

# Redbridge Community Crime Commission

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# Foreword

Redbridge has much to be proud of. I've worked here for many years and know there are people across the borough working very hard to improve this part of the world for themselves and their neighbours.

As an outer London borough, Redbridge is relatively leafy and prosperous. But it also faces enormous challenges, with the fear and impact of crime at the top of that list. The borough is home to real affluence alongside serious deprivation and disadvantage. Too many residents seem trapped in a cycle of despair, suffering a poverty of hope. Generations are being lost to criminality, with a growing number of young people trying hard to make sense of what Redbridge has to offer them and find their place within it.





So many people are living lives they are desperate but unable to change. Professionals – teachers, social workers, police officers, health workers – all care deeply and work long hours, trying their level best to serve, but are often hindered by the bureaucracy that surrounds them. A rich mix of cultures and faiths is underpinned by enormous, untapped social capital, that lacks the coherence and cohesion needed to drive change. Understanding this mix of challenges is key to any attempt to address crime here.

The causes of this situation are as complex as they are deep-seated. We all know we can't simply arrest our way out of crime. The solution requires a compelling vision of the future and coordinated action to achieve it. But right now, many of the key services that we rely on are remote from ordinary people, with barriers built into the well-intentioned 'system' that stop them working together.

**The idea behind the Community Crime Commission was quite simple but also quite brave: to gather a group of committed local people, put the experience of highly trained professionals at their service, and then let the people tell the professionals what needs to be done.**

*"I know that there will be challenges ahead but I am certain that everyone involved is determined that this opportunity will not be wasted. The people of Redbridge deserve nothing less."*

*“Whatever has been unearthed by this report, we must acknowledge and applaud the fact that local leaders have not shied away from doing what is right.”*

When I was invited to chair this Commission, I wondered how serious the council and its partners were about letting us look under the bonnet of the services they manage and reveal what could be some uncomfortable truths. Redbridge’s council leader, Councillor Jas Athwal, reassured me that that was exactly what he wanted us to do. I heard that local leaders were looking for new ideas and views on how they could improve their services for communities, and saw the Commission as a valuable set of eyes which could bring a new perspective on longstanding challenges. It was clear to me that public services were putting their trust in the local community, and had high hopes for what we might offer in return. It’s important to recognise just how rare this is. I can’t think of many places that would be so bold. Whatever has been unearthed by this report, we must acknowledge and applaud the fact that local leaders have not shied away from doing what is right.

From the outset we agreed that the focus for our recommendations would be directed towards not just the local council, but also the police, health, education and the voluntary and community sectors – all critical to a comprehensive response to tackling crime. We planned our evidence-gathering sessions accordingly. Over

many weeks Commissioners heard from professionals and residents alike, all focused on making this a better place to live. At no point did witnesses try to duck the hard questions we asked. I am grateful they were so willing to work with us, and that they gave us their time and insight so freely.

The critical challenge facing Redbridge, in common with all other local authorities, is how to inject some fresh thinking into problems which have defeated professionals for decades. It is clear that the usual ‘sticking plaster’ solutions we might consider won’t be enough. What we need is a systematic rethink of what we do, how we do it, and how it is funded. So, the approach of public services targeting crime in Redbridge needs to change. Nothing else will deliver the sustained improvement we need to see. Without it, in years to come, we are likely to be back where we started.

As the Commission investigated a range of different issues, we came across several common themes: poor communication between agencies and with the public; services working in isolation from each other and not sharing information; a

*“I heard that local leaders were looking for new ideas and views on how they could improve their services for communities, and saw the Commission as a valuable set of eyes which could bring a new perspective on longstanding challenges.”*

system that does things to people rather than working with them; agencies being aware of young people living with risks but not intervening early enough to prevent criminality. We describe addressing these issues as our ‘golden threads’: a set of simple principles which could help to untangle the most pressing problems we face. They have influenced all of the recommendations we make in this report.

We’re looking for a culture shift, so have proposed a set of guidelines that govern standards from public services and those who work for them; we refer to these as the ‘Redbridge Principles’. But we recognise that everyone who lives in the borough has some responsibility for its improvement. You’ll see reference to this as the ‘Redbridge Charter’.

Now we need leaders across our public services in Redbridge to be brave enough to listen to what we have to say and to drive the transformation we are calling for. We expect that our recommendations will shape the strategy for the Community Safety Partnership, and others.

Undoubtedly there will be difficulties along the way. We know that funding is a challenge in the current climate. We also know that the long-term costs of doing nothing dwarf the cost of acting now. Investing to solve the problems we are living with today will insure us against them becoming worse tomorrow. Releasing a generation of young people from the cycle of fear and crime in which they are trapped will unleash their potential to lead happy and productive lives and contribute to our shared future. However hard it might seem, we simply cannot carry on with the old ways. The consequences of not acting now will be catastrophic to the lives of another generation of people living and working in Redbridge.

*“Now we need leaders across our public services in Redbridge to be brave enough to listen to what we have to say and to drive the transformation we are calling for.”*

With this report the first part of our work is done. The baton is now back with the local leaders of all our services. We will watch their response closely, but we will do more than just watch. The Community Crime Commission will reassemble in 2023 to review the progress that has been made towards delivering our recommendations.

I know that there will be challenges ahead but I am certain that everyone involved is determined that this opportunity will not be wasted. The people of Redbridge deserve nothing less.

Finally, I want to record my sincere gratitude to all our Commissioners for their hard work and enthusiasm. Their personal and professional insights, unwavering dedication to the cause and relentless focus on speaking truth to power has been exemplary. The Commission has been superbly supported by the Commission’s Secretariat, the council’s Community Safety Team, and without John Richards and his colleagues we could not have delivered.

**Dr Javed Khan OBE**

Chair, Redbridge Community Crime Commission

# Executive summary

Seeking new approaches to tackle the issue of crime in Redbridge, the council turned to the people who live and work here. The Community Voice, a panel of 60 local people, was set up as a way for residents to speak directly to the council. It was followed in the spring of 2021 by the establishment of the Community Crime Commission.

The Commission was made up of 16 Commissioners, all with a close connection to Redbridge, who listened to evidence on the five priority areas that were identified by the public: **women and girls' safety on the streets; domestic abuse; drug-related crime and street violence; anti-social behaviour; burglary and public confidence**. Our task was to devise a set of recommendations to be presented to the council and its key partners.

The Commission grew out of a desire to make Redbridge a better place to live. We want to make this somewhere people feel safe to walk the streets and bring up a family; where residents' problems are dealt with by services working in partnership; where our concerns are taken seriously by those whose job it is to help us; and where the services we pay for respond to us efficiently and with empathy. For far too long, this has not been the case. There are excellent public servants working across Redbridge doing their best, but they work with systems which too often don't allow them to do the work they know is needed. The Community Crime Commission offers an opportunity to change that for the better.





**The Commission's work, and the recommendations we have produced, have been influenced by a set of principles which we believe should influence all aspects of public services in Redbridge:**

- We are led by the lived experience of those who have dealt with the issues at hand.
- We believe people when they tell us about their lives.
- We try to understand the challenges facing children and young people as both victims and perpetrators of crime; we see them as children first.
- We are committed to working with people, not imposing solutions on them.
- We recognise the importance of early intervention, addressing problems before they escalate.
- We celebrate the good work that is already being done across the borough and want to share it more widely.

Running through all of the evidence we heard has been a set of themes that seem to undermine current efforts to tackle crime.

**Whether we were talking about domestic abuse, anti-social behaviour or anything else, we kept hearing about services and people that:**

- don't share information with each other or with residents;
- work in isolation, when joining-up resources would make things more effective;
- consistently missed opportunities, when acting fast could make all the difference; and
- showed a lack of accountability when services don't deliver.

We dubbed these the '**golden threads**', and we have made them the basis for our recommendations. They are a fundamental reason why the problems we face are so serious. Addressing them is the only way to find solutions.

**The actions recommended in this report are all influenced by the need for:**

- A long-term vision, multi-agency commitment and sustained pressure for change.
- Consistent and high-quality communications between service providers.
- Consistent and high-quality engagement and communications with residents.
- Using existing resources more effectively, making access to services simpler for local people and making leaders accountable for their performance.
- Supporting young people when and how they need it, to prevent the escalation of issues. Recognising that they are children first.
- Working with local people to co-design the services they need.

# Priority areas



## Women and girls' safety

Redbridge should be safe for all women and girls. Right now, many women feel far from safe, experiencing harassment from men on a depressingly regular basis. This issue has to be a priority for our public services. Women and girls must be supported when they make a complaint of harassment, and their experiences should influence how services and public spaces are designed.



## Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse is often a hidden crime, with victims suffering in silence, feeling ashamed of what is happening to them and unable to find the support they need. Opportunities are being missed to support child and adult victims of domestic abuse. We need a system that puts victims of abuse first and supports them through their journey – making it easier to report a problem, offering greater access to emergency refuges and allocating appropriate housing, mental health support and specialist support for children.



### Drugs and street violence

The testimony about drugs and street violence was particularly harrowing to listen to. We heard about young people experiencing violence and family breakdown, falling through the cracks between support services and being groomed into a life of criminality. Youth workers working with children and young people already know what needs to happen to change this state of affairs, but the systems in which they work are poorly coordinated and lack the resources they need to meet a growing challenge.



