



VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS PLAN

2017 - 2021

Standing Together to keep people safe;
THE VIOLENCE STOPS NOW.
Safer Lewisham Partnership

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Foreword

"Building a Safer Lewisham: preventing and eradicating Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)"

Through effective partnership work and engagement with communities the Safer Lewisham Partnership aims to reduce victim based offences, and to improve the quality of life of its residents.

The Safer Lewisham Partnership has endorsed and supports the VAWG strategy 2017-2021 for our Borough.

The United Nations (UN) defines VAWG as "any act of gender- based violence that is directed at a woman because she is a woman, or acts of violence which are suffered disproportionately by women". This definition is also endorsed by the London Mayor's Office on Police and Crime, (MOPAC). The Safer Lewisham Partnership accepts this definition as well as recognising that male victims can also be vulnerable to these forms of violence and abuse. This does not detract from the clear focus on this agenda affecting women and girls disproportionately.

It is for this reason I introduced an individual and cooperate Lewisham pledge that states:-

- I will take a zero tolerance approach to violence
- I will not act in a way that will cause harm or distress to others
- I will talk to a trusted adult if I am concerned, am a victim, know someone who is causing harm to others
- I will think before I press send on social media or photos/ videos
- As a parent, carer or adult I will be alert to signs and seek how I can help others with information or support
- As agencies (police, Local Authority, Voluntary sector) we will work together to help those affected by violence

It is all of our responsibility to speak out, and take logical action to prevent gender based violence and abuse.

Within this agenda is Domestic Abuse (DA). In Lewisham, domestic violence and abuse is a priority for the Lewisham Safeguarding Adults Board (LSAB), and has been flagged as a priority within the Lewisham Safeguarding Children's Board's (LSCB). It is only one area of VAWG. As we take a closer look at this area we find the national state of domestic violence alarming and prevailing effects on our communities.

- Across England and Wales, 7.3% of women and 4.2% of men were victims of domestic abuse between March 2016 and 2017. In London alone, 54,462 women and 17,068 men were victims of domestic abuse in 2016.
- Each week two women are killed by their current or by a former partner in England and Wales (Office for National Statistics 2016).
- 38% of all women murders globally were reported as being committed by their partners (World Health Organization 2016).

- 25% of women experience domestic violence in their lifetime (Office of National Statistics 2016).
- Women who experience domestic violence are twice as likely to experience depression (World Health Organisation 2016).

It is indeed widely understood that DA victims like most VAWG crime is under reported, and many victims and survivors do not come to the attention of services. This needs to be fully understood in light of the above information.

In response to this the Mayor of London Sadiq Khan has sought to increase the number of Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs), which provides the victims with legal support. The Mayor's Officer for Police and Crime (MOPAC) has also commissioned four rape crisis centres and provided £2.5 million for a pan-London domestic violence service, alongside separate funding for victim support which specifies that the providers will be expected to ensure that the services meet the needs of different groups including Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME), Lesbian Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT), young people and those with mental health and substance misuse needs.

This plan takes us through the journey of VAWG in all its forms and provides information about how we can help and support victims and their families on the road to recovery, earmarking available support systems and strategies. It opens with the case study of Jacqui, a touching story of resilience to domestic violence and a plight to recovery and empowerment, alongside supportive agency.

For a healthy, safe and happy community to exist we need to ensure that all people take part in attempting to understand and prevent VAWG. We need to challenge conventions and some cultural practices. To recognise victims and how to support them. Agencies need to be supported to develop clear pathways to support all victims of all gender-based violence and abuse is crucial. Professionals need to be trained in awareness, observation and in how to respond.

This 4 year Plan sets out the issues and provides a clear understanding of its many forms as well as a comprehensive vision forward. Finally, it is about caring for people by protecting them from harm, where they have been harmed it is about removing them from the abuser and offering them (and their family) support and safety.

Join and sign up to **PLEDGE**:

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- As a parent, carer or adult I will be alert to signs and seek how I can help others with information or support
- As agencies (police, Local Authority, Voluntary sector) we will work together to help those affected by violence

Cllr Janet Daby
Cabinet Member for Community Safety
Chair of Safer Lewisham Partnership

Jacqui's Story – Finding My Voice

The first few weeks that I was with Peter were wonderful. He was affectionate, considerate, fun to be with and a great boost to my self-esteem. But as soon as I moved in with him the violence began. I was frightened and shocked but he was always so sorry for what he had done and promised never to hurt me again.

