

Government consultation *Together We Can End Violence Against Women And Girls*

Response from Respect

1. Introduction

1.1 Respect is the UK membership association for domestic violence perpetrator programmes and associated support services. Our key focus is on increasing the safety and well-being of victims by promoting, supporting, delivering and developing effective interventions with perpetrators. Our services include: support, resources and training for members; managing accreditation of perpetrator programmes; developing work with young people; promoting knowledge of research about domestic violence and collaboration between researchers, practitioners and policy makers; influencing public policy; providing a national voice on masculinity and violence against women; running the Respect Phonenumber, an advice and referral line for perpetrators; running the Men's Advice Line, a helpline for male victims and running Dadspace.com, a virtual child contact centre.

Respect is a UK registered charity, number 1083968. Our website is www.respect.uk.net

1.2 Respect's response to this consultation draws on the expertise and experience of our staff and members, on relevant research and on monitoring the use of our services. We have consulted our members about the content of this response. As domestic violence is our key specialism, this response particularly, but not only, focuses on domestic violence issues.

1.3 Respect welcomes the draft strategy as both a commitment from the government and a key stage in the process of eradicating violence against women and girls. Violence against women and girls is a key cause and consequence of gender inequality and discrimination against women and girls worldwide and in the UK, as recognised by the United Nations and the UK government.

- 1.4 Respect welcomes the government commitment to gender equality as demonstrated by the Gender Equality Duty as well as this strategy consultation and other policy developments in the last twelve years. We also welcome the support provided to the domestic violence sector broadly, such as the development of Specialist Domestic Violence Courts, as well as funding for Respect specifically, such as for the Respect Phonenumber, the Men's Advice Line, Dads' Space, the Young People's Services development project and for the development of the Respect Standard – a national system of accreditation for community based domestic violence perpetrator programmes.
- 1.5 Respect wants to recognise and support the extraordinary achievements of the women who have worked tirelessly over the past thirty years and more to establish networks of women's support service, refuges, advice centres, rape crisis services, children's counselling services, community based projects and many other innovations which have kept women and children safe and alive and helped to promote their empowerment and independence, often with little or no public funding.
- 1.6 We also recognise that many of the women and men working with men who use violence came to this work because we felt that women living with violence and abuse deserved effective services to change the behaviour and manage the risk of the men who were abusing them. Many of us worked in women's services and some of us continue to do so. We also continue to work closely with specialist women's organisations locally and nationally, including Women's Aid, Refuge, CAADA and Rape Crisis.
- 1.7 Without this history of work with, by and for women there would be no basis on which to develop this strategy. We strongly recommend that the government supports services for women and girls who are experiencing or have experienced violence and abuse through funding, commissioning guidance, political pressure and publicity.
- 1.8 The recent Home Affairs Committee (HAC, 2008) enquiry into domestic violence, forced marriage and crimes of so-called 'honour' provided another important marker in this process. We recommend that the government reviews all the recommendations of this report and identifies a plan for implementing these as an essential element of the strategy to eliminate violence against women.

- 1.9 Domestic violence perpetrator programmes in the UK are based in 2 main settings: criminal justice programmes, which are usually run by probation or prison staff; and community based programmes, which are usually run by a range of different professionals in either in a voluntary sector organisation or as part of a voluntary and statutory sector partnership. Criminal justice based programmes take only mandated referrals from the criminal courts as part of a sentence for a conviction for a violent or abusive incident. Community based programmes take referrals from Children's Services, from the family courts via Children and Families Court, Advice and Support Services (Cafcass), from mental health or substance misuse services, from counselling services including couples counselling services, from the Respect Phoneline and from individuals approaching programmes themselves wishing to self-refer, often because their partner or other family members have asked them to do this. Programmes in both sectors typically have linked safety and/or support services for partners and ex-partners of programme participants. Accreditation systems in both sectors require this.
- 1.10 Our members include individuals and organisations working in both sectors. Their primary aim is to promote the safety of victims and their children, through a range of activities. These include: assessment, risk assessment and management, inter agency working, group work for perpetrators, individual and group support for victims, advocacy for victims. We have developed a system of accreditation for community based programmes (part-funded by the Home Office) using the Respect Service Standard, which contains 105 requirements for programmes to comply with, and a system of assessment against the Standard. The Standard was developed in 2005 – 2008 through a careful process of drafting, consultation, piloting and revising. It is based on best available knowledge of the lessons from research, practice, policy and guidance in order to ensure the maximum possible chance of safety for victims and children and to provide the greatest chance of perpetrators changing their behaviour. It will be revised every 3 years as knowledge develops. Respect member programmes are required to be assessed against the Standard within 3 years of implementation in April 2008. Several are currently going through the assessment process.
- 1.11 When we refer to our member organisations or community based programmes in this document we are therefore referring primarily to those programmes which take referrals from outside the criminal justice system.

- 1.12 We are disappointed that this consultation only mentions interventions with perpetrators in terms of criminal justice system responses and does not ask how health, children's services or local strategic partnerships should be addressing perpetrators.
- 1.13 The HAC report recommended supporting the existing network of community based programmes working with men who have used intimate partner violence (domestic violence against intimate partners) and we of course endorse this recommendation. There is substantial rigorous research evidence to demonstrate the value of domestic violence intervention programmes: after 4 years from programme completion, over 80% of programme participants are still violence free (Gondolf, 2002).
- 1.14 We want to emphasise the crucial involvement of men in the process of eliminating violence against women. As men are the vast majority of the perpetrators of violence against women and men's assumption of entitlement over women is often a critical feature of their justifications for violence, work with and by men to change and challenge both this assumption of entitlement and the acceptance of violence as justified in certain circumstances to enforce this entitlement, is critical.
- 1.15 Men have a critical role as fathers, brothers, partners, family members, colleagues, friends and fellow citizens who can help to challenge violence against women and girls and support work to protect women and girls from violence. It is essential to actively encourage *all* men (not just young men) to treat women and girls with respect. We would like to see the strategy including elements targeting men and supporting their involvement in work against violence against women. This may include work in schools and in youth work but should also include other work to engage adult men, including publicity campaigns, community work, peer support and other activities to encourage men to behave respectfully towards all women and girls. This is in line with government policy on gender equality and there are various activities which we have recommended in more detail later in this document.
- 1.16 Given the recognition that violence against women is both a cause and a consequence of gender inequality and discrimination against women and girls, we believe that work towards ending violence against women therefore both helps to bring about true gender equality and also requires an approach which

supports a whole range of gender equality activities. These will benefit women and men, girls and boys, as gender based assumptions and expectations are challenged and greater opportunities for equality in employment, home life, childcare and public life are created.

- 1.17 We look forward to working with government and with other organisations to support the development and implementation of the violence against women strategy in order to bring about an end to all forms of gender based violence and to work towards true gender equality.

Key recommendations

We have made recommendations throughout the document. Here we highlight key recommendations which mainly – but not only – relate to our area of specialism - perpetrators of violence against women.

- 1.18 We recommend that the government carries out a thorough independent audit of current legislation, guidance and statutory sector policy and performance to assess failures in implementation. This should be accompanied by an independent gaps' analysis to identify any shortfalls in the legislation, guidance or policy itself, or indeed in service provision. Following this, urgent action is needed to address the gaps and failures that are identified.**
- 1.19 We recommend comparative levels of funding for violence against women work as for work against knife crime and terrorism, as the homicide and serious crime rates for violence against women are more than comparable for these other equally serious categories of criminal behaviour.
- 1.20 We recommend that survivors and victims of all forms of violence against women, including women who have experienced sexual harassment, use of non-physical force, and more dangerous or traumatic forms of violence, are fully involved in planning, monitoring and evaluating the impact of the strategy.
- 1.21 We recommend that addressing all forms of gender based violence is considered an essential and legally required element of fulfilling the Gender Equality Duty for public sector or publicly funded organisations and services.

- 1.22 We recommend that any national or local strategy tackling violence against women must include work with and about men and masculinity. This should be an essential and integral part of the work overall, not an alternative to or add-on part of the work.
- 1.23 We recommend that interventions with perpetrators (including perpetrator programmes) are recognised as a key part of the system of protection and support for women and child victims.
- 1.24 We recommend that the Respect standard and Respect accredited programmes for domestic violence perpetrators should be supported and the Standard used as the criteria for quality and safety assurance for perpetrator programmes.
- 1.25 We recommend that the DCSF and Home Office work together with Respect to ensure that there is adequate provision of accredited domestic violence perpetrator programmes across England and Wales, for children's services, family courts, health and other relevant agencies to refer to, and for perpetrators to self refer. This should never be at the expense of, or as an alternative to funding for specialist services for women and children and should be seen as an integral and valuable element in a coordinated community response to violence against women.
- 1.26 We further recommend that when provision of domestic violence perpetrator programmes is more consistent and complete that the government explores with Respect the potential for expanding the remit of such programmes beyond domestic violence into other areas of violence against women such as sexual harassment, sexual violence, using prostitutes and using pornography. Respect and our members have unique expertise. The skills, knowledge, experience and understanding developed in the work with men who have used gender based violence in their relationships have provided practitioners with a considerable and relevant basis for expanding this work to respond to other gender based violence against women and girls.
- 1.27 We recommend that any statutory service response to violence against women (including health, social services, mental health services and substance misuse services) includes required interventions with perpetrators. Providing an effective response which identifies perpetrators, assesses and manages the risk they pose

and offers them opportunities to change (via accredited perpetrator programmes) is a critical part of protecting current and future victims. This must be supported by the use of agreed screening tools, skilled training and adequate monitoring systems.

- 1.28 We recommend that statutory commissioners are required to work to agreed guidance (which is GED and human rights legislation compliant) when considering funding for services for victims, children and perpetrators.
- 1.29 We further recommend that this includes clear, funded routes for Children's Services and other statutory commissioners to refer perpetrators to Respect accredited members both for risk assessment and to attend a perpetrator programme, whenever children are identified as at risk from domestic violence.
- 1.30 We recommend that the government invests in research into effective interventions with perpetrators by contributing financially and in other ways to the Respect commissioned longitudinal research into programme outcomes and to other programme and intervention research, such as risk assessment effectiveness.
- 1.31 We further recommend that the government encourages the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) to carry out and publish research into the effectiveness of criminal justice based interventions with perpetrators.
- 1.32 We recommend that Respect is supported to take the lead, with our members and other relevant organisations, in developing new services to work with men and boys in response to men's use of all forms of violence against women and to explore the ways in which masculinity and the gendered assumption of entitlement in social as well as intimate relationships might be used to justify violence against women. Whilst we may not always yet know what this work might look like, we feel that we have the relevant expertise and skills to take the exploration and development forward.

