

Equality Impact Assessment for the Gender-Based Violence Strategy 2021-2031

Name of strategy:	Gender-Based Violence Strategy
Corporate objective being addressed:	Stronger and Safer Communities
Department carrying out the assessment:	Police and Crime
Person responsible for the implementation of the strategy	Bev Hughes, Deputy Mayor
People involved in the impact assessment	Shona Boyle – Lead Analyst (Police and Crime) Louis Richards – Principal Research (Police and Crime) Neil Evans - Strategic Adviser to the Deputy Mayor

Introduction

The gender-based violence strategy has equality and equity at the centre, as it strives towards a society where gender equality means that individuals are not at risk of violence based on their sex, sexual orientation or gender identity. This equality impact assessment outlines the way in which equality has shaped the development of the strategy through information and data collection, consultation, and engagement. An assessment of the impact on each protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010 has been undertaken alongside any mitigating actions which have been taken or which are planned.

This strategy is broad and involves a wide variety of commitments and priorities and it would not be possible to individually assess the impact of each of these interventions, so instead the strategy as a whole has been assessed and further equality impact assessments will take place during the implementation stage when interventions are planned.

Due to the scope of the strategy and its particular importance around equality and equity, this equality impact assessment goes into more detail than may be usual, but this

represents the increased level of engagement and consultation which informed this strategy. The document does, however, still follow the core questions asked within GMCA EIA documentation.

What are the aims of the strategy?

The aim of this strategy is to provide direction and accountability for the work taking place within the city region around tackling gender-based violence including the services to support victims, programmes to rehabilitate perpetrators and hold them accountable for their actions, campaigns to change attitudes around sex and gender stereotypes and education programmes to ensure people, especially young people, understand what a healthy relationship looks like. The strategy also incorporates the police response to gender-based violence as well as the role that probation will play. Agencies and service providers will be accountable to the Gender-Based Violence Board.

This strategy lays out a core set of priorities and commitments which will be put into action to tackle gender-based violence in Greater Manchester. A key set of overarching priorities are backed up with specific commitments which fall into 6 sections.

- Mobilising Greater Manchester
- Supporting Victims and Survivors
- Meeting the Needs of Children and Young People
- Responding Effectively to Perpetrators
- Improving Policing and Criminal Justice
- Integrating Health and Social Care

Once the strategy is finalised, a board will be created that will oversee the implementation of the commitments. This board will incorporate members from a wide variety of professional and personal backgrounds to ensure that the implementation of the strategy works for everyone in Greater Manchester.

Who is intended to benefit from the strategy?

This strategy is intended to benefit victims and survivors and potential victims of gender-based violence. As the majority of victims and survivors of gender-based violence are female it will therefore mostly address the needs of women and girls, however the strategy also acknowledges that people of any gender can be subjected to gender-based violence, and male and non-binary victims and survivors of gender-based violence will also benefit. The strategy is intended to benefit everyone in Greater Manchester through working with both victims and survivors, and perpetrators, as well as tackling attitudes and underlying inequalities that foster gender-based violence.

Whilst women and girls will be the main focus of service provision, men will also benefit by understanding how attitudes and inequalities can contribute to gender-based violence so

that they can be informed around how to challenge gendered stereotypes and prevent gender-based violence from happening.

Children and young people will also benefit greatly from this strategy through empowering them to recognise abuse and ensuring that they have supportive and well-informed teachers and role models around them that can teach them about healthy relationships. Children who are victims (the recent Domestic Violence Act now specifically defines children who witness domestic abuse as victims) of domestic abuse also will benefit significantly from this strategy through the support that they will receive.

What are the main outcomes of the strategy?

In 2021, a new Gender-Based Violence Board will be initiated with clear terms of reference, setting out its 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, and will reflect the diversity of the communities that 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 they will be 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. It will work with other relevant established forums, including but not restricted to, the Greater Manchester Women and Girls Equality Panel, Racial Equality Panel, Disability Panel and Older Peoples' Network.

