



What a Waste

The Case for an Integrated
Violence Against Women Strategy

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Women's National Commission



What a Waste

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Take integrated measures to prevent and eliminate violence against women.

Strategic Objective D.1, United Nations Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action with the Beijing +5 Political Declaration and Outcomes Document. 2001: p.76.

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Contents

1. Introduction	4
2. What is violence against women and how common is it?	6
3. Mapping the connections	8
4. Paying the price	12
5. Impacts of violence against women and girls	14
6. Violence against women, human rights, discrimination and equality	17
7. Current approaches in the UK	19
8. Beacons lighting the way	22
9. Creating an integrated approach	26
Appendix A	30
References	32



1. Introduction

As soon as possible, preferably by the end of 1995, Governments, in consultation with relevant institutions and non-governmental organizations, should begin to develop implementation strategies for the Platform and, preferably by the end of 1996, should have developed their strategies or plans of action. This planning process should draw upon persons at the highest level of authority in government and relevant actors in civil society. These implementation strategies should be comprehensive, have time-bound targets and benchmarks for monitoring, and include proposals for allocating or reallocating resources for implementation. Where necessary, the support of the international community could be enlisted, including resources.

Paragraph 297, United Nations Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action with the Beijing +5 Political Declaration and Outcomes Document. 2001: p. 161.

How integrated can services and responses be... can they be provided on the basis of need? **(Baroness Scotland, address to Big Conversation on Sexual and Domestic Violence, Middlesborough, March 2004)**

This document proposes that there are substantial benefits for Government, for victims/survivors and for the entire community, of an integrated strategy/approach to violence against women (VAW). The argument is based on five fundamental premises.

- There are connections across all forms of VAW, which are currently being ignored or missed.
- The costs – to women and children, especially girls, and the public purse – of ineffective responses represent a waste of potential in both individual lives and for the community as a whole.
- Not only is the prevalence of violence and abuse serious – affecting at least half of all women over their lifetime – but it shows no sign of decreasing. (Whilst men and boys are also subjected to some, although not



all, of the forms of violence, the scale of victimization is far lower than for women. The vast majority of perpetrators in all cases are male).

- The demand for support and services will remain at the current level or increase over the next five to ten years.
- Simply extending current forms of provision will have little, if any, impact on prevalence; to decrease and prevent violence and abuse requires a more strategic approach.

In the sections that follow the case is made for the need for a long-term UK Government-led national strategy and action plan that would address all forms of VAW. In highlighting the inadequacies of the current approach, a range of benefits are outlined that would result if politicians were to find the political will and devote the necessary resources to creating a more coordinated approach. The document headlines some of the areas that the proposed national strategy should include – commitment to prevention/a long-term approach, clear goals/priorities, coordinated measures addressing various forms of abuse, and monitoring of the impact of interventions on the prevalence and seriousness of abuse. The UK arguably has greater recognition of the range of forms of VAW at policy and practice levels and a more vibrant research culture than most other European countries. Unlike many of our neighbours, however, we do not have a Plan of Action or strategy against which to measure progress and achievements. A more strategic response would maximise benefits and enable integration of a longer-term preventative approach. Moving on from the silo thinking that currently separates domestic violence, forced marriage, rape, female genital mutilation (FGM), trafficking and other forms of VAW would present opportunities to address seriously the question Baroness Scotland poses and offer considerable potentials for knowledge transfer. Whilst not

underestimating the serious challenges developing such an approach represents, success would deliver a raft of gains for Government, for agencies and service providers and for women themselves. In 2005, we face a unique opportunity to deliver these benefits, due to the happy conjunction of a Government seriously addressing a number of these issues alongside a non-government organisation (NGO) sector that is more connected and united than ever before. This historic opportunity should not be wasted.





2. What is violence against women and how common is it?

VAW encompasses, but is not limited to: domestic violence; FGM; forced and child marriage; honour crimes; rape and sexual assault; sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of girls; sexual harassment (in the workplace and in the public sphere); trafficking in women and exploitation in the sex industry. Women in particular groups may be additionally targeted for violence and abuse, have more limited resources to resist or find support and/or find themselves in contexts where there is a high incidence of assaults. Combinations of these factors increase women's vulnerability: for example, women with disabilities or mental health issues are more likely to spend time in residential settings and/or have interactions with a large number of professionals; recent migrants or asylum seekers may have limited English and knowledge of their rights, not to mention legacies of abuse, and/or may have encountered authoritarianism and corruption in state officials which limit their possibilities for trust and seeking help. Isolation from the mainstream, and having to live in institutions structured around social and physical power inequities, can intensify and extend experiences of abuse.

Women's (widely documented) greater fear of crime than men's, particularly in relation to violent offences (see, for example, Mirrlees-Black and Allen, 1998; Simmons et al., 2002), is directly connected to a perceived need to factor personal safety into routine decisions and activities. All the aforementioned forms of VAW occur within the UK, as the selected statistics below illustrate. Table 1 draws on the (limited) UK random sample studies that provide lifetime prevalence rates and, in some instances, estimates for the numbers of women experiencing violence in the previous year.

The most recent British Crime Survey (BCS) findings reveal that almost one in two (45%) women has experienced some form of domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking (Walby and Allen, 2004). If we include sexual harassment and all the other forms of violence, this issue directly touches more than half of the female population.

Table 2 presents data on forms of violence where we have less reliable data and which are often marginalised in policy and practice. It is the combination across all these forms of violence, alongside those for which we do



Table 1: Most recent prevalence and incidence findings

Type of VAW	Prevalence rate	% ¹	Source
Domestic violence ²	Since age 16:	26	Walby and Allen (2004)
	Previous year:	6	
Rape ³	Lifetime:	6	Walby and Allen (2004)
	Since age 16:	4	
	Previous year:	0.3	Myhill and Allen (2002)
	Since age 16:	5	
Sexual assault ⁴	Previous year:	0.4	Walby and Allen (2004)
	Lifetime:	24	
	Since age 16:	17	
Sexual harassment	During employment:	50	EOC (2000)
Stalking	Lifetime:	19	Walby and Allen (2004)
	Previous year:	8	

¹ Percentage has been rounded to the nearest whole number. ² Defined as ‘non-sexual’ domestic abuse, threats and/or force.

³ Sexual Offences Act 2003 definition, includes attempts. ⁴ Includes attempts.

