

Equal Opportunities Commission

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# Domestic Abuse

## THE FACTS

**A Secondary Research Report**

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## Introduction

Domestic Abuse occurs all over the world and has no boundaries in terms of class, race, religion, disability, age or sexuality.

However, research has shown that Domestic Abuse affects primarily women with the perpetrator being predominantly male. Therefore the Equal Opportunities Commission asks 'How can gender equality be achieved when Domestic Abuse is so rife?'

This report examines the effects of domestic abuse, its impact on both women and their children, the cost to the economy and the legal system.

The report also looks into initiatives the UK and Welsh Assembly Government have funded to tackle the issue of domestic abuse. As the report states 'Domestic abuse is a huge issue with 25% of women experiencing it in their lifetime'<sup>(1)</sup>. The section on recommendations in the report shows that the government and voluntary organisations cannot tackle this crime alone, responsibility falls onto everyone's shoulders – especially employers who employ many women.

Therefore we recommend organisations to:

- ❑ **Break the silence**
- ❑ **Raise awareness**
- ❑ **Provide training on domestic abuse**
- ❑ **Have a Domestic Abuse Policy**
- ❑ **Offer Support**

Note: Recommendations are explained fully on page 29.

# Domestic Abuse

The Home Office defines domestic abuse as:

"Any violence between current and former partners in an intimate relationship, wherever the violence occurs. The violence may include physical, sexual, emotional and financial abuse."

*The Home Office, 2002*

# Statistics on Domestic Abuse

*Violence against women is chronically under-reported, but research shows that:*

## **In the UK**

25% of women experience domestic violence in their life and between 16% to 10% of women suffer domestic violence every year. <sup>(1)</sup>

Two women each week are murdered by their partners or ex partners in the UK. <sup>(3)</sup>

The British Crime Survey showed that 45% of women in the UK have experienced some form of domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking. <sup>(27)</sup>

Repeat victimisation is higher in domestic abuse than in any other crime. A woman will be assaulted on average 35 times before reporting it to the police. <sup>(3)</sup>

Women are at the greatest risk of homicide at the point of separation or after leaving a violent partner. <sup>(3)</sup>

## **In Wales**

In 2003, domestic violence constituted half of all murders in South Wales.

Cardiff Women's Safety Unit (WSU) receives fifty referrals each week. <sup>(22)</sup>

Cardiff Women's Safety Unit report that a WSU client will on average, have experienced almost 7 years of physical abuse, with a third reporting sexual abuse. <sup>(3)</sup>

The Welsh Women's Aid 'one day count' in 2000 revealed that 173 women and 240 children/young people that day were living in refuges throughout Wales. <sup>(22)</sup>

Everyday in Wales an average of 49 women contact Welsh Women's Aid because they are experiencing domestic abuse. <sup>(22)</sup>

## **Attitudes**

20% of young men and 10% of young women think that abuse or violence against women is acceptable. <sup>(5)</sup>

Nearly a third of people say a woman is partially or totally responsible for being raped if she was drunk. <sup>(36)</sup>

## **Health**

Domestic violence is the largest cause of morbidity worldwide in women aged 19-44. Greater than war, cancer or motor vehicle accidents. <sup>(4)</sup>

The impact of domestic abuse has been found to have psychological parallels with the impact of torture and imprisonment of hostages. (7)

The psychological impact on victims living with domestic violence include anxiety, sleep problems, loss of self respect, low self worth, feelings of hopelessness, depression and loss of confidence. The effects can lead to self harm and actual or attempted suicide. (3)

Domestic Violence has been identified as a prime cause of miscarriage or stillbirth. (27)

In a study by Shelter, 40% of homeless women stated that domestic violence was a reason for becoming homeless. (37)

10% of children living in refuge have no access to NHS services, such as a doctor or dentist. (38)

Over 50% of women in prison have experienced domestic violence and one in three has experienced sexual abuse. (45)

### **Prosecution**

Every minute police in the UK receive a domestic assistance call, yet only 35% of domestic violence incidents are reported to the police. (38)

There are an estimated 600,000 incidents of domestic violence every year across Britain. However, there are only an estimated 7,000 criminal prosecutions. (6)

From April 2004 to March 2005, 45% of domestic violence cases were recorded as unsuccessful as compared to an average of 20% for other crimes. (42)

Research suggests between 75-95% of rapes are never reported to the police (36)

In 2004 the conviction rate for rape was 5.3% the lowest ever. (36)

