

Setting the Standard: A Council of Europe project on violence against women support services

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In a nutshell



- ◆ Background on the Council of Europe
- ◆ The project – what, why and how
- ◆ The standards for provision of services
- ◆ The practice principles
- ◆ Where the project is now

COE work on VAW



- ◆ Council of Europe larger than EU, based on human rights
- ◆ 1997 Plan of Action on VAW
- ◆ Police training manual – the VIP Guide, 2002
- ◆ 2002 Declaration
 - ◆ Stocktaking study
- ◆ Campaign to Combat Violence against Women, including Domestic Violence
- ◆ One of four core objectives – to enhance support and protection for victims
 - ◆ Standards project contribution to this

Defining terms: VAW

UN Definition

....violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman, or violence that affects women disproportionately

Challenges

- Range of services which an address all forms of violence
- Accessible to all women
- Operating within human rights standards
- May be integrated across forms of violence (domestic/sexual) or by functions (advice, advocacy, shelter, counselling)
- May be specialised – by form of violence, by functions and/or by target group (girls, migrant, BME, disabled women)

Defining terms: support services



- Began in 1970s to address hidden/silenced issues
- Enable women to name what has happened, make sense, address it, deal with legacies
- Depth understanding of violence in various forms
- Creative alternatives that met women's needs
 - Anonymity – helplines
 - Safety – shelters
 - Empowerment – rights, advocacy, self-defence
- By women, for women
 - Confidence/re-training/personal development – staff and service users

Defining terms: minimum standards



- The basic standards that all states and services should aim to achieve
 - Benchmarks – rooted in human rights standards and principles
 - the extent and mix and services which should be available
 - who should provide them
 - the principles and practice base from which they should operate.
- Not aspirational → all provision should reach them
- Aspirational → states may not have the requisite amount/distribution of services
 - some/all services may not meet the practice standards
- Good practice takes minimum standards as minimum, seeking to exceed them maximising quality and outcomes

The task

- To use human rights conventions and thinking to extend the knowledge base on approaches to supporting and assisting women who become victims
 - What services should be available, and their distribution in terms of populations and geography?
 - Who should provide services?
 - What minimum standards should be adopted across Europe?

Methodology



	Task	
1	Desk-based research to develop a typology of provision and HR standards	
2	Interview National Focal Points on existing/proposed standards	
3	Interview specialist NGOs and networks to identify existing standards, opinions and proposals	
4	Expert interviews	54 interviews in total
5	Analysis and draft proposals .	Presented at conference in Strasbourg
6	Online consultation for all contacts/participants	91 responses
7	Revise standards and final report	

Consensus across Human Rights and NGOs



- Confidentiality
- Safety, security and respect within a 'culture of belief'
 - 'taking the side of'
- Access for all women who need
 - Marginalised/minority groups
- Availability
 - 24/7 where safety is immediately compromised
- Free of charge
- Empowerment and self-determination
- Specialist and by women for women
- Holistic
 - across forms of violence against women and/or support needs
 - Immediate crisis/safety through to long term legacies
 - 'Inter-agency co-ordination, intervention chains

Required provision



- ◆ **Helpline**
- ◆ One line covering all violence against women or one for domestic violence and one for sexual violence. In small countries one may be sufficient. For more densely populated one per region

- ◆ **Refuge/Shelters**
- ◆ One family place per 10,000 of the population
- ◆ At least one in every province/region.

- ◆ **Rape Crisis Centres**
- ◆ One per 200,000 women; one centre per region

- ◆ **Sexual Assault Centre (for recent assault, forensic and follow up)**
- ◆ One per 400,000 women

Required provision 2: independent or integrated services



◆ Advice/Advocacy

- ◆ One service per 50,000 women

◆ Counselling

- ◆ One service per 50,000 women, in each regional city

◆ Outreach

- ◆ To address the largest local minority groups, women with disabilities, and other under-served groups.