### Anti-social behaviour

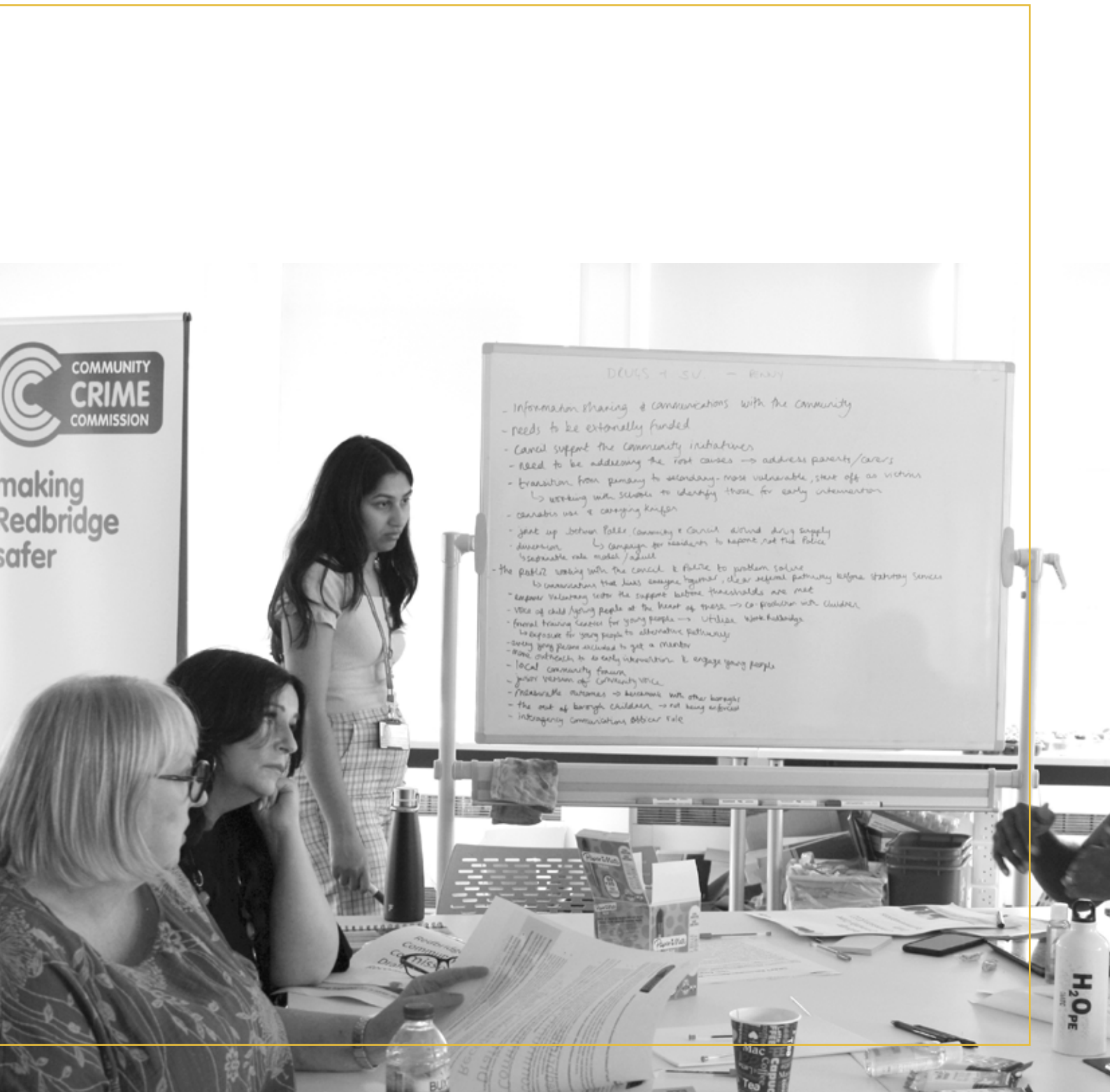
Anti-social behaviour is one of the most common complaints about life in Redbridge. Constantly having to deal with other people's litter and noise destroys the pleasure and pride we should be able to feel in our own homes and on our streets. The response from the authorities is inadequate and uncoordinated. Residents are frustrated about the lack of progress being made when the problem is so clear, and infuriated that their complaints seem not to be listened to.



### Burglary and public confidence

The statistics show that burglary is declining in Redbridge, but the thought of becoming a victim means many residents still live in fear. Local people think the issue is not treated seriously enough by police and feel left in the dark by poor communication about the problem. We need better communication between all the services involved, a faster and more effective response when people report crime, and much more effort being put into preventing burglary.

# Our recommendations



For many of us, being involved in this process has been challenging, not just because of the subjects we have been discussing, but because we have received comments from friends and neighbours accusing us of wasting our time trying to do something about a system that will never change, and that never listens to people like us. After many years of not being listened to, it is easy to see why people might feel this way. **We have put our trust in the promise that what the Commission delivers will not just be listened to, but will be acted on. We've all given this our best shot. It's time for our service leaders to step up too.**

Some of what we are asking for will require long-term funding and difficult decisions will need to be made about choosing priorities. The people of Redbridge have made it very clear where our priorities lie. It's now up to the council and the whole range of other local service providers to deliver for us.

**There is a detailed set of recommendations in each section of this report, detailing both the strategic direction we think the agencies should be taking, and a set of practical actions we want to see delivered.**

**The recommendations fall into three main themes, detailed overleaf.**



## Strengthen the response from public services

1. Make women and girls' safety a priority for the council and its partners. We need a single, senior member of staff as the strategic lead on this issue with responsibility to coordinate the efforts of partners in the council, police, the education service, health service and community sector.
2. Appoint a full-time strategic lead for Domestic Abuse to join up and transform services in Redbridge and ensure the post-holder is accountable for how services are delivered.
3. Create a dedicated Domestic Abuse Support Service with the long-term resources it needs to support people at risk.
4. Create a 5-year Domestic Abuse Training Strategy with training for council staff, workers in other public services, and the voluntary and community sector.
5. Create an ambitious Youth Diversion and Early Intervention Strategy that includes a review of current services and increases opportunities for early intervention.
6. Increase the number of youth outreach services created with and for all young people, and empower the voluntary sector to support young people at risk as soon as help is needed.
7. Produce a strategy for children in the care system which removes the cliff-edge at age 18, so they are supported continuously to the age of 25.
8. Review mental health support for children and young people to understand the causes of harm and reduce the high thresholds for support, delivering quicker interventions to improve young people's life chances.
9. Review the existing Our Streets Strategy and speed up the efforts to deliver it, working with residents to develop it as a community-led anti-social behaviour strategy.





### Work closely with the community to bring about practical change

1. Work with women to identify public spaces where they feel threatened, and find ways to design out crime and harassment.
2. Develop a Community Allies network so that people know how to respond if someone talks to them about domestic abuse.
3. Work with children and young people to improve the links between the services they use, co-designing new services and ways of working in partnership with them.
4. Develop and promote a Redbridge Charter, setting out the standards expected of all residents including local businesses and landlords.

### Use good communications to change the culture

1. Create a multi-agency team so that partner agencies working on crime reduction can join up communications between the council, police, housing services and local residents.
2. Give residents clear information about who is responsible for which elements of crime reduction and prevention in Redbridge, and what action is being taken.
3. Deliver public communications and engagement strategies that:
  - a) drive a sense of civic pride in Redbridge;
  - b) campaign to empower women, encourage men to call out abuse when they see it, and challenge men who harass women; and
  - c) bring the issue of domestic abuse out of the shadows and remove the stigma surrounding it.

## Background and approach

Crime has long been the number one concern for residents in Redbridge. Seeking new approaches to tackle it, the council turned to the people who live and work in Redbridge, and who have a stake in making it better. The Community Voice, a panel of 60 local people, was set up as a sounding board for new ideas and a mouthpiece for residents to speak directly to the council. It was followed in the spring of 2021 by the Community Crime Commission.

The Commission was made up of 16 Commissioners, all with a close connection to Redbridge, including experts in the fields of policing, education, youth work and community activism. They were asked to come up with recommendations to tackle the five priorities identified in the biggest public consultation Redbridge council has ever run: safety on the streets for women and girls; domestic abuse; drug-related crime and street violence; anti-social behaviour; and burglary and public confidence.

*“[Redbridge is] doing something quite unique in setting up this Community Crime Commission ... I think Redbridge is on the verge of doing something that the rest of the country might want to know more about.”*

– Commission Chair, Javed Khan, at launch of Redbridge Action Week

*“We’ve got a group of people who are passionate about change and have no agenda other than making a difference.”*

– Commissioner Gavin McKenna





*“I don’t think it’s just the Council’s responsibility, I think it’s central government’s responsibility as well, but also as a community we need to look at what we can do better.”*

– Commissioner Irfan Shah

*“There are lots of local people with a good will, who want to help, but don’t know how. I hope the Community Crime Commission can help to highlight opportunities where people can get involved.”*

– Commissioner Colin Foster MBE



### The Community Voice

The work of the Community Voice panel is ongoing. The members’ remit goes further than the issue of crime in Redbridge, but we were able to talk with them about their experiences of crime and their feedback strongly influenced our thinking.

A key question we asked them was about whether people have a duty to report crime – and what influences their decision to do so. The strength of feeling in their replies and the anger and frustration they expressed about not being listened to or supported led us to add public confidence in reporting to our list of priorities.

