

Call to End Violence Against Women and Girls: Action Plan

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1. Introduction

The UN declaration on violence against women (1993) defines such violence as *any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life*. The vast majority of these violent acts are perpetrated by men on women and girls and includes domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, so-called ‘honour based violence’, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

This action plan provides an overview of the wide range of actions the Government will be taking forward with key partners to deliver its strategy to tackle Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG). The overarching strategic narrative was set out in *Call to End Violence Against Women and Girls* on 25 November 2010¹. This provides the framework for this action plan and makes a long-term commitment to work towards the prevention of VAWG. It also recognises that it is an international issue which occurs in all countries and crosses borders.

Both the strategic narrative and action plan build on extensive consultation with the statutory sector, voluntary organisations, women and girls and the wider public. The publication of this action plan also coincides with the Government’s response to Baroness Stern’s independent review into how rape complaints are handled by public authorities in England and Wales. The actions

being taken forward as part of this response are also included within this document.

We acknowledge that ending VAWG is a difficult task which cannot be achieved by central government alone. We also recognise that the majority of services to support women and girls will continue to be funded and delivered at a local level. In order to achieve our objective, we must therefore work to ensure **collective action** from international institutions, local government, voluntary groups and local communities.

The Government’s commitment to tackling VAWG is clear. Violence will not be accepted and we will not stop until it has been eradicated. Government departments will continue to lead by example and we will encourage all spheres of society to be part of a wider movement to take action.

Central powers will be localised to ensure that the systems and decisions to deliver public services are accountable, transparent and efficient. We acknowledge that local authorities are facing difficult decisions about funding services but we are clear: VAWG services should not be the easy cut. We will lead by example. So over the next four years the Home Office has committed more than £28million to specialist VAWG services. We recognise that investing in services which support victims of VAWG now will yield much higher returns in the future.

¹ Visit www.homeoffice.gov.uk/vawg

We want to build on the experience of the women's sector and specialist organisations that are dedicated to delivering services to women and girls, and know all too well the reality of abuse. The Home Office and the Ministry of Justice have pledged to provide direct, ring-fenced funding to these specialist services. However, we need to move beyond financial support alone to ensure that all women and girls are able to access support.

Whilst the focus of this document is on supporting women and girls, there is still a need to address the needs of men and boys who may be affected by domestic and sexual violence. Some of our work to end VAWG will directly benefit them; in particular our preventative activity and the service signposting that we are developing with partners. Overall, our investment in actions to end VAWG represents a commitment to greater equality which will benefit every member of society.

Transforming the societal attitudes that underpin VAWG will take a long time, much longer than the timescale for this action plan. It is important to note that although the goal of the strategy is to end VAWG, we hope that in the short to medium term, there will be an improvement in the reporting of these acts of violence to appropriate agencies. If survivors are more confident in coming forward to deal with the abuse they have suffered, then this will indicate the strategy has been successful in sending a clear message both to the public and victims that VAWG is unacceptable.

Our approach to tackling VAWG is a test of this government's capability to build a fairer society. There is clearly much more to do to ensure that women and girls are not held back. We should strive to be ambitious in our aims and meet our shared commitment to ending violence.

Together, we will make a difference.

2. Preventing violence

Guiding principle: Prevent violence against women and girls from happening in the first place by challenging the attitudes and behaviours which foster it and intervening early where possible to prevent it.

Through our work to **prevent** violence, we will:

- change the attitudes, behaviours and practices which contribute to VAWG by means of appropriate and targeted challenge;
- increase public understanding of VAWG by putting in place focussed awareness-raising initiatives which include looking at its root causes, hidden nature and economic cost to society;
- strengthen understanding of the unacceptability of VAWG by ensuring our frontline partners can intervene early to challenge acceptability; and
- protect vulnerable children by working with frontline partners to make them aware of the tools and systems available to them to ensure the right first response.

I. Attitudes, behaviours and practices

Everyone knows at least one person who has been affected by, or has been a perpetrator of, VAWG. We need to act now to ensure that all members of society are aware of how commonplace violence is, the impact it can have on the lives of women and children, and how everyone has a part to play in challenging violence.

Action	Dept	Timing
<p>1. Deliver a cross-government VAWG Communications Strategy.</p> <p>The VAWG Communications Strategy has four overarching aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to change attitudes, especially those who think the victim is often to blame for being abused, or that violence is a private matter; • to change behaviour to make victims feel more confident to report abuse and empower individuals, including men and boys, to play their part in tackling the issues; • to equip frontline professionals to recognise and deal effectively with victims and perpetrators of VAWG; and • to mobilise communities to take responsibility and challenge VAWG. <p>Communication plans are being developed to support the delivery of all elements of this action plan.</p>	HO	Ongoing
<p>2. Launch a youth prevention campaign to tackle teenage relationship violence.</p> <p>The aim of the campaign will be to prevent teenagers from becoming victims and perpetrators of abusive relationships. The campaign will encourage teenagers to re-think their views of acceptable violence, abuse or controlling behaviour in relationships and direct them to places for help and advice.</p>	HO	Launch – September 2011
<p>3. Develop education and awareness-raising campaigns on rape and sexual assault.</p> <p>Building on recommendations in the Stern review, we will explore campaign options to spread awareness of the law amongst the public - and in particular young people - to ensure basic elements of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 are understood.</p>	HO	Work to commence - November 2011

<p>4. Improve understanding of the incidence and reporting of false allegations of rape.</p> <p>The Stern Review highlighted the range of different estimates of the extent of ‘false allegations’ that have been put forward and the different interpretations of this term. The Government has appointed an independent research company to conduct a case file review of a large sample of serious sexual and violent crimes in order to assess the prevalence and circumstances of false allegations.</p>	Moj	Report will be published in the second half of 2011
<p>5. Improve the reporting on the number of successful rape prosecutions in the UK.</p> <p>The Stern Review was critical of the way in which crime and conviction statistics about rape have been taken out of context to present misleading attrition rates for rape cases. This will be addressed as part of an independent consultation to look at the measurement of conviction rates. The issue will also be considered as part of the National Statistician’s short review of crime statistics.</p>	Moj	Reports due end of April 2011
<p>6. Take action to protect children from excessive commercialisation and premature sexualisation.</p> <p>Reg Bailey, Chief Executive of the Mothers’ Union, has been asked to conduct an independent review into the sexualisation and commercialisation of childhood. This Review will build on the earlier reports and recommendations from Prof. Tania Byron on child internet safety, Prof. David Buckingham on the commercialisation of childhood, and Dr Linda Papadopoulos on the sexualisation of young people.</p>	DfE	Review commenced November 2010 Findings published May 2011
<p>7. Hold a forum between the VAWG interministerial group and representatives from the media and music industries.</p> <p>The VAWG interministerial group will meet with media representatives to discuss how images and messages can perpetuate gender stereotypes and promote an acceptance of VAWG. The Group will look at ways of challenging these stereotypes and promoting positive male and female role models through the media and music industries.</p>	HO / DCMS / DfE / GEO	By end of summer 2011