Provision across Europe

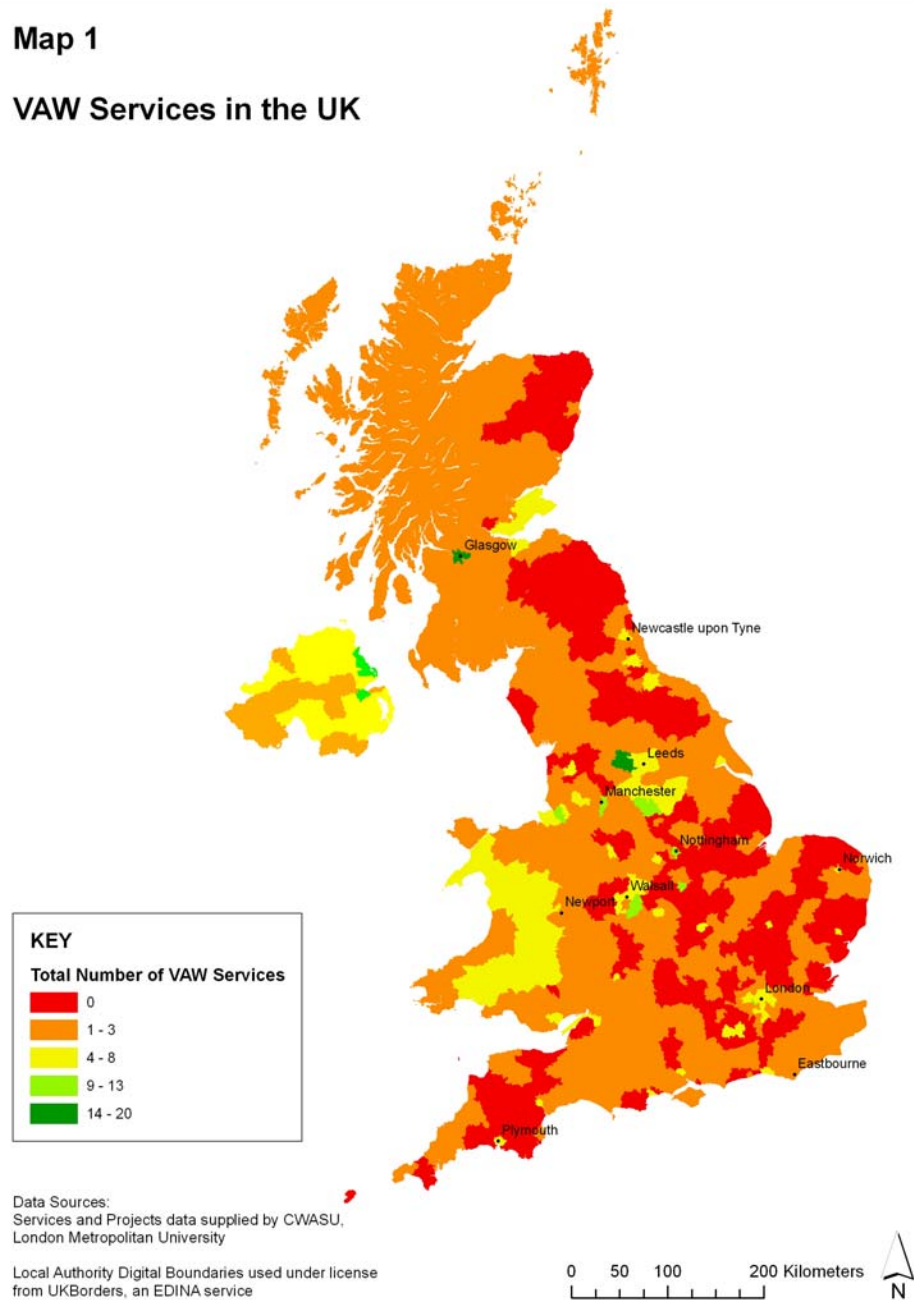


- ◆ Refuges/shelters the most common
 - ◆ Range from 12 countries with 0-6, to five countries with more than 40
 - ◆ Majority of refuges DV only, but in 14 countries also cover SV and in 3 all forms of VAW
 - ◆ Dearth of SV only services
 - ◆ In some countries where services developed later – CEE – have more helplines and ‘crisis centres’

Mapping the gaps

Map 1

VAW Services in the UK



KEY

Total Number of VAW Services

- 0
- 1 - 3
- 4 - 8
- 9 - 13
- 14 - 20

Data Sources:
Services and Projects data supplied by CWASU,
London Metropolitan University