## The Cost of Domestic Abuse

It is estimated that each domestic abuse homicide costs approximately £1.1m

*Home Office, 2000*

## The Costs

**It is estimated that the total cost of domestic abuse for one year in England and Wales is around £23 billion.** <sup>(10)</sup>

Sylvia Walby (2004) breaks down the costs of domestic abuse:

Type of cost	Estimated cost £Billion
<b>Criminal Justice System</b>	<b>1.017</b>
Of which police	(.49)
<b>Health care</b>	<b>1.396</b>
Of which physical	(1.22)
Of which mental health	(.176)
<b>Social services</b>	<b>.228</b>
<b>Emergency housing</b>	<b>.158</b>
<b>Civil legal</b>	<b>.312</b>
<b>All services</b>	<b>3.111</b>
<b>Economic output</b>	<b>2.672</b>
Sub-total	5,783
<b>Human and emotional</b>	<b>17.086</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>22.869</b>

Costs are estimated for one year for England and Wales and are centred on 2001. <sup>(10)</sup>

- **Criminal Justice System (CJS):** This amounts to around £1 billion a year, which is almost one quarter of the Criminal Justice System budget. CJS components include: prosecution, courts, prison, probation and legal aid with the largest single component being the police.
- **Health Care:** The majority of the cost to the NHS comes from physical injuries (£1.2 billion a year). However, domestic abuse also has an impact on mental health costing the NHS an additional estimated £176 million a year.
- **Social Services:** Research has shown that child abuse by a male parent is 15 times more likely to occur in a home where domestic abuse is present. <sup>(14)</sup> The annual cost to Social Services is nearly a quarter of a billion pounds which overwhelmingly is for children rather than adults.

- **Housing:** The total is estimated at £160 million a year. Expenditure on emergency housing includes costs to Local Housing Authorities and Housing Associations for housing those people rendered homeless due to domestic violence; housing benefit for such emergency housing; and, importantly, refuges. <sup>(12)</sup>

Shelter helped 3,193 women with housing problems related to domestic violence in 2002. UK Government statistics show that over a period of three months, of 33,640 households (accepted as homeless by local authorities), 23% were due to relationship breakdowns with domestic abuse being present in 70% of these cases. <sup>(3)</sup>

- **Civil Legal:** Injunctions, divorce and child custody are just a few of the Civil Legal services costing over £300 million a year, about half of which is borne by legal aid and the other half by the individual.
- **Economic Output:** Lost economic output accounts for around £2.7 billion a year. This is the cost of time off work due to injuries. It is estimated that around half of the costs of such sickness absences is borne by the employer and half by the individual in lost wages. <sup>(12)</sup>

### Domestic Abuse in the workplace

- 56% of abused women arrive late for work at least five times a month.
- 28% leave early at least five days a month.
- 53% miss at least three days of work a month.
- Productivity and concentration falls substantially.
- Once a person leaves an abusive partner they are especially vulnerable at work, as it may be the only place they can be located or harmed.
- 75% of domestic violence victims are targeted at work – from harassing phone calls and abusive partners arriving at the office unannounced, to physical assaults. <sup>(11)</sup>

**Human and emotional costs:** The human and emotional costs for domestic abuse are estimated at over £17 billion a year. <sup>(10)</sup> Sylvia Walby (2004) includes human and emotional costs into her final figure as the costs of services shown, does not include the pain and suffering that is caused by domestic abuse. It is useful to include an estimate for human and emotional costs in order that this impact is not ignored when it comes to public policy.

A huge amount of public money goes towards services geared towards the after effects of domestic abuse, in particular prosecuting the perpetrator. There seems to be a lack of information regarding the amount of money that goes towards preventing domestic abuse.

# Domestic Abuse & its Effect on Children & Young People

It is estimated that as many as 150,000 children and young people are affected by domestic abuse in Wales at any one time.

*Welsh Women's Aid (2004)*

# Domestic Abuse & its Effect on Children & Young People

## Children's Experiences of Domestic Violence

In 90% of all domestic assaults on women which occur in the home, children are in the same or an adjacent room. <sup>(13)</sup> At least 750,000 children a year witness domestic violence in the UK and nearly three-quarters of children on the child protection register live in households where domestic violence occurs. <sup>(15)</sup>

Children may be involved in the abuse in a number of ways. 33% of children try and intervene during attacks on their mother <sup>(9)</sup>. They may be made to watch the abuse, with 10% of mothers being sexually abused in front of their children, <sup>(9)</sup> or may be encouraged to be abusive towards their mothers. Perpetrators may make threats against the children or punish the children inappropriately in order to frighten their mothers.