The Board therefore, will determine what the main outcomes of this policy will be through defining priorities, overseeing detailed delivery plans, overseeing allocation of resources and finance and by defining how success will be judged. The Board will establish a cycle of publishing annual plans and progress reports.

What other organisations are involved in the delivery of this strategy?

This strategy intends to make positive change across the whole of Greater Manchester, and it is therefore very wide in scope and cuts across a lot of sectors. There will therefore, be a wide range of partners included in the delivery of this strategy. These include GMCA,

our 10 local councils, GM Health & Social Care Partnership, Greater Manchester Police, the Greater Manchester region of the National Probation Service, voluntary, community and social enterprise sector and employers. Much of the service delivery will be through commissioned services and programmes that support victims and survivors of gender-based violence and that work with perpetrators.

Schools, colleges and universities are also included within the strategy, through inviting teachers to training events and working collaboratively with head teachers.

What information do we have and what did this information tell us?

The strategy draws upon data from a wide variety of sources. These include other GMCA strategies and plans, Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership, HM Government, Office for National Statistics, Home Office, United Nations, Crown Prosecution Service, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services, OFSTED, NHS England, Law Commission, World Health Organisation, European Institute for Gender Equality, Department for Health, Department for Education, Ministry of Justice, HM Inspectorate of Probation as well as academic literature and resources and research produced by the VCSE sector.

A key source of information was the expert knowledge of those who were consulted and engaged with in the development of this strategy. These are highlighted in the next section.

How will information be collected regarding the impact of the strategy?

Several organisations and individuals were consulted with in the writing of this strategy to ensure that the policy will have the intended impact. These included professionals from across GMCA and GM districts, academics from Manchester Metropolitan University and The University of Manchester as well as wider partners and organisations working within this field in Greater Manchester.

It was important to consult with a variety of organisations which represent the diversity of the communities within Greater Manchester. This was to ensure that this strategy will have a positive impact on everyone. The expert knowledge, personal and professional insights and experiences provided by the VCSE sector were invaluable in the development of this strategy.

VCSE and community partners included:

- LGBT Foundation
- Diversity Matters North West
- Manchester BME Network
- NESTAC
- Safety 4 Sisters
- Wonderfully Made Woman
- Fortalice
- Bolton Council of Mosque
- Northern Care Alliance
- Talk Listen Change

- Jewish Women's Aid
- Victim Support IDVA service
- Endeavour Domestic Abuse Services
- Salford Foundation
- Stockport Without Abuse
- Bridge
- Pankhurst Trust (incorporating Manchester Women's Aid)
- MASH
- Manchester Rape Crisis
- Collaborative Women UK
- Trafford Domestic Abuse Services
- Women MATTA
- Survivors Manchester

The Community Rehabilitation Company, National Probation Service and colleagues from GM Health and Social Care Partnership were also consulted with around the plan.

Individuals consulted included Carl Austin-Behan, the LGBT adviser to the Mayor, Keiran Barnes, Equalities Team Manchester City Council, Dr Rabyia Majeed at St Mary's who advised on learning difficulties and autism, as well as Mari Saeki, Greater Manchester Autism Consortium and National Autistic Society.

The first draft of the plan was also read by the Domestic Abuse Commissioner who endorsed the strategy and a presentation of the strategy was delivered to the Women & Girls Equality Panel who provided feedback. Ongoing dialogue has taken place with the Violence Against Women & Girls sub-group of the Panel, and dialogue has also taken place with members of the Race Equality Panel.

A draft version was made public in March 2021 and comments were welcomed. After feedback was received several changes were made. Where these changes impact those with protected characteristics, these have been outlined below.

After this first stage of feedback, the knowledge of those with lived experience was further recognised and those with lived experience will play an integral role in the governance of this strategy through being members of the board. In addition a Victim and Survivor Advisory Panel will also be established. This will contribute to ensuring that the strategy has a positive impact on victims of gender-based violence throughout the implementation stage.