Local Authority Digital Boundaries used under license
from UKBorders, an EDINA service

0 50 100 200 Kilometers

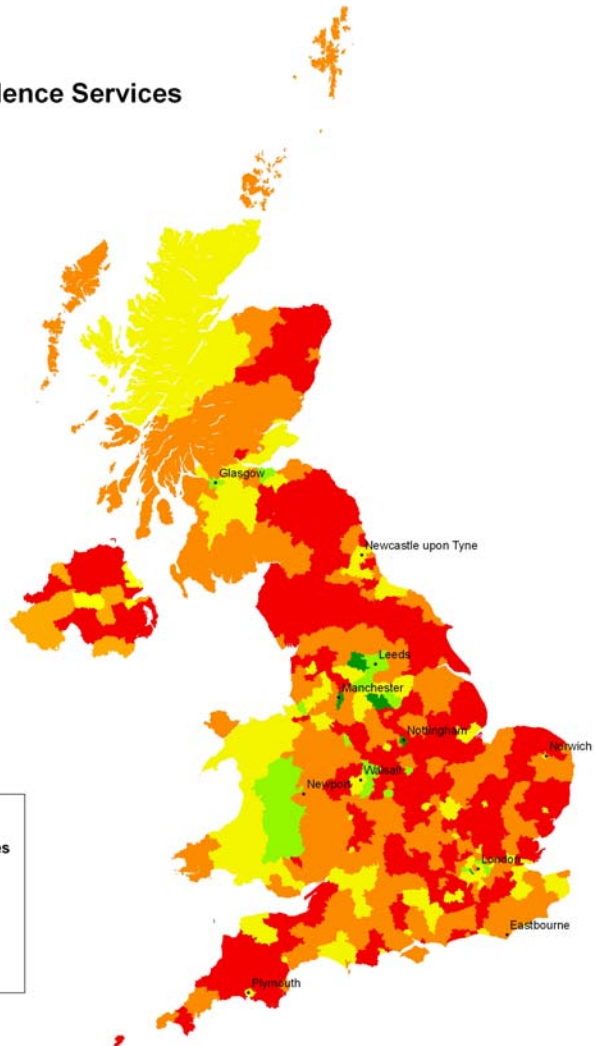


Map prepared by Cities Institute, London Metropolitan University



Map 2

Domestic Violence Services

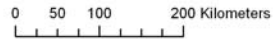


KEY
Number of DV Services

Red	0
Orange	1
Yellow	2-3
Light Green	4-6
Dark Green	7-11

Data Sources:
Services and Projects data supplied by CWASU,
London Metropolitan University

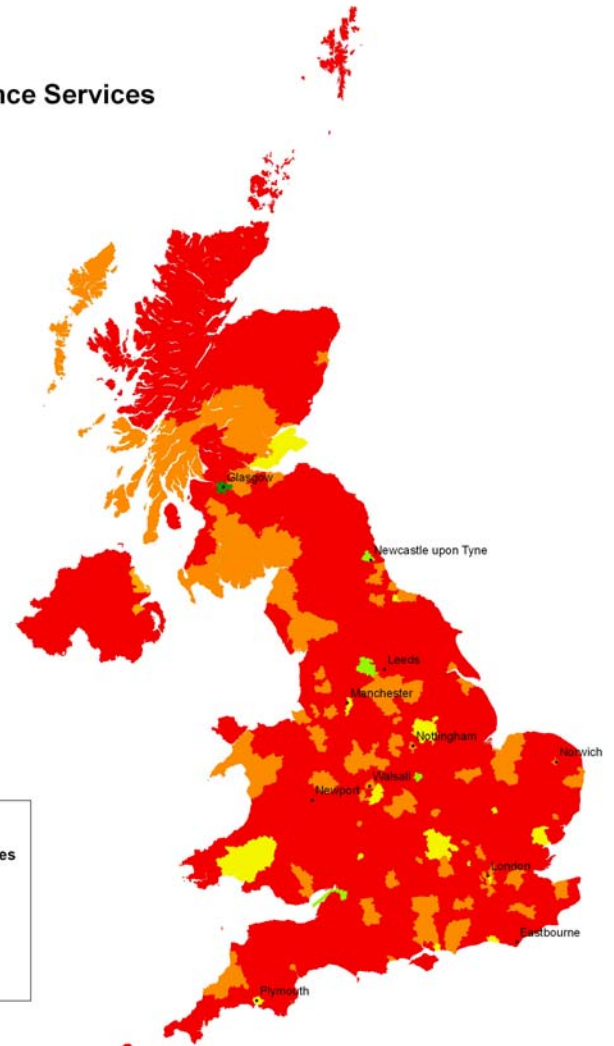
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Map prepared by Cities Institute, London Metropolitan University