Child abuse by a male parent is 15 times more likely to occur in a home where domestic abuse is present. <sup>(14)</sup> In a recent analysis of Serious Case Reviews of child deaths, one of the commonly recurring features was the existence of domestic abuse. <sup>(29)</sup>

Even if a woman has left a violent partner there is a risk that child contact arrangements can be used by the man to continue the abuse. Homicide reviews have found that post-separation contact between children and a violent parent poses significant risk. Despite this, although domestic violence features in about 16,000 cases a year where court welfare reports are ordered, contact was refused in only 601 cases. <sup>(29)</sup>

Women's Aid has compiled a list of 29 children in 13 families who were killed as a result of contact (or in one case residence) arrangements in England and Wales between 1994 and 2004. As the Government has not collated statistics on child contact homicides, the actual number could be higher. With regard to five of these families, contact was actually ordered by the court. <sup>(29)</sup> In five of these cases it is clear that the Father killed the children in order to take revenge on his ex-partner for leaving him. <sup>(29)</sup>

## The Impact on Children

Children living with violence can be affected in a number of ways. They can be affected by the fear, disruption and distress in their lives. They may have physical, emotional, learning, behavioural or development problems and their educational performance and achievements may also be affected. Pre-school children living with domestic violence are thought to witness more violence and be at greater risk of emotional and behavioural difficulties than older children. <sup>(18)</sup>

Ensuring the safety of mothers is typically the most effective way of protecting children. <sup>(3)</sup>

On the Women's Aid Census Day (2<sup>nd</sup> November, 2004) approximately 45% of children staying in refuges were under the age of 5, 39% of children were between the ages of 5 and 10 and 16% were between the ages of 11 and 16. <sup>(17)</sup>

Welsh Women's Aid report that children occupy nearly half of refuge space in Wales

An estimated 18,569 women and 23,084 children stayed in refuges in England during the year 2003/04. <sup>(17)</sup>

In 2003/04 142,526 women and 106,118 children received support for domestic violence in England. <sup>(17)</sup>

# Domestic Abuse, Disability, Race, Religion, Age and Sexual Orientation

Domestic violence affects all sections of society, regardless of age, gender, wealth, sexuality and geography.

*(‘Tackling Domestic Violence: providing advocacy, support to survivors of domestic violence.’)*

# Domestic Abuse, Disability, Race, Religion, Age and Sexual Orientation

## Women from Black and Ethnic Minority Communities

Domestic violence affects women from all ethnic groups but in some communities it can be perpetrated by extended families and can include forced marriages or genitalia mutilation.

Women's Aid believe that if a woman's first language is not English, it may be much harder to understand the systems of support. Men are more likely to speak English and this can be used as a tool of power. Women from Black and Ethnic Minority communities are also less likely to have friends and family to offer support. (44)

Women and children from black and minority ethnic communities can face further obstacles where information and services are not accessible to them or agencies are not seen as a source of support because of previous experiences of racism. (3)

## **Forced Marriage**

There is currently no specific criminal offence of 'forcing someone to marry' in the UK. However perpetrators – usually parents or family members – can be prosecuted for offences that can be associated with forcing someone into marriage, including kidnapping and false imprisonment.

No one knows exactly how many people are being forced into marriage each year because many victims don't seek help or say that they are being forced into marriage. However, the Government's Forced Marriage Unit sees at least 250 cases each year. (24) and approximately 85% of forced marriage cases dealt with by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office involve female victims. (28)

## Female Genital Mutilation

While there has been no Government funded prevalence study of Female Genital Mutilation, based on data from the 1999 labour force survey, it is estimated that 74,000 women in the UK have been subjected to FGM and 7,000 girls under the age of 16 are at risk. (28)

## **Immigration**

Women's Aid highlight that a woman's insecure status gives her partner an opportunity to control her, and the threat of deportation severely limits her options. Women who come to the UK on a wife's visa face particular difficulties if they leave an abusive husband within 12 months of their arrival. Under the 2 year rule they have no recourse to public funds and so cannot claim benefits. As a result many women have no option but to be dependent on their settled spouse or partner. They may also face deportation and abusive partners often use this threat.

Applications for indefinite leave to remain in the UK often take a long time and during this time women wanting to leave an abusive relationship, cannot apply for Income Support, Family Credit, Child Benefit, Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit, Disability Working Allowance, Attendance Allowance, Severe Disability Allowance, Invalid Care Allowance, Disability Living Allowance and Income-based Jobseekers Allowance. An estimated 500 women every year experience violence from a partner and cannot access Housing Benefit and other support, including places in refuges, because they are subject to immigration control. (27)

Women's Aid argue that this results in a longer time period for a woman to feel she has no option but to live with the violence and may result in more children being born into violent households.