*“If things don’t get reported things won’t get dealt with ... Not enough resources are a bit of a lazy excuse, [there are] lots of police but how are they distributed? [We] need to think of new solutions ...*

*I came here to see how we can improve things.”*

– Comments from Community Voice session on public confidence



## The Community Crime Commission - facts and figures

Between 24th June and 21st September 2021, the Community Crime Commission heard almost 30 hours of testimony from 43 witnesses including representatives from:

- The Metropolitan Police
- Specialists in the fields of youth work, domestic violence, drug and alcohol services, communications and behaviour change
- Local people with lived experience of gang violence, street harassment and community action against anti-social behaviour
- The education services
- Council staff from the London Borough of Redbridge, the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham, and the London Borough of Havering
- Barking, Havering and Redbridge University Hospital Trust

A range of academics provided evidence; and reviews were commissioned into drug and gang violence and domestic abuse in the borough.

Commissioners undertook fact-finding visits to places including Redbridge's CCTV control centre, the Youth Offending Team (YOT), voluntary sector-run programmes and Street Watch to widen their understanding of how crime affects our borough. A number took part in a Women's Walk through the centre of Ilford – joined by local women, council and police representatives – as they considered the safety of the town centre.





*“I wasn’t really sure what to expect ... If you watch TV, you get all sorts of ideas of what a place like that might be like but it was really hopeful ... you can sense the enthusiasm and the motivation to change people’s lives.”*

– Commissioner Taiwo Ademola, who visited the YOT centre

*“I really enjoyed getting to see behind the scenes of the CCTV network we have heard so much about. The technology we have here is amazing, they can zoom in really tightly on what is happening in the street; but we need to be sure that it is being monitored and used as well as possible so that it produces the results we need.”*

– Commissioner Clare Patterson

Commissioners Irfan Shah and Gavin McKenna, who are specialists in local youth services, set up a roundtable for young people to share their views; and Commissioner Amy Tully addressed a local youth council to talk about young women’s experience on the streets of Redbridge.

*“It is vital that young people’s voices are central to efforts to tackle crime in the area, including crimes against women and girls. I was keen to hear about the impact of street harassment on young women, how young men feel about the issue, and their suggestions for ways to reduce incidents of harassment.”*

– Commissioner Amy Tully

The Community Crime Commission has grown out of the need to make Redbridge a better, safer, more welcoming borough. We believe that these goals don't just belong to us as people who live in the borough, but they are also what motivate the people who work in our public services.

## Our ambition for Redbridge

### Working together we want to make Redbridge:

- A borough that is safe to grow up in, to walk in, to work in, to run a business in. A borough of opportunity.
- A place where there are shared expectations of how services work with local residents and how members of the community behave towards each other.
- A place where young people are listened to and believed when they talk about their experiences, where support is in place to protect them from violence inside and outside their homes, and where young people are supported into adulthood.
- A safe borough for women and girls, with support for their families, protection from domestic abuse, and public spaces in which they feel confident.



# Our principles

The Commission's work, and the recommendations we have produced, have been influenced by a set of simple principles:

- We are led by the lived experience of those who have dealt at first hand with the issues we are examining.
- We believe people when they tell us about their lives.
- We try to understand the challenges facing children and young people as both victims and perpetrators of crime. They are children first.
- We are committed to working with people, not imposing solutions on them.
- We recognise the importance of early intervention, addressing problems in individual lives and communities before they escalate to unmanageable proportions.
- We celebrate the good work that is already being done in pockets across the borough and want to share it across the whole of Redbridge.

## The golden threads

There are no simple causes for any of the crimes we need to address. And there are no simple solutions. However, running through all of the evidence has been a series of themes that seem to undermine current efforts to tackle crime.



**Common phrases kept cropping up in our meetings, whether we were talking about domestic abuse, anti-social behaviour or anything else. We kept hearing about services and people that:**

- don't share information with each other or with residents;
- work in isolation, when pooling resources would make services more effective and easier for people to find;
- consistently missed opportunities, when acting fast could make all the difference; and
- showed a lack of accountability when services don't deliver.

We dubbed these factors the golden threads, and we have made them the basis for all our recommendations. The golden threads aren't just a way we found to talk about crime in Redbridge; they are a fundamental reason why the problems are so serious and they must be part of any solution.

In some cases, current ways of working aren't just inefficient, they actively limit people's ability to get the support they need. Far too many people, particularly young and vulnerable people, don't meet the thresholds that services require before they act. That leads to a terrible cost for all of us.

There is no shortage of enthusiasm for the job of improving things. What needs to be done is to focus that goodwill on the things that will deliver the biggest changes; pulling on the golden threads to dismantle the barriers to tackling crime, protect our communities and instil a sense of pride in Redbridge among all of its residents.

**The actions recommended in this report are therefore all influenced by:**

**1. A long-term vision, multi-agency commitment and sustained pressure for change**

These issues have been years in the making. We need a long-term approach to tackling them and a vision of the future which is shared by local people and local agencies.

**2. Consistent and high-quality communications between service providers**

We must ensure consistent, high-quality information and data sharing between agencies so that decision-makers have all the information they need.

### **3. Consistent and high-quality communications with residents**

Services need to share information with the public, honestly and in a way that engages all communities with the job of improving life in Redbridge.

### **4. Using existing resources more effectively and making leaders accountable to residents for their performance**

Local residents need to be sure that the services they pay for work efficiently, and that someone is accountable if they don't deliver.

### **5. Supporting young people when and how they need it, to prevent the escalation of issues**

We must end the current cycle of despair and hopelessness among young people, creating opportunities to help them build healthier and happier lives.

### **6. Working with local people to design the services they need**

We need local people to be at the heart of designing our services, as well as using them.





## If you want to work in Redbridge...

The Seven Principles of Public Life, also known as the Nolan Principles, set out the standards expected of everyone who holds public office in this country. The Nolan Principles include the expectation that people will act with selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability and honesty, and demonstrate good leadership.

We are asking the council and its key partners to ensure that anyone working in public services in this borough does so in a way that embodies *The Redbridge Principles*. They should be:

**Responsive** – responsive to our needs, dealing with matters in a timely and attentive way.

**Respectful** – understand and value the range of life experiences of local citizens, knowing that this underpins trust and partnership.

**Kind** – never forget that behind every challenge is a person or family trying to thrive.

**In-tune** – informed by lived experience.

**Proactive** – actively and creatively seek solutions, challenging systems that hold us back.

**Honest** – be honest about their capability and accountable for when things fall short.

### The Wigan Deal

In 2014 Wigan Council launched a new relationship between public services and local people that became known as the Wigan Deal, designed as a borough-wide agreement between everyone who lives or works in Wigan to make it a better place. The council committed to a series of pledges in return for the commitment of residents to become more involved in their communities – recycling more, volunteering and using online services. As part of The Deal, there are initiatives such as the Community Investment Fund that offers an opportunity to support communities and make a real difference in improving the area as well as several smaller deals on healthcare, children, and social services.

Wigan Council has estimated that The Deal has saved it over £155m since launch.



## Women and girls' safety

### Redbridge Women and Girls Listening Exercise shows:

66% of respondents have experienced psychological, physical, sexual, financial, verbal or emotional abuse, or harassment

64% felt very unsafe or a bit unsafe at train stations

71% felt unsafe at bus stops

78% felt unsafe or a bit unsafe in car parks

### The Ilford Street Harassment Survey shows:

44% of respondents say harassment takes place most times they go out

91% of respondents have experienced cat-calling

62% report having been followed

69% of respondents have changed the routes they take in Ilford

67% avoid public transport at night

64% avoid going out alone

Redbridge, like everywhere else, should be safe for all women and girls. Right now, many women feel anything but safe, experiencing verbal and sometimes physical harassment from men on a depressingly regular basis. This is a national problem and Redbridge is no exception, but that does not excuse the fact that it is shameful for so many women and girls to be afraid to walk around our borough.

*“Every time I leave my house, I get harassed, I’m always scared to leave the house no matter what I’m wearing or what time it is.”*

*“Women should not have to be protected by male relatives in order to feel safe.”*

– Respondents Ilford Street Harassment survey

*“We shouldn’t really have to worry and plan on an everyday, hour by hour basis for our own safety.”*

– Valerie Dalsou, local resident

Witnesses to our session on the safety of women and girls talked about feeling scared when they are out in the borough, and about not expecting to be taken seriously if they make a complaint.

*“One of our young people was walking to school and was being followed by a much older male in a car. This is a 12-year-old we’re talking about, in school uniform. Someone in the car began to take pictures of her and videos of her on his mobile phone ... we’re seeing an increase in the frequency and the seriousness of these incidents.”*

– Faheem Khan, deputy headteacher and designated safeguarding lead

*“I was harassed on a bus in Ilford ... He touched my thigh and body ... I tried to get out but he kept blocking me in. We reported the situation to the bus driver but he said he can’t really do anything about the situation. He said if I wanted to file a police report I should leave the bus, if not please sit down.”*

– Ilford Street Harassment Survey

*“Nationally, 70% of women experience harassment but only 4% report. And when we ask why, they say they never thought they would get a solution.”*

– Councillor Saima Ahmed, Women’s Safety Champion

*“There is systematic normalisation of this behaviour which needs to change... men must be held to account for their actions.”*

Councillor Saima Ahmed

This issue blights the lives of women and girls of all ages and, although it is present everywhere in Redbridge, it is particularly acute in some places. More than 96% of respondents to the Ilford Street Harassment Survey reported that they have experienced street harassment in Ilford. But despite this disgraceful fact, all too often attention is focused on what women can do to stay safe, rather than demanding that men themselves change.