Map 7

Sexual Violence Services

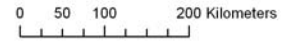


KEY
Number of SV Services

Red	0
Orange	1
Yellow	2
Light Green	3-4
Dark Green	5-6

Data Sources:
Services and Projects data supplied by CWASU,
London Metropolitan University

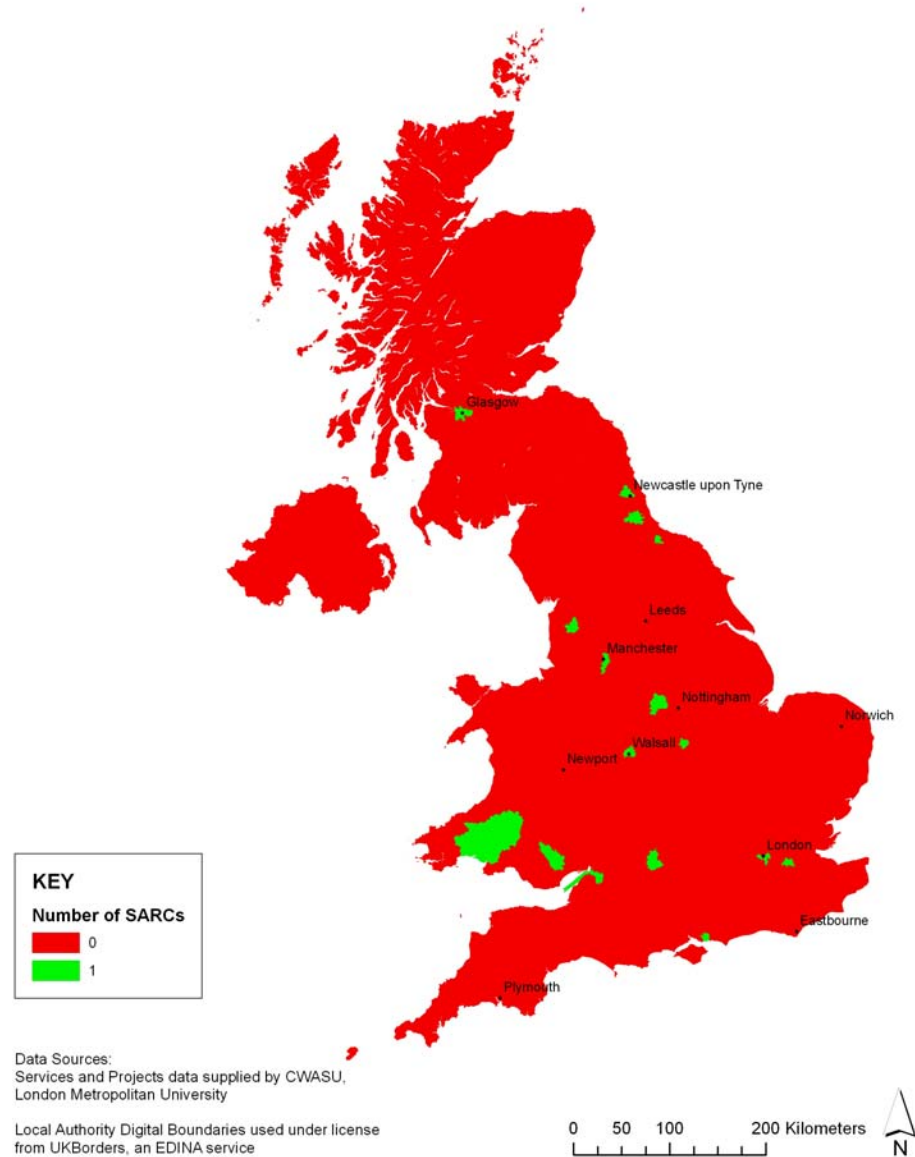
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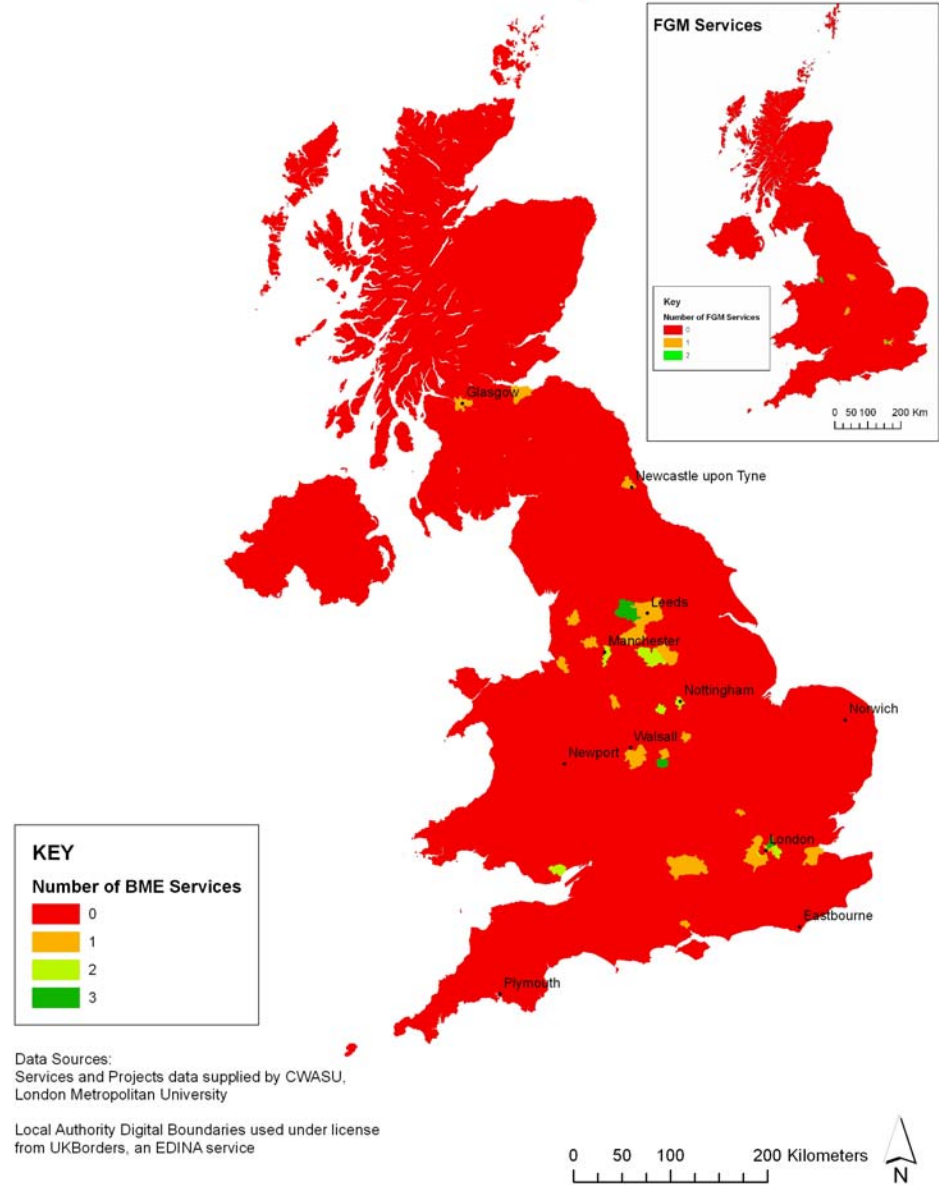
Map 9

