

Independent Domestic Violence Advocates in London: Analysis of a London IDVA Survey in 2014

The Mayor's Office for Policing And Crime (MOPAC) carried out an Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVA) Survey during August 2014. This was to better understand current IDVA provisions and funding arrangements across London, identify gaps in service provision, and inform the development of a pan-London Domestic Violence service approach.

Boroughs were invited to complete an online survey asking about current IDVA provisions, including information on funding, workloads, gaps and anticipated future changes. All 32 London boroughs responded. Additionally, answers from five cross-borough or pan-London providers were received. The survey was followed up with a phone conversation to each London borough to validate initial feedback on IDVA provisions.

Key findings are outlined below:

Key Finding 1: Current London IDVA provisions are below recommended levels¹

- The survey and individual borough conversations revealed a total of 115.2 IDVAs across London. Additionally, there were 11 IDVAs provided by Specialist organisations operating either across a number of boroughs or on a pan-London level.
- This represents a decrease of almost 12 IDVAs across London since the MOPAC's VAWG survey in April 2013².
- When looking at individual boroughs, we find that IDVA provisions have increased in 11 out of 32 boroughs. In 5 boroughs IDVA provisions have remained the same, whilst they have reduced in 13³.
- However, when compared to the levels of IDVA provision recommended by CAADA⁴, most London boroughs are below this recommended figure. This is based on the current population, When looking at London as a whole, there is currently a shortage of 21.5 IDVAs compared with what the current CAADA recommendation for London would be (136.7 IDVAs).
- The table overleaf summarises IDVA provisions in 2014 compared to 2013, and in comparison to the CAADA recommendation:

¹ Using CAADA's recommendation of 4 IDVAs and one MARAC coordinator per 100,000 of the female population aged 16+, as outlined in: CAADA Insights 1: A greater place of Safety', Coordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse (CAADA), November 2012

² Please note that three boroughs did not respond in 2013. It is also not possible to say with certainty to what extent cross-borough or pan-London provisions were picked up in 2013.

³ Not including the three boroughs that did not respond in 2013.

⁴ 4 IDVAs and one MARAC coordinator per 100,000 of the female population aged 16+, as outlined in: CAADA Insights 1: A greater place of Safety', Coordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse (CAADA), November 2012

BOROUGH	AREA	IDVAs APRIL 2013	IDVAs OCT 2014	IDVA CHANGE	CAADA Recommendation ⁵	IDVA over or below CAADA Recommendation
Barking & Dagenham	E	6	6	0	2.96	3.04
Hackney	E	5.5	4	-1.5	4.14	-0.14
Havering	E	8	1	-7	4.14	-3.14
Newham	E	5	4	-1	4.67	-0.67
Redbridge	E	1.5	2	0.5	4.56	-2.56
Tower Hamlets	E	3.5	3.5	0	4.21	-0.71
Waltham Forest	E	5	6	1	4.2	1.8
East		34.5	26.5	-8	28.88	-2.38
Camden	N	6	5.4	-0.9	3.88	1.52
Enfield	N	NR	3	NA	5.19	-2.19
Hammersmith & Fulham	N	3	3.5	0.5	3.06	0.44
Haringey	N	3	4	1	4.22	-0.22
Islington	N	5	7	2	3.66	3.34
Kensington & Chelsea	N	5	3	-2	2.66	0.34
Westminster	N	2.5	3	0.5	3.71	-0.71
North		24.5	28.9	1.4	26.38	2.52
Bexley	SE	2.5	4	1.5	3.96	0.04
Bromley	SE	2	3	1	5.38	-2.38
Croydon	SE	8	7	-1	6.07	0.93
Greenwich	SE	NR	2.8	NA	4.17	-1.37
Lambeth	SE	6	3	-3	5.18	-2.18
Lewisham	SE	3.4	3.4	0	4.66	-1.26
Southwark	SE	2.5	2.5	0	4.95	-2.45
South East		24.4	25.7	-1.5	34.37	-8.67
Kingston upon Thames	SW	1.5	1	-0.5	2.77	-1.77
Merton	SW	3	3	0	3.33	-0.33
Richmond upon Thames	SW	3	2	-1	3.16	-1.16
Sutton	SW	3.5	2.1	-1.4	3.25	-1.15
Wandsworth	SW	4	4.5	0.5	5.4	-0.9
South West		15	12.6	-2.4	17.91	-5.31
Barnet	W	3.3	3	-0.3	6.04	-3.04
Brent	W	NR	7	NA	5.01	2.01
Ealing	W	2	4	2	5.44	-1.44
Harrow	W	3	3.5	0.5	3.95	-0.45
Hillingdon	W	3	2	-1	4.58	-2.58
Hounslow	W	4.5	2	-2.5	4.12	-2.12
West		15.8	21.5	-1.3	29.14	-7.62
All London		114.2	115.2	-11.8	136.68	-21.46