### **Disability**

An estimated 156 disabled women and 61 disabled children received support for domestic violence in England on the Women's Aid Census Day, November 2, 2004. (17)

Women's Aid highlight that disabled women are twice as likely to experience domestic violence as non-disabled women. They are also likely to experience abuse over a longer period of time and to suffer more severe injuries as a result of the violence.

Disabled woman can experience abuse in ways that non-disabled women do not. For instance, an abuser may touch someone inappropriately while apparently 'assisting' her. If an abuser is providing a caring role, they may withhold or make her beg for the assistance she needs. They can also withhold medication, or use it to distort her sense of reality. The abuser may capitalise on low-self esteem, or the belief that a disabled person could not manage without their 'carer'.

Disabled women can be more physically vulnerable than non-disabled women and are less likely to be able to remove themselves from the situation. Women's Aid argue they maybe more socially isolated because of the disability and as a result of the abusers control of any social relationships. Furthermore, it may be difficult to disclose the abuse, as there are few opportunities to see a health or social care professional without the abuser being present.

Additional barriers such as lack of access to public transport or buildings can make it extremely difficult for those experiencing abuse to access support services available to other women. (33)

### **Age**

There is little research which has examined domestic abuse and older women. Help the Aged highlight that older women are less likely than any other age group to report their experiences . There is often confusion between domestic violence and elder abuse, which means that the needs of this group are often overlooked.

Help the Aged believe injuries and distress can be seen by health and social workers to be age-related rather than the outcome of domestic violence and are less likely to ask about it. Horvath & Kelly (2007) acknowledge that older women seeking to end a violent relationship may be faced with additional barriers when seeking help. Older women may find that the lack of separate pension provisions affects their economic position, opportunities to stay with friends and relatives is extremely limited and feel that refuges are not suitable for them. There is also the possibility that older women may be carers of their abusive partners and or adult disabled children, and more likely to be unaware of the support services available to them. (39)

### **Lesbian and bisexual women**

Although this report is examining domestic violence perpetrated by men against women it is worth noting that violence also can take place within same gender relationships. Women's Aid highlight that lesbian or bisexual women may find that their abuser will also undermine their sexuality and threaten to 'out' them to family members, colleagues and employers. Lesbian and bisexual women can be faced with additional barriers when seeking help and support. Women's Aid highlight that some women may anticipate hostility or homophobia from agencies and be reluctant to speak out in case it results in criticism of all lesbian and bisexual women.

## Domestic Abuse & the Law

The Female Genital Mutilation Act (2003) increases the protection offered to Black and Minority Ethnic females by making it an offence, for the first time, for UK nationals or permanent residents to carry out female genital mutilation abroad or to aid, abet or procure the carrying out of FGM abroad (even in countries where it is legal).

The maximum penalty for doing so is increased from 5 to 14 years imprisonment

*The Female Genital Mutilation Act (2003)*

## Domestic Abuse & the Law

There is no specific offence of 'Domestic Abuse' under Criminal Law today. This means that a perpetrator of domestic abuse would usually be convicted for offences such as harassment, kidnapping or attempted murder but not actually 'domestic abuse'.

Until the late 1980's the criminal justice system paid little attention to the needs of women and children experiencing domestic violence. Domestic violence was frequently seen as a private matter, not 'real' violence and the sympathies of a predominantly male police force were often with the violent man/husband. <sup>(23)</sup> Often Police intervention in 'domestics' was seen as 'interfering in private affairs', or being worthy of little police effort as 'successful prosecutions' were rare. A negative police attitude often developed as officers saw themselves as 'stuck in the middle of warring factions'. This negativity became entrenched because often the "victims" would not provide written evidence or, having done so, would refuse to co-operate with a prosecution. <sup>(32)</sup>

### **The Crime and Disorder Act (1997)**

This Act places a duty on local authorities and the police to work together with other agencies to tackle crime at a local level through the provision of a Community Safety Strategy, which should include domestic abuse.

### **The Protection and Harassment Act (1997)**

This was intended to tackle stalkers and provide more effective protection for abused women, in particular those who no longer live with their abuser. This Act enables the police to protect women and to use the criminal law against men who threaten, pester and harass women after the relationship has ended. <sup>(44)</sup>

### **Female Genital Mutilation Act (2003)**

This act repeals, re-enacts and strengthens the provision of the 1985 Prohibition of Female Circumcision Act. The provisions have established a new offence of taking a female abroad for the purposes of FGM or of assisting a non-UK person to mutilate a female overseas. The maximum penalty for FGM has increased from 5-14 years imprisonment.

