



HM Government

# Ending Violence against Women and Girls

## Strategy 2016 – 2020

March 2016

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# Contents

Ministerial forewords..... 4

Executive summary..... 8

Preventing violence and abuse..... 15

Provision of services..... 28

Partnership working..... 35

Pursuing perpetrators..... 43

Annex A: Action plan..... 52

Annex B: Data caveats..... 59

## Ministerial foreword by the Home Secretary



In 2010, we first published Our Call to End Violence against Women and Girls. Behind our strategy was this simple proposition: no woman should live in fear of violence, and every girl should grow up knowing she is safe, so that she can have the best start in life.

Through our strategy we strengthened the legislative framework. We introduced new offences to tackle stalking and to make sure that forcing someone to marry against their will is a crime. We brought in Clare's Law so that women now have a right to know if their partner has a violent past. We introduced a new offence of coercive and controlling behaviour which can ruin women's lives. And we have created new protection orders for domestic violence, sexual violence and female genital mutilation, to allow authorities to take protective action before harm occurs.

This legislation has been underpinned by work to change attitudes and prevent offending, work with the police to improve their response to these crimes, and stable national funding for specialist support services and national helplines.

In recent years we have seen a step change in the number of these crimes recorded by the police. But as more victims and survivors come forward we need to ensure that they get the support they need. As the true scale of these crimes is revealed we need to strengthen our work to change attitudes, improve prevention and where possible rehabilitate offenders to stop reoffending.

To do this we need to make tackling violence against women and girls everybody's business. From health providers, to law enforcement, to employers and friends and family we all need to play our part. By allowing women to disclose violence as part of their everyday interactions we can support earlier identification and intervention to stop violence and abuse from escalating to critical levels. By improving confidence in the criminal justice system we will be able to bring more perpetrators to justice, as well as doing more to rehabilitate offenders.

Violence against Women and Girls Strategy 2016 - 2020

And to ensure all victims get the right support at the right time, we will drive a real transformation of service provision, providing support to local commissioners so that all areas rise to the level of the best. We will make sure that all partnerships have access to the best examples of local practice, along with the data, tools and information they need to provide an integrated, effective, whole family approach to addressing and stopping violence and abuse.

To support the Government's commitment to tackling violence against women and girls, we have pledged £80 million in funding. This will help vital services and frontline work such as refuges and rape crisis centres. In 2017, we will also launch a dedicated Service Transformation Fund, to encourage new approaches, and establish and embed the best ways to help victims, and their families, and prevent perpetrators from re-offending.

This strategy is ambitious. But so too must be our aims. We must do more to stop people offending, break the cycle of abuse, provide ways out of difficult circumstances, and ensure women and girls can live their lives free of violence and abuse.

I want to end by thanking all those who protect and support women and girls, wherever and whenever they need help. I am grateful to the organisations, agencies, and service providers who work tirelessly and with such tremendous dedication.

It is by listening and learning from those who know what is needed on the frontline – the victims and survivors, and those who provide them with support – that we will achieve sustainable and lasting change.



**The Rt Hon Theresa May MP**  
**Home Secretary**

## Ministerial foreword by the Minister for Preventing Abuse, Exploitation and Crime



Through this refreshed strategy, we have set out an ambitious vision to tackle violence against women and girls in all its forms over the next four years. We will drive a transformation in the delivery of VAWG services, make prevention and early intervention the foundation of our approach, and embed VAWG as 'everyone's business' across agencies, services and the wider public.

As Minister for Preventing Abuse, Exploitation and Crime, I am determined to support all vulnerable groups. The strategic aims of our VAWG work – to increase reporting of often hidden crimes, to overhaul the criminal justice response to vulnerable victims and to bring more perpetrators to justice – complements, and will be supported by, wider Government work to tackle modern slavery, prevent child sexual abuse and protect girls from exploitation by gangs. Our greater focus on early intervention and prevention and the support that we are providing to local commissioners will have benefits for all vulnerable victims.

We know that these terrible crimes are disproportionately gendered which is why our approach must be framed within a violence against women and girls strategy. However, I recognise that men can also be victims of violence and abuse and the approach set out in this strategy will benefit all victims of these crimes.

Too many women are still victims of domestic and sexual violence. We must help young people to understand what a healthy relationship is and to re-think their views of controlling behaviour, violence, abuse, sexual abuse and consent. Our new campaign aims to prevent the onset of domestic violence in adults by challenging attitudes and behaviours amongst teenage boys and girls that abuse in relationships is acceptable.

We must also ensure that victims are able to access the services that they need, when they need them. We have devolved responsibility for local service provision to local areas but we recognise that achieving effective commissioning across all local

Violence against Women and Girls Strategy 2016 - 2020

areas in England and Wales is challenging. We are providing a comprehensive package of support for local commissioners which will include targeted and collaborative support from local and national experts in driving service transformation, a National Statement of Expectations and up to date guidance.

Collaboration is vital to achieving the aims of this strategy and I look forward to continuing to work across Government and with local partners over the next four years. In preparation for the strategy, I hosted a number of roundtables with practitioners and representatives from the women's sector. As always, I was impressed with the passion and commitment shown by those who work in this area. I am grateful for their time and contributions which have helped to shape the approach in this strategy.

I am also proud that the UK is a leader in tackling violence against women and girls overseas. We are delivering an ambitious programme to address female genital mutilation and forced marriage by tackling them in the source countries for these practices. I am pleased that the UK is championing the implementation of the UN Global Goals which include targets on eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking, sexual and other types of exploitation. With the introduction of our landmark Modern Slavery Act, I am determined to break the supply chains that see victims trafficked into the UK and abused.

Violence and abuse are terrible crimes which have no place in our society. Our commitment, underpinned by this refreshed strategy, will help keep more women and girls safe and bring more perpetrators to justice.



**Karen Bradley MP**  
**Minister for Preventing Abuse, Exploitation and Crime**

## Executive Summary

Under the previous Government, we set out our ambitious vision of eliminating violence against women and girls (VAWG)<sup>1</sup>. Since 2010 we have made real progress. The prevalence of domestic and sexual violence and abuse has dropped according to the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) and, in 2014/15, we saw total prosecutions for VAWG offences reach the highest levels ever recorded<sup>2</sup>.

Significant new legislation is now in place including specific offences of stalking, forced marriage, failure to protect from Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), and revenge pornography, as well as the new domestic abuse offence to capture coercive or controlling behaviour in an intimate or family relationship.

We introduced a landmark Modern Slavery Act, and rolled out Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPOs) and the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS) nationally. We have introduced FGM Protection Orders and an FGM mandatory reporting duty, and strengthened measures to manage sex offenders or those who pose a risk of sexual harm. A summary of progress and the impact of our previous strategy is detailed in our progress report<sup>3</sup>.

However it is unacceptable that many women still suffer in silence from crimes that wreck their lives and the lives of their families – crimes which all too often remain hidden. The only way we can achieve real, sustainable progress is if national and local government, local partners and agencies, and every community work together to prevent women and girls from becoming victims in the first place and make sure those who have experienced abuse receive the support they need to recover. Tackling VAWG is everybody's business. This refreshed strategy is a call to action for us all over the next four years to work together so we achieve our shared vision by 2020.

The pillars of the approach set out in 2010 – prevention, provision of services, partnership working and pursuing perpetrators – remain the right framework. Over the next four years, we will support a transformation in service delivery and a step change in social action to achieve a sustainable long term reduction in the prevalence of these terrible crimes, to help women and girls rebuild their lives, and to break the inter-generational consequences of abuse.

The human cost of VAWG is high. Experiences of abuse have serious psychological, emotional and physical consequences and may contribute to multiple disadvantage, or a chaotic lifestyle involving substance misuse, homelessness, offending behaviour, gang involvement, prostitution or mental health problems. That 41% of the prison population have witnessed or experienced domestic abuse is illustrative of the wider social harms these crimes cause.

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/97905/vawg-paper.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/97905/vawg-paper.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Caveats relating to CPS data are listed fully in Annex B.

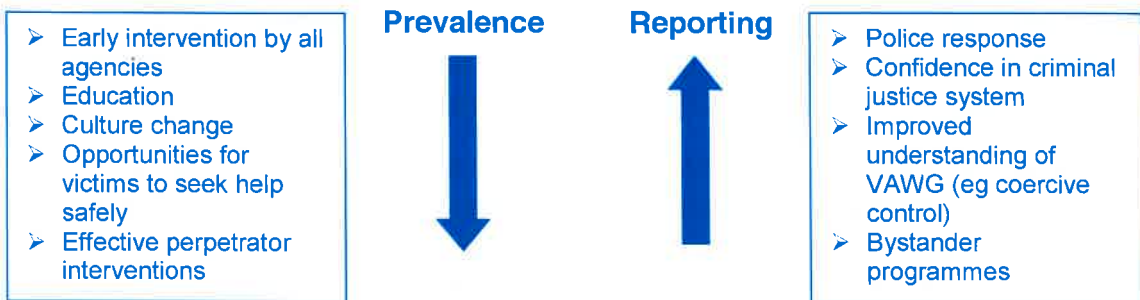
<sup>3</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/409510/VAWG\\_Progress\\_Report\\_2010-2015.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/409510/VAWG_Progress_Report_2010-2015.pdf)



Violence against Women and Girls Strategy 2016 - 2020

The cost to individuals cannot be measured, but the costs of violence and abuse to the economy can be calculated and are considerable. Sylvia Walby's report<sup>4</sup> estimates that providing public services to victims of domestic violence and the lost economic output of women affected costs the UK £15.8 billion annually. The cost to health, housing and social services, criminal justice and civil legal services is estimated at £3.9 billion. Our collaborative, cross-government approach to tackling this violence and abuse is therefore essential in order to make a difference.

We are clear about the overall outcomes we want to achieve by 2020 - a reduction in the prevalence of all forms of violence against women and girls, matched by increases in reporting, police referrals, prosecution and convictions for what can still be hidden crimes. We want to see earlier intervention and prevention so that fewer women reach crisis point and every victim gets the support she needs - and the support her children need - at the right time. Through our plans to bring all services up to the level of the best, we will ensure that women get the support they need to ensure long-term changes to their lives and the lives of their children.



**Preventing violence and abuse**

Preventing violence and abuse from happening in the first place will make a significant difference to overall prevalence of these crimes. We will continue to challenge the deep-rooted social norms, attitudes and behaviours that discriminate against and limit women and girls across all communities.

We will educate, inform and challenge young people about healthy relationships, abuse and consent. Working with partners like the PSHE Association, leading Head Teachers and other practitioners, we will ensure schools have access to effective and high quality resources for teaching about healthy relationships. Our nationally acclaimed campaign, *This is Abuse*, has had an impact and we are investing £3.85 million in a new campaign to continue to build teenagers' awareness of issues like consent, 'sexting' and relationship abuse.

Our refreshed strategic approach will support professionals to identify and deal with the earliest signs of abuse, stop violence before it happens, prevent abusive behaviour from becoming entrenched and perpetrators from moving from one victim to the next. Critically, it will provide victims and their families with support before a crisis point is reached and their only option is to flee their own homes - frequently

<sup>4</sup> Walby, S (2009), The Cost of Domestic Violence Up-date 2009 Lancaster University

with their children. Case studies from Women's Aid illustrate how earlier intervention can save many thousands of pounds in each individual's journey<sup>5</sup>.

### **Provision of services**

Our goal is to work with local commissioners to deliver a secure future for rape support centres, refuges and FGM and Forced Marriage Units, whilst driving a major change across all services so that early intervention and prevention, not crisis response, is the norm. We will ensure that victims get the help they need when they need it. This needs a collaborative response both between Government and local areas, and between all local agencies in each area. Effective support must also make the links to targeting wider vulnerability - including child sexual exploitation and abuse, substance misuse, modern slavery, and gang exploitation.

We know that the best areas are already doing this. At the same time, it is clear from the number of women still reaching crisis point, and those being turned away from services, that these approaches are not widespread enough. Our ambition is that all areas rise to the level of the best and that services reform further and faster to meet the needs of women and girls experiencing violence. To achieve this, we are making our expectations clear for the first time, backed by support for areas to improve commissioning and leadership to best meet the needs of women in their area.

We will publish a National Statement of Expectations (NSE) to make clear to local partnerships what good commissioning and service provision looks like. This will provide a blueprint for all local areas to follow, setting out core expectations, but giving them the freedom to respond to meet local needs.

To help deliver on these expectations, local partnerships will have access to new targeted, expert support from a network of local and national practitioners. We will make sure that all partnerships have access to the best examples of local practice, along with the data, tools and information they need to improve local commissioning. We will provide local areas with the resources they need support transformation by aligning increased central Government funding to promote effective local leadership, joined up commissioning and the evaluation of emerging models which support earlier intervention and coherent pathways of victim support.

We recognise that some sectors of society can experience multiple forms of discrimination and disadvantage or additional barriers to accessing support. These include women and girls from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGB&T) women and disabled women, adults who seek help for childhood sexual abuse, and the needs of female offenders who have also been victims of violence and abuse. Our support to promote effective local commissioning will focus on ensuring the needs of all victims are met.

The Government is clear that local areas are best placed to understand local needs and we have devolved power and responsibility for meeting those needs accordingly.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.womensaid.org.uk/our-approach-change-that-lasts/>

## Violence against Women and Girls Strategy 2016 - 2020

We set the direction in 2010 by pledging £40 million in funding over the previous spending review period to ensure the provision of some core services for victims, alongside a clear expectation that all local commissioners are responsible and accountable for meeting the broader need.

Over the next four years, we will continue to provide a bedrock of critical services for VAWG. But, as we move forward to 2020, we recognise that embedding VAWG as everyone's business, improving agencies' responses in identifying abuse at an earlier stage and supporting further increases in reporting, will place greater demand on local services.

To help meet this challenge, the Government will provide £80 million of dedicated funding over this spending review period. This funding will provide core support for refuges and other accommodation-based services, helping local areas ensure that no woman is turned away from the support she needs. It will include specific provision for women from BME backgrounds, and innovative services for the most vulnerable with complex needs. The funding will also support a network of rape support centres, a network of national helplines. Critically, from 2017, this increased funding will also support the launch of a VAWG Service Transformation Fund to support, promote and embed the best local practice.

In addition, until the Government negotiates an end to VAT on sanitary products, we will provide £15 million a year to support a range of women's charities. Receipts from VAT on sanitary products have already been used to provide a £2 million donation to Women's Aid and Safelives to work with specialist organisations to improve early responses and ultimately help to save the lives of abused women and children.

Tackling VAWG will also benefit from a range of other Government programmes, including the £200 million already invested in the Troubled Families Programme, and a further £720 million for the programme to 2020.

### *Partnership working*

The multi-faceted and complex nature of VAWG means that it cannot be addressed by any one agency alone. We know that the most effective areas have strong partnership arrangements across national, regional and local boundaries; helping victims and providing an effective first response to violence and abuse. At its very best, this is overseen by strong local leadership, with a single person clearly accountable for provision, and underpinned by pooled budgets so that funding can follow women's needs rather than being artificially constrained by service boundaries.

We will provide guidance and examples of good practice to illustrate how multi-agency arrangements can most effectively share information, assess risk and undertake joint safeguarding activities to meet the needs of victims of VAWG. Working with voluntary sector partners, we will help local areas go further and faster to develop new and more integrated approaches that facilitate earlier intervention,

swifter, pre-emptive action by a multi-agency specialist team and risk identification for all members of a family at the same time.

Our ambition is to make awareness of and response to VAWG 'everyone's business' across all agencies, professions and the wider public. We will ensure that women can seek help in a range of everyday settings as they go about their daily lives – for example through interactions with Citizens Advice, housing providers, Job Centres and employers – and secure appropriate support from specialist victim services. Every point of interaction with a victim is an opportunity for intervention and should not be missed.

### ***Pursuing perpetrators***

An effective criminal justice response is crucial to tackling VAWG and we will continue to drive delivery against the recommendations emerging from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) inspections on so called 'honour-based' violence and domestic violence and abuse. The HMIC reports shone a spotlight on the policing response and put it into the public domain - placing an onus on the police to be publicly accountable for making improvements and addressing shortcomings.

Our new offence of domestic abuse not only addresses a gap in the law by targeting coercive and controlling behaviour, but will help to support a culture change which refocuses the criminal justice system's response on recognising and addressing patterns of abuse rather than single incidents, and intervening at the earliest opportunity.

We will harness new technology to tackle VAWG by promoting how data analytics can be used to drive a more targeted approach to tackling offenders, supporting use of body-worn cameras to collect best evidence, and trialling new GPS proximity tracking technology to offer greater protections to victims. We will do more to protect victims from online abuse and stalking, for example by building the capability of police and prosecutors to identify these crimes and bring forward prosecutions.

But we cannot simply arrest our way out of domestic and sexual violence. Re-offending rates and breaches of protection orders are high with this type of offending<sup>6</sup>. Through supporting interventions that lead to sustainable behaviour change in perpetrators themselves, we will drive an overall reduction in prevalence of VAWG crimes and reduced rates of re-offending.



<sup>6</sup> [http://www.cps.gov.uk/publications/docs/cps\\_vawg\\_report\\_2015\\_amended\\_september\\_2015\\_v2.pdf](http://www.cps.gov.uk/publications/docs/cps_vawg_report_2015_amended_september_2015_v2.pdf)

### **Oversight**

We will maintain oversight of this strategy through the Inter-Ministerial Group chaired by the Home Secretary. We will promote greater transparency of performance to harness greater local democratic accountability including through Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs), elected mayors and local authorities. To enable people to hold their elected representatives to account, we will, through the NSE, expect local areas to publish detailed data on the level of need in their area and the services they are providing to meet that need. To further improve transparency, we will consider how to build on existing inspection arrangements to reflect the multi-agency nature of VAWG provision.

### **Internationally**

We are pursuing an ambitious programme of work at the international level. This includes driving and supporting implementation of the UN Goal<sup>7</sup> to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls and eliminating all forms of VAWG and harmful practices such as FGM and child, early and forced marriage (CEFM). This work includes our efforts to end the use of sexual violence in conflict.

The appointment of Baroness Verma as our new Ministerial Champion for Tackling VAWG Overseas will help drive this work, alongside the Rt Hon Baroness Anelay of St Johns as the Prime Minister's Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict. We will build on our reputation as a world leader on gender equality and VAWG following on from the success of the call to action on protecting girls and women in emergencies in 2013, the Girl Summit, and the Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict in 2014. Women are also often excluded from conflict resolution and prevention and we will continue our efforts to ensure they are fully included as set out in our National Action Plan on Women Peace and Security (2014-17).

We will work with international partners to further progress our VAWG work in developing countries. Collaborating with both UN agencies and civil society organisations and with other governments will be key to ensuring international action, as agreed at the UN General Assembly in September 2015, to implement the Global Goal targets on all forms VAWG and on harmful practices.

*"Ending Violence against Women and Girls is a top priority for the UK Government both at home and abroad. In the last parliament we made significant steps to bring previously hidden crimes to light but more must be done. In my role as Ministerial Champion for Tackling Violence Against Women & Girls Overseas, I will focus on all forms of violence, including domestic violence, sexual violence, female genital mutilation and child, early and forced marriage. I am committed to playing my part by engaging with leadership across the UK Government and international partners to deliver our commitments in this refreshed strategy."*

**Baroness Verma, Ministerial Champion for Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Overseas.**

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/what-are-the-global-goals>

***Our vision is that by 2020:***

- There is a significant reduction in the number of VAWG victims, achieved by challenging the deep-rooted social norms, attitudes and behaviours that discriminate against and limit women and girls, and by educating, informing and challenging young people about healthy relationships, abuse and consent;
- All services make early intervention and prevention a priority, identifying women and girls in need before a crisis occurs, and intervening to make sure they get the help they need for themselves and for their children;
- Women and girls will be able to access the support they need, when they need it, helped by the information they need to make an informed choice;
- Specialist support, including accommodation-based support, will be available for the most vulnerable victims, and those with complex needs will be able to access the services they need;
- Services in local areas will work across boundaries in strong partnerships to assess and meet local need, and ensure that services can spot the signs of abuse in all family members and intervene early;
- Women will be able to disclose experiences of violence and abuse across all public services, including the NHS. Trained staff in these safe spaces will help people access specialist support whether as victims or as perpetrators;
- Elected representatives across England and Wales will show the leadership, political will and senior accountability necessary to achieve the necessary change, and will champion efforts to tackle these crimes;
- Everyone in a local area will be able to hold their elected leaders to account through clear data on how local need is being met;
- There will be a lower level of offending through an improved criminal justice response and a greater focus on changing the behaviour of perpetrators through a combination of disruption and support; and
- A stronger evidence base of what works, and victim safety, will be embedded into all interventions to protect victims of VAWG.

## Chapter 1: Preventing violence and abuse

### Outcomes by 2020

- Continued decreases in the overall prevalence of domestic and sexual violence as measured by the CSEW and reductions in the prevalence of FGM in line with our aim to end FGM within a generation.
- More victims are helped to long term independence and freedom from violence and abuse by breaking the generational cycle, strengthening the focus on prevention and early intervention and addressing underlying issues driving perpetrators.
- More victims and offenders are identified at the earliest possible opportunity, with effective interventions in place to prevent violence and abuse from escalating to a crisis point, with a reduction in high-rates of re-victimisation.
- Increased awareness across all sections of society that VAWG is unacceptable in all circumstances with individuals, communities and frontline agencies empowered to confidently challenge negative attitudes to VAWG.
- Increased awareness in children and young people of the importance of respect and consent in relationships and that abusive behaviour is always wrong - including abuse taking place online.
- Social norms, values, beliefs, attitudes, behaviours and practices tolerating VAWG amongst communities in a range of developing countries continue to shift in recognition of its unacceptability.
- Stronger global evidence base and high quality data on primary prevention is available which helps to inform policies and programmes at home and overseas.

Prevention and early intervention remain the foundation of our approach to tackling VAWG as we set out in 2010. Once patterns of violence are entrenched the harder it is to break cycles of abuse, support victims to recovery and independence, and deter perpetrators. We recognise that abuse can happen at any stage of a woman's life, and this strategy reflects a life course approach to ensure that all victims – and their families - have access to the right support at the right time to help them live free from violence and abuse.

In the most extreme cases we are working to save people's lives - over 80 women a year still lose their lives to domestic homicide<sup>8</sup>.

We know that domestic and sexual violence and abuse are under-reported crimes so it is encouraging to see police recorded crime figures increase for these offences while figures on overall prevalence continue to decrease. The Office for National Statistics states that increases in police-recorded rape, sexual offences and domestic abuse are due to greater victim confidence and better recording by the police. We welcome this.

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/crime-stats/crime-statistics/focus-on-violent-crime-and-sexual-offences--2013-14/rpt-chapter-2.html#tab-Victims-aged-16-years-and-over>

While there is undoubtedly more to do to bring perpetrators to justice, the number of police referrals to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), the number of prosecutions and the number of convictions for VAWG crimes were all higher than ever before in 2014/15.

However, there were still an estimated 1.35 million female victims of domestic abuse in the last year, and nearly 450,000 victims of sexual violence. The Government is determined to drive continued decreases in these numbers over the next four years and we are clear that local partnerships need to go faster and further to reform services so that prevention is the bedrock of their local VAWG strategy.

## Primary prevention

Violence against women and girls is both a cause and consequence of gender inequality<sup>9</sup>. We will continue to challenge the deep-rooted social norms, attitudes and behaviours that discriminate against and limit women and girls across all communities.

The age at which an individual starts to experience or witness abuse or to access material which might influence behaviour and beliefs as an adult is crucial. There is evidence that experiencing adversity in childhood, including violence and abuse, can impact on health and well-being and, in some cases, lead to a higher risk of becoming a victim or perpetrator of violence as an adult<sup>10</sup>. Research also demonstrates that viewing pornography at a young age can cause distress and have a harmful effect on sexual development, beliefs and relationships<sup>11</sup>. Latest figures show that, in May 2015, one in five under 18s in the UK visited an adult site and one in ten UK visitors to adult sites were children<sup>12</sup>.

This means that educating and challenging young people about healthy relationships, abuse and consent is critical. Working with partners like the PSHE Association, leading Head Teachers and other practitioners to improve PSHE education, we will ensure schools have access to effective and high quality resources for teaching healthy relationships in classroom settings.

This work will be complemented by the next phase of our national teenage relationship abuse campaign which will continue to build teenagers' awareness of key issues like consent and healthