



# **Making the Grade? 2007**

The third annual independent analysis of UK  
Government initiatives on violence against women

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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Violence against women affects us all; whether we have direct experience of it, know someone who has been in a violent relationship or sexually harassed at work or in the street. The threat and realities of violence are major factors in women's enhanced fear of crime, which in turn limits our access to public spaces. We are also all concerned about women trafficked into the UK and all sexual exploitation. As a society we pay, socially and financially, for the multitude of costs that violence results in. These are just a few of the ways that violence against women (VAW) cuts across all areas of life and therefore all areas of public policy.

VAW is a serious human rights abuse, recognised as a cause and a consequence of women's inequality. End Violence Against Women (EVAW) is a broad-based coalition of organisations who are calling for the UK Government to take action to end all forms of violence against women. Our vision is of a society where women and girls can lead their lives free from the threat and reality of violence.

## What is Making the Grade?

Making the Grade is an assessment by members of the independent violence against women sector of how UK Government Departments tackle violence against women. It is based on the responses that Secretaries of State give to 12 questions, looking at how far there is a strategic framework to drive this work, alongside the basic components that must form a part of any strategy: a common definition; action plans; objectives and measures of progress; resources and capacity. Points are allocated up to a possible maximum of 150, and then calculated as a score out of 10. All the responses can be found online at [www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk](http://www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk).

## Why does this matter?

The British Crime Survey 2005-06 shows that 23% of women and 3% of men experience sexual assault as an adult. In the same year, 14,449 offences of rape were recorded by the police – 92% of the victims were women. Only 15% of

serious sexual offences against people over 16 are reported to the police; and of the rape offences that are reported, fewer than 6% result in a conviction. Girls are more likely than boys to be sexually assaulted by a family member, a form of sexual violence that carries an increased likelihood of repeat victimisation and debilitating impacts into adulthood.<sup>10</sup> The Forced Marriage Unit says that forced marriage involves threatening behaviour, assault, kidnap, abduction, imprisonment and, in the worst cases, murder. Sexual intercourse without consent is rape, regardless of whether this occurs within the confines of a marriage. A girl forced into marriage may be raped until she becomes pregnant.<sup>11</sup> 89% of those who suffer sustained domestic violence are women.<sup>12</sup> Out of an estimated 500,000 domestic violence related calls to the police, only around 7,000 incidents result in a prosecution.<sup>13</sup> There is a significant link between maternal mortality and a history of psychiatric illness and domestic violence.<sup>14</sup> 75% of those working in prostitution are girls or women.<sup>15</sup> 70% of those in street prostitution began as children or teenagers; 85% report physical abuse in their family; 45% report sexual abuse in their family; 70% spent time in Local Authority care while children.<sup>16</sup>

EVAW's recent publication *Map of Gaps*,<sup>17</sup> published in partnership with the Equality and Human Rights Commission, points out the following:

- A third of Local Authorities have no specialised violence against women support services.
- Most women have no access to a Rape Crisis Centre, and less than a quarter of local authorities provide any sexual violence service at all.
- A third have no services on domestic violence.
- Fewer than 10% of local authorities provide any specialised services for women and girls who face forced marriage, female genital mutilation or crimes in the name of honour.

## **What can Government do about this?**

All parts of Government have a part to play in prevention, protection, and support for women suffering from violence. Some lead in protection: the Home Office, Ministry of Justice, and the Crown Prosecution Service; others in prevention and support, such as Health and Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). Attitudes that condone, ignore, or even encourage violence against women often start in childhood and must be addressed through the National Curriculum (DCSF). Poverty increases women's vulnerability to violence, and violence may make women poor: something that Her Majesty's Treasury (HMT), Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR), Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and Department for Innovation, University and Skills (DIUS) must tackle. There are links between violence against women and women's fear of crime, of going out at night and participating in public life; using public transport, or using our public parks and open spaces (Department for Communities and Local Government, Department for Transport); between violence against women and combat stress suffered by returning troops (Ministry of Defence); between violence against women and sport and sporting events, the commercial sex trade, and the sexualisation of women in the media (Department for Culture Media and Sport); between violence against women and social exclusion (Cabinet Office); between violence against women and the isolation of rural women (Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs); between violence against women and the particular vulnerability of migrant and trafficked women (Home Office, Foreign and Commonwealth Office). Finally, all Departments that hold personal records or set policy for such records must hold them securely so that they cannot be accessed by perpetrators of domestic violence, forced marriage and crimes in the name of honour, female genital mutilation (FGM), stalking, and traffickers who are attempting to track women.

## **What did we find?**

The first year that we published Making the Grade, few Departments scored well. Many scored nil, and a number said that violence against women had nothing to do with them. Last year two trends were discernible: a small number pulled ahead – Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), Home Office, Department of Health; leaving a large group of Departments still underperforming, but a welcome fall in the number of Departments that claim to have nothing to do with violence against women. This year, there is further, although lamentably slow, progress. The best Departments have performed, on the whole, better again. This is good, but also means the majority are still performing poorly.

This year Departments should have been preparing to comply with the new Gender Equality Duty, which came into law in April 2007. This requires them not just to eliminate unlawful sex discrimination and harassment, but to promote gender equality between women and men. Their responses show that most have not identified violence against women as an extreme manifestation of gender inequality, nor seen the links between their policies and their impact on violence against women. Nor do they tackle the intersectional discrimination faced by, for example, black and minority ethnic and disabled women, migrant and trafficked women, which makes them more vulnerable to some forms of violence, and less able to get help.

This year, for the first time, two Departments failed to respond at all, despite much correspondence. They have both therefore scored nil. This has reduced the average score across Government to below last year's level. The scores are reproduced below. The Crown Prosecution Service achieved a highly commendable 7/10, coming top for the second year running; the Home Office came a close second; and a group of others gave some good accounts of their work, although they have some way to go. The lowest scoring departments do not recognise the relevance of violence to their remit.

|                                                                         | 2005           | 2006        | 2007        |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-------------|-------------|
| Department for Business, Enterprise, and Regulatory Reform <sup>a</sup> | 1              | 1½          | ½           |
| Cabinet Office                                                          | ½              | 1¾          | 1½          |
| Department for Children, Families and Schools <sup>b</sup>              | 0              | 1           | 1           |
| Department for Communities and Local Government                         | 1              | 2           | 3           |
| Crown Prosecution Service <sup>c</sup>                                  | - <sup>d</sup> | 6¾          | 7           |
| Department for Culture, Media and Sport                                 | 0              | ¾           | ½           |
| Ministry of Defence                                                     | 1              | 1¼          | ½           |
| Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs                     | 0              | ¾           | 0           |
| Foreign and Commonwealth Office                                         | 3              | 2½          | 4           |
| Department of Health                                                    | 3½             | 4           | 4           |
| Home Office                                                             | 3              | 6           | 6           |
| Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills <sup>e</sup>         | 0              | 1           | ½           |
| Department for International Development                                | 2½             | 2¾          | 4           |
| Ministry of Justice                                                     | 2½             | 5           | 3½          |
| Department for Transport                                                | 0              | ¼           | 0           |
| Her Majesty's Treasury                                                  | 0              | 1¼          | ½           |
| Department for Work and Pensions                                        | 0              | ¼           | ½           |
| <b>Average score across Government</b>                                  | <b>1</b>       | <b>2.28</b> | <b>2.18</b> |

- a Previously Department of Trade and Industry  
b Previously Department for Education and Skills(alongside DIUS)  
c CPS responds for the Law Officers Department  
d CPS was not invited to take part in the first edition  
e Previously Department for Education and Skills

1 Kelly, L., Regan, L., and Burton, S. (1991) An Exploratory Study of the Prevalence of Sexual Abuse in a Sample of 16-21 Year Olds. London, University of North London.  
2 Dealing with Cases of Forced Marriage: Guidance for Education Professionals, 2005  
<http://www.fco.gov.uk/Files/kfile/Dealing%20with%20cases%20of%20Forced%20Marriages.pdf>  
3 Ministry of Justice, <http://www.dca.gov.uk/dept/equality/gender-full.pdf>  
4 Ministry of Justice, <http://www.dca.gov.uk/dept/equality/gender-full.pdf>

5 Maternal Morbidity and Mortality - study group statement, Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, November 2002  
6 Paying The Price, Home Office, Paying the Price: July 2004  
[http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/paying\\_the\\_price.pdf?view=Binary](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/paying_the_price.pdf?view=Binary)  
7 Op cit  
8 Map of Gaps: the Postcode Lottery of Violence Against Women Support Services, EVAW, November 2007 [www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk](http://www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk)