We are determined to make this issue a priority for our public services. Redbridge must be a place where women and girls are safe on our streets, in our parks, workplaces and homes; where they are supported when they make a complaint, and where their experiences influence how services and public spaces are designed.

*But this is a problem which needs more than just a police or council-led response. Harassment of women will only stop when men stop thinking this behaviour is somehow acceptable.*

*As well as changes to the way the issue is handled by public services, we also want to see a long-term campaign to change the culture: empowering women to speak out, encouraging men to call it out when they see abuse, and challenging the men who believe they can get away with insulting women.*

*“When the police came [after reporting an incident] they were saying well, you just have to be really careful ... they were making her feel as though she was the one that was at fault ...*

*She wasn't the one at fault. She shouldn't feel that something about her behaviour to want to go meet her friends was somehow wrong.”*

Valerie Dalsou, local resident



Amy was hoping to gather about 50 responses. In fact, she received 1,700 replies within 4 days of launching the survey...



### The Ilford Street Harassment survey

In March 2021, Commissioner Amy Tully launched a survey into street harassment in Ilford. In the wake of a violent rape close to her home she felt moved to contact her MP and wanted to use data from women in the area to strengthen her argument about the problem.

She was hoping to gather about 50 responses. In fact, she received 1,700 replies within 4 days of launching the survey, and not only were the women who responded reporting regular verbal harassment, some were describing physical and sexual assault, of being groped on the street or on buses, some even mentioning rape.

“I thought it was important to shine a light on what is usually a very hidden experience,” says Amy. “Women and girls continue to have to accept street harassment and assault as a part of everyday life and they don’t feel empowered to report their experiences.

We must tackle the culture of misogyny that exists in our society and we must speak openly with one another about sexual harassment and assault, and teach young people about important topics like consent.”

### Beyond Equality

Although there are schemes aimed at keeping women safe, most if not all tackle the problem by addressing women’s behaviour. There are very few initiatives that aim to address the root cause of this problem – men’s behaviour and violence towards women and girls.

An example of good practice in behavioural change is the work of Beyond Equality, a charity that engages boys and men in education, work and sport settings. They get them to rethink masculinity, create gender equality and prevent gender-based violence.

**In their 2019 impact report, 54% of participants self-reported behaviour change from having attended a workshop.**

They have also created a practical toolkit on how to deliver workshops with boys to prevent street harassment.

### Strengthen the response from public services

- Redbridge must make women and girls' safety a priority for the council and its partners. Partners need to appoint a single, senior member of staff as the strategic lead on this issue with responsibility to coordinate the efforts of the council, police, the education service, health service and community sector. A key part of this role will be to actively join up, not simply oversee, the services involved.
- Make it easier for women to report safety issues and train police, enforcement officers, school staff and other public service staff so women feel confident that issues they report will be taken seriously. Use existing Public Space Protection Order powers to hold men to account if their behaviour causes women alarm, harassment or distress.
- Adopt systems which support and reinforce women's safety, for example requiring businesses to sign up to women's safety initiatives such as the Mayor of London's Women's Night Safety Charter, before they are granted licences to operate in Redbridge.

# Our recommendations



- Ensure schools are consistent in investigating and addressing the behaviour of boys who harass or assault girls in and around schools.

### Work closely with the community to bring about practical change

- Work with women to identify public spaces where they feel threatened, and use their experience to create safer spaces, designing out crime and harassment. Complete Crime Prevention Audits for main high streets to identify changes required.
- Make women and girls' safety a topic for discussion in schools, creating materials and opportunities to ensure young people understand healthy relationships and tackling harassment that takes place outside school between pupils. Include information for parents about keeping children safe online.
- Train women's safety community champions, with clear responsibilities to lead in the community.

### Use good communications to change the culture

- Develop and deliver a public communications and engagement campaign to empower women, encourage men to call out abuse when they see it, and challenge men, changing the culture to one where harassment of women and girls is unacceptable.
- Promote reporting of women's safety issues in spaces including services in schools, youth clubs and other community spaces to give a clearer picture of what is happening in Redbridge. Use this data in the design of services and keep women and girls updated on progress in their own cases and on progress being made towards a safer Redbridge.

**Let's work with women to identify public spaces where they feel threatened, and use their experience to create safer spaces, designing out crime and harassment.**

# Domestic abuse



An estimated 10,000 people in Redbridge experience domestic abuse from an intimate partner every year. 4,913 domestic abuse incidents were reported to the police in Redbridge in the past year.\*

Many also experience other problems such as:

- financial difficulties (37.2%)
- mental health difficulties (27.9%)
- poor physical health (23.3%)

\*Because domestic abuse is a largely unreported crime, figures for reported incidents are likely to be an underestimate.

Main reasons for not seeking support:

- fear of what the perpetrator might do (66%)
- fear of not being believed/ blaming self (46%)
- lacking confidence in police protection (43%)
- shame (36%)
- fear of losing children (32%)

93% of perpetrators in Redbridge are male. Most abuse victims and survivors identified their perpetrator as a partner or ex-partner (76.5%), or father/step-father (15.7%)

## What is domestic abuse?

The term *domestic abuse* includes domestic violence, and recognises that there are many kinds of unacceptable behaviour that victims can suffer, including coercive control (a pattern of intimidation, isolation and control), psychological and/or emotional abuse, physical or sexual abuse, financial or economic abuse, harassment and stalking, and online or digital abuse.

Domestic abuse is a problem that affects communities everywhere. It is often a hidden crime, with victims suffering in silence, many feeling ashamed of what is happening to them and unable to find the support they need. Victims can be isolated from families and friends by their abuser, and can face real difficulties in getting the help they need from public services when they do ask for help. Many, mistakenly, feel that their children could be taken away from them if they report abuse. The issue can be particularly heightened for people with a disability.

*“Redbridge Council knew about my situation but did nothing to help.”*

– Service user

*“No confidence in local police or council, from previous experience would not feel confident in contacting them.”*

– Service user

Time and again we heard how hard it is to negotiate the different services which should support victims of abuse. We heard evidence of a lack of coordination and communication between services, and a shortage of safe spaces and support workers to help victims from different communities. It was particularly hard to hear the evidence of young people, who remained traumatised by their experiences long after any physical danger had passed.

*“The type of domestic violence has become an issue... It’s more aggressive. It’s very violent. Children are witnessing it, suffering and becoming traumatised because of it.”*

Jade Lauren Chesmin – Redbridge Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub

*“Particularly in housing there are a lot of gaps in Redbridge ... some of the temporary accommodation that our women are sent to is very bad quality, and there’s often a lot of men around which for some of our survivors can be very intimidating. It’s also quite difficult to explain to the people they speak to at the council housing department why they are priority need and that they are domestic abuse survivors.”*

*“We do see a lot of children involved in these situations who maybe witnessed domestic violence or heard domestic violence, or whose lives are uprooted or changed because of it ... there’s quite limited services for those children.”*

– Refuge

*“It’s still hard to access services for the LGBT community as there is little support out there, little knowledge of the issues, and at times only token attempts to engage with the community.”*

– Service user

*“[We] have also [had] a lot of calls now from male victims which was not really the case about a year ago but there are a lot of male victims now involved, we’ve got same sex relationships, transgender relationships.”*

– Jade Lauren Chesmin

Opportunities are being missed to support child and adult victims of domestic abuse, despite them being in touch with public services in lots of different ways: from contact with the education and health systems, through to housing services, the police and the specialist support services.

We believe that people suffering domestic abuse in Redbridge need easier access to support. Those services need more capacity to respond effectively, need to work together more closely, and to earn the trust of the people that need them most. Redbridge needs to put victims of abuse first and support them at all stages of their journey – making it easier to report a problem, offering greater access to emergency refuges and allocating appropriate housing, mental health support and specialist support for children.



### **The Gaia Centre Lambeth**

Lambeth is one of the first councils in the UK to develop an integrated Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) strategy and the first to deliver a service addressing all forms of VAWG under one roof.

Lambeth created this pioneering centre to address the problem of duplication from existing services and address the issue of not properly meeting the needs of all service users, particularly younger women and girls. To ensure that the new centre delivered a truly seamless VAWG service, the commissioning team brought together a range of funding streams to commission one service model.

## Adam's journey



### Age 0

From birth, Adam was exposed to violence and alcoholism



### Age 2

Domestic violence and his mother's offending brought a Child Protection Plan



### Age 12

Excluded from school after sexualised behaviour, he drops out of the Pupil Referral Unit



### Age 15

Criminal damage then a stabbing: Adam referred to Youth Offending



### Age 14

Child in Need Plan closed



### Age 13

A Child in Need Plan because of a volatile home and Adam's anti-social behaviour



### Age 16

He fathers a child – taken into care. Services struggle to contact Adam



### Age 16

Convictions for assault, criminal damage and stabbing



### Age 17

Adam's violence towards his girlfriend results in a conviction for GBH

“To start with I didn’t realise how alone I was. He had convinced me that my friends couldn’t be trusted, my family were interfering, that my workmates were thick. He was the only one I could rely on.

He demanded silence when the football was on. It’s not easy keeping young children quiet. I could see how scared my son was as we crept around the flat. Sometimes I imagined what he’d do if I tried to leave, but when he started to threaten my son, I had to risk it. He had made me feel so useless and I just didn’t know what to do first. I was so ashamed. When I eventually went to the housing team, I couldn’t prove I was homeless and I was terrified they would make me go back to him or I’d end up losing my kids. I just wish someone had said, ‘I can help’.”