2. Responses to specific questions in the draft strategy consultation document

2.1 *How should schools encourage young men to treat women and girls with respect and not to resort to violent behaviour?*

What are your views on the role of schools in helping children and young people to develop the values and skills that they need as they grow into adulthood, including mutual respect, rights and responsibilities, gender equality, and the ability to manage their feelings and emotions?

Should schools supplement this broader development by explicitly helping young people to understand issues such as domestic violence and sexual violence against women and girls?

- 2.1.1 Schools are not just sites for formal education. Schools are a key place where young women and men learn informal lessons about life, relationships and gender. In particular, young women learn from their peers about what is expected of them as females and what is likely to happen to them if they do not conform to these gender based expectations.
- 2.1.2 Schools can be havens from a violent home life for many pupils. However, for others, they are places where they experience abuse and violence.
- 2.1.3 Schools have an extremely important role in shaping social values. Healthy relationships and parenting education, explicitly addressing domestic and sexual violence throughout the school curriculum, delivered in age appropriate stages, should all play major parts in bringing about a gradual reduction in violence against women and social change in gender relations on a society- wide level.
- 2.1.4 Schools also have a legal duty to protect children and young people from harm and to promote their welfare. This clearly supports a duty to carry out work which can help young people in their current as well as future intimate

relationships. The Greater London Domestic Violence Project tool kit¹ for responding to children affected by domestic violence provides further guidance and support for schools and others working with children and young people.

- 2.1.5 As violence against women and girls has been clearly identified as both a consequence and cause of gender inequality, addressing all forms of gender based violence should be considered by schools as an essential element of fulfilling their Gender Equality Duty responsibilities.

What teaching works on this already?

- 2.1.6 The London Boroughs of Westminster, Islington, Hounslow, and other local authorities have already developed extensive programmes that deal effectively with domestic violence and other forms of violence against women, specifically developed for age appropriate, school based work. As with so much work already developed by front line experts on violence against women, significant good practice already exists, which now needs to be properly supported, funded and rolled out more widely.
- 2.1.7 The Womankind report *Challenging Violence, Changing Lives* provides an excellent overview of these resources. Such education needs to include work with young men on their understanding of masculinity and entitlements as males, with reference to sexual behaviour, rape and sexual assault, providing them with clear information and ways to explore what this means.
- 2.1.8 Respect's Young People's Services development project (funded by the DCSF) is developing and piloting a toolkit for working with young people who use force in intimate and family relationships. This will be a valuable resource for working with young people in a wide range of settings.
- 2.1.9 **We recommend that the resources and lessons learned from the pilot of the toolkit for working with young people who use violence should be widely disseminated amongst practitioners working with young people in a range of settings.**

¹ GLDVP, forthcoming, commissioned by the Department of Children, Schools and Families, 2009

2.1.10 We recommend national support, including funding and policy direction, for the use of well-recognised and tested programmes, resources, activities and approaches to address violence against women and to promote gender equality.

How should this responsibility be shared between parents and schools?

2.1.11 Parents need to be informed and supported to understand their roles and responsibilities and be properly resourced and equipped to be parents, including the resources to instil in their sons respect for women and girls. For many parents, this happens through observing and experiencing good parenting in their own family, but for many others this sadly does not happen. Therefore schools and other support agencies have a vital role to play in filling this gap. Those parents who do not take up this responsibility will often include those parents whose children most need the help or those parents who are not able to do this because of their own experiences of violence.

2.1.12 Schools should take responsibility for educating and supporting boys and young men to treat women and girls with respect and not to resort to violent behaviour and not rely on parents to share or take up this responsibility, as many will not do this.

2.1.13 Parents need to demonstrate and model respectful and healthy relationship skills at home, and know how to nurture their children's self respect and self esteem, in order to develop their children's understanding of healthy relationships. Respect and our members can in particular help to support men's contribution to this process through carrying out activities on healthy fathering and by providing role models of respect for women.

2.1.14 It is essential that, if they are to have any further contact with those children, men who have used violence against their children's mothers have access to domestic violence perpetrator programmes which include work on fathering and on attempting to repair some of the damage they have done to their children.

2.1.15 We strongly recommend that any work on parenting skills must have as an underlying principle that it is essential, as part of parenting, that a man who has used violence must either show respect for their children's mother or are

working towards that. Any parent who cannot show such respect for the other parent will be at risk of undermining the other parent's parenting and upsetting the child. This principle should apply whether the parenting work is taking place in schools for young people, in parenting support programmes for parents in general, or in programmes for men who have used violence against their child's mother.

- 2.1.16 **Respect member programmes are able to offer expertise on this principle as they are already promoting such an approach in their work with men who have used violence. Some have specialist additional programmes to work in more detail on men's fathering after domestic violence.**
- 2.1.17 Schools can help develop the skills needed for healthy relationships in various ways such as:
- Modelling healthy relationships between the genders both amongst school staff and from staff to pupils, and by modelling a healthy relationship between the school and parents.
 - Working with children and young people on their understanding of masculinity and femininity, gender based assumptions and expectations and, in particular, with young men on their gendered beliefs and attitudes.
 - Explicitly teaching children about how to have respectful relationships with their peers and with their teachers.
 - Including in the curriculum some basic information about responsible parenting, in case children do not see this modelled in their home life.
 - Doing this work as part of a whole school approach to gender equality, working across the curriculum, using PHSE and SRE but also other subjects. Maths, English, Drama, Art, History, Geography, IT, Media studies and many other mainstream subjects can contribute by focusing on specific aspects of gender equality and violence against women.
- 2.1.18 Schools need specialist help to sustain this and other work to prevent and challenge violence against women and girls. Funding streams for voluntary organisations to support young women and work with young men are needed to provide this. Specialist organisations with skills in carrying out education and counselling work with young women and young men on gender relations and

on violence prevention should be supported to do this, in conjunction with school staff and as part of a coordinated community response.

How well is sexual bullying being tackled in schools? Is the necessary support provided to schools to do this?

- 2.1.19 This question asks only about “sexual bullying” but does not clearly define what is meant by this – is it bullying of a sexual nature (which we would rather define as sexual assault or coercion) or is it gender-based (or sexist) bullying? This is an important distinction as it is unhelpful to minimise the seriousness of sexual assault or coercion by calling it sexual bullying. Both need to be tackled by schools. It is essential that there is clarity in both their definition and subsequent prevention and intervention strategies, in order for these strategies to be effective.
- 2.1.20 Our experience of work with men who have used abuse and research with young people has shown us that there is a great deal of confusion about the concept and practice of consent in sexual relationships. Sexual assault or coercion is forcing young women into sexual behaviour or making them feel that they have to agree to sex. This is clearly not the same as consent, but many young women feel that they have consented if they did not actively refuse because of their fears of violence or other retribution. Research carried out by the NSPCC confirms that significant numbers of young people have incorrect information about the legal status of sexual coercion and have assumptions about sex which support sexually abusive behaviour in relationships.
- 2.1.21 Therefore it is important for schools – and the violence against women and girls strategy – to be clear about consent and the boundaries of legal and illegal behaviour, particularly where the victim or perpetrator have consumed drugs or alcohol or where weapons or threats are involved. Many young women and men believe that consent has been given if the victim is too drunk to know what is going on, or feels that she has to consent because of fear of the consequences. The legal status of this behaviour is that it is often sexual assault or rape and may also include sexual exploitation, particularly where it takes place in the context of gangs.
- 2.1.22 Prevention work with young people on violence against women therefore must include discussions and learning about sexual behaviour, respectful

sexual relationships, sexual abuse and negotiation in intimate relationships. It must challenge concepts of male entitlement to sex from women and girls in ways which support women and girls and provide them with the confidence to negotiate safely. It is also important to provide young people with the opportunity to explore how to deal with other non-criminal forms of sexual coercion and pressure.

- 2.1.23 This is skilled work requiring significant experience and understanding and specialist training. School teachers may understandably feel ill-equipped either to carry out prevention work or to respond to sexual assault, coercion or other gender-based (or sexist) bullying involving school pupils.
- 2.1.24 Schools are not the only places for challenging young men's use of violence or for promoting alternatives to violence against women. Youth work, Youth Offending Teams, Connexions, Young parenting programmes, health services, counselling services, sports organisations and other organisations are also appropriate settings and in many cases are already involved in responding to violence against young women or in promoting attitudes and knowledge likely to decrease violence against women and girls in the future.
- 2.1.25 Such organisations, if they receive statutory funding or are themselves statutory organisations, are required to promote gender equality by the Gender Equality Duty.
- 2.1.26 Furthermore, all activities which are part of promoting gender equality, such as promoting equality in education, training and employment, will contribute towards the reduction in violence against women and girls and the increased ability of women and girls to take action if they do find themselves the victims of gender based violence.
- 2.1.27 **We therefore recommend that the government supports a programme of training for all schools' staff on all aspects of preventing violence against women. Additionally, teachers and other relevant staff should be trained in how to identify and respond to pupils perpetrating or experiencing violence and abuse. It is unrealistic to expect most teachers to be able to give specialist responses- but they should be able to identify and provide an initial response and refer on to a specialist.**

- 2.1.28 Therefore it is essential that every school has access to specialists, both to support victims and intervene with perpetrators. We recommend that funding is made available for specialist organisations with appropriate skills and experience to take the lead in carrying out this work.
- 2.1.29 We further recommend that parents are not permitted to withdraw their children from any of these activities, as they are helping schools to meet their legal obligations towards pupils.
- 2.1.30 We further recommend that a named appropriate individual is identified in each school to take responsibility for all work on gender based violence and that this person is provided with sufficient resources and decision making authority to be able to implement effective strategies for responding to and preventing gender based violence in schools.
- 2.1.31 We further recommend that inspection systems (such as Ofsted) include audits of how well schools are implementing strategies for responding to and preventing gender based violence as a mandatory requirement.
- 2.1.32 We further recommend that local authorities have a mandatory responsibility for ensuring that children and young people excluded from school, are able to benefit from work to prevent gender based violence and to protect them from it, as they are at high risk of experiencing and using gender based and other forms of violence.
- 2.1.33 Finally we recommend that the government support active dissemination and use of approved resources developed for use with children and young people to promote gender equality and challenge gender based violence. These could include, for example, the Respect tool kit for work with young people known to be using force²; the Spiralling tool kit developed by Safer Bristol³ for work with all children and young people to prevent domestic violence, including an original film about sexual violence in a teenage relationship; the

² Respect, 2009 (draft)

³ Safer Bristol, DVR, NYT and yeastproductions, 2006

Greater London Domestic Violence Project tool kit for responding to children affected by domestic violence⁴.

- 2.1.34 Government support for work to prevent violence and promote gender equality in schools must include funding both to provide resources for all schools and for training of relevant staff by specialists.

⁴ GLDVP for the Department of Children Schools and Families, *ibid*

2.2 How do social attitudes towards girls and women affect the problem of violence against women?

How can we best challenge the perceptions that allow people to stay silent on violence against women and for it to be accepted in various sectors of society?

- 2.2.1 We need to look for allies, especially amongst men, to challenge male violence. There are a great many men who do not use or advocate violence against women. There are others who through their work with men and boys promote non violence and respect for women and girls. We need to reach out to these men through the media and other sources to take responsibility for challenging their sons, brothers, fathers, uncles, friends and colleagues to, if they are using violence, seek support and, if these men won't do so, be prepared to involve others. Non-abusive men are a valuable resource: to speak up as a group against violence against women and in favour of respect and equality for women and girls; to support women and girls they know who are affected by violence and abuse; as individual role models for young men, boys and other adult men. If non-abusive men did this en masse it would change the social climate and discourse and take away the power of abusers. Respect is already involved in campaigns which support and encourage non-abusive men and boys to do this and will continue to do so. This includes our role in the Coalition of Men and Boys⁵.
- 2.2.2 Legislation, policy and clear publicity from public bodies about the unacceptability of all forms of violence against women help to strengthen and support any education and campaigning work with individuals or groups.
- 2.2.3 Social change can also be promoted through actively valuing public figures who champion non violence and gender equality. Too often, celebrities are given un-critical publicity when they commit sexual harassment or violence against women. Alternative figures, such as sports people or musicians who strongly challenge all forms of violence against women should be promoted in

⁵ <http://www.themenscoalition.org.uk/Welcome.html>

public campaigns. Being non violent and respecting women and girls need to be promoted as the 'cool' things to do.

- 2.2.4 **We recommend that the government considers widespread, far reaching and creative ways of promoting clear messages about non violence and about respect for women and girls in public and private life.**
- 2.2.5 **We recommend that Respect's experience and expertise at carrying out public campaigning and social change work to encourage non-abusive men and boys to promote non violence and gender equality is used by any government campaign on this topic.**

How can we challenge cultural beliefs which promote forced marriage, crimes committed in the name of 'honour' and female genital mutilation?

- 2.2.6 **We strongly believe, through extensive experience of working on violence against women, that *all* violence against women is cultural.** The differences between communities include variations in the forms of violence and abuse which abusive men use; how they justify their use of such violence; the historical context for such justifications and the extent to which these strategies are accepted by the wider community. However, the intention and effects are similar – maintaining men and boy's privilege, entitlement and control over women and girls.
- 2.2.7 All communities, including white western communities of all classes, have notions of honour and respect based on women's behaviour and men's assumption of entitlement.
- 2.2.8 There are of course variations within and between communities in expressions and use of culture as an excuse of men's violence. Punishments meted out on women who do not meet expectations can be more extreme in some parts of some communities than in others. These clearly need appropriate specialist responses and where the behaviours used to enforce the sense of honour are criminal these need to be met with clear and unequivocal criminal justice system responses.

- 2.2.9 Sometimes religion is used to justify violence by some men and occasionally women, whilst others in the same community from the same religion will challenge such interpretations (usually by male leaders of that faith) of religious texts and practices.
- 2.2.10 Likewise within *all* communities there are women and men who oppose violence against women and girls.
- 2.2.11 It is vital to integrate the principle of respecting human rights in all communities into any response to specific cultural contexts: culture must never be allowed to be used as an excuse or justification for violence.**
- 2.2.12 Firstly we need to identify and support *appropriate* community leaders in the communities where these issues are more prevalent, so the issue can be challenged by people with authority and authenticity. More broadly, we need to identify and empower those within a community who do not support violence against women and girls. These are the people we need to engage with in order to challenge others within their community through work such as culturally specific perpetrators programmes which hold abusive men to account, seek to change their attitudes and behaviours and reduce the risks they pose.
- 2.2.13 At the same time we should provide support services for victims that address their specific needs and don't marginalise them further, particularly if they come from communities which have difficulties accessing mainstream support.
- 2.2.14 Men who use violence against women may have also experienced the oppressions of racism or other forms of marginalisation such as unemployment, poor mental health, discrimination because of legal status. They may well need support to deal with these factors and indeed it is often in the interests of women's welfare that their partner is provided with help, for example to gain employment. However, individuals from within the same communities as well as individuals from outside those communities can often undermine women's safety by allowing men to use these experiences as an explanation, even a partial one, for their violent behaviour. This can often be unintended but has serious consequences for women.

- 2.2.15 Cross cultural or matched cultural working in any response to violence against women needs to be carried out by individuals who can separate out the experiences and ensure that support for men's marginalisation or oppression is not allowed in any way to be treated as an explanation or justification for their violence.
- 2.2.16 Given the difficulties of maintaining the distinction between intervening with men's violence and supporting their needs arising from racism or other forms of oppression we recommend that the same staff are not required to provide both services on an ongoing basis and that wherever possible, support and intervention services have strong links and referral systems to ensure that both sets of needs are adequately met.
- 2.2.17 We recommend that the government increases funding and other support for both specialist organisations and mainstream agencies working to protect potential and actual victims of such crimes.
- 2.2.18 We further recommend that all work on violence against women and girls is underpinned by an understanding of the range of justifications used for that violence and how these link to concepts of entitlement, respect and expectations which may be presented as "honour".

Is there a link between sexualised images, perceptions and actual violence?

- 2.2.19 Research carried out and reviewed by the American Psychological Association⁶ demonstrates a clear link between the sexualisation of girls and sexual harassment, beliefs that women deserve rape and sexual assault and low confidence in young women⁷.
- 2.2.20 Respect and our members' experience of working with adult men who have used physical and sexual abuse and violence in their relationships provides anecdotal evidence that viewing sexualised images supports beliefs that

⁶ APA <http://www.apa.org/pi/wpo/sexualizationrep.pdf>

⁷ Zirbuggen et al, 2007

women are primarily sexual objects. These beliefs may be temporarily highly active, for example, immediately after someone has been looking at sexualised images⁸.

- 2.2.21 Our collective experience has also shown us that it is often mainstream sources such as TV music stations, men's magazines such as *Zoo* and *Nuts* and newspapers such as *The Sun*, which promote sexualised images. It is therefore insufficient to only target pornography for attention, although this of course needs consideration.
- 2.2.22 Research and practice strongly suggest that sexualised images of women promote the concept of women always being sexually available, which allows men to objectify women more easily and therefore find it easier to abuse and attack them. Combining these with stereotyped portrayals of women who are supposedly sexually powerful and want/need/demand sex creates a potent mix that makes it easier for men who violently and sexually attack women to justify their behaviour.
- 2.2.23 We recognise and acknowledge that this isn't a simple causal connection. Many men undoubtedly view sexualised images without sexually assaulting women. However, the attitudes these images create affect people's assumptions about women's sexual availability, which in turn support justifications of and tolerance for certain forms of violence against women on the grounds that they were probably "asking for it" (Fiske, 2009). This kind of statement amongst men who don't sexually abuse serves to support the justifications by men who do.
- 2.2.24 New technologies are rapidly expanding people's ability to view extreme pornography (e.g. via the internet) and to experience extreme violence vicariously (e.g. through playing video games) which allows people to see and imagine themselves behaving in sadistic and violent ways, far more graphically and realistically than they ever could before (except perhaps in real war situations).

⁸ Fiske, 2009

- 2.2.25 This greater access to and availability of extreme pornography creates and legitimises the demand for and creation of space for what is often seen as “softer” images in mainstream media, promoting highly sexualised and stereotypical images of women and girls in legal contexts.
- 2.2.26 We believe this is starting to filter through into our society in a negative way, creating a climate that normalises tolerance of pornographic images of women, and of serious violence, which is beginning to affect the behaviour of children, young people and adults.
- 2.2.27 We also believe that the early sexualisation – and idealisation and airbrushing of the images of real women and girls – sets impossible standards of attractiveness and thinness, and this is causing great distress, pressure and unhappiness to young girls, and creating confusion for young men about what to expect from real women, and real relationships.
- 2.2.28 Pornography creates a demand for trafficking in women and girls, which, in itself, is a recognised form of violence against women. In many cases it appears to be difficult to distinguish between pornography that is made with the full and active consent of those taking part and that which depicts real sexual assault and rape. Protection for women and girls in the pornography industry is reportedly weak and the extent of ‘consent’ may often be questionable.
- 2.2.29 We recognise that – however desirable it may be – it is probably impractical to ban all sexualised images of women and girls in mainstream media. However, we believe that it is possible to promote alternatives and that there are strategies that we could explore for promoting a greater respect for women and girls and celebrating a wider and more realistic range of body images than those promoted in most popular culture.
- 2.2.30 We recommend that the police and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) continue to use the full force of the criminal justice system to respond to illegal pornography. The CPS Violence Against Women Strategy supports this (CPS, 2002).**

- 2.2.31 We further suggest that the government and other relevant agencies should consider whether the boundaries of what is illegal and legal need to be re-drawn.
- 2.2.32 We further recommend that the policy makers, practitioners and others involved in education and violence prevention work explore a range of ways of promoting critical thinking about sexualised images and their effects on men and women. Schools and youth services could also promote and support young people creating their own alternative positive images and alternative view points of women and girls, using the potential of new media to create and circulate their own written and visual materials. They could also support young men and women who wish to campaign against pornography or other sexualised images or against sexism in general.
- 2.2.33 We further recommend that, as part of implementing the Gender Equality Duty, all public sector organisations make it a disciplinary offence or breach of contract for a public sector employee or sub-contractor to watch, look at or share pornographic or sexually offensive images of women and girls during work time, on work premises or on work equipment (such as office lap tops) or on property or during time paid for by the public sector, such as staying in a hotel whilst at a work conference. This should include viewing static images and watching pornographic (“adult”) films or live sexualised performances such as visiting strip or lap dancing clubs. This would be in keeping with the Gender Equality Duty and would provide a strong public message that promoting women and girls as sexual objects is contrary to gender equality.

How could we help women and girls to achieve greater confidence in their lives?

- 2.2.34 Respect welcomes this emphasis on women and girls achieving greater confidence. By increasing the confidence of women and girls in all areas of their lives, we are helping to reduce the risks of violence against them by enabling them to recognise such risks, take preventative action, including asking others for help.
- 2.2.35 As already noted, violence against women is both a cause and consequence of gender inequality and discrimination against women and girls. We believe

that education, employment, access to training, access to high quality affordable child care, equality between men and women in public life, and equality between men and women in household chores and caring responsibilities will therefore all support work to end violence against women and girls.

- 2.2.36 We further wish to highlight in particular that campaigning and education work needs to include a critical examination of the pressures on women and girls to present themselves primarily as sexual beings **and to take responsibility for men's sexual needs and wants**. The research carried out by the American Psychological Association on the sexualisation of young girls (see above) and other research on the impact of men watching sexualised images of women at work provide clear examples of the effects of what is often considered to be "mainstream" images of women, on women's safety and feelings of safety at work and in public life.
- 2.2.37 Respect recommends that the government actively pursue and support the implementation of the Gender Equality Duty in the public sector in ways which set as high a standard as possible for the promotion of gender equality, respect for women and girls and challenges to all forms of gender based violence.
- 2.2.38 **We recommend that the government considers practical measures to set an example for the promotion of gender equality.**
- 2.2.39 Improving criminal and civil justice responses to all forms of violence against women should be recognised and promoted as a means of improving women's confidence to take full part in public and private life. It improves women's confidence when they believe that when they do so it will be without violence or if they do experience violence, it will be dealt with seriously and effectively.

How can we encourage peer-to-peer support to challenge violence against women and girls?

- 2.2.40 Within Respect membership, there are many men who are dedicated to non violence in their personal, public and professional lives and who are proactively working on this issue on an equal and respectful basis with women.

- 2.2.41 Respect is also a founder member of the Coalition on Men and Boys (www.themenscoalition.org.uk) which provides a forum for the development of peer-to-peer support amongst men and boys to challenge violence against women and girls and to promote gender equality.
- 2.2.42 Too often the non-abusive voice of what is probably the majority of men and boys is not heard. Respectful and non-violent men and boys need to be supported and encouraged to make their views known. In order to support young men in this, adult men need to be championing and encouraging them and also supporting or enabling young men develop their own ways of making their views known, perhaps through the use of new media and other communications.
- 2.2.43 We believe that there is great potential for peer-to-peer support between men and boys to challenge the attitudes and sense of entitlement which are used to justify use of violence against women and girls, particularly regarding access to sexual and domestic services, such as housework and child care.
- 2.2.44 Respect would very much like to be an active part of any movement to support such peer-to-peer support.**
- How could we introduce self-defence training for all women and girls?*
- 2.2.45 Respect believes that self-defence training can provide a positive support for women and girls to allow them to feel confident and safe in public areas and in private.
- 2.2.46 We also believe that it is important that self-defence training focuses on avoidance of violence and confidence to respond appropriately to different situations and that it does not place responsibility on women and girls for managing the violent behaviour of others.
- 2.2.47 We also believe that good self-defence training needs to include recognition of where women are most at risk and how their sexual and intimate relationships may be sites of danger as well as public places.
- 2.2.48 The London Centre for Personal Safety has provided excellent self-defence training for women and girls which meets these requirements and we

recommend that models of self-defence such as these are supported and commissioned locally.

- 2.2.49 We recommend that the government considers commissioning a system of criteria for self-defence courses for women and girls which promote gender equality and work from an in-depth understanding of where and how women are at risk and feel at risk. This should include a detailed understanding of the specific ways which some women may face additional risks due to their sexuality, disability, age, ethnicity or other factors.
- 2.2.50 We further recommend that national and local government work together to ensure the provision of free self-defence training for all women and girls, following agreed criteria, available at times and locations which make them accessible to all women and girls. This will include consideration of the particular needs of women with disabilities, older women, girls and young women, women from the full range of ethnicities, lesbian and bisexual women, and refugee women.

2.3 Are we doing enough to protect and support children affected by adult violence? Who's looking out for them and what do they need?

What are your views on whether staff in all services that work with children and families have the knowledge and skills to identify assess and refer children who are affected by adult violence?

- 2.3.1 We want to be clear about what 'adult violence' means in this context – as it could include football hooliganism, street mugging, robbery and other non-gender-based violence. It is essential – particularly given this is a consultation on violence against women and girls – to focus on how violence against women and girls impacts on and affects children – not just to talk about adult violence. In particular, we believe that an understanding of the gendered nature of intimate partner violence, for example, as well as other forms of violence against women, is essential for all staff in order for them to provide effective protection and support to children.
- 2.3.2 **We recommend that the strategy includes a clear definition of what is meant by “violence against women and girls” and that language and concepts are consistent throughout the document.**
- 2.3.3 Children are profoundly affected by violence against women in a range of ways and many individuals and organisations attempt to respond to and protect them. This effort is sometimes unsuccessful due to the extent of the violence and the difficulties of stopping it. However, it is also sometimes unsuccessful because the organisational response focused on changing the victim's rather than the perpetrator's behaviour.
- 2.3.4 This is particularly noticeable in responses to intimate partner violence in statutory agencies when both partners are alleged to have used violence or where the victim is identified as responsible for protecting the children from the harm done by the perpetrator. This emphasis on the victim's responsibility for her partner's behaviour demonstrates a lack of understanding of the danger and risk she is often under, fails to consider the strategies she may already be using and most importantly fails to locate responsibility for

changing with the person whose behaviour needs to change for the risk to stop.

- 2.3.5 Consequently, the most vulnerable women, particularly those who are also struggling with poverty, substance misuse, mental health or other problems, are unlikely to be supported as well as they should be. The consequence of that for children is that they too are unprotected and unsupported.
- 2.3.6 Children in these situations are too often either not picked up quickly enough by services or are confronted with the very real prospect of being removed from their mother, who is often blamed for her perceived “failure to protect” the children, as opposed to blaming the father / step-father for causing the risk and danger to the children and working to eradicate or limit his abusive behaviour.
- 2.3.7 “Failure to protect”, when applied to victims of violence against women, is a redundant phrase: if a woman who is a victim of violence was in a position to protect her children, she would do so and very often she remains in a violent relationship because she believes, often correctly, that it is safer for the children to do so.
- 2.3.8 The risks of homicide, including child homicide, increases after separation. Violence continues in about 50% of cases and the likelihood that children will witness violence after separation increases in many cases. E.g. Children may be more likely to witness or get caught up in violence on handover for child contact visits than when they were at home and able to hide in their bedrooms or when their mothers were present to protect them..
- 2.3.9 The fact that staying in an abusive relationship may actually offer more protection than leaving is often not accepted by statutory agencies. This is well demonstrated by the policies and procedures presented by many local Safeguarding Children’s Boards. These often emphasise the victim’s need to “choose” to leave as the key aspect of achieving safety, when what are needed are services which protect the victim and her children, hold the perpetrator accountable and legal responses to prevent them from having access to their victims.

- 2.3.10 Child protection procedures frequently appear to work in opposition to the processes in child contact proceedings after separation. The latter tends towards an assumption that contact between the non-resident parent and the children is going to take place and is in the child's best interests. As post-separation contact is usually facilitated by the resident parent, this frequently leads to those victims of domestic violence being forced to meet their abusive ex-partners when handing over their children. This provides the opportunity for the perpetrator to continue to harass and abuse the victim in front of the children and for the children to have to experience unsafe or inappropriate contact.
- 2.3.11 This is contradictory to the child protection processes which place pressure on victims of domestic violence to leave the perpetrator for the sake of the children. In these situations many victims feel they and their children would be safer returning to the family home or allowing the perpetrator to return, so that they can manage the abuse themselves and prevent unsafe unsupervised care of the children by the perpetrator.
- 2.3.12 Placing responsibility clearly on the perpetrator also importantly allows agencies to focus the need for changing behaviour and the identification of risk on the person causing the danger and disruption and is therefore more likely to result in positive outcomes for children. We understand that many practitioners who are not skilled in working with perpetrators are fearful or uncertain of how to do this. Practitioners with skills and experience of work with perpetrators can provide expertise for improving general front line responses as well as specialist services.
- 2.3.13 Children's Services and other professionals need to carry out a clear and thorough assessment of who is doing what, to whom and in what circumstances, to enable a clear identification of who is the victim and who is the perpetrator.
- 2.3.14 In most cases, when both adults have used violence, one will have been doing so as part of a pattern of coercive control over the other and the victim may have been using force as self-defence, defending children or as a form of resistance. Failure to identify this correctly will lead to interventions which are unsafe for children, women and men.

- 2.3.15 Respect has prepared a position statement on categories of clients presenting or referred as involved with domestic violence, to help professionals to assess clearly who is the perpetrator and who is the victim. This includes guidance on how to do this when both have been identified as using violence and to be able to assess who has used violence in self defence or resistance and who has done so as the perpetrator. This position statement also includes guidance on how to respond to different situations. This position statement is currently under consultation with our members, other practitioners, policy makers and researchers and will be finalised by the end of July 2009 and available for public use.
- 2.3.16 Too often when services intervene, domestic abuse perpetrators are left out of the picture. The perpetrator must be held to account, the risks posed by him thoroughly assessed and opportunities provided for him to change his behaviour. Even if the original relationship with the child's mother has ended, he will still have contact with the child and therefore the victim and he may also have other children. Alongside this, continual monitoring and risk management are essential. Respect's accredited members are able to provide this specialist response.
- 2.3.17 We recommend that support services that place women & children at the heart of intervention need to be consistent, relevant and above all provide proper support for victims of domestic violence as an integral and essential part of protecting the children living with it.**
- 2.3.18 We further recommend that the government considers including Respect's position statement on categories of domestic violence client within guidance to Safeguarding Children's Boards and others as relevant and ensures that child protection staff in particular have specialist training on this topic in order to be able to assess more effectively who is the perpetrator and who is the victim.**
- 2.3.19 We recommend that all child protection staff have training in how to engage and work with perpetrators and in assessing their parenting, in order to place a clear emphasis in child protection plans on the behaviour of the person who is**

causing the problem. We can recommend specialist trainers with this expertise.

- 2.3.20 We further recommend that child protection staff continue to place an emphasis on providing support and assistance for the non-abusing parent and that they are guided to treat this as an essential and integral part of child protection.
- 2.3.21 We further recommend that the government promotes the sample Safeguarding Children's Board procedure for responding to children affected by domestic violence which is contained in the Department of Children, Schools and Families toolkit on responding to children affected by domestic violence (in press). This procedure provides a clear framework for responding to children in a variety of settings without placing responsibility for men's violence on women and locating the emphasis for changing behaviour on the violent parent.
- 2.3.22 We recommend that commissioning arrangements be put in place so that Children's Services and other statutory agencies have clear, funded routes to refer perpetrators to Respect accredited members both for risk assessment and to attend a perpetrator programme, whenever children are identified as at risk from domestic violence.

Are these staff working together effectively (both within and across organisations) to protect and support children?

- 2.3.23 Individual staff are often working effectively within and across organisations to protect and support children.
- 2.3.24 The problems highlighted above in 2.3.1 – 2.3.15 are frequently institutional and written into required procedures which work against the safety of women and children affected by intimate partner violence and other forms of violence against women.
- 2.3.25 As part of the system of assessing and responding to the needs of children affected by intimate partner violence, specialist organisations with skill and

expertise at supporting women or working with violent men are often not used or not used effectively.

- 2.3.26 Specialist organisations such as our members are also not provided with the funding or commissioning structures to play the full role that they could take across the country. In Plymouth (Ahimsa) and in London (DVIP), for example, specialist domestic violence intervention organisations provide skilled specialist risk assessments for child protection and child contact proceedings where there is domestic violence. Such a service could be provided across the country.
- 2.3.27 Respect and our members have the skills, knowledge and expertise to provide training and resources to develop specialist domestic violence intervention services providing risk assessment as well as group work for perpetrators of domestic violence across the country.
- 2.3.28 Respect and our members can also be involved in delivering specialist training for generic staff in statutory and other organisations such as Children's Services, mental health and substance misuse services. Such training could include how to engage and work safely and effectively with perpetrators on an individual basis when they present to those organisations and how to work with specialist domestic violence intervention programmes.
- 2.3.29 Respect would also like to explore the possibilities for our members to expand their remit to include addressing other forms of violence against women.
- 2.3.30 Respect's pilot programmes working with young people who use violence and abuse in close relationships could be supported to share their expertise and learning across the country. Respect has commissioned an evaluation of the pilot programmes and the results will be available in autumn 2010. The lessons from this pilot and evaluation will help to inform skilled work with young people, who are both victims of violence and a risk to others because of their own use of force. The government should consider supporting the lessons from this evaluation.

What types of support services are most effective and what should be done differently?

- 2.3.31 The criminal justice system is not ever going to be able to attend to all perpetrators of violence against women. Currently there is attrition at every point of the criminal justice system: Many police call outs result in no further action or caution; many of those arrested are not charged; many of those charged are not convicted; many of those convicted receive inadequate sentences such as bindovers, fines or punishment orders. Only a tiny minority of perpetrators is prosecuted, convicted and sentenced to attend a probation run perpetrator programme (IDAP or CDVP) or gains access to the Healthy Relationships programme while in prison. So, whilst the criminal justice deals effectively with some perpetrators, the vast majority do not receive any behaviour change opportunity at all.
- 2.3.32 Domestic violence perpetrator programmes are therefore an invaluable contribution to responding to and preventing violence against women, whether the men are referred to them from the criminal justice system or from community mandates and referrals.
- 2.3.33 Provision of domestic violence intervention programmes working with men is frequently criticised as either ineffective or irrelevant as a service for victims.
- 2.3.34 Evidence from rigorous, well structured and analysed longitudinal research with over 800 men taking part in domestic violence intervention programmes in the USA demonstrates the effectiveness of perpetrator programmes working as part of a coordinated community response. Four years after programme completion, over 80% of men were no longer using violence ⁹.
- 2.3.35 Contrary to many popular assumptions, perpetrator programmes are not usually counselling services for meeting the needs of perpetrators. For most perpetrator programmes, the primary client or intended beneficiaries of the service with men are their partner, ex-partner or new partner and their children.

⁹ Gondolf, 2002

- 2.3.36 Many programmes do employ therapists or counsellors or use techniques from therapy or counselling to work with the men, as well as others such as educational, cognitive behavioural or action learning. This blend and range of approaches and skills helps to strengthen the operation and effectiveness of programmes.
- 2.3.37 The Respect Accreditation Standard explicitly requires that organisations working with perpetrators are working in the interests of victims and their children, by challenging violence and the underlying belief systems, by promoting alternative ways of thinking and behaving, by carrying out risk assessments, monitoring and management, by providing closely integrated support and safety services for victims which allow workers to do case management effectively, using information from perpetrators and victims to protect and support victims.
- 2.3.38 Some perpetrators of domestic violence may also want or need counselling for themselves. Programmes may refer men to other services or to other parts of their own service. They will, however, maintain a clear distinction between the intervention work to change their violent behaviour and underlying belief systems and their own counselling needs. To do otherwise would risk undermining the clarity of the intervention work with domestic violence.
- 2.3.39 Programmes also contribute to victim safety in many other ways including: reaching women who would not otherwise have accessed support; providing specialist domestic violence court reports for child protection and family courts; ensuring that victims have accurate information about the likelihood that their partner or ex-partner will cease his abusive behaviour, something which is not available from any other expert source; helping women to make sense of this information; accept that their partner may not change; understand that they are not to blame and take steps to protect themselves accordingly; supporting safe separation, thus minimising the risk of serious violence and homicide at the time of highest homicide risk for women and children.
- 2.3.40 Perpetrator programmes have built up a critical mass of expertise, knowledge, experience and skill in assessing, working with and monitoring men who use violence against women and working with women's services to promote the safety of women and children. Our members have substantial skills in carrying

out specialist domestic violence risk assessments which help to protect women and children and in providing training for other agencies on how to engage and work with perpetrators in order to increase the safety of women and children.

- 2.3.41 We were pleased that the Home Office supported the process of developing a national system of accreditation of perpetrator programmes with Respect in 2006–2008 and we hope that they can support roll out and capacity building to provide programmes across the country.
- 2.3.42 We are also pleased that the Department of Children Schools and Families has supported programmes with funding, particularly through the funding for Cafcass (Children and Families Court Advice and Support Service) referrals to programmes. It is particularly welcome that DCSF has used an amended version of the Respect accreditation assessment as a means of assessing suitability for this funding and has used Respect to carry these out. This provides a model of Commissioning Agency actions, using the Respect accreditation standard and assessment as a quality assurance, for other statutory funders to use, such as Children’s Services.
- 2.3.43 In 2008 the Respect Phonenumber (funded by the Home Office) spoke to more than 1000 perpetrators of intimate partner violence. Most of them had not been convicted of any criminal offence – and most demonstrated motivation to change. They want to participate in programmes. Adequate central government funding for our members to provide Respect accredited services working with perpetrators of domestic violence, including linked support services for their partners and ex-partners would provide more safety for women and children.
- 2.3.44 Individual work and responses in children’s , health, substance misuse, and mental health services could all improve and Respect accredited members could support such improvements by being funded to provide the full range of specialist services.
- 2.3.45 Without community perpetrator programmes it is difficult to see how some public sector organisations such as Children’s Services and the family courts can fulfil their legal obligations to protect children. It is therefore significant that there are entire areas of the country with no community based programme at all. The East of England, most of Wales and significant areas of

the Midlands are without any programme outside the criminal justice system. Even within areas with programmes, there are many cities, towns and local areas without any reasonably accessible service.

- 2.3.46** We recommend that the DCSF and HO work together with Respect to ensure that there is adequate provision of accredited domestic violence programmes for children's services, family courts and community organisations to be able to make referrals to and for abusers to self refer . This should never be at the expense of, or as an alternative to funding for specialist services for women and children and should be seen as an integral and valuable element in a coordinated community response to violence against women.
- 2.3.47** We further recommend that when provision of domestic violence intervention programmes is more consistent and complete that the government explores with Respect the potential for expanding the remit beyond domestic violence into other areas of violence against women such as sexual harassment, sexual violence, using prostitutes or pornography.
- 2.3.48** We recommend that commissioning agencies work to agreed guidance for perpetrator programme funding, which should include using the Respect Accreditation Standard and assessment system as criteria.
- 2.3.49** Funding for Respect to carry out such assessments should therefore be included in any long term strategy for supporting work with violent men, as a means of quality assurance.

Where are the main gaps in current provision?

- 2.3.50** Provision of services for victims must also include services which address the behaviour of the men hurting them. Respect accredited programmes can provide victims, the courts and other professionals with specialist information about the likelihood of change. If it is not possible for an individual man to change, the provision of intervention programmes also provides women with a unique service, which monitors and supervises safe separation from a violent man, through the risk and case management provided by domestic violence intervention programmes.

- 2.3.51 Perpetrator programmes also provide a valuable source of support, advice and information for all partners and ex-partners, which includes many women who do not otherwise approach any service for help for themselves. Some do this because they do not wish to be identified as experiencing domestic violence, some because they feel very clearly that it is for the man to sort out for himself, others for other reasons. Perpetrator programmes therefore also provide a significant advice and information service to women.
- 2.3.52 There are currently significant geographical gaps in the provision of domestic violence perpetrator programmes nationally and a near total lack of community based programmes to address other forms of violence against women.
- 2.3.53 The gaps in provision of such programmes detracts from women's safety, as such programmes provide significant and unique routes to bringing about change in women's lives and the risks posed to them by violence. Such gaps cannot be filled by other services or legal interventions alone.
- 2.3.54 Provision for victims has to be consistent, effective and appropriate for women's needs. This includes not only provision of emergency protection, medical and housing services, but also long term, specialist therapeutic and support services to help women and girls recover from their experiences.
- 2.3.55 The HAC response to the government's response to the original HAC report on domestic violence, forced marriage and "honour" violence (HAC, 2008) criticised the government for putting too much emphasis and resource into criminal justice measures, at the expense of other sorts of interventions. Committee Chairman Keith Vaz said *"We are disappointed that the government has chosen not to take forward other recommendations, especially those around stronger guidance on commissioning and funding services at the local level and on increasing availability of perpetrator programmes. We also consider the Government's comments on our overarching conclusion – that the government response remains disproportionately focussed on criminal justice response at the expense of prevention, to be confusing. Whilst the government acknowledges that "there is more to be done in relation to prevention" the actions it lists are in our view measures to identify abuse already taking place and not to prevent*

its occurrence.” (Keith Vaz - Committee Chair’s response to the Government’s Response to the report issued on 23 July 2008.)

- 2.3.56 The legal system could be developed to provide ways of supporting interventions with young people who use violence and abuse in their intimate relationships, families or in other settings.**
- 2.3.57 Through our Young People’s Services development project, Respect recognises that some women who are victimised by partners are also victimised by their children. The response to these children and young people needs to be specialist and different to the responses to adult perpetrators, taking into account both their age and their own (often current or very recent) experiences of witnessing or directly experiencing abuse. The provision of protection and support for their mothers is also a specialist and different intervention to that provided to victims of adult perpetrators.
- 2.3.58 It is not usually desirable to use the criminal justice system as an initial response to young people’s use of violence against intimate partners, family members or other gender based violence.
- 2.3.59 We recommend that the government considers extending the scope of civil orders to provide a clear initial response to young people’s use of violence and abuse against intimate partners and family members and other forms of gender based violence. This could provide a way of requiring young people to change particular aspects of their behaviour and to participate in relevant programmes thus providing them with opportunities to change their behaviour.**
- 2.3.60 For this to work, legislation would be needed requiring local authorities to provide or commission high quality relevant services for young people using violence. Respect’s pilot programmes for working with young people provide an excellent template from which to start. These pilots are taking place during 2009 – 10 and will be evaluated throughout that time to assess the usefulness of the toolkit and the impact of the service on young people, their families and partners. The results of the process and the evaluation will be available in 2010. The draft tool kit for providing such a programme is available from the Respect Young People’s Project workers, via Respect.