Table 2: Other indicators of the scale of VAW

Type of VAW	Estimates	Source
Trafficking for sexual exploitation	Up to 1,500 women per year	Kelly and Regan (2000) NCIS, (2003) Dickson (2004)
	2,000 women per year	
	81% of women in 730 off street prostitution sites in London were from outside the UK	
FGM	74,000 women in the UK have been mutilated 7,000 under-16s are at risk	Home Office (2004)
Forced/child marriage	Southall Black Sisters support 200 cases per year Bradford police deal with 70 cases per year Foreign and Commonwealth Office deal with 200 cases annually, 15% of which involve minors	Samad and Eade (2002)
Honour killings	At least 12 per year	Cowan (2004)

not have recent data – like sexual harassment in public spaces and flashing – which make up ‘violence against women’. It affects at least one in two women over their lifetime, and the vast majority of perpetrators across all the categories are

male. Stalking is by definition a ‘course of conduct’ offence but so is most domestic violence and sexual harassment. Given the extent of rape by current and ex-partners a considerable proportion here also involves multiple incidents.



3. Mapping the connections

There are many connections that cut across all forms of VAW; some serve to sustain it, others indicate common impacts and consequences.

For centuries, across contexts and cultures, VAW has been minimised, justified, denied and legitimised. Whilst considerable challenges to such traditional approaches have been mounted, forms of tolerance persist. Three research studies with children and young people (Burton and Kitzinger, 1998; Mullender et al., 2001; Regan and Kelly, 2001) reveal that at the most basic level most children and young people do not accept VAW, but when asked more contextual questions uncertainty and justification emerge, particularly among young men. Especially revealing is the fact that messages about domestic violence have had more impact, with considerably less clarity about the use of pressure and force to get sex: one in two young men and one in three young women found the latter justifiable under certain circumstances. The Irish study (Regan and Kelly, 2001) also found that young people had high levels of contact with harassment, abuse and violence.

- 23% of young women and 7% of young men knew someone who had been forced to have sex.
- 56% of young women and 31% of young men knew someone who had been hit by a partner.
- 65% of young women and 15% of young men had been told about an abusive experience by a friend or relative.
- About a third of young women and young men also knew a perpetrator.

These data link to another connection – who is first told or knows about VAW; this is not agencies, but friends, family and even neighbours and work colleagues. How informal networks respond can be critical in empowering victims to access support or further entrapping them in shame and self-blame. Equally, they may also communicate intolerance of actions to perpetrators or act in ways that suggest there will be no sanction or criticism. Currently, there is minimal acknowledgment of the extent to which we all know about the existence of VAW, let alone creation of an enabling culture to address it more constructively.



Other very important connections include:

- long-standing myths and stereotypes that have served to justify or excuse abuse and/or to blame victims;
- the dynamics of power and control underlying abuse;
- the social organisation of gender, which produces the distribution of victimisation and perpetration;
- high levels of under-reporting across all forms of VAW;
- the justice gap in relation to prosecutions and convictions;
- the long-term psychological, social and economic impacts and consequences;
- the extent of repeat victimisation by both the same and different perpetrators; and
- an historic failure of state agencies to respond appropriately, promptly or pre-emptively.

A number of these links are illustrated in the two case studies in the boxes below.

Box 1: There, here, everywhere

Sumera came to the UK with her husband, who had a work permit, and their two children. In Pakistan, Sumera's husband had physically assaulted her many times and forced her to have sex with his friends and other men he brought to the house. The shame of admitting what had happened to her family, combined with the fact that her husband was a powerful force in the local community, made it impossible for Sumera to seek help. The abuse continued in the UK, where Sumera was also forced to watch pornographic videos, and her husband threatened to return her to Pakistan if she complained or spoke to anyone. Increasingly fearful and depressed, a chance discussion at the local school resulted in Sumera being referred to a local women's group. →

It took her a long time to dare to leave her husband and make an asylum application. Unable to claim benefits because of her immigration status, Sumera and her children were homeless until social services eventually accommodated them after lengthy advocacy by the women's group. The family remained in temporary housing for a year until Sumera was granted refugee status and finally had the opportunity to rebuild her life and that of her children.



Box 2: The last straw

This story begins with a child called Emma who migrated from the UK to Canada with her mother and siblings. In Canada, her household was dominated by the violent rages of her stepfather and her mother's descent into alcohol and despair. She spent short periods of time in a number of refuges but none seemed able to deal with the damage the family had already sustained and they always returned home. Emma began running away to escape from the atmosphere of fear and chaos.

I was just looking for something better, I couldn't cope. I had nowhere to run to, nowhere to go, and there were men just stopping, picking me up... At first it was 'I'll look after you, I'll take care of you', but all they wanted was sex... At first I never asked for money or anything, I was just happy to have a roof over my head, to be fed, or whatever you know. Later on when I was about 14 it turned into proper for cash prostitution. →

Social services decided she was 'out of control' and took her into care. She had 11 placements in 18 months, continued to run away and to be sexually exploited. Like many who become entrapped in the sex industry, drugs - legal and illegal - became her survival tool and refuge. No one managed to reach this troubled young woman, and professionals she encountered seemed happy to label her - as a 'juvenile prostitute', a 'juvenile delinquent', an 'impossible child'.

Aware that her life was a mess and dangerous, Emma decided to return 'home' to the UK to re-connect with her family. However, the negative effects of her life experiences to date and her 'need' for alcohol and drugs prompted a swift return to prostitution. She met Trevor Armatidge - an older punter - who convinced her that he loved her and wanted to look after her. She moved in with him and continued working in prostitution. As her boyfriend-pimp, on occasion he used violence and threats to ensure she continued to earn money. After a few months she was gang raped, and bravely reported to the police. In the months that followed, the impacts of the abuse she had sustained and survived - she was 16 at this point - began to overwhelm her, leading to self-harm and suicide attempts, but Trevor continued to expect both his own sexual access and that she sell sex to other men.

One evening, having earlier contemplated serious self-harm and defending herself from what she perceived as an attempted rape, Emma stabbed Trevor once. He died and at 17 she was convicted of murder and spent the next ten years in prison. From the first night she was administered major tranquilisers to which she became addicted. →

Emma Humphreys chose to fight her conviction for murder, rather than take early release through parole. Her historic Appeal Court case set legal precedent.

On her release Emma attempted to construct a new life, but the legacies of abuse - eating disorders and addictions - proved difficult to overcome. She was found dead three years after her release, having taken an overdose of the tranquiliser she was still being prescribed.

To read more, including extracts from Emma's diaries and her poems, see Wistrich, H. and Bindel, J. (eds.) (2003) *The Map of My Life: The Story of Emma Humphreys*, London: Astraia Press. For information on the Emma Humphreys Prize, established in her memory, see www.emmahumphreys.org.



Both these stories exemplify the kinds of connections we need to be making; Emma Humphreys' death illustrates the extreme price some women and children pay when we fail. Whilst forms of violence can be separated in law, in research categories and in service provision, they were intertwined in these women's experiences and are in the lives of many other women. It is impossible to understand their lives, still less imagine how Emma's might have been different, without addressing the repeat victimisation by the same and *different* men. **In Emma's case, her attempts to cope with/escape one form of abuse made her vulnerable to others; she needed people who understood the connections between forms of VAW and organisational responses that worked with such links and across bureaucratic and**



analytic borders. Emma's life was complex, as were the impacts it had on her. With tragic effects, Emma did not find the people and responses she needed until very late in her life. Sumera was luckier, but many women with similar histories do not encounter such determined and effective advocates.

It would be a grave mistake to believe that cumulative experiences are exceptional, and delusional to discount the dreadful harm that these bring. The tragic irony is that women who sustain the most damage are those for whom the least support and services exist. They, and their lives, are complicated, difficult and do not 'fit' into the ways services have developed. Emma deserved access to services that could have given her a chance to construct a life in which she could deal with her past and from there take control of her future. She, and women like her, will never get this if we continue to work with disjointed thinking and practice rather than with connections.



4. Paying the price

It is not just individuals who pay the price for ineffective responses, but all of us, not least in the sense that VAW costs substantial amounts to the public purse. The most recent research in the UK only addresses domestic violence in England and Wales and estimates a yearly cost of almost £6 billion. Table 3 below summarises the findings of Sylvia Walby's (2004) important study, which includes a serious attempt to give a financial value to **the human and emotional costs¹, estimated at three times the cost to the public purse – £17 billion.** Table 4 outlines how the £6 billion costs are distributed across the state, individual victims and employers.

Governments have minimal choice about incurring these costs to the public purse and the economy more broadly. However, **where Government can exercise control is over whether expenditure takes place within a policy framework directed towards a more effective, integrated and preventative response.** There are short and long-term savings to be made if interventions protect from subsequent abuse and/or the impacts of victimisation.

Table 3: Summary estimates of the cost of domestic violence

	£billions
Type of cost	Cost
Criminal Justice System	1.017
Police	(.49)
Health care	1.396
Physical	(1.22)
Mental health	(.176)
Social services	.228
Emergency housing	.158
Civil legal	.312
All services	3.111
Lost economic output	2.672
Sub-total	5.783
Human and emotional	17.086
Total	22.869

Source: Walby (2004). Costs are estimated for 2001 for England and Wales.

¹ This calculation is based on a Home Office study that explored what people would be prepared to pay to avoid victimisation.



Table 4: Who bears the cost?

Type of cost	£billions			
	State	Individual victim	Employers	Total cost
Criminal Justice System	1,017			1,017
Health care Physical	1,206	15		1,220
Mental health	176			176
Social services	228			228
Housing and refuges	130	28		158
Civil legal costs	159	152		312
All services	2,916	195		3,111
Employment		1,336	1,336	2,672
Sub-total	2,916	1,531	1,336	5,783
Human costs		17.082		17.086
Total	2,916	18,613	1,336	22.869

Source: Walby (2004). Costs are estimated for 2001 for England and Wales.

We pay an additional and unnecessary cost when service provision duplicates and/or fails to promote multi-agency links and coordination. Research for this document revealed that two ambitions flagged by the Government in *Living Without Fear* (Women and Equality Unit, 1999) – to transform local domestic violence fora into VAW networks, and the urgent necessity to connect knowledge and intervention with respect to child protection and domestic violence – have not been followed through at local or agency levels. One clear example here are continuing disconnections within the police service itself (see Box 3), a critical issue since they are not only a frontline response agency, but also often the lead statutory agency in local domestic violence inter-agency networks.

There are some costs and consequences that are incalculable. Here we refer especially to the trafficked women who are unable to access support in the UK, and to women asylum seekers whose claims on the grounds of having already been abused, or facing gender violence if returned, are refused. If they are returned to their country of origin with little if any resources to resettle, develop a sustainable livelihood and create personal safety, their futures are anything but assured.

Box 3: A view from the frontline

NGOs and local authority staff concur that it is difficult to work effectively at a local level with the police to tackle VAW, since there is little if any coordination within the police service itself. Taking London as an example: the specialist police response to domestic violence, following the initial call to frontline officers, is the Borough Community Safety Unit; sexual offences are dealt with by a separate Project Sapphire Team; whilst child protection (which will not include rapes of minors by strangers) is dealt with by the Child Protection Team, which often covers a geographical area larger than the borough. Strategically, these teams are rarely, if ever, directly members of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships. These disconnections make it difficult and extremely time-consuming for agencies trying to work in partnership with the police to develop coherent and effective work.





5. Impacts of violence against women and girls

On women

Too many women's lives are constrained and diminished by the threat and reality of male violence. The World Health Organisation and the Surgeon General of the USA have identified VAW as one of the most significant factors in women's ill health, and these impacts are compounded for those who, like Emma, suffer serial victimisations. UK policy, practice and training still tend to focus on domestic violence OR rape and sexual assault OR sexual exploitation, meaning few workers or projects are confident working across these boundaries. For many of their service users, however, this may be their most critical need – for example:

- a woman suffering domestic violence is not in a position to make use of outreach or advocacy services if she believes it must be her fault because she has experienced abuse before;
- a recent rape may link directly to events from childhood, which have not been resolved, for instance, where child sexual abuse was not disclosed or adequately addressed at the time; and

- a young woman in prostitution may have a history of childhood abuse, a recent rape and violent boyfriend/pimp to deal with.

The ways gender violence is understood, coupled with the humiliation of the experience itself, often mean women internalise a sense of shame and self-blame. This is accentuated where the cultural context of a woman's life includes beliefs about honour/purity/control of sexuality. It was partly to avoid the stigma which attaches to being a 'victim' of gender violence that led women's organisations to use the term 'survivor' to highlight the strength, courage and creativity women display in adversity. Changing cultural meanings is, however, extremely complex, and some women harm themselves or take their own lives rather than live with the stigma and pain of their past.

Even in the most extreme contexts, it is a mistake to view women and girls as passive victims – they develop and use an extraordinary array of resistance and survival strategies. Nonetheless, victimisation has effects, many of which are long lasting.



