



HM Government

# **Violence Against Women and Girls Newsletter**

## **Winter 2015**

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## Foreword

I am pleased to welcome you to the winter edition of the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) newsletter.

Since our last newsletter in the summer, we have continued our work with stakeholders and the voluntary sector in developing a refreshed VAWG strategy. In early autumn we held three Ministerial Roundtables which were chaired by Karen Bradley, Minister for Preventing Abuse and Exploitation. The outcomes from the discussions at these Roundtables, together with a series of bilateral meetings, have proved invaluable in identifying what more we can do to protect and support victims and survivors of violence against women and girls, and I would like to thank all those who have given their time and expertise.

In the Spending Review Statement, the Government announced that a total of £40m will be provided for domestic abuse services, including refuges, between 2016 and 2020, and a £2m grant to Women's Aid and SafeLives to support a new domestic abuse early intervention project.

We will set out the full package of support for victims of VAWG, and how we will deliver on our ambition to make awareness of VAWG 'everyone's business' across all agencies, professions and the wider public, in an updated strategy which we aim to publish in the new year.

Following the passing of the Serious Crime Act earlier this year, on 5 December we announced that the new offence of coercive or controlling behaviour will come into force from 29 December. The new offence closes a gap in the law around patterns of coercive or controlling behaviour in an ongoing relationship between intimate partners or family members. The offence carries a maximum sentence of 5 years' imprisonment, a fine or both, and more information on the new offence can be accessed at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-guidance-framework-controlling-or-coercive-behaviour-in-an-intimate-or-family-relationship>

We are also continuing our work to protect victims and we have begun a consultation seeking views on the possible introduction of new measures to offer better protection to victims of 'stranger stalking'. The consultation can be accessed at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/introducing-a-stalking-protection-order> and we would be pleased if you could read the consultation and take part in the attached survey.

The Home Office and Government Equalities Office are also providing £3.85 million to develop a new phase of the campaign to tackle abuse within teenage relationships which will launch in the new year. This follows on from the acclaimed 'This is Abuse' campaign, which since 2010 has encouraged teens to rethink their views of violence, controlling behaviour and what consent means within their relationships – thereby helping to change attitudes which can underpin violence against women and girls.

International Development Minister Baroness Verma has been confirmed as the new Ministerial Champion for Tackling Violence against Women and Girls Overseas. This is a cross-government position dedicated to driving the UK's efforts to end all forms of violence against women and girls overseas.

If you have any questions relating to violence against women and girls, please email us at:

[VAWGenquiries@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:VAWGenquiries@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk)

Christian Papaleontiou,

Head of Interpersonal Violence Team,

## Home Office FGM Unit

The Home Office's [Female Genital Mutilation \(FGM\) Unit](#) was set up in December 2014 to coordinate efforts across Government and provide outreach support to local areas. In addition, the Unit acts as a hub for effective practice, gathering and sharing examples across local areas and professional groups.

The FGM Unit does not handle individual cases. If you are worried that a girl or woman is at risk of FGM or is a victim of FGM, contact the [police](#) or the [NSPCC helpline](#).

### Celebrating the life of Efua Dorkenoo, OBE

On 26 November, friends, family and colleagues of Efua Dorkenoo gathered at St Margaret's Church, Westminster Abbey to celebrate her life. Efua's strength and conviction made an invaluable contribution to the campaign to end FGM. She leaves behind an inspirational legacy which will continue to drive us all to end this abuse once and for all.

### Publication of statutory guidance on FGM

The consultation on the draft statutory guidance has now closed. Thank you to all who responded. We will publish the final guidance in shortly.

### Commencement of FGM Mandatory Reporting Duty

An FGM mandatory reporting duty which requires regulated health and social care professionals and teachers in England and Wales to report 'known' cases of FGM in under 18s to the police came into effect on 31 October. This was accompanied by [procedural information](#) for professionals, a factsheet for communities, and additional [information for NHS staff](#) in England. If you have any queries about the duty or would like to request an electronic copy of the factsheet, contact the [FGM Unit](#).

### Updated FGM Online Resource Pack and materials

In 2014, we developed an online FGM Resource Pack to highlight examples from local areas where effective practice has been identified and to emphasise what works in fighting FGM. This has now been [updated](#) to reflect recent legislative changes, including the new mandatory reporting duty for professionals; the introduction of mandatory recording of FGM cases within the NHS in England; and the publication of new estimated prevalence data. The aim of the resource pack is to encourage local areas and commissioners to consider measures they could put in place to prevent and tackle FGM.

We have also updated our FGM 'The Facts' leaflet to include details on the legislative changes. To order copies, please contact the [FGM Unit](#).

### FGM Unit Outreach

Over the past few months, the FGM Unit has spoken at a number of events across the country, including regional conferences in Coventry and Hertfordshire. We have also presented at briefing and training sessions for a law firm in Liverpool and a Safeguarding Children Board (SCB) in London, visited community organisations, statutory agencies and SCBs in North East England and Nottinghamshire, and

attended a regional FGM forum in Greater Manchester. The visits and events have highlighted the good work under way across the country to tackle FGM.

## Contact Details

We are interested in hearing about effective practice to tackle FGM across local areas and professional groups. We would also like to hear about events and initiatives.

If you would like the Unit to attend an event you are holding, would like to share best practice and resources you have developed, or for more information on the Government's work to tackle FGM, please contact us at:

[FGMEnquiries@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:FGMEnquiries@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk).

## Crown Prosecution Service

### CPS Social Media Campaign #ConsentIs

The role of the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) is to consider whether cases reach the required threshold for prosecution, and to prosecute them if so. It is important that the public understands the principles on how and why we prosecute or not.

The CPS wants more people to recognise that consent is a concept that is easy to understand, particularly as it is something that rape cases can hinge on in court, and is a key consideration when deciding whether to bring charges.

In September 2015, to coincide with Fresher's Week, the Crown Prosecution Service launched a social media campaign to get people talking about consent to sex within the context of sexual assault and rape.

The campaign was developed in partnership with Rape Crisis, End Violence against Women Coalition, Survivors Manchester, White Ribbon Campaign and the National Union of Students. The campaign generated a significant amount of interest with:

- over 2,300 contributors
- 4,453 tweets
- a reach of 12 million twitter users
- campaign material being seen over 45 million times

Further information about the campaign is available here:

[http://www.cps.gov.uk/news/articles/consent\\_is/](http://www.cps.gov.uk/news/articles/consent_is/)

## Statement from the Director of Public Prosecutions on Violence against Women and Girls

As DPP I have made it absolutely clear that my focus is on improving the experience of criminal justice for victims – all victims. I do not differentiate in our treatment of victims - male or female, adult or child, current or non-recent. But what is also clear is that some offending is based on gender. Violence against Women and Girls – VAWG - is recognised worldwide and by the UK Government as a form of offending where gender really does play a part.