- 2.3.61 Legislation would also be needed to provide civil courts with the scope to make orders temporarily removing young people from the home or requiring them to abstain from violence and threats, as well as to attend programmes, and for courts to attach penalties, which could include criminal action, if the young person fails to comply.
- 2.3.62 **We recommend that the government explores such legislation as a means of protecting women and girls from violence from young men in particular, but also from young women, and in a variety of settings, including but not confined to the home. This could also provide legal remedies for young people using violence in other settings.**
- 2.3.63 **We further recommend that the government provides funding and other support for the development, monitoring and evaluation of programmes working with young people using violence and particularly gender based violence.**
- 2.3.64 **We also recommend that the government ensures that staff working with young people in a range of settings have access to specialist training about responding to young people's use of force and to help prevent this.**

2.4 How can we all better pick up on and respond to early signs of violence?

How could public service providers play a stronger role in identifying and responding to the early signs of violence against women and girls?

How would you like to access information on how to support a friend, colleague or partner if they told you that they had been a victim of violence?

How can government better help supporters of victims?

2.4.1 The Criminal Justice System already has the potential to pick up on and respond effectively to early signs of violence. Police and CPS have been clearly directed by government and their own internal policy development processes to make more effective use of the current system.

2.4.2 The HAC report states that:

191. Failure by the police adequately to assess the risk of harm to victims has, in a number of cases, resulted in homicides which might have been prevented. The police must ensure that work under way to implement consistent risk assessment across all forces, in partnership with other agencies, puts right these failings.

201. Most of our witnesses agreed that there has been progress in terms of the police response, in moving away from a culture of diffidence towards domestic violence over the last ten years or so. The top level of the police service, aided by the relevant ACPO working groups, appears to have made a commitment further to improve the police response to victims. However, the evidence we heard suggests that the experience of individual victims remains varied, and depends to a great degree on the commitment and knowledge of the individual officer. Police representatives agreed that it remains difficult to ensure that every front line officer is trained and that the response is consistent every time.

202. We therefore recommend that the police service renews its efforts to ensure that every police officer is trained to respond to domestic and “honour”-based violence and forced marriage. Comprehensive, accredited training must be implemented swiftly. HM Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) should ensure that, as part of its inspection regime, it assesses whether, and to what standard, forces have implemented training.

Respect response to Home Office consultation on violence against women strategy

203. We note that ACPO has not yet published its strategy and action plan on “honour”-based violence, and urge it to do so.

HAC, 2008

- 2.4.3 Front line practitioners in statutory and other relevant services need specialist training on how to identify, assess, engage and manage perpetrators of all forms of violence against women. Respect approved trainers are ideally placed to be commissioned locally or nationally to provide such specialist training.
- 2.4.4 We need better support for community based perpetrator programmes and programmes working with young people using violence. These programmes often work with victims who do not and will not come to the attention of any other service and with perpetrators who may not yet have come to the attention of the CJS. Supporting this work helps us to pick up and respond to early signs of violence and of violence re-occurring.
- 2.4.5 **We therefore recommend that the police, CPS, other agencies and the government prioritise responding to the recommendations in the HAC report in order to pick up on warning signs and provide early interventions to violence against women.**
- 2.4.6 **We also recommend that local statutory services commission specialist organisations, such as Respect and our members, to deliver specialist training as detailed above.**
- 2.4.7 **We recommend that mental health and substance misuse agencies should carry out routine screening to identify perpetrators of violence against women, using agreed screening tools and supported by skilled training and adequate monitoring systems. This would provide both opportunities for early intervention and also better quality data about the violence against women, which could then inform the development of appropriate interventions.**
- 2.4.8 We believe that clear public awareness raising campaigns would be beneficial, assisting everyone to know what to do when they experience, witness or become aware of violence of all forms against women..

Respect response to Home Office consultation on violence against women strategy

- 2.4.9 We are aware that many people feel unwilling to intervene in what they see as a private matter such as sexual or physical violence in the home or between adults who know each other. Research and experience has shown that, in the long term, most women are pleased when someone calls the police to help to protect them, even though at the time they may feel, or present as being, angry or displeased. Behaving angrily at a police response is often a form of protection for the woman, so that her abuser does not think that she supports police intervention, and it would be helpful for the general public to understand this.
- 2.4.10 **We recommend that the police commission long-term research into women's reactions to police intervention, such as five years after the intervention took place, to find out what the impact was on them and their children. Findings from this research, if positive, could then be promoted to the public as part of an awareness raising campaign to encourage people to report all forms of violence against women and girls to the police.**

2.5 How best can we keep track of the most serious offenders and reduce the risks those individuals pose?

What new powers would help the police to control serial perpetrators?

- 2.5.1 We welcome the recent developments and government support for improving the ways we identify and respond to the most serious offenders and reduce the risks they pose. Services like the Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVAs) and Independent Sexual Violence Advocates (ISVAs), the national coordinating support for these provided by Coordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse (CAADA), the Specialist Domestic Violence Courts (SDVCs) and the introduction of Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs) have all contributed greatly to an improved understanding of risk and a more coordinated response to it.
- 2.5.2 We would like to see urgent action to implement all the improvements to the criminal justice system as recommended in the HAC report (see above). This is an essential starting point for any improvement to tracking and responding to all offenders, including those identified as high risk or serial. Many high risk offenders first come to the attention of statutory and voluntary agencies as low risk. It is therefore important to work with apparently “low” risk offenders both to accurately assess their actual risk, and to provide effective interventions to prevent low risk offenders from becoming high risk.
- 2.5.3 We believe that the emphasis in MARACs on victims and on the assessment of risk only from information from the victim limits the potential for such systems to protect victims and to identify high risk and serial perpetrators.
- 2.5.4 We feel that risk assessments need wherever possible to include information from and about the perpetrator from a range of sources including, of course, those working with the perpetrator.
- 2.5.5 We also feel that the introduction of a focus on assessing perpetrators would improve victim safety by picking up, and responding to those who assault multiple victims but would not otherwise come to the attention of MARACs or Multi Agency Public Protection Panels (MAPPPs).

- 2.5.6 Introducing a system of picking up multiple assaults on different women, across all forms of violence against women, and responding to serial perpetrators more robustly would inevitably help improve victim safety.
- 2.5.7 We note that some MARACs include perpetrator programme representatives while others do not. Our members also report that sometimes they do not feel they have a place on MARACs if they are not working with men who are currently identified as high risk. We feel that women, are currently identified as low risk, may be abused by men who will become high risk and that women identified as high risk may be abused by men who would benefit from assessment and possible group work with Respect member services.
- 2.5.8 We also note that MARACs do not operate on a statutory basis and that they concentrate on those victims who are identified as high risk. We believe that paying attention to a greater range of perpetrators and victims, backed up by statutory powers for MARACs, would help to protect more women and children and identify and respond earlier to those perpetrators who would otherwise become high risk but currently are not.
- 2.5.9 We also feel that the criminal justice system would benefit from a rigorous auditing of progress in police and CPS against targets set in previous policies and strategies, with consequences for non-compliance.
- 2.5.10 Furthermore we note that there are many steps which contribute to failure to respond effectively to many cases at high or any level of risk. These start with police not gathering evidence, CPS not charging, cases not being supported, convictions resulting in inadequate sentencing and sentencing which doesn't result in change. Whilst in many cases this process has significantly improved we note that even the existing patchy monitoring systems carried out by the CPS, for example, as part of their review of their own Violence Against Women Strategy (CPS 2008) identify failures which could be rectified.
- 2.5.11 We therefore recommend that the work of MARACs should be expanded to cover all forms of violence against women.**
- 2.5.12 We further recommend that MARACs are made statutory, that, by using a range of sources of information including those organisations working with perpetrators as well as victims, repeat victimisation of the same victim should**

come to MARAC and that serial victimisation by the same perpetrator of several victims should also come to MARAC,.

- 2.5.13 We also recommend much closer links between MAPPPs and MARACs.
- 2.5.14 We further recommend that the government introduces a rigorous monitoring system of the response of the criminal justice system to all forms of violence against women, monitoring all aspects of the police, CPS, courts and National Offender Management Service response to offenders.
- 2.5.15 We also reiterate our recommendation that national and local government funding structures support community based work with non convicted perpetrators of all forms of violence against women as a way of preventing men from becoming high risk perpetrators.

There are already programmes for perpetrators of some forms of violence against women; how can their effectiveness be measured?

- 2.5.16 Respect welcomes the support the UK government gave to the development of a system of accreditation for domestic violence intervention programmes for the UK, through the Home Office funding and support for the Respect Accreditation Standard and system of inspection, something which the HAC report also supported. This standard provides the framework for assessing the safe and effective operation of programmes working with men using intimate partner violence and the linked services for women partners and ex-partners.
- 2.5.17 Community based programmes can and do provide a range of services which include, but are not confined to, group work with individual men to change their behaviour as listed above.
- 2.5.18 The measurement of effectiveness of programmes should therefore start with an understanding of the range of ways in which programmes working with perpetrators can and do help to promote safety of women and children, including but not confined to individual behaviour change in individual perpetrators.
- 2.5.19 Respect believes that rigorous research on the outcomes of participation in domestic violence intervention programmes working with perpetrators is essential for improving and maintaining effective work with perpetrators of all

forms of violence against women as well as intimate partner violence in particular.

- 2.5.20 In pursuit of this, Respect has introduced a requirement for all accredited programmes to monitor and evaluate outcomes of their services using a range of self assessment methods. To this end we have developed an electronic client management and outcome database (REDAMOS). We will soon be able to collect outcomes data from all members using the database which will begin to give us a national picture of provision, attrition and outcomes.
- 2.5.21 Respect has also commissioned independent research to be carried out over the next three years with selected accredited Respect member organisations to provide rigorous and independent evidence of the outcomes of participation in domestic violence intervention programmes complying with the Respect Accreditation Standard.
- 2.5.22 Respect has consulted with, and will continue to consult and be guided by, an independent advisory group of researchers, policy makers and practitioners from a range of backgrounds and approaches during the process of this research.
- 2.5.23 We will be publishing the interim and final findings of this research regularly and extensively, through our website, our publications, conferences and through other means.
- 2.5.24 We also note the strong commitment expressed by the government of Australia in their Violence Against Women Strategy to funding perpetrator programmes and to funding rigorous evaluation of work with perpetrators in order to inform the response to violence against women:

5.4.1 Fund and deliver a perpetrator research agenda, including longitudinal research that has a particular focus on: what changes problem behaviour; what maintains behaviour change; the utility of risk assessment tools; the effectiveness of various recidivism reduction strategies; and takes into account different offender characteristics and cultures.¹⁰

¹⁰ Australia strategy on violence against women 2008

- 2.5.25 **Respect recommends that the government invests in research into effective interventions with perpetrators by contributing financially and in other ways to the Respect commissioned longitudinal research into programme outcomes and to other programme and intervention research, such as risk assessment effectiveness.**
- 2.5.26 **We further recommend that the government encourages the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) to carry out and publish research into the effectiveness of criminal justice based interventions with perpetrators.**

What interventions would help perpetrators of all forms of violence against women to change their behaviour?