Research on the consequences of a range of forms of VAW reveals substantial commonalities, perhaps most eloquently explored by Judith Herman in her book *Trauma and Recovery* (1992). At the most obvious level, violence causes physical damage, ranging from death², through to permanent disabilities, miscarriages, broken limbs, cuts and bruises. With sexual offences there are also risks of HIV, sexually transmitted infections, forced pregnancy and persistent gynaecological problems. At a psychological level, violence affects a woman or girl's sense of self and place in world: abuse transmits a message that you are worth less than others, that you are not safe and, where the abuser is a relative, partner or authority figure, also involves a profound betrayal of trust. Rejection and/or blame by family, friends or community serve to reinforce these messages, and create a deep sense of isolation and exclusion. It should not, therefore, be a surprise that those who experience serial victimisation are disproportionately represented among women with criminal convictions and/or mental health problems.

This is, however, one side of a complex story. Women and girls resist abuse at the time, and try to find resources that help them cope with the aftermath. Many succeed against all odds to build lives that are not overshadowed by legacies of the past. The extent to which they are able to do so depends substantially on the responses of others – their friends and family and the services that they approach. Most survivors attribute their ability to re-build their life to support – emotional and practical – including self-help groups and self-defence classes. Philosophy professor Susan Brison (2002) reflects on the meaning of her own experience of stranger rape, the need to 're-make' herself and the role played by self-defence.

I develop and defend a view of the self as fundamentally relational – capable of being undone by violence. But also of being remade in connection to others... Learning to fight back is a crucial part of this process, not only because it enables us to experience justified, healing rage... the confidence I gained from learning to fight back not only enabled me to walk down the street again, it gave me back my life... a changed life, a paradoxical life.
(p.xi & pp.14-15)

There is no simple 'recovery' here; violence changes one's sense of self and relationship to others. But enhancing social support and the capacity of formal and informal responses to respond appropriately could make a difference to a huge number of women, enabling them to 'live' rather than just survive.

On children

A key factor undermining implementation and delivery, here and elsewhere, has been the failure to make connections between VAW and child abuse/children. A few examples will illustrate.

- All forms of VAW and child sexual abuse are under-reported, and where reports are made, cases have extremely high attrition rates. Despite these connections, knowledge transfers across the sectors have been minimal.
- The connections between domestic violence and child abuse have been highlighted for more than a decade, including in virtually every child death enquiry. However, because the areas are not connected in law, policy and most provision, the changes these insights should have prompted, have not been easy to achieve.

² Most murders of women are by men, where there has been a history of gender violence – not just domestic violence, but also rape and prostitution.



16

- The underlying causes of, and social supports for, violence against women and children are common and addressing both through awareness and prevention programmes has the potential both to be cost-effective and to deepen understanding.³

Another connection, with many complex implications, is that most VAW and child abuse is committed by known perpetrators. In both cases, however, public policy tends to ricochet between an emphasis on the family or strangers – the archetypal ‘rapist’ or ‘paedophile’. **The majority of sexual offenders against women and girls are neither – they are neighbours, friends, work colleagues, recent acquaintances and a range of professionals (teachers, doctors, therapists, sports coaches). Too many policy initiatives are built around the high profile minority.** A clear example of this failure is the case of Ian Huntley outlined in the box below. Another example would be how a community safety order requiring no contact with children could be enforced when an abusive father has been awarded contact in family court proceedings.

The failure to integrate what we already know – and we do know a lot about connections – in the formulation and implementation of policy is a significant impediment to change.

Box 4: Failing to make connections

Two investigations have been undertaken into the failure of agencies to share information about Ian Huntley, and whether the deaths of Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman could have been prevented. What emerged is that Huntley had a history of sexual abuse; during 1995-1999, he came to the attention of police and social services on nine occasions: four allegations of rape were made and four of ‘unlawful sexual intercourse’. In most cases the victims were under 16. But even where Huntley admitted to having sex with an underage girl he was not even cautioned, let alone charged. *How is this possible?*

Firstly, Huntley did not fit either the stereotypical profile of incest offender or ‘paedophile’. Secondly, like many predatory men he targeted girls and young women who did not fit stereotypes of ‘innocent victims’ - several had already had sex with older men and many came from deprived backgrounds. **His sexual offending, therefore, was ‘written off’ as consensual underage sex.** As a consequence vulnerable young women were denied protection and Huntley was allowed to operate with virtual impunity, and murdered Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman.



³ The Zero Tolerance Campaign did this throughout much of the 1990s, and much of its impact was thought to stem from the connections and cumulative messages.



6. Violence against women, human rights, discrimination and equality

Violence has been a feature of women and girls' lives throughout recorded history – it ranges from the cold, calculating entrapment in trafficking, to brutal rape by a recent acquaintance, through to the excruciating intimate violation by a family member. Over the last three decades VAW has been increasingly recognised not only as a public issue, but also a matter of justice and human rights. **Kofi Annan recently stated that VAW is ‘... perhaps the most shameful human rights violation, and it is perhaps the most pervasive. It knows no boundaries of geography, culture or wealth. As long as it continues, we cannot claim to be making real progress towards equality, development and peace** (cited at <http://www.amnesty.org.uk/svaw/vaw/international.shtml>). This sea change in perception is the outcome of the courage and determination of individual women and women's organisations across the globe who have broken the taboos on speaking out and built new and innovative responses, whilst working for deeper transformations in gender relations.

Decades of campaigning by women's organisations has resulted in international recognition of VAW as a fundamental abuse of the human rights of women and girls. The United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence Against Women states that: ‘violence against women is one of the crucial social mechanisms by which women are forced into a subordinate position compared with men.’ Developments in international human rights standards have clarified Government obligations in preventing and addressing VAW, especially through the concept of due diligence, and have specifically acknowledged gender-based violence as a form of discrimination (CEDAW General Recommendation 19).

Historically, unequal power relations between women and men resulted in systematic discrimination, legacies of which remain despite the advances that have been made on gender equality issues. Violence was not, until the 1990s, recognised as a serious barrier to achieving equality, and even today this fundamental premise of United Nations, European Union and Council of Europe policy is seldom placed at the centre of discussions of how to create a



safer, just and more equitable society. Government and public services have persistently failed to take effective action to curb violence against women and children, thus playing a direct role in reproducing a context in which women still do not have equal access to justice, employment, leisure, community and political participation, freedom of movement – all of which are basic to modern concepts of citizenship.