As the United Nations describes it: *Violence against women is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women, which have led to domination over and discrimination against women by men and to the prevention of the full advancement of women, and ... violence against women is one of the crucial social mechanisms by which women are forced into a subordinate position compared with men.*

At the CPS this includes certain types of offending such as domestic abuse, sexual offences including rape, forced marriage, stalking, honour based violence, trafficking, FGM and prostitution offences.

These crimes are personal, invasive and traumatic – regardless of the gender of the victim - and the sheer volume of them is staggering, particularly when it is widely accepted that reporting rates are low. And of these thousands upon thousands of cases, we cannot shy away from an uncomfortable truth – they are inextricably linked to gender. Over the past five years our records show that most (84%) victims of these crimes where gender is recorded are female, and almost all (93%) perpetrators are male.

Those figures are not changing, but we at the CPS want to recognise, acknowledge and help those victims that are not necessarily caught by the “VAWG” umbrella – that is, the men and the boys who can also be victims of domestic abuse and sexual offending and the other VAWG crimes. To that end, all our policies that sit within the VAWG framework are applied fairly and equitably to all perpetrators and victims of crime - irrespective of their gender.

We absolutely must not and do not ignore the fact that 16% of these victims are male and that is exactly why we include them in our report and our analysis – many of the same issues apply to bringing these cases, regardless of the gender of those involved. Similar stigmas and some of the most pervasive myths and stereotypes are associated with both male and female victims – for example, the belief that women who don't scream were not raped, just as the belief that “real men”, also, don't get raped.

This issue is extremely important - men should not feel that they cannot report cases because of misconceptions or feeling judged and that is why we include them in this report rather than refusing to acknowledge their equal status as victims of these horrible crimes.

I fully accept the concerns raised by some, however, that we need to be clearer in our annual VAWG report about the inclusion of men and boys which is why I have arranged for amendments to be made to the current, and all future, reports. We will clarify our introductory remarks and we will also where possible, include a breakdown of gender volumes.

So I reject the notion that we are excluding men and boys, rather I stress that we are being inclusive in our approach.

Ultimately I believe we all want the same thing – that is to address the fact that regardless of gender, the victim still has to confront too many obstacles that may stop them reporting a crime and supporting a prosecution. These victims still face society's stereotypes and expectations on how they should behave, they face a sometimes formal and intimidating courtroom process, and of course they face the difficulty of having to relive the crime - in front of a room full of complete strangers –

something many feel unable to share with even close friends and family. These are tough issues that require our support and we have looked at these crimes to build experience and expertise, so prosecutors can build the strongest cases for the court while delivering a better service for victims.

I hope my willingness to address these concerns will be welcomed, but until it is no longer the case that the vast majority of these crimes are committed by men using power, coercion and violence against women, amending the title of VAWG would put the victims of these crimes back into the dark, where they have been kept for far too long.

The updated VAWG Annual Report is available here: [link](#)

## GEO Annual CSW Consultation Event

The Government Equalities Office hosted its annual consultation event with NGOs on 9 November, as it starts preparations for the next session of the United Nations' Commission on the Status for Women (CSW). CSW is the primary global inter-governmental body on gender equality and women's empowerment and takes place each year in March in New York. It is the UN's second largest gathering after the General Assembly. It attracts an international audience of ministers, government officials, experts on gender equality and a large number of national and international NGOs. The discussions and agreements at CSW influence legislation and policies on gender equality and gender-based violence around the world.

This year's focus will be *Women's empowerment and the link to sustainable development* and the review theme will be *The elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls*, looking particularly at what UN member states have achieved since this was last discussed in 2013.

At the event organised by the Government Equalities Office on 9 November, participants had the opportunity to discuss these issues and inform the government of their priorities for CSW. The Secretary of State for Education and Minister for Women and Equalities Rt. Hon. Nicky Morgan MP talked about the importance the Government is placing on CSW in advancing gender equality globally but also as a unique forum fostering collaboration between countries and the exchange of ideas. The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Women, Equalities and Family Justice Caroline Dinenage MP also spoke of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which was signed 20 years ago and is still considered a guiding document for gender equality for governments and organisations around the world.

More specifically on violence against women and girls, participants mentioned the need for schools and other educational institutions to take these issues seriously and address them in the relevant contexts, such as PSHE lessons. The importance of sustainable funding models for specialist services dealing with violence against women and girls was also mentioned. Some organisations praised the work of the revenge porn and online abuse helplines as well as the many successes of independent advisors on domestic violence.

The Government Equalities Office will be leading the government's efforts in the run up to March, working closely with other interested departments, including the Department for International Development, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Home Office.



## Public Health England

### Domestic Violence – A Public Health Response

The prevention of interpersonal violence, and violence in general, continues to be an important piece of work for Public Health England. Intimate partner violence has significant and enduring impacts on individual health, and through the collateral impacts on children and families, social networks and employment is an important public health issue.

As a response to inequalities in domestic violence Public Health England has produced a key document *'Disability and Domestic Abuse'*. This topic overview focuses on disabled people's experience of domestic violence. Public Health England aims to protect and improve the population's health and reduce health inequalities. As part of a broader work programme on preventing domestic abuse, PHE highlights the experience of people enduring or affected by domestic abuse who are often ignored: this includes lesbian, gay and trans (LGBT) people; men; black and minority ethnic (BME) people; and disabled people. *'Disability and Domestic Abuse'* aims to improve understanding of the complexities of disabled people's experiences of domestic violence and promotes consideration of these complexities within the public health system. This topic overview also supports local and national action, and provides guidance to improve response across local authorities, health and social care services, clinical commissioners, and the wider public health system.

Public Health England has also been working closely with AVA to produce an e-learning tool. Domestic and sexual violence, problematic substance use and mental health are three issues that often co-exist and when they do, the three things can become complicated. *'Complicated matters: a toolkit and e-learning programme'* addresses domestic violence, problematic substance use and mental ill health are designed to 'uncomplicated' matters by raising professionals' experience about how the three issues interlink and reflecting on the most effective ways to engage with individuals and families who are affected by these issues. To this aim, both the toolkit and e-learning programme provide information on ways to engage survivors to engage with services and how to meet their needs, ways to increase safety for survivors and their children and developing a holistic approach based on partnership and integrated work.

In addition Public Health England have produced a resource providing an overview of domestic violence which sets out the potential for evidence based action across the public health system to reduce the incidence and impacts of domestic violence on individuals enduring or exposed to domestic violence. Details of this resource pack, the supporting webinars and other resources in this article can be obtained by contacting [Rachel.jaywebster@phe.gov.uk](mailto:Rachel.jaywebster@phe.gov.uk)

## Welsh Government

## National Adviser for Violence against Women

Rhian Bowen-Davies, Wales' first National Adviser for Violence against Women and other forms of Gender-based Violence, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence started in post on 28<sup>th</sup> September. She can be contacted via twitter @NatAdv\_VAW or you can read her blog to see how she is helping to bring an informed, expert and independent perspective on work being taken forward and to shape and inform policy and legislative developments in Wales.

## Statutory Guidance

### Ask & Act

The Welsh Government's proposed statutory guidance on "Ask and Act" is open for consultation until 27 January 2016. "Ask and Act" is a principles based approach to targeted enquiry for violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence across the Public Service. The consultation can be found here:

<http://gov.wales/consultations/people-and-communities/draft-guidance-on-ask-and-act/?status=open&lang=en>

## Multi Agency Collaboration

The Welsh Government's consultation on statutory guidance on multi-agency collaboration will close on 17 December 2016. The guidance explores the necessary stages of collaboration and identifies good practice in establishing partnership arrangements. The consultation can be found here:

<http://gov.wales/consultations/people-and-communities/statutory-guidance-domestic-abuse-act/?lang=en>

The Welsh Government is also preparing statutory guidance on the effective commissioning of specialist services and working with perpetrators, both of which will be consulted upon over the next 12 months.

## Whole Education Approach

A Whole Education Approach Good Practice Guidance, developed in conjunction with Welsh Women's Aid was published by the Welsh Government on 20 October. The Good Practice Guide can be found here:

<http://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/safety/domesticabuse/publications/good-practice-guide-a-whole-education-approach/?lang=en>.

On 3 December, the Welsh Government is hosting Keeping Learner's Safe – Everybody's Business, an all Wales safeguarding in education conference with a specific focus on violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence. Keynote speakers include the Minister for Education and Skills, Huw Lewis AM, the Minister for Public Services, Leighton Andrews AM, the National Adviser for violence against women and other forms of gender based violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence, and Professor Emma Renold.

## Live Fear Free Helpline and website

The Live Fear Free Helpline (formally called the All Wales Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Helpline) was re-launched by the Welsh Government on the 1 October. Alongside the helpline, The Welsh Government's Live Fear Free website was redeveloped to provide a user-friendly resource for victims and survivors, families and friends, and professionals. Content includes domestic abuse, sexual violence, FGM, HBV & Forced Marriage and Slavery.

[www.gov.wales/livefearfree](http://www.gov.wales/livefearfree)

[www.llyw.cymru/bywhebofn](http://www.llyw.cymru/bywhebofn)

## Publicity campaigns

The second Live Fear Free campaign was launched by the Welsh Government on 9th November. It has been designed in partnership with the University of South Wales, NUS Cymru and Young Wales and focuses on violence and abuse in respect of young people.

Our recent Cross the Line campaign which focused on coercive control was recently awarded a Gold and Silver award at the Chartered Institute of Public Relations Cymru Wales PRide award. To view the award winning videos go to:

<http://livefearfree.gov.wales/campaigns/where-is-the-line?lang=en>

## Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and So-called Honour Based Violence

### Youth Participation

The Welsh Government is funding an innovative youth participation project which aims to capture young people's voices and views on this issue in order to stimulate and support intergenerational conversations within a range of different communities. Bawso and NSPCC Cymru/Wales are working collaboratively on this project, which will culminate with a youth led conference in February 2016.

### FGM & Health

As a result of the Tackling FGM in the UK – Intercollegiate recommendations for identifying, recording and reporting report, the Welsh Government & NHS Wales have developed a FGM Health work stream. As a result Wales now has:

- FGM safeguarding leads in each of the health boards
- A FGM Care Pathway for Wales. This care pathway has been developed by Public Health Wales and FGM health board leads for use of women and girls of all ages, in primary and secondary care settings. Work continues to be taken forward in this area.

## Protecting children from harm: a critical assessment of child sexual abuse in the family network in England and priorities for action

The Children's Commissioner has published the first report of her Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse in the Family Environment. The report assesses the scale and nature of child sexual abuse in and around the family. It is based on data and evidence from every police force in England, data relating to statutory social work provision collated by the Department for Education, site visits, oral evidence sessions, focus groups, and the largest ever survey of adult survivors of sexual abuse in the family. The report draws a number of conclusions.

In particular, data gathered for this Inquiry suggests that approximately 1 in 8 victims of sexual abuse come to the attention of statutory agencies. This finding is consistent with research in this area. Data on the proportion of child sexual abuse which occurs within the family is not recorded consistently by police forces. Where the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator is recorded rigorously, approximately two thirds of cases of child sexual abuse are within the family.

There is a high level of commitment to tackling this issue among professionals working with children. However, statutory services are largely disclosure-led, with the burden of responsibility placed on the victim. However, many victims of child sexual abuse in the family environment do not realise that they are being abused, and may not have the words to tell someone what has happened to them. Proactive enquiry by professionals is therefore necessary to substantiate concerns and activate processes for the investigation of abuse and protection of the child.

The evidence highlights the barriers to telling someone about sexual abuse. A quarter of survivor survey respondents stated that they did not become aware that they had been sexually abused until they were an adult. Evidence gathered by the Commissioner has highlighted a number of barriers to telling, including self-blame and guilt, fear of the perpetrator, fear of the consequences and being judged, loyalty to other family members, a lack of opportunities to tell someone, and a distrust of professionals. Victims may also fear the breakdown of the family, and take responsibility for preventing the shame which they perceive would be felt by other family members if the abuse was discovered.

The report calls for the capacity of professionals to identify children who are being sexually abused to be strengthened, children and young people to be equipped with the knowledge to recognise abuse and access help when they are worried, and processes for the investigation of sexual abuse to be improved to minimise their impact on children and maximise their effectiveness.

For further information contact: [graham.ritchie@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:graham.ritchie@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk)

Download a summary of the report at:

<http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/Protecting%20children%20from%20harm%20-%20full%20report.pdf>

Download the full report at:

[http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/Protecting%20children%20from%20harm%20-%20executive%20summary\\_0.pdf](http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/Protecting%20children%20from%20harm%20-%20executive%20summary_0.pdf)

# Women's Aid

## Women's Aid Marks the 16 Days of Action

Women's Aid launched a new website on 25th November [www.womensaid.org.uk](http://www.womensaid.org.uk) and published a blog a day throughout the 16 Days of Action. The blogs cover particular areas of Women's Aid's work, key issues for survivors, legislative and policy issues and are written by a range of experts, survivors and supporters.

## National partnership launched to sustain domestic abuse services across England

Women's Aid is delighted to announce its new national partnership with Imkaan, 'Sustaining Dedicated and Specialist Services'.

Funded through the Lloyds Bank Foundation, the partnership aims to improve the sustainability of independent specialist services for women and children affected by domestic abuse. It will help small specialist domestic abuse organisations to navigate, and be successful in, tough commissioning environments, making a lasting difference to the lives of hundreds of thousands of women and children.

The partnership also aims to enable funders and local and national government to understand the value of protecting specialist services. Women's Aid and Imkaan will support smaller organisations to demonstrate their quality, measure their impact, develop strategic partnerships and engage proactively in commissioning processes. The project will build on this experience to deliver targeted support to other unique specialist services, addressing the needs of disabled and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender victims of domestic abuse. It will also ensure that policy at a national level will be informed by the voices of survivors and the knowledge and experience of frontline specialist services providing accurate information on needs, outcomes and commissioning trends.

Polly Neate, Chief Executive of Women's Aid, said:

"It is vital that our smaller dedicated and specialist domestic abuse services are protected. This will ensure they can maintain their survivor-led practice - practice that has been saving the lives of women and children for more than four decades. Through this partnership we can support these life-saving services to survive in what is a very difficult funding climate and ensure those who make funding decisions locally understand the long term impact they have in women's and children's lives."

## Women's Aid Training

The Women's Aid National Training Centre continues to run the National Award, Certificate and Diploma in Tackling and Preventing Domestic/Sexual Violence/Abuse.

The Home Office endorses the Women's Aid National Certificate and Diploma in Tackling and Preventing Domestic Violence which is run through the National Open College Network (NOCN), as suitable for the IDVA role. The next available dates and locations for these courses are:

### **Award – Bristol**

Unit 1 - 26th & 27th April 2016

Unit 2 - 18th & 19th May

Unit 3 - 15th & 16th June

### **Certificate - London**

Unit 1 - 26, 27 & 28 April 2016

Unit 2 - 25 & 26 May

Unit 3 - 21, 22 & 23 June

Unit 4 - 20 & 21 July

### **Certificate - Manchester**

Unit 1- 3, 4 5 May 2016

Unit 2- 8 & 9 June

Unit 3 - 5, 6 & 7 July

Unit 4 - 6 & 7 Sep

The Centre also offers a number of CPD courses including:

Understanding and identifying coercive control (Bristol 20th November & 10th December, 19th January 2016 London & 26th January Manchester)

Courses for Facilitators of support groups for adult and child survivors of domestic abuse including Power to Change, Helping Hands and You & Me Mum (various) Domestic Abuse and Teenage Relationships (8th December, London)

More information on these courses and all of the other courses we run can be found on our website [www.nationaltrainingcentre.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrainingcentre.org.uk)

## No Woman Turned Away

Women's Aid has been tasked by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) to undertake a piece of work that will assist in establishing a longer term solution for refuge funding in England.

Women's Aid is also working with DCLG to explore longer term solutions to the crisis in refuge provision. As part of this, we will be doing a piece of work for DCLG to improve access to refuge provision and bottom out what the current challenges are for local refuges and the women needing to utilise them. We will be undertaking a detailed data capture and analysis of reasons women face barriers to a service and actual gaps in service provision.

The new small team delivering this work will be utilising UKROL data and working closely with the National Domestic Violence Helpline (NDVHL) and local service providers to:

- Follow up on all referrals made from the NDVHL to a refuge to ascertain the outcome
- Support complex and difficult to place referrals, analysing the process and the roles that other agencies play, whilst also working to secure a positive outcome for the caller.

This information will feed into a national review and will inform longer term decisions about the refuge funding framework.

## Refuge

### #16signs #16daysofaction

Raising awareness of the many different aspects of controlling and abusive behaviour can help women, and concerned friends and family members, identify domestic violence. Refuge believes that early prevention is essential; forewarned is forearmed. It is also vital people know what services are available to them and that Refuge is here to offer information and support.

This is why Refuge used 16 days of action to raise awareness of 16 of the common signs of abuse. Launched on the 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, the #16signs campaign shared survivors' voices to draw attention to the different types of behaviours which can indicate abuse. Jealous behaviour, isolating someone from their friends or family, controlling what they wear or what they can do, are all signs of abuse. Each day throughout the 16 days of action, Refuge focused on one particular sign of abuse; highlighting how it can manifest itself, how it was experienced by survivors of abuse and how people who are identifying with the sign can get more information and support.

### Refuge launches sexual violence service in Thames Valley

Refuge has proudly launched a new service in the Thames Valley, to support women and men who have experienced sexual violence. Funded by the Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner, the sexual violence service is available to those living in Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire; providing survivors with the emotional support and practical information they need to overcome their experience, whilst taking essential steps to rebuild their lives.

As part of this service, Refuge is also running a support service for 16-21 year olds for those who have experienced, or are at risk of experiencing, sexual assault or rape. The advisory service offers confidential, non-judgmental and independent support, including for those who do not wish to make a report to the police. Refuge's highly-trained, specialist staff work with each individual to create a tailor-made support plan which suits their needs; linking up with wider support service across the Thames Valley to ensure each individual can access additional services.

To find out more about the Refuge-Thames Valley Sexual Violence Advisory service, or to refer, please visit: [www.refuge.org.uk/thames-valley](http://www.refuge.org.uk/thames-valley)

## National Stalking Helpline

The National Stalking Helpline, which is run by Suzy Lamplugh Trust, is currently piloting a casework service for victims of stalking. This means that victims of stalking who contact the helpline with more complex needs could be provided with further assistance, such as help contacting the police or housing services; or referrals to local domestic violence agencies. The particular work carried out for clients will be decided on a case by case basis. This service is for standard-medium risk stalking cases, and the pilot shall initially run until December 2015. High risk cases will continue to be referred to Paladin.

The results of the pilot should be ready by the end of March 2016. If you would like to find out more about the National Stalking Helpline and our casework please contact [info@stalkinghelpline.org](mailto:info@stalkinghelpline.org)

## White Ribbon Campaign

White Ribbon Campaign UK has recently been awarded a tender from the European Institute for Gender Equality to draw up a plan a European wide White Ribbon Campaign. This is a great step to help targeting men to challenge male violence against women in countries where there are not yet active White Ribbon Campaigns. The Campaign will be launched in Luxembourg by the Prime Minister of Luxembourg.

DFID have become the latest Whitehall department to show support to White Ribbon Campaign. For this year's campaign they will have internal communications with staff and have white ribbon badges on offer via counter displays in their offices.

Four Towns in Cornwall are now working towards white ribbon accreditation with support from the County Council. To recognise this, new Cornish enamel White Ribbon lapel badges have been made available, with the black and white flag superimposed upon a white ribbon. Cornish Pirates Rugby Union Team are having a White ribbon game on November 29th.