- 2.5.27 This question could usefully be re-phrased or re-interpreted to read: “what will effectively increase the safety of women and children”? In some cases this will mean holding men to account for their violence but not always. Interventions should be based upon risk, both in the short and long-term, and should wherever possible offer a potential way for men to learn how to stop behaving abusively and violently, though this should never be at the cost of women and children’s safety.
- 2.5.28 A man who, although minimising his use of violence, is able to partially acknowledge it and is likely to continue to be part of his children’s lives, is probably worth working with, in order to enable the possible risks he poses to be examined. It may be a consequence of him being on a programme that his partner understands that he is dangerous and not minded to change. However, with the right support, she will be better equipped to make better informed decisions on her children’s future.
- 2.5.29 **We therefore reiterate our recommendation for secure and consistent funding of community based perpetrator programmes.**
- 2.5.30 We believe that campaigns to challenge male entitlement over women and girls in all forms, including child care, housework, employment conditions, sexual access etc. would also help to gain support for direct interventions with men already using violence against women and girls.

- 2.5.31 This would be strengthened by real and visible commitment to challenging all forms of discrimination against women (see United Nations Convention Against All Forms of Discrimination Against Women).
- 2.5.32 We therefore also recommend that the government considers pilot funding of programmes to work with men who are using other forms of violence against women or gender based inequality such as sexual harassment at work, the use of prostituted women or pornography, particularly use of either on publicly funded property or time (e.g. during public sector conferences in hotels or travelling for work). This could link to the recommendations we made in section 2.2 about setting standards for public sector employees. Work with Respect members would help to establish the potential for such pilot programmes.

Not all perpetrators come to the attention of the criminal justice system – are there other services that should be developing work with perpetrators to change their behaviour?

- 2.5.33 We wish to emphasise the existence in the community based sector of accredited domestic violence perpetrator programmes and the need for substantially increased capacity, both in terms of consistent national coverage across the UK, and of the size of existing programmes. Our members work hard to change the behaviour both of perpetrators who are and perpetrators who are not in the criminal justice system. Community based programmes include those who are mandated by the child protection and family courts systems but who may also come to the attention of the criminal justice system. Our members who work in the Criminal justice system also work with men who need interventions in the community to sustain their change or to address their fathering skills after they have stopped using violence.
- 2.5.34 We also wish to highlight the value of cross local authority and borough partnerships to deliver perpetrator services such as that operating in East London, providing greater protection for victims across different London boroughs through integrated work with perpetrators and with victims as well as connections to local Children's Services.

2.5.35 We would also like to reiterate our belief that practitioners in our member services have skills and experience which could be expanded to respond to other forms of violence against women.

2.5.36 **We therefore recommend that the government invests and supports local investment in nationally consistent provision of Respect accredited community based programmes as part of a coordinated community response to all forms of violence against women.**

2.6 What kind of services should you expect to receive from the health service and/or social services if you were a victim of violence?

What would form a range of high quality services for victims of violence against women in every local area? How could these services be commissioned?

How could existing services improve their response to victims of violence against women?

Are there specific services that should take a leading role?

2.6.1 We believe that support should be based upon women's complex needs and what they want. This strategy should reflect throughout that services to reduce men's violence are part of the range of services needed.

2.6.2 Services should therefore include:

- a. Range of counselling support – both group and individual within appropriate care settings such as havens and other women only spaces.
- b. High quality cost free crèche facilities to enable women with childcare responsibilities to access support.
- c. A range of refuge spaces that houses women according to need i.e. some refuges would be able to accommodate mothers and children, some would be able to accommodate women with substance misuse problems, and some would be able to do both. The point is one size cannot fit all.
- d. Advocacy services.
- e. Domestic violence court, expanding to a court responding to all forms of violence against women and girls.
- f. MARAC attended by people from health services, Police, Social Services, Voluntary Services who have the authority to make changes/implement policies within their own organisations.
- g. Local Children's Safeguarding Board sub-group that deals with the sexual exploitation of children.
- h. Children's services that offer support for victims of violence
- i. Children's services that offer support for victims of sexual abuse
- j. A mapping system to identify repeat abusers and their addresses

- k. Perpetrator programmes to hold men to account for their violence, abuse and controlling behaviour and provide them with effective routes to change their abusive and violent behaviours
- l. Specific services to address the specific issues/needs of each community's population based on information for BMER groups
- m. Domestic violence forums 'with teeth' that can hold local services to account and reasonably demand changes
- n. Co-ordination across MAPPAs and MARACs so that, when perpetrators are released back into the community, they are monitored and victims, particularly if local, are offered support
- o. A scheme that looks to remove the perpetrator from the home – not the other way around, with provision to move perpetrators to suitable temporary accommodation, with trained staff such as Approved premises (probation hostels), ideally where they can also participate in programmes to address their behaviour
- p. Using powers of arrest consistently and robustly when banning orders, injunctions and such like are violated
- q. Making all of the above focus on the central tenet of improving women and children's safety
- r. Training for all statutory staff

2.6.3 Services working with men using violence should be seen as a critical part of any health responses to violence against women. This section of the strategy therefore needs to be revised to include required responses to anyone presenting to a health or social service who has used or is using violence against women. Some victims will not present to services but sometimes their abusers will ask for help about their abusive behaviour or present with another aspect of his life such as substance misuse. This presents a critical opportunity to help protect victims through providing an effective response to their abuser.

2.6.4 Local specialist women's services such as refuges and rape crisis centres, and Respect accredited services working with men and boys who have used violence against women or girls should take a lead role in coordinating and overseeing the impact of local policies to tackle violence against women.

2.6.5 We recommend that a full list of required services should be provided to all local commissioners and policy makers and that these should include

response to both victims and perpetrators of violence against women, in the interests of protecting all victims.

- 2.6.6 We recommend that services make use of the skills, experience and knowledge of experienced practitioner/trainers who have worked in perpetrator programmes and can provide high quality training and consultancy. Respect can provide contact details for suitable individuals and organisations and is also developing a system of accreditation for trainers and other specialist to assure quality.

2.7 How can central government, local government and other service providers best work together to promote better consistency and quality of provision in services for victims of violence against women across England?

What are the barriers to sustainable delivery of and funding for services for victims of violence against women at present?

- 2.7.1 We believe that a key barrier to sustainable delivery and funding is a lack of consistent and sustained national and local political will, which results in a lack of coordinated and comprehensive thinking, commissioning and provision. This is partly because of a failure, when setting targets, to count the true costs of, and take into account, crimes which have lifelong or long term impact..
- 2.7.2 We are pleased to see that this strategy links up different forms of violence against women and welcome this approach. The challenge is to translate this into coordinated and integrated services and responses in specialist and generic agencies.
- 2.7.3 Our experience has shown us that when no one takes ownership for these programmes and services, either locally or nationally, they are undervalued and treated as low priorities.
- 2.7.4 Services battling for funding is therefore a constant which not only leads to service closure and/or intermittent provision but also makes it difficult for existing services to focus on more useful long term strategies, such as ensuring skills and learning are passed on and adequately disseminated.
- 2.7.5 Individual politicians and policy makers have played a key and often outstanding role (in what?). Whilst we welcome this and that services have often consequently benefitted , we feel that it is now time for a consistent national approach which does not rely on the drive of one or two individuals, and hope that this strategy and local strategies provide a way for this to happen.

What are the barriers to providing a wide range of quality services for victims of violence against women?

- 2.7.6 We have already identified the key barrier of funding constraints.
- 2.7.7 Specific groups of women face additional barriers to receiving protection and support for dealing with their experiences of violence. The HAC enquiry report recognised this:

233. We are very pleased that, during the course of our inquiry, the Government announced that it would introduce measures to help those acutely vulnerable victims of domestic violence who have insecure immigration status and therefore 'no recourse to public funds'. This should ease the heavy financial burden of supporting these women on the refuge sector.

234. There seems, however, to remain a problem with the speed of processing applications for Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR). We heard that applications can take between 2 and 24 months. This is too long to expect women to live in destitution. We recommend that the process could be speeded up by simplifying the application process and related paperwork. This could be achieved, for example, by reviewing forms to ensure that they are in plain English, and by developing an internet system through which claims could be tracked. The small claims court system could provide a model.

HAC 2008

- 2.7.9 Other women face different barriers which also need to be tackled. Women who have been prostituted or identify as sex-workers often have difficulties obtaining protection from any agency, particularly but not only because of beliefs or perceptions that they have consented to any form of sexual contact. Others are afraid to approach statutory agencies because they fear immigration difficulties or, if they have been trafficked into the country, they may have no understanding of their rights or, if they take action, fear retribution to their families back home. Women who face homophobia and violence which is based on their sexuality need specialist support to deal with their experiences as well as greater understanding from the police and criminal justice system. Women whose first language is not English may not be able to understand publicity or information or will need (professional, not family members) interpreters to use services.

- 2.7.10 We recommend that the government conducts a diversity audit on the proposed violence against women strategy to ensure that the specific needs and experiences of different groups of women and girls are taken into account when planning responses locally and nationally.

What are the barriers to partnership working to tackle violence against women?

- 2.7.11 We believe that one of the biggest barriers is ownership of the issues and how this is perceived. Voluntary sector organisations tend to bring expertise and a passionate understanding of the issues, often accompanied by desperation around funding and lack of capacity to engage with anything other than their bread and butter client work. Statutory sector agencies tend to bring small pockets of enthusiasm contained within departments with little more than middle management power, hampered by institutional passivism about what their priorities should be. This makes partnership working difficult, voluntary agencies become disheartened, statutory agencies (often, at senior levels, with poor levels of understanding of the nature of violence against women), having thrown some money at the problem, feel the solutions offered haven't produced the (perhaps unrealistic) targets that they set or don't work.
- 2.7.12 Lack of willingness to collaborate in the first place becomes one of the biggest hurdles. Tackling violence against women needs to be seen as an integral theme running through all services and policies rather than something which is often treated as a minority interest affecting only a few women and needing limited attention, resource or political will. Widening the remit from domestic and sometimes sexual violence to all forms of violence against women.

How best can providers of local services reflect in their local priorities the needs of women and girls who are victims of gender-based violence?

