

A Different World is Possible:

A call for long-term and targeted action to prevent
violence against women and girls

SUMMARY
2011



End Violence Against Women Coalition

About the End Violence Against Women Coalition

The End Violence Against Women (EVAW) Coalition campaigns for governments at all levels around the UK to take urgent action to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls. We are the largest coalition of its kind in the UK representing over 7 million individuals and organisations. A full list of members is on our website.

We are grateful to Comic Relief for its generous support of this project and to Amnesty International UK for its support in hosting EVAW.

EVAW relies on the generous support of individuals and charitable trusts to fulfil our objectives to achieve a vision of a world without violence against women and girls. If you share our vision and would like to support our important work, then please make a donation by visiting: www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk

A Different World is Possible: A call for long-term and targeted action to prevent violence against women and girls.

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End Violence Against Women
17-25 New Inn Yard
London EC2A 3EA

www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk

Call to action: A Different World is Possible!

Violence against women has been described as ‘perhaps the most pervasive violation of human rights’ across the globe.¹ This violence bears significant costs – for individuals, for public services, society and the economy. Violence against women and girls (VAWG) is more prevalent amongst women in England than stroke, diabetes and heart disease.² Yet, the *prevention* of violence against women and girls has been a long neglected part of Westminster government policy.

The End Violence Against Women Coalition (EVAW) is calling for a coordinated, targeted and long term approach to preventing violence against women and girls (VAWG). In particular, we are calling for schools and other educational institutions to play their part in creating a safer world for women and girls.

At an estimated cost of around £122,000 per rape and a total annual health cost of domestic violence at around £1,100,000,000³, the benefits of preventing violence in the first place will far outweigh the costs.

What is this report?

This report sets out why we need a targeted and long term approach to preventing VAWG drawing on the most cutting-edge evidence-base on the causal factors underlying violence and abuse. We make policy recommendations under ten areas of action for Westminster government departments, statutory bodies, schools and other educational institutions and local authorities, providing a preliminary blueprint for decision-makers and an advocacy tool for the third sector. The report has been developed with expert practitioners, researchers and policy analysts on the EVAW Prevention Network, England. The report is complemented with ‘*A Different World is Possible: Promising practices to prevent violence against women and girls*’, a piece of research that explores innovative examples of interventions to prevent violence through education, community mobilisation and capacity building, media and public awareness.

The intended audience for the report is Members of Parliament, civil servants, local authorities, schools, policy-makers, violence against women and girls organisations and other organisations who are interested in ending VAWG.

Why do we need a targeted and long term approach to prevention?

You have to show how masculine you are; you can't show sensitivity – it is difficult to be different – you need to look and act a certain way (young man, Year 11)⁴

1 United Nations, *Remarks of Secretary-General Kofi Annan to the Inter-Agency Videoconference for a World Free of Violence against Women*, SG/SM/6919 WOM/1113, <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/1999/19990308.sgsm6919.html>, accessed 2 February 2011.

2 Taskforce on the Health Aspects of Violence Against Women and Children, *Responding to violence against women and children – the role of the NHS* (2010).

3 Järvinen et al, *Hard Knock Life: Violence Against Women – a guide for donors and funders*, New Philanthropy Capital (2008). Costs in 2003/4 prices and apply to England and Wales.

4 Womankind Worldwide, *Freedom to achieve. Preventing violence, promoting equality: A whole-school approach* (2010).

5 Womankind Worldwide, *Freedom to achieve. Preventing violence, promoting equality: A whole-school approach* (2010).

I have started wearing shorts underneath my skirt as boys lift up skirts as they walk they...sometimes they come up behind you and put their hands on your chest (young woman, Year 9)⁵

Violence against women and girls is widespread, as are attitudes that normalise and excuse this violence

- Up to three million women across the UK experience rape, domestic violence, forced marriage, stalking, sexual exploitation and trafficking, female genital mutilation (FGM) or so called honour violence each year.⁶
- Almost one in three girls have experienced unwanted sexual touching at school.⁷
- Over one in three people believe that a woman should be held wholly or partly responsible for being sexually assaulted or raped if she was drunk.⁸
- 33 per cent of girls in an intimate relationship aged 13-17 have experienced some form of sexual violence from a partner.⁹
- In 2009 the Forced Marriage Unit received over 1600 calls to its helpline on suspected/potential forced marriage, 86 per cent of who were women.¹⁰

Violence against women has serious consequences for individuals and society

- Women and girls who experience violence endure significant physical, emotional, health, financial and social consequences. Violence causes physical damage ranging from death in extreme cases to miscarriages, broken limbs, and cuts and bruises.
- It is estimated that violence against women costs society £40 billion each year in England and Wales.¹¹

Governments have obligations to prevent violence against women under international and national human rights and equality laws

- Under the European Convention on Human Rights and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the UK has obligations to exercise due diligence in preventing violence against women before it happens.
- In Britain, the Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010 requires public bodies to take account of how they are promoting equality between women and men. Under the new duty, public bodies should be considering how they are preventing VAWG.

5 Womankind Worldwide, *Freedom to achieve. Preventing violence, promoting equality: A whole-school approach* (2010).

6 Coy, M., Lovett, J. and Kelly, L., *Realising Rights, Fulfilling Obligations: A Template for an Integrated Strategy on Violence Against Women for the UK*, End Violence Against Women Coalition (2009).

7 End Violence Against Women and YouGov, *Sexual Harassment in UK Schools Poll* (2010).

8 Home Office, *Violence against women opinion polling* (2009).

9 Barter et al, *Partner exploitation and violence in teenage intimate relationships*, NSPCC (2009). Available at http://www.nspcc.org.uk/Inform/research/findings/partner_exploitation_and_violence_wda68092.html

10 Foreign and Commonwealth Office, *Forced Marriage Unit Website*, <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/when-things-go-wrong/forced-marriage/>

11 Järvinen et al, *Hard Knock Life: Violence Against Women – a guide for donors and funders*, New Philanthropy Capital (2008). Costs in 2006/7 prices.

The current policy context

Current Westminster VAWG policy makes prevention a priority – a commitment which is long overdue and welcome. However, although the Coalition Government's, '*Call to End Violence Against Women and Girls: Action Plan*' contains some positive developments, it lacks: an investment in research, monitoring or evaluation; a concerted effort to embed prevention work in educational settings; a commitment to long term and evidence-based public awareness campaigns; and adequate and sustained funding of the VAWG sector to deliver their services and prevention programmes. The current ad-hoc approach to prevention is short-sighted, costly and unlikely to deliver the change needed to truly eliminate VAWG.

Ten areas of action to prevent violence against women and girls

The prevention of VAWG requires a range of targeted interventions which are designed and delivered in a coordinated manner.

- 1. Develop and implement a cross-government gender equality strategy.**
- 2. Ensure universal delivery of a 'whole school approach' to prevent violence against women and girls across the education system.**
- 3. Ensure funding for specialist violence against women and girls services to deliver prevention work.**
- 4. Invest in research, monitoring and evaluation of prevention interventions.**
- 5. Produce evidence-based and sustained public awareness campaigns.**
- 6. Fund community mobilisation activities to challenge violence against women and girls.**
- 7. Promote leadership at all levels to champion gender equality and non-violent norms.**
- 8. Tackle the sexualisation of women and girls in the media and popular culture.**
- 9. Commission the voluntary VAWG sector to deliver quality training on violence against women and girls to a range of agencies as part of vocational qualifications and ongoing professional development.**
- 10. Target interventions to ensure prevention of violence against women and girls addresses intersections of gender with other social inequalities.**

Schools must play their part in ending violence against women and girls

Schools are a microcosm of society in general. You have a chance when you are dealing with young people to change attitudes... I think if you don't take a stand over it you are basically colluding. (School teacher)¹²

Educational settings are an important site of prevention where attitudes that condone VAWG and gender stereotypes can be challenged and positive attitudes towards gender equality and equal relationships can be fostered. There are significant long-term social and economic gains to be made by investing in prevention through education. However, schools and academies – key players in delivering prevention – are on the back-foot in responding to violence against women and girls with a weak response. This means they may not be meeting their legal obligations under child protection and equality law provide safe environments and teach students about healthy, respectful and equal relationships. In this report, we call for all primary and secondary schools, including academies, to play their part in ending VAWG.

All primary and secondary schools, including academies should:

- develop and implement a 'whole school approach' to prevent VAWG;
- appoint VAWG champions amongst school governors and student councils;
- directly commission VAWG services to design and deliver targeted prevention interventions;
- ensure access for students to specialist VAWG support services in the community; and
- ensure that their anti-bullying policies include an explicit reference to sexual harassment and bullying.

All local authorities should:

- establish local partnerships with relevant voluntary sector agencies, primary and secondary schools to support the coordinated delivery of prevention work; and
- champion a 'whole school approach' to preventing VAWG amongst primary and secondary schools, including academies, in their area.

The Greater London Authority should:

- champion a 'whole school approach' to preventing VAWG amongst primary and secondary schools, including academies, in the Greater London area; and
- regularly communicate through public messages the important role of educational institutions in preventing VAWG.

The Minister for Education and Department for Education should:

- amend the Education Bill 2011 to make it a requirement for all schools and academies to collect and report data on all forms of violence against young women and girls in schools, including sexual harassment and bullying;

¹² Womankind Worldwide, *Freedom to achieve. Preventing violence, promoting equality: A whole-school approach* (2010).

- communicate to all primary and secondary schools, including academies, the importance of addressing VAWG through a whole-school approach;
- appoint a senior policy lead who is responsible for developing and implementing a department-wide action plan on VAWG;
- work with organisations like the Centre for Excellence and Outcomes to ensure examples of best practice are disseminated widely across primary and secondary schools, including academies;
- ensure initial and ongoing training for teaching and non-teaching school staff and governors to increase awareness and build skills to challenge VAWG;
- under the Public Sector Equality Duty, set an objective on tackling VAWG in primary and secondary schools - they should regularly collect, analyse and publish data on young women and girls' experiences of all forms of violence and require regular school surveys on experiences of violence and attitudes;
- develop specific strategies to ensure the safety and well-being of girls in Pupil Referral Units and consider alternative behaviour management strategies for girls;
- integrate gender stereotypes, sexualisation, VAWG and media literacy into the primary and secondary curriculum across all subjects in an age-appropriate manner as part of the National Curriculum review;
- make Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) and Personal Social Health and Economic education (PSHE) part of the statutory curriculum to ensure universal access for all students; and
- ensure the internal review of PSHE and SRE addresses VAWG. References on sexualisation, VAWG, healthy relationships, gender stereotypes, media literacy and the harms of pornography should be included in the Department's guidance on Sex and Relationships Education.

Ofsted should:

- ensure inspection judgements on behaviour and safety assess how well schools are tackling VAWG including sexual harassment and bullying, looking for evidence of all forms of violence against girls in schools; and
- carry out a thematic review/survey into how well primary and secondary schools are tackling VAWG.

The Education Select Committee should:

- conduct an inquiry into how schools are responding to VAWG.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission should:

- support schools, academies and colleges to meet their obligations to prevent violence against young women and girls under the Public Sector Equality Duty by producing specific guidance; and
- regularly monitor schools, academies and colleges to ensure compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty and take action where necessary.

Song written and recorded by a young person attending Morgan Academy, Dundee, played at the “Our Rights” event

Make My Day

It all begun when I saw my dad hit my mum
Through a key hole I'd look
To see my mum's life being took, you see

Sometime I'd have to run
He'd take his belt off and say you're next son
Can't quite describe the fear
Whenever that man is near

Sometimes he'd say go to your room
Get half way through then
Boom, boom, boom then smack, smack,
Boom
The best would crack her near the eye

It's this man, I pure despise

The neighbours say they can hear her cries
Tear drops dripping from her eyes

Me on my own I sit in silence
Whenever I'm away from the violence
Think of a place by myself, with nobody else

In school it travels the news,
About me and how I've got a new bruise
On my cheek a little to the left

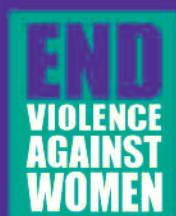
I'm actually considering death
Cause suicide, seems like the only way
To make my day
To make my dad pay

No-one listens to what I say.....!

Take action to create a different world for women and girls

Based on the recommendations of this report, EAW is campaigning for greater action from the Department for Education, local authorities and schools on preventing VAWG through education.

Visit www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk to download our campaign actions and template letters.



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