackle the attitudes and underlying inequalities that foster gender-based violence, while mobilising the public, employers, health service, Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector and educational institutions to work alongside the police and criminal justice system to protect victims and prevent violence and harassment.
2. Making it as easy as possible for victims and survivors to access the support and guidance they need, and providing high quality, joined-up victim-focused services across health care, criminal justice, and the VCSE sector.

3. Maximising accountability to victims and survivors, especially with regard to police and justice outcomes. Working with the public, especially young people to tackle the norms, attitudes and inequalities that enable, justify and excuse gender-based violence, whilst protecting those at risk of harm and working effectively with those at risk of perpetrating it.
4. Ensuring all frontline staff understand both that anyone can become a victim of gender-based violence and that poverty economic insecurity, and other inequalities compound people's vulnerability to victimisation. These other inequalities arise from discrimination in response to sex, gender, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, immigration status, physical and intellectual abilities, and physical and mental health.
5. Anticipating how the threats posed to victims are intensified by online forms of abuse, while building on investment in new technologies to increase reporting, open up access to services, and provide evidence in criminal cases.
6. Taking a Whole Housing Approach to reducing the risk of homelessness that forces many victims and their children to endure domestic abuse and increase the options for rehousing perpetrators to minimise the harm caused to victims.
7. Developing a culture of reflective learning that builds on the valuable work provided by specialist 'by and for' providers; enabling all frontline professionals to redress shortcomings in service provision at a system level and access the very best international research and evidence, so as to continuously develop best practice.
8. Providing risk assessment tools for all those working with victims and perpetrators, which anticipate the diverse and complex needs of many service users, and state of the art training in their application.

9. Working with employers, professional bodies and government inspectorates to set new professional standards and internal policies for tackling gender-based violence and harassment that respond to reports of it in the workplace, including abuse perpetrated by or against professionals working in the sector.
10. Measuring the effectiveness of our interventions and public engagement campaigns, to ensure they increase safety for victims, change attitudes and behaviour, and reduce the prevalence of gender-based violence and the gendered inequalities underpinning it.

Over the next ten years, Greater Manchester seeks to reduce significantly the demand for the kinds of crisis interventions the police and health service routinely provide when someone has been seriously hurt – what is sometimes called *tertiary prevention* - by investing strategically in *primary prevention* – actions to stop abuse occurring in the first place – and *secondary prevention* – early interventions to protect those most at risk.

2. Tackling Gender-based Violence in Greater Manchester

What is Gender-Based Violence?

In Greater Manchester we are adopting the term gender-based violence to convey our commitment to tackling the many forms of abuse, harm and violation that are directed, at least in part, by sexist expectations and which reinforce the sexual inequalities that most disadvantage women and girls. We use the term 'gender-based violence' to convey how the power inequalities associated with gender, in its many articulations, are exploited by perpetrators to reinforce gendered norms through the infliction of harm and the threat of it. This subjects women and girls generally, but not exclusively, to gender-based violence and abuse, including domestic homicides. Consistent with the Istanbul Convention, our strategy recognises that 'women and girls are exposed to a higher risk of gender-based violence' than men – that 'domestic violence affects women disproportionately and that men may also be victims of domestic violence' – and that 'children' – i.e. boys and girls - 'are victims of domestic violence, including as witnesses of violence in the family'.

Pervasive forms of gender-based violence include: domestic abuse and coercive control; rapes and sexual assaults perpetrated by family members, acquaintances and strangers; violence targeting sex workers; the abuse and harassment of women working in the sectors that support victims and respond to perpetrators; street and workplace harassment; stalking and sexual exploitation on and offline; the sharing of explicit images without consent and harassment, hate crime and misogyny on social media; frauds that involving tricking people into transferring money or sharing images under the pretense of a romantic relationship; and threatening behaviour directed towards women as mothers, grandmothers, sisters and teachers.

Gender-based violence includes not only physical assaults. It also includes emotional, psychological and financial forms of abuse and other non-physical forms of harm and violation. The 1993 United Nations 'Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women'² defined violence against women and girls as 'any act of

gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life'. The 2011 Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence³ – often referred to as the 'Istanbul Convention' – expanded the definition, requiring the countries that have signed up to it to recognise the 'structural nature of violence against women as gender-based violence, and that violence against women is one of the crucial social mechanisms by which women are forced into a subordinate position compared with men'.

In Greater Manchester, 36%⁴ of all violent crime reported to the police entails domestic abuse, the majority of which involves offences perpetrated by men against women. Focusing on the most pervasive forms of gender-based violence can, however, obscure other forms of violence that are also informed by gendered expectations. These include abuse within LGBTQ+ relationships, as well as abuse directed at men by women in heterosexual partnerships.⁵ Violence perpetrated by other family members – including, so-called 'honour' based abuse, adolescent to parent violence and elder abuse – also have gendered dimensions.

In Greater Manchester we include harassment and violence directed at trans, gender-queer and non-binary people who are attacked for not conforming to gender norms as forms of gender-based violence. In Greater Manchester we recognise that the trans population is also at increased risk of domestic abuse, not least because of the lack of dedicated service to meet their needs and overcome the stigma associated with it. We are committed to redressing this.⁶

Female genital mutilation is also a form of gender-based violence, typically perpetrated by older women against younger women in the service of particular patriarchal and cultural traditions. Sometimes it is only in the course of routine examinations, for example during pregnancy and childbirth that FGM and the harms caused by sexual abuse become apparent. Hence, it is vital that all our health care professionals are trained to recognise the signs and understand what to do whether or not the victim makes a disclosure of harm.

It is important to recognise that anyone can become a victim of gender-based violence. But it is also important to understand that gender-based violence is perpetrated predominantly by men against women and that other intersecting forms of inequality – many of which intensified during the COVID-19 Pandemic - reduce access to the support many victims needed to stop perpetrators abusing them. These include social deprivation, poverty, and financial insecurity, as well as disability, homophobia, structural racism and immigration status⁷. Foreign nationals often face additional challenges accessing services. These can include: language barriers; doubt that reporting to the police will bring greater protection; and a fear of deportation among those whose immigration status is precarious or irregular.

Gender-Based Violence in Greater Manchester

In Greater Manchester, the Combined Authority and all the partner agencies and organisations that work with it, are committed to working with an inclusive definition of gender-based violence that recognises the many forms it can take and the multiple ways that other structures of inequality render people vulnerable to it. The city-region has a proud history of struggle in this regard, having been home to Emmeline Pankhurst, the founder of the British Suffragette movement in the early 20th century; Manchester's cotton mill workers having opposed the exploitations of the transatlantic slavery in the 19th century; and the 1970s Campaign for Homosexual Equality sowing the seeds of reform that enabled the launch of Manchester Pride in 1985.

Today there are in excess of 2,000 organisations in Greater Manchester working to protect people from gender-based violence.⁸ These organisations bring with them invaluable specialist skills and expertise to complement statutory services that are more generalist to help safeguard people who are at risk of harm, and to help those who have been abused to find safety and rebuild their lives.

There remains, however, much to be done. In 2018-19, Greater Manchester Police received in excess of 46,000 reports of domestic abuse.⁹ Over the course of 2020, when the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdowns presented many new challenges, public authorities in Greater Manchester had to deal with an increase in high harm

cases. These high harm cases exposed the connections between domestic abuse, the abuse, neglect and exploitation suffered by some children and young people, and the role of economic insecurity and housing in compounding gender-based violence.

We know reports to the authorities are the tip of the iceberg, for in England and Wales only one in six domestic abuse incidents are reported by victims to the police.¹⁰ In Greater Manchester, 80% of the domestic abuse cases that are prosecuted result in a conviction,¹¹ which is higher than the national average. But the reality in Greater Manchester is that only about 1 in 13 incidents reported to the police are successfully prosecuted. This is why we are launching a whole-system approach, which fully utilises the expertise of the specialist and VCSE service providers to improve rapidly policing and criminal justice responses to victims and survivors and simplify access to ongoing health and social care.

In the aftermath of the pandemic, finding solutions to gender-based violence will be more challenging. Many children will have lived through the lockdowns with a parent who is being abused and another who is being abusive. Some young trans, genderqueer, lesbian, gay and bisexual people will have been confined to homes with unsupportive and abusive family members. Contact for children living between two households has become complicated in many cases, sometimes wilfully by abusers looking to limit their former partner's access to their children or to put those with underlying health conditions in danger. For some young people, access to teachers and other sources of support within their own families will have reduced. Some specialist service providers will have been unable to provide the support and places of safety they formerly did for victims and their families. For many victims, vulnerability to violence will have been compounded by loss of income and the threat of losing their homes. We know that women predominate in the sectors of the economy that were hardest hit and least protected during the lockdowns - caring, hospitality, sales and retail - and this, combined with lower rates of pay, makes it much harder for those trying to escape from some forms of gender-based violence.

The Way Forward

Hence, this strategy starts from the premise that policing and criminal justice can only ever be one part of the solution to gender-based violence. We must challenge and change societal attitudes and the structural inequalities that enable gender-based violence to proliferate. Changing public attitudes is also the key to improving justice outcomes for victims, for as the government's End to End Rape Review reveals, juries – that comprise members of the public – are susceptible to supporting rape myths that are used to discredit survivors¹². As a city-region with budgets and responsibilities that have been devolved from Westminster, Greater Manchester is in a strong position to direct bespoke responses to the challenges gender-based violence poses. It can only do this effectively though by mobilising the engagement of the general public to support victims and challenge perpetrators. It also requires services to be accessible to all who need them, and for these services to be as responsive as they can be to the needs of victims and survivors.

Over the next ten years, in Greater Manchester we will therefore:

- Prioritise preventative activity that address the causes of gender-based violence before it becomes entrenched and inflicts enduring harm.
- Equip schools, colleges and teachers to provide preventative education that connects with public awareness campaigns that appraise young people of how to access the support services Greater Manchester has to offer.
- Invest in a sustained programme of public engagement to change the ways in which gender-based violence are discussed and responded to in Greater Manchester, identify what people can do to tackle it, and highlight what services are available to those experiencing it and those at risk of perpetrating it. This will build on the pioneering work Manchester Survivors have undertaken with the soap operas, Coronation Street and Hollyoaks.
- Ensure that all aspects of service provision are responsive to the voices of victims and survivors and that their views are given due prominence through the Office of the Deputy Mayor.

- Increase the capacity and capability of our victim advocacy services through the development of a Greater Manchester Advocacy Standards Framework consistent with the Violence Against Women and Girls Sector Shared Core Standards developed by Women's Aid Respect, Safe Lives, Imkaan and Rape Crisis England and Wales¹³. This will be designed and delivered in partnership with victims, survivors and voluntary sector support networks and will be underscored by a person-centric approach with targeted, timely advice and support based on need. The office of the Deputy Mayor is fully committed to ensure this happens.
- Develop a whole-system approach to those who perpetrate harmful, unlawful and abusive acts, whether they are engaged in the criminal justice system or identified through voluntary, community or civil law routes. This will include intensive oversight and management of those sentenced by the courts.
- In line with our statutory duties, review and model the optimal level of housing provision in the region, so that victims do not have to choose between enduring abuse and homelessness, and that wherever possible, perpetrators are relocated to minimise disruption to those living in fear of them.
- Maximise the integration and training of health service professionals in general practice and specialist maternity, accident and emergency, mental health, and drug and alcohol services, alongside those whose primary work focusses on gender-based violence.
- Reinforce strong, multi-agency teams, which are able to learn from the findings of official inquiries, safeguarding, domestic homicide reviews, and other major serious crime reviews regarding gender-based violence. These need to be unhindered by a blame culture, and sustain the professional curiosity needed to work effectively with adults and young people who are reluctant to disclose the risks of harm they pose or face.
- Commission timely evaluations of interventions to protect victims and survivors and instil information sharing protocols that ensure that those

working with victims and survivors are kept fully informed about ongoing work with those who present dangers to their service users.

- Provide strong and effective leadership in partnership with our academic institutions, third sector and policy makers to ensure our Gender-Based Violence Strategy is fully delivered.

Greater Manchester will excel in tackling gender-based violence by mobilising the public to work with accessible, professional services that are responsive and accountable to the needs of victims and survivors.

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3. Changing the Story

Leadership and Partnership

As some of the best international examples reveal,¹⁴ changing the public story about gender-based violence from one that relies on enforcing sanctions against a minority of perpetrators to one that is primarily about prevention that is everyone's concern, requires considerable skill, enduring leadership, and most critically, the commitment of the many dedicated people who work to support victims and challenge offenders. We are committed to changing the story in Greater Manchester so that gender-based violence is no longer a prevalent social problem for future generations.

Devolution has provided Greater Manchester with an opportunity to make this change, to ensure our services are integrated around the people they serve and the places they live. The Greater Manchester Model¹⁵ is enabling us to refocus on prevention, developing new models of support and sharing information across the public sector to design and deliver better services through place-based teams, with co-located professionals from all relevant public services working together. But it also enables us to develop a more radical vision that asks what we can do to stop gender-based violence, to enable those who perpetrate it to change and to value the expertise of those who have endured it. A transformation in our services is needed so that we move away from public services that screen people out to manage demand, only to later have to respond to urgent needs and problems disclosed by victims, offenders and their children. We need a public service model that proactively responds according to what matters to the public, intervenes promptly, and recognises strengths that we all can build upon.

In compiling this strategy, we have also drawn inspiration from some of the best national examples,¹⁶ which invite us to consider the whole picture when tackling gender-based violence. This means engaging holistically with victims and their families, involving whole communities in which they and perpetrators live to challenge abusive behaviour, offering victims networks of support, and presenting young people, especially young men, with the guidance and opportunities needed to develop in ways that do not rely on the performance of coercive masculinities. This

kind of transformative change hinges upon being able to bring Greater Manchester together - including the public, professionals, employers, journalists, and politicians to change what we say and do about gender-based violence.

To achieve this change, the leadership of Greater Manchester's approach to reducing gender-based violence over the next ten years will be defined by:

- Accountability to victims and survivors, including children and young people, and their active participation in the city-region's programme of change.
- Sustained engagement with the public, schools, colleges, universities, and employers.
- Recognition of the vital roles played by those working in frontline health and social care occupations and specialist, VCSE, 'by and for' service providers, alongside community groups, employers, schools, colleges and universities, in protecting survivors from repeat victimisation.
- Openness about the demands the criminal justice system places on victims and its capacities to guarantee safety and justice.
- A clear, coordinated, and integrated housing policy that ensures that most victims can stay in their own home, or when not appropriate to do so, that they are rehoused swiftly within Greater Manchester while also maintaining their tenancy rights.
- Evaluating interventions and ensuring that the views of service users are fully incorporated into our measures of success.

From 2021, we will establish a new Gender-Based Violence Board with the core task of developing and overseeing the implementation of this strategic plan and establishing key milestones to be achieved over the next ten years. The Board will include victims and survivors with lived experience of gender-based violence as co-chairs, action plan leads and members. They will reflect the diversity of the communities, victims and survivors come from and experiences they have. The Deputy Mayor will co-chair the Board with a survivor of gender-based violence, appointed annually, and tasked with overseeing the development of core action

plans and championing the rights of victims. The Co-chairs will be responsible for the coordination and implementation of the Gender-Based Violence Strategy, and will draw up a roadmap that establishes an incremental programme of change that identifies key milestones.

The Board will be supported by operational leads from across Greater Manchester to ensure all key priorities are met. The Board will provide a forum that enables young people's voices, including the work of the Youth Combined Authority, to be heard alongside those of adult survivors and those organisations that represent them. The Board will work in tandem with the Greater Manchester Women and Girls Equality Panel¹⁷ and the Racial Equality Panel,¹⁸ and be intrinsic to meeting their strategic objectives.

Skilled leadership that is responsive to victims and survivors, and fully conversant with their justice interests as well as the challenges faced by professionals, will enable us to keep victim safety paramount in all that we do and ensure those organisations with greatest capacity to deliver safety and justice are accountable to the people they serve. We know that radical improvements to the criminal justice response to victims and survivors are urgent. This is why, in light of the HMICFRS inspection report on the service provided to victims of crime by Greater Manchester Police, a first priority for the Gender Abuse Board will be to review how domestic abuse cases are managed by the force. The review will:

1. Ensure that the 'Think Victim' campaign is fully embedded within GMP and further explore how to improve outcomes for victims in the criminal justice system, ensuring they are offered the very best service, kept informed, treated with dignity, listened to, and understood.
2. Investigate how case management can be improved by frontline, investigating, and senior police officers, and what can be done to reduce the number of reports to Greater Manchester Police that result in no further action.

3. Take account of both budgetary pressures on Greater Manchester Police and the wider cost of repeat victimisation to victims and service providers across the sector.

A second core priority will be to integrate responses across criminal justice, health, social care, and specialist, VCSE, 'by and for' service providers. Sections 8 and 9 of this strategy outline our plans to secure this change.

A bespoke plan will be drawn up to address how we effectively meet the needs of male victims and survivors. This will cover the full range of acts of violence, abuse and exploitation in which men or boys are the victims, and in which their gender, sexuality and/or intimate relationships are motivating or prevailing factors. The Board will be asked to consider how best to devise further bespoke plans that address the distinctive needs of disabled people, older people, sex workers and ethnic minority communities.

As a city-region with a proud history of tackling inequalities and the capacity to innovate that our devolution deal has enabled, Greater Manchester Combined Authority is in a strong position to influence national debate about gender-based violence and to lobby for national reform. In this capacity, Greater Manchester will:

- Lobby for legislative change that ensures that perpetrator information is appropriately shared to reduce further risk to victims.
- Work with government inspectorates to set new professional standards, including, for example, investigating reports of gender-based violence perpetrated by public sector professionals.
- Endorse the Domestic Abuse Commissioner's call for 'firewall' services to protect migrant women who are victims of gender-based violence from criminalisation and deportation.
- Ensure that the newly configured Probation Service in the city-region is at the forefront of new developments in working safely and effectively with perpetrators.

Building on Strengths

The new Greater Manchester Gender-Based Violence Board will play a central role in consolidating, coordinating and bolstering good practice across all the sectors that work to tackle gender-based violence in the city-region. The Board will also foster a supportive environment which encourages reflective practice and debate amongst practitioners, researchers, and the general public, so that mistakes are translated into a culture of continuous improvement and staff development, instead of one that resists change through fear of blame. This is why the Board will:

- Oversee the incremental development of the public engagement strategy and ensure all interventions are consistent with its messaging.
- Invest in pilot projects that can scope the potential to reduce the demand for crisis and criminal justice responses by prioritising primary prevention and early intervention.
- Develop a programme of staff development that works across the sector to help address common challenges and foster collaborative working that provides a seamless service for victims from the first point of disclosure.
- Review our commissioning arrangements for rape and sexual assault services with the aim of making it easier for all victims to access support and reduce waiting times.

We will take every opportunity to consolidate links between voluntary and statutory service providers, those working with victims and survivors, those working with children and young people and those working with offenders. This will ensure that Greater Manchester upskills those working with perpetrators by sharing experience and training across police, probation and third sector organisations. It will also work to consolidate links between organisations working with ethnic minority communities and LGBTQ+ with organisations that work specifically with women or with men.

Where it is evidenced that we are not meeting the needs of survivors, particularly those from minoritised or marginalised populations, we will be advised by groups that are run by and for survivors from those populations. Our strategy aims to reduce the

pressures on organisations that are at the forefront of delivering specialist services, but which are often overburdened with the pressures of competitive tendering. In order to better to support frontline services, Greater Manchester will enroll universities and colleges, employers and specialist, VCSE, 'by and for' service providers in helping to address common and pressing challenges in tackling gender-based violence. These include:

- The need routinely to upskill all health, education, social care, and criminal justice personnel in the implications of new criminal and civil legislation so they understand the powers available to protect victims from further abuse and disrupt perpetrators from continuing to intimidate them. There will be an immediate focus on the Domestic Abuse Act and the provisions it makes for dealing with coercive control and non-fatal strangulation to prevent future harm and homicides among women who are sexually and domestically assaulted. We will ensure sector-wide recognition of the requirement made in the Domestic Abuse Act to recognise children as victims of domestic abuse in their own right.
- The need to understand how gender intersects with other inequalities that disadvantage people according to their ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, physical and intellectual abilities, physical and mental health.
- The need for greater training and risk assessment tools for working with both victims and perpetrators who have learning difficulties and those who identify as autistic or neurodivergent, i.e. who consider themselves to think or feel differently to the majority of people for developmental reasons.

Innovation, Research and Evaluation

The nature of gender-based violence is rapidly changing as it manifests through new technologies, whether that be through online stalking and threatening behaviour, cyberbullying, misogyny and homophobia, the sharing of explicit images, revenge

porn, romance frauds, or the manufacturing of evidence against victims. This is why we will ensure that any legal reforms following the review of the Communications Offences are implemented swiftly across our city-region.¹⁹ We know that these behaviours can cause victims acute psychological distress, and this is why we are investing in services that support well-being and address mental health issues in response to this. We know also that we will need to find new strategies for engaging with younger people who perpetrate online abuses, many of whom will be completely unknown to the criminal justice system. We will be actively engaging in national debates and international research to redress this.

New technologies, however, also offer some solutions to the problems of tackling gender-based violence. They can make it easier for people to access services and to understand what is available to them. They can also create systems that improve information sharing amongst professionals and empower victims by ensuring that they have access to data stored about them and the choices available to them. Over the next ten years, we are committed to developing online systems that enable victims to report abuse from wherever they are, and which minimise the need for them to share their stories multiple times to the various professionals who are working with them. This will require us to develop common protocols and assessment tools that are shared across health and social care, criminal justice and third sector settings.

It is crucial that we know what is and is not working to reduce gender-based violence in Greater Manchester. Service providers need to know when their interventions are not working as intended, or when support services are adding to the pressures on victims. It is crucial that we support research and evaluation of our interventions and that such research is designed and implemented in dialogue with victims and survivors and received in the spirit of openness and supportiveness by commissioners, chief executives, managers, and frontline professionals, as far as possible. At the same time, we need to recognise that the causes of gender-based violence are embedded not only in pervasive attitudes and values that cross generations, but also in the deep cultural inequalities that reach beyond Greater Manchester. We need also to recognise that those who perpetrate harms often have very complex problems of their own that are not always amenable to a 'quick fix'.

In Greater Manchester, we are conversant with the challenges involved in measuring progress in tackling gender-based violence, especially in determining whether interventions designed to prevent it have been effective. Over the next ten years, we will therefore be monitoring how prevalence rates for gender-based violence and abuse change in Greater Manchester, how they compare with the national picture, and how they are shaped by rates of reporting and public awareness. We will also look closely at how patterns of gender inequality change across our city-regions, how these relate to rates of pay for men and women, parental involvement in childcare arrangements, and access to advice, housing, and healthcare. Monitoring these trends will enable us to develop a better understanding of how specific and targeted interventions are working and situate the perspectives of victims and survivors in the wider contexts through which vulnerabilities are experienced and professional responses are received.

More specifically, we are fully committed to:

- Evaluating how our public engagement campaigns are received, to check that they are delivering greater understanding and improved attitudes and to recognise where they generate counter-responses, unintended consequences, or unforeseen demand on services.
- Closely monitoring the findings of research²⁰ on the impact of the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme, sometimes referred to as Clare's Law, that provides those living with someone whom they have concerns about with a 'right to ask' and a 'right to know' if that person has committed domestic abuse offences before.
- Fostering dialogue between academics, policymakers, practitioners, victims, and survivors to clarify what success in the short, medium and long term looks like, and how it should be measured.
- Establishing a quality assurance and capability inspection process, which will consider the effectiveness and efficiency of how services are provided. This will entail reviewing what works, why it works, and establishing the most effective balance between therapeutic, criminal justice and other support-based service provision.

- Working with university partners to ensure all our interventions are informed by the best international research and supporting applications for projects that help identify service needs and subject our interventions to evaluations which give voice to the perspectives of the victims and survivors we serve.

Leadership of the gender abuse strategy in Greater Manchester will be distinguished by accountability to adult victims and survivors and young people, a sensitivity to the challenges faced by frontline professionals, and a commitment to evidence –based practice that ensures all interventions are effective at reducing gender-based violence and gendered inequalities.

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4. Mobilising Greater Manchester

Engaging the Public

The public, universities, colleges and employers have key roles to play in tackling gender inequality, homophobia and transphobia, sexism and the objectification of women and girls. In the United Kingdom, victims are more likely to disclose domestic abuse to a friend or family member (48%) or a neighbour (14%) than a professional, including the police.²¹ Preventing and addressing gender-based violence therefore requires a concerted public effort, in which everyone understands that they can play a role. It is critical that the public are able to recognise the signs of abuse, feel confident in talking to victims, and know which organisations they can call for support, including support with challenging those who present an ongoing threat. The public need to feel empowered and safe to do so, in order to support the sector in challenging perpetrators and potential perpetrators.

Over the next two years, Greater Manchester has committed to a coordinated strategy of public engagement that extends the reach of central government campaigning and builds on the preventative education we have been supporting in schools. Critically, our city-region campaign will be informed by the perspectives of victims and survivors, and reflect the diversity of experiences within these groups. Our campaigns will go beyond raising awareness and signposting services. They will actively engage the public in dialogue, opening debate about how young men and boys can contribute to reducing the prevalence of gender-based violence and abuse,²² how the public should respond to signs, and what can be done to encourage perpetrators to see themselves as such and seek help to change. We will:

- Develop a series of targeted campaigns to highlight the various forms gender-based violence can take, as well as the attitudes and structural inequalities that give rise to it.
- Produce a bespoke campaign directed at boys and young men that addresses the intricacies of developing trust in intimate relationships, without being controlling.

- Ensure this messaging is consistent with commissioned interventions to support victims and tackle perpetrators.
- Co-work with schools, colleges, organisations working with young people, and directly with young people themselves to ensure key messages are actively engaged with and understood by the audiences they are aimed at.
- Engage with White Ribbon²³ Champions, Expect Respect Advocates and Women’s Aid Ask Me Ambassadors, as well as international research to identify innovative ways of encouraging men and boys to challenge gender inequality and gender-based violence.
- Monitor and evaluate the impact of all public engagement on the progression to gender equality for women and girls living in Greater Manchester.
- Expand existing signposting to services and ensure that services are prepared for any increase in demand generated by increased public awareness.

In Greater Manchester, we also know that our public spaces are not always safe for women. Part of our city-region public awareness campaign will be calling to attention the harm caused by what is often considered to be low-level, sexist behaviour (for example, wolf-whistling, catcalling, stalking, and harassing women and girls in public spaces) and verbal abuse towards people on the basis of their appearance, dress, sexuality, cultural values or non-conformity to gender norms.

“Gender-Based Violence in public is quite normalised and more should be done to prevent people feeling unsafe when they go out.” – Quote from Year 9 school student from a focus group during public consultation.

National research reveals higher rates of domestic abuse victimisation among women from Christian, Hindu, and Muslim faiths than among women of no religion.²⁴ Over the next ten years we will develop targeted public engagement campaigns with our faith communities and through our multi-faith forums to ensure awareness is raised about what can be done to tackle gender-based violence and what help is available.

In addition, we will:

- Introduce an emergency contact system for passengers using public transport to alert the police discreetly if they are concerned for their safety or that of others.
- Support Local Authorities across Greater Manchester in seeking public space protection orders that protect women and girls from harassment and abuse. This will include working with the Greater Manchester Night Time Economy Adviser to implement an action plan that tackles gender-based violence in public places and commercial settings.
- Support campaigns to enhance the safety of women in public places, such as Reclaim the Night, which raises awareness of violence against women and girls through an annual night-time march across Greater Manchester and builds community support for our weeks of action against gender-based violence.

Working with Universities and Colleges

Greater Manchester is fortunate to be home to five higher education institutions²⁵ and 25 further education and sixth form colleges, in addition to those embedded in secondary schools. The city-region's colleges provide further education and training to over 50,000 young people annually, while a population of over 100,000 are studying for degrees in our universities each year. Many of these students go onto work and lead in the city-region after they graduate.

International research reveals that students are the population most likely to be persuaded to take action when they witness someone being subjected to gender-based violence.²⁶ Universities and colleges thus have a vital role to play in ensuring

Greater Manchester benefits from a workforce confident in its capacity to tackle gender inequalities and gender-based violence. Academics can also work with the sector to improve the quality of news reporting about gender-based violence, so that it avoids victim blaming, sensationalism and over-simplification that compound the harms of abuse. Our universities provide access to the world-class research and training practitioners need to respond effectively. Over the next ten years, we will work closely with Manchester's colleges and universities to ensure:

- We recruit people who are committed to challenging gender-based violence and the sexism, racism, disablism and homophobia that contribute to it.
- Professionals working in the public and third sector have access to the very best training and continuing professional development programmes about research on gender-based violence.
- Universities and colleges, as both employers and leaders within the city-region, extend the reach and impact of our public engagement campaigns.