Looking at VAW from a human rights perspective alerts us to the ways in which gender violence denies women and girls the most fundamental of human rights: life, liberty, bodily integrity, freedom of movement and dignity of the person. It constrains women's choices, options and behaviour since personal safety features so strongly in routine decision-making: is it safe to travel alone; to walk alone; to attend a meeting at night; to challenge a statement or decision? Women and girls are not able to occupy and use public space with the same freedom and ease as men and boys and interpersonal relationships are frequently marred by the threat and reality of abuse. Access to resources, especially economic, can mitigate some of these restrictions, but no woman is entirely safe from violence.

As a consequence women monitor their own behaviour and are often placed under surveillance by others. This has extensive consequences, limiting women's participation and involvement in community and public life, their productivity and achievements in education and employment and, when they are victimised, etching their family and personal lives with pain and betrayal.

The human rights perspective also serves to make clear that VAW is not a private matter but one of public concern, meaning governments can be held accountable if they are seen to carry out or condone acts of VAW, or if they fail to take adequate steps to fulfil

their human rights obligations to address the issue effectively, including prevention. These obligations will also extend to public bodies if the Government introduces a statutory duty to promote gender equality.

The 1995 UN Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA), which was drafted and signed by UN Member State governments, including the UK, states that VAW is one of the major barriers for achieving gender equality. It addresses VAW as one of its 12 areas for concern, calling upon governments to:

Take integrated measures to prevent and eliminate violence against women (UN, 2001: p.76).

The BPFA sets out specific steps that state signatories should take with respect to VAW, including setting a fundamental aim to 'eliminate' it, with express steps to be taken in the spheres of legislation, education, health, judiciary, social services and NGOs. Within this framework, governments are expected to develop national action plans that take a holistic and multidisciplinary approach.



7. Current approaches in the UK

Government approach

There has undoubtedly been an improved policy context in the UK since the election of a new Labour Government in 1997 and the introduction of devolved Government. Nevertheless, there remains a glaring lack of any overall strategic direction for the UK. Whilst Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales do have policies and strategies, the focus has overwhelmingly been on domestic violence/abuse. That said, some local authorities in Scotland - and Glasgow City Council is perhaps the strongest example - have built a VAW approach within wider gender equality frameworks⁴. The focus on domestic violence has grown over the last couple of years, with a number of women MPs becoming more powerful champions in Parliament⁵ and Ministers for Women repeatedly citing it as a priority. On a smaller scale, a noticeable shift has taken place in relation to rape and sexual assault and trafficking, especially in terms of legal reform. As a consequence there are now two inter-ministerial groups operating in parallel – on domestic violence and sexual offending – alongside entirely disconnected

developments with respect to forced marriage and FGM. The recent review of child protection was not linked in to VAW work, and the prostitution review was associated with a different team. Such structural duplication and/or missed opportunities are neither efficient nor productive, yet they are frequently reflected at local and agency levels throughout the UK. The exception here would be Scotland, where a clearer VAW agenda has been evident in the Scottish Executive, undoubtedly linked to the high-profile integrated approach of Zero Tolerance in the 1990s, but even here the main focuses have been on domestic violence and rape and sexual assault.

Whilst the increased attention and, in the case of sexual crime far-reaching legal reform, is welcome, developments have been piecemeal and lack coordination. Despite an apparent commitment to mainstreaming, specific references to gender equality, let alone VAW, barely feature in ministerial policy priorities or Public Service Agreements (PSAs) across Government. In preparing this document current policy aims, objectives and PSAs for Government ministries were

⁴ The Scottish Parliament has recently placed a statutory duty on local authorities to address gender inequalities.

⁵ A clear example here was the lobbying by a group of Labour women backbenchers which ensured that the Home Office minister extended the funding for the majority of the Crime Reduction Programme (CRP) Violence Against Women Initiative pilot projects for a further 12 months. Without this intervention Government funding would have ended when the original contract period was completed.



researched, down to the delivery level.⁶ Whilst there are a myriad of ways in which VAW connects to current policy priorities, there are virtually no explicit recognitions of this in targets or Performance Indicators (PIs) – even mining down to the delivery level there are only two places where domestic violence is explicitly part of a target or PI, and one where VAW as a whole appears – the latter is in the Department of Health’s *Mainstreaming Gender and Women’s Mental Health: Implementation Guidance* (2003). Sexual crime is subsumed within the general category of ‘violent crime’ and in the current National Policing Plan 2004-2007 all references to VAW appear in a section headed ‘other areas of police work’, which by definition fall outside the strategic priorities.⁷ Whilst there are two actual (and a proposed third) domain indicators on domestic violence, rape and sexual assault appear only as a ‘potential’ focus within a broader target relating to ‘serious crime’. Moreover, there are only two explicit references to gender equality across all Government policy. One is courtesy of the UN Millennium Development Goals, which appear as aims for the Department for International Development; the other is a designated PSA for the Department for Trade and Industry.⁸ These are rather disappointing findings in the year in which the UK reported considerable progress to CEDAW on gender mainstreaming and the most extensive reforms to sexual offences for over a century were implemented.

Some examples of the missed opportunities include:

- limited recognition in the Drugs and Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategies of either the extent to which alcohol is a factor in sexual offences, or the fact that drugs and alcohol are used as coping strategies in the aftermath of victimisation;

- the Department for Education and Skills could extend the encouragement to include domestic violence in citizenship education to sexual violence, incorporating vital issues such as the new positive consent standard in the Sexual Offences Act 2003. Issues raised in the review of law and responses to prostitution, *Paying the Price* (Home Office, 2004), and our responsibilities as a destination country under the UN Protocol on Trafficking to address demand could also be addressed here;
- the Home Office has encouraged Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships to address domestic violence explicitly but rape and sexual assault remain hidden under the heading of violent crime, with no specific targets;
- the Ministry of Defence linking concerns about the behaviours of troops in other countries with data that suggests domestic violence and child abuse are more common within military families, and developing a prevention curriculum within basic training; and
- treating FGM as a health rather than a VAW issue, and separating the work on legislative measures from policy implementation.

Within Government, few policy advisors appear to have sufficient understanding of the extensive ramifications of violence to make connections with 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 sustainable employment. The lack of ‘joined-up-ness’ is evident even within individual Government departments, where outsiders have a better overview of disparate activities and note the absence of strategic thinking. The impacts of interventions, therefore, are not as effective and long lasting as they

⁶ The results are not presented here but anyone wanting a copy of the 50-page analysis can obtain a copy from the Women’s National Commission.