A full public consultation took place between 22nd June and 1st August in which individuals and organisations provided feedback on the commitments and priorities laid out within the strategy. The Older People's Board, Disabled Panel and the Youth Combined Authority were also consulted with at this stage and several focus groups were arranged. These included female school students, male school students, university students, younger women, younger men, women over 54, employers, females with disabilities, police and probation officers and one-to-one interviews with victims of gender-based violence.

Within the consultation, some people felt that there needed to be greater clarity around how the distinctive needs of certain groups would be met. In response to this, 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 and this is reflected in the finalised strategy.

Once the strategy is launched, disaggregated data will be collected regularly to show that a service is being provided as equitably as possible. This will include collecting gender-based violence data and data around local demand for services. The data will be used to contribute to, and influence commissioning and contract management processes going forward, to ensure we meet the needs of all communities and demographic groups.

The co-chairs will be responsible for the coordination and implementation of the strategy and will draw up a roadmap that establishes an incremental programme of change that identifies key milestones. This will include ensuring that actions from this assessment are captured and subject to ongoing assessment, particularly in respect of identified mitigation. New information will be captured as it comes to light and appropriately assessed. This will be particularly important in respect of our stated ambition in respect of continuing to listen to and act upon the voices of those with lived experience, as well as wider stakeholders.

Assessment of the Impact on Protected Characteristics and Mitigating Actions

Age

Gender based violence affects people of all ages and whilst this may take on different forms depending on the victims age, the commitments within the strategy ensure that all victims will benefit.

Younger people, particularly young men, are a priority within the strategy and much of the preventative work is targeted towards them. This is because the strategy intends to educate and change the gendered stereotypes that become ingrained from a young age and therefore this work must involve young people.

To ensure that the strategy is having a positive impact on young people, the Youth Combined Authority will continue to contribute towards ideas and policies that will engage young people, protect them from gender-based violence and improve their outcomes. Teachers and head teachers will also be involved through events and training.

Whilst the strategy does recognise the different challenges and circumstances that older victims of gender-based violence experience, this was given more clarity after consultation. In response to feedback received from the Older Peoples' Board, a recognition of the specific dimensions of coercive control - including financial abuse and withholding of care and medicines – suffered by older victims is now included alongside a commitment that health providers, care workers and social services will seek to identify new screening tools to better recognise these specific dimensions. There is also greater recognition of the likelihood that older women who experience domestic abuse do so often

from adult sons and sometimes grandchildren. In addition, the strategy now includes a commitment to review whether refuge provision and support services are meeting the needs of older women, reflecting the particular barriers they often face.

Alongside this, data on age will be collected frequently to ensure that our services are being provided as equitably as possible.

Race

The document acknowledges that ethnic minority communities are not being reached by some services in Greater Manchester, reflective of the particular difficulties they face in respect of access and disclosing abuse. The strategy therefore, makes a commitment to make services for victims more accessible to ethnic minority communities. This includes working with local authorities to ensure greater availability of translation services and undertaking a scoping exercise to determine the extent to which the needs of various minority groups are being met within GM and learn from best case examples across the UK.

After feedback was received, several responses wanted greater assurances that services 'by and for' ethnic minority groups would be supported within the strategy. Specific mention of working with such organisations was added within the latest draft.

In addition, following feedback from the Race Equality Panel, further detail around the support to be provided to those from minoritised populations was added to the strategy. Specifically this included ensuring that victims and survivors 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. Greater clarity was also added around providing appropriate refuge for women that includes consideration of the locality and the risks of racial or religious harassment.

Once this scoping exercise is complete, the next stage of implementation of services will need to be monitored to ensure that those from ethnic minorities will receive a service which is appropriate.

Sex

After consultation, changes were made to link the definition of gender-based violence to the internationally recognised United Nations 'Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women.' The definition used within the strategy is consistent with the Istanbul (UN) Convention and recognises that women and girls are exposed to a higher risk of gender-based violence than men but that men can also be victims. This definition includes men but is proportionate to the levels of victimisation experienced by men. Women and girls are, therefore, a priority within the strategy particularly around provision of support.