– Domestic abuse survivor, Redbridge



# Our recommendations

## Strengthen the response from public services

- Create a Domestic Abuse Support Service with the long-term resources and staff it needs to support people at risk. Include support for the Community Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVA) service (currently provided by Refuge), increase resources in Children's Services and GP practices and include mental health support for victims of domestic abuse as core parts of the Domestic Abuse Support Service.
- Create a 5-year Domestic Abuse Training Strategy with training for council staff, workers in other public services and the voluntary and community sector so that they can spot the signs of domestic abuse, support children and adults at risk, refer them to the services they need, and provide long-term support for people who commit domestic abuse, helping them to change their behaviour.



- Ensure that no victim of abuse loses their home as the result of anti-social behaviour or other criminal actions by an abusive partner.
- Create a “single front door” for accessing help, making it easier to find support, online, in person, or in safe spaces across the borough, so that people don’t have to search to find what they need.
- Review police support for victims of domestic abuse and publish an action plan on improving victims’ confidence in police services.
- Enable smoother communication between all the partners working on the issue of domestic abuse from the council, public services and community groups.

### Work closely with the community to bring about practical change

- Develop and maintain a Community Allies network so that people know how to respond if someone talks to them about domestic abuse. Schools should be included in this network with student and staff groups at every school, and support in every workplace.
- Ensure lived experience is at the heart of support services and community campaigns.
- Ensure that Redbridge’s children and young people have education about healthy relationships at a level which is appropriate for their age.

### Use good communication to change the culture

- Create and deliver a 5-year Domestic Abuse Communications and Engagement Strategy which makes domestic abuse a topic that can be spoken about freely in Redbridge, bringing it out of the shadows and removing the stigma that surrounds it.

# Drugs and street violence



8% of all notifiable crimes May 2020 -April 2021 were drug and possession of weapons offences

40% of all weapon-enabled crimes occurred in the south of the borough (MOPAC)

Reporting of drug offences has increased by 90% in the last three years

51 cannabis factories have been closed in the past year

Redbridge has embedded, homegrown gangs which are expanding and getting younger; gangs are closely linked to drug dealers.

- Recruitment takes place in chicken-shops, estates, schools

- Young women's role is less clear; exploitation is hidden

- Cross-border groups also operate in Ilford

- Users now used as drug runners

- Users are asked to commit violence by proxy

The testimonies about drugs and street violence were particularly harrowing. We heard about young people experiencing violence, crime and family breakdown, falling through the cracks between support services and being groomed into a life of criminality. Many said they had no hope of a better life, felt unsafe on our streets and let down by the services which are meant to support them. There are many deeply traumatised young people living in our community.

*“Kids shouldn’t have to go to jail for life for murder. Kids shouldn’t have to get their lives cut short due to unlawful murders. Kids shouldn’t have to be sectioned under mental health from all the undealt traumatic events they have witnessed on the streets and things that they may have experienced.”*

– Stephen Addison, founder Box Up Crime

*“The seriousness of why young people are coming to us has increased massively. We’re seeing an increase in county lines and increasing possession of weapons and increasing use of illegal substances and more violent crime. We are also, sadly, seeing it happen at younger and younger ages ...”*

– Sam Walters – Pupil Referral Unit

*“I couldn’t even count how many times I’d be approached in a day [to buy drugs], and I’d recognise them as people I’d been to school with ... It’s crazy that the people who you were once in school with are now trying to sell you drugs.”*

– Participant, Youth Roundtable

*“What doesn’t work well in Redbridge is the same thing that doesn’t work well in most other boroughs, it’s the system. The system that we have to work with does not provide us with the tools and analysis we need.”*

– Colin Lambert, Groundwork youth worker

The youth workers working with children and young people already know what needs to happen to change this state of affairs. The systems in which they work are poorly coordinated and they don’t have the resources they need to meet the growing challenge.

*“Once a young person is already in a very difficult situation it’s hard to get them out of it. We’re not anywhere near proactive enough in putting the early intervention in place to prevent those young people from being involved in things... caseloads are so high that it’s just not possible for every young person that needs to be seen to be seen... That lack of a multi-agency approach is more often than not what results in a failure to protect some young people from being exploited.”*

– Sam Walters – Pupil Referral Unit

We must recognise that young perpetrators are often victims of crime too. There needs to be a shift in focus to support children and intervene early when things start going wrong in their lives. We need to support them before anything worse happens to them.

Transforming those young lives would protect them, and make our communities safer. There needs to be a borough-wide approach to joining up services for young people, that reacts to what is happening in homes, schools, workplaces and online, as well as responding to their actions on the streets.

Our young people have lots to offer if we will only give them the chance. They want to achieve something in their lives, to be safe and to be happy. But we need to give them hope.

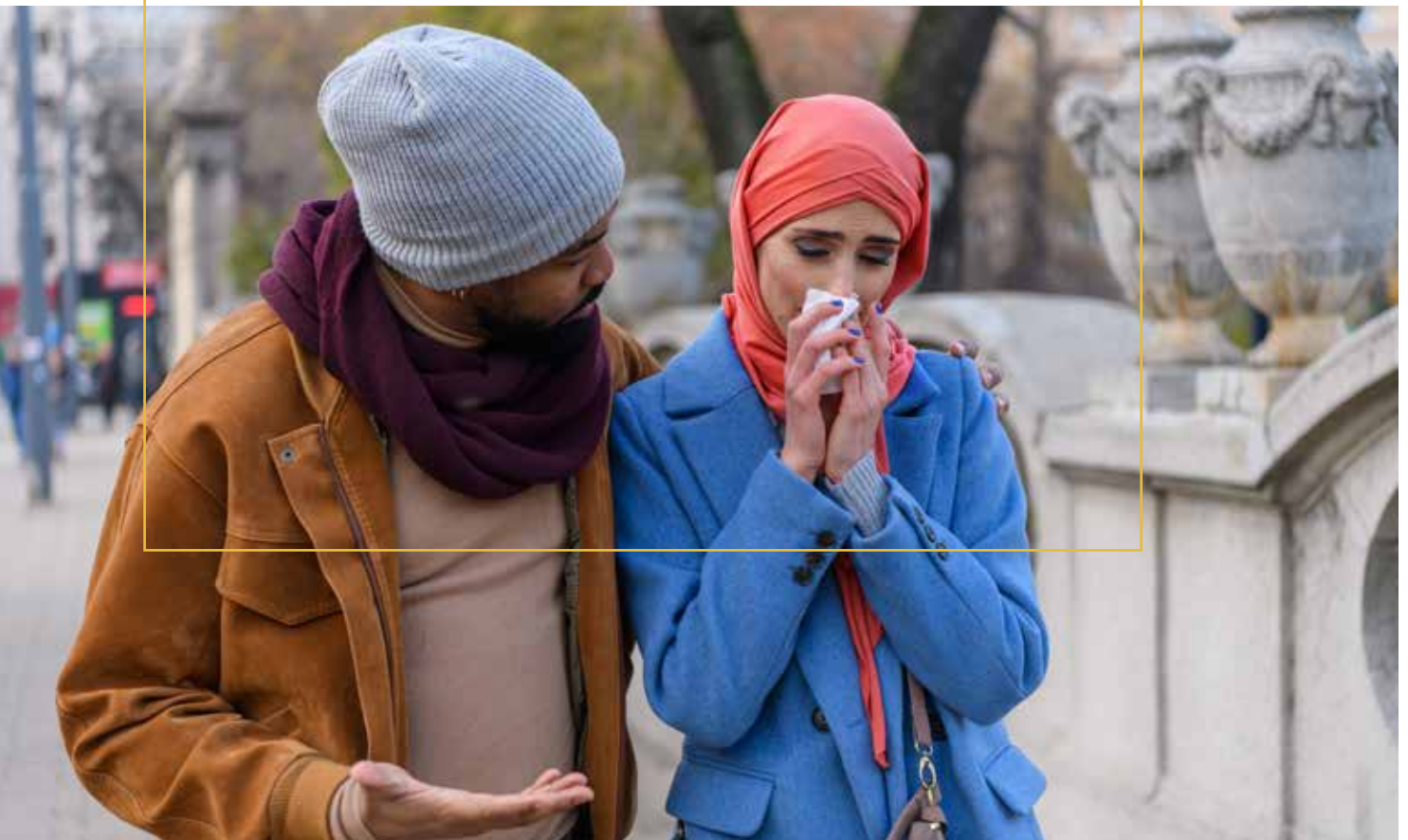


### Syed's story

Since I was really young there was violence at home. From 5 or 6 years old I would look out my window and see a lot of knife crime, assaults and drug deals. Crime was a normal part of life, I grew up thinking prison was bound to happen, and I ended up spending 14 months inside.

A lot of the steps that agencies took weren't helpful; school kept me isolated. I was looking for someone to sit down with my family. The social workers were distant and didn't pick up on the signs or behaviours in time – there was no effort to create a bond with me. It felt too formal, a person from outside poking their nose into your business when you haven't even established a connection with them.

I've been a victim of crime myself; I've also been a perpetrator of crime. I feel like for people from this area, it's inevitable. Even when I went to prison, I felt like I was on both sides, a victim to everything that was going on in my life. When I was in prison, I came across a lot of opportunities to help people less fortunate than me that gave me back my sense of self and the chance to get back on the right track.



## Box Up Crime

In October 2020, Redbridge Council funded the renovation of a derelict, council-owned property in the heart of Ilford, close to a drugs and violence hotspot, and encouraged Box Up Crime to use it for free community sessions for hundreds of young people aged 7 to 19. The award-winning Box Up mentors leave the activity up to the young people who attend, many choose to box, others do fitness work, some use the on-site music studio, others attend to have access to inspiring mentors.