⁷ There are two explicit relevant sections on child protection and domestic violence; other forms of VAW are either not mentioned at all or referred to in passing in the above sections.

⁸ ‘By 2008, working with other departments, bring about measurable improvements in gender equality across a range of indicators, as part of the Government’s objectives on equality and social inclusion.’ (see: www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/AD5/FA/sro4_psa_ch12.pdf).



could be. The increased emphasis on consultation, whilst welcome, has stretched the resources of many voluntary and statutory sector organisations to keep pace with the seemingly endless new policy initiatives and legislative reform. If issues had been approached more strategically, expertise could have been used more effectively.

Disconnections also ensure that the underlying causes of VAW are neither understood sufficiently nor addressed directly. This leaves policy makers vulnerable to responding to whatever ‘new’ issue becomes a matter of media concern, rather than having a framework within which a more considered response can be located.

The voluntary sector

The UK VAW sector – refuges, rape crisis, helpline and advocacy projects, survivors’ groups – has a strong reputation internationally and has been the foundation of the moves to take VAW seriously. Whilst some groups have a strong campaigning focus, most have, at least in recent years, concentrated on developing and maintaining innovative service provision, in an arena where women continue to be poorly served. The absence of any policy regarding provision means services continue to remain deeply uneven – not just geographically, but in terms of covering all forms of violence – with the number of rape crisis groups in particular falling, rather than growing, in recent years. International human rights standards, including the BPFA, place a responsibility on governments to ensure that adequate support and protective services are available for all who need them. Whilst funding has improved with respect to domestic violence services (although there is still much unmet

need), provision addressing rape and sexual violence, trafficking, FGM and other forms of VAW, particularly for vulnerable groups such as lesbians and transgendered women and Black and minority ethnic women, remains chronically under-funded.

Whilst we are aware that it is not the primary responsibility of central Government to fund local services⁹, policy can be used to provide a strong steer. It is essential not only to acknowledge the sector’s contribution and critical role in future developments, but also to headline at regional and local levels the vital importance of a vibrant sector in ensuring that women’s rights to dignity and integrity are upheld, and that the 3 P’s – provision, protection and prevention – alongside justice, apply equally across all forms of VAW.

A strategy could also begin to explore best value within the sector and what kinds of service developments could be provided on the basis of need.

⁹ It does, for example, fund them through national grants to organisations such as Victim Support and Citizens Advice.



8. Beacons lighting the way

There are a number of examples from current practice in the statutory and voluntary sectors that can act as signposts, or beacons, illustrating the benefits of making connections. Indeed, the Women's National Commission (WNC) VAW Working Group is a case in point. From uneasy beginnings, and a focus on domestic violence, it is now a strong advocate for a more integrated approach and has sought to reflect this inclusionary framework in membership and work undertaken. Similarly, the European Women's Lobby has had a VAW project in Brussels for six years. It, too, began with a focus on domestic violence but has since deepened its understanding and perspective and is now a powerful voice in EU debates about trafficking and the sex industry. The Scottish Parliament cross-party group on Men's Violence Against Women and Children has consistently been the largest and most active cross-party group and continues to provide a forum for across-service networking.

The five boxes below contain examples from the national statutory, local authority and service provision sectors, each of which demonstrates the benefits of a more integrated approach.

Box 5: National policy and practice development

The strategic development plan for mental health care for women, *Mainstreaming Gender and Women's Mental Health: Implementation Guidance*, issued in 2003 by the Department of Health, and subsequent wider developments on the back of it, is the sole example of an integrated VAW approach within Government policy.

VAW is understood as a common cause and expression of mental distress. Through mainstreaming this perspective *'the impact of violence and abuse will be established as a core mental health issue. Sufficient local expertise will be generated to address the needs of survivors of violence and abuse within the mental health system and, where appropriate, to commission specialist services in the voluntary sector. Assessment and care planning process will take full account of the context of violence and abuse on a routine and consistent basis'* (DoH, 2003: p.47). →

More recent developments are a joint Department of Health and National Institute for Mental Health Programme on Violence and Abuse, which seeks to address the health and mental health implications of sexual abuse in childhood, domestic violence and sexual violence. The programme will encompass children, adolescents and adults and victims/survivors and perpetrators.

A coordinator on VAW has been appointed at national level.



Addressing VAW here will deliver added value with respect to training, research and provision, as well as opening up potentials for wide ranging partnerships at local levels. The intention – still to be realised in practice – is that Primary Care Trusts and Care Trusts will begin to develop fruitful partnerships, including commissioning services from voluntary sector groups which have built expertise in this field over many years.

Thurrock Violence Against Women Alliance demonstrates this innovative combination at a local level, and through the commitment of South Essex Rape and Incest Crisis Centre in the voluntary sector, has produced a local commitment not only to address VAW, but also to using gender mainstreaming methodology.

Box 6: Local and Inter-agency work: Thurrock Violence Against Women Alliance, Essex

Originally a domestic violence forum, this multi-agency group widened its vision and brief primarily due to the tireless engagement of South Essex Rape and Incest Crisis Centre (SERICC).

The Violence Against Women Alliance (VAWA) was established in 2001 to replace the Thurrock Domestic Violence Panel, informed by the recommendation in *Living Without Fear* (Women & Equality Unit, 1999) that domestic violence forums should be replaced by violence against women forums by 2002. Previous to this, SERICC had been prime movers in partnerships that secured national funding for innovative work. For the first time sexual violence was not an ‘add on’ and VAW has been progressively mainstreamed into core council and institutional programming.

For example the Joint Investment Plan on VAWA works to the following objectives:

1. to protect women who are experiencing, or who are under the threat of, violence by changing their circumstances so that the violence or threat is removed;
2. to prevent VAW by challenging and changing attitudes towards women experiencing violence;
3. to prevent VAW by targeting groups and individuals most at risk of violence;
4. to enable women to rebuild their lives and those of their dependents following crisis resolution;
5. to develop systems and attitudes that enable women and children who are in violent situations to survive emotionally and physically; and →



6. to prevent VAW by targeting groups and individuals most at risk of perpetrating VAW.

In the Thurrock's Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy 2002-2003 document, VAW is identified as a community safety priority and linked to other local strategies, as well as the Council's corporate objectives (Quality of Life for All, Supporting Vulnerable People) and to the responsibilities of local authority departments (social services, education, neighbourhood and housing) (see: www.thurrock.gov.uk/i-know/pdf/crime.pdf).

