



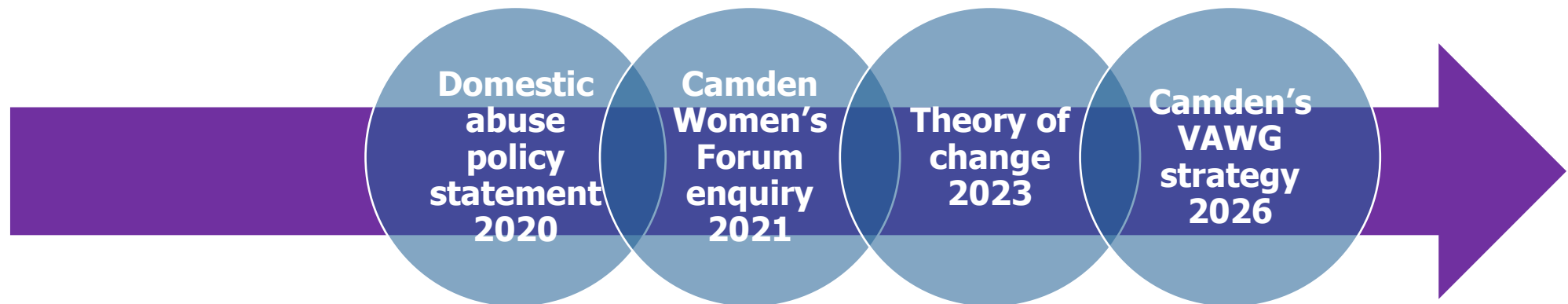
Response to VAWG: our journey

ADCS annual conference July 2025

Rashida Baig, Director of Children's Prevention, Family Help and Safeguarding

Evolving policy landscape and leadership model

- ❑ Camden's journey **started over 5 years ago** and was accelerated by the pandemic.
- ❑ **We published our Domestic Abuse Policy in 2020** which informed the development of a diverse internal change programme to improve the Council's response to Domestic Abuse, including achieving Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance accreditation and rolling out trauma-informed practice across schools.
- ❑ We embraced the recommendations from Camden's Women's Forum (CWF) enquiry into domestic abuse in 2021 which led to the **launch of Camden's Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Board in 2022** and a **dedicated annual VAWG budget to boost resourcing and allow us to test innovations**.
- ❑ The **survivor group** which shaped recommendations from CWF are members of the VAWG Board, providing a valuable contribution to improving services. We now have a dedicated resource in our Children & Learning Participation unit to develop our approach to co-production.



Distributed leadership model and sponsorship

In 2023, we adopted a cross-council distributed leadership model working across 6 pillars underpinned by a theory of change under the banner of our vision statement:

“Camden is a place where Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) is unacceptable and not tolerated. We want to reduce levels of VAWG in Camden, to broaden, enrich and increase the levels of support to survivors of VAWG and their families, and to deal with perpetrators”.

Six pillars with director sponsors across the Council

Raise awareness
and break the stigma across all parts of the community

Director for People & Inclusion

Identify
everyone affected by domestic abuse at the earliest opportunity

Director of Housing

Support those affected by domestic abuse to access the help that they need to be safe

Director of Early Intervention & Prevention

Seek to take action to change and stop the behaviour of offenders and the conditions that enable them to offend

Director of Children’s Social work and Safeguarding

Partnerships and sexual harassment

Director of Public Safety

Health and Care Partnerships

Director of Public Health

Our HR policy for domestic abuse was introduced in 2020 – it is widely promoted through internal comms where senior leaders speak about their lived experience

"If you are experiencing domestic abuse, or are worried about someone close to you, we want you to know that you are not alone. We will do all we can to support you and to make sure you are able to access specialist help whenever you need it"

- ✓ Additional 10 days paid leave
- ✓ Access to interest-free loans
- ✓ Signposts to specialist support from our Camden Safety Net service and other external organisations
- ✓ Guidance for people managers and flexibility in our day-to-day roles.

Camden Council is signed up to the **Employers Domestic Abuse Covenant (EDAC)**, becoming the first London Local Authority to take the pledge to support women affected by domestic abuse to enter or re-enter the workplace.

"I grew up in a household where my dad was regularly violent and abusive towards my mum. We want to make sure that you don't feel like you're alone, and we want you to feel like we are there to support you, and that I think is really important."

Jon Rowney, incoming
Chief Executive



"Staff are absolutely experiencing domestic abuse as we speak and people need to know that we are here to support them as well."

