

# Towards ending violence directed at women and girls in Wandsworth

(TEVEA Wandsworth)



Overview of Phase One Report  
March 2023

# Acknowledgements

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**MAYOR OF LONDON**

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Thanks to **Wandsworth Council SEND Participation Team**, this report is also available in Easy Read.

Roots to Change CIC would like the information in this report to be shared as widely as possible. Please feel free to quote from it. We only ask that you please do not use Roots to Change materials and resources for commercial purposes and that you cite this work as the source.

# About Roots to Change

**Roots to Change CIC** is a community interest company that was incorporated in 2022.

Building on **20 years of experience**, the company's main activities include:

- **Social Research:** We conduct research and analyses on a range of social issues
- **Strategy and Project Support:** We support organisations in designing and developing their strategies and projects
- **Training and Capacity Building:** We provide bespoke training and other capacity building support to individuals, social sector and other organisations
- **Coordination and Facilitation:** We facilitate consultations and other engagement processes
- **Evaluations and Reviews:** We carry out independent and participatory evaluations and reviews for a range of organisations



# Definitions

## Violence directed at women and girls

In line with the United Nations definition, violence directed at women and girls is defined as **any act** that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or mental **harm or suffering** to women and girls **because they are women and girls**, including threats of such acts, whether **in public or private life**.

Violence directed at women and girls is a **human rights issue**.

Violence can include but not be limited to being forced to have sex or do sexual things; being forced to do something you don't want to do; having your money and/or movements controlled by another person; being harassed or stalked; being verbally or physically attacked; being forced to marry someone; being made to question your version of events; someone sharing images of you without your consent; and all forms of exploitation and trafficking.

People can be harmed physically, psychologically (mentally and emotionally), sexually, and socio-economically and by people they know or by strangers. These harmful acts can take place online, on the phone, and in person. They can happen in the home, in the street, in social settings and in the workplace.

## OTHER KEY TERMS

### **Patriarchy**

A system of society, community, or government in which men hold a disproportionate amount of power.

### **Sexism**

Sexism refers to prejudice or discrimination on the basis of sex.

### **Misogyny**

Misogyny is hatred of, contempt for, or prejudice against women and girls.

### **Structural inequalities**

This refers to when the policies and practices of organisations, institutions, governments or social networks advantage some groups of people and disadvantage others.

### **Equality**

This refers to the state of being equal in status and rights.

# Key Statistics

(from latest [ONS](#) and [Femicide Census](#) data)



Many cases go unreported in Wandsworth and across the country for a variety of reasons, so the real figures are likely to be much higher across different types of violence. Additionally, there are some issues with some online data collection tools that limit the types of questions that can be asked due mainly to safeguarding concerns.

What is clear is that too many people in the borough have a story to tell, whether it is based on their own experiences or the experiences of women or girls they know.

These stories, posts on social media, the few high-profile cases we hear about in the news, together with available data from the ONS and the latest Femicide Census all indicate that this problem isn't getting better. Some data suggests it could even be getting worse. Sexual offences recorded by the police were at the highest level recorded within a 12-month period (196,889 offences) in the year ending June 2022.

# Overview

Towards ending violence directed at women and girls in Wandsworth (TEVEA Wandsworth) is a community-led project that aims to bring about positive change towards building a more equal, fairer and safer borough where women and girls can live free from violence and fear.

Roots to Change CIC co-designed this study, as the first phase of the project, to gain a better understanding of what is contributing to or enabling high levels of violence directed at women and girls in the borough; what could be done to help prevent it from happening in the first place; and who has what role to play.

The outputs will be used to develop a plan of action to be implemented in subsequent phases of the project.

Roots to Change CIC carried out work between June 2022 and February 2023. It consisted of a review of various related resources and also drew on valuable insights gathered from over 140 people across the borough through an online anonymous survey, one-to-one interviews, small focus group discussions and workshops.

The interconnected factors that can contribute to or enable violence directed at women and girls include:

- Structural inequalities that deny equality to women
- Adherence to certain attitudes and behaviours associated with “being a man”
- Condoning of violence directed at women and girls
- Portrayals of violence directed at women and girls in all forms of the media
- Influence of popular, high-profile individuals and groups

Factors that present significant challenges to tackling this problem include:

- Limited awareness and understanding of rights and responsibilities that impacts on people's understanding on how they should be treated and how to treat others; what constitutes violence and its impact; and what healthy relationships look like between and among people of all genders
- Some tensions between schools and parents and carers of children and young people
- Limited investment in long-term strategic interventions

To achieve real change, we will need to directly address these multiple factors. This will take time and require coordination and collaboration. Actions will be needed on all levels and across all settings and people of all genders must be meaningfully engaged and supported to participate in this process throughout.

Our collective approach must also focus on human rights principles and consider how sexism and misogyny intersect with other forms of discrimination and prejudice such as homophobia, transphobia, racism, ableism, or ageism.