Troubled children who attended Box Up themselves are now leading sessions in the gym and in local schools. In a recent evaluation 56% of respondents said that without Box Up they would be taking part in a negative activity, including criminal activity; 81% of families taking part in the family outcomes programme reported improvements in their family relationships.



## Solar Service, Solihull

Mental health problems have never been more in demand and Solar, an innovative approach in Solihull, has cut time for children and young people (CYP) and their families to access mental health support. Solar was set up as a service not about thresholds or tiers, but about timely access to appropriate support in line with CYP needs. It is a partnership between Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust, Barnardo's and Autism West Midlands. The service works to identify their needs early, ensure services are local, and create a seamless transition to adult health services. For families and carers, Solar encourages parents to support emotional wellbeing in their children, giving them more confidence to respond when challenges arise.

# Our recommendations

## Strengthen the response from public services

- Create an ambitious Youth Diversion and Early Intervention Strategy that includes a review of current services and increases opportunities for early intervention, making the most of what is already available locally. Work with schools to identify young people who need support and provide mentors who can offer them stability and guidance.
- Increase the number of youth outreach services created with and for all young people in every part of Redbridge, and empower the voluntary sector to support young people at risk as soon as it is needed rather than when a criminal threshold has been passed.
- Promote and expand Work Redbridge as a source of support for young people and ensure that the JobCentre Plus careers advice services develop opportunities for young people. This



should include entry level roles into skilled employment and support for entrepreneurship and business mentoring.

- Work with other London boroughs to stop children from outside Redbridge being placed in care settings here without local services being told about them; and lead by example, ensuring that information is shared with other boroughs when children from this borough are placed elsewhere.
- Produce a strategy for children in the care system which removes the cliff-edge at age 18, so they are supported continuously to the age of 25.
- Review mental health support for children and young people, including CAMHS, to understand the causes of harm and reduce the high thresholds for support, delivering quicker intervention to improve young people's life chances.
- Increase uniformed council and police enforcement to reduce drug dealing,

drug use, violence, begging and street drinking; and support the police to disrupt the 'drugs ecosystem' by tackling sellers of stolen goods

### Work closely with the community to bring about practical change

- Reduce the spaces where criminality can flourish by speeding up the delivery of the Our Streets Strategy in partnership with local people. Efforts should initially focus on Ilford and address the abandonment of public spaces.
- Work with children and young people to improve the links between the services they use, co-designing new services and ways of working to make the system respond better to their needs. Make creative use of Community Hub sites or derelict high street properties let at nominal rents to develop new services along the lines of Box Up Crime.



Anti-social behaviour

85% of respondents to the public consultation reported rubbish and litter as a problem

75% identified public drug use as a problem

62% identified vandalism, graffiti and deliberate damage to property

47% identified people being drunk or rowdy in a public place

The use of parks has almost quadrupled in recent years but resources have reduced due to financial pressures. All parks and open spaces have unsustainable volumes of litter left by users.

Fly-tipping of domestic and commercial waste happens on a daily basis. There is drug dealing, gangs, drinking and prostitution in parks, particularly in the south. Key issues of concern include vandalism, graffiti, and aggressive behaviour to staff.

Anti-social behaviour (ASB) is one of the most common complaints about life in Redbridge, and one of the most powerful factors in influencing how people feel about living here. Constantly having to deal with other people's litter and noise can eventually destroy the pleasure and pride we should be able to feel about our own homes.

*"This used to be a common place where people used to come and have sex so [we] used to find condoms and needles ...people used to go in there with alcohol bottles as well... we don't have much greenery in Ilford Lane, this could be potentially quite beautiful, a bed with flowers and a nice place that you can come and sit with your children. But right now, no-one would want to come here."*

– Ruthba, local resident, Clean Up Ilford Lane

*"Multi-tenant houses are a huge problem and are bases for crime, prostitution, violence, filling streets with trucks full of stolen goods, general anti-social behaviour, and they dump all their rubbish on the streets."*

– Redbridge Resident

We heard about longstanding problems with litter, fly-tipping, and noise from neighbours and businesses. People frequently spoke about "broken window syndrome", where tolerance of low-level crimes leads to crime problems getting worse. The response from the authorities is often inadequate and uncoordinated. Residents are deeply frustrated about the lack of progress being made when the problem is so clear, and infuriated that their complaints seem not to be listened to.

*"People use social media platforms to talk about crime, they no longer have confidence to report due to lack of action..."*

*"No one available at council after hours – this is why people complain on social media..."*

*"Phoning 101? You can be over an hour on the phone..."*

– Comments from Community Voice session August 2021

As a borough with a constantly changing population living in high density housing, we understand that Redbridge has some difficult issues to deal with. It may be hard for residents to buy-in to a long-term vision for the borough when they might not be here for long. Local authorities cannot solve this problem on their own, but as the guardians of our streets they have a crucial role to play in supporting the community's efforts.

We need to see a renewal of pride in Redbridge and a shared understanding of the kind of behaviour that is expected of people who live in our borough. We must also have a significantly improved, more sensitive and faster response to residents who complain about ASB.

We have some fantastic assets in Redbridge, beautiful parks and open spaces, and a community that really wants to see change. Our recommendations are designed to build up that sense of civic pride and make sure that everyone who lives and works here shares in the job of making Redbridge a better place to live.

## The Anti-Social Behaviour Warning Scheme

In Tower Hamlets, the police successfully piloted the Anti-Social Behaviour Warning Scheme. Working in partnership with the local authority this joint initiative was able to reduce ASB calls to the police by 5.3% and the local authority by over 17%.

Through the use of an agreed, shared process for both organisations, those who were committing a range of anti-social behaviours were taken through a staged process of 'Educate, Engineering a solution and Enforcement'. Through the sharing of intelligence, individuals and families were identified that would benefit from positive support and diversionary schemes. Only 10% of individuals who received an initial warning have come to notice again.



# Our recommendations

## Strengthen the response from public services

- Review the existing Our Streets Strategy and speed up the efforts to deliver it, working with residents to develop it as a community-led anti-social behaviour strategy.
- Ensure Safer Neighbourhoods Policing teams are working at times when people need their support most, and that they know their area and local residents well.
- Vary the hours at which CCTV cameras are staffed and operating rather than using a predictable timetable. Use the evidence gathered to tackle ASB as well as other crimes.
- Increase uniformed presence in parks and highstreets with the flexibility to increase numbers over the summer months and at closing time when demand is highest. Investigate the extension of hybrid park rangers who can enforce measures to prevent ASB in parks.
- Invest in systems to improve data sharing between the police and local authority, and explore a partnership approach to collecting evidence from residents who may have cameras or video doorbells within legal guidelines.

- Reinvest a percentage of the proceeds from housing developments into parks and other green spaces.
- Increase outreach opportunities for drug and alcohol treatment and support for homeless people.

### Work closely with the community to bring about practical change

- Develop and promote a Residents' Charter, setting out the standards expected of all residents in Redbridge regarding issues such as noise nuisance, litter and waste disposal. The Charter should include expectations on local businesses and landlords, and landlords should be required to share it with all tenants.
- Tackle litter and waste by making it easier for people to dispose of waste and take pride in their area and incentivising positive behaviour, for example through money-back schemes for plastic bottles.
- Increase membership and activities undertaken by Voluntary Parks Groups and celebrate their contribution to the community.

### Use good communications to change the culture

- Develop and deliver a communications and engagement strategy to support a sense of civic pride in Redbridge.

## The Redbridge Charter

Redbridge is shaped by the actions, large and small, which we all take every day. Our borough is full of people who care about their community and work hard to make it stronger. We understand that pressures can make life difficult, but by pulling together, everyone can thrive.

We want everyone who lives in Redbridge to feel that they belong, whether they are long-term residents or just passing through. Everyone should have pride in our borough.

But this can only happen if everyone living or working in Redbridge plays their part.

The Redbridge Charter will guide our actions and interactions, and it could look like this:

### **As people living or working in Redbridge, we are committed to being:**

1. **Respectful to each other.** Our community is richer for its diversity, and we value it.
2. **Considerate of our neighbours.** We know our actions can have consequences for others.
3. **Responsible for our place.** Where we live and how it looks matters to us. Clean streets and safe spaces are important for us all.
4. **Actively engaged.** We look out for others and help wherever we can.
5. **Positive.** We look out for ways to improve our borough.

Developing initiatives that shape vision and unity are a key part of turning the tide on crime in Redbridge.

# Burglary and public confidence





29% of all notifiable offences in Redbridge from May 2020–2021 were burglary, theft or robbery; of these, 66% were theft, 24% burglary and 9% robbery

Residential burglary was seen by respondents as their second highest priority

1st August 2020 – 31st July 2021 saw a total of 1,578 allegations of burglary, a 32.4% reduction compared to the same period in the preceding year \*

1st August 2020 – 31st July 2021 saw 1,165 allegations of residential burglary; the same period 2019/20 saw 1,723 allegations while 2018/19 saw 1,858, representing reductions of 37.3% and 7.3% respectively

Over the same period, allegations of non-residential burglary saw a 13.4% reduction

1st August 2020 – 31st July 2021 saw 87 offences or 5.5% of the total solved. This is a 5.6% decrease on the previous year \*

The statistics show that burglary is declining in Redbridge, but the thought of becoming a victim means many residents still live in fear. Local people think the issue is not treated seriously enough by police and feel left in the dark by poor communication about the problem.

