



# **Gender equality scheme: A template for local public bodies**

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Understanding and supporting  
women and their organisations

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# About the Women’s Resource Centre

The Women’s Resource Centre (WRC) is a charity which supports women’s organisations to be more effective and sustainable. We provide training, information, resources and one-to-one support on a range of organisational development issues. We also lobby decision makers on behalf of the women’s not-for-profit sector for improved representation and funding.

Our members work in wide range of fields including violence against women, employment, education, rights and equality, the criminal justice system and the environment. They deliver services to and campaign on behalf of some of the most marginalised communities of women. There are over ten thousand people working or volunteering for our members who support almost half a million individuals each year.

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# Introduction

## The Gender Equality Duty

The Gender Equality Duty (GED), which came in to force on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2007, creates new legal requirements for public authorities. It was brought into being because existing legislation was insufficient to eradicate the persistent and systematic discrimination against women.

Further, it acknowledges that many services and policies have been designed in a 'gender-neutral' way which fails to take account of the different needs of women and men. The aim of the GED is to address these issues by introducing both general and specific duties for achieving gender equality.

Under the **general duties**, public authorities are required to:

- ✓ Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment; and
- ✓ Promote equality of opportunity between men and women

Many public bodies are also required to fulfill a number of **specific duties**:

- ✓ Prepare and publish a **gender equality scheme (GES)**, showing how it will meet its general and specific duties and setting out its gender equality objectives.
- ✓ In formulating its overall objectives, consider the need to include objectives to address the causes of any **gender pay gap**.
- ✓ **Gather and use information** on how the public authority's policies and practices affect gender equality in the workforce and in the delivery of services.
- ✓ **Consult** stakeholders (i.e. employees, service users and others, including trade unions) and take account of relevant information in order to determine its gender equality objectives.
- ✓ **Assess the impact** of its current and proposed policies and **practices** on gender equality.
- ✓ To **implement** the actions set out in its GES within three years, unless it

is unreasonable or impracticable to do so.

- ✓ **Report** against the GES every year and **review** it at least every three years. [1]

## Why we need the Duty

Women's inequality is deeply entrenched in society and needs to be tackled in a direct and uncompromising way. There are many examples of current discriminatory policies and practices and their impact on women's lives across a wide range of areas:

- ✓ Rape conviction rates have dropped steadily from 33% of reported cases in 1977 to only 5.29% in 2004. [2]
- ✓ If poverty were measured on the basis of individual income, 52% of married women would be under the income support poverty line, compared to just 11% of men. [3]
- ✓ Female graduates earn, on average, 15% less than their male counterparts at the age of 24, with this gender pay gap widening with age. [4]
- ✓ Just over a quarter of local authority councillors are women and no region has yet to reach the threshold of one-third female councillors. Only 2% of local councillors were Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) women in 2006. [5]

## How the Duty will benefit public authorities

The GED presents a unique opportunity to eradicate systematic discrimination against women and offers a range of benefits to employers including: [6]

*Services:*

- ✓ Understand what women and men really need from your services.
- ✓ Improve customer satisfaction by tailoring services to actual needs.
- ✓ Better quality and more cost effective services.
- ✓ More effective targeting of resources.
- ✓ Improved service means fewer complaints and potentially more profit.

- ✓ Less time dealing with complaints leaves staff more time to deal with core responsibilities.
- ✓ More time working on core activity means higher efficiency.

*Employment:*

- ✓ Improve recruitment. Considering gender could help fill the skill gaps.
- ✓ Flexible working and improving the work - life balance means happier staff and higher retention rate.
- ✓ Action on maternity leave will increase staff returning.
- ✓ More efficient use of talent in the workforce.

However, in order for the GED to be successfully implemented it is crucial that public bodies have a clear understanding of gender inequality. The WRC has gathered evidence that some public authorities are misinterpreting the Duty and promoting the kind of equality where 'equal' simply means 'the same' – same resources, same access (for example requesting that women's refuges provide services to men).

This approach is, in fact, gender neutral, as it does not account for the different needs of women and men. For the GED to effectively tackle systematic discrimination, what is needed is **substantive equality**, which ensures that resources are targeted towards need.