<p>8. Work with the National Union of Journalists to produce guidance for journalists reporting on issues relating to VAWG.</p> <p>This will encourage responsible reporting of VAWG which does not perpetuate the myths or beliefs which fuel it; for example, referring to a ‘crime of passion’ when someone is murdered by their partner or ex-partner.</p>	HO	Produce a code of conduct for NUJ members by November 2011
<p>9. Explore the prevalence and effects of VAWG on vulnerable groups, including BME communities, and work to raise awareness of VAWG both within these groups and with frontline practitioners and local decision makers.</p> <p>VAWG is not restricted to particular socio-economic groups or specific communities. Ultimately, the primary risk indicator is simply being female. However, we recognise that age, disability, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation and culture also play a role.</p> <p>We want to ensure that our approach to ending VAWG tackles inequality and effectively supports the most vulnerable women and girls in our society. We will review reports from the joint Southall Black Sisters and End Violence Against Women Coalition seminars with BME women and the report <i>Still We Rise</i> (Women’s National Commission, 2009). We will also identify and collate best practice across all agencies, highlighting the work of VAWG specialist services, and ensure that awareness raising campaigns reach all communities.</p>	HO	Findings will be reported to the VAWG interministerial group late in 2011
<p>10. Raise awareness of forced marriage and challenge attitudes which condone this practice through media activities, training events and community engagement.</p> <p>The Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) will continue to lead the way in this work and build on its expertise in this area by working with partners to explore good practice approaches to further engage communities. The work will include FMU running its annual preventive media campaign in the run-up to the school summer holidays.</p>	FMU (HO / FCO)	Ongoing Summer campaign to be rolled out in early July

<p>11. Support community engagement work to tackle female genital mutilation (FGM).</p> <p>Long-term and systematic eradication of FGM in the UK will require practising communities to abandon the practice themselves. Through the regular government-chaired FGM Forum, we will work with the well-established network of FGM civil society organisations to examine how we can support and facilitate their engagement with communities in the UK.</p>	HO / DH / DfE	Ongoing
<p>12. Raise awareness of VAWG within the Armed Forces.</p> <p>The Ministry of Defence will take steps to ensure that its employees and their families understand the nature of the abuse and what steps to take if they are affected by it.</p>	MoD	Summer 2011
<p>13. Update the British Crime Survey (BCS) to improve understanding of attitudes towards VAWG.</p> <p>We will introduce new questions in the BCS on attitudes towards domestic abuse and sexual assault in order to guide our polices on early intervention and changing attitudes and behaviours.</p>	HO	Data from the first 12 months of interviews will be available from July 2012
<p>14. Meet with the major supermarkets and relevant business organisations to discuss how to promote personal safety for lone workers.</p> <p>We know that many women working in supermarkets and other retail premises late at night fear for their safety, particularly with regard to the sale of alcohol. We will work with major supermarkets and relevant business organisations to promote best practice in ensuring the safety of their staff.</p>	HO	First meeting in January 2011. Follow up meetings taking place March – July 2011
<p>15. Work with the EHRC to promote the new Equality Duty and produce guidance covering issues in relation to gender equality for local areas.</p> <p>The new Equality Duty comes into effect on 6 April 2011. For the first time, the duty will require all public bodies to have due regard to the need to foster good relations between groups, including eliminating unlawful discrimination on the grounds of gender. We will publish guidance to accompany the Equality Duty to support organisations in their duties.</p>	GEO	April 2011

2. Early intervention

Women and girls who are victims of VAWG will come into contact with a wide range of services, so there are many opportunities for professionals working across the public services to spot the early signs of violence. Intervening early to reduce violence and abuse against both adults and children not only protects victims from immediate harm but also prevents the violence from escalating.

Action	Dept	Timing
<p>16. Establish an independent VAWG Advisory Group to advise the Department for Education.</p> <p>Schools and colleges can play a vital role in helping children and young people to develop healthy relationships. The group, which will be chaired by Gill Francis, will agree a work plan with the department for 2011. This will include input to both the Bailey and Munro Reviews.</p>	DfE	Terms of reference and outline workplan for 2011 to be agreed by end April 2011
<p>17. Run a national campaign to support and help turn around the lives of families with multiple problems.</p> <p>Domestic violence is a key issue in families with multiple problems. Evaluation has shown that family intervention services can reduce the number of families suffering the ill affects of domestic violence as well as issues such as drug and alcohol misuse.</p> <p>As part of this national campaign there will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a new Early Intervention Grant of £2.2 billion per year from April 2011 to bring together funding for early intervention and preventative services including support for families with multiple problems; • community budgets, allowing areas to pool funding, focused on provision of integrated family intervention and a key worker approach; and • funding for exemplar projects in community budget areas which test new approaches to supporting families, for example, by improving access to domestic violence and substance misuse services. 	DfE	<p>First 16 community budgets to be up and running by April 2011. All areas to have opportunity to do this by end of Spending Review period</p> <p>Early Intervention Grant: funding available from April 2011 – March 2013</p> <p>Exemplar projects: to be set up in April 2011, to provide good practice for all areas during the Spending Review period</p>
<p>18. Develop training for health visitors to provide support to families when they suspect violence against women or children may be a factor.</p> <p>As part of our professional skills workstream, we will ensure that health visitors can easily be signposted to information and web-based training on violence against women and children as it is developed by the Department of Health.</p>	DH	Completely embedded in Health Visitor training by 2015

<p>19. Implement findings from the independent Munro Review to improve child protection.</p> <p>This review focuses on supporting better, child-focused, frontline practice and will recommend ways of overcoming barriers which hinder this.</p>	DfE	<p>Interim report January 2011</p> <p>Final report April 2011</p>
<p>20. Encourage the teaching of sexual consent within the curriculum.</p> <p>This work will be taken forward in the context of the Department of Education's review of Personal Social Health and Economic (PSHE) education, which will also consider Sex and Relationship Education (SRE). We will look at how all schools are able to follow good practice regarding the teaching of sexual consent.</p>	DfE	<p>Details of the internal DfE review of PSHE will be announced later this year</p>
<p>21. Reduce sexual and sexist bullying in schools.</p> <p>Head teachers will be expected to take a strong stand against bullying – particularly prejudice-based bullying such as racism, sexism and homophobia. We will increase their authority to discipline pupils and maintain this discipline beyond the school gates.</p> <p>In addition, Ofsted inspections will focus more strongly on behaviour and safety, including bullying, as one of four key areas of inspection. Inspectors will look for evidence of how much bullying there is in schools and how well it is dealt with.</p>	DfE	<p>Legislate through forthcoming Education Bill. Statutory guidance issued – spring 2011</p> <p>Ofsted consultation on new school inspection arrangements – early February 2011</p> <p>New Ofsted framework in place by December 2011</p>
<p>22. Reduce access of children to harmful material on the internet.</p> <p>Children who access pornographic websites can find it disturbing and viewing this material has been associated with the reinforcement of sexist or violent attitudes and behaviours. To address these concerns, the UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS), co-chaired by Home Office and DfE Ministers, together with DCMS, is looking at parental controls (and age verification) for computers, networks and mobile devices; improving the skills of parents and children; and providing resources for the schools' and children's workforce.</p>	DfE / HO / DCMS	<p>Spring 2011</p>

<p>23. Establish a working group of the Home Secretary's Guns, Gangs and Knives Roundtable to develop proposals to address VAWG and female involvement in gangs.</p> <p>The Roundtable comprises experts from voluntary and community sector organisations and the police. It discusses knife and gang-related issues and has played a valuable role in developing the Government's programme of community engagement on youth violence issues. Working with the Roundtable, the Home Office will look at what more can be done to prevent VAWG within gangs through combining early intervention work with tough enforcement and empowering local communities to prevent the spread of violence.</p>	HO	First meeting spring 2011. Meetings will take place quarterly
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3. Getting the first response right

It can take a huge amount of courage for a woman or girl to seek help. Getting that first response right is crucial: it should be informed, sympathetic and gender-sensitive. It should also show a real willingness to help someone in this desperate situation. All front-line professionals should be supported to view their interactions with the public as opportunities to make a real difference to someone's life.

Action	Dept	Timing
<p>24. Evaluate the police specialist unit approach to investigating rape.</p> <p>Emerging evidence for investigating rape suggests that forces that develop specialist units tend to report an increase in reporting and confidence amongst victims. In spring 2011, the ACPO Rape Support Programme will produce a final report looking at the specialist unit approach by the police to investigating rape. The ACPO Rape Working Group will then consider next steps.</p>	HO	Completed report to be submitted by end April 2011
<p>25. Identify ways to improve communication with victims of sexual violence.</p> <p>We are committed to improving our communications with victims of sexual violence and the support systems they rely on. For example, the Crown Prosecution Service will ensure that the <i>CPS Policy for Prosecuting Cases of Rape</i> booklet is accessible and available to victims. The CPS will also continue to assess the quality of prosecutors' response to rape by quality assuring a random sample of letters from the CPS to rape victims.</p>	Moj / CPS / HO	CPS booklet to be available to victims - October 2011 The quality of prosecutors will be assessed bi-annually. Dates for 2011 are April and October

<p>26. Learn from how the Fixated Threat Assessment Centre (FTAC) operates to see how its methods of investigation of stalking cases could be applied to mainstream policing.</p> <p>FTAC is a specialist unit that has developed considerable expertise in the risk assessment and management of stalking of high profile individuals, such as members of the royal family and politicians. The unit brings together police work with psychiatric assessments. We are looking to capture their learning and use their techniques more widely. This will include consideration of programmes for perpetrators which focus on their offending and issues relating to their mental health.</p>	HO	Paper for ACPO Working Group in autumn 2011
<p>27. Work with ACPO, the CPS and specialist organisations to ensure that best practice guidance on the investigation and prosecution of stalking cases is disseminated through a series of regional events.</p> <p>This work follows on from the first joint Home Office / ACPO National Stalking Conference – <i>Tackling Stalking and Harassment in Homicide Prevention</i>, which took place in December 2010.</p>	HO	4 initial events to be held in 2011
<p>28. Coordinate a National Stalking Strategy Group to support the ACPO Stalking Working Group.</p> <p>The National Stalking Strategy Group will comprise representatives from the Police, CPS, Home Office, Ministry of Justice and experts in the field. It will support the victim and charity focused ACPO Stalking Working Group in building Police/CPS awareness of stalking, focusing on the importance of risk assessment, improved police response and robust prosecution.</p>	HO	<p>April 2011</p> <p>The Group will meet monthly, reporting to the quarterly ACPO Working Group</p>
<p>29. Learn from how police forces in other countries respond to VAWG and work with our police partners to consider how effective approaches might be applied in England and Wales.</p> <p>We will look at the New York Police Department's pro-active approach to dealing with domestic violence perpetrators, maintaining contact with families where there is a history of such incidents.</p> <p>We will also learn from the pioneering work taking place in Melbourne to tackle stalking. We will work with FTAC to consider how this approach might be applied in England and Wales.</p>	HO	Ongoing

<p>30. Work with the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) to produce public health guidance on preventing domestic violence.</p> <p>This guidance will be directed at commissioners and front-line professionals including the NHS, the Police and social services. It will provide information for professionals dealing with domestic violence and will include evidence-based interventions that can be used by professionals to identify and support victims, including children; enforce the law; and respond to perpetrators.</p>	DH	To be completed by 2015
<p>31. Share with partners and local areas best practice in the use of integrated offender management (IOM) to tackle domestic violence related offending.</p> <p>We will explore with partners how the IOM approach to drugs and alcohol interventions might include awareness raising of the prevalence of domestic violence in these cases. We will support partners and local areas to identify and share effective practice in this.</p>	HO	<p>Final draft for dissemination July 2011</p> <p>Evaluation December 2012</p>
<p>32. Introduce VAWG training for health professionals who carry out Work Capability Assessments.</p> <p>The Deputy Chief Medical Adviser for the Department for Work and Pensions will integrate awareness of VAWG into the training of healthcare professionals who undertake Work Capability Assessments in order to improve their understanding of the issues involved. This will help ensure that victims of VAWG (particularly victims of sexual violence) are seen by trained medical assessors.</p>	DWP	Module delivered in 2011
<p>33. Introduce an automatic 13 week deferral period for victims of domestic violence who claim Jobseeker's Allowance.</p> <p>The Department for Work and Pensions plans to introduce a separate automatic 13 week deferral period in autumn 2011 for Jobseeker's Allowance claimants who are victims of domestic violence. This will ensure that victims have financial support during a period of instability.</p>	DWP	Autumn 2011

<p>34. Work on the development of learning programmes for the Police on sexual and domestic violence, including FGM, forced marriage and honour-based violence (HBV).</p> <p>Police officers need to ensure that they have the tools to respond effectively to call-outs relating to cases of domestic violence and sexual assault. Their actions need to be professional and sensitive to reassure vulnerable women and girls that the police believe them and will protect them.</p>	HO	Ongoing
<p>35. Ensure that the CPS review of victim support commitments includes consideration of communication with, and support of, victims of VAW.</p> <p>This review will set out the standard service for all victims and witnesses, and in what circumstances the CPS would offer an enhanced service (based on offence type, vulnerability of victim or witness or nature of the defendant).</p>	CPS	Review and guidance produced March 2012

3. Provision of services

Guiding principle: Provide adequate levels of support where violence occurs.

Through our work to **provide** adequate levels of support where violence does occur, we will:

- strengthen the basis for appropriate services for all women and girls by creating a robust commissioning framework;
- send a clear signal to local areas that the provision of support to victims of VAWG is a national priority by continued central funding to frontline services over the next four years;
- improve the support that women and girls get locally by enabling local areas to tailor service provision to meet their local needs; and
- deliver better and more effective outcomes for victims by the provision of training to frontline partners to recognise VAWG and understand the actions to be taken.

1. Frontline services, funding and sustainability of the sector

It is important that continued support for victims is available, particularly in an economic climate which requires us to spend less and work more efficiently. While most of the funding for specialist services will continue to be provided at the local level, we recognise some services are best provided at the national level, as demonstrated by the commitments below.