He became very jealous and possessive. He kept accusing me of having an affair but I just thought he was feeling insecure. I felt sorry for him. I believed I could change him. Then he turned against my family and friends and tried not to let me see them. I broke up with him more than once but he was always so sorry for what he'd done that I took him back.

I thought his attacks must somehow be my fault. I found myself asking 'What have I done to deserve this? Why am I making him so mad that he has to treat me this way?' I couldn't bring myself to tell anyone what was happening. I was embarrassed and couldn't help thinking it was my fault.

Peter was cunning. No matter how hard he hit me, he was always careful never to mark my face. My family realised what was happening and wanted me to call the police but I couldn't press charges. I was terrified.

Then one day, Peter stabbed me in the face with a fork. I started screaming and tried to back away but he just kept stabbing me with it. I tried to run away but he followed me and picked up a glass and chucked it at me. I was bleeding and in agony with a shard of glass stuck in my side but Peter just picked up his keys and walked out.

I called an ambulance that took me to the hospital where they stitched me up. This time I did find the strength to go to the police and they put me in touch with Refuge. I knew I had no choice. If I had gone back to Peter, I might not be here today. I finally saw him for what he was – a menace who used violence to control me.

Slowly I am starting to rebuild my life and my confidence. I have left the refuge and moved into my new flat – a place I hope Peter will never find. I still suffer from headaches and I don't sleep well.

I am cautious of everyone, particularly men and it will be hard for me to trust enough to form another relationship. Nothing will change what happened to me but I know that with time I can learn to live again. My life is getting better every day and I know I've done the right thing.

Context

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) is both a form of discrimination and a violation of human rights. It is both a cause and consequence of gender inequality in society. The United Nations (UN) defines VAWG as “any act of gender-based violence that is directed at a woman because she is a woman, or acts of violence which are suffered disproportionately by women”¹. This definition is also endorsed by the London Mayor’s Office on Police and Crime, (MOPAC). The Safer Lewisham Partnership has recognised the significant impact these areas have on females, but also recognises that for some of these strands male victims require focus and greater understanding.

Lewisham launched its first VAWG Plan in 2014. Since then, the VAWG legislative and policy context has developed considerably. A range of new legislative measures have been introduced including specific offences of stalking, forced marriage, failure to protect from Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), and revenge pornography, as well as a new specific offence of “coercive control”. Other key legislative developments include the introduction of the Modern Slavery Act (2015), the rolling out of Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPOs) and the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS), the introduction of FGM Protection Orders and a revised statutory guidance on Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs). HM Government has released a new national strategy, *Ending Violence Against Women and Girls 2016-20*. The refreshed strategy retains the framework of Prevention, Provision of services, Partnership working and Pursuing perpetrators.

The Safer Lewisham Partnership has committed to a focused response to this issue and has adopted the London Mayors Policing and Crime Plan 2017-2021. In this Plan there is a clear recognition of this issue across London, and is committing to undertaking reviews and funding to support this agenda. Lewisham will play a key role in the London agenda and offer and work collaboratively to ensure that there is a comprehensive offer for residents in Lewisham affected by any strands within VAWG. MOPAC plan a release of their refreshed VAWG Strategy in November 2017, (building on from the Mayoral Strategy on Violence Against Women and Girls 2013-17).

Whilst the partnership acknowledges and supports the VAWG principles held by central Government and London Mayor’s Office of Policing and Crime (MOPAC), it is worth noting that Lewisham will include children and young people within the Plan, as well as recognising elder abuse. In Lewisham, domestic violence and abuse is a priority for the Lewisham Safeguarding Adults Board (LSAB), and has been flagged as a priority within the Lewisham Safeguarding Children’s Board’s (LSCB) Neglect Strategy, underpinning work for 2017 and going forward.