**Example – Funding loss because “no equity of service for men”**

Since 1984 South Essex Rape and Incest Crisis Centre (SERICC) has provided a confidential, independent and specialist women only sexual violence service. SERICC's funding (approximately £60,000) was cut by the health authority in the mid 1990s because health services were under pressure to make efficiency savings, the commissioner of voluntary services said there was considered to be “no equity of service provision for men”. The organisation narrowly escaped closure of its counselling service because a “forward-thinking individual in a PCT filled the funding gap.” She recognised that the withdrawal of SERICC's services would result in an increased workload for GPs and that women and girls had no other service.

When public bodies do base policy decisions on clear evidence of need and take equality considerations into account, there is potential for real change. For example, the Crown Prosecution Service conducted a gender impact assessment before producing their violence against women strategy which establishes an argument for why a specific strategy to address violence against women is necessary. [7]

It is an excellent example of policy based on accurate information and underpinned by an equality and human rights framework which understands the links between women's experience of violence and wider forms of discrimination.

**The women's voluntary and community sector**

There are over 30,000 women's voluntary and community organisations (VCOs) working across England and Wales. They are the experts in challenging gender discrimination and continue to play a lead role in identifying and addressing issues of discrimination against women. They have expertise and experience in meeting women's needs and they work with some of the most marginalised and forgotten communities of women.

Research has found that women's organisations also provide added-value in terms of providing safe women-only space, involving women in decision-making and empowering women in terms of (re-)building their self confidence and developing and enhancing their skills. [8]

In addition, they are a crucial way to effectively support women's 'voice', articulating the concerns and solutions of the women they work with in the local community. Consequently, women's VCOs are crucial stakeholders, not only in your work on gender equality, but in all areas of policy and planning.

For example, it would be hard to argue that the Sustainable Community Strategy or Local Area Agreements will meet the needs of the community if women's organisations are not actively involved in their development.

In addition, public bodies should be mindful that decisions or actions taken on forums such as Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) are consistent with their obligations under the Gender Equality Duty and the gender equality scheme.

Public bodies should engage proactively and effectively with their local women's sector. Practically, this could mean finding out which VCOs in your locality work with women and ensuring that they are able to engage in policy development. This would need to include consideration of how this engagement could be supported, given the limited resources of women's organisations.

#### **Good practice on consultation:**

WRC has been running a policy forum for the women's sector for the last four years. Women's organisations from different equalities groups and areas of work are invited to join the forum. It is a space where WRC can learn about the key issues and priorities of women's organisations and a chance to find out what is happening 'on the ground'. Members can exchange information, share good practice and build networks. In acknowledgement of this vital expert input and time (as well as the practicalities of small organisations arranging cover to attend meetings) we offer a payment as well as travel and childcare expenses for participation in meetings. As a result women's organisations know that they are valued and have a genuine opportunity to engage with WRC and its work.

#### **About the gender equality scheme template**

WRC has produced this template document to detail some of the cross-cutting issues that public bodies may want to consider and include in their gender equality schemes. The issues and actions documented here have originated from a number of sources including current policy and research but have predominantly come from the expertise and experience of the women's VCOs.

This document brings together some of the most urgent issues that women's VCOs work on that need to be addressed in order to ensure that the GED tackles discrimination against women effectively (although it is still very important to consult with local women's organisations in your area to ensure that their concerns are reflected in your gender equality schemes).

Most of the actions are relevant to all bodies. However we have also included some specific actions for certain organisations which we thought would be helpful to share with all agencies.

In addition, the number of requests WRC have been receiving from government departments (and other public bodies) to feed into their gender equality schemes demonstrated the need for an accessible and practical resource to be made available. We have also developed a template document for central government departments. This is available on our website at: [www.wrc.org.uk](http://www.wrc.org.uk)

## **Themes**

The following section provides a brief overview of the themes covered in the template document. Sources of additional reading can be found in the 'Useful Resources' section at the end of this document.