Following extensive consultation, we know that, at the local level, the most effective approach to tackling VAWG requires a clear commitment from a number of agencies including health, Police, housing, safeguarding and adult social services. This approach must involve meaningful consultation with specialist services so that they can pass on their expertise to inform the local decision making-process. Localism is about shifting power and decision making away from central government towards voluntary organisations, communities and individuals so that they can ensure that local decisions are fair and responsible.

Action	Dept	Timescale
<p>36. Allocate £28million of Home Office funding over four years for specialist services and consider mechanisms to devolve VAWG monies in the next Spending Review.</p> <p>The funding rounds for ISVAs, MARACs and IDVAs are now complete and decisions on successful bids will be made by the end of March 2011. For the first time funding will be allocated on a stable basis for the next four years.</p> <p>The Government has committed to provide £1.72m in every year up to 2015 to fund ISVAs based in either voluntary and community sector organisations or SARCs. This will provide for 86 ISVA posts across the country based on Home Office funding alone. In addition, the Home Office will provide £3.3m in every year up to 2015 for IDVAs and MARAC co-ordinators, who provide vital support to high-risk victims of domestic violence.</p>	HO	<p>Funding decisions end of March 2011</p> <p>Have funding mechanism in place for next Spending Review period by end of 2014/15</p>
<p>37. Provide Home Office funding over the Spending Review period for continued training and quality assurance for MARACs.</p> <p>We will continue to invest in the training and quality assurance process for MARACs to assist in ensuring levels of consistency across the country and help disseminate good practice.</p>	HO	April 2011 – March 2015
<p>38. Allocate £900,000 for national helplines for each year of the Spending Review period.</p> <p>This will support the work of national helplines which provide advice to male, female and LGBT victims of domestic violence. We will also fund helplines dedicated to victims of stalking and male perpetrators of violence.</p> <p>We will work with the National Stalking Helpline to develop its capabilities. This will include an online forum and regional activities to provide ongoing support to victims.</p>	HO	<p>April 2011 – March 2015</p> <p>Online forum to be launched summer 2011</p>

<p>39. Use proceeds from the victim surcharge to give existing rape crisis centres stable, long-term funding, and to establish new centres where there are gaps in provision.</p> <p>A total of up to £3.5 million per year has been made available from the MoJ to rape support centres and – for the first time – grants will be made to centres on a three-year basis. The aim is to allocate at least £30,000 a year to each eligible centre, providing such centres with the financial certainty they require to develop a sustainable presence.</p> <p>39a. Allocate three-year funding to <u>existing rape crisis centres</u> by means of a centrally-run grants scheme.</p> <p>By providing guaranteed core funding over three years, we will be providing centres with the financial certainty they require to develop a sustainable presence.</p> <p>39b. Address gaps in service provision by developing <u>new rape crisis centres</u>.</p> <p>The Ministry of Justice is working with the sector’s two umbrella groups to develop four new rape crisis centres in different locations around the country in 2011/12. This represents the first phase of a longer-term programme to establish additional centres over the course of the Spending Review period.</p>	<p>Moj with support from DH</p>	<p>39a. January 2011 - Launch fund</p> <p>March 2011 - Allocate grants</p> <p>April 2011 - Announce funding decisions</p> <p>39.b January 2011 - Contact emerging groups</p> <p>February 2011 - Commence work to develop new centres</p> <p>March 2011 -Announcement on new centres</p>
<p>40. Develop an effective and sustainable funding solution for victims of domestic violence with no recourse to public funds (the Sojourner Project).</p> <p>Migrant spouses who are victims of domestic violence may benefit from a provision in the Immigration Rules which allows them to qualify for indefinite leave to remain in the UK even though their marriage has broken down. However, if destitute, they cannot access benefits while their case is considered by the UK Border Agency and this can make access to refuges problematic.</p> <p>A pilot project is running until 31 March 2011 to provide support to victims and their children. We will continue support for this group past March 2011, taking account of recommendations made by a review of the current scheme.</p>	<p>UKBA</p>	<p>From April 2012, migrant spouses fleeing domestic violence will be given access to benefits while their indefinite leave to remain claim is being considered</p>

<p>41. Consider the findings of a study examining the impact of transferring commissioning and budgetary responsibility for forensic sexual assault work from the Police to the health service.</p> <p>Fundamental to the provision of SARC services is the opportunity for victims to undergo a forensic examination if they wish. This study will look at the variation in quality of forensic medical provision for victims of rape and sexual assault. It will also pull together evidence on what the impact of a change in responsibility would be on issues such as cost, quality of service and workforce issues.</p>	DH	Findings of the study to be submitted to Ministers in March 2011
<p>42. Build capacity amongst NGOs to establish local initiatives and services to raise awareness of and tackle forced marriage.</p> <p>Local initiatives and services which are embedded and informed by the local community can be highly effective. We will use the learning from these projects to ensure that adequate support is provided to NGOs to enable them to respond effectively to forced marriage.</p>	FMU (FCO / HO)	Launch Fund in April 2011 Successful projects notified in June 2011 Funds allocated in June 2011
<p>43. Explore options for providing longer term support to victims of forced marriage once they have been repatriated to the UK.</p> <p>Historically, the nature of consular assistance has meant that direct support to victims ends once a person is repatriated to the UK. We will work with NGOs and survivors to revise the current Survivor's Handbook and explore the feasibility of providing longer term support to victims of forced marriage when they have been repatriated.</p>	FMU (FCO / HO)	Options paper produced by summer 2011
<p>44. Support local authorities and specialist organisations, in partnership with the Local Government Association, to work together to provide local support for women and girls affected by abuse.</p> <p>This will involve Ministerial-led discussions on sharing and promoting practice on commissioning local services to ensure that all women and girls are able to access advice and support to help them overcome abuse.</p>	DCLG	Summer 2011

<p>45. Work to ensure that the asylum system is as gender-sensitive as possible.</p> <p>We want to make the asylum system as gender-sensitive as possible so that women and girls who have been persecuted through violence and/or discrimination can have every opportunity to make their case and to have their asylum application considered as fairly as possible. This work will be taken forward in consultation with key corporate partners as well as voluntary organisations. It also involves the UK Border Agency's determination services, detention services and support services.</p>	UKBA	A review of gender based claims will report in May 2011
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2. Effective practice and training

Effective early intervention requires frontline professionals to be trained in identifying and managing risk. They must also be able to support women and children if they disclose violence, share information where appropriate, and have knowledge of the local services available. In particular, they should be in a position to support vulnerable groups who may face multiple disadvantages when seeking support.

Action	Dept	Timescale
<p>46. Fund the development of a Diploma in the Forensic and Clinical Aspects of Sexual Assault.</p> <p>This initiative should see an increase in the numbers of appropriately trained forensic practitioners available to SARCs, which should in due course allow for a greater choice for victims in the gender of the treating physician. We will also launch e-learning training which will provide doctors and other clinical professionals with specialised knowledge in sexual assault work.</p>	DH	<p>Following the first group of qualifiers in autumn 2010, a further intake is planned for summer 2011</p> <p>E-learning launches April 2011</p>
<p>47. Build on the training available to ISVAs to ensure a minimum quality standard for ISVA support, and provide a framework for qualification of ISVAs.</p> <p>We will work with Skills for Justice to further develop the agreed National Occupational Standards for Domestic and Sexual Abuse and Violence to ensure they adequately capture the range of skills that ISVAs will need. This will provide a framework for qualification of ISVAs.</p> <p>We are also working with the voluntary and community sector and SARCs to build the training available to ISVAs, ensuring a minimum quality standard for ISVA support. We will also provide an introductory e-learning package for all Home Office funded ISVAs.</p>	HO	E-learning package to be available summer 2011

<p>48. Review and update guidance on the operation of Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPAs).</p> <p>It is important to ensure that our efforts to tackle crime are joint up with our work to protect victims. Therefore our guidance on the operation of MAPPAs will be reviewed in relation to how well it fits with the MARAC system to ensure effective links are made.</p>	NOMS	December 2011
<p>49. Launch e-learning training for GPs on violence against women and children (VAWC).</p> <p>This aims to help improve the competencies and skills of GPs to understand the scale of the problem, identify signs of violence, know what to do when someone does disclose, and share information appropriately with other agencies.</p>	DH	Launch – June 2011
<p>50. Review forced marriage e-learning tool for frontline practitioners.</p> <p>The review will help to evaluate use of the tool across practitioner groups; determine whether improvements are required; and identify agencies willing to host the site on local networks.</p>	FMU (HO / FCO)	Review completed by September 2011
<p>51. Review use and effectiveness of multi-agency guidelines for dealing with forced marriage and FGM.</p> <p>In October 2010, the FMU began its review of the implementation of the statutory guidance on forced marriage with a view to identifying patterns, good practice and possible areas for improvement by relevant agencies.</p> <p>Multi-agency FGM practice guidelines were launched in February 2011. We will evaluate their success by examining how extensively they have been utilised, and consider how they may be best improved or adapted for the future.</p>	FMU (HO / FCO) HO / DH / DfE	Report summary will be published in spring 2011 Review completed by February 2012
<p>52. Review the findings from the HBV local mapping exercise and identify models of effective practice to share with local areas, particularly those where awareness and activity to tackle forms of HBV is low.</p> <p>We are aware that there are differing levels of awareness and action to tackle forms of HBV at a local level. It is important to continue raising awareness of these issues to ensure those at risk, who are often particularly hard to reach, are aware of the support available to them. It is also important to recognise where good practice is taking place and share this information with other areas to help improve the response to HBV.</p>	HO	March 2012

<p>53. Support information sharing and effective practice in the criminal justice system through a network of CPS specialist co-ordinators with responsibility for implementing CPS policy locally.</p> <p>The CPS will support specialist coordinators working with local VAWG services, especially the voluntary sector at a local level, to improve support for victims during the criminal justice process.</p>	CPS	<p>Bi-annual assessment – April 2011, October 2011</p> <p>Quarterly CPS VAW newsletter</p>
<p>54. Continue to deliver training for specialist and dedicated prosecutors in VAW.</p> <p>The CPS will ensure that all rape specialists are trained by March 2011 and that a national list of prosecutors is kept updated. Likewise specialist forced marriage and HBV prosecutors have also been trained to focus on improving the prosecution of these crimes and the safety of victims.</p> <p>The Director of Public Prosecutions is visiting all areas to discuss the implementation of VAW plans, especially in relation to rape.</p>	CPS	<p>Training for rape specialists – March 2011</p> <p>Training on domestic violence, forced marriage and HBV – ongoing</p> <p>Visits to all areas – September 2011</p>
<p>55. Produce a universal academic module (six days duration) for frontline professionals on VAWG.</p> <p>The training module will be produced for frontline practitioners including nurses, teachers and social workers so that they can access a formal standard of training which is directly relevant to their work. The module will be developed in consultation with leading practitioners and academics.</p>	HO	<p>Module to be piloted on four separate university courses late in 2011</p>
<p>56. Carry out further research on the health aspects of violence against women and children (VAWC).</p> <p>This work responds to the recommendations made by the independent Taskforce on the health aspects of VAWC on strengthening evidence in this area, including around prevention of mental health impairment associated with exposure to violence, early detection and prevention of recurrence.</p> <p>The research will consist of five separate but related studies in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sexual assault, gender and violence: exploring the NHS response; • A&E data sharing; • human trafficking; • violence against women and children; and • self-harming, retraumatisation and family violence. 	DH	<p>Research commissioned and delivered by end of 2015</p>

4. Partnership working

Guiding principle: Work in partnership to obtain the best outcomes for victims and their families.

Through **working in partnership** to obtain the best outcome for victims and their families, we will:

- improve outcomes for victims of VAWG locally by supporting community and voluntary groups to take a stand against violence and helping them understand how to do this effectively;
- strengthen the role of the community in tackling VAWG by encouraging people to help themselves and each other using community-based initiatives such as community coaching; and
- improve the life chances of victims of VAWG overseas by working with our European and international partners to tackle it on a collaborative basis.

I. Working with sector organisations and communities

The Government is committed to do all it can to end violence against women and girls but it cannot achieve this aim alone. We want to work with communities, the women's sector and victims themselves to recognise and address this issue.

Action	Dept	Timing
<p>57. Help local areas understand the overall benefit of investing in VAWG services.</p> <p>We will support the development of an on-line tool to raise awareness about VAWG. This tool will inform the decision making process of local bodies or organisations that make funding decisions by outlining the services victims of VAWG might need. This work will build on the 'Ready Reckoner', which used findings from the British Crime Survey to estimate the regional prevalence of domestic abuse, sexual assault and stalking for a given population.</p> <p>We will use the learning from research projects such as the Women's Resource Centre pilot project, which looks at the social return on investment for women's organisations, to help local areas understand that investing in VAWG services could yield savings in the future.</p>	<p>HO / EHRC</p> <p>HO</p>	<p>June 2011</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
<p>58. Develop a needs assessment toolkit on sexual violence to provide a local dataset that can inform local statutory assessments such as the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.</p> <p>Local decision makers and elected representatives need to be encouraged to work together to tackle sexual violence. This action equips providers and commissioners of Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) and other services for victims of sexual violence with support to carry out robust assessment of need in local areas to support more effective commissioning.</p>	<p>DH</p>	<p>End March 2011</p>

59. Work with eight local areas on a project exploring how tackling VAWG can be supported by community projects.

59a. Make the effective practice coming out of the participatory budgeting and community coaching pilots available to local areas so they can decide whether these approaches would work for them or could be adapted to their local circumstance.

Community coaching (also known as ‘positive deviance’) is a model for empowering local communities and initiating action, both in organisations and in wider society, for example at estate or team level. Skilled facilitators support citizens to identify locally practised, but hidden, solutions to seemingly intractable problems. It has the potential to foster a community approach to solving VAWG problems locally.

Participatory budgeting directly involves local people in making decisions on the priorities and spending for a defined public budget. This means engaging residents and community groups representative of all parts of the community to discuss and vote on spending priorities, make spending proposals, and vote on them. It also gives local people a role in the scrutiny and monitoring of the process, drawing on local expertise.

HO

Projects will be set up by March 2011. Work will be taken forward and evaluated over 2011/12

VAWG community coaching projects will take place in three areas –
Blaenau Gwent,
Cambridge and
Southwark

Participatory budgeting projects will take place in eight areas – Blaenau Gwent,
Cambridge, Great Yarmouth,
Havant,
Southend, Southwark,
Stockport and Torbay

2. International

Women and girls in all countries suffer violence because of their gender. It is a global issue which requires all countries to work together to take a committed, coherent and co-ordinated stand against it. It is in the moral and economic interest for all nations to ensure that women and girls do not lead restricted lives and suffer violence.

Violence and lack of security hinders progress towards the Millennium Development Goals and curtails women and girls' human rights. It prevents women and girls from benefiting fully from health, education and other services; increases the risk of maternal death, and vulnerability to HIV; and makes women more vulnerable to exploitation. We believe these issues need to be addressed and the United Kingdom will contribute by working in partnership with countries internationally and through its work with the European Union.

Action	Dept	Timing
<p>60. Continue to strongly support the ratification and lobby for the full implementation of the Convention of the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and its Optional Protocol.</p> <p>CEDAW and other human rights treaties lay the foundation for international efforts to improve women's rights within a framework of rule of law and respect for human rights. We will continue to act as a strong voice in negotiations on international agreements on women's rights.</p>	FCO	Ongoing
<p>60a. Continue to promote the domestic implementation of CEDAW.</p> <p>The 7th UK Periodic Report on CEDAW is due in May 2011. The GEO is engaging with NGOs, other government departments, the Devolved Administrations and overseas territories to gain their views. The GEO works to ensure that all departmental Ministers are alerted to those recommendations that are relevant to the work of their respective departments.</p>	GEO	Submit UK report to the UN Committee May 2011

<p>61. Take action to tackle VAWG in conflict and post conflict countries through the implementation of the UK National Action Plan (NAP) on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, in partnership with the Department for International Development (DfID) and the Ministry of Defence (MoD).</p> <p>This resolution recognises that levels of VAWG in modern conflicts amounts to a threat to international peace and security and that women’s contribution to preventing and resolving conflict is under-recognised and unfulfilled. The NAP contains a number of specific commitments to implement SCR 1325, including tackling VAWG in conflict and post-conflict countries. This includes improving staff expertise and knowledge; targeted country plans for Afghanistan, DRC and Nepal; and working multilaterally with other countries. We want to monitor progress on the implementation of this NAP, in consultation with civil society so that our work is fully informed and scrutinized.</p>	FCO	<p>Establish civil society focus groups – January 2011</p> <p>Tri-departmental internal review of NAP – August 2011</p> <p>Report to Parliament – October 2011</p> <p>Senior Government consideration – December 2011</p> <p>Revised Plan disseminated – January 2012</p>
<p>62. Address VAWG through the Government’s forthcoming Building Stability Overseas Strategy (BSOS).</p> <p>The BSOS should recognise that women’s inclusion in political settlements and peace processes, the protection of women and girls in situations of armed violence, and women’s access to security and justice, are essential building blocks for more peaceful and stable states and societies. The BSOS focus on upstream conflict prevention should also help reduce incidence and intensity of conflict, a key driver of VAWG.</p>	DFID	<p>New BSOS to be published by May 2011</p>
<p>63. Ensure that the UK’s humanitarian action, including both assistance and protection, prevents and responds to VAWG.</p> <p>Humanitarian crises often erode protection systems, social structures and infrastructure. Social norms and support networks break down due to conflict and/or natural disaster, resulting in an increase of women and children’s vulnerability to violence. An independent review of the UK’s Humanitarian Emergency Response is ongoing. Following the review, we will determine actions on UK support to tackling VAWG in humanitarian settings.</p>	DFID	<p>The Humanitarian Emergency Response Review concludes March 2011</p>

<p>64. Work with UN Women to ensure it focuses on key priorities including VAWG and the delivery of the Millennium Development Goals and delivers real progress for women and girls worldwide.</p> <p>As a member of the UN Women's Executive Board, we will work with international partners to ensure that a well focused strategic plan for the new UN agency for gender equality and women's rights is agreed and adopted at the September session of the Executive Board.</p>	DFID / FCO	UN Women Strategic Plan to be adopted by Executive Board in September 2011
<p>65. Continue to support the role and contribution of the Council of Europe (CoE) in preventing and responding to VAWG.</p> <p>We will continue to participate in the negotiations of the draft Convention on Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence. As well as sharing our best practice, we are also learning from the experiences of other European states in their efforts to address violence.</p>	HO	Convention finalised summer 2011
<p>66. Continue to support the EU Plan of Action on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development 2010-2015.</p> <p>The EU Plan of Action specifically targets the strengthening of EU support to partner countries in combating gender-based violence and all forms of discrimination against women and girls. This includes: training EU delegation staff on how to implement the EU guidelines on VAWG and discrimination; increasing EU support for national strategies for combating VAWG; and systematically involving women's rights networks and organisations in local calls for proposals for human rights projects. The UK will continue to monitor progress against the EU Plan of Action.</p>	DFID / FCO	Attend the annual Expert Group consultations March 2011
<p>67. Scale up our activity to tackle VAWG in at least 15 of the poorest countries (includes countries in the UK 1325 National Action Plan).</p> <p>The following countries are planning to develop new DFID programmes on VAWG: India, Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Malawi, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Uganda, South Africa, Zambia, Ghana, Kenya, Somalia, DRC, the occupied Palestinian Territories and Yemen. In addition, the UK continues to tackle VAWG in Afghanistan through the UK NAP. Projects are likely to include a range of interventions from strengthening security and justice systems, to changing attitudes and behaviours to supporting legislative programmes overseas.</p>	DFID / FCO	<p>Improved methods of measuring impact of DFID programmes on VAWG in place by March 2012</p> <p>Following the ongoing business planning process, countries will undertake project design. We will select a small group of these countries for focussed support, monitoring and reporting</p>

<p>68. Enhance the UK's international leadership on tackling VAWG overseas.</p> <p>Lynne Featherstone, the Parliamentary under Secretary of State for Equalities and Criminal Information was confirmed as Ministerial Champion for tackling VAWG overseas on 25th November 2010. The focus of the role is to provide policy coherence and co-ordination across Whitehall departments on tackling VAWG and to represent the UK overseas. The ministerial champion will also actively encourage FCO, DFID and MoD and other relevant Ministers (who retain Ministerial responsibility for VAWG) to use their influence in their domestic, EU and international engagements to drive forward efforts on VAWG.</p>	HO	<p>March 2011 introductory programme and work to define the role</p> <p>April 2011 – March 2012 programme of engagement in place including visits at international and EU level</p>
<p>69. Enable our staff to develop their expertise to support and develop our work on tackling VAWG and to transfer their knowledge across country programmes and sectors.</p> <p>Through training and support, we must equip staff to take forward the Government's international commitments on tackling VAWG. This will include developing staff knowledge and guidance on the causes and effects of VAWG and what effective interventions looks like and supporting them to access existing resources.</p>	DFID	<p>HMG Security and Justice Course to include specific focus on addressing VAWG by March 2011</p> <p>DFID guidance on integrating VAWG into programmes by March 2012</p>
<p>70. Work with partners to improve and communicate the evidence base on VAWG and understanding of effective interventions.</p> <p>We recognise that there are significant knowledge gaps on the extent and nature of VAWG and of effective interventions to address violence, including those which work across different contexts. The UK is looking to scale up our support to tackle VAWG in the poorest countries. Research is critical in enabling the UK and other development partners to design and implement effective policies and interventions. We will continue to work with our partners, including the World Bank, United Nations and Civil Society Partners to share lessons and best practice.</p>	DFID	<p>DFID commissioned evidence paper - July 2011</p> <p>Constructive dialogue with the World Bank to support the 2012 World Development Report – ongoing</p>