Sexual Assault Referral Centres



Map 4

Services for BME Women



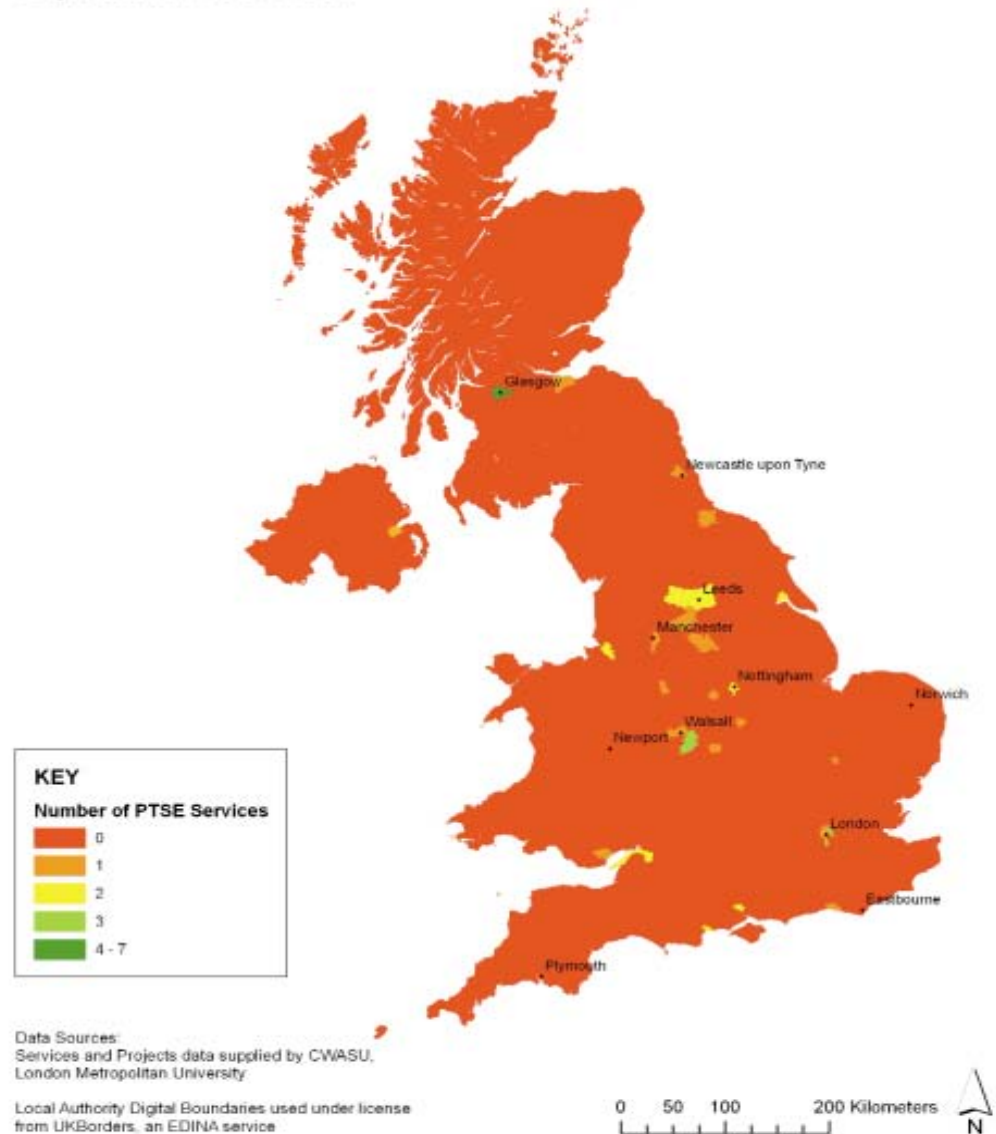
Data Sources:
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Map 10

Prostitution, Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation Services



Map of Gaps 2



- ◆ Partner project with Equality and Human Rights Commission
- ◆ Website launched end of January
- ◆ 100 Local authorities with no specialised services, less than 30 with a diversity and range
- ◆ Trevor Philips – failure to provide is against the law
 - Gender Equality Duty places responsibility to promote gender equality
- ◆ Currently sending letters to local authorities

Practice principles



- ◆ Defined as core standards across all forms of provision
- ◆ Drew on work in England and Wales between DV and SV sectors
- ◆ Also on human rights principles

Core standards 1



Working from a gendered understanding of violence against women

- ◆ Services demonstrate an appropriate, and informed approach, relevant to their service users, which recognises the gendered dynamics, impacts and consequences of violence against women within an equalities and human rights framework, including understanding violence against women as both a cause and consequence of inequalities between women and men and the need for women only services