It is acknowledged that **men and boys** will also experience and be affected by the range of issues that encompass the VAWG strands and Lewisham’s response includes these. The term violence against women and girls can be accompanied by concern about the exclusion

¹ ‘The Way Forward. Taking Action to end violence against women and girls’, Mayor of London 2010-2013

of men and boys from services and a lack of recognition that they can experience these forms of violence and abuse. This does not detract from the clear focus on this agenda affecting women and girls disproportionately, and the approach is tailored accordingly.

It is recognised that people may be impacted by more than one type of abuse and that the intersectional nature of each person's identity will frame their experience and how they access support. As such, the partnership is committed to increasing reporting rates and providing support and appropriate services for male and Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Transgender (LGBT) victims. Agencies developing clear pathways to support all victims of all gender-based abuse is crucial.

The Lewisham Landscape

It is widely acknowledged that all strands of violence against women and girls are underreported and many victims and survivors do not come to the attention of services. This, coupled with lack of awareness of professionals around individual strands, means that we do not have robust data. Many incidents of VAWG and domestic abuse are hidden and not reported. These issues are compounded by the often high levels of cultural/community acceptance of types of VAWG and domestic abuse.

There are also sometimes corresponding low levels of awareness among communities and relevant professionals about how to identify victims/survivors and perpetrators of VAWG and domestic abuse, or those at risk of becoming victims/survivors or perpetrators, and how to ensure that these individuals and families access support. In addition, the way in which many types of alleged offence are recorded does not always allow easy differentiation between female and male victim/survivors or between categories of VAWG and domestic abuse.

Furthermore, prevalence data does not capture information about people at risk of VAWG or domestic abuse (who may never become victims/survivors). It is also likely to under-estimate the numbers of repeat victims and how often individuals are repeatedly victimised, as well as the numbers of witnesses of VAWG or domestic abuse. Increasing the number of victims that tell services they are experiencing violence or abuse is an important focus.

Athena Service

Since its inception in April 2015, the Athena service has seen a **16% increase** in referrals (1,577 in 2016/2017 compared to 1,324 in 2015/2016). The service has supported on average 550 victims each year, with domestic abuse being the highest presenting need.

Victims of multiple forms of Abuse

Due to better data collection, we are able to see that victims are experiencing and reporting (to Athena) multiple forms of VAWG. For example, a victim can be experiencing domestic violence, stalking, sexual abuse, and honour based violence; all at the same time. **42%** of all victims in 2015/2016 and 2016/2017 reported experiencing at least two or more types of VAWG.

VAWG brings together eight strands of policy under one umbrella (data 2016-2017):

Domestic violence and Abuse	London: 1 in 38 women or 1 in 59 people
	Lewisham: :1 in 31 women or 48 people : 2 Domestic Homicides since 2014 : Of all child protection cases 55% involved domestic abuse : MARAC – 13 % increase in referrals (510) : 17% increase since 2015. : Fourth highest rate of recorded domestic abuse in London.

Sexual Violence and Rape	London: 1 in 530 people
	Lewisham: 1 in 447 people : 11 th highest prevalence in London : 20% increase since 2014

Stalking	London: 695
	Lewisham: 26

Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation	London 1
	Lewisham 0

Prostitution	London (still being collated)
	Lewisham (still being collated)

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)	London: :
	65 (NHS Digital) - estimated 3,539 women and girls are affected by FGM in Lewisham (or 2.9% of the national female population),

1 Newly Recorded women and girls with FGM are those who have had their FGM information collected in the FGM Enhanced Dataset for the first time. This will include those identified as having FGM and those having treatment for their FGM. 'Newly recorded' does not necessarily mean that the attendance is the woman or girl's first attendance for FGM

Forced Marriage	London (still being collated)
there are high but hidden levels of forced marriage and crimes committed in the name of honour	
	Lewisham (still being collated)

Crimes said to be committed in the name of 'honour.'	London (still being collated)
	Lewisham (still being collated)

Lewisham Residents Survey

“Some people think they’re worthless without another person.. they get so deluded and wrapped up they don’t see it.. they don’t just have the balls to get up and leave”

“The person you’re most scared of in the world is often also the person you trust most in the world”

A summary from the Residents survey:

- The consultation has shown that the vast majority of people want to see a clearer and concerted focus on healthy relationships in schools. Using more interactive ways to connect with teachers and students to ensure attitudes to VAWG are challenged.
- Visibility was also a significant issue raised. Respondents want to see more messages about zero tolerance to VAWG.
- There is a recognition that there is increased complexity when women experiencing multiple disadvantage (mental health, complex needs, drugs and alcohol, homelessness and No Resource to Public Funds) access services, as well as a marked fear of institution identified.
- The two biggest challenges highlighted by respondents are skills provision – providing parents, professionals and community members with the skills to support victims and survivors of VAWG, and;
- The main gap that has been identified is the lack of community hubs, where people can go to for advice (3rd party reporting sites). *“widely publicise where people in the community can go for advice, if they have concerns”*
- Respondents also mentioned having access to a range of service provision (online directory).
- Online bullying/harassment and receiving unwanted sexually explicit messages were the most common negative online experiences for under 25 year olds – how are the online dangers understood by all.

The Strategic Vision

In setting the Priorities a number of aspects have been taken into consideration. These include:

- the London Police and Crime Commissioners Police and Crime Plan 2017-2021
- Regional work being undertaken in respect of the London Landscape – future projections in respect of harm and vulnerability and any regional and sub-regional commissioning across agencies
- Reviews in respect of disproportionality and cohesion including Baroness Young, MP David Lammy, and Dame Louise Casey
- Inspection outcomes that relate to all partners within the Partnership
- Information from our local strategic needs assessment and local residents survey
- Lewisham’s local assessment profiles including Serious Youth Violence, and Child Sexual Exploitation and Domestic abuse for under 25 year olds
- The 17-18 Safer Lewisham Plan

The Borough partners and residents have identified the following as being essential for our collective approach:

- Reduction in harm and vulnerability being critical as part of an overall prevention, intervention and enforcement strategy
- Clear focus on reducing violence in all its forms
- Focusing on redesigning and delivering services that supports and provides a victim centric approach. Seeking to ensure that all contact and outcomes by all agencies puts victims at the forefront. Reducing fear, harm and Re-victimisation is critical.
- Considering contextual analysis and location risks.
- Improving confidence and satisfaction in police, local authorities and public services.

The ecological framework (World Health Organisation) is based on evidence that no single factor can explain why some people or groups are at higher risk of interpersonal violence, while others are more protected from it. This framework views interpersonal violence as the outcome of interaction among many factors at four levels—the individual, the relationship, the community, and the societal.

- At the **individual level**, personal history and biological factors influence how individuals behave and increase their likelihood of becoming a victim or a perpetrator of violence. Among these factors are being a victim of child

maltreatment, psychological or personality disorders, alcohol and/or substance abuse and a history of behaving aggressively or having experienced abuse.

- Personal **relationships** such as family, friends, intimate partners and peers may influence the risks of becoming a victim or perpetrator of violence. For example, having violent friends may influence whether a young person engages in or becomes a victim of violence.
- **Community** contexts in which social relationships occur, such as schools, neighbourhoods and workplaces, also influence violence. Risk factors here may include the level of unemployment, population density, mobility and the existence of a local drug or gun trade.
- **Societal** factors influence whether violence is encouraged or inhibited. These include economic and social policies that maintain socioeconomic inequalities between people, the availability of weapons, and social and cultural norms such as those around male dominance over women, parental dominance over children and cultural norms that endorse violence as an acceptable method to resolve conflicts.

The approach:

- Reducing levels of violence and exposure to violence
- De-normalising violence – **it is unacceptable**
- Understanding and addressing the root causes of violence
- Taking a life course approach whereby the benefit is of effective, evidence based interventions accumulate from the beginning of life
- Building on the positive assets of people and their communities
- Ensuring our services are accessible and effective at addressing holistic young people, family and peer group needs.

The vision and priorities have been produced collectively with our residents, partners, community groups, Councillors and VAWG Forum. Through this process the vision and the four strategic priorities have been agreed for the lifespan of this strategy.