Gender Mainstreaming

This work, undertaken by SERICC and Sheffield Hallam University, has involved the development of Gender Mainstreaming Action Plans, addressing gender equity and acknowledging the impact of violence on women's lives, developing a 'gender lens' through which service provision in specified areas needs to recognise and embed VAW issues within local policies and partnerships (see: http://www.thurrock-community.org.uk/sericc/pdf/gender_mainstreaming.pdf).



Glasgow City Council, through its gender equality work, has always taken a VAW approach, including being one of the earliest and most sustained supporters of the Zero Tolerance awareness raising strategies. What we highlight here is their innovative work around prostitution and the sex industry, which prefigured the recent Government review on prostitution policy.

Box 7: Glasgow City Council - including prostitution and sexual exploitation

Prostitution is a significant social problem in Glasgow, affecting women, families and communities. The strategy developed in Glasgow to tackle prostitution and other forms of commercial sexual exploitation began in May 1998 with the recognition that the issue must be addressed within the context of gender equality. **The Council rejected the view of prostitution as a choice or work since whilst prior experiences of abuse, violence and coercion are involved, poverty and drugs were seen as the roots of prostitution in Glasgow.** How prostitution is understood is key to the approach adopted and all resulting activity, including harm reduction. As with other social problems, public agencies have a role to play in tackling the causes and the impact of prostitution.

The Routes Out of Prostitution Partnership, established in July 1999, comprises three core elements.

- A city-wide partnership with a remit to develop a strategic approach to the issues of street prostitution.
- A small, specialist intervention team to assist women wishing to exit prostitution.
- A commitment from all partners to reviewing their services in the light of the city-wide strategy, and to adjusting services to be more accessible and more responsive.

Inter-agency work addressing indoor prostitution, the proliferation of lap dancing establishments and trafficking has also taken place, again within the context of gender equality and addressing VAW more broadly. →



Significant progress has been made during the past six years in challenging the public perception of prostitution as acceptable and inevitable. **It is recognised that there will never be equality between men and women whilst men are able to buy and sexually exploit women with no social or legal consequences.** Work with the media has been prioritised and, in its role as an Education Authority, the Council has committed resources to promoting positive relationships between young people and addressing inequality (see: http://www.glasgow.gov.uk/en/Your Council/PolicyPlanning_Strategy/Corporate/Equalities/Women/).



Southall Black Sisters have played an inspirational role in the UK voluntary sector for two decades, demonstrating that it is possible to combine local service provision and acting strategically at regional and national levels.

Box 8: Southall Black Sisters

Southall Black Sisters (SBS), founded in 1979, combines service provision for black (Asian, African and Caribbean) women and campaign work. It provides integrated services, including information, advice, advocacy, counselling and support. SBS are so widely known because of their campaigning and policy work on violence against black women. Although the majority of service users are South Asian women experiencing domestic violence, SBS assists women suffering all forms of VAW, in both the private and public →

spheres, including sexual assault, harassment, forced marriage, dowry-related abuse and honour crimes. SBS is currently running a project on gender violence, which aims to mainstream recognition and representation of black and minority women's experiences of domestic and sexual violence (including trafficking and prostitution) into practice and intervention strategies (see: <http://www.southallblacksisters.org.uk/>).



The final example illustrates the possibilities of integrating services and providing them on the basis of need.

Box 9: Women's Support Network, Middlesbrough

Originally a domestic violence outreach service, this service expanded by involving a number of rape crisis workers to ensure that sexual violence issues were integrated into the service provision. They also support adult survivors of child sexual abuse. The Centre now functions as a 'one stop shop' for women who have experienced sexual or physical violence across a range of contexts (see: <http://www.mdvf.co.uk/index.php?item=12>).





9. Creating an integrated approach

The basic contours of an integrated approach must, in the short term, support and empower women and girls and ensure sanctions for abusive men, whilst over the longer term seeking to reduce and ultimately end violence. All of these tasks require counteracting the legacies of permission, justification and victim blame. Achieving this, and widening the focus beyond domestic violence, will require a strong steer from the centre. The UK, through its support for the BPFA, has committed itself to creating a Plan of Action, which would be the clearest and simplest way to move forward. There are various examples from other countries, from which elements and lessons could be learnt.

- Australia, Austria and Germany have aspirational documents, which, whilst short on specific steps, make clear philosophical statements.
- Norway and Finland have had strategic plans: the former is a renewable three-year plan focussed on domestic violence; the latter a broader five-year action plan with a linked research and documentation centre.
- The USA has used its renewable Violence Against Women Act for ten years to develop and steer public policy through setting new

targets for national roll-out and providing matched funding for local areas or agencies that pick up the challenges. This has also provided a mechanism for funding local specialist services.

Whatever approach is taken in the UK, the basic aims could be:

- to improve responses in the short term within a framework that seeks transformations, which will decrease and ultimately end VAW; and
- to provide stepping stones and create templates for implementation at local and regional levels within the duty to promote gender equality.

The kind of integrated strategy envisaged here would enable:

- more coordinated and consistent Government policy;
- better knowledge transfer across the sectors;
- more effective use of limited financial resources;
- the possibility of linked training, including a core curriculum for all professionals.



- a coherent, integrated long-term approach to prevention; and
- the possibility of mainstreaming neglected and under-resourced issues, such as trafficking, exploitation in the sex industry and FGM.

In terms of National Government, it would provide a series of benefits and opportunities.

- To give a strong policy steer across the range of forms of violence faced by women in the UK.
- To redress the current/historical focus on domestic violence.
- To provide a clear philosophical framework and a vision of a future in which gender violence no longer exists.
- To be in full, rather than technical, compliance with UN and EU commitments/policy.
- To set markers/standards for provision and responses, including the possibility of services on the basis of need.
- Possible partnership with organisations such as Amnesty International in its national and international VAW campaign.

Towards an integrated approach

An integrated approach to all forms of VAW should begin from a clear vision/overall statement:

Ending Violence Against Women – Creating Equality and Social Justice; Delivering Human Rights.

This sets the long-term ambition in line with UN and EU policy, makes explicit that prevention is a key element in the approach and underlines that delivering it requires gender equity. A series of critical shifts in perspective and response need to be highlighted, namely shifts from:

- domestic violence to VAW;
- reactive to proactive responses;
- making do to providing quality services;
- margin to mainstream; and
- responding to preventing.

The term ‘integrated’ is central to the strategy and at a minimum refers to the following:

- addressing all forms of VAW simultaneously, thus combining the currently disparate inter-ministerial initiatives;
- highlighting connections between forms of violence and abuse, not least in terms of their underlying causes, short and long-term impacts;
- mainstreaming VAW into all relevant areas of Government policy; and
- encouraging and enabling integration in specific policy areas like prevention and public awareness and in activities such as inter-agency fora.