- 2.7.13 Our experience is that local coordination works best when someone is paid to make it happen and when they have the backing of senior policy makers). Standing Together (West London), Safer Bristol domestic violence work and the

Devon partnership are all excellent examples of the progress which can be achieved when there is a paid coordination team or person to assess need, establish services and monitor how they are used.

- 2.7.14 We believe that sometimes it is politically difficult and personally challenging for men (and sometimes also women) in power to face up to the fact that women are differentially affected by gender based violence. We would like to see the strategy addressing masculinity directly and clearly as part of the strategy to end violence against women and girls.
- 2.7.15 Part of meeting victims' needs and preventing violence against women is working with men. This is needed in the strategy and needs to be woven into provision, protection and prevention work. Both abusive and non-abusive men need to be considered in all of these. This is in the interests of women and girls. Without changing ideas of masculinity and encouraging the non-abusive majority of men to speak out and champion respect for women, we feel that the strategy will be failing the women.
- 2.7.16 **We recommend that any national or local strategy tackling violence against women must include work with and about men and masculinity. This should be an essential and integral part of the work overall, not as an alternative to or add-on part of the work.**

How should local bodies and service providers work together to ensure that the longer-term impacts of violence against women are acknowledged (for example, impacts on mental and physical health or child welfare)?

- 2.7.17 Improved coordination is needed to ensure that longer term impacts are acknowledged. This in turn requires research, monitoring and evaluation of needs and services and better coordination between different specialist services.
- 2.7.18 Currently, mental health, substance misuse and violence against women services tend to work separately and from different or even opposing understanding of the different aspects of women's needs and experiences. We recognise that this is not helped by insufficient and insecure funding and

support for each sector and that individual practitioners make great efforts to do their best for the clients and to work together whenever possible. However, too often, women and men are expected to deal with several different agencies working in different ways or passing them between agencies because of the long term impacts of violence on women's health or because of fear of engaging with men who use violence who are also mentally ill or abusing substances.

- 2.7.19 The Greater London Domestic Violence Project Stella Project, which supports and promotes effective joint working between substance misuse and domestic violence agencies to meet a wider range of complex needs, provides an excellent model for examining and responding to multiple needs.

What can be done to place the provision and delivery of services for victims of violence against women on a more sustainable basis?

- 2.7.20 We believe that this needs long term funding and strategic commitments, both locally and centrally, and that this should include funding for and commitment to delivery of services that aim to increase victim safety via behaviour change and risk management of perpetrators.

What can be done to ensure that local bodies work together to ensure the provision of all forms of services for victims of violence against women in your local area?

- 2.7.21 There should be more willingness to pool resources. A woman fleeing violence in Manchester, should she move just 35 miles away to Liverpool, might find herself within a completely different set of support service circumstances. In London recently three boroughs sustained a successful perpetrator programme by pooling resources for a programme that neither one of them would have been able to afford as individual boroughs.
- 2.7.22 **We recommend that local and national funding strategies promote cross local authority funding for services for victims, children and perpetrators.**

What can be done to ensure that the needs of victims of violence against women are accounted for in Local Strategic Partnerships in your local area?

2.7.23 Local Strategic Partnerships need guidance to ensure that they understand the full range of legal and other requirements to meet the needs of victims of violence against women and girls. Some are unsure of the implications of the Gender Equality Duty and need clarity about how promoting gender-specific initiatives, such as services explicitly for women or for gay men, for example, are or can be a legal part of fulfilling the GED, rather than contrary to it, as some policy makers appear to believe.

2.7.24 We recommend that the government issues guidance to all local strategic partnerships clarifying their legal responsibilities and the ways in which these can be fulfilled within a local violence against women strategy.

What can be done to drive delivery of services for victims of violence against women through the Local Performance Framework? How could this be monitored?

2.7.25 We recommend that the Equality and Human Rights Commission should be empowered and required to monitor the implementation of the national strategy with advice from specialist organisations such as Women's Aid, Fawcett Society, Rape Crisis and Respect. Local services could be provided with the facilities to monitor service delivery against targets in the strategy.

What can be done to encourage commissioners of local services (for example, local health providers and local authorities) to work together to support women and girls who are victims of gender-based violence?

2.7.26 Strengthening the legislative requirements for such activities would provide an excellent incentive for local commissioners to work together.

2.7.27 We recommend that the government legislates to require local commissioners to work together with local services and support them according to the violence against women strategies.

- 2.8 How can we improve women’s confidence that the criminal justice system is working to protect them?**
- 2.8.1 We believe that the first and most important step to improve women’s confidence that the criminal justice system is working to protect them is to ensure that it does just that. Whilst there have been significant improvements over the last 25 years in how the CJS responds to all forms of violence against women, we regret to note, for example, that the majority of rape reports never result in a court conviction and that the levels of victim related case failures remain at a worrying level (CPS report on VAW strategy, 2008). We also know from our practice with victims whose partners are on our members’ programmes that police responses vary considerably, despite great improvements in policy, monitoring and practical responses available to the police.
- 2.8.2 Again, we recommend that the government urgently reviews all the recommendations made by the HAC report on domestic violence, forced marriage and “honour” violence, as well as those made in research on sexual assault and rape.**
- 2.8.3 We recommend that the government urges the CPS and police to review the monitoring, training and policy implementation processes for supporting their strategies to respond to all forms of violence against women as detailed in the CPS VAW strategy 2002.
- 2.8.4 We also recommend that the government ensures that criminal justice and community based perpetrator programmes alike have a common focus on safety of victims with mandatory linked safety services for partners (as per the accreditation requirements for both criminal justice programmes and in the Respect accreditation Standard) and adequate length of programme to ensure the maximum possible opportunity for men to change.

2.9 What would make your journey at night safer?

2.9.1 We welcome the attention paid to women's use of public space and wish to see this expanded upon in the final strategy so that it is not limited to journeys at night.

2.9.2 **We recommend that this aspect of the strategy is widened to include women's use of all public space at all times, not only journeys and not only at night. Women are fearful of attacks in particular places at all times, women experience sexual harassment, sexual violence and other forms of abuse at all times and all of these fears and experiences affect their use of a range of forms of public space at a range of times.**

If you would use this website, which features do you think would be useful?

2.9.3 We have no comments on this section as it is not our area of expertise.

2.10 Following completion of the consultation period, the government will issue a strategy in order to ensure that coordinated activity is undertaken across government to reduce and prevent violence against women.

How should the strategy be delivered? Who should lead it locally?

How should progress on the strategy be measured and assessed? Who should do this?

Should the strategy include any specific measures on equality and diversity?

What further equalities issues should the violence against women strategy take into account (for example on race, age, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, disability, socioeconomic background or geographical location)?

Are there any other matters we should be considering?

2.10.1 This country has a fairly comprehensive framework of primary legislation to respond to most, though not all, forms of violence against women and girls. Legal provisions for prosecuting men who prostitute women are not yet adequate to protect women but we welcome recent government proposals to remedy this. Otherwise, we have a strong set of laws which prohibit most forms of physical, sexual and even many non physical forms of violence and abuse. We have systems for prosecution and remedies as well as support services. It is important that the government is not tempted to focus on new initiatives at the expense of consolidating and improving the existing operation of legislation and services we already have and which women and girls need and benefit from.

2.10.2 However, legislation is often not implemented well or, sometimes, at all. The Female Genital Mutilation Act (2003) has not, we believe, seen any successful prosecutions in the six years that it has been in existence. While acknowledging that some new initiatives will be advantageous, we believe a focus on fixing what isn't working is the most urgent priority.

2.10.3 Similarly, and perhaps for many women and children more importantly, we already have excellent models of provision for victims and their children, which are sadly not always adequately supported or funded. Funding to support those services which provide life saving help and long term support,

such as refuges, outreach services, rape crisis centres and other sexual assault services are critically important.

- 2.10.4 Improving the existing implementation of legislation would also introduce a cost benefit to the public purse. Failure to protect known victims costs more in terms of repeat victimisation, repeat health care, the need to support women through the process of appearing in the criminal justice system more than once, all these things cost money. Ensuring that the legal framework and specialist and generic services do and are supported to do what they already can and should be doing will not only protect women and girls from violence, it will save the public money.
- 2.10.5 **Therefore, we recommend that a thorough independent audit of current legislation, guidance and statutory sector policy and performance is carried out to assess failures in implementation. This should be accompanied by an independent gaps analysis to identify any shortfalls in the legislation, guidance or policy itself, or indeed in service provision. Following this, urgent action is needed to address the gaps and failures that are identified.**
- 2.10.6 **We propose that central government drive this strategy nationally and provide clear leadership, support and guidance for government departments, local government and national and local statutory and voluntary agencies.**
- 2.10.7 **The Local Strategic Partnerships are the obvious local lead – with a named individual with sufficient authority to drive the strategy at a local level and obtain clear commitments and support from all relevant agencies and from inter agency networks.**
- 2.10.8 **We further recommend the development of a mandatory suite of violence against women performance indicators for local authorities and all statutory agencies. The CPS strategy and performance indicators are a good example of what can be done in specific agencies and this approach could be replicated in other agencies.**
- 2.10.9 **There is an urgent need for greater accountability of statutory commissioners and statutory services especially in relation to the Gender Equality Duty and other legal requirements.**

- 2.10.10 We would like to see greater recognition of the expertise of the specialist violence against women voluntary sector and funding attached to support this. This should include for example a requirement that statutory agencies such as the local Safeguarding Children Boards have to consult and take into account the specialist advice of violence against women agencies when drawing up procedures for responding to violence against women, in recognition of the particular skills and expertise they contribute to the protection of women and children from violence.
- 2.10.11 We recommend comparative levels of funding for violence against women work as for work against knife crime and terrorism, as the homicide and serious crime rates for violence against women are more than comparable for these other equally serious categories of criminal behaviour.
- 2.10.12 We would like to see clear outcomes with actions and targets attached for each government department and each statutory agency. The strategy should be clear about lines of accountability, who should deliver what, timescales, consequences and clear monitoring structures.
- 2.10.13 Targets should include lower homicide rates of women and children related to violence against women, lower rates of repeat victimisation, lower rates of serial perpetration, and reduced rates of trafficking. This should be done with the knowledge that in the short term, many of these rates appear to increase as practice improves, as more victims have confidence in the system and therefore report in greater numbers. This demonstrates again the need for long term thinking which we believe the government is looking for in the strategy and which we welcome.
- 2.10.14 Another set of targets should be about the raised profile of violence against women as a public concern and consequent improved public understanding of the issues and need for attitudinal change.
- 2.10.15 It is also important to involve survivors and victims of all forms of violence against women, including women who have experienced sexual harassment, use of non-physical force, and more dangerous or traumatic forms of violence, in planning, monitoring and evaluating the impact of the strategy.

2.10.16 We welcome the development that this proposed strategy brings and look forward to working with the government and others on implementation, monitoring and review.