From today until 2021

- Improved safety, health and wellbeing of young people and victims supported by the VAWG services in Lewisham
- Everyone, Family, friends, communities and practitioners, knows about all forms of violence against women and girls and how to disclose abuse and get support. Everyone knowing how to support victims, including those with care and support needs.
- Women, particularly those from different cultural backgrounds, have an increased awareness of violence against women and girls.
- Services take a trauma informed approach to supporting victim/survivors, recognising their range of support needs.
- Implementing the learning from tragic Domestic Homicide Reviews.
- Increase percentage of crime outcomes rates for all strands of VAWG, if this is what the victim wishes as an outcome.
- Increase the number of domestic violence perpetrators engaged in directed programmes.
- Improved victim satisfaction within the criminal justice services.
- Reduction in the percentage of repeat victimisation.
- More community groups and informal networks are safe spaces for disclosure. All victims have the confidence to approach any service and know that they will be supported.
- Agencies are working together with community and faith leaders to challenge views that perpetuate violence against women and girls.
- Equality of approach; improved understanding, assessment and recognition about the individual and contextual risks associated with VAWG.

Strategic Priorities

Protecting and educating

Prevention of such violence from happening by working with schools, promoting healthy relationships, challenging the attitudes and behaviours which encourage it and intervening early is key to the Safer Lewisham Partnerships' VAWG prevent strategy.

The partnership knows that preventing violence and abuse from happening in the first place will make a significant difference to overall prevalence of these crimes. Continuing to challenge deep-rooted social norms, attitudes and behaviours that discriminate against and limit women and girls across all communities is critical.

Witnessing and being a victim of violence and abuse has a huge negative impact on outcomes later in life. Quicker intervention, particularly in early childhood, can prevent individuals developing a propensity for domestic violence and abuse. We also want to ensure Lewisham victims know where to go to for help, and at the earliest opportunity.

Children are affected by domestic violence and abuse, and that early childhood experiences of living in a family setting where violence and abuse occurs will have negative impact on a young person's wellbeing and development later in life. Lewisham is committed to addressing the links between domestic violence and abuse and trauma in childhood. Continuing work with schools and children's services to address aggressive behaviour in young men to assist them in understanding that domestic violence and abuse is not normalised behaviour will be essential.

- Together with the Home Office and MOPAC, develop and lead on a partnership communications campaign strategy; challenging and changing views and behaviours that perpetuate violence against women and girls. Awareness raising needs to be tailored through a range of channels including social media, outreach, and campaigns.
- Imbed a Trauma informed approach across the Children's workforce and wider Economy working with children.
- Work with the Lewisham's Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) and the Adult Safeguarding Board to ensure that messages delivered through training are consistent and support practitioners to make the links between VAWG, safeguarding children and child sexual exploitation, harmful behaviours, peer to peer abuse and vulnerable adults.
- Focus on under 25 year olds peer on peer abuse challenge including CSE, County lines drug dealing, and serious youth violence.
- Everyone knows about all forms of violence against women and girls and how to disclose abuse and get support. Assessing contextual risks, and fully understanding the dynamics and risks associated with adolescence and services approach to these in line with the peer on peer abuse report (Feb 17). Ensuring multi agency confidence in understanding of consent, and recognise the ways in which environments, contexts and relationships can limit the safe choices available to young people

Deliver the right Support

It is important that we deliver and adequate **Provision of Services** and support to all victims and those vulnerable to being victims of violence.

It is vital to provide high quality services to anyone who needs it. Ensuring that all victims and survivors regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion and belief, sex, sexual orientation and complex needs are provided with a high quality person centred response.

- Victims should expect to access specialist support quickly, appropriately, fairly and easily. This will be provided through the support of a community based specialist VAWG service, for victims to access directly, and specialist supported accommodation along with integrating pan London and nationally commissioned services, including those funded by the Home Office, MOPAC and London Councils.
- Safe spaces will be created for survivors to disclose abuse, working with key locations across Lewisham.
- Work will be undertaken to address the underreporting by both genders, different ethnic groups and community groups through increased communication between services, ensuring that everyone knows what to do in the case of disclosures.
- Developing a local approach supporting those involved in the sex trade.
- Support will be joined up and can address all risk, harm, needs and vulnerabilities including substance abuse, child sexual exploitation (CSE), housing/homelessness, knife crime, modern slavery and debt.