### **The Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act (2004)**

The Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act (2004) aims to put victims in the centre of the criminal justice system and embraces tougher powers for the police and courts to protect victims and prosecute abusers. Measures include a stay away order for convicted perpetrators of domestic violence in order to ensure the victims safety.

It also means that common assault is an arrestable offence. This Act has been seen as an essential measure that strengthens the rights of victims and witnesses, ensuring they receive the help, support and protection that is needed.

## **The Gender Equality Duty**

In April 2007 the biggest change to sex equality legislation since the Sex Discrimination Act came into force – the Gender Equality Duty (GED). The GED requires all public authorities to eliminate unlawful sex discrimination and harassment, and promote equality of opportunity between men and women. This means public authorities have to prioritise action to address the most significant gender inequalities within their remit and to take actions that are likely to deliver the best gender equality outcomes.

[http://www.eoc.org.uk/PDF/GED\\_CoP\\_Draft.pdf](http://www.eoc.org.uk/PDF/GED_CoP_Draft.pdf)

Domestic abuse is one of the most serious forms of gender inequality, so public authorities need to consider what steps they can take to:

- Reduce the incidence in domestic abuse
- Lesson its impact by speedy, sensitive and effective interventions
- Protect those at risk
- Support those who have been abused.

These obligations apply to authorities in their role as service providers and employers.

## **Forced Marriage**

Legislation aimed at protecting the victims of forced marriages and preventing them from taking place received Royal Assent in July 2007.

Under the Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act, courts are able to make orders to protect the victim or potential victim where a forced marriage has or is about to take place and help remove them from the situation.

The Bill was introduced to Parliament in November 2006 by Lord Lester of Herne Hill as a Private Member's Bill. The Government then worked to strengthen the draft legislation and laid amendments to the Bill to provide greater powers for the courts to identify and protect victims of forced marriages.

# United Kingdom Government Policy

The UK Government has stated that it is: -

‘Committed to helping prevent domestic violence, improving the support and protection for victims and their children and bringing those who are perpetrators of this horrific crime to justice.’

*Domestic Violence, a national report, Home Office 2005*

## United Kingdom Government Policy

In June 2003 the Home Secretary published the consultation paper 'Safety and Justice: the Government's proposal on domestic violence.' This document set out the Government's strategy for tackling domestic abuse through three strands:

1. Prevention
2. Protection & Justice
3. Support

It included proposals for legislative and non-legislative changes in the way domestic abuse is dealt with in England and Wales.

### **Prevention**

In 2003 an Inter-Ministerial group was set up to take the lead on Government Actions in relation to domestic abuse. <sup>(20)</sup>

Information sharing guidance has been published for practitioners so that they are aware of what they can and should do if they suspect or are told about domestic violence.

An awareness campaign was run to promote the new 24-hour free phone national helpline number as well as general awareness.

A teenage soap series, aimed at educating young people about domestic violence, was funded by the government and distributed to all secondary schools.

A national Phone line for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender communities, was funded and launched with Broken Rainbow.

Good practice guidance has been published on how to encourage and enable disclosure of domestic violence in a range of health settings.

### **Protecting Victims and Bringing Offenders to Justice**

During March 2004 the Government published an evaluation of specialist domestic violence courts. These specialist courts were intended to ensure the recognition of difficulties and special concerns faced by victims of domestic violence when using the system. <sup>(20)</sup> The evaluation has resulted in there currently being 25 specialist courts up and running. The Government is planning to expand the number to more than 50 by April 2007 following research, which show the courts are having an impact on prosecutions and convictions. <sup>(34)</sup>

On 31 March 2005 the Home Office published a National Delivery Plan for domestic violence, which sets out a strategic framework for tackling domestic violence at regional and local levels.

In March 2007 an updated Plan highlights significant progress.

There has been a roll out of accredited Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programmes to every Probation area in England and Wales.

In 2007 it was announced that the number of local Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs) is to double with a cash boost of nearly £2 million. MARACs enable local agencies to work together to identify high-risk victims and plans to keep them safe. By 2008 there will be 100 MARACs.

Now all 43 police forces have explicit policies on domestic violence and domestic violence units. The police now have national policy and procedures including training on domestic violence and all forces are expected to comply. <sup>(23)</sup>

In the Crown Prosecution Service a network of CPS co-ordinators and a national policy on domestic violence has been established.