By the end of November the White Ribbon Campaign office had sent out over 600 parcels of awareness raising materials, leaflets, posters, banners and badges to support work across the country involving men in speaking out about male violence and challenging negative gender stereotypes which underpin abuse.

On November 20th Hebden Bridge closely followed by Halifax became the first town to have White Ribbon Campaign Festive light displays, with Cross Street designs proclaiming Love & Respect with white ribbons at the side, a vital message at this time of year, and a message which stays in everyone's sight for the whole festive period.

## RASA Merseyside



RASA Merseyside were visited by The Chair of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse, Hon Lowell Goddard DNZM to talk about the Truth Project and to hear about their hopes for how the Inquiry can provide an opportunity for victims and survivors to share their experiences.

Inquiry chair Hon. Lowell Goddard DNZM said: "I would like to thank the Merseyside Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre...for meeting with me today. The work of organisations such as these is incredibly important in helping support victims and survivors of child sexual abuse. I am grateful for the time they have taken today to talk to me about their work and about some of the challenges faced by those whom they support."

## Respect

### Calling the Respect Phonenumber and the Men's Advice Line: impact and outcomes for victims and perpetrators

Respect is a domestic violence organisation for work with domestic violence perpetrators, male victims and young people. Respect runs two helplines, part-funded by the Home Office: the Respect Phonenumber for domestic violence perpetrators and the Men's Advice Line for male victims of domestic violence.

All callers are informed about a client satisfaction survey gathering service user feedback about their experience of the Helplines. Callers have the opportunity to evaluate all aspects of the service they receive: opening hours, quality of advice, listening and knowledge of the Helpline Worker, and what difference the call made to the caller. Here's what some callers said specifically about the latter.

### Respect Phonenumber callers

*"It has given me the confidence to pursue options for becoming free from violence"*

*"The Worker was very wise, helpful, knowledgeable, but also listened and made me understand what I knew but didn't want to admit."*

*"I have an immensely complex history and an immensely complex brain to go with it. Someone taking the time to listen and help me feel heard is of paramount importance. I can mostly understand what's going on for me but laying it out in front of me is difficult. I've been to a lot of counselling and it doesn't always help. Having someone both listen and hear is rare. I felt both happened in my phone call. He listened without judgement and he was very clear in his use of language. These things are very helpful when sorting out 'mental spaghetti'."*

*"I know I have to change my ways. It is the much needed wake-up call in my life"*

*"I am a counsellor and have a new client who is a perpetrator of domestic violence, and wants to change their behaviour. The helpline person was brilliant, I never really thought about it being about the perpetrator wanting desperately to be (and remain) in control. Exploring this with my client has been hugely beneficial, helping them understand the reasons underlying their behaviour. The call and website have really helped me to up skill myself as a professional, as well as helped my client find a*

*specific men's group run by DV experts, that he can attend alongside our one-to-one work."*

*"It made me see things in a different perspective through examples I would not have normally. I was given the honest truth and is a step forward to understanding myself."*

## Men's Advice Line callers

*"I had nowhere to turn. I felt that as a man, I should not be the victim. It was explained that men are also victims of mental abuse."*

*"It gave me confidence that my decisions for a way forward were correct. Good advice was given in an understanding and experienced way."*

*"It was helpful to talk to someone specifically geared up to help men. The operator was calming and practical and not so sympathetic that they made me feel more upset!"*

*"Just having someone to talk to who was understanding of my situation was a great help! Talking to friends and family is difficult especially in this situation and it is hard to know where to turn. Your adviser was able to help me deal with my immediate feelings and pointed out many ways that I may be able to change my own behaviour to help deal with and negate my wife's behaviour. He also pointed out where I could go for further support. I am very grateful that this service was available to me and it is a comfort to know that I and others in my situation have somewhere to turn. Thank you!"*

*"Just listened to my concerns and helped me to acknowledge my feelings which will help me to support my partner better. The Worker was wonderful and totally understood that what I needed was someone to listen to and not to provide practical advice as such, more emotional support."*

The Respect Phonenumber is available on 0808 802 4040 Monday-Friday 9am-5pm, [info@respectphonenumber.org.uk](mailto:info@respectphonenumber.org.uk) [www.respectphonenumber.org.uk](http://www.respectphonenumber.org.uk) ; webchat service available.

The Men's Advice Line is available on 0808 801 0327 Monday-Friday 9am-5pm, [info@mensadvice.org.uk](mailto:info@mensadvice.org.uk) [www.mensadvice.org.uk](http://www.mensadvice.org.uk) ; webchat service available.

## Rights of Women

Rights of Women has published two new legal guides and a vital new handbook to add to our existing range of legal publications, covering family, immigration and criminal law issues. The new publications include: [Female genital mutilation and the law](#), an updated legal guide to [Domestic violence injunctions](#) and [Child arrangements and domestic violence: a handbook for women](#).

*Female genital mutilation and the law:* With the passing of the Serious Crime Act 2015, some major changes have been introduced into the law in respect of Female Genital Mutilation ('FGM'). The most significant change for professionals being that,

since October 2015, teachers, healthcare professionals (in England and Wales) and social care workers (in Wales) are now under a legal duty to report to the police if they discover that a girl under the age of 18 has experienced FGM. The Act has also brought into existence the Female Genital Mutilation Protection Order ('FGMPO'), which is a protective order that can be obtained from either the Family Court or the Criminal Court. [Female genital mutilation and the law](#) is designed to help women, and the professionals who support them, to navigate their way through these legal changes.

*Child arrangements and domestic violence: a handbook for women*: this is an essential and practical resource for women without lawyers, who are involved in child arrangements proceedings. Professionals who support women affected by domestic violence will also find this handbook a useful tool to help women through child arrangements cases.

The handbook includes:

- the law and the courts' approach to child arrangements cases
- the procedure, how to make an application, what happens at court, fact finding hearings and what happens after the final hearing
- information on how to get advice and support including lawyers and McKenzie Friends
- various aids such as flowcharts and example documents to help you along the way

To order your copy go to: [www.rightsofwomen.org.uk/get-information/family-law/](http://www.rightsofwomen.org.uk/get-information/family-law/)

## The International Centre: Researching child sexual exploitation, violence and trafficking

'The International Centre' at the University of Bedfordshire is a research centre working to improve responses to child sexual exploitation, violence and trafficking through academic rigour, collaborative working and the meaningful and ethical engagement of children and young people.

For a full list of our publications and activities visit our [website](#). For on-going news follow us on [twitter](#) and sign up to our [mailing list](#).

### Recent publications

- The '[Our Voices](#)' project report shares the view, ideas and perspectives of young people on preventing sexual violence. Forty-seven young people from Albania, Bulgaria and the UK took part in consultations.
- The [FCASE](#) (Families and Communities against Sexual Exploitation) evaluation found that a new model of working with young people, parents and communities piloted by Barnardo's identifies factors that can be effective in preventing child sexual exploitation (CSE).

- [Making Justice Work](#) details the experiences of the criminal justice system for children and young people affected by sexual exploitation as victims and witnesses, identifying areas of particular difficulty and opportunities for change and improvement.
- A [Briefing for Inspectorates](#) was written to inform the development of the Joint Targeted Area Inspections by Ofsted, HMIC, HMIP and the CQC.

## CSE Research Forum - January 18th 2016

The CSE Research Forum happens twice a year in London with the aim of disseminating relevant research findings and providing a space for practitioners and researchers involved in the field of child sexual exploitation to learn from one other in dialogue. Presentations from previous forums are available [here](#) and bookings are [now open](#) for the next forum on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2016.

## Twelve mini-films disseminating research findings

Earlier this year the Centre released [12 two-minute open-access films](#) to mark National CSE Awareness Day. The films share the findings of a range of studies we have completed. Each film is accompanied by a short briefing document.

## MsUnderstood

The University of Bedfordshire is currently developing local responses to peer-on-peer abuse as part of the MsUnderstood partnership in 11 local authorities. Visit the [website](#) for further details.

## Training and further study

We offer a four day short course with Masters level credits on child sexual exploitation, as well as Masters, PhD and Professional Doctorate opportunities. We also offer bespoke training packages on a range of issues, including CSE, peer on peer abuse and participation. Our [website](#) has more information.

## IKWRO – True Honour Awards

True Honour Awards 2016: Nominations now open!



IKWRO are delighted to announce that nominations are now open for their True Honour Awards 2016!

IKWRO will present a True Honour Award to a person or organisation that has taken a stand against “honour” based violence, whether in their personal lives or in their work. By recognising and publicising their outstanding courage and commitment, IKWRO hope that they can inspire others to act.

You can nominate an individual or organisation for the award by completing the nomination form and emailing it to [events@ikwro.org.uk](mailto:events@ikwro.org.uk)

[True Honour Awards 2016 Nomination Form \[DOCX\]](#)

The only criteria is that your nominee has made a contribution to the fight against “honour” based violence.

The deadline for submitting the nomination form is midnight on Friday 22nd January 2016.

If your nominee is shortlisted you will both be invited to a gala awards ceremony in Central London on Thursday 10th March 2016 where IKWRO will announce the award winner.

The judging panel is looking forward to receiving your nomination!

## Reducing women’s imprisonment - new three year drive

On 1 October 2015 the Prison Reform Trust launched a new [three year drive](#) supported by a major grant from the [Big Lottery Fund](#) to reduce women’s imprisonment across the UK. Led by Programme Director Jenny Earle the strategy has as a key objective to improve join-up between domestic violence, trafficking, gender equality and women offender policy frameworks. This is because [women in prison](#) are highly likely to have been victims of sexual and domestic abuse, and coercive relationships are a significant driver to their offending. We will promote more effective, early intervention and non-custodial responses to women in trouble, working with national and local governments, statutory agencies, and voluntary and community sector organisations in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Meanwhile in [evidence](#) to the Probation Inspectorate’s thematic review of work with women offenders we highlighted a model of collaboration between domestic violence and women offender support services in the [Llybrau Project](#) in Wales. The latest Prison Reform Trust discussion paper on [Sentencing of Mothers](#) refers to recent [UN statements](#) about the need to recognise women’s histories of abuse and trauma in the criminal justice process. For further information contact [womensprogramme@prisonreformtrust.org.uk](mailto:womensprogramme@prisonreformtrust.org.uk)

<http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/ProjectsResearch/Women> Transforming Lives - Prison Reform Trust

## Peabody Trust

### Raising Awareness of Female Genital Mutilation amongst housing providers

“We’re all here to end FGM wherever we go, and that’s where we can start from”



So opened the first ever roundtable discussion on tackling FGM with housing providers. Chaired by FGM survivor and passionate campaigner Alimatu Dimonekene, the meeting brought together leading activists in the field of ending FGM and ending violence against women.

This meeting began as a coming together of two organisations, Plan UK, who are now bringing their global campaigns for girls’ rights Because I am a Girl, which includes ending FGM, to the UK and Peabody, a housing provider who have become leaders in the field for identifying and addressing domestic abuse.

Dimonekene, who comes from a housing background and now runs a new anti-FGM organisation, ProjectACEi, facilitated conversations about how housing providers were, or were not, meeting the needs of women experiencing abuse and what needed to be done to broaden our understanding of violence against women.

Gudrun Burnet, Senior Business Partner (Domestic Abuse) at Peabody explained how she had joined Peabody when there were only four cases of domestic abuse on their systems 8 years ago. Through strategic delivery of training for all staff, from frontline Housing professionals to plumbers and gas engineers, powerful awareness raising and policy development, Peabody have increased their domestic abuse reporting by 1425%. This has also led to the creation of the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) a national initiative whose aim is to transform the housing sector response to domestic abuse.

However, Burnet explained how domestic abuse remained the focus subject across the housing sector and views of what constituted violence against women needed to expand to include trafficking, early child and forced marriage and FGM.

“The purpose of this meeting was to start the conversation,” said Burnet, “Advocating and campaigning to end domestic abuse is so vital, however housing providers need to include other strands in our understanding of violence against women.”

Sharon Hanooman, CEO of Women’s Health and Family Services Tower Hamlets brought the results from her ‘Hear our Voices’ study, highlighting the needs of FGM survivors living and using services in Tower Hamlets. She highlighted how much work she did with the health sector and yet how little housing was connected into that work. The report also highlights how the most marginalised women are still not being heard, but that there are opportunities to link services and meet their needs.

Attendees included Rosa, Viridian Housing, IKWRO and Barnardos National FGM Centre who all brought expert advice to the table. Discussions included ensuring FGM wasn’t viewed as a ‘African Community’ issue, the need for enormous improvements in housing support for women leaving abusive relationships but also how when housing get it right – it saves lives.

“It’s essential that we see violence against women in its broadest sense”, said Lucy Russell, UK Girls’ Rights Campaign Manager at Plan UK “and that understanding must look from the global picture to the local to tackle things like FGM and other harmful traditional practices that are, in the end, all about securing girls’ rights.”

## **Southall Black Sisters Education Pack: Changing Hearts and Minds**

To mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and the 16 Days of Activism, Southall Black Sisters have launched ‘Changing Hearts and Minds: Preventing Violence against Black and Minority Ethnic Women and Girls – An Education Pack.’

Changing Hearts and Minds is a unique, free education resource for teachers to undertake prevention work on violence against black and minority ethnic (BME) women and girls. It provides specialist understanding and awareness raising of the key issues that affect BME women and girls experiencing violence and abuse. It also provides information for teachers on how to protect and support young people who may be affected or vulnerable to such forms of abuse.