We know that the student population is also disproportionately affected by gender-based violence. The prosecution case against Reynhard Sinaga drew international attention to the degree to which men in the student population are at risk of sexual assault, and how reticent this group of victims are to report sexual violations and reach for help.²⁷ The same is true of many female students. In the year ending 2019, 12.2% of female students had experienced domestic abuse within the past 12 months, compared to 7.5% of women in the general population of England and Wales.²⁸ Survey based research suggests that female students are at twice the risk of sexual violence than other women within the general population, and account for around 50,000 cases of sexual abuse or assault across the UK each year.²⁹ This underscores the need for colleges and universities to provide internal pastoral support as well as signposting local services independent of them that are responsive to a diverse student population, who may have been victims of gender-based violence.

Universities and colleges must promote and abide by clear policies and guidelines for reporting and investigating cases of sexual misconduct, harassment, assault, and rape, involving staff and students within and outside of the workplace. It is important that these policies ensure victims do not fear recrimination when they report the perpetrator, whatever their formal position or status.

Universities and colleges are well placed to educate students about gender-based violence and should therefore play a key role in setting good examples to those living and working in our city-region. Our Greater Manchester universities and colleges will engage students in education about gender-based violence, hate crime and sexual citizenship in their induction and pastoral programmes, and redress the gendered and sexual norms that discriminate against women, sexual minorities and those who do not conform to gendered expectations.

Working with Employers

Lower rates of pay for women, the under-representation of women in leadership roles, and poverty cycles, combine with sexual harassment in public spaces and workplaces to render women and girls more vulnerable to gender-based violence and abuse than men in other aspects of their lives. It is vital therefore that employers are engaged in redressing both the structural inequalities and prejudices that promote gender inequality and gender-based violence.

Employers are legally obliged to prevent gender-based violence in the workplace under the Equality Act 2010. Nevertheless, 40% of women are estimated to experience sexual harassment in the workplace.³⁰ Greater Manchester therefore welcomes the advent of new victim-informed laws that will form part of a national response to protect those who are subject to abuse at work.³¹ Domestic abuse also impacts upon victims' attendance and performance, yet workplace policies and procedures can prevent victims from coming forward and can expose them to harm and unfair disciplinary action.³²

In Greater Manchester, we want to be a beacon of best practice. To this end, we will work with all our city-region employers to put into place policies and processes through which bullying, sexual harassment, domestic abuse and discrimination can

be raised, tackled, and actioned; regardless of the status of the alleged perpetrator, particularly when they are working in trusted public positions or as responders to victims in need of support.

This will involve asking employers to go beyond the requirements of the Equality Act, which does not extend the same protections to non-binary and gender diverse people as it does to binary gendered people. It is important that employers recognising the harm caused to trans people by 'deadnaming' and intentional misgendering. It is also important employers are alert to the signs that trans and non-binary people are experiencing domestic abuse, as these can be particularly difficult to detect, especially among those who are not 'out' at work.³³

"I can't give details, but there is a specific incident that happened in my workplace a couple of years ago, where there was a number of women being harassed by one of the other staff. I don't think that sort of stuff is dealt with correctly, or it's not treated as severely as it should be." - Quote from male participant from a focus group during public consultation.

Many frontline workers who support victims of gender-based violence are just as likely to have experienced abuse themselves, and it is critical that we listen to their voices, learn from their experiences and support them fully. We have expanded our Greater Manchester Resilience Hub provision to ensure all frontline health and social care staff are able to access mental health advice and well-being support. In Greater Manchester we will:

- Endorse the Domestic Abuse Commissioner's call to introduce paid leave for victims of gender-based violence, lobby government for legislation change, and ask all our suppliers to do the same.
- Establish best practice processes, for example, by drawing upon the Employer's Initiative on Domestic Abuse,³⁴ in collaboration with workers' unions,³⁵ to ensure victims of gender-based violence are supported by representatives who are trained in tackling gender-based violence and that flexible working arrangements are offered to those who need them.

- Develop health and safety procedures to safeguard victims of domestic abuse who may be at risk of harassment and stalking from perpetrators travelling to and from work, or when working online.
- Deliver domestic abuse training to public sector, private sector and not-for-profit employers in the city-region, in partnership with our universities, so that they can develop transparent policies for reporting gender-based violence without fear of judgement or disciplinary action.
- Develop workforce development programmes that equip workers to recognise and call-out discriminatory attitudes and abusive behaviours.

Abuse perpetrated against partners or former partners by criminal justice professionals, especially the police, compounds the feelings of powerlessness suffered by victims, as the system intended to protect them can be misdirected to intimidate them. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services is currently investigating a super-complaint submitted in March 2020 by the Centre for Women's Justice (CWJ) in respect of domestic abuse perpetrated by police officers or staff.³⁶ Greater Manchester Police, working with the Deputy Mayor, have already produced a detailed action plan in response to the issues raised by the Centre for Women's Justice. We will work with Greater Manchester Police to ensure the practice detailed in the plan becomes embedded and monitor its effectiveness while we await the report of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services, due in the summer of 2021. The Deputy Mayor, having the delegated functions of Police and Crime Commissioner, will hold the Chief Constable to account on behalf of the public to ensure necessary reforms are implemented immediately.

It is also important for employers to recognise how gender inequality compounds some women's vulnerability to gender-based violence. Women living in our city-region are on average paid 7%³⁷ an hour less than men, are more likely to be employed part-time, and shoulder the burden of domestic and caring roles, which exacerbates the gender-pay gap. These inequalities make it harder for women to escape abusive relationships and render them more susceptible to coercive control. Employers can therefore contribute to tackling gender-based violence in the long

term by redressing gender inequality. In Greater Manchester, we are supporting employers to do so by:

- Ensuring our commissioned services, procurement processes and grant allocations are compliant with the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012. In line with the Act, we will promote our commitment to addressing inequalities in opportunities for women. We will also go further by explaining to employers how they can excel at redressing inequalities in the workplace, including supply chains.
- Encouraging all organisations that are commissioned by the city-region councils to report annually on the gender pay gap and what they are doing to redress it.
- Encouraging employers to become members of the Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter, so they can access advice on how best to support the needs of women in the workplace and develop family friendly policies, flexible working arrangements and childcare schemes.

The *Cut it Out* campaign is an excellent example of how Greater Manchester's businesses can work to prevent gender-based violence and support victims. The initiative offers free training to hair and beauty professionals so they know what domestic abuse is, how to recognise the signs of domestic abuse in their clients, and how to access professionals who can help these clients. An evaluation of the *Cut it Out* campaign has already been commissioned. This evaluation will inform decisions on how best to work with employers to bolster public engagement in tackling gender-based violence over the next ten years. We are looking at how best to extend the *Cut it Out* campaign in the years ahead.

Our vision in Greater Manchester is to mobilise the public, universities, and employers to challenge gender-based violence, establish gender equity, and collaborate with those working victims and survivors to ensure they are safe and supported

5. Supporting Victims and Survivors

Victims at the Heart of our Services

From 2021/22, the organisations that work with Greater Manchester Combined Authority will broaden and deepen their engagement with victims, survivors, children, and their families. This will include, but not be restricted to, the establishment of a diverse panel of people with lived experiences of gender-based violence fully engaged in designing, commissioning, and reviewing the services that tackle gender-based violence in Greater Manchester. In this way, we will ensure that victims and survivors' voices are heard and validated, while providing more meaningful responses and consequences that are cognisant of what they perceive as justice.

This will also ensure that all our services remain responsive to those who have been abused, not all of whom define as 'victims'. Some people prefer the term 'survivor' to reflect their personal strength in overcoming violence that has been terrifying. Others wish not to be defined by what has been done to them or need time to recognise that behaviours they had defined as a 'fight' or 'unwanted sex' amounted to serious crimes perpetrated against them.

GMCA is currently undertaking a review process to support the re-design of services it provides to victims of crime. As part of this process they have conducted a 'listening exercise,' where 66 people affected by crime have been engaged.

This has involved telephone interviews, where participants were then invited to take part in follow up focus groups or one to one interviews. Participants reflected the diversity of Greater Manchester and came from all areas of the city-region.

This process has resulted in significant and detailed insights. This will not only assist in the ongoing re-design of GMCA's victim services, ensuring it they are as effective as possible, but also in ensuring that services provide by police, criminal justice agencies, health and VCSE sector amongst others, can continue to be improved based on the insights and experiences of those who receive them.

Helping those who are living with gender-based violence to name their experiences and seek the support they need to escape will be a key feature of the public awareness campaigns that Greater Manchester will commission. In Greater Manchester we endorse the government's recommendations in its 'End to End Rape Review'³⁸ and recognise the need to build increasing confidence in the criminal justice response to victims and survivors of all forms of gender-based violence. Through the Greater Manchester Victim Services Review, members of the public and practitioners found that:

- Sometimes they do not know how to access support or what that entails.
- The criminal justice system is re-traumatising and confusing.
- Victims and survivors keep having to repeat their stories.
- They are subjected to multiple needs assessments but feel disempowered.
- Victims' lives are put on hold if the perpetrator is tried in court.

In response, we will ensure services:

- Reduce harm and trauma for victims and their families.
- Are responsive, person and child centric.
- Reduce health inequalities.
- Are underpinned by clinical governance principles.
- Build upon advances in online systems and modes of working developed during the pandemic.

We will routinely collate the information, evidence and expertise needed to co-produce, redesign, and reform the services that victims and survivors of rape and sexual offences need to cope and recover in the immediate, medium and long term. Specifically, we will raise awareness among all those working with survivors of sexual assaults, including survivors of historic abuse, of draft guidance on the provision of pre-trial therapy for survivors and the importance of not delaying access to this if it would have an adverse impact on the health and well-being of the victim³⁹.

This will ensure Greater Manchester can be well prepared for when the guidance becomes substantive.

We will also review how we respond to: complex cases, child sexual exploitation and online grooming. Between 2021 and 2031 we will address 'hidden crimes', including offences against men and those that take place in religious or culturally 'closed' communities, those embedded in the night-time economy, and the exploitation of dependent adults and the economically marginalized. Further reforms to the criminal justice process which we are overseeing are documented in section 8.

Accessible and Inclusive Service Provision

In Greater Manchester, we are committed to reducing the barriers to reporting gender-based violence that can deter those who need help from accessing it. In 2020, we invested in new online and app-based reporting mechanisms as an alternative to face-to-face processes.⁴⁰ Making the public aware of these reporting mechanisms and the breadth of service provision available to them will be a focus of public engagement campaigning from 2021.

To reduce the need for victims to repeat their stories or be reassessed, we will seek to develop a new Trusted Referrer's Scheme that will enable voluntary sector organisations, faith groups and schools to refer victims directly to health and criminal justice services. In Greater Manchester, we require all our service providers to have the appropriate skills, knowledge, and experience to respond thoughtfully to victims, whatever their circumstances.

We are fortunate in the city-region to benefit from the expertise of some of the most long established and pioneering interventions to support victims of domestic and sexual abuse. These include Manchester Women's Aid, St Mary's Sexual Assault Referral Centre, Survivors Manchester and Greater Manchester Rape Crisis. Over the next ten years we will ensure all service providers learn from the experience these and other organisations have to offer to enhance our provision to survivors, maximise our compliance with recognised quality standards, and ensure the consistent application of safeguarding procedures. We will also encourage all service

providers to ensure their resources are available in the many languages spoken in the city-region.

Responding to Diversity

Over the next five years, our quality assurance and inspection processes will look closely at whether our services are accessible to all. We know that some services in the city-region are not reaching ethnic minority women as well as they should. We know also that some services are less accessible to people from sexual minorities, trans and gender-queer people, older people, disabled people, and those with learning difficulties. We know that fear of criminalisation deters a range of women from seeking support, including women whose immigration status is insecure or secure but still hard to reach, women with drug and alcohol problems, sex workers, and women who have retaliated against perpetrators who are subjecting them to coercive control. In Greater Manchester we do not consider these to be reasons to deny women sanctuary and protection and are committed to offering them the very best service provision. We will work closely with all our local authorities to ensure all our services are accessible to all: including women who not speak English fluently, older women, and those with disabilities. We will also scope the potential to establish Greater Manchester as a Sanctuary City⁴¹.

“I don’t think it should matter what the survivor’s standing in the community is, everyone is entitled and deserving of the best support and it should be made as easy as possible to get it.” – Quote from one focus group participant to our public consultation.

In 2021/22, we will undertake a comprehensive scoping exercise to assess the extent to which our services are meeting the needs of victims and survivors from ethnic minority, foreign national, LGBTQ+, disabled, learning disabled and neurodivergent populations. In doing so, Greater Manchester will seek to learn from good practice examples, like the Women’s Centre Cornwall group, who have developed specialist training to support professionals and peers to understand the specific problems domestic abuse causes people with learning disabilities.⁴² We will also:

- Work with and support our local authorities to develop strategies within the scope of gender-based violence, based on the needs and priorities of their respective local areas. Data on the rates and prevalence of various forms of violence and abuse will be collected in each local authority area, be attentive to local demand for services and be responsive to the needs of all communities and demographic groups.
- Review and revamp our IDVA and ISVA provision to make sure it is meeting the needs of all victims and survivors in all areas of the city-region and working most effectively with the VCSE sector. In addition, ensure our end-to-end support is informed by the training and support NGOs supporting ethnic minority and LGBTQ+ populations have to offer; and ensure our provision better reflects and caters for the diversity of the victim and survivor population (see also section 9).
- Appoint a Health Service Project Manager, via the Women's Support Alliance, to review existing pathways into health and well-being services for vulnerable women, including those at risk of gender-based violence and sexual exploitation, to identify opportunities to improve referrals.
- Continue to advocate for vulnerable and marginalised women and to support our local authority partners through the recommissioning of women's centres - which offer direct support, advice and advocacy to a range of specialist services such as: accommodation; education, training and employment; emotional wellbeing support; and drug and alcohol dependency recovery programmes.
- Ensure our victim's services are accessible to all, irrespective of whether the complainant has contacted the police, whatever their immigration or documented status, and whether or not they formally have no recourse to public funds.
- Enhance the provision of services dedicated to tackling harmful and abusive practices - like forced marriage, so-called 'honour' based abuse, and female genital mutilation – by integrating them with the provision of specialist clinical and emotional support for people who have undergone trauma.

