

Spending cuts and service provision: the challenges for meeting the needs of survivors of sexual and domestic violence

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The facts

- Every year in the UK, **3 million women** experience domestic violence (DV), rape, forced marriage, stalking, sexual exploitation and trafficking, female genital mutilation, or crimes in the name of honour.
- Approximately **80,000 women** suffer rape and attempted rape every year, 54% of these rapes are committed by a woman's current or former partner.
- At least **66,000 women and girls** in England and Wales have undergone female genital mutilation, in the main prior to arrival in the UK, with a further 33,000 girls and young women at risk.
- An estimated **1,000 British Asian girls** are forced into marriage each year.

The government's commitment



Welcome

- Call to End Violence Against Women and Girls (November 2010);
- Action Plan (2011);
- Recognition of the need for specialist network of VAWG services;
- Funding for Rape Crisis, IDVAs, ISVAs, MARAC, National Helplines and other projects.

Why specialist services are needed



- To address fully the varying needs of survivors and their children;
- To provide effective programmes for perpetrators of violence;
- To encourage children and young people to develop healthy non-violent relationships;
- To educate and inform the general public and so prevent future violence against women and girls.

The current situation: what do we know?



- Most VAWG organisations experiencing funding cuts;
- 32 DV organisations in England have already closed at least 1 of their services;
- Services for children and young people are particularly affected;
- Some services have been completely decommissioned (including BMER services);
- 75% of DV prevention projects have been significantly cut.

The current situation: what do we know?



- IDVA services less badly affected, cuts of 10-20% but all are more stretched;
- Sexual violence services at risk through historical lack of support, and new pressures on funding from charitable trusts;
- Delays in decision-making and minimal notice of forthcoming cuts;
- Demand for services has risen;
- Re-commissioning is undervaluing specialist women's services, and BMER services;
- Continuing uncertainty about the future and the anticipation that worse is to come.

Impact of cuts in funding and service provision



- Cuts in staff levels and staff redundancies;
- Short-term and insecure contracts resulting in increased staff turnover;
- Reduced hours of services;
- Reduced support for survivors and their children;
- Reduction in the number of clients that can be helped;
- Closure of services;
- Continued uncertainty about future provision.

Wider impact of funding cuts on victims and survivors



- Reduction in quality of service;
- Repeat victimisation;
- Increased long term costs;
- Impact on other services that survivors need.

Wider impact of funding cuts on victims and survivors



- Police
- Social care
- Child protection
- Drug and alcohol services
- Health and mental health services
- Counselling services
- Youth services
- Housing services
- Legal aid services
- Childcare services

What is needed



- Stronger messages from government to local authorities and commissioners;
- Promotion of needs-led VAW commissioning models;
- Training for commissioners;
- Recognition of quality frameworks;
- Standardised data collection and monitoring;
- Review of funding frameworks (locally and nationally).