More information is available on: <http://www.southallblacksisters.org.uk/changing-hearts-and-minds/>

## **AAFDA Training**

AAFDA will provide more specialist training in 2016 for Chairs, prospective Chairs and Commissioners of Domestic Homicide Reviews. The next course will be in February 2016 and will be delivered by Frank Mullane CEO of AAFDA and a colleague who is a practicing Chair and expert in domestic abuse and homicide. Frank is a Home Office appointed reader of Domestic Homicide Reviews and a Home Office accredited Chair. He sits on the national panel that quality assures all reviews.

The training will:

- Deal with the grey areas and be highly interactive.
- Link to real cases and will include input from a family member who recently completed the Domestic Homicide Review journey.
- Cover the process including by quality assuring published reviews.
- Share best practice particularly around working with families.

For more information contact [info@aafda.org.uk](mailto:info@aafda.org.uk)

“AAFDA bring a wealth of expertise and experience to the Domestic Homicide Review process, and I welcome their commitment to training chairs and commissioners of reviews to help promote and embed good practice.” Christian Papaleontiou, Home Office, Chair of National DHR QA Panel.

## An AAFDA view – The status of ‘families after homicide’ needs to be raised.

Commissioners and Chairs of Domestic Homicide Reviews and other Inquiries should afford families more status. Drs. Evan Stark and Jane Monckton Smith wrote powerfully about raising the status of domestic violence victims as a way of reducing abuse (Coercive Control 2007, Domestic Abuse, Homicide and Gender 2014).

Sometimes the language in Domestic Homicide Reviews reveals an agency's rather dismissive view of a victim's reaction to offers of help. Here too, victims should be given more status. Families sometimes have to read that their loved one *‘refused all help’*. Perhaps this comment may imply that the help offered is excellent and to refuse it would be reckless. But it is also possible that the victim assessed the offer and felt it would not keep her safe. The victim may be dead but so are many that accepted help. It is unlikely that we can be certain that the victim's decision was critical.

In our work, we see that the families left behind after domestic homicide also lack status. Family members are sometimes seen as having value only as providers of emotion for the review. In reality they always have empirical value as they will usually know so much which cannot be found in agency records.

Families are disturbed by comments in reviews which say something like *‘This statutory agency said this.... and that agency said this also happened.... The family said something else happened but their comments can't be corroborated’*. That perhaps implies that what the agencies say can be taken as fact but what the families say is just opinion. It seems to me that the most likely position is that all



parties to a review will give input the accuracy of which may be affected by fallible memory, poor or degraded records and subconscious filtering.

With some exceptions (we have witnessed examples of excellent practice), families are not adequately updated. It is a shame that we have to contact chairs of these reviews for monthly updates. In our experience, lack of contact from the Chair sometimes causes significant distress to families.

Of course, some families may choose not to be regularly updated. On first meeting the family, the Chair should discuss this matter and critically, keep promises made. Otherwise, trust is quickly broken which can undermine the effectiveness of the review.

We have helped around 100 families on Domestic Homicide Reviews. It is a myth that all families want to lay blame. The best reviews are ones in which families have very good status and all professionals are freed up to concede their own weaknesses and frustrations. We should use that honesty not to blame but to develop a safer future. There is a big responsibility on leaders to facilitate this environment.

*Frank Mullane is a Home Office appointed reader of Domestic Homicide Reviews and a Home Office accredited Chair. He sits on the national panel that quality assures all reviews. The comments above are made in his capacity as CEO of AAFDA.*

## AAFDA Film Domestic Homicide Reviews

Please see AAFDA short film here, <https://vimeo.com/141762145> on approaching Domestic Homicide Reviews.

## AVA

### FREE Training: Working with gang-affected young women experiencing sexual and domestic violence, beginning 19 January 2016, London

This 5-day, OCN accredited course will equip you with the knowledge and skills to work effectively with young people affected by domestic and sexual violence, including gang-related violence. The course is designed around an OCN unit of assessment developed by AVA and Women & Girls Network. The unit has been created to give learners an overview of the main areas of learning needed to work effectively with young survivors of sexual and domestic violence who are also gang-affected. This will contribute to your personal and professional development. Local commissioners of services are increasingly looking for evidence that staff are appropriately qualified and suitable to support survivors at all levels of risk.

For more information & to apply; <http://www.avaproject.org.uk/our-training--events/open-training/stella-project-training/working-with-gang-affected-young-women-experiencing-sexual-and-domestic-violence,-beginning-19-january-2016,-london-.aspx>

## Run the 2016 London Marathon for AVA

At AVA we are delighted to have been allocated a guaranteed place at the 2016 London Marathon. We are looking for a runner who, in return for having this place in the world's greatest marathon, can commit to raising £2,000 for our work.

For more information; <http://www.avaproject.org.uk/news/2015/october/london-marathon-2016.aspx>

## Health and Social Care professionals should be #readytorespond to Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse is everyone's business, and health professionals are particularly well placed to make a difference. Domestic abuse is a public health issue. The health care costs alone are £1.6 billion a year. The cost in human misery cannot be measured.

More importantly, health professionals are ideally placed to encourage receive and respond to disclosures of domestic violence from women who need support. For some women, it will be because the incident that has lead them to seek health care is the one that has tipped them into recognising their experience as abuse.

Or it may be because a healthcare appointment is the only time they are able to speak without their abusive partner present, and a doctor's appointment may be the only time they are allowed to leave the house unaccompanied.

Health care professionals are trusted, meaning women are more likely to disclose to them something they feel ashamed or uncomfortable about.

For many women it has been a health care professional who has helped them make that vital first step in recognising their experience as abuse and seeking help. Unfortunately, too few health care professionals are ready to encourage and respond to disclosures of domestic abuse, including in those services where it is most needed.

Research (Rose et al, BJP 2011) shows that the main barriers to enquiry by mental health professionals, for example, are lack of knowledge and expertise in the area, and thinking that it was not part of their role.

This is a real missed opportunity , given that 69% of women with serious mental health issues have experienced DV in their lifetime(Khalifeh et al 2014) , and people with extensive experience of violence and abuse are five times more likely to experience a common mental disorder than those with little or no abuse (UK Psychiatric Morbidity Survey 2007).

We appreciate that austerity measures have placed health and social care professionals under enormous pressure and strain.

So, at AVA, with support from Public Health England, we are doing our bit to ensure that health and social care professionals are ready to respond to domestic abuse with our free e learning package at <http://elearning.avaproject.org.uk>

## Paladin National Stalking Advocacy Service

Paladin National Stalking Advocacy Service is the only advocacy service for stalking victims in the world and we are approached by agencies from all over the world seeking to learn from our bespoke service. Since our launch in June 2013, we have supported over a 1000 victims of stalking. As well as providing this necessary service, we have been campaigning for essential change in order to increase the protection of victims.