There are many stakeholders that are committed to improvements – for example, at a national level the police and Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) – and a strong steer from the centre would ensure that resources were released or organised to enable implementation. For instance, outside London it is still the case that **few police resources are allocated to rape, trafficking or prostitution – they are neither ‘volume’ crimes nor linked to a Performance Indicator.** Location within a VAW strategy would also enable more innovation at local levels.

The VAW sector has provided a response to and critique of the then Government initiatives on VAW in the CEDAW Thematic Shadow Report on Violence Against Women (Sen et al., 2004). Many of the headline areas in this Thematic Report have already been addressed within this document, but some offer additional elements from which to build an integrated approach.



- Locating VAW centrally within efforts to create gender equality (as is the case in many other European countries).
- Developing thinking on human rights as they apply to victims, in the private as well as the public sphere.
- Addressing attrition in a coherent and coordinated way.
- Devising strategy, in partnership with other key actors, to secure and aid development in the specialist NGO sector.
- Developing strategic interventions and priorities, mainstreaming what we already know to be good practice and ensuring that wherever women live, and whatever additional needs they may have, they have access to quality and effective services.
- Enhancing knowledge through concerted efforts and dedication of resources to data collection. The current knowledge base is insufficient to enable assessment of the success or otherwise of Government policies, not to mention that effective intervention requires more sophisticated analysis of the contexts in which VAW occurs, and the impact that it has on women, their families and communities. There is a critical need to understand better the needs of vulnerable groups of women, including disabled women, older women and women from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds. It is also necessary to look at patterns of offending, how violence is located in contemporary gender relations and the links between perpetration of different forms of abuse.
- Placing VAW within foreign and development policy, as well as domestic policy.

Although the research exercise underpinning this document revealed very limited reference to VAW in current Government policy, the authors and members of the WNC VAW working group had no difficulty in identifying many examples of how VAW applied to, or fitted within, current Government priorities and PSAs. These insights and potentials will be missed in the absence of a strategic response¹⁰. Diagram 1 (see Appendix A) presents some examples, locating VAW within selected current delivery mechanisms. **Having a single coordination mechanism in Government would remove duplication, ensure better knowledge transfer and embrace issues that are currently outside the major policy loops – for example, forced and child marriage, FGM, trafficking and sexual exploitation, adult women survivors of child sexual abuse – ensuring that areas were not left behind due to a lack of strong champions.**

This proposal is a significant departure from previous approaches. In particular, it recognises that:

- achieving women's equality requires addressing violence;
- all forms of VAW are connected, and have the same underlying causes;
- these are not only individual experiences of victimisation, they also have a gendered pattern;
- victims need support, advocacy and redress; perpetrators must be held to account; and
- national and local Government can and should take a leading role in seeking to prevent (in the word of the UN 'eliminate') violence against women and children.

¹⁰ See footnote 7.



VAW is currently everywhere and nowhere.
An additional gain from an explicit national strategy would be a connected sector across voluntary and statutory service providers, which could be recognised through a National Service Agreement. Whether in this format, or another, the strategy should also include:

- an implementation plan with timescales, roles and allocated resources;
- mechanisms for ensuring trickle down of proven good practice into local service provision;
- a framework for monitoring change; and
- an oversight body, which is not part of Government, to review progress, learn from international examples, conduct the regular reviews of the legislative framework required by the BPFA and make recommendations.

Taking the opportunity that exists in 2005 would mean the UK could boast an integrated approach to VAW when it takes over the Presidency of the EU later this year. This could build on work undertaken in the Irish Presidency on extending the focus from domestic violence to VAW. The UK, with its diverse population and vibrant NGO sector, could extend the focus and perspective even more.

Appendix A

30

Crime and Disorder Partnerships

- Extend from domestic violence to VAW.
- Audit about which forms and contexts need addressing locally.
- Include direct support for victims of sexual crime.
- Address primary prevention.



Local Strategic Partnership Community Plan

- Possibility of mainstreaming VAW, women's safety, especially if a public duty to promote (gender) equality is introduced.



National Services Framework for Older People

- Violence against older people is more than elder abuse, but even here women are disproportionately victims - suffered DV for decades and undisclosed childhood abuse may emerge.
- Sexual harassment of elderly women meaning they do not leave their house/flat.
- Sexual safety in residential settings.



Diversity and Social inclusion

- Specific needs of disabled women, women from BME communities, refugees and asylum seekers and women in prison who have experienced sexual and domestic violence.
- Childhood abuse as a factor in subsequent social exclusion.



Best Value Performance Indicators could be achieved through integrated approaches.

For all delivery mechanisms there must be a teasing out of levels of response:

Department of Health & National Institute for Mental Health in England (NIMHE) Programme on Violence and Abuse (Health and Mental Health)

- Ensure that the impacts of VAW are 'established as a core mental health issue' and also with respect to physical health.
- Audit extent to which local Trusts commission services from the voluntary sector which already has specialist knowledge and expertise.
- Extent of in-service and initial training and capacity on links between VAW, trauma and health and mental health consequences.



Violence Against Women Strategy Delivery Model - Some examples

Local Authority Corporate Performance Assessments

- Gender and VAW mainstreaming.



Primary Care Trust Local Development Plan

- Awareness of extent to which VAW underpins ill-health.
- Development of screening.
- Early intervention through well woman, NHS counsellors, local partnerships and specialist women's organisations.



- Policy
- Strategy Planning
- Commissioning Operational Practice

Acute Hospital Trust

- Map locations and contexts where VAW arises (eg: A&E as direct result but also suicide and self-harm; Pre and post-natal care; Paediatrics; Genito-Urinary Medicine).
- Opportunities for screening and early intervention.



Valuing People

- Address abuse of disabled children and adults.
- Link with Crown Prosecution Service and Association of Chief Police Officers to develop a strategy that enables those with learning difficulties and severe impairments to report sexual violence and achieve justice.



Children's Trusts

- Mainstream VAW from the outset with respect to:
 - girls;
 - living with DV;
 - child abuse including sexual exploitation; and
 - young people as risk group for victimisation and perpetration.
- Primary prevention - building cultures of respect in families/relationships.
- Support as children and young people know about abuse in their families, communities and peer groups - build their capacity to name, resist and reject violence and also to support those who are victims and challenge perpetration.





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