Safety and Justice

It is crucial that service providers are honest with victims about the demands that engagement with the criminal justice system entails, the time such engagement takes, and the possibility of adverse outcomes, even if such honesty can be disheartening. The process of pursuing justice can compound the original trauma some victims suffer, for example, when defendants make malicious accusations against those they have abused, prosecutions are not proceeded with, or fail to deliver justice. In Greater Manchester, we are committed to being open with victims about what the criminal justice system can and cannot achieve, to reducing the additional pressures this system places on victims, and to keeping them fully informed at each stage of the process in alignment with the Victim's Code. To this end, we are looking closely at best practices being developed elsewhere in the UK, such as 'Aurora New Dawn DVA Cars';⁴³ a project that allows voluntary sector specialists to work in partnership with the police to ensure initial contact with victims are positive, supportive and reassuring. We are also supporting research that seeks to help us better understand the long term needs of sexual survivors from the point of crisis intervention through to when their cases go to court.⁴⁴

We understand the importance of listening to what victims say they want. This is why all services in Greater Manchester are committed to supporting victims to live in safety, whether or not they wish to pursue a prosecution or wish to continue living with someone who has hurt them. We know also that people who have suffered trauma do not wish to have to repeat their accounts of victimisation to multiple service providers and that it is important for voluntary and statutory services to work together towards our common vision in Greater Manchester to tackle gender-based violence. In 2021/22, we will be focussing attention on ensuring smooth pathways of referral between generalist and specialist services, with clear information sharing protocols to stop victims having to disclose personal information on multiple occasions. We are also working closely with the National Probation Service to ensure that where perpetrators are supervised within the community, appropriate liaison occurs between probation staff and service providers who are supporting

victims and keeping them informed, on the premise that all interventions put victim safety first.

Women whose immigration status is irregular, or contingent on their husband's, are particularly vulnerable to coercive control, domestic servitude, and sexual exploitation, as perpetrators often forewarn them that going to the police will result in their deportation and/or their separation from their children. In Greater Manchester we are determined to combat this form of legal systems abuse. This is why police officers who have concerns about a victim's immigration status are now required to refer the victim in the first instance to relevant third-party support organisations for victims and survivors of gender-based violence that can provide immediate advice and assistance.

Housing and Security

The very real risk of homelessness is an enduring problem for many women who are abused by intimate partners, and a problem that is much more acute for women on low incomes or in precarious employment (see section 4). Many women who have been abused come to the notice of local authority homelessness teams, housing providers, refuges, and other places of safety when they are escaping an abusive situation. Radically reducing homelessness remains a core priority for the Mayor, which is why the Greater Manchester Ethical Letting Agency has been formed to prioritise social housing for those who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Eradicating homelessness is essential if we are to protect the most vulnerable women and children from harmful behaviours. In Greater Manchester, we are committed to ensuring that women and children at risk of abuse are supported in finding alternative housing or refuge, that is suitable and safe, as soon as possible. We will work with partner organisations with expertise in serving minoritised populations to ensure assessment procedures take full account of survivors' social, emotional and economic needs and anticipate the risks of further violence, including targeted forms of abuse, racial and religious harassment and hate crime in particular localities. Specifically, we will ensure that victims experiencing the threat of gender-based violence from multiple perpetrators within their own families and communities

are provided with places of safety and that the exceptional risks they face are properly recognised and understood by all those intervening and supporting them.

Too often in Greater Manchester we see people who have been victimised, trafficked, or moved from one end of the country to another as part of an asylum system that has often failed them. This makes building trust hard. In Greater Manchester we will not be complicit in Home Office policies that seek to deport people because they have found themselves destitute and street homeless.⁴⁵ In Greater Manchester, we are proud to accommodate and support individuals with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) as part of *A Bed Every Night*. This gives people the opportunity to have somewhere safe to stay and receive support to regularise their status and find stable accommodation.

Greater Manchester will build on its pioneering approaches to supporting vulnerable and marginalised women by re-commissioning the 'Whole System Approach for Women'.⁴⁶ While continuing to support Greater Manchester's refuges for women, we will ensure that local emergency housing provision is available for men who are victims of domestic abuse. We will also ensure that emergency housing provision is also available for trans people, our own research revealing that they are at increased risk of homelessness when subject to abuse from partners and other family members and not always served well by housing providers.⁴⁷

Following the reunification of the probation service, we are in a strong position to ensure that women impacted by gender-based violence in each of our districts are consistently supported, where appropriate and safe, to stay in their homes. Those who are fleeing violence and abuse should not have to forfeit their homes or tenancies and should be supported in securing long term accommodation when they do. Over the next years we will endeavour to comply with the principles set out by the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance⁴⁸ that advocate for 'an enabling environment where survivors know they will be listened to' and housing providers 'recognise that tenants 'may be disadvantaged by multiple oppressions.' We will:

- Develop and evaluate a Whole Housing Approach to housing and law enforcement that prioritises moving perpetrators elsewhere as fairer

and less disruptive solution to the threats of intimate partner violence and stalking wherever possible (see section 7).

- Work with local authority and housing provider partners to develop a cross-border protocol or reciprocal, establishing a system of co-operation, which defines responsibilities for the provision of housing, and care and support services when victims and survivors of domestic abuse are transferred across local authority areas.
- Work across voluntary and statutory sectors to build on innovative practice developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, to support the swift transition of victims and their children from refuge to stable accommodation.
- Ensure the Greater Manchester Homelessness Prevention Strategy, which will be in place from 2021, addresses the various ways in which housing insecurity compounds the risks of gender-based violence women and children face.
- Ensure that all rough sleeping initiatives, including *A Bed Every Night* and *Housing First*, have a gender and trauma informed approach that is sensitive to diverse needs of those at risk of gender-based violence, including, women, LGBTQ+ populations and disabled people.

In Greater Manchester we will provide services that are designed for, and accountable to, victims and survivors. All services tackling gender-based violence will be accessible, responsive, and victim centred.

6. Meeting the Needs of Children and Young People

Investing in Young People

Children and young people experience many different forms of gender-based violence, including: day-to-day sexist behaviour, stalking and sexual harassment, hate crime and online abuse, sexual assault, sexual and criminal exploitation, domestic abuse, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, and 'honour' based abuse. They are also at high risk of peer abuse and dating violence, with young men who are abusive in their teens at risk of becoming serial perpetrators of domestic abuse in early adulthood.⁴⁹

Protecting young people from gender-based violence within and outside of the home, and doing everything possible to prevent it becoming a feature of the lives of subsequent generations, is a top priority within the Greater Manchester Children and Young People's Plan.⁵⁰ This has established a Standards Board focussed on sharing evidence of what works to improve safeguarding practice supported across all ten of Greater Manchester's local councils and is supported by a £7.43 million Targeted Innovation and Reform Grant. The Greater Manchester Safeguarding Alliance is deploying this investment to develop an evidence and strengths-based approach to supporting children and young people in the communities where they live.

In Greater Manchester, our approach to improving the lives of children and young people and keeping them safe comprises universal, targeted, and specialist services, which are allocated depending on the type and level of need required. We are taking the findings of the OFSTED 'Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges'⁵¹ seriously and will implement its core recommendation that 'school and college leaders should create a culture where sexual harassment and online sexual abuse are not tolerated, and where they identify issues and intervene early to better protect children and young people'.

- We are committed to working with and supporting headteachers and college principals to ensure all schools and colleges provide a safe space where

children and young people are protected from gender-based violence and feel able to disclose threats and risks of harm to them.

- Our Violence Reduction Units will work with schools and colleges to share good practice that identifies and prevents violence, including learning about specific needs that have arisen in the context of the pandemic.

Investing in our children and young people is critical, both for the possibility it brings them of living lives free of gender-based violence, and also because young people play an important role in challenging misogyny, homophobia and racism, and speaking out when others are at risk of harm. Over the next ten years, Greater Manchester will:

- Invest in and promote universal and early interventions to protect young people from gender-based violence and primary prevention activities that empower young people to recognise abuse and seek support when it infringes on their own relationships and those of people known to them.
- Support the children's social care system across our city-region by ensuring that our future investments build and strengthen existing practice and systems to ensure that children most in need or at risk receive appropriate and effective support.
- Widen the access of specialist service provision for victims and perpetrators to ensure we are meeting the needs of teenagers and young adults at risk of intimate partner violence and/or peer-on peer abuse.
- Support the charity Talk, Listen, Change to deliver on a pilot project - commissioned by the Home Office – designed for young people involved in intimate partner violence.

Early Intervention

In Greater Manchester, we have and will continue to invest in early help models, through a combination of local investment and national programmes. Children and

young people sometimes perpetrate abuse on their peer groups. By intervening early, challenging gender stereotypes and victim blaming, we can reduce the chances of abusive behaviours becoming a pattern of coercive control in later life.

Through both our Youth Justice Transformation work and the Troubled Families Programme, we pursue whole family and contextual safeguarding approaches that seek to understand the wider dynamics that lead some young people to perpetrate gender-based violence, adolescent to parent violence, abusive sexual behaviours, and hate crime. In 2021, the Greater Manchester Early Years Initiative will launch an Early Years Workforce Academy, with a commitment to increasing the proportion of men working in early years care and education and to improve the training and development of early years staff across the city-region. We will also work closely with schools, colleges and other educational settings, to implement an evidence-based programme of preventative education to change harmful attitudes and behaviours, and upskill teachers, teaching assistants and youth workers that will build upon our education statutory requirements.

Our work over the next ten years will be delivered in partnership. For example, we will work with the Youth Combined Authority to identify ways to engage young people in tackling gender-based violence and reducing their risk of exploitation, and co-develop policies that improve young people's lives across the city-region. We will also work closely with the Greater Manchester Parenting Working Group to explore ways to tackle stereotyping and precursors to gender-based violence. And we will work closely with the Alliance for Learning Teaching School, to develop a range of targeted resources that address gender stereotyping and abusive behaviours, including online abuse. We will ensure that teachers are invited to the many training events for professionals tackling gender-based violence and abuse held in the city-region and we will liaise with head teachers and safe-guarding leads to ensure examples of best practice within schools are shared and celebrated.

A key part of our partnership working will involve educating young people about abuse and exploitation, including its digital dimensions. Preventative education with young people will focus on promoting positive attitudes around women and girls, healthy relationships, sexual citizenship and consent, and will use peer mentoring

schemes, advocates and role models. It will also educate young people about the harm of sharing sexual images online and how pornographic material portrays unrealistic views about sex and sexual consent, which can be damaging to intimate relationships.

As part of our statutory duty to deliver inclusive relationship, sex, and health education to our primary and secondary pupils,⁵² we will continue to support the many third sector organisations that come into schools and colleges to inform young people about dating violence, peer abuse and bullying, mental health, alcohol and substance use, sexual diversity, sexual health services, and services for victims of domestic and sexual abuse. It is important that professionals delivering relationship education confront the gendered nature of boys' controlling behaviour, often borne from issues of trust, personal insecurities and sexual jealousies. It is also critical that those working with young men at risk of exclusion help them to recognise how their own capacities to trust are sometimes diminished by adverse experiences and how this can inflect expectations of intimate relationships.⁵³ It is also critical that education with young women, especially those who are at risk of pressure from peers, disadvantaged or vulnerable, addresses the significance of self-esteem and choice in relationships, so they are not pressured to stay with boys and men who are coercive.⁵⁴

We also know that sex and relationships education needs to be specially tailored to meet the needs of autistic pupils and those with learning disabilities. Some of these children are at a higher risk of exploitation, grooming and abuse than their peers, and need particular guidance on how to navigate the physical, emotional and sensory aspects of relationships. Hence, from 2021/22, in keeping with our Greater Manchester strategies,⁵⁵⁵⁶ we will work with organisations such as the National Autistic Society to develop and deliver neurodiverse sex and relationships educational materials through Skills for Life, Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE), and Sex and Relationship (SRE) programs,⁵⁷ to reflect different learning needs and levels of social understanding. This will entail teachers making wider use of visuals, pacing the delivery of teaching in different ways, and deploying an understanding of the sensory differences and challenges faced by those with autism or learning disabilities. We will also provide resources and training that help parents

and professionals to support autistic young people in making the transition into adulthood and independence, through person-centred planning.⁵⁸

Children and young people with learning difficulties, histories of sexual abuse, multiple victimisations, and neglect are at increased risk of displaying harmful sexual behaviours towards other children, either on their own or as part of a peer group.⁵⁹ It is crucial that professionals are aware of the signs and respond appropriately by recording and reporting all incidents to children's services, where a trauma-informed approach can be deployed to understand the reasons behind the behaviour and draw up appropriate safeguarding arrangements.

Over the next three years there will be increased investment in children and young people's mental health services. Mental health support for children and young people will be accessible to those in mainstream schooling, colleges and alternative provision, ensuring that those experiencing crises can quickly access support in the community that they need, and relieving pressure on police and emergency services.

We will work with local authorities, schools and colleges to ensure that all children in need, looked after children, children in pupil referral units (PRUs), and children in schools in areas with high levels of domestic abuse benefit from high quality relationship education programmes. In addition, we will adhere to the pledge made in the Greater Manchester Serious Violence Action Plan⁶⁰ to strengthen the relationship between schools, colleges, and neighbourhood policing teams. To meet this commitment, we will dedicate at least 20 full-time police officers to schools with the greatest need with the objective of diverting young people away from early criminalisation. Police officers working in schools and in partnership with locality Early Help Teams and Teams Around the School Services will engage proactively with young people to prevent further offending and minimise engagement with the youth justice system where appropriate.

Police officers in schools will also work with youth justice services to ensure young people at risk of becoming repeat offenders are provided with interventions in their communities that divert them from re-offending with the objective of avoiding further criminalisation and/or criminal exploitation. Police officers working in youth justice

contexts have the specific remit of ensuring that frontline operational officers engage with youth justice services to ensure timely and holistic interventions are offered to young people at risk of perpetrating gender-based violence. NHS funded trauma-responsive programmes can be accessed via youth justice in order to intervene earlier and forestall children and young people's progression into prisons and hospitals for those with acute mental health problems.

A core focus of our work with young people, but especially young men and boys, will be to identify how bystanders can respond in non-confrontational ways when they see others subjected to gender-based violence. We will work closely with local Third Sector organisations, including 42nd Street,⁶¹ The Men's Room,⁶² the LGBT Foundation⁶³ and The Proud Trust,⁶⁴ to make sure that children and young people across the city-region have access to support from services that specialise in engaging with young people to promote gender and sexual equality and challenge prejudices.

Supporting Children Where They Live

An essential part of addressing gender-based violence involves working with families where there is, or has been, domestic abuse in the home. Children who are victims of domestic abuse suffer many long-term effects and are at increased risk of a range of harms, including mental illness, substance use, developmental problems, and victimisation by peers and adults. It is very difficult to disentangle experiences of victimisation and trauma from offending, but we know that when they are unsupported, some young men who experience abuse as children become at risk of perpetrating abuse in their intimate relationships, parent abuse, and online abuse and that some young women become more vulnerable to entering abusive relationships.⁶⁵⁶⁶

More generally, we know that teenagers and young adults are the age groups most at risk of domestic abuse and peer on peer abuse and that their needs are different to older age groups.⁶⁷ School children and college students, for example, are unlikely to be being abused by a partner at home, but they may have little choice but to be in the same classroom, playground, or public space also occupied by a peer who is attempting to control or intimidate them. It is critical that these young people can self-

refer to support services and get help outside of the criminal justice system if needed. We will ensure that this is the case and that this service provision is properly signposted in all educational contexts, including schools, PRUS, colleges and universities.