⁵ Based on 2014 population data

Key Finding 2: Almost 9 out of 10 London IDVAs are currently funded by Local Authorities or by MOPAC

- The vast majority of current IDVA funders are Local Authorities, funding (at least partly) two thirds of London IDVAs (67%)
- This is followed by MOPAC, funding more than one in five London IDVAs (22%).
- The remaining funders consist of the Home Office (funding, at least partly, 4% of London IDVAs), Big Lottery (2%), Ministry of Justice (1%) and NHS England (1%).

Key Finding 3: Most boroughs feel uncertainty over future IDVA provisions

- The survey picked up considerable uncertainty from boroughs around the future of IDVAs. This was mostly related to uncertainty around funding. For most IDVAs, funding was tied to a certain time period, and Local Authorities were anticipating further cuts within the next two years. 13 out of 32 boroughs said they either expected provisions to go down or expressed uncertainty as to the future of their current IDVA provisions.
- Only seven boroughs stated that they believed provisions would increase. However, most of these answers were based on specific strategies boroughs had put in place to increase provisions – but these were by no means certain.
- This reflects the findings of a recent evidence review undertaken by the MOPAC's Evidence & Insight team – findings generally were very consistent in pointing out the positive impact of IDVAs, with the only negative aspect being an uncertainty around future provisions and sustainability of this service.

Key Finding 4: Most London IDVAs are multi-taskers, working across different locations and with a range of different client groups

- Most common locations for IDVAs were police stations and specialist women's organisations, with around half of IDVAs (56% and 47% respectively) working from these two locations.
- However, overall, most IDVAs were not based in one place but tended to work across different locations (including Specialist Domestic Violence Courts)⁶.
- They also mostly dealt with a range of different clients and only few IDVAs had specialist functions or additional remits.
- Where IDVAs did have specialist functions or additional remits (20 out of the 32 boroughs had at least one IDVA with a specialist function and in 13 boroughs IDVAs had additional remits), these most commonly centred on sexual violence, but also BAME, prostitution, young people and male victims.

⁶ Seven boroughs explicitly mention such an arrangement (but the actual number may be larger since we did not specifically ask for this information).

- When asked about gaps, the majority of boroughs (26 out of 32) felt that their current IDVA provisions were not sufficient. This feedback was independent of whether current provisions matched CAADA recommended levels or not.
- Gaps identified differed from borough to borough, but included:
 - Provisions for male clients
 - Provisions for young people
 - Need for more follow up support (e.g. to address family law, immigration or long-term housing issues)
 - Need for more intensive support to existing clients (e.g. being able to accompany them to key appointments or being able to run a helpline)
 - Wanting to develop specialist responses for BME clients (including IDVAs with different languages), or for FGM and other harmful practices
- This may suggest that, whilst currently IDVAs are very much working as generalists and multi-taskers, there is some aspiration to develop more focused support.

Key Finding 5: London IDVAs operate within the wider context of a vast range of support services for Domestic Violence

- Informal borough feedback on the survey uncovered a complex picture of Domestic Violence service provision across London with various models – often drawing on a range of professionals and using a risk-based approach.
- Where risk-based models were used, case workers were often put in place to support victims at low or medium risk.
- Other boroughs had put in place one service models, such as the GAIA Centre in Lambeth or SASS in Southwark, providing a single point of entry for access to a range of different support services. This included advocacy services, but also outreach work, counseling services, training provision and perpetrator programmes.
- Provisions put in place often recognized the cross-over with other services and catered for this. Sutton, for example, trained housing workers as IDVAs to account for the fact the majority of their clients had experienced Domestic Violence. Islington’s Men and Masculinities Programme, initially aimed at men in substance use treatment, delivers a linked (ex) partner support service.