Working together

Partnership Working with services and communities is important in order to develop a strength based community led response to obtain the best outcome for victims, partners and their families. This partnership working includes involving the victim at all stages in developing this work.

- Strong partnerships need to be developed, that work together to protect those at highest-risk and the most vulnerable, and to deliver the best possible response to victims and perpetrators
- There will be a commitment to ongoing review of service provision and partnership working to ensure that wider outcomes are being delivered.
- Good practice and innovation for professionals will be identified and supported and partners will encourage reflection and learning in service delivery. Develop third party reporting centres where victims of violence against women and girls can disclose and be linked into support services.
- Ensure that our model means that any disclosure of abuse will trigger immediate efforts to support the victim/survivor, including connecting them to community initiatives that can reduce their isolation, increase their confidence and provide them with a supportive network.
- Community led education and awareness raising

Ensure that perpetrators are held to account

All agencies need to take action to reduce the risk to women and girls who are victims of these crimes by ensuring that **Pursuing Perpetrators** until they are brought to justice, is a key focus in all our VAWG plans.

Build on the zero-tolerance approach to VAWG, and take this approach with these perpetrators, who should be held to account for their actions. A feasibility review of, where it is safe to do so, working in a holistic way with all professionals, especially those who work with the whole family, and look at engaging perpetrators in interventions designed to reduce harm and future offending.

- Coordinate, monitor, review and aim to increase the use:
 - Domestic Violence Protection Orders
 - Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (Clare's Law)
 - FGM Protection Orders
 - Forced Marriage Protection Orders.
 - Stalking Protection Orders
 - Modern Slavery Orders
- Better use of Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) to manage the most serious risk of harm domestic abuse offenders including those with sexual offending within the context of an intimate relationship
- Ensure that perpetrators, and not victims, will have their behaviour (and the causes for their behaviour) challenged
- Proactive approach to trafficking through organised crime
- Undertake a feasibility review of alternative interventions.

Understanding the issues and having an impact

Having a clear understanding about the issues as they affect Lewisham is essential in progressing and shaping the services and actions by all.

- A clear Local Profile against each strand of VAWG will help to deliver on the priorities
- Clear data capture, reporting and identification across all agencies will give a more complete picture
- Commitment to joint analysis to help redesign, re-commissioning and testing approaches
- Effective governance through the VAWG steering group and SLP will ensure delivery

Finance and Resources

There have been a number of significant changes in the funding and resourcing for all aspects of the Criminal Justice system both locally and regionally. Mayor of London is the Police and Crime Commissioner, and he delegates this portfolio to Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime - MOPAC. MOPAC not only holds the Met Police to account for delivering its priorities, but it also has overarching responsibilities for crime reduction in the capital and has significant powers to commission services. All partners are committed to working collaboratively and to support funding applications where appropriate to continue the support required to deliver on the areas identified as priorities for 2017-18.

Resources across the partnership have reduced significantly and all agencies are seeing large scale transformation. The changing landscape will impact on deliverability and will need to be reviewed and monitored regularly and closely by the Safer Lewisham Partnership.

To deliver this plan the ability to undertake detailed analytical products is essential. This is a significant risk to the Partnerships ability to review performance regularly and understand the impact of the work.

Contact Us:

Further copies of the Plan can be obtained on request to the Crime Reduction and Supporting People Services within the Council.

If you would like the information in the document translated into a different language, provided in large print or in Braille or the spoken word, please contact us on:

Tel No: 0208 314 9569

Post: Crime Reduction and Supporting People Division

London Borough of Lewisham, Lawrence House, Catford Road, SE6 4RU

In developing this plan, there has been a series of consultation processes as well as collation of data from a range of sources. We would welcome any feedback, suggestions or proposals from individuals or organisations.

For practical advice in relation to community safety and crime prevention, please visit the website:

www.crimereduction.gov.uk

Call Crime Stoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111 to give information about a crime

For information on your local Safer Neighbourhood Teams please visit:

<http://www.met.police.uk/teams/lewisham/index.php>

For support on VAWG contact Athena: 0800 112 4052

Lewishamvawg@refuge.org.uk

For full directory of VAWG services please visit:

www.crimereduction.gov.uk