In partnership with the Deputy Mayor and the third sector, Greater Manchester has been awarded Home Office funding to develop innovative programmes to work with young people who have developed unsafe and unhealthy behaviours in their own relationships such as towards partners, parents, or carers. We are committed to evaluating these programmes so that they can be rolled out across all ten districts in the city-region, if they are proven to be effective and responsive to the needs of our young people.

In addition, some of our Greater Manchester Local Authorities have developed a specific advocacy service for young offenders and young victims of gender-based violence. From 2021, we will extend this provision across our city-regions to ensure all our young people receive targeted support to prevent abuse escalating into their adult lives, whether as victims, perpetrators, or both.

In keeping with our commitment to prioritise early intervention, over the next five years Greater Manchester will:

- Support Operation Encompass, which requires police officers who have attended a domestic abuse incident where a child is present to inform the child's school by 9am on the next teaching day. This enables schools to provide rapid support to vulnerable children. We will extend the implementation of Operation Encompass to Early Years Settings and to 16-18 year olds.
- Work with local and national charities to ensure schools across the city-region benefit from new innovations to provide adequate support to all children who experience domestic abuse in the home.
- Map out the range of therapeutic services for children and young people who are living in homes affected by domestic abuse in Greater Manchester and ensure all those working in educational, health and

criminal justice settings are appraised of how to refer those in need into this provision.

- Increase the accessibility of long-term support services for young people who have experienced domestic abuse as children, by developing online self-referral services for those who are at risk of or engaging in specific types of gender-based violence.
- Invest in targeted support programmes for families at risk of or experiencing specific forms of gender-based violence and provide accredited parenting programmes and family support groups, where needed.
- Adopt a whole family approach to domestic abuse by working with Directors of Children's Services and the Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise sector to explore the development of a Greater Manchester Community Perpetrator Programme looking at both family service based referrals and criminal justice mandating.
- Invest in local initiatives that seek to intervene early in the lives of children experiencing trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences and build resilience.

Case Study

Two children in a primary school did not come to school the morning that the designated safeguarding lead there had received a notification through Operation Encompass. Following normal school procedures, they contacted home as they knew that was safe to do and the mother said that she could not face coming out after the previous nights' incident. The children were at home with her and wanting to go into school. The school offered to go and collect the children, and mother agreed and was relieved and happy. This meant that the children could take part in the school nativity that was happening that day as well as other Christmas activities. The school continued to liaise with social services and put measures in place to ensure ongoing sensitivity to the children's situation and to ensure they maximised their attendance and received tailored support, whilst at school.

In selected areas, we will develop new services for children who have complex needs that are not currently being met, including a number of children who have been subject to sexual assault but who are not reaching the attention of Sexual Assault Referral Services. For at least 500 highly vulnerable children with complex trauma, this will provide consultation, advice, assessment, treatment and transition into integrated services.

Preventing Child Sexual and Criminal Exploitation

Greater Manchester has invested in a Complex Safeguarding programme that involves the integration of key services, including police and social workers, to identify children and young people deemed to be at risk of or victims of child sexual and criminal exploitation and ensure that harms perpetrated against them are thoroughly investigated. This programme provides specialist support to these children and their families to keep them safe from extra-familial abuse. Multi-agency teams are in place across all ten districts of our city-region and work to protect hundreds of vulnerable children and young people and their families every year.

Greater Manchester is committed to developing a trauma informed workforce across the public sector, which recognises the warning signs and long-term impacts of trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences,⁶⁸ including those that occur outside of the familial home. Building on the findings of the independent review of Operation Augusta,⁶⁹ we are committed to developing a community wide approach to preventing child sexual and criminal exploitation, and safeguarding children and young people at risk. This necessitates meeting the needs of those young people whose vulnerability is compounded by experiences of care, learning difficulties, and experiences of harassment and abuse within their own homes, schools, and communities.

Over the next ten years we will continue to develop the programmes we have established to protect the most vulnerable young people. These include:

- The *No Wrong Door* initiative, which enables dedicated child protection teams to work closely with foster carers and residential care homes

where there are risks of harm to adolescents who do not always see themselves as victims.

- The *Achieving Change Together (ACT)* programme, which has embedded specialist workers into Complex Safeguarding Teams across Greater Manchester. This programme has been successful in providing intensive support to children who have been exploited and need to access support in the areas where they live.
- The *Trusted Relationships* initiative, which has enabled us to embed psychotherapists in Complex Safeguarding Teams. The psychotherapists: help other professionals to understand the impact of trauma on a child's development and understand children's behaviour in the context of their life events; and facilitate the design of strategies and interventions that best meet the needs of children who have experienced trauma.
- The *Greater Manchester Campaign Against Sexual Exploitation*, which consists of 60 national and local charities. We will support the exchange of knowledge and training between grassroots organisations, community groups and statutory service providers, as recommended in the Real Voices report.⁷⁰

We will also ensure that all public awareness campaigns tackling child sexual and criminal exploitation and online abuse are fully supported by programmes of public engagement. These need to be co-designed by young people and include the capacity to reach out to them through the use of mobile technologies.

Engaging with young people about their experiences and understandings of gender-based violence is the key to reducing its prevalence in future generations. In Greater Manchester, we will seek to protect and empower children and young people through early intervention; inclusive approaches that cater for the diversity and multiple vulnerabilities of our youth; and providing targeted and accessible support to children who are victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse.

Responding Effectively to Perpetrators

A Whole System Approach

One in four women in the UK will experience some form of sexual assault or domestic abuse in their lifetime.⁷¹ In Greater Manchester, we recognise that the vast majority of perpetrators of gender-based violence are men, who are often the partners or ex-partners of their victims. We know that there needs to be systemic change among men in general if we are to tackle gender-based violence for future generations, which is why we are aligning our specialist work with perpetrators with a wider strategy of primary prevention and early intervention that mobilises public engagement.

Greater Manchester needs a whole-system approach to those who perpetrate gender-based violence, which responds consistently to both those engaged by the criminal justice system (see also section 8) and statutory enforcement services and perpetrators who are identified through voluntary, community and/or civil law routes. In Greater Manchester we understand that in order to respond effectively to perpetrators, practitioners need to be able to listen carefully to what victims and survivors share about their experiences, as well as what offenders say about their motivations and problems. This is why all our work with perpetrators will be routinely appraised by the Gender Abuse Board.

Perpetrator Interventions

Approaches to understanding diversity among offenders are critical to understanding the drivers for behavioural change. The reasons why men are abusive vary, and some perpetrators require different forms of intervention to others to help them stop offending. For example, there are some men who only abuse their partners in the home, others who do so in private *and* public spaces, and others who are generally violent towards their partners, acquaintances, and the public. We also recognise that there are a small number of women who perpetrate gender-based violence and there is a need to deliver interventions that are relevant to them.

We know that most victims and survivors want perpetrators to be able to access effective interventions that will help them to change, but nationally, only a small minority of repeat offenders receive specialist interventions.⁷² From 2021 we will ensure that we map and evaluate gender-based violence related perpetrator programmes across Greater Manchester, to assist with the development of a GM perpetrator programme framework that will seek to deliver programmes for all who need them on both a voluntary and compulsory basis.

Our 2021-2031 strategic plan provides Greater Manchester with one of the most wide-ranging programmes of interventions to tackle perpetrators available in Europe. We have already secured funding to pilot a range of new interventions which work within a whole family approach. These will include:

- Extending the reach of current provision for men who have been abusive in heterosexual relationships across the city-region.
- Extending current one-to-one provision for women who have been abusive in heterosexual and same-sex relationships.
- Commissioning a new programme to work with men who have been abusive in same-sex relationships.
- Commissioning a new DRIVE programme to work with high risk and high harm perpetrators of abuse.
- Piloting a new intervention for those who are not fluent English speakers and/or for whom English is a second language.

All of our voluntary sector interventions with perpetrators will comply with the Respect Accreditation Standards,⁷³ ensuring that the safety of victims, survivors and children is paramount. All of our new provision for perpetrators will be rigorously evaluated to ensure they are effective and responsive. And all of our new provisions for perpetrators will be signposted in our public engagement campaigns, so that victims and perpetrators know there is help available to those who need to redress their behaviour.

Our interventions will recognise that many perpetrators will also have experienced gender-based violence in their own lives, which they reproduce in their intimate

relationships. Intervening early and engaging boys about harmful gendered stereotypes and expectations is key to the Greater Manchester strategy. But it is also important that adult men who have been abusive have opportunities to learn about trust, alternatives to coercive masculinities, and the value of apologies so that they can set better examples to their own children and acknowledge the harm they have caused to victims.

To do this we need a highly skilled workforce to address the gendered and emotional antecedents implicated in abuse, as well as to improve ethnic and sexual diversity among those doing direct work with abuse perpetrators. We will also commission research to explore how we can better respond to offenders with learning difficulties and autism. We acknowledge that these populations are over-represented among those sentenced for violent and sexual offences but are not well-suited to behavioural change groupwork programmes.

Case study

A male was sentenced to a 24 month community order to include a Building Better Relationships (BBR) accredited programme, following a conviction for domestic abuse where he assaulted his current partner. Probation officers identified, throughout the course of the order, that the individual had significant mental health issues which he was not in treatment for. The probation case manager then referred into and liaised with the local mental health team, through which appropriate signposting and referrals were actioned leading to ongoing engagement with local mental health support services. His mental health has stabilised and he continues to access community health team interventions to manage this. He has also successfully completed the BBR programme.

Since completion of the programme, his relationship with his partner has ended. He reports to have found the course skills useful in navigating this situation, in that he was able to apply the skills ensuring he didn't react negatively to the break up thus managing his emotions well. Police intelligence logs also evidence his successful application of the skills in that there have been no further incidents recorded. This case was also subject to MARAC arrangements and due to managed risk is no longer an active case, again evidencing the benefits the programme had on reducing risk.

A Sustainable Integrated Approach

In order to be effective, perpetrator programmes need to be embedded in coordinated multi-agency approaches to gender-based violence that are able to manage risk and disrupt those who continue to offend or act in controlling ways. The Greater Manchester Justice Devolution Deal is enabling us to build a strong integrated network of organisations that can reduce the perpetration of gender-based violence, while ensuring the safety of victims. We endorse the Call to Action,⁷⁴ which asks central government to implement a Perpetrator Strategy which will end the precariousness of funding and a postcode lottery of service provision for tackling gender-based violence.

Disrupting Repeat Offending

We know that some, predominantly male, offenders in Greater Manchester are not motivated to change; many of whom are repeat offenders and who have abused multiple victims. Whether engagement in change is compromised because of a range of complex social or psychological needs or because of misogynistic beliefs and a desire to control, it is crucial that agencies in the city-region are equipped to manage those perpetrators who pose an immediate or enduring danger. We have therefore launched a number of pilots, including the widely acclaimed DRIVE⁷⁵ programme, and community-based perpetrator programmes in a number of districts, which seek to embed pioneering coordinated approaches to domestic abuse.⁷⁶ These interventions, that have received seed corn funding from the Home Office, use multiple strategies to disrupt high harm perpetrators from continuing the abuse they perpetrate against victims.

Innovation and Restorative Justice

The Domestic Abuse Act will introduce new court orders - Domestic Abuse Protection Orders (DAPOs) - that will enable sentencers to take better account of victims' voices and require convicted perpetrators to receive treatment for drug/alcohol dependencies and mental health problems, as well as their violence, where needed.⁷⁷ We will develop a framework for managing offenders subject to DAPOs that require them to attend both domestic abuse accredited programmes and drug and alcohol treatment programmes.

When these new orders come into force, we will ensure that those working with victims are fully informed as to what they entail and how they will impact upon those who have perpetrated gender-based violence and those they are in contact with. The 28-day period in which a DAPO is in place presents opportunities for professionals to work safely with victims. Those victims deemed 'high-risk' routinely receive support from an IDVA service at this stage. We are determined to extend this support to all victims of domestic abuse at continued risk. A pilot in the City of Manchester is currently providing bespoke support to all victims who have DAPOs in place to protect them and will be appraised as part of our Victim Services Review.

We are also pioneering new approaches to identifying perpetrators and victims among service users seeking support for gambling problems. Emerging evidence suggests high rates of domestic abuse perpetration among gamblers, and also that gambling can be connected to the financial aspects of coercive control and exploitation for women living with high levels of debt⁷⁸. Our Public Service Reform Team are seeking to integrate referral pathways and data collection across interventions to redress gambling harms with those addressed to gender-based violence.

We recognise that some victims continue to live with someone who has hurt them, and some want support in helping to mediate conflict, secure an apology, or re-establish the trust needed to ensure safe childcare arrangements, or rebuild family life. The Greater Manchester Restorative Justice Service can help those victims and survivors who explicitly request support in pursuing some form of mediation once a prosecution has concluded. From 2021, we will work with Greater Manchester partners to develop standard approaches for both 'Out of Court' interventions and community programmes focused on gender-based violence, such as domestic abuse incidents, workplace sexual harassment and hate crimes. We will devise safeguarding options for young people and very vulnerable adults and a program of support for those who wish to engage in restorative processes. All restorative justice processes developed will only be initiated at the request of victims post prosecution of defendants. Where restorative justice is pursued it will always be accompanied by robust risk assessments supported by multi-agency teams and victim advocacy.

In Greater Manchester we are committed to providing a portfolio of effective and responsive interventions that facilitate change among perpetrators and increase the safety and wellbeing of survivors and their children.

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7. Improving Policing and Criminal Justice

Accountability to Victims and Witnesses.

The criminal justice system involves a variety of different organisations including the police, the Crown Prosecution Service and National Probation Service. It is not always easy for victims to understand how these aspects of the system work together. Victims are also often made to recount their experiences multiple times, do not receive the criminal justice outcomes they expect, or end up feeling re-victimised by court processes in which their experiences are cast in doubt.