Together we must actively seek to:

- Adjust the systems and structures that disadvantage or deny equality to women and girls
- Reshape ideas and expectations about who and what men and boys, women and girls and people of other genders should be and how they should behave
- Reset the social norms that help to condone so much of the violence in our society
- Change how people of all genders are portrayed in all forms of media
- Build positive relationships between and among people of all genders

In the short-term, there needs to be a fundamental shift in understanding of rights and responsibilities; some of the principles of healthy relations; what constitutes violence directed at women and girls and its impact; how violence directed at women and girls is present in all forms of media; the ways in which we as a society condone violence directed at women and girls; and how children and young people are targeted online.

With this knowledge, people should have the confidence and skills to meaningfully engage in the process.



Additionally, we need to see:

- More opportunities for people of all genders to come together to engage on this issue more constructively, which should help foster mutual trust to develop a foundation on which to build more positive, equal and respectful relations
- More investment in initiatives to support women and girls, including specialist support to meet the specific needs of different groups of women and girls
- More long-term investment to support people of all genders to address trauma and grievances, and talk about and manage a range of feelings and emotions; address isolation and loneliness; and to develop self-esteem, confidence and positive personal identities not constrained by harmful stereotypes
- A more inclusive and less-judgemental approach to better support parents/ carers and others who come into contact with children and young people
- A shift in the way both men and women are portrayed in the media generally and to how violence is reported specifically
- More education around healthy relationships and at an earlier age
- More work to address the gender pay gap
- A workable system that promotes shared parenting and one that promotes financial autonomy and independence for all

When people recognise the positive benefits of a more equal, just and fairer society, they are more likely to choose to adopt and model safe behaviours and reject sexism, misogyny and other violent attitudes and behaviours. As more people promote healthy and positive behaviours, call out harmful practices and encourage others to do the same, we should start to see a significant shift in attitudes and in turn a reduction in violence directed at women and girls.



# To help facilitate this..

## **Individuals**

are encouraged to help share this report widely, participate in discussions around this issue and encourage friends, family, neighbours and work colleagues to do the same. They are also encouraged to promote healthy relations and behaviours and join efforts to bring about positive change.

## **Individuals who have contact with children**

and young people are encouraged to engage them in discussions and help them to build positive personal identities that are not constrained by harmful gender and other stereotypes.

## **Civil society organisations**

are encouraged to critically reflect and promote discussion within their organisations around what they are doing to address misogyny and sexism and other forms of prejudice and to promote equality. They are also encouraged to consider how their work could contribute to addressing harmful gender and other stereotyping and other factors enabling violence.

## **Local businesses**

encouraged to critically reflect and promote discussion within their organisations around what they are doing to address misogyny and sexism and other forms of prejudice and to promote equality. They are encouraged to allow flexible and adaptable working to ensure both women and men are able to choose a balance that works for them between work and family commitments.

## **Public facing entities like pubs and gyms**

and other public facing entities are encouraged to use their space to encourage positive dialogue and share knowledge. They are also encouraged to ensure their staff members are adequately trained and supported to call out harmful behaviours.

## **Riverside Radio and other media platforms**

are encouraged to provide platforms and space for people of all genders to engage in discussion. They are also encouraged to commission creative writers and journalists who could contribute to creating the space for less divisive and more humane discussions. Additionally, they are encouraged to promote positive and diverse portrayal of people of all genders and contribute to eliminating the (sexual) objectification of women in the media, drawing on existing resources and guidelines.

## **Wandsworth Council**

are encouraged to **simplify the definitions of violence** directed at women and girls. They are also encouraged to support Council-run schools with the necessary resources to support children's mental and physical wellbeing; and implement PSHE and RSE curriculum more effectively. They are also encouraged to play a role in ensuring the work of members of the newly formed forum on violence against women and girls who are largely responding to the problem is coordinated with work done on primary prevention.

## **Funders**

are encouraged to invest in long-term strategic interventions that tackle the root and underlying causes of this problem to bring about change and move away from short-term piecemeal funding. They are also encouraged to do their bit to ensure that the initiatives that they support do not reinforce but rather address harmful gender and other stereotypes. Additionally, they are encouraged to ensure adequate provision is made to bring people together to encourage dialogue, build trust and understanding, and develop positive relationships between and among people of all genders.

## **School governance bodies**

are encouraged to support schools to ensure that PSHE and RSE is prioritised and ensure that teachers are provided with the necessary resources and time to meaningfully implement this important part of the curriculum. They are also encouraged to participate in any consultations that may be offered around future iterations to the primary or secondary school curricula.

## **Faith leaders**

are encouraged to use their space to encourage critical reflection and discussion and promote mutual respect and understanding among and between people of all genders.

## **Police, fire service and other public sector entities**

are encouraged to promote critical reflection and discussion within their organisations around what they are doing to address misogyny and sexism and other forms of prejudice and to promote equality. They are also asked to use their platforms to encourage positive dialogue and disseminate information and key messages to help people understand what constitutes violence, its impacts and related laws.

**Fairness  
Respect  
Dignity  
Equality  
Independence**



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