

Community Safety eNewsletter

February 2019



Welcome to the first Community Safety eNewsletter, to keep you up to date with the prevention and detection measures we're taking to ensure residents, visitors, businesses and property are kept safe. We want to introduce you to the Partners we work with, the initiatives we're implementing, and importantly, the results - where we are winning, and where we have more work to do. We will also provide practical advice; simple actions that we can all take to protect our property and ourselves.

The Council, together with our Partners, are here to serve and protect our vibrant community. If you would like further information and advice, there are links below to help you - or alternatively, please [visit our website](#) and/or [get in touch with us](#).

Best wishes, Cllr Ahsan Khan
Cabinet Member for Community Safety



A PUBLIC HEALTH APPROACH TO TACKLING VIOLENT CRIME

Introduction:

Residents will be only too aware that London has been in the grip of a rise in street violence over the past two years, which has taken the lives of young people across the Capital. During that time, Waltham Forest has been shaken by a number of senseless murders, most recently that of Jayden Moodie on 8 January.

Many residents will also have come across the term “public health approach” to tackling violence, as it has recently been proposed by both Central Government and City Hall. Waltham Forest has been in the forefront of this thinking, having been pushing for a public health approach for several years, and we want to take this opportunity to tell you what we mean.

Traditional thinking about street violence, and particularly the type of violence we have come to associate with gangs, has relied on Police and the Courts to protect communities by taking violent people off the streets.

No one doubts the importance of this kind of action, but it takes place only after the violence has occurred; it does nothing to prevent it from happening.

What is a public health approach?

A public health approach doesn't just treat symptoms; it looks at health problems in a comprehensive way by:

Strengthening the resistance of the general population - sometimes through changing the environmental conditions that cause or increase the health problem;

Providing enhanced protection to groups who are at greater risk;

Treating those who get infected to help them recover; and

(Sometimes) isolating the infectious to prevent them infecting others

Why take a public health approach to violence?

Like many other public health problems, violence is infectious. Children exposed to violence in the home are more likely to grow up to be perpetrators or victims of violence themselves. This terrible cycle can result in families and communities suffering violence for generations.

Violence is preventable and recent decades have generated clear evidence describing both the risk factors that push people into violent life courses and a range of policies, programmes and practices that prevent such violence from developing.

What does a public health approach to violence look like in Waltham Forest?

The WF Public Health Approach

A public health approach is different to traditional enforcement-led approaches to tackling violence. Enforcement is still crucial, but complemented by a focus on the causes of violence, to prevent it occurring and spreading. Our public health approach does this through four strands:

- **Curtail** violent acts at source, pursuing perpetrators and enforcing action
- **Treat** those who have been exposed to violence to control the spread
- **Support** those susceptible to violence due to their exposure to risk factors
- **Strengthen** community resilience through a universal approach

What does that mean in practice?

A summary of what we are doing and planning is set out below. We will be taking a closer look at the different areas of work over the coming months.

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| CURTAIN VIOLENCE | We will continue to work with Police, Probation and the Courts to bring violent people to justice and we will recruit a financial investigation resource to track and seize criminal assets |
| TREAT HARM | We will continue to work with those who have been harmed or exploited by violent people, taking a whole family approach, and help them to become safe from harm and to change their lives |
| SUPPORT THOSE AT RISK | We will prevent young people from getting drawn into gangs, drugs and violence by intervening earlier and introducing new support services to help them stay safe |
| STRENGTHEN RESILIENCE | We will build on existing community resources to strengthen them, introducing new support in neighbourhoods and primary schools across the borough |

VAWG CAMPAIGN UPDATE



We have recently carried out a number of linked events as part of our ongoing work to eliminate violence against women and girls (VAWG). These events saw us engage with several thousand residents and dozens of professionals across the borough.

A big part of the work focuses on tackling and preventing domestic abuse (DA). Not only is it vital in its own right to

prevent DA, we now also know that a very large proportion of those involved in carrying out street violence have grown up in households where DA is a feature of family life.

We are also determined to respond robustly to the concerns of girls and women who are being sexually harassed on the borough's streets. It's completely unacceptable that they cannot go about their daily lives without this type of intrusion from some men.

The recent events included:

- Renewing our partnership with Leyton Orient FC to challenge violence against women and girls, engaging with over 1500 fans on one match day
- Engaging with over 1000 residents on the issue of sexual harassment, as well as several local businesses who wanted to be part of a joint solution
- Training nearly 200 professionals, including social workers and GPs to better identify signs of DA and other types of violence against women and girls

We will be writing more over the coming months about the range of help available to victims and survivors of violence, as well as what to do if you think someone you know needs help.

London unites in zero tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation



Public organisations across London united this month at **Whipps Cross Hospital** to reaffirm their commitment to eradicating Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), marking the international day of zero tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation.

London's Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, Sophie Linden was joined by clinicians, Cllr Ahsan Khan, members of Waltham Forest Council and others, where they heard from local women

personally affected by FGM about the importance of community education.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is often performed in young girls, involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. It causes serious long-term emotional, psychological and physical health damage that continues into adulthood.

According to NHS Digital from July 2018-September 2018 there were 2,025 total attendances to hospitals where FGM was identified or a procedure for FGM was undertaken, with almost half relating to women and girls in London.