### **Supporting Victims and their Children**

December 2003 saw the National Domestic Violence 24-hour Helpline set up. This free phone service was funded by Refuge, Women's Aid, Comic Relief and received £1m from the Government. Today the Helpline is run in partnership between Refuge and Women's Aid.

£32 million has been provided for improvements to existing and new refuge places through the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister Homelessness & Housing Support Directorate and the Housing Corporation.

In 2004 good practice guidance was published on how to support children who have witnessed domestic violence.

In January 2005 new forms were introduced to enable allegations of domestic violence to be made right from the start of court applications for contact and residence involving children.

In April 2007 a Cross Government Action Plan on Sexual Violence and Abuse was published. The Action Plan brings together the measures underway and planned over the next year to deliver key objectives on sexual violence and abuse. It aims to maximise prevention of sexual violence and abuse, increase access to support and health services for victims of sexual violence and abuse and improve the criminal justice response to sexual violence and abuse. This action plan can be found at: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/Sexual-violence-action-plan?view=Binary>

In March 2007 a Cross-Government Action Plan on Human Trafficking was published. The action plan pulls together the work currently underway to tackle trafficking across government, and creates a platform for future work to combat this ongoing problem. It aims to balance the protecting and assisting of victims with

enforcement work that cracks down on the organised crime groups responsible for much of the trafficking.

This action plan can be found at:

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/human-traffick-action-plan?view=Binary>

## **A National Strategy**

End Violence Against Women's (EVAW) annual report, *Making the Grade?* (2006), is an independent analysis of Government initiatives to combat violence against women. Each Government Department is asked what they are doing to address violence against women and are assessed in relation to 20 questions and awarded a score out of 10.

EVAW agree that whilst there is a lot of work going on in some departments, there is no framework which underpins the work. *Making the Grade?* (2006) demonstrates that many departments are still not recognising violence against women. EVAW believe this is resulting in a number of missed opportunities to link violence against women to wider policy issues such as asylum, productivity in the labour market, social inclusion, housing, fear of crime, teenage pregnancy and programmes designed to enable single parents to find suitable employment. <sup>(28)</sup>

In other areas of the Government there is a repetition of work. Already there has been an inter-ministerial group working on domestic violence and sexual offending alongside a detached inter-ministerial group on forced marriages and FGM. Women's National Commission believe that this structural duplication is neither efficient or productive, and is often reflected at local and agency levels throughout the UK. <sup>(43)</sup>

In 1995, the UK signed the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) which required Governments to work towards ending violence against women by implementing national action plans. EVAW and the Women's National Commission are calling for the Government to build on the work that is being done and develop a cross-departmental strategy to end violence against women with prevention as a central pillar. <sup>(28)</sup> EVAW argue that the challenge is to create an integrated and co-ordinated approach that combines targeted initiatives for the promotion of gender equality, including the elimination of violence against women, with systematic use of gender mainstreaming in all sectors. It is highlighted that these efforts need to be supported by strong gender-specific mechanisms that will enhance co-ordination and function as a catalyst for action. <sup>(28)</sup>

# Welsh Assembly Government Policy

The Welsh Assembly Government acknowledges that domestic abuse is a serious problem in Wales and is committed to its eradication from Welsh society.

*Welsh Assembly Government (2005)*

## Welsh Assembly Government Policy

In March 2005 the Welsh Assembly Government launched its report '*Tackling Domestic Abuse: The All Wales National Strategy, A joint agency approach*'. The report sets out the Welsh Assembly Government's strategy to tackle domestic abuse in Wales. It was created by the Welsh Assembly Government and a wide cross-section of Welsh organisations including front line agencies.

Essentially the strategy's main principles are the same as those of the UK Government:

- Protection and support for victims
- Perpetrator accountability
- Prevention

The strategy also mentions the additional barriers that victims of domestic abuse may face when living in rural areas of Wales and when the medium of Welsh is used as a first language.

Since the publication of the strategy, many initiatives have been put into place, these include:

### **All Wales Working Group**

To ensure that there is joint action across Wales an 'All Wales Working Group' was established to provide advice. The group comprises of representatives from relevant Assembly Divisions and from key outside organisations who come into contact with victims of domestic abuse on a day to day basis. The remit of the group is to monitor and evaluate the progress of the All Wales Domestic Abuse Strategy, to provide advice to the Welsh Assembly Government and to share established good practice.