Debbie Edwards, IDSVA
Camden Safety Net



Communication campaigns in 2024

"In Camden we call it out" was **informed by the experiences of local women** and raises awareness about **sexual harassment** and the law. It is a call to action to report unacceptable behaviour and to intervene if it is safe to do so. The campaign highlights the wide range of work being delivered by the Council and in partnership with the Police, schools, community groups and businesses.

'Know you're not alone' was launched on **White Ribbon day** and highlights different forms of domestic abuse such as controlling or coercive behaviour, psychological and emotional abuse, financial abuse and physical abuse. It shows these taking place in different types of relationships including partners and family members.



"I don't go out in the evening."

Women and girls should not have to change their behaviour to feel safe.

If you see inappropriate behaviour or harassment, you can defuse the incident with a question or ask the person being targeted if they are OK.
Only interrupt if you feel it is safe to do so.

In Camden we call it out!

Sexual harassment is a criminal offence.
In an emergency call **999**, or report online at met.police.uk
Want to remain anonymous? Call Crimestoppers on **0800 555 111**.
Visit camden.gov.uk/tackling-sexual-harassment for support and advice.

Camden
Supported by
METROPOLITAN POLICE



"I'm scared that next time, my husband might kill me."

We're here and we can help.

If you are experiencing domestic abuse, or know someone who is, contact:

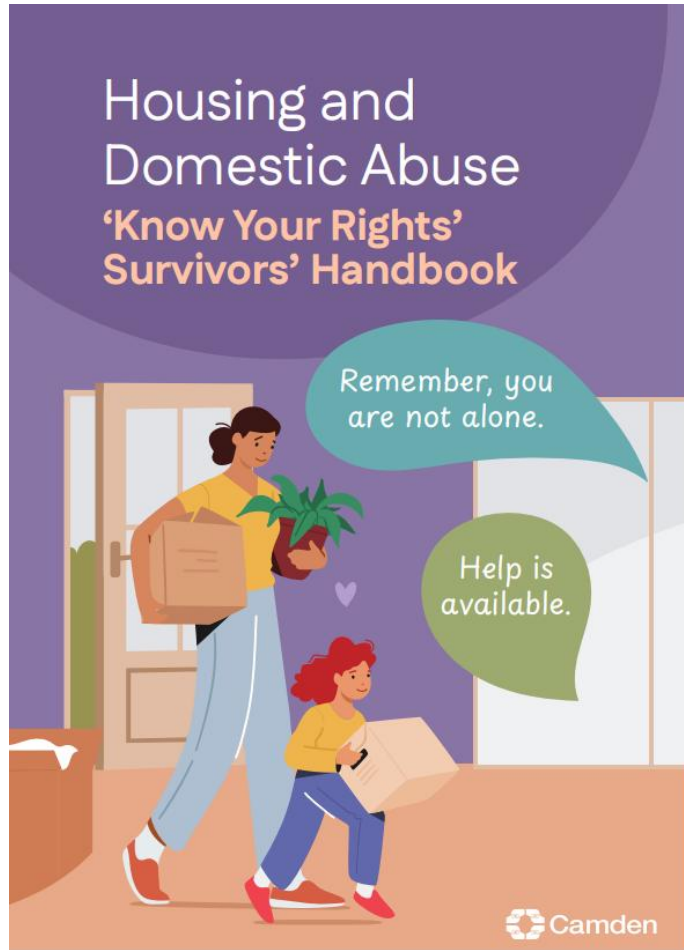
- Camden Safety Net on **020 7974 2526**
- National Domestic Abuse Helpline (run by Refuge) 24/7 on **0808 2000 247**

! Call **999** in an emergency. If you are deaf or have a speech impediment, please text **999** or use the BSL **999** app

KNOW
you're not alone

Camden

Co-production: spotlight on housing



Feedback from DAHA: “This is an informative and strong policy, it is easy to follow, trauma informed and meets every standard we have in relation to a DA policy, amazing work!”

The handbook was created with a group of women with lived experience of domestic abuse and of accessing housing support. **It included members of the survivor group who shaped the Camden Women’s Forum recommendations.**

The steering group brought together lived experiences, knowledge and expertise to **co-create a Housing and Domestic Abuse policy** and a **‘Know Your Rights’ Survivors’ Handbook.**

“We have come together with a shared goal: we want you to get as much help and support as possible so that you know your rights whilst accessing housing services.

We know how traumatic and overwhelming this time is so we hope this handbook gives you clear information and reassures you about the help available. **You are not alone.**” from the foreword to the Handbook.