### Domestic Violence Law Reform

Our Domestic Violence Law Reform Campaign, a partnership campaign with Women's Aid and Sara Charlton Charitable Foundation, to criminalise coercive and controlling behaviour has progressed significantly. On 29th October we held 'Beyond the Bruises,' a pioneering conference on the coercive and controlling behaviour legislation (s76 Serious Crime Act 2015) which was very successful. On 5<sup>th</sup> December the government announced that the new law will come into force on 29<sup>th</sup> December 2015. Paladin is very pleased with this announcement and we would like to thank all of our supporters of this campaign. We continue to press for positive, victim-centred change and effective implementation of this new law.

### Training

We are committed to continuously provide effective training. Since July 2014, we have trained over 2750 professionals through the various training that Paladin provides. Over 90 of these were trained to become stalking Single Points of Contact within the police forces and Crown Prosecution Service, in partnership with National Police Chiefs' Council. We are running further courses of our university accredited Independent Stalking Advocacy Caseworkers (ISAC) training. Our network has now extended to 26 ISAC's across the UK and 5 affiliate services. The next ISAC training course is scheduled for spring 2017. Please contact [office@paladinservice.co.uk](mailto:office@paladinservice.co.uk) to register your interest.

## Women's Resource Centre London Borough Surgeries

As the lead partner for the 2nd Tier strand of the ASCENT project Women's Resource centre with Rights of Women run regular surgeries around Greater London

The aims of the surgeries is to increase women sector organisations' knowledge and ability to develop effective partnerships amongst themselves and with other sectors e.g. public health, local council, police services, etc. This is an opportunity to network for stakeholders that are working to tackle VAWG issues from all the sectors and know each other and find collaborative ways of working.

The surgery has key components to it:

- Workshop on the Equality Act 2010 – delivered by Rights of Women
- Workshop on preparing to pitch for partnership
- A structured networking session
- Local and relevant key note speakers

Although the surgeries are for mainly for organisations whose work focuses on tackling violence against women and girls (VAWGS) public service officers from different teams such as safeguarding, housing, social services, police are welcome to attend.

To make the surgery more relevant to organisations in the different boroughs we invite local speakers from both public and voluntary sectors to speakers that can share relevant information how the VAWG situation is in each area for example: how commission on VAWG happens in the area, examples of current partnerships, development of new strategies, etc.

In recent surgeries:

- Central London Borough Surgery (Hammersmith and Fulham, Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster) speakers included Tri-borough VAWG coordinator; Public Health Westminster; and Angelou (Voluntary sector partnership to address VAWG needs)
- Hackney Borough surgery: Hackney Safer Community ran a sector consultation that will contribute to the VAWG strategy, more than 20 organisations that haven't previously consulted attended the session. Head of Safeguarding Children at Homerton University talked about their services and how their work links with VAWG. Nia to present the IRIS project (Identification and Referral to Improve Safety) implemented by GP's in Hackney and now has expanded across the country.

**If you would like to:**

- Share how public services go about commissioning VAWG services in your area
- Present a new initiative or report on progress of your area's VAWG strategy
- Start a dialogue or run a consultation with the women voluntary and community sector
- Become closer to the women voluntary and community sector

Contact Paulina A. Casillas, development officer at Women's resource Centre

Email: [paulina@wrc.org.uk](mailto:paulina@wrc.org.uk)

Phone number: 020 7697 3460

## Welsh Women's Aid

October saw the launch of the 'Good Practice Guide: A Whole Education Approach to Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence' written by Welsh Women's Aid for the Welsh Government. The guide seeks to explain how these

issues can be covered within schools and further education in Wales, including practice points and case studies for staff, teachers, governors, students, parents, local authorities and others. A copy can be accessed at <http://gov.wales/docs/dsjlg/publications/commsafety/151020-whole-education-approach-good-practice-guide-en.pdf> and is also available in Welsh.

Our new Save Refuges Save Lives campaign is now underway and is fighting to save funding for vital specialist services in Wales, which were not included in the UK Government's recent £13.2 million funding for struggling refuges. The situation in Wales is looking dark, with many services facing large cuts in the New Year, and we are calling on local authorities and the Welsh Government to protect funding for this vital network. For more information, please see our website [www.welshwomensaid.org.uk](http://www.welshwomensaid.org.uk) or follow us on Facebook or Twitter @welshwomensaid.

The Welsh Government have also recently announced that Welsh Women's Aid has won the contract to deliver their new 'Ask and Act' training across Wales. This contract forms part of the development of the National Training Framework for Wales on violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence, which is part of the new Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015. It involves the creation of two national programmes of training which will ensure that within each region in Wales there is a cohort of practitioners with the skills and knowledge to support the regional delivery of the Welsh Government's Ask and Act policy. The Ask and Act contract follows the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015, which requires public authorities to prevent violence against women and to protect and support survivors.

## Tackling VAWG and creating Safer Schools

Dr Wanda Wyporska, Lead Equalities Officer, Association of Teachers and Lecturers.

Education staff cannot but be aware of the increase in sexting, sexualised behaviour, sexist bullying and gender-based bullying, set against a backdrop of proliferating technologies, an increased pressure to look good, share everything online and cyberbullying. Increasingly, teachers and support staff are finding that they need to identify a range of issues, a range of symptoms and behaviours and to extend their pastoral expertise. Teachers and support staff are very concerned about the young people in their care and have noticed that many pupils are disclosing issues towards the end of term or half term because they are facing a prolonged time at home, which is perhaps not a safe space for them.

That's why we set up the Safer Schools Network, [www.saferschools.org.uk](http://www.saferschools.org.uk), which is designed to be a one-stop shop for education staff. ATL believes that all those who work in education should have the support and information they need to enable them to safeguard children as well as recognise sexual abuse or bullying. Safer Schools is a platform for education professionals, academics, practitioners and expert policy makers to come together in one place to discuss, debate and learn about a range of issues that affect our young people.

Whether you need to know more about Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), or the prevalence of sexting in schools, the Safer Schools network can point you towards the expert organisations and their excellent resources. Our partners include the NSPCC, Against Violence and Abuse (AVA), End Violence Against Women (EVAW) Coalition, Forward and the Sex Education Forum. The site contains a number of lively blogs and features a different organisation each month as our 'Campaign of the Month'. We have just marked Anti-Bullying Week with a host of blogs on a variety of aspects of bullying and often a Safer Schools blog will get reblogged on ATL's Speak Out blog site as well.

If you are interested in your organisation featuring on the Safer Schools Network, please contact Dr Wanda Wyporska, [wwwyporska@atl.org.uk](mailto:wwwyporska@atl.org.uk) or @ATLWanda

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