Safety, security and human dignity

- ◆ Services ensure that all interventions prioritise the safety, security and dignity of service users and of staff

Core Standards 2



Specialist services

- ◆ The knowledge and skill base of staff, and forms of provision, are specialised; that is appropriate and tailored to the specific needs, which may be complex, of service users

Diversity and fair access

- ◆ Services respect the diversity of service users and positively engage in anti-discriminatory practice. Provision should be available free of charge, equitably distributed across geography of the country and crisis provision available 24/7

Core standards 3



Advocacy and support

- ◆ Services provide both case and system advocacy to support and promote the **rights** and meet the needs of service users

Empowerment

- ◆ Services ensure service users can name their experiences, are familiar with their rights and entitlements and can make decisions in a supportive environment that treats them with **dignity, respect and sensitivity**

Core standards 4



Participation and consultation

- ◆ Services promote service-user involvement in the development and evaluation of the service

Confidentiality

- ◆ Services respect and observe service users right to confidentiality and all service users are informed of situations where that confidentiality may be limited

A co-ordinated response

- ◆ Services operate within a context of relevant inter-agency co-operation, collaboration and co-ordinated service delivery

Core standards 5



Holding perpetrators accountable

- ◆ Services work from the twin foundations of belief and respect for victims and that perpetrators should be held accountable for their actions

Governance and Accountability

- ◆ Services are effectively managed, ensuring that service users receive a quality service from appropriately skilled and supported staff

Challenging tolerance

- ◆ Services model non-violence internally and externally and use gender analysis to raise awareness, educate and undertake prevention work, both in communities and with individuals

Specific service standards



- Helplines
- Shelters/refuges
- Advice and advocacy (includes crisis centres)
- Counselling
- Outreach
- Intervention projects
- Rape crisis centres
- Sexual assault referral centres
- Law enforcement
- Perpetrator programmes.

Refuges: Human Rights framings



- ◆ The UN Beijing Platform states shelters should be well-funded, and accessible.
- ◆ 2005 CEDAW case established failure to provide access to immediate protection (in this case where a victim could not access a refuge and had no legal or other avenues to create safety) will mean a State is in violation of the Convention (*AT v Hungary*).
- ◆ Refuges may be limited to DV (or other forms of violence) or open to any woman who has sustained violence
- ◆ Some shelters only offer safe housing, many provide some combination of: outreach; advocacy; advice; counselling; resettlement; follow up support; children's services.

Closer to Home



- ◆ Standards need to be located in an integrated VAW strategy
 - ◆ ERAW been calling for for 3 years
 - ◆ Including a funding strategy to ensure the sustainability and expansion of support services
- ◆ Supported by HAC, EHRC, main opposition parties and CEDAW Committee
 - ◆ Government making announcement today
- ◆ CPS has excellent model, Scotland will publish its strategy soon
- ◆ GLA will publish a strategy in April 2009

A fractured response

- ◆ Over emphasis on prosecution, overlapping policies, prevention an 'add on'
- ◆ 3 out of 4 local authorities do not have Rape Crisis Centres



A balanced approach

Begin from perspective, overarching policy, prevention at core
Provision of support key – prior to protection and prosecution

Perspective

Gender Equality
Human Rights
Due diligence
Non-discrimination

Policy

Integrated strategy on all VAW and intersections
Agreed definition
Research and disaggregated statistics
Analysis of causes of VAW
Mainstreaming VAW into all policy areas

Prevention

Education
Work with perpetrators
Public awareness
Self-defence for women and girls

Provision

Specialised women's sector
- Women's Centres
- Rural provision
- BME women
Statutory Sector

Protection

Provision
Support networks
Civil law
Safety in public space
Non-discrimination

Prosecution

Data monitoring
European models of good practice
Procedural justice for victim-survivors
Holding perpetrators accountable
Non-discrimination

Taking stock



- Different trajectories
 - Not one model of service provision
 - But common gaps and lacks
- The Euro Lottery – which country and which part of any country
 - Means majority of women cannot realise their rights
- Continuum of interests
 - States, organisations, NGOs and academics
- Difficult conundrums
 - Can common understandings and principles embed across ongoing debates and varied legal contexts?
 - Which women are there/not there?
 - 'One size' does not fit all

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AGAINST
WOMEN**

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