The 2020 HMICFRS inspection of Greater Manchester Police emphasised the need to 'overcome deficiencies in service to vulnerable victims', particularly victims of domestic abuse, sexual assault and sexual exploitation.⁷⁹ The inspection revealed that while Greater Manchester Police 'has commenced an ambitious programme of strategic change to better manage the service it provides, the pace of that change needs to increase'. Particular changes Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Police and Fire Services required included: better identification of victims at the point of contact; more comprehensive recording and investigation of stalking, coercive control and 'crimes amounting to domestic abuse... involving vulnerable adults and children'; supervising investigations effectively and progressing them in a timely manner; consulting with victims about the use of out of court disposals; and redressing the high volume of domestic and gender-based crimes recorded as 'not supported by victims, but without evidence to show this is the case'.⁸⁰

In Greater Manchester, we must radically improve victims' experiences of criminal justice. This is why the Deputy Mayor for policing and crime on behalf of the Mayor, as Police and Crime Commissioner, will be closely scrutinising and assessing the performance of Greater Manchester Police and holding the Chief Constable to account on behalf of the public, as well as ensuring the Force has the necessary support. To further increase the safety of victims who report gender-based violence, Greater Manchester Police will:

- Ensure that cases involving serious harm and risk, such as domestic abuse and stalking, are subject to bail conditions that protect victims. New risk assessments will be required as a matter of routine before a suspect's bail status changes.
- As a matter of routine, notify the Crown Prosecution Service, whether a suspect is on bail or released under investigation for a specified time period. Those released on bail or released under investigation must be so for the shortest possible time. This is in the interests of both victims and suspects.

In Greater Manchester, we are determined to improve victims' experiences of criminal justice. We recognise that gender-based violence is a form of targeted harassment, the effects of which are not only felt directly by victims, but also all women who perceive violence and abuse to be directed at them by virtue of their gender. In its recent review into hate crime laws, the Law Commission made a recommendation⁸¹ to add gender to the protected characteristics recognised under hate crime laws. The recommendations still need to be fully considered by parliament. Nevertheless, during 2021/22:

- Prior to any decision by parliament we will consult with the public of Greater Manchester and other interested parties on how to effectively introduce the recording of misogynistic incidents by Greater Manchester Police, in the same way as they record racist and homophobic incidents. This will ensure that abuse that is aggravated by misogyny is fully investigated and victims of it are offered the same protections as those afforded to all hate crime victims. This should improve confidence in reporting while improving understanding of the impact of misogynistic hate crime and how our wider strategy needs to take account of it.
- We will also work with the police to ensure they have the necessary systems in place and officers trained to ensure swift and effective implementation of any changes. Of course, changing police recording

practices would not change what offenders can be charged with in Greater Manchester if, and until, there is a change in the law.

The Greater Manchester Victim Services Review of 2019 revealed the importance of engaging regularly with victims and survivors to ensure that they are able to contribute to the co-design of services and their ongoing effectiveness. From 2021, we will:

- Ensure victims and survivors are regularly consulted on how the criminal justice response to gender-based violence can be improved in Greater Manchester.
- Routinely monitor whether criminal justice reforms are improving victim satisfaction and justice outcomes with processes in place to monitor any unintended detrimental impacts ethnic minority communities.

We will deliver effective criminal justice services that are responsive to diverse victim and perpetrator populations. We will provide training to our call handlers and responding officers so that they are fully versed in the nature and impact of stalking, harassment, and coercive control and how these crimes can make reporting difficult.

Effective Policing

When victims report a crime, it is crucial that they are told what will happen next and are aware of and what support is available to them and the timeframes for accessing it. This is why we are working with our criminal justice partners to expedite compliance with the Victims' Code of Practice ahead of the introduction of the new Victims Law to ensure victims receive the support they deserve and to put things right when things go wrong.

Some victims withdraw their support for prosecutions the police wish to pursue. While this can be because they wish to pursue restorative or support-based resolutions instead (see sections 5 and 7), some victims lack confidence in the criminal justice process and/or become afraid that their own safety will be jeopardized if the perpetrator goes to court. Over the next year, the Deputy Mayor's Office will:

- Seek sustained improvement in the quality of police investigations and their outcomes in cases of gender-based violence.
- Closely monitor and oversee how the Early Investigative Advice Process is working, including its digital dimensions.
- Ask Greater Manchester Police to deliver on the investment in key technologies, such as body-worn video, digital forensic technology and core IT systems, and to demonstrate how they have improved justice outcomes for victims of gender-based violence.
- Ask the Chief Constable to anticipate the need to implement a new 'Gold Standard' framework focusing on investigating the suspect and improving victim engagement, consistent with that being trialled by the Home Office via Avon and Somerset Police.

Some gender-based crimes are notoriously difficult to investigate and prosecute. For this reason, there is a need to ensure that frontline officers have a strong grasp of the powers conferred by new legislation. To deliver more effective investigations, reduce the time it takes for cases to go to court, and increase rates of conviction, we will:

- Ensure that when police officers attend domestic abuse incidents they gather and secure all the relevant evidence. This will include the mandatory use of body worn cameras.
- Ensure all frontline police officers are able to speak clearly to children who are present to obtain their views and know how to request to talk to victims on their own so that they feel safe to disclose abuse.
- Improve the police response to stalking through the continued use of multi-disciplinary scrutiny panels.
- Train all criminal justice personnel in the powers the new criminal and civil legislation confer, with an immediate focus on the Domestic Abuse Act and the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme, commonly known as Clare's Law, and an enduring focus on best practice with regard to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

- Assess the potential to use multi-disciplinary panels to improve responses to all victims of all gender-based violence and to actively include victims and survivors as members of the panel.

In Greater Manchester, we know that perpetrators of gender-based violence sometimes seek to point blame at victims and try to use the criminal justice and legal system to abuse and control them further, sometimes resulting in the arrest of women who are repeat victims and/or who are highly traumatised.⁸² Greater Manchester Police are preparing for the implementation of the Domestic Abuse Act, and the new powers this confers in relation to current coercive control laws, by ensuring all officers fully understand how to enhance the response to victims when this comes into effect. Greater Manchester Police will further develop policy in relation to coercive control and establish a review system to assess how new law in this area is working, especially in relation to cases where counter accusations are made by alleged perpetrators. Over the last ten years, we have learnt from the tragedies reported in Domestic Homicide Reviews, the importance of information sharing, multiagency working, and of professional curiosity needed to reveal the close attention to the dynamics of power and control that put some women at risk of lethal violence.

From 2021, a programme of learning and development will be implemented to ensure all frontline officers understand the differences between domestic abuse, 'honour' based violence, and elder abuse, and how these present specific risks to victims that need to be anticipated. In Greater Manchester we also recognise the need to support families where children and young people are abusive towards their parents but are reluctant to call the police as they fear their children will be unnecessarily criminalised. Similarly, it is crucial to recognise that parents who feel unsafe are taken seriously, not blamed, or forced to take children home where they and other children in the home may be placed at risk. To this end, we will ensure all frontline officers are appraised of, and abide by, Home Office guidelines in dealing with adolescent to parent violence.⁸³

Improved Experiences of the Courts

We know that the experience of going to court can be particularly unsettling for many victims. We are determined to make sure that perpetrators cannot use the criminal justice process to further intimidate them. The Domestic Abuse Act will now prevent victims from being cross-examined by perpetrators in the family courts. In Greater Manchester we want to ensure that our criminal courts and justice processes also minimise the stress legal action can expose victims to. To this end we will:

- Promote the due consideration of all cases that proceed to court for restraining orders to be attached.
- Work with the Court service, Magistrates' Association and wider criminal justice system to promote the use of alternative means of presenting evidence, such as pre-recorded cross-examinations and the use of Victim Personal Statements.
- Ensure sentencers, the police and offender managers are aware of the full range of sanctions that can be imposed on perpetrators and that provision is made to anticipate sentencing options as new legislation comes into force.
- Ensure that victims are referred to the statutory Probation Service Victim Contact Scheme when those who have abused them receive custodial sentences of 12 months or more. They will be allocated a designated Victim Liaison Officer who will provide information and advice about the criminal justice process, including IDVA and ISVA service provision, and their rights, from the point of sentencing through to post-release supervision.
- Monitor, evaluate and roll out learning from the Stockport Family Drug and Alcohol Court (FDAC) with regards to its 'problem-solving' approach to families managing substance use while undergoing care proceedings.
- Wherever possible utilising the Women's Problem-Solving Court to attempt to divert female defendants charged with crime deriving from

problems with debt, health, parenting, housing and substance use in the aftermath of gender-based violence from further offending.

Protecting Victims in the Community

It is also crucial that risk is accurately assessed when dealing with the threat of gender-based violence. In Greater Manchester, police are required to complete Domestic Abuse, Stalking, and 'Honour' Based Violence (DASH)⁸⁴ risk assessments for all reported incidents involving some form of domestic abuse. We will ensure that all police officers are trained to undertake these effectively and consistently, while recognising the less dominant forms of abuse, when attending incidents. Risk assessments should comprise other sources of data, such as the history of the alleged perpetrator, of which officers should be made aware in advance of attending scenes.

Stalking is increasingly being recognised as a form of domestic abuse within the criminal justice system, with analysis conducted in 2020 by the Crown Prosecution Service finding the majority of offences are committed by ex-partners.⁸⁵ A record 2,288 charges nationally were brought in 2019-2020 - more than double the number five years previously. This is partly driven by better recognition among police and prosecutors of stalking as part of a wider pattern of domestic abuse. In Greater Manchester, we are developing new ways of responding to perpetrators who continue to threaten victims.

Perpetrators of domestic abuse and violent and sexual offenders who live in the community are managed via community supervision and multi-agency forums that include representation from the police, social services, and prison and probation service, to comply with their statutory duties in a coordinated manner that reduces the risk to the public. Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) are convened in cases where domestic abuse victims are at continued risk of victimisation, for example by Multi Agency Safeguarding Teams (MASH), so that appropriate support and services can work consistently together to reduce the likelihood of harm. Likewise, Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) are convened to enable the police, probation and prison services work together with

other agencies to assess and manage violent and sexual offenders in order to protect the public from harm. We will be extending this work in 2021 through:

- Exploring the potential to establish Stalking Assessment Centres which will enable the police to more effectively determine the risks to victims earlier and whether to seek Stalking Prevention Orders that can help protect those suffering from on and offline forms of stalking and harassment.
- Engaging with Paladin (National Stalking Advocacy Service) in order to develop and invest in a Greater Manchester wide advocacy offer for those who are victims of stalking.
- Increase the speed and efficiency of information sharing practices across Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs in each of the ten local authority areas to improve access to services.

During the pandemic, Greater Manchester Police hosted a series of public webinars and live chat events to support those experiencing gender-based violence and people who were concerned about those at risk of domestic abuse. Social media campaigns were launched to encourage engagement from those from communities who historically have less trust in the police/state agencies. Greater Manchester Police is committed to trialling and evaluating the effectiveness of such initiatives and will seek to implement these more widely if they are positively appraised by the public.

Probation Reform and the Justice Devolution Deal with HM Government has created a Greater Manchester Probation Service that serves the city-region. This brings both the opportunity for integrated partnership approaches and improvement to effective working practices with offenders. Crucially, it puts Greater Manchester in a unique position to be the only region in England to have devolved arrangements for the commissioning of rehabilitative and resettlement services.

Greater Manchester Probation welcomes the opportunity to innovate and work closely with partners, under devolved arrangements, in the commissioning and delivery of services and endorses the four initiatives for development under the

Rehabilitative Services programme. These include: new behaviour change interventions; an offender family support service; young adult community orders, and reinvigorating reducing reoffending boards. The reunification of Greater Manchester Probation Services will enable us to enhance our provision for managing convicted perpetrators of gender-based violence, which extends beyond domestic abuse to include, for example, perpetrators of sex offences and hate crime, and to increase the safety of and accountability to victims. In Greater Manchester, the Probation Service are committed to:

- Ensuring perpetrators receive the most appropriate sentences by collating relevant information for inclusion in pre-sentence reports.⁸⁶
- Delivering a range of effective and responsive group work and one-to-one interventions that address the complex needs of those supervised by them.⁸⁷
- Working across sectors to ensure the transference of knowledge, skills and expertise so that all practitioners working with perpetrators of gender-based violence are able to do so effectively and that knowledge is shared between those specialising in domestic abuse interventions and those working with sex offenders or hate crime offenders.
- Investing in victim liaison services and the upskilling of frontline staff to ensure there is sufficient capacity to meet the demands created by the statutory Probation Service Victim Contact Scheme that requires probation staff to keep victims informed about the disposals those who have abused them are being subject to.
- Working with commissioners to sustain women's centres in line with the Greater Manchester Integrated Health and Justice Strategy⁸⁸ (also see section 3).

Case Study

Caroline (not her real name) was referred to a women's centre through police custody triage as a stipulation of a conditional caution for shoplifting. At the initial assessment it looked as though Caroline had simply stolen two bottles of vodka and had few underlying issues – she seemed eager to leave. She was reluctant

to talk about the bruises around her neck and wrists. There was no apparent reason for her to shoplift and it was assumed she had a drink problem. She was told that if she attended and engaged with Alcohol Services a positive report could be sent to the police. Continued appointments were maintained with her key worker.

At a subsequent meeting with her key worker, because of the rapport built up Caroline disclosed that for the last 3 years she had been in a relationship with and was living with a very violent man. He would not allow her to claim benefits and she had no money of her own. He forced her to shoplift for him by threatening to beat her if she refused. She had been subjected to repeated violence over this time including being headbutted, stabbed in the forehead and stamped on. On one occasion the police attended, but she jumped out of the back of ambulance as she was terrified what would happen to her if she told the police.

Caroline was referred to the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference process. She was allocated an IDVA and other multi-agency support, including from the women's centre, was provided in respect of finance, accommodation and employment etc.

Caroline is now out of the relationship, has her own accommodation and is in stable employment. She is continuing to receive therapy and support from health services for the trauma she has suffered.

We will also make it a requirement that those working with perpetrators engage with housing providers to identify solutions to the management of repeat offenders that prioritise the safety of victims and their children so that they can stay in their homes. To this end we will:

- Work with Greater Manchester Probation Service's new *Homelessness Prevention Taskforce*, while building upon the Mayor's *A Bed Every Night* initiative and good practice on re-housing perpetrators during COVID-19 (see also section 5).
- Make a positive difference to the lives of private tenants at risk of homelessness by working in partnership with private landlords to

provide quality housing provision through our Greater Manchester Good Landlord Scheme.⁸⁹

- Foster reciprocal arrangements between housing providers in the city-region's ten boroughs to minimise the cost and disruption to victims and their families who need to move in order to flee domestic abuse.