We accept that resources for the police and community safety teams are stretched, but we believe that they could and should be better managed. The failure to engage with communities about their concerns, and to follow up reports and complaints, means that residents often don't know what is happening. In the absence of accurate official updates, people increasingly rely on social media for information and the perception grows that the situation is getting worse.

An important element in tackling burglary is the public's willingness to report crime when it happens. The meeting of the Community Voice panel about public confidence highlighted why this often does not happen in Redbridge. Panel members overwhelmingly agreed that the public has a duty to report crime, but highlighted a long list of problems with how the authorities respond when residents do contact them. Lack of communication, a perception that only "major" crimes get attention, and inadequate staffing of support services out of office hours were among the most frequent complaints.

*"Resident had theft from front of house. Police said it was not a matter they can investigate and told to report to insurance. If you want people to engage, more action must be taken on reports..."*

*"Resident heard a break-in to neighbours' car late at night. Calls the police who turned up and arrested people. Police kept resident up for hours taking a statement. Resident enquires 2 weeks later and was told there was no action taken, 'a slap on the wrist'. Feels 'why bother'..."*

***"When something is reported there should be some real feedback – outlining what action. If people feel it's a waste of time, people feel 'what's the point' ..."***

*"Safer neighbourhood team phone number is not 24/7, causes issues reporting drugs, burglary and car crime... Police did turn up once to speak to a reported drug dealer who was spoken to quickly by police and no further action taken. No communication about what happens when a report is made."*

– Comments from Community Voice Panel

We want to see much more effort being put into preventing burglary in Redbridge. We are concerned that the police are currently only visiting 50% of burglary scenes and as a result are likely to be missing important leads. We need better communication between all the services involved, and a faster and more positive response when people report crime. We also need to see an acknowledgement from the police of the fact that people might, understandably, feel anxious about neighbours seeing uniformed officers arriving to take statements. They should always act with discretion.

We hope that many of the actions we are recommending elsewhere in this report will have an impact on reducing burglary: improving public spaces to design out crime, improving the use of CCTV and Safer Neighbourhood Policing teams, and actively engaging the public in sharing information will all contribute to making Redbridge a safer borough to live in.

“Boxes dumped beside my broken front door were the first sign that I’d been burgled. Every room turned upside down. I didn’t know where to start – check that the cat was ok, or find the gold chain Dad left me? It was all gone, including my tools for work from the shed. I hated the thought that a stranger had been through my things – everything felt dirty.

I called the police. They visited three days later. Before they arrived I’d barely slept, I’ve never felt so afraid. To say I felt let down doesn’t come close. I felt they just didn’t take it seriously, they asked me if there was any evidence. How would I know?

I look at my community differently now. Was it someone I know? My trust has gone.”



# Our recommendations

## Strengthen the response from public services

- Prioritise preventing burglaries, putting additional uniformed officers in known hotspots, supporting Street Watch volunteers and giving residents information about how to prevent burglary.
- Improve the police response to victims of burglary.
- Develop plans for each ward to meet their local needs and find ways to revitalise the ward panels.
- Make better use of local authority engagement officers to promote crime and community safety and attend community events with the police.

## Work closely with the community to bring about practical change

- Subsidise the cost of equipment designed to prevent burglary so that it is available in all communities, and enable tenants to improve safety features in social housing.
- Ensure a personal and timely response is given to victims, including visiting them in their homes where that would be welcomed, and increase “cocooning” (visiting houses close to those which have been burgled to offer advice).

## Use good communications to change the culture

- Create a multi-agency communications team which means partner agencies can deliver better communications between the council, police, housing services and local residents.

## Funding change

Tackling crime in Redbridge needs to be a priority for the council and partner agencies. Our Commission has highlighted the need for them all to work together with a new purpose and commitment. Naturally, if we are to achieve the step-change that our residents demand, this also needs to be a strategic priority for resourcing decisions now and in the longer term.

We encourage the council and partners to look boldly and creatively at potential funding sources – some may come

by pooling existing resources; by refocusing funds into addressing the golden threads of change; or indeed by increasing council tax and using the additional funds specifically for delivering our recommendations. We believe that our findings underline the need for additional funding from regional and national government too. But in the immediate term, our challenge to the council and key partners is that they can and should prioritise the delivery of our recommendations when setting departmental budgets.

- Run training for frontline staff in partner agencies to improve engagement and information sharing with members of the public, and improve engagement with the Neighbourhood Watch communications network by police and council staff.
- Give residents clear information about who is responsible for which elements of crime reduction and prevention in Redbridge, how it is paid for and how the council, police and other partners work together.

## Turning the tide on crime

Our Commission has set out a vision for a safe, supportive and ambitious Redbridge. Across all our priority areas there are short- and long-term actions which will help to achieve this. But we need to be clear, this is the start of the journey to turn the tide on crime. When we review progress in 2023, we will expect to see how long-term funding commitments and interdependent working across agencies is delivering a safer borough for us all.

## Next steps

We believe that taken together our recommendations are the basis for a sustainable and practical programme of change. Some of them are innovative and perhaps radical, but mostly they are about taking a fresh look at what already exists, making sure the service to residents improves, and leads to a reduction in key crimes and the fear of crime.

We will be presenting them to key local service leaders from the council, police, health and voluntary services and asking for their joint, considered response. We cannot afford for our voices to be ignored.



We understand that the council has a timetable for making decisions about funding which cannot be bypassed. We know that Redbridge Police is part of a London-wide Policing ecosystem, so many decisions which affect Redbridge are made elsewhere. We know the health sector is diverse, with a multitude of local, regional and national governance and funding systems. We don't accept that this means that no action can be taken until all the pathways are clear.

If there is a will to make change happen, much of what we are recommending can be started without waiting for additional funds. For example, action can be taken on physically bringing services together and breaking down barriers between them to enable closer working; agreeing to share data and information; and reviewing key service performance.

Equally, there is no obvious financial reason why work cannot start to develop and embed a Redbridge Charter, or for all council-run services to commit to including service users in the design of new services, or for the council to improve the quality of the information it shares with partners and residents, on its own outlets, or to think creatively about ways to use existing council-owned buildings to offer spaces for a new generation of Box Ups.

These are organisational systems challenges, not necessarily financial ones. Everyone we have spoken to agrees that urgent action is needed. And it must start now.

For many of us, being involved in this process has been challenging, not just because of the subjects we have been discussing, but because we have received comments from friends and neighbours accusing us of wasting our time trying to do something about a system that will never change, and that they never listen to people like us. After many years of not being listened to, it is easy to see why people might feel this way. We have put our trust in the promise that what the Commission delivers will not just be listened to, but will be acted on. We've all given this our best shot. It's now time for our service leaders to step up too.

Some of what we are asking for will require long-term funding and difficult decisions will need to be made about choosing priorities. But the people of Redbridge have made it very clear where our priorities lie. It's up to the council and the whole range of other local service providers to deliver for us.

# The Commissioners



## Dr Javed Khan OBE (Chair)

Since 2014 Javed has been the Chief Executive of Barnardo's, the largest national children's charity in the UK. A British Muslim with Kashmiri heritage, Javed is the first non-white CEO in Barnardo's 155-year history.

After initially training to be a teacher, Javed worked as a director of education in local government, the Civil Service and then CEO of Victim Support. His non-executive board roles have included NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups, Hospital Trusts and local government improvement. He is a Companion of the Chartered Management Institute, was a Patron of the National Citizen Service, a key member of the Independent Grenfell Recovery Taskforce, and Specialist Advisor to the Justice Select Committee's Inquiry into Prison Reform. Dr Khan was awarded an OBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours list in June 2021 for services to young people and education.



## Taiwo Ademola

Taiwo has worked in higher education and student-led organisations in multiple capacities, as the Vice President, Campaign Manager, and as an advocate for the rights of ethnic minorities on local and national developments. He works part time for an international NGO, holds a BSc in Biomedical science, and is the Chief of Staff at Youth Vote UK.



## Richard Angell

Richard Angell is a resident in Barkingside, Redbridge; he works as Campaigns Director for the HIV and sexual health charity Terrence Higgins Trust and is a Trustee of the global LGBT rights charity, the Kaleidoscope Trust. He has previously worked for an events company; a leading think tank; and was the Secretary of the All-Party Parliamentary Group Against Antisemitism.





### Jenny Ellis

Jenny Ellis is a Redbridge resident and Chief Officer of RedbridgeCVS, the umbrella body for the local voluntary and community sector. Before this she held a range of social enterprise and frontline charity leadership roles. She is also Vice Chair of Odd Eyes Theatre, a charity that seeks to facilitate exchange, break barriers and celebrate diversity through performance, film and creative learning opportunities.

She brings 10 years' experience of building partnerships across the voluntary, public and private sectors



### Colin Foster MBE

Colin has spent many years working in organisational change management in the Department of Education and in 2000, was awarded the MBE for managing the programme which gained the Investors in People Award for the entire Department – the first Civil Service Department to gain this Award. He has also worked in developing sheltered employment for disabled people and as a Jobcentre Manager.

In recent years Colin has been Chair of the Patients Group at Gants Hill Medical Centre, and has previously been engaged with local Police action in dealing with antisocial behaviour.



### Mark Glazer

Mark retired as an international tax specialist to devote his life to helping the police and council reduce crime. He has been involved in Redbridge Neighbourhood Watch for close to 25 years, and is currently its Chairman, as well as being Chairman of London Community Watch.