Men and boys however, also have a place within the strategy and they will also benefit from the commitments laid out. In order to prevent gender-based violence, the strategy recognises the need for systemic change amongst men and focuses on wider primary prevention and early intervention and opportunities for public engagement. Everyone, including men and boys, will benefit from breaking down the sexist expectations which reinforce gender-based violence.

For example, work with young men and boys will be delivered to identify how bystanders can respond in non-confrontational ways when they see others exposed to gender-based violence. This work will involve local VCSE organisations to ensure that children and young people, but particularly young men and boys can access support from services that specialise in engaging with young people to promote gender and sexual equality and challenge prejudices.

To ensure that male victims and survivors also benefit from this strategy, a bespoke plan will be drawn up to address how to 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.

Following feedback, the development of the Greater Manchester Advocacy Standards Framework will take account of the Violence Against Women and Girls Sector Shared Core Standards developed by Women's Aid, Respect, Safe Lives, Imkaan and Rape Crisis England and Wales.

Some people expressed concern that the strategy is 'gender' based as opposed to 'sex' based. This was often in the context of concern about gender-neutral commissioning and the potential impact this could have on women's ability to access women's specialist services. GMCA recognise and accept that discrimination means some people may have not had equal access to services or employment and support the view that it may be necessary to develop or create some services or opportunities to specifically meet different needs. GMCA will seek to ensure that no one is unlawfully discriminated against on the basis of their protected characteristic but recognise the right to use the services and employment exceptions as a proportionate means to achieve a legitimate aim in line with the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty. (See also below).

Gender reassignment

The strategy acknowledges that the trans population is at increased risk of domestic abuse and part of this is because of the lack of dedicated service to meet their needs and overcome the stigma associated with it. This strategy commits to changing this and ensuring that services are safe, accessible and appropriate for all.

Some comments in the consultation wanted greater inclusion of trans and non-binary victims within the definition of gender-based violence and so the final draft outlines clearly

that this strategy includes 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.

Disability

The true scale of gender-based violence amongst the deaf and disabled population in Greater Manchester is not known, but there is extensive national and international research suggesting that disabled women are at greater risk of domestic abuse than the general population. It would be reasonable to assume this is the case in Greater Manchester and our strategy commits to undertaking a comprehensive scoping exercise to assess the extent to which our services, including refuge provisions, are meeting the needs of victims and survivors from physically disabled, learning disabled and neurodivergent populations. This is to ensure that there is not a negative differential impact for disabled victims.

Religion

The strategy lays out how it will work with faith communities to ensure that awareness is raised about what can be done to tackle gender-based violence. This is because national research shows that there are higher rates of domestic abuse victimisation amongst women from Christian, Hindu, and Muslim faiths than among women of no religion. Those from faith backgrounds, therefore, will have even more opportunity to engage with the strategy but this will not lead to a differential impact for those from faith or non-faith communities.

Sexual Orientation

The strategy acknowledges that violence within LGBTQ+ relationships can also be informed by gendered expectations and that whilst male violence against women accounts for the majority of domestic violent crime, those in LGBTQ+ relationships can also suffer gender-based violence. Some research suggests comparable prevalence rates in in LGBTQ+ relationships, and specific risks among those who have relationships with men' It is also recognised that domestic abuse within the LGBTQ+ population might not be picked up on as rapidly by front line workers and that further training and resources are needed.

In order to ensure that commissioned services are meeting the needs of LGBTQ+ victims, a scoping exercise will also take place to understand the current provision and to ensure that there is fair access for people of all sexual orientations.

Marriage and Civil Partnership

No differential impact has been identified around marriage and civil partnership.

Pregnancy and maternity

Evidence suggests that women who are pregnant are at increased risk of domestic abuse and that both pregnancy and maternity both elevate the risks of serious harm and death of

women experiencing domestic abuse and other forms of gender-based violence. The 'Integrating Health and Social Care,' chapter of our strategy makes specific commitments with the intention of early identification of those experiencing domestic abuse, to ensure earlier intervention and support is provided. Reference is specifically made to pregnancy and midwives.