Where appropriate, and there is no realistic chance of prosecution (see also section 5 and 7), we will signpost victims to services who can support them in obtaining civil orders. The newly formed Public Protection Governance Unit within Greater Manchester Police will also continue to review and develop its monitoring of Domestic Abuse Protection Orders (DAPOs). This will ensure that these powers are being complied with consistently across our city-region, that breaches of civil orders are dealt with, and that use is consistent with the national roll out of DAPOs within the 2021 Domestic Abuse Act. A dedicated DAPO officer based at the Manchester City Magistrates court has been appointed to ensure that local police are notified when protective orders are issued and hence able to impose appropriate sanctions when these are breached

A Pioneering Response to Sex Trafficking, Domestic Servitude and Modern Slavery

Greater Manchester is at the forefront of tackling some of the most serious forms of gender-based exploitation that disproportionately affect the least protected women and girls living in the UK. Women whose immigration status is insecure, who are care leavers, who have learning difficulties, and/or who have significant debts, are especially susceptible to the forms of exploitation that are collectively referred to as 'modern slavery'.⁹⁰ This includes trafficking for sexual exploitation, child sexual and criminal exploitation, being held in domestic servitude, and the selling of women into sham marriages. Over the next ten years we will continue to develop our flagship partnership approach, *Programme Challenger*, through which the organisations of the Combined Authority, Police and National Health Service work closely with community groups, charities, faith based organisations and businesses, in order to

protect victims of modern slavery and sexual exploitation and pursue those who exploit them.

The next ten years will see radical improvements in the police and criminal justice response to victims and perpetrators of gender-based violence. On behalf of the public, the deputy mayor's office will be holding the police to account to ensure they deliver on an extensive programme of reforms to keep victims safe and informed. The reunification of the Greater Manchester Probation Service provides a unique opportunity to work effectively with offenders and to protect victims that capitalises on cross sector working and the Mayor's homelessness strategy.

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8. Integrating Health and Social Care

Integrating Services for Victims

The NHS is often the first point of contact for people who have experienced domestic abuse, sexual assaults or other forms of gender-based violence, though not all victims attend with obvious signs of abuse or injury. Health professionals therefore play a crucial role in identifying and signposting the appropriate services victims require at moments of crisis. Sometimes victims will present with physical injuries, the fear that they have contracted a sexually transmitted disease or become pregnant following a sexual assault. Some victims will come to health services because they suspect that they have been raped while asleep or unconscious and/or have had a drink spiked. In such instances, victims can need urgent treatment with Accident and Emergency, obstetrics, and gynaecology departments, as well as examination by forensic medical examiners who collate evidence that can be used when offenders are prosecuted.

Many victims also present to other health professionals – including GPs, midwives, and health visitors – because of enduring problems with their physical or mental health that derive from the experience of abuse. These can be ongoing or historical, caused directly by physical and/or psychological abuse, or indirectly by the trauma of having to revisit the past because of the demands created by the criminal justice system or even everyday life events.

In Greater Manchester, health services are committed to dealing with the immediate, medium, and long-term needs of victims of gender-based violence and to do so in line with their statutory duties to reduce health inequalities in service provision.⁹¹

There are three key aspects of this work:

- Recognising the signs of abuse, proactively supporting victims, and using professional curiosity to enquire as to whether their support needs are being met.
- Providing immediate healthcare treatment and information.

- Referring victims on to specialist or support services and delivering on a whole health approach which joins up local health providers, acute health, mental health and primary care with specialist services for victims of gender-based violence.

Recognising the Signs

A recurring finding of domestic homicide reviews is that some victims do not reveal the full extent of the abuse they are suffering when they meet with health professionals, acute coercive control more commonplace in the lives of some victims than physical violence. It takes time and professional diligence to support some victims with disclosing what has happened to them and the enduring threats they face. This is why we are extending specialist training and advocacy programmes across GP practices in Greater Manchester in collaboration with third sector organisations specialising in tackling Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG). It is a critical part of the Greater Manchester strategy to recognise the early signs of abuse and ensure victims are referred to appropriate support services tailored to their particular needs.⁹²⁹³ In addition, we will:

- Implement minimum standards for domestic abuse training for clinical and clerical staff working in primary care and provision of advocacy support for victims.
- Support the Pride in Practice⁹⁴ initiative that provides training to General Practice, Optical Practices, Dental Practices and Pharmacies across Greater Manchester to ensure that practices effectively and confidently meet the needs of LGBTQ+ patients.
- Extend the provision of hospital based IDVAs across Greater Manchester, to enable early identification of potential victims and provide end-to-end support for those who present with injuries.
- Develop a pilot with Manchester Foundation Trust to equip sexual health clinics to identify and support victims of domestic and sexual abuse.

Case Study

A patient had attended hospital by ambulance three times in a four month

period, following attempts of self-harm via drug overdose. After the fourth admission to hospital the patient disclosed that she had tried to take her own life because of domestic abuse by her ex-partner. The patient was referred to the Hospital IDVA service by the hospital social worker.

Following a conversation between the Hospital IDVA and the patient it became apparent that she was self-harming because of anxiety caused by an upcoming court case against her ex-partner. The Hospital IDVA worked with the patient to discuss and help address the issues that were causing her to self-harm. This involved:

- Appointing a solicitor on a pro bono basis who provided support and advice at the ward whilst the patient was in hospital.
- Arranging a pre-trial visit to the court to reduce any further anxieties and to manage expectations on the day of the trial.
- Putting 'special measures' in place, such as giving evidence behind a screen, for the court appearance.

The patient attended court and gave evidence against her ex-partner who was found guilty. She has continued to rebuild her life and has not subsequently self-harmed.

Providing Immediate Healthcare

In Greater Manchester, these support services take many forms. A key service provider is the Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) in St Mary's Hospital. This provides forensic examinations and psychological therapies to victims of sexual assault. St Mary's have played a key role in drawing national attention to the prevalence of stalking and non-fatal strangulation among women who are sexually assaulted. Many victims of these terrifying forms of abuse present with few visible signs of injury, but suffer acutely from depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, and sometimes suicidal thoughts and self-harming behaviours. We are committed to helping St Mary's meet the immediate, medium term and long term needs of sexual assault survivors.

One thing we must ensure is that it becomes standard practice for women who are victims of gender-based violence to be seen in the health settings with which they are most familiar. This is particularly important for women who are at risk of 'honour' based abuse and female genital mutilation, who face additional barriers in reaching specialist services.

In Greater Manchester, we will raise awareness across health service providers to make sure they have the facilities and cultural sensitivity to ensure this is the case. We will also ensure all health care professionals know how to fast-track victims of stalking, strangulation, and sexual assault to specialist medical and psychotherapeutic services.

Addressing Enduring Support Needs

For some victims, it is important that their long-term needs are met by organisations that understand the specific ways in which gender-based violence is experienced by people from their demographic group, or in spaces in which people from the demographic group that abused them are excluded. In Greater Manchester, we understand these needs, which is why we invest in dedicated services for women, men, and LGBTQ+ and sexual health organisations. We recognise that more needs to be done to help victims navigate these services. We know, also, that waiting lists for therapeutic services have sometimes been long in Greater Manchester and that the concentration of provision in the city centre is a barrier to accessing support for some victims of gender-based violence. This is particularly true of the long-term sick and disabled, who are most at risk from gender-based violence.

To maximise the capacity, accessibility, and diversity of our support services and the skills of those working within them, we will:

- Ensure closer working relations between our IDVA/ISVA teams, the health services and third sector.
- Undertake a scoping exercise to identify gaps in our current counselling service provision and understand which further services are required right across Greater Manchester.

- Build on innovations in technology trialled in 2020 and implement greater outreach with victim services and to ensure they are fully accessible to people living in all areas of the city region.
- Generate new opportunities for service user engagement for vulnerable and marginalised women and victims of domestic abuse through Primary Care Networks.
- Ensure that appropriately trained and impartial translators are available to help those whose first language is not English access support.
- Support the development of integrated health and social care services for LGBTQ+ populations.

In December 2020, Greater Manchester became an early adopter of a pilot scheme to deliver a gender dysphoria clinic⁹⁵ led by a primary care team in a local setting working alongside the LGBT Foundation,⁹⁶ who provide social support to those experiencing gender-based violence and hate crime as some trans and non-binary people do.

We know also that people with autism and learning disabilities are over-represented among those who present to services for sexual assault survivors, and that these victims often have additional vulnerabilities including mental health problems, self-harm, and substance misuse issues.⁹⁷⁹⁸ We will be investing in services for people with learning difficulties to ensure services for victims of gender-based violence are properly signposted and professionals in both sectors can work effectively together in the best interests of victims and survivors.

For those experiencing mental distress or mental illness as a result of gender-based violence, it is essential for local, place-based support to be available. Greater Manchester has historically been in the lowest quartile of the country in terms of investment in mental health services, and this is a key area for development. This compounded the strain on services during the 2020 pandemic, increasing demand for mental health services by 40%. To redress the need for mental health services in Greater Manchester we:

- Have launched a new Mental Health Tactical Advice Service within Greater Manchester Police to ensure that our officers provide victims with the appropriate support the first time they ask for help.
- Invested in five urgent care centres to support the work of Accident and Emergency Departments.
- Are promoting our newly commissioned 24/7 mental health helpline.
- Offering phone and video-based consultations over extended hours for those who need to speak to NHS mental health staff and/or bereavement support.

Minimising Further Harm

When teachers, health workers, police or other professionals are advised of incidents of gender-based violence, they should assess whether a referral to Local Authority services is required (in line with Local Safeguarding Partnership thresholds, policy and procedures). This will enable a decision to be made as to the appropriate level and type of intervention required. In cases of intimate partner abuse, for example, social workers will seek to work with families in order to safeguard children and young people who are also at risk of harm. In Greater Manchester, we recognise that this approach can place extra pressures on victims, especially mothers, who can feel under pressure to manage the dangers posed by abusers who are still threatening them or using coercive control. We will be taking the following action to redress this:

- A new programme of training will enhance understanding of gender-based violence among social workers and Cafcass officers, with a specific focus on the need to support mothers who have lived with abuse and develop systems that do not allow abusive men to evade intervention. This training will take full account of the recommendations of the Ministry of Justice's (2020) report on Assessing Risk of Harm to Children and Parents in Private Law Children Cases.⁹⁹
- A new framework will be developed to facilitate family group meetings that prevents abusers from using these forums to further intimidate victims.

- Protocols for working with schools will be revised, to stop abusers exploiting their right to information about their child's education in ways that are coercively controlling.

We will also review our provision for older people. National research¹⁰⁰ has revealed that older women are at much greater risk of domestic homicide than men, and that violence against older women is perpetrated by sons almost as frequently as it is by male partners and ex-partners. We will help health providers, care workers and social services to identify new screening tools to recognise better the specific dimensions of coercive control - including financial abuse and withholding of care and medicines – suffered by older victims. We will also review whether our refuge provision is meeting the needs of older women, women with disabilities and women with enduring healthcare needs.

A Multi-Agency Approach

In Greater Manchester, we know it is important that service providers work together to address cases in which gender-based violence is complicated by multiple vulnerabilities and risks. These complex cases can involve intervening when two parties are abusing each other. For example: when one partner who has been severely assaulted starts using violence to protect themselves; cases of intimate partner violence and sexual assault that take place in relationships that involve co-dependency upon illicit substances or transactional elements that include the exchange of sex for drugs or money; child to parent violence cases, including where abusers persuade their children to collude in abusive behaviours; and forms of abuse that are culturally endorsed by a wider family network or community, including honour based abuse, forced marriage and female genital mutilation.

Over the next ten years, Greater Manchester will continue to engage with national support organisations such as Karma Nirvana and local charities like Project Choice to advise and train those working in multi-agency partnerships on complex cases. This will ensure health and social care workers in Greater Manchester are fully equipped to understand the many forms gender-based violence can take and how

gendered patterns of inequality compound the dangers faced by women and girls in many different relationships. In addition, we will:

- Review national and international approaches to preventing harmful traditional practices to understand what works, for who and how. This will include a review of the Greater Manchester Project Choice and Guardian projects.

Over the last five years, Greater Manchester has recognised the need to build collaborative relationships with young people who are vulnerable to abuse, for example, through ‘Safe and Together Model’ training in Manchester¹⁰¹. This is especially the cases with ‘Looked After’ children, who are more easily persuaded to rely on the support of adults looking to groom them with offers of accommodation, protection, food, drugs, and money, when they are distrusting of the social workers supporting them.¹⁰² The *Achieving Change Together* pilots in Wigan and Rochdale – which were co-designed by young people and their parents and carers - have revealed how providing a single, consistent source of professional support to young people who have suffered trauma, neglect and gender-based violence can protect them from subsequent victimisation.

From 2021, we will extend this pilot across Greater Manchester’s Complex Safeguarding teams. We will adopt a non-judgemental, context specific, and phased approach, to maximise buy-in among service providers, young people and their families at the earliest possible stage. This will require:

- Upskilling all those working with young people in contextual safeguarding approaches. Training must address how the gendered dimensions of peer, school and family relationships shape young people’s perceptions of risks and the strategies available to them for overcoming it.

In Greater Manchester, we are striving to integrate services for all victims of gender-based violence to ensure we meet their long-term social, emotional and health care needs.

9. Executive Summary of Commitments

Over the next ten years, Greater Manchester's approach to redressing gender-based violence will be defined by:

- Accountability to victims and survivors, children and young people.
- Sustained engagement with the public, employers and educational institutions.
- Recognition of the roles played frontline health, social care and specialist, VCSE and 'by and for' service providers in reducing repeat victimisation.
- Openness about the capacity of the criminal justice system to deliver justice to victims and the demands it places on them.
- An integrated housing policy that ensures that most victims can stay in their own homes, or are swiftly rehoused locally without compromising their tenancy rights.
- Safe and effective interventions with perpetrators that prioritise the protection of victims and survivors.

Over the next ten years we will reduce the demand for crisis and criminal justice responses by prioritising primary prevention and early intervention. Our strategy will be led by a new Gender-Based Violence Board which will include victims and survivors who will co-chair it alongside the Deputy Mayor. The Board's oversight will be organised across seven strands:

1. Changing the Story
2. Mobilising Greater Manchester
3. Supporting Victims and Survivors
4. Meeting the Needs of Children and Young People
5. Responding Effectively to Perpetrators

6. Improving Policing and Criminal Justice

7. Integrating Health and Social Care

Mobilising Greater Manchester

We will change the story by:

- Developing a programme of public engagement that highlights how attitudes and inequalities contribute to gender-based violence, including a campaign directed at boys and men.
- Evaluating the impact of our public engagement activities and consulting directly with young people and faith groups to ensure campaign messages are understood as intended.
- Anticipating the demand generated by enhanced public awareness.
- Introducing a discrete emergency contact system for passengers using public transport and helping Local Authorities to secure public space protection orders.
- Promoting best practice processes for employers with respect to recording and responding to domestic abuse and sexual harassment, safeguarding those at risk of stalking, and equipping workers to call-out discriminatory attitudes and abusive behaviours without fear of repercussion.
- Requiring commissioned service providers address inequalities in opportunities for women and report annually on the gender pay gap and actions to redress it.
- Ensuring all third and public sector professionals have access to the best professional development programmes about gender-based violence and are committed to challenging the sexism, racism and homophobia that contribute to it.
- Work with government inspectorates to set new professional standards with regard to investigating reports of gender-based violence perpetrated by public sector professionals.