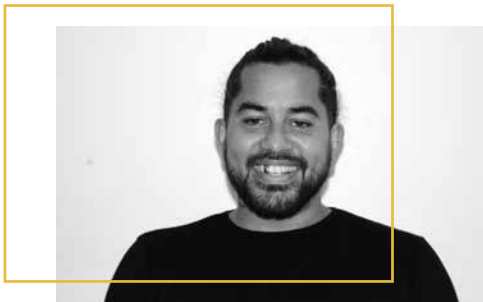
### Joanne Hamill

Joanne is the Headteacher of Oaks Park High School in Newbury Park and a member of the Youth Offending Team Executive Board, working alongside the Police, NHS and Social Services. Joanne wants to help address rising concerns in local crime, especially in relation to the number of young people getting caught up and the prevalence of women and girls being victims of crime. Joanne advocates education as a vital part in tackling the root causes of crime.



### Rob Harris

Having worked with young people and their families for over 19 years within the Youth Justice System, Rob set up LifeLinxs where he is an advocate for young people, influencing decision-makers and helping them to understand the context in which young people live. His vision is to change lives, one young person at a time and, in turn, see them doing the same for others. LifeLinxs partners with experts in housing, social services, education, gang intervention, business management and more to achieve the best possible outcomes.



### Gavin McKenna

Gavin is the Founding Director of Reach Every Generation which supports young people involved in or at risk of criminal exploitation, serious violence, and crime. He has had numerous years of experience working within the youth justice sector, and draws on his own lived experience of adverse childhood experiences to bring about societal change. Reach Every Generation is establishing grassroots coaching projects to directly reach the young people who need support, and the professionals who work with them and their families every day.



### Clare Patterson

Clare is a local resident who was born and grew up in Ilford. She is a member of the Loxford and Clements Wood Resident Association and Friends of Loxford Community group based in Loxford Park. She is also a member of the Loxford Ward Panel. In her professional life she is an HR, Education and Training Manager.



### Michelle Robson

With a background in health Michelle has now worked for more than 20 years within the field of domestic abuse with extensive frontline experience of supporting vulnerable women and children. She is passionate about this area and has worked for many years training and developing other professionals working in this field in her role as an assessor for Women's Aid Federation of England National Training Dept. For the last 10 years she has worked to develop best practice within children's social care, in order to improve the experience of those families experiencing domestic abuse within this system.



### Irfan Shah

A lifelong Redbridge resident, Irfan now runs Frenford Youth Club. The club sees over 4,000 young people annually as well as being a community hub for many groups working within the community. He has a BA Hons in Youth and Community Education and has been working in youth work for over 17 years.

He is also co-founder of the Frenford & Mutual Aid Redbridge Foodbank and a Trustee of Wanstead Youth Club; Irfan is currently supporting Redbridge to gain UNICEF accreditation on becoming a child-friendly Borough. Irfan also works closely with local partners including the police around knife crime and finding ways to deter young people from reoffending by creating opportunities in employment and self-development.



### Hasan Siddiqi

Hasan has worked across complex programme and policy portfolios for the Government and in a voluntary capacity, focused on environmental and crime issues.

As a Redbridge resident for over 10 years, he recognises how great the Borough is and how much potential there is to improve the quality of residents' lives by tackling crime.



### Peter Terry QPM

Peter served 31 years in the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) and was awarded the Queen's Police Medal for distinguished service in the 2015 New Year's Honours. In retirement he provides advice to various public safety projects, works with policing services to support the career aspirations of under-represented groups and assists the College of Policing with the design and implementation of selection processes. During his time with the MPS he worked in Redbridge twice, firstly as an Inspector, and then as the Borough Commander.



### Amy Tully

Amy was born and raised in Redbridge. She has worked in the UK charity sector and is currently studying for a Master's degree in International Development. In early 2020 she began to gather data on local women's experiences of street harassment and assault via an online survey. More than 1,800 women came forward to shed light on their experiences and to give their testimonies, providing some harrowing responses and highlighting the crucial need for action. Amy is particularly interested in how women are disproportionately impacted by particular forms of crime such as sexual harassment, sexual assault and domestic violence.

**One other Commissioner participated in the Commission but prefers to remain anonymous.**

# Glossary of terms

## **The golden threads**

A set of findings that were present throughout all topic areas and have become the basis for our recommendations. They are a fundamental reason why the problems we face are so serious.

## **Strategic lead**

Member of council staff leading, managing and developing the provision of a particular service across the council.

## **Our Streets Strategy**

An existing council strategy aiming to improve the look and feel of the street scene in Redbridge.

## **Redbridge Charter**

A set of principles outlining standards that all residents in Redbridge should adhere to.

## **Public Space Protection Order (PSPO)**

A PSPO is an order which prohibits specified things and activities being done in an identified public place.

## **Co-design**

Collaboration between different organisations working together and bringing in a range of experiences, including people with lived experience, to help shape services.

## **Redbridge Principles**

A set of principles detailing the standards that anyone working in public services in the borough should uphold.

## **Multi-agency**

Work involving partnership and collaboration of several organisations, such as the council, police and schools.

## Organisations/structures

### **Street Watch**

Local residents patrolling their own streets, promoting good citizenship and supporting a better neighbourhood.

### **Work Redbridge**

A partnership of over 30 local providers designed to assist residents looking for employment support, training, volunteering or business support.

### **Mayor of London's Women's Night Safety Charter**

A set of pledges asked of organisations that operate at night to make London a city where all women feel confident and welcome at night.

### **Neighbourhood Watch**

The Neighbourhood Watch Network supports individuals and groups to create safer, stronger and active communities.

## Evidence sources

**Community Voice**

[www.redbridge.gov.uk/have-your-say/community-voice/](http://www.redbridge.gov.uk/have-your-say/community-voice/)

**Street Watch**

[www.redbridge.gov.uk/crime-and-public-safety/street-watch/](http://www.redbridge.gov.uk/crime-and-public-safety/street-watch/)

**Mayor of London's Women's Night Safety Charter**

[www.london.gov.uk](http://www.london.gov.uk)

**Neighbourhood Watch**

[www.ourwatch.org.uk/](http://www.ourwatch.org.uk/)

**Refuge**

[www.refuge.org.uk/](http://www.refuge.org.uk/)

**The Gaia Centre Lambeth**

[www.refuge.org.uk/our-work/our-services/one-stop-shop-services/the-gaia-centre/](http://www.refuge.org.uk/our-work/our-services/one-stop-shop-services/the-gaia-centre/)

**Box Up Crime**

[boxupcrime.org/](http://boxupcrime.org/)

**The Wigan Deal**

[www.wigan.gov.uk/Council/The-Deal/The-Deal.aspx](http://www.wigan.gov.uk/Council/The-Deal/The-Deal.aspx)

**Redbridge ASB**

[www.redbridge.co.uk/crime-and-public-safety/anti-social-behaviour/](http://www.redbridge.co.uk/crime-and-public-safety/anti-social-behaviour/)

**Groundwork**

[www.groundwork.org.uk/](http://www.groundwork.org.uk/)

**Clean Up Ilford Lane**

[www.facebook.com/cleanupilfordlane/](http://www.facebook.com/cleanupilfordlane/)

**Redbridge Women and Girls Listening Exercise**

[engagement.redbridge.gov.uk/strategy/womens-listening-exercise/](http://engagement.redbridge.gov.uk/strategy/womens-listening-exercise/)

**Ilford Street Harassment Survey**

[linktr.ee/ilfordstreetharassment](http://linktr.ee/ilfordstreetharassment)

**Redbridge Council women's harassment reporting webpage**

[www.redbridge.gov.uk/crime-and-public-safety/domestic-abuse/](http://www.redbridge.gov.uk/crime-and-public-safety/domestic-abuse/)

**Beyond Equality**

[www.beyondequality.org/](http://www.beyondequality.org/)

**Our Streets Strategy**

[www.redbridge.gov.uk/about-the-council/our-streets-strategy/](http://www.redbridge.gov.uk/about-the-council/our-streets-strategy/)

**Aanchal Women's Aid**

[www.aanchal.org.uk/](http://www.aanchal.org.uk/)

# Sources of help for residents

**There is information about the support services provided by the London Borough of Redbridge on the council's website**  
[www.redbridge.gov.uk](http://www.redbridge.gov.uk)

**For domestic abuse support call the National 24hr Helpline on 0808 2000 247, local services on 0800169 7759 or Reach Out, a support service for adults in Redbridge who are being abused or fear being abused, on 0800 1456410**  
[www.redbridge.gov.uk/crime-and-public-safety/domestic-abuse/](http://www.redbridge.gov.uk/crime-and-public-safety/domestic-abuse/)

**Reporting anti-social behaviour**  
[www.redbridge.gov.uk/crime-and-public-safety/anti-social-behaviour/](http://www.redbridge.gov.uk/crime-and-public-safety/anti-social-behaviour/)

**If you think a child or young person is being abused**  
[www.redbridge.gov.uk/adult-and-childrens-services/child-protection/](http://www.redbridge.gov.uk/adult-and-childrens-services/child-protection/)

**If you have been a victim of crime Victim Support can help:**  
**0203 910 9040**

**Reporting in Redbridge**  
[www.redbridge.gov.uk/report-it/](http://www.redbridge.gov.uk/report-it/)

**Report a crime Metropolitan Police**  
In an emergency always call 999.







Redbridge  
Community  
Crime  
Commission