### **Representation and engagement**

Women's VCOs work with the most marginalised and vulnerable members of society. As a result they are often the first to identify and address issues such as trafficking, rape in marriage, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, 'honour' killing and so on.

Public bodies can benefit immensely from engaging women's VCOs, using their expertise and intelligence to respond appropriately and effectively to current and emerging issues which have an impact on women and communities.

Currently however, engagement with women's VCOs is poor on local, regional and national forums, (such as Local Strategic Partnerships and Change Up regional consortia). There are a range of barriers preventing women's organisations from participating on these forums including lack of adequate resourcing, information and capacity and lack of awareness of gender equality and why it is important.

Women's organisations in your locality should be integral to any policy and planning processes, such as Local Area Agreements and Sustainable Community Strategies to ensure that the needs of local women are identified and addressed.

New research on women's engagement and representation on LSPs has found:

- ✓ Across England only 1.8% of voluntary and community sector representation on LSPs are women's organisations (despite comprising 7% of the voluntary sector).
- ✓ Only 11% of central LSP boards have 50% or more female representatives.
- ✓ 70% of respondents said that they were aware of the Gender Equality Duty coming into force. At the same time no LSP surveyed was drawing up a Gender Equality Scheme.
- ✓ Over 80% of LSPs did not monitor women's representation. [9]

### **Third sector**

The women's VCS is already marginalised within the wider VCS, receiving only 1.2% of central government funding, despite making up 7% of registered charities. [10]

Furthermore, the shift from grant giving to commissioning and procurement has increased pressure on women's and equalities VCOs. In many cases this has led to financial instability and reduction in or closure of services. As these organisations are often small community based services, they may not have the skills or capacity to bid for contracts.

Because of its prescriptive nature, procurement particularly disadvantages women's organisations as they often work on politically unpopular issues not yet accepted as important by mainstream organisations and policy makers. Services provided by women's organisations will be essential to the successful implementation of the GED, so public bodies must ensure that their procurement practices target rather than exclude women's organisations.

### **Evidence based policy**

A requirement of gender equality schemes is that objectives are evidence based and outcome focused, i.e. objectives must be determined on the basis of current, accurate statistical information and in consultation with key stakeholders, such as women's organisations. The outcomes of these objectives must be that current and future policies and practices take account of the impact of gender (as well as other equalities issues).

In order to achieve this, public bodies need to ensure that data is routinely collected on all equalities strands (gender, age, disability, race, sexuality and faith) and disaggregated by gender. This will enable departments to base decisions on robust evidence which is clearly targeted towards need.

The intersection of equalities issues in women's lives also needs to be considered when collecting and analysing data. Women are not a homogeneous group and come from different cultures and backgrounds, occupy different class and economic positions, have different ages and sexualities are able-bodied and disabled, and policies and practice need to take account of this.

## Violence against women

Violence against women (VAW) is acknowledged by the United Nations as one of the key causes and consequences of women's inequality. It also represents a violation of women's fundamental human rights.

VAW includes: rape and sexual abuse of girls; female genital mutilation, forced and early marriage, stalking, crimes in the name of 'honour', trafficking and sexual exploitation, sexual harassment and domestic violence. [11]

VAW affects large numbers of women and girls and is most commonly perpetrated by men who are known to the women.

- ✓ Almost half of women in England and Wales experience at least one incident of domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking.
- ✓ The conviction rate for rape has fallen for three decades, and now stands at 5.29% of reported rapes in England and Wales, and just 4.3% in Scotland.
- ✓ 85% of victims of forced marriage are female.
- ✓ An estimated 86,000 women living in the UK have undergone female genital mutilation (fgm) and 7000 girls under 16 are currently at risk.
- ✓ Thousands of women are trafficked into the UK for sexual exploitation each year. [12]

The GED creates an opportunity to develop an integrated and resourced approach to the many forms of violence against women. Currently, approaches are narrowly focused on domestic violence, which overlooks the broader context of violence and the fact that different forms of violence, (such as rape, domestic violence, childhood sexual abuse and trafficking) often overlap.

There needs to be greater awareness and understanding of different forms of violence, and increased resources for support and prevention.