### **All Wales Domestic Abuse Helpline**

One of the specific measures of the strategy was to review the 'All Wales Domestic Abuse Helpline'. The Helpline previously provided vital free, confidential support 12 hours a day, 365 days a year in Welsh and English to women, men and children who are victims of domestic abuse. The review of the Helpline resulted in an additional £250,000 being allocated for 2006/2009 to Welsh Women's Aid to assist and develop the Helpline into a 24 hour service and fund 6 call workers.

### **Forced Marriage Seconded**

It has been agreed that a 'forced marriage seconded' be recruited to map out the extent of the problem in Wales and liaise with Whitehall Forced Marriage Unit.

### **All Wales network of Domestic Abuse Co-ordinators**

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires local authorities and police to form local crime and disorder partnerships to reduce the level of crime in their areas. This

encourages a co-ordinated approach to crime reduction by effective partnership working between agencies and organisations. In Wales these partnerships are called Community Safety Partnerships (CSP). The All Wales National Strategy states that 'Domestic abuse must be prioritised and form part of the local community safety plan'. The Welsh Assembly is continuing to support and set up an all Wales network of Domestic Abuse Co-ordinators and is funding a Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator in each Community Safety Partnership.

### **All Wales Pathway**

An 'All Wales Pathway' to ensure that health professionals in Wales carry out routine enquiries for domestic abuse within the ante-natal period has been completed. The training pack for use in all NHS trusts was printed and distributed in October 2005. Training commenced in November 2005.

Following the successful roll out of the Ante-Natal Care Pathway across Wales, it was agreed that this work should be extended into Accident and Emergency services. £23,000 funding has been allocated in 2006/07 for the appointment of a nurse secondee to introduce an 'All Wales' routine enquiry about domestic abuse in A&E for 9 months from the Domestic Abuse Fund.

### **Specialist Domestic Violence Court Programme**

The Specialist Domestic Violence Court Programme was developed after the evaluation of seven specialist court systems around the country, including two pilots in Croydon and Caerphilly. The findings from the evaluation demonstrated that by adopting particular working practices, significant improvements could be made to the outcomes of domestic violence cases.

### **Supporting People: Domestic Abuse Guidance**

This guide which is currently out for consultation is intended to complement the all Wales National Domestic Abuse Strategy and has been written from a supporting people perspective and is aimed at supporting people teams and members of commissioning bodies; as well as organisations that provide services to this client group.

### **Sexual Assault Referral Centres**

A sexual assault referral centre is a one-stop location where victims of sexual assault can receive medical care and counselling, quickly and sympathetically. Additional funding of £150,000 for 2006-07 has been agreed to provide a one-off start up grant to develop further Sexual Assault Referral Centres or sexual assault counselling services in Wales to achieve better coverage.

## **Good Practice on Domestic Abuse**

The information booklet for schools 'Good Practice on Domestic Abuse' was published at the end of March 2004, and has been circulated widely to schools, local education authorities, teaching bodies and youth organisations. This builds on existing child protection procedures and is aimed at assisting teachers and support staff to recognise and understand children and young people who are victims of domestic abuse.

The Welsh Assembly Government recommend that tackling domestic abuse should be part of a 'whole school' ethos and part of the culture of other organisations such as youth work settings. A strategic approach to prevention would mean 'implementing mandatory programmes targeted at girls and boys from primary school age through to secondary. The programme would aim to;

- Reduce tolerance of all forms of violence against women
- Raise awareness that violence against women is a crime
- Support young men and women to develop healthy relationships based on respect and equality; and
- Encourage young people to be active citizens in creating safe schools and communities, that do not tolerate violence against women.

## **Project Dyn**

Cardiff Safety partnership has set up a male telephone Helpline, Project Dyn, to target male victims of domestic abuse. The project will also provide an advocacy and safety planning service. The aim is to offer a one-stop-shop for men who have experienced domestic abuse. The service will encompass an all Wales element in recognition of the lack of available appropriate agencies in Wales able to provide effective support to male victims of domestic abuse.

**The Welsh Assembly Government Domestic Abuse Budget for 2007/08 and 2008/09 is £3.774m.**

## Recommendations

### **Break the silence**

Talk about domestic abuse, make your organisation a safe place where employees can discuss, disclose and ask for help. Employees will then feel better able to name their own experience as domestic violence and seek help. Silence and taboos surrounding domestic abuse collude with perpetrators of abuse.