Supporting Victims and Survivors

In Greater Manchester, we are committed to making it as easy as possible for victims to access support and aim to deliver a seamless service for from the first point of disclosure. From 2021 the Gender Abuse Board will ensure the views of victims and survivors inform all our measures of success. The Board will oversee:

- The introduction of a new Trusted Referrer's Scheme that will enable voluntary sector organisations, faith groups and schools to refer victims directly to health and criminal justice services.
- A review of how domestic abuse cases are managed by Greater Manchester Police to ensure victims in the criminal justice system are offered the very best service, kept informed, treated with dignity and listened to.
- A revamp of our IDVA and ISVA provision to ensure it meets the diverse needs of all survivors and victims in all areas of the of the city-region, alongside the development of bespoke action plan on male victims.
- A review our commissioning arrangements for rape and sexual assault services to increase access to immediate support and decrease waiting times for specialist services.

We will also:

- Increase the capacity and capability of our victim advocacy services through the development of a Greater Manchester Advocacy Standards Framework.
- Recommission women's centres and appoint a Health Service Project Manager who will review existing pathways into health and well-being services for vulnerable women.
- Ensure our victim's services are fully signposted and accessible to all, irrespective of whether the complainant has contacted the police, has no recourse to public funds, and whatever their immigration status, complying with the Domestic Abuse Commissioner's call for 'firewall'

services to protect those victims of gender-based violence who are of interest to immigration enforcement, and engaging with the recommendations of bodies that have examined how the limited protections afforded to women with insecure immigration status are exploited by abusers¹⁰³.

- Investing in services and risk assessment tools for people with learning difficulties and those who identify as neurodivergent to ensure services for victims of gender-based violence are properly signposted and professionals in both sectors can work effectively together in the best interests of their clients.
- Integrate support for those who are victims of harmful practices within the clinical service provision for people who have undergone trauma.
- Develop and evaluate integrated approaches to housing and law enforcement that prioritise moving perpetrators rather than victims wherever possible.
- Work across voluntary and statutory sectors to build on innovative practice developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, to support the safe return of adult victims and their children to stable accommodation whenever refuge places have been needed.
- Ensure the Greater Manchester Homelessness Prevention Strategy addresses the ways in which housing insecurity compounds the risks of gender-based violence women and children face and that rough sleeping initiatives adopt gender and trauma informed approaches that are sensitive to the diverse needs of women, LGBTQ+ populations and disabled people.
- Routinely upskill all health, social care, and criminal justice personnel in the implications of new criminal and civil legislation.
- Establish a quality assurance and capability inspection process to review the effectiveness and efficiency of our service provision.

Meeting the Needs of Children and Young People

Primary prevention activities that empower young people to recognise abuse and seek support when it infringes on their own relationships, together with early interventions to minimise the harm gender-based violence causes young people, are the keys to reducing prevalence in the long term. This is why we will continue to support the many third sector organisations that come into schools and colleges to inform young people about dating violence, peer abuse and bullying, mental health, alcohol and substance use, sexual diversity, sexual health services, and services for victims of domestic and sexual abuse.

It is also why we are investing in the children's social care system and bespoke initiatives to reduce the risk of harm to young people. We are:

- Extending Operation Encompass so that schools are notified the next morning when the police attend domestic abuse incidents where anyone aged 18 or below is present.
- Revising protocols for schools to stop abusers exploiting their right to information about their child's education in ways that are coercively controlling.
- Increasing the accessibility of long-term support services for young people who have experienced domestic abuse as children, by developing online self-referral services for those who are at risk of or engaging in gender-based violence.
- Increasing investment in children and young people's mental health services so that mental health support for children and young people becomes readily accessible through educational institutions, while relieving pressure on police and emergency services.
- Mapping the range of provisions therapeutic services for children and young people who are living in homes affected by domestic abuse and extending access to pre-existing adult services to older teenagers at risk of intimate partner violence and/or peer-on peer abuse.
- Supporting a pilot intervention for young people involved in intimate partner violence while exploring the potential for a Community

Perpetrator Programme looking at both family service based referrals and criminal justice mandating.

We are also investing in many targeted support programmes for families at risk of or experiencing specific forms of gender-based violence. These include:

- The *No Wrong Door* initiative, which enables dedicated child protection teams to work closely with foster carers and residential care homes where there are risks of harm to adolescents who do not necessarily see themselves as victims.
- The *Achieving Change Together* (ACT) programme, which has embedded specialist workers into Complex Safeguarding Teams to provide intensive support to children who have been exploited.
- The *Trusted Relationships* initiative, which embeds psychotherapists in Complex Safeguarding Teams.
- The *Greater Manchester Campaign Against Sexual Exploitation*, which facilitates exchange between grassroots organisations giving voice to survivors and other professional service providers.

Responding Effectively to Perpetrators

The establishment of a Greater Manchester Probation Service aligned with the geographical remit of other statutory service providers, combined with government investment in a catalogue of perpetrator programmes offered through the third sector and bolstered by GMCA's commitments to an extensive public engagement campaign and a system of governance that prioritises accountability to victims and survivors, provides a unique opportunity to respond effectively to gender-based violence perpetrators. From 2021 we will:

- Extend the geographical reach of provision for men who have been abusive in heterosexual relationships.
- Extend current one-to-one provision for women who have been abusive in heterosexual and same-sex relationships.

- Commission a new intervention for men who have been abusive in same-sex relationships.
- Commission a new DRIVE programme to work with perpetrators of abuse for those who are not fluent English speakers.
- Devise a victim-led framework to identify where alternatives to criminal justice are appropriate, safe, and just means of responding to perpetrators.
- Develop a framework for facilitating restorative justice options for young people and very vulnerable adults who have perpetrated gender-based violence in the context of being victims themselves.
- Evaluate and develop post-sentence restorative options to help victims recover from serious and complex cases and road-test new approaches that enable them to explain to perpetrators the harms they have caused.

Improving Policing and Criminal Justice

Radical improvements in the police and criminal justice response to gender-based violence are forthcoming. We expect Greater Manchester Police to:

- Require police officers attending domestic abuse incidents to secure all the relevant evidence and use body worn cameras consistently.
- Ensure all frontline police officers know how to request to talk to victims on their own so that they feel safe to disclose abuse and speak clearly to children living with abuse.
- Record misogynistic hate crime incidents in the same way as they record racist and homophobic incidents.
- Ensure that abuse cases involving serious harm and risk are subject to bail conditions that protect victims and that risk assessments are revised and the Crown Prosecution Service notified before suspects' bail statuses change or they are released under investigation.
- Promote the due consideration of all cases that proceed to court for restraining orders to be attached.

Through the Office of the Deputy Mayor, the Police and Crime Commissioner will:

- Seek sustained improvement in the quality of police investigations and their outcomes in cases of gender-based violence.
- Ensure victims are regularly consulted on how the criminal justice response to gender-based violence can be improved.
- Routinely monitor whether criminal justice reforms are improving victim satisfaction and justice outcomes or resulting in detrimental impacts on women at risk of abuse and black and ethnic minority communities.
- Ask Greater Manchester Police to demonstrate how investment in key technologies is improving justice outcomes for victims.
- Assess the potential to use multi-disciplinary panels to improve responses to victims of all gender-based violence and increase the speed and efficiency of information sharing practices across Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs.
- Improve the police response to stalking by deploying multi-disciplinary scrutiny panels; engaging with Paladin, the world's first national stalking advocacy service, to develop advocacy for those who are victims of stalking; and considering the case for establishing new Stalking Assessment Centres.

GMCA will ensure that:

- All criminal justice personnel are trained in the powers the new criminal and civil legislation confer, with an immediate focus on the Domestic Abuse Act and the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme, commonly known as Clare's Law, and an enduring focus on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.
- Work with the Court service, Magistrates' Association and wider criminal justice system to promote the use of alternative means of presenting evidence, such as pre-recorded cross-examinations and the use of Victim Personal Statements.

- Ensure sentencers, the police and offender managers are aware of the full range of sanctions that can be imposed on perpetrators as new legislation comes into force.
- Ensure that victims are referred to the statutory Probation Service Victim Contact Scheme when those who have abused them receive custodial sentences of 12 months or more.

The Greater Manchester Probation Service will:

- Invest in victim liaison services and the upskilling of frontline staff to fulfil the Victim Contact Scheme that requires probation staff to keep victims informed about the disposals those who abused them are subject to.
- Ensure perpetrators receive the most appropriate sentences by collating relevant information for inclusion in pre-sentence reports.
- Deliver a range of effective and responsive group work and one-to-one interventions that address the complex needs of those supervised by them.
- Work across sectors to ensure the transference of skills and expertise among those working with perpetrators of gender-based violence and that knowledge is shared between those specialising in domestic abuse interventions and those working with sex offenders and hate crime offenders.

Greater Manchester's criminal justice professionals and GMCA will work in partnership to:

- Engage continuously with those with organisations working with survivors to ensure all work with perpetrators prioritises the protection of victims and survivors, including children and young people.
- Sustain women's centres in line with the Greater Manchester Integrated Health and Justice Strategy.

- Capitalise on Greater Manchester Probation Service's *Homelessness Prevention Taskforce*, the Mayor's *A Bed Every Night* and the Good Landlord Scheme to increase the protection available to victims of abuse and minimise the disruption to them and their children posed by perpetrators.

Integrating Health & Social Care

Victims and survivors often find it easier to disclose gender-based violence to health and social care professionals than criminal justice professionals than to criminal justice professionals. This is why, in Greater Manchester, we are integrating health and social into our responses to gender-based violence. To meet this aim we will:

- Introduce minimum standards for domestic abuse training for clinical and clerical staff working in primary care.
- Extend the provision of hospital based IDVAs and ISVAS to enable early identification of potential victims.
- Undertake a scoping exercise to identify gaps in our current counselling service provision for victims and survivors.
- Ensure all services are fully accessible by building on innovations in technology, implementing greater outreach with victim services, and proactively pursuing user engagement with vulnerable women and victims identified within Primary Care Networks.
- Promote the Pride in Practice initiative that provides training to General Practice, Optical Practices, Dental Practices and Pharmacies to ensure that practices effectively and confidently meet the needs of LGBTQ+ patients.
- Support the Indigo pilot scheme that enables NGO providers of social support to assist patients at our gender dysphoria clinic at risk of gender-based violence and transphobia, while further integrating pathways of support and social care for LGBTQ+ populations.
- Ensure that appropriately trained and impartial translators are available to help those whose first language is not English access support.

In the context of social care and services for children, we will:

- Develop a new training to enhance understanding of gender-based violence among social workers and Cafcass officers, with a specific focus on the need to support mothers who have lived with abuse; develop systems that do not allow abusive men to evade intervention; and upskill those working with young people in the principles and practices of contextual safeguarding.
- Introduce a new framework to facilitate family group meetings that prevents abusers from using them to further intimidate victims.
- Review national and international approaches to preventing harmful traditional practices to understand what works, for who and in what contexts.

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Glossary

Cafcass	Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service
Deadnaming	The use of the birth or other former name of a transgender person without their consent.
DRIVE	National high harm perpetrator programme developed by Respect, Safe Lives and Social Finance.
FGM	Force Genital Mutilation - all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.
Gender Dysphoria	The condition of feeling one's emotional and psychological identity to be at variance with one's birth sex.
Gender-queer	A person who does not subscribe to conventional gender distinctions but identifies with neither, both, or a combination of male and female genders.
GMCA	Greater Manchester Combined Authority - made up of the ten Greater Manchester councils and Mayor, who work with other local services, businesses, communities and other partners to improve the city-region.
HMICFRS	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary & Fire and Rescue Services.
Homophobia	Dislike of or prejudice against gay people.
IDVA	Independent Domestic Violence Adviser.
ISVA	Independent Sexual Violence Adviser.
LGBTQ+	Acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning of sexual orientation or gender identity.
Looked After Child	Also referred to 'children in care,' a term which many children and young people prefer.
Misogyny	Dislike of, contempt for, or ingrained prejudice against women.
Non-binary	Someone who does not fit into rigid gender categories and is neither female nor male. While they can identify with aspects of either

	gender, they can also have an identity outside the binary, which can also change and evolve over time.
Primary Care Network	Groups of GP practices working together with community, mental health, social care, pharmacy, hospital and voluntary services in their local areas.
PRU	Pupil Referral Unit - a type of school that caters for children who aren't able to attend a mainstream school. Pupils are often referred there if they need greater care and support than their school can provide.
Public Space Protection Orders	An order made by a local authority to tackle anti-social behaviour in a specified area.
Restorative Justice	A process where those harmed by crime or conflict and those responsible for the harm into communication, enabling everyone affected by a particular incident to play a part in repairing the harm and finding a positive way forward.
Revenge porn	The sharing of private, sexual materials, either photos or videos, of another person without their consent and with the purpose of causing embarrassment or distress. The images are sometimes accompanied by personal information about the person, including their full name, address and links to their social media profiles.
Romance fraud	The engineering of a supposed friendship or relationship for fraudulent, financial gain.
Social deprivation	A term that refers to the combination of factors that prevent a person from having easy and frequent access to the many different aspects of their culture and society.
Structural racism	<u>Laws, rules, or official policies</u> in a <u>society</u> that <u>result</u> in and <u>support</u> a <u>continued unfair advantage</u> to some <u>people</u> and <u>unfair</u> or <u>harmful treatment</u> of <u>others based</u> on <u>race</u> :
Think Victim Campaign	A programme of education and training within Greater Manchester Police to ensure the organisation, officers and staff provide the best

	possible service to victims of crime and are responsive to individual needs.
Third Sector	The part of an economy or society comprising non-governmental and non-profit-making organisations or associations, including charities, voluntary and community groups, cooperatives, etc.
Trans	A person whose sense of personal identity and gender does not correspond with their birth sex. accepted as interchangeable with the term transgender. However, some people prefer the shortened adjective trans to avoid any reference to assigned sex or binary gender in this inclusive identity label.
Victims Code of Practice	Statutory code that sets out the minimum level of service that victims should receive from the criminal justice system. Revised version published in April 2021.
VCSE	Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise

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