In June last year, Whipps Cross Hospital was the first in England to open walk-in clinics offering cervical screening to women who have suffered FGM. At the clinic women can also seek help and treatment for a range of symptoms. The hospital, run by Barts Health NHS Trust, had in the previous year launched one of just a few specialist maternity units in the country for FGM sufferers.

Cllr Ahsan Khan, Cabinet member for Community Safety and Cohesion at Waltham Forest Council, said: *"It is shocking and saddening that we still see girls and young women forced to*

undergo this damaging abuse in the 21st century. Those who undergo the procedure carry the effects with them for the rest of their lives, while all too often those who perpetrate the abuse go unpunished.

“We are committed to working with other organisations and survivors to spread the message about how harmful FGM is and why it is unacceptable. Help is available for anyone affected by the issue and I urge those who have undergone FGM, or know someone who may be at risk, to come forward and seek that support.”

A form of child abuse, FGM is illegal in the United Kingdom carrying a custodial sentence of up to twelve years for anyone who arranges for a procedure to take place in this country and abroad. Since 2015 all health professionals have a duty to report all cases of FGM, meaning the NHS is now well positioned to have those conversations and offer specialist support. *On 1 February 2019, the first person in the UK was convicted of FGM following concerns initially raised by staff at Whipps Cross Hospital.*

ESSENTIAL LIFESKILLS PROGRAMME



Knowing how to cope with life’s challenges is a really important part of being healthy and happy.

LifeSkills promotes resilience through the development of emotional literacy, critical thinking, problem solving, healthy relationships and strategies to prevent risk taking behaviours. **It is a highly effective early intervention and prevention programme which prevents risk taking behaviours in children and young people aged 8-14 years.** LifeSkills is a universal programme, designed for whole-class in school delivery.

Waltham Forest Council is funding Barnardo’s to bring the LifeSkills programme to local schools and we are the first authority in London to do this. **Ninety teachers in 28 of our primary schools** have come together to be trained to deliver it. We have decided to do this because it will improve the life chances of our young people.

Studies testing its effectiveness have found LifeSkills can **reduce the likelihood of risk taking behaviours by up to 75% and effects can last up to 12 years.** LifeSkills concentrates on a preventative approach which shares age appropriate information with young people, providing them with skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary to make healthy choices.

UK evaluation of LifeSkills shows as well as preventing **substance misuse**, it also leads to important improvements in other core skills which are key for healthy development amongst young people. These include **self-esteem, communication, social skills and ability to cope with stress.** Teachers highly recommend the programme and report on LifeSkills impressive fit with curriculums across the UK, the style of delivery works in classroom settings and the interactive activities engage pupils. Implementing this programme will improve student’s skills, knowledge and resilience. This will help children and young people have healthier and more enjoyable lives.

LifeSkills is one of the most evaluated early intervention and prevention programmes in the world. It is rated as Model Programme in the USA for **violence prevention** and is very highly rated by the Early Intervention Foundation in the UK. This means that LifeSkills has been **independently assessed and shown to have the highest standards of evidence of effectiveness**.

Working with Safeguarding professionals to keep residents safe



The **Understanding Safeguarding and Prevent** course was first launched in December 2017 as a pilot project and is designed for adult learners and Local Authority professionals.

The aim of the project is to safeguard attendees and the communities they are part of from potentially harmful information or views, particularly those presented on the internet and through social media.

Critical thinking and online resilience skills protect people from being vulnerable to extremist and terrorist propaganda. The Understanding Safeguarding and Prevent course has been designed to teach these skills in a safe space with the goal of building up the resilience of the learners and professionals, and to also provide them with the skills to support other potentially vulnerable members of their communities.

Wednesday 6 February saw the first of three scheduled training sessions take place with the latest cohort of trainee social workers in Waltham Forest. The day-long programme offered the students an opportunity to better understand the Local Authority's approach to Prevent, some of the key risk factors that residents are more likely to encounter, and also information and guidance about accessing professional support when managing the case of a vulnerable young person or adult.

Feedback from course participants

- *"It has helped me be more aware of using the internet more safely and the precautions I can take to ensure others are using the internet safely too"*
- *"Raised awareness – provided me a safe place to think"*
- *"This course has really helped me to understand what Prevent is and what can contribute to vulnerability and radicalisation"*

Taking court action to stop anti-social behaviour



In August 2018, issues around a property in E11 were reported. Residents complained of disruption from frequent visitors to the property at varying times of the night, shouting, fighting and drug use.

Working with the Police, Waltham Forest Council attended and initially warned the resident of the issues being raised and that further action could be taken. In addition the landlord was contacted and updated of the complaints; who promptly began possession action on the household.

Unfortunately the behaviour escalated causing great distress to local residents and in an attempt to assist the tenant to manage their property, Waltham Forest Council made an application to court for

a Premises Closure Order that would allow only the occupant to enter the property. This was granted on 2 January 2019. Residents were contacted to see if the property was still causing disruption, and it was confirmed that the order was being breached almost instantly by various people. *On one occasion police arrested someone in the property.*

Therefore a further application was made to the court for a Full Closure Order on the 15 January 2019 which was successful for a period of three months. This order restricted anyone but the Police, the landlord and Council officers from entering the property. It was sealed and secured preventing anyone from entering. This will now prevent any disruption in the area, allowing the local residents to enjoy their homes in peace. Possession action is currently in process so that residents will have permanent respite from the Anti-Social Behaviour caused by this resident and their visitors.

If you are experiencing anti-social behaviour problems, please [report it here in strict confidence](#).

End of February news.

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