## Sexual violence

One in five women experience sexual assault in adulthood, and 21% of girls and 11% of boys experience sexual abuse in their childhood. [13]

The government has stated that "Sexual violence and childhood sexual abuse are two of the most serious and damaging crimes in our society". [14]

Whilst the government has provided funding for (statutory) Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs), [15] there is still an urgent need for long term, specialist provision (including advocacy) to support women who are dealing with experiences of sexual violence which includes childhood sexual abuse, rape or other sexual violence issues.

In a recent survey, 35 Rape Crisis Centres had a combined annual income of £3,570,912 in 2006-07. In 2004-05, the Government spent more than twice this amount on advertising and public relations *each week*. Sixty-three per cent of Rape Crisis centres had an annual income of £100,000 or less. The average income was £81,598, only marginally more than the cost, to the state, of one rape.

Respondents and service user evaluations reported that the positive effects of accessing Rape Crisis centres impact, not just on survivors, but also their loved ones and wider communities. Survivors reported outcomes ranging from improved mental well being and a reduction in self-harming, better inter-personal relationships, ability to return to work or study, ability to reduce or stop medication, etc. [16]

SARCs currently only exist in 30 areas resulting in a 'postcode lottery' of services for women. Furthermore, the sexual violence sector is facing a funding crisis. In England and Wales there are only 38 Rape Crisis groups, the majority of which have insecure funding.

This means long waiting lists, cutbacks and closures and crucially, lack of support for vulnerable women. This sector has faced historic underinvestment which must now be addressed.

Rape crisis and other women-only VCS sexual violence services are essential as they have the expertise and experience to provide longer term support and advocacy to women survivors who have experienced historic as well as recent abuse and/or have complex needs. [17]

Sexual violence, alongside other forms of VAW need to be acknowledged and addressed at a local level.

### **No recourse to public funds**

The 'No recourse to public funds' requirement means women with insecure immigration status (e.g. on spouse, domestic worker or student visas), including those subject to the two year rule, cannot access public funds (e.g. housing benefit, income support, job seekers' allowance, child benefit etc) if they need to leave a violent relationship.

This forces women into positions of economic dependency on the settled spouse or partner. The result is sheer desperation on the part of the individual and the statutory (including the police) and voluntary organisations that women turn to.

Women's refuges work on the principle that the cost of the accommodation and the living costs are claimed back from the local authorities through the client's receipt of housing benefit and income support.

However, if the refuge can't claim the accommodation and living costs back, because the women are not entitled to these funds, then they have little choice but to refuse to take a woman in.

Public bodies need to acknowledge this issue and ensure adequate

provision is made for local women in this situation.

### **Gender and immigration**

Women claiming asylum in the UK often face difficulties as the Refugee Convention was designed with a stereotypical 'male' refugee in mind.

Whilst women may be seeking asylum for similar reasons to men, women additionally seek protection from persecution because of their gender, for example: sexual violence or rape, being forced to dress/behave in a specific way, female genital mutilation, honour killing, domestic violence, sexual and domestic slavery where there is no state protection.

Whilst the Home Office has a policy to overcome the procedural and evidential difficulties faced by asylum seeking women, its failure to consistently implement this policy puts women at a disadvantage in the asylum process.

# REPRESENTATION & ENGAGEMENT

Objectives	Actions	Outcomes	Measure of success
<p>*To increase the level of engagement between women's organisations and local public bodies.</p> <p>*To increase the representation of women's organisations on local decision making forums.</p> <p>*To increase understanding and representation of the needs of women in local policy and practice.</p>	<p>*Each local public body (e.g. the person/s responsible for consultation and engagement etc) to identify relevant women's organisations through women's umbrella bodies, (e.g. Women's Resource Centre, YWCA, Women's Aid Federation England, Council for Voluntary Services, Rape Crisis England &amp; Wales).</p> <p>*Arrange a women-only consultation event or provide other ways of facilitating engagement e.g. online consultation, women-only focus groups, outreach visits etc.</p> <p>*Make resources available for women's organisations to participate in consultation and engagement processes.</p> <p>*Target and support women's VCOs to participate in local forums and decision making bodies, such as Local Strategic Partnerships, Local Involvement Networks (LINKs), ensuring there is a clear focus on gender and an acknowledgement of capacity issues of women's VCOs.</p> <p>*Develop targets for gender representation on local forums (e.g. Local Strategic Partnerships and Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships) and formalise gender equality by including it as a regular agenda item.</p>	<p>*Better and more appropriate local services for women.</p> <p>*Women's VCS 'intelligence' and expertise on gender equality is incorporated into policy and decision making processes.</p> <p>*Forums address issues of concern to women and the women's sector so that gender equality issues can be identified and addressed, including emerging issues (e.g. issues which are new to mainstream service providers).</p> <p>*Stronger voice for marginalised communities and women.</p> <p>*Improved representation of the local women's VCS at a strategic level of local decision making.</p> <p>*Local public bodies are more responsive to need.</p> <p>*More empowered local citizens.</p>	<p>*Evidence in local strategies that the concerns of women's VCOs are incorporated into policy and decision making processes.</p> <p>*Increased representation of women's organisations and women on local decision making bodies.</p>

# THIRD SECTOR ISSUES

Objective	Action	Outcome	Measure of success
<p>*Ensure that local VCOs who do not wish to deliver public services are still able to continue with their work (in view of the move towards commissioning and procurement).</p> <p>*Ensure all commissioning and procurement processes do not (directly or indirectly) exclude the women's specialist voluntary and community sector that have the expertise to deliver services.</p> <p>*Commissioners to work with women's organisations to identify and meet the needs of local women.</p> <p>*Ensure secure, sustainable and adequate funding for the women's voluntary and community sector.</p>	<p>*Develop (or maintain) local grant schemes to fund the work of women's VCOs on issues/needs that they have identified as priorities.</p> <p>*Identify and publicise the contact details of staff who will lead on equality and diversity in each department and with a responsibility for community engagement and for equality.</p> <p>*Undertake Gender Impact Assessments as required by the Gender Equality Duty on relevant documents, starting with the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Local Area Agreement.</p> <p>*As part of developing the Sustainable Community Strategy and determining local priorities, undertake a needs analysis focusing on the type and availability of appropriate local service provision for women. This should include identifying who is providing services, emerging needs, deficits in provision and the sustainability of services. This could incorporate data collected by local women's VCOs e.g. service user monitoring information to help inform decision making processes (e.g. as part of a local needs analysis).</p> <p>*Incorporate gender budgeting, (i.e. budgeting which takes in to account the different social roles and responsibilities of women and men) into policy and planning processes.</p> <p>*Examine how and where funding is allocated (e.g. local grants schemes, Supporting People etc), taking account of the provider / grant recipient. This will provide information about the extent to which there is a diverse and thriving third sector (currently NI 7).</p> <p>*Increase opportunities for engagement and involvement of women's VCOs by offering payment for input and expertise (as well as for the practicalities of small organisations arranging cover to attend meetings).</p> <p>*Invite women's VCOs to work in partnership at the start of the planning and commissioning process.</p> <p>*Provide training in gender awareness for commissioners and service leads (using expertise from women's sector).</p>	<p>*Better informed commissioners and commissioning processes.</p> <p>*Compliance with Compact and government guidelines e.g. (at least) three year funding and full cost recovery.</p> <p>*Funding priorities are determined on the firm evidence of need and this evidence is gender-proofed.</p> <p>*Better informed policies and practices based on engagement and involvement with local women's organisations.</p> <p>*Accessible, adequately resourced and sustainable services which meet the (often hidden) needs of women.</p> <p>*Level playing field for women's VCOs in terms of grant funding, procurement and commissioning and choice about whether or not to engage in procurement.</p> <p>*Better understanding of the needs of women in the local area.</p> <p>*Greater participation and confidence of women's VCOs in commissioning and procurement processes.</p>	<p>*Increased visibility and recognition of women's VCOs and their role in addressing the systematic discrimination of women.</p> <p>*Adequate and sustainable funding to women's VCOs.</p> <p>*Diverse local voluntary and community sector which meet the (often hidden) needs of women.</p>

# THIRD SECTOR ISSUES

Objective	Action	Outcome	Measure of success
	<p>*Commissioning and procurement processes to be informed by relevant government guidance e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Social Issues in Purchasing (Office of Government Commerce)</li><li>- Cross Government Action Plan on Sexual Violence and Abuse, which will be producing guidance for Primary Care Trusts on commissioning services from the sexual violence and abuse voluntary sector.</li></ul>		

# EVIDENCE BASED POLICY

Objective	Action	Outcome	Measure of success
<p>*The impact of gender (and other equality strands) is measured and the intersection of equality strands is addressed.</p> <p>*Ascertain clearly what the needs are and use this evidence to change policy as required.</p>	<p>*Routinely collect statistical information on all equalities strands and disaggregate by gender (including feedback such as complaints/Patient Advocacy and Liaison).</p> <p>*Collect qualitative data on all equalities strands and analysed by gender (including feedback such as complaints/Patient Advocacy and Liaison).</p> <p>*Report (in plain English) on this evidence and demonstrate how it informs decision making processes e.g. funding/commissioning and procurement.</p> <p>*Funding to develop/maintain equalities monitoring and dissemination of this equalities information in an accessible (plain English) format.</p> <p>*Local action plans e.g. produced by Local Authorities or Local Strategic Partnerships to demonstrate how actions are determined by need including the needs of diverse communities in all areas e.g. older women, BME women, disabled women, lesbians, women from faith communities and transgender women. Women's organisations can help you to identify the needs of these different groups.</p> <p>*Develop systems to collect data on equalities including gender.</p> <p>*Training on how to collect sex disaggregated data and how to analyse it.</p>	<p>*Comprehensive data disaggregated by gender and available on all equalities groups.</p> <p>*Regular monitoring to identify and address differences in outcomes.</p> <p>*Clear and identifiable evidence base and methodology for determining need which corresponds to funding priorities.</p>	<p>*Public bodies are more responsive to local need.</p> <p>*Public bodies develop local intelligence and expertise on equalities issues in that area.</p> <p>*Direct correlation between needs of communities and funding priorities reflected in appropriate and adequate service provision.</p>

# VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Objective	Action	Outcome	Measure of success
<p>*Develop a strategic, integrated approach and action on violence against women (VAW).</p> <p>*Ensure rape crisis and other (including women-only) sexual violence services are adequately recognised and sustainably funded in order to continue their work with survivors of sexual violence and abuse.</p>	<p>*Refresh existing policy/develop new policy to ensure gender equality and VAW is comprehensively addressed in all its forms (e.g. sexual violence, female genital mutilation, 'honour' killings, forced marriage, trafficking). This should include actions as to how it will be addressed locally.</p> <p>*Forums to address domestic violence should be extended to include all forms of VAW and a lead within each public body and department should be identified to take this forward.</p> <p>The focus of this forum should be to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify and involve experts on VAW, including local women's voluntary and community sector organisations in commissioning and planning services.</li> <li>- Co-ordinate training for key staff members on VAW and discrimination against women (using expertise from women's sector and covering issues of the intersection of equalities strands). This should include issues of prevention as well as appropriate service provision.</li> <li>- Identify/develop specific, measurable indicators and outcomes for VAW for local policies and practices stating how VAW will be addressed.</li> </ul> <p>*Undertake regular needs analysis focusing on the type and availability of service provision for women who have experienced violence. This should include identifying who is providing services, emerging needs (e.g. women with no recourse to public funds), deficits in provision and the sustainability of services.</p> <p>*Local authorities to co-ordinate and undertake Women's Safety Audits, using a multi-agency, holistic approach focusing on safety in the home, workplace and built environment.</p> <p>*The next round of Local Area Agreement targets (or when policies are refreshed) to include appropriate national indicators to address violence against women.</p>	<p>*Proactive, co-ordinated and strategic policy which is able to identify and address all forms of VAW, including the root causes of VAW and that has a focus on prevention, provision, elimination and mainstreaming of VAW.</p> <p>*Identifiable lead on VAW policy working with experts on VAW, including women's organisations.</p> <p>*Inclusive and integrated VAW policy which reflects and addresses all forms of violence against women across related policy areas such as: health and social care (including mental health and learning disabilities), homelessness, education, crime and criminal justice and so on.</p> <p>*Increased understanding and knowledge of VAW and discrimination against women.</p> <p>*Rape crisis and other women-only sexual violence services do not close and are able to meet the demand from SV survivors.</p>	<p>*Prioritisation of VAW issues and increased stability of VAW sector with increased service provision.</p> <p>*Rape crisis and other VCS women-only sexual violence services are adequately and sustainably funded.</p>

# VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Objective	Action	Outcome	Measure of success
	<p>*Sustainable Community Strategies to include targets on reducing violence against women which are identified with local women's organisations.</p> <p>*Specific actions for PCTs include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide training for all health staff on violence against women, using Mainstreaming Gender and Women's Mental Health guidance (available from the Department of Health website).</li> </ul> <p>This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- An understanding of the (mental) health implications of experiencing violence and/or abuse.</li> <li>- Guidance on how to respond to a woman who discloses abuse (and potentially extending routine questioning by health professionals about domestic violence to include VAW and childhood sexual abuse).</li> <li>- Develop referral pathways for women who disclose experiences of abuse or violence with involvement of women's organisations.</li> <li>- Develop and implement mechanisms to monitor violence against women and include targets for reduction and on perpetrators.</li> <li>- Develop/refresh policies to ensure women using inpatient services have access to single sex wards and facilities.</li> </ul>		

# VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Objective	Action	Outcome	Measure of success
	<p>*PCTs should: Adhere to planned government guidelines on commissioning and procurement of sexual violence and childhood sexual abuse services from women's VCOs (See Cross Government Action Plan on Sexual Violence and Abuse, 2007).</p> <p>Invite specialist women's VCOs (including those working with equalities communities and Sexual Assault and Referral Centres) to be involved in the planning and delivery of services relating to violence against women.</p> <p>*Provide refuges with adequate funding to support women with no recourse to public funds.</p> <p>*Identify local (or national) women's organisations with expertise in this area to develop an understanding of the key issues for women with insecure immigration status and to identify how to address these issues.</p> <p>* Islington Council has a specialist team working with destitute people from abroad who have no recourse to public funds. We would recommend following their guidance for information about how to support women with no recourse to public funds: <a href="http://www.islington.gov.uk/Health/ServicesForAdults/nrpf/default.asp">http://www.islington.gov.uk/Health/ServicesForAdults/nrpf/default.asp</a></p>	<p>*Women with no recourse to public funds in the local authority area are adequately supported.</p> <p>*Increased understanding of the issues facing women with insecure immigration status and no recourse to public funds.</p>	

# Useful Resources

## The Gender Equality Duty

The Equalities and Human Rights Commission is responsible for enforcing the Gender Equality Duty.

<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com>

## Violence against women

Coy, M., Kelly, L. & Foord, L. (2007) Map of Gaps: The Postcode Lottery of Violence Against Women Support Services. End Violence Against Women Coalition. London

End Violence Against Women Coalition (2005) Making the Grade? An independent analysis of Government initiatives on violence against women. EVAW. London

<http://www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk/documents/Making%20the%20Grade.pdf>

Kelly, L & Lovett, J. (2005) What a Waste. The Case for an Integrated Violence Against Women Strategy. Women's National Commission. London.

<http://www.thewnc.org.uk/pubs/whatawaste.pdf>

Walby, S. & Allen, J. (2004) Domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking: Findings from the British Crime Survey. Home Office. London. <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs04/hors276.pdf>

Kelly, L., Lovett, J. & Regan, L. (2005) A gap or a chasm? Attrition in reported rape cases. Home Office. London. <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs05/hors293.pdf>

Home Office (2007) Cross Government Action Plan on Sexual Violence and Abuse. HO. London.

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## Evidence based policy

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[14] Ibid, p.i.

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