*Equal Opportunities Commission Wales*

## Recommendations

As well as the UK and Welsh Assembly Government having strategies and recommendations in place to tackle domestic abuse, there are also many non-governmental organisations who have recommendations in place such as:

### Welsh Women's Aid

Welsh Women's Aid is the national umbrella organisation representing local Women's Aid groups in Wales. Their 34 member groups provide direct women-centred support in the community and in refuge to thousands of women and children who have or who are experiencing domestic abuse.

Welsh Women's Aid recommendations can be found at:

<http://www.welshwomensaid.org/index.html>

### End Violence Against Women

End violence against women is an unprecedented coalition of individuals and organisations who are calling on the Government, public bodies and others to take concerted action to end violence against women. Members include Rape Crisis, Women's Aid, the Women's National Commission, Amnesty International UK and the TUC.

End violence against women recommendations can be found at:

<http://www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk/>

### Women's National Commission

Women's National Commission is the official and independent advisory body giving the views of women to the government of the United Kingdom. It is an umbrella organisation representing women and women's organisations in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales to ensure women's views are taken into account by the government and are heard in public debate.

Women's National Commission recommendations can be found at:

<http://www.thewnc.org.uk/pubs/unlockingthesecret.pdf>

### Equal Opportunities Commission Wales recommendations

From these recommendations the EOC Wales has pulled out a few simple steps to how your organisation can help tackle domestic abuse.

### **Break the silence**

Talk about domestic abuse, make your organisation a safe place where employees can discuss, disclose and ask for help. Employees will then feel better able to name their own experience as domestic violence and seek help. Silence and taboos surrounding domestic abuse collude with perpetrators of abuse.

### **Raise awareness**

Display posters and leaflets about domestic abuse in public waiting areas and women's toilets. Have the National Helpline and other domestic abuse organisation posters visible to employees and visitors. Where possible collect data on the extent to which your organisation deals with domestic abuse issues.

### **Provide training on domestic abuse**

Recognise the need to provide training for all staff so they are aware of the issues and dynamics of domestic abuse. It is important that key staff know what their roles and responsibilities are for identifying, reporting and responding to survivors and perpetrators. Ongoing training on domestic violence and its impact on the workplace should be provided for all.

### **Have a Domestic Abuse Policy**

Recognise that domestic abuse is a serious problem. A workplace domestic violence policy should provide a clear statement that the organisation will not tolerate domestic violence, that there is a commitment to responding sensitively and effectively to those needing help and support, and to taking action against those perpetrating domestic violence.

### **Offer Support**

Be familiar with the domestic abuse services offered in your area. It is vital that if domestic abuse is disclosed your organisation can briefly explain their rights and the services they can access, signposting them appropriately and responding sympathetically to their disclosure in a non-judgemental manner.

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## Helpline Numbers

### **Wales Domestic Abuse Helpline - 0808 8010 800**

Offering support to women, men and children. The bilingual helpline is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and calls from UK landlines are free (some mobile phone networks may charge).

Website: <http://www.wdah.org/>

### **Black Association of Women Step Out (BAWSO): 029 2043 7390**

Offering support to black and ethnic minority women.

Website: <http://www.bawso.org.uk/>

### **New Pathways Rape and Sexual Abuse Services: 01685 379310**

Provides bespoke and relevant counselling services, help and advice to children, young people and adults who have suffered rape, sexual abuse or trauma. Services, which are provided free of charge.

Website: <http://www.newpathways.co.uk/>

### **Saheli: 029 2049 6920**

Offering support to Muslim and Asian Families.

### **Samaritans (Cardiff): 029 2034 4022**

Samaritans provides confidential non-judgemental support, 24 hours a day for people experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including those which could lead to suicide.

Website: <http://www.samaritans.org/>

### **Tai Hafan: 01267 238041**

Housing Association for vulnerable women.

Website: [www.tai-hafan.co.uk](http://www.tai-hafan.co.uk)

### **Welsh Women's Aid: 0808 8010 800**

Lead Agency offering support to all Welsh women and children who are experiencing domestic abuse.

Website: [www.welshwomensaid.org](http://www.welshwomensaid.org)

### **Cardiff Women's Aid: 02920 460 566**

Specialist support services to Women and children experiencing domestic abuse.

Website: <http://www.cardiffwomensaid.org.uk/>

**Cardiff Women's Safety Unit: 029 2022 2022**

Providing access to a range of effective and immediate support services.

**Victim Support: 0845 3030 900 (minicom: 020 7896 3776)**

Offering support and advice to all victims and witnesses.

Website: [www.victimsupport.org.uk](http://www.victimsupport.org.uk)