<p>71. Improve the international, including EU response, to forced marriage.</p> <p>The Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) provides advice and support to anyone in the UK. However, overseas British Embassies and High Commissions can only provide support to British nationals. We want to build links with partners/ governments overseas to encourage them to adopt a co-ordinated response to forced marriage, so that nationals of their countries are afforded similar assistance, both in their country of residence and overseas.</p>	<p>FMU (FCO / HO)</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>72. Review results of EU Fundamental Rights Agency's survey on VAW across EU member states and consider any recommendations.</p> <p>In 2011/12, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights will conduct the first dedicated EU wide survey on VAW.</p>	<p>All depts</p>	<p>First results from the survey will be ready from April 2012</p>

5. Justice outcomes and risk reduction

Guiding principle: Take action to reduce the risk to women and girls who are victims of these crimes and ensure that perpetrators are brought to justice.

Through our work to **reduce the risk** to women and girls who are victims of these crimes and ensure that perpetrators are brought to justice, we will:

- increase the numbers of women and girls who have the confidence to access the criminal justice system by seeking continued improvement in the effectiveness of its response to them;
- strengthen the framework to protect victims by ensuring the application of current legislative powers and risk management processes are both understood and effective; and
- increase the number of offenders breaking out of a cycle of offending by ensuring the effectiveness of rehabilitation programmes.

1. Legislation and justice outcomes

There are a number of legislative measures in place to protect women and girls from violence and bring perpetrators to justice. The challenge for legislators is to ensure that the provisions in the law are suitable, implemented effectively and provide justice outcomes.

Action	Dept	Timing
<p>73. Conduct a 12 month pilot of Domestic Violence Protection Notices (DVPNs) and Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPOs).</p> <p>The period between an incident of domestic violence being reported to the police and the point at which prosecutions are brought into place is often the most dangerous for a victim. DVPNs (issued by the police) and DVPOs (issued by the courts) will require a perpetrator to vacate the residence of the victim for a maximum of 28 days, to provide victims with immediate protection in the aftermath and provide time and space to make a decision about their longer term protection.</p>	HO / Moj	<p>Summer 2011</p> <p>Evaluation work to commence in Summer 2011 findings available by Autumn 2013</p>

<p>74. Consider the case for implementing section 60 of the Family Law Act 1996.</p> <p>This provision would provide for a ‘prescribed person’ such as the police or local authority to make an application for a domestic violence injunction on someone else’s behalf. A similar provision is already available in forced marriage cases. This option could prove most helpful where the victim is particularly vulnerable, or unable to pursue an application themselves.</p>	Moj	Defer until 2013 until after the DVPO pilots are concluded and evaluated in order to assess likely increase in civil injunctions and impact on court resources
<p>75. Implement section 9 of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act (2004), putting in place statutory domestic violence homicide reviews.</p> <p>In the aftermath of a domestic homicide, these reviews will support all agencies involved to identify the lessons that can be learned from domestic homicides, with a view to improving practice and preventing future homicide. In addition to implementation of the provision, we will provide statutory guidance for relevant agencies and practitioners, as well as an e-learning training package.</p>	HO	Spring 2011
<p>76. Support women affected by domestic violence through the courts system.</p> <p>We will consider how Specialist Domestic Violence Courts (SDVCs) systems may be developed further, including a review of guidance to local areas on establishing one. We are also providing advice and support to SDVC systems that are affected by the Court Closure Programme in order to ensure that all partners are engaged with their relocation.</p>	Moj / CPS / HO	Throughout March and April 2011 – guidance will be produced for partnerships to use as appropriate throughout the Court Closure Programme
<p>77. Consult on a revised definition of domestic violence to take into account younger victims.</p> <p>Following a recommendation from the Home Affairs Committee report in 2008, the Government will consult on a revised definition of domestic violence to include victims under 18 years of age.</p>	HO	December 2011
<p>78. Address issues relating to prosecution, domestic violence and ethnicity.</p> <p>The CPS will consider ways to address prosecution issues in relation to ethnicity differences, especially with regard to support for BME victims and monitoring of cases by ethnicity.</p>	CPS	March 2012

<p>79. Produce guidelines for prosecutors dealing with potential cases of FGM.</p> <p>To ensure that the CPS is able to prosecute every case of FGM that satisfies the evidential and public interest tests within the Code for Crown Prosecutors, we will produce new guidelines to support prosecutors to understand the sensitivities and complexities often involved.</p>	CPS	June 2011
<p>80. Review impact of the Protection from Harassment Act 1997.</p> <p>The Police and the CPS are working together to improve the safety of victims of stalking. This review will look at police attitudes to, and training on, stalking and the impact of CPS guidance for prosecutors. It will also address the effectiveness of restraining orders in preventing harassment and stalking.</p>	HO / CPS / Moj	Ongoing
<p>81. Address the issue of cyberstalking by ensuring that the links are made between the different agencies that are working on stalking, e-crime and communications data.</p> <p>Cyberstalking should be treated as seriously as any other form of stalking. The Home Office will work with ACPO to support the police by raising awareness of the agencies that can be used to track down perpetrators of cyberstalking who are able to hide their location and identity on the internet. We will also work with international partners to ensure better cross-border data sharing to facilitate prosecutions.</p>	HO	<p>Guidance for police and prosecutors – November 2011</p> <p>Report for IMG on approach to cyberstalking - October 2011</p>
<p>82. Take steps to validate how VAW prosecutions are conducted.</p> <p>The CPS will ensure that its handling of VAW prosecutions meets the expected standard and will encourage effective processes through which victims can access support with the utmost dignity and respect. It will do this by six monthly reporting to the Chief Operating Officer on the quality and efficiency of VAW prosecutions including a qualitative assessment of 25 per cent of rape prosecutions, improve rape data and publishing an annual VAW Report.</p>	CPS	<p>Six monthly reporting – Bi-annually April / October 2011</p> <p>Improve rape data – October 2011;</p> <p>Annual VAW report – December 2011</p>

<p>83. Widen the notification requirements for registered sex offenders.</p> <p>Three proposals for notification requirements are currently under consultation to strengthen the management of sex offenders. The proposals are that registered sex offenders: be required to notify the police of all foreign travel; make weekly notification where offenders have no fixed abode; and inform the police if they are residing in a household with a child/children under the age of 18.</p>	HO	<p>Consultation: spring 2011</p> <p>Implementation: summer 2011</p>
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2. Reducing the risk for victims and rehabilitating offenders

There is a clear need for targeted support for high risk victims of domestic violence. This often requires a sustained multi-agency effort to manage and reduce the risk faced by victims of violence that can mean the difference between women and children being safe or seriously harmed.

We will continue to invest in programmes to rehabilitate perpetrators, reducing the likelihood of repeat offending. We also recognise the need to understand and respond to the underlying causes of women's offending. Almost half of women prisoners have experienced violence at home and about one third report having suffered sexual abuse. Alternatives to custody should therefore be considered as a more appropriate rehabilitative measure for these women.

Action	Dept	Timing
<p>84. Ensure that local areas are fully equipped to continue to operate MARACs as part of their wider response to tackling domestic violence.</p> <p>Our review of MARACs helped improve our understanding about how they are working. It also highlighted areas for improvement and further consideration. We will work with colleagues on the National MARAC Steering Group to review the guidance and training for MARACs, including strengthening the links with other multi-agency arrangements and continue to raise awareness of MARACs.</p>	HO	<p>Publication of review summer 2011</p>
<p>85. Consider whether MARACs could be used to identify and support high-risk victims of rape and sexual assault.</p> <p>As with domestic violence incidents, the majority of sexual assault cases would not be referred to a MARAC. There are, however, some groups that are more vulnerable to serious sexual assault such as those involved in street prostitution, young people in or leaving care, and women and girls with learning difficulties. We will work closely with external stakeholders to consider whether MARACs could be used to identify and support those at a higher risk of serious sexual assault.</p>	HO	<p>Report conclusions to Ministers in autumn 2011</p>

<p>86. Support the continued development of effective community-based alternatives to custody for women offenders and women at risk of offending.</p> <p>Supporting Community Sentences and working closely with Probation, the voluntary sector led Women's Community Projects are a central hub where women in the criminal justice system can access support at any point. Support is provided to women who have been abused, raped or experienced domestic violence on a number of areas including accommodation, health, children and families, finance, benefit and debt. NOMS will sustain funding for services that are effective in diverting women away from crime in their local areas.</p>	NOMS	Ongoing
<p>87. Provide information on services to support women offenders and women at risk of offending who have been affected by abuse or violence.</p> <p>The Ministry of Justice will provide a framework of guidance that will offer models of support and direction to all those working with women offenders and women at risk of offending. This will enable them to respond more effectively to those who have been affected by abuse or violence.</p>	Moj	June 2011
<p>88. Deliver the Women Awareness Staff Programme (WASP) to voluntary and community sector partners working with women offenders and women at risk of offending in the community.</p> <p>WASP is a two-day training course covering how women enter criminality, the differences between working with men and women in custody, self-harm, parenting from prison, foreign national women, domestic violence and sex work.</p>	Moj	December 2011

6. Governance of the VAWG Strategy – holding us to account

The Government's strategy sets out a comprehensive approach to addressing VAWG. It moves beyond an approach which is purely focused on the criminal justice system and envisages a role for all relevant public sector organisations, ranging from central government departments and public service delivery bodies through to businesses, local government, the voluntary sector, communities and the public.

To ensure that the actions and milestones set out in this strategy are delivered the following management structure will be put in place:

- A **VAWG Inter-Ministerial Group (IMG)** will be chaired by the Home Secretary and will meet on a quarterly basis. The IMG will address issues across Government and monitor progress on the delivery of the strategy.
- A cross-departmental **VAWG Delivery Board**, managed by the Home Office, with responsibility for oversight of the actions to which all individual departments, and associated agencies have agreed. The Delivery Board will meet every six weeks and will report to the VAWG IMG.

A central part of our vision for engaging and listening to women and girls involves working in partnership with women's organisations. Women's organisations have played a crucial role across the UK in bringing women's voices to government, advocating on behalf of women, campaigning for change and delivering services.

The Government will continue with a range of engagement activities which will underpin and influence the strategic direction of its work to tackle VAWG. This will include:

- continuing to meet with stakeholders from the women's sector every four months. Key stakeholders will also be invited to attend the VAWG IMG bi-annually;
- circulating a VAWG newsletter produced by the Home Office every other month. to updates on progress made across Government on delivering the actions contained within the VAWG action plan;
- regular engagement with local partners from the statutory sector and frontline practitioners to communicate the Government's approach to VAWG; and
- working with the Local Government Association and Local Government Improvement and Development to support greater provision of quality local services for women and girls and to support greater innovation.

Working with the Devolved Administrations

Devolution affects many of the areas of government covered in the Government's strategy. The Scottish Government, the Northern Ireland Executive and the Welsh Assembly Government all have their own approach to tackling VAWG. The Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland Offices will be invited to attend the VAWG IMG as appropriate and we will work in partnership with devolved administrations in order to learn from their experiences and share best practice.

7. Next steps

The next steps with this strategy will be:

- to engage with local areas and key partners and explore what this strategy means for them;
- to enable local areas and key partners to work up their plans for implementation and delivery of the prevention, provision, and partnership approaches set out in the strategy;
- to encourage local areas to work together in the joint design and commissioning of services; and
- to continue to develop and publish the evidence base on what works.

We are committed to using evidence to drive the very best outcomes for individuals in urban and rural communities.

We are also committed to reviewing this action plan every six months in order to build in further initiatives and actions from the Government's reform programme. This also allows us to respond to new and emerging evidence and to respond flexibly to the outcomes being achieved.

8. Glossary

A&E	Accident & Emergency
ACPO	Association of Chief Police Officers
BCS	British Crime Survey
BSOS	Building Stability Overseas Strategy
CAADA	Coordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CJS	Criminal Justice System
CPS	Crown Prosecution Service
DCLG	Department for Communities and Local Government
DCMS	Department for Culture, Media and Sport
DfE	Department for Education
DH	Department of Health
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
DV	Domestic Violence
DVPN	Domestic Violence Protection Notice
DVPO	Domestic Violence Protection Order
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
EHRC	Equality and Human Rights Commission
EU	European Union
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
FMU	Forced Marriage Unit
FTAC	Fixated Threat Assessment Centre
GEO	Government Equalities Office
HBV	Honour Based Violence

HO	Home Office
IDVA	Independent Domestic Violence Adviser
ILR	Indefinite Leave to Remain
IMG	Inter-Ministerial Group
ISVA	Independent Sexual Violence Adviser
JSNA	Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
LGA	Local Government Association
LGBT	Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transsexual
MAPPA	Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements
MARAC	Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference
NAP	National Action Plan
MoD	Ministry of Defence
Moj	Ministry of Justice
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NHS	National Health Service
NOMS	National Offender Management Service
NUJ	National Union of Journalists
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
PCT	Primary Care Trust
PSHE	Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education
SARC	Sexual Assault Referral Centre
SDVC	Specialist Domestic Violence Court
SPOC	Single Point of Contact
SRE	Sex and Relationship Education
UKBA	United Kingdom Border Agency
WNC	Women's National Commission
UKCCIS	United Kingdom Council for Child Internet Safety
UN	United Nations
VAW	Violence Against Women
VAWC	Violence Against Women and Children
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls

Cabinet Office
35 Great Smith Street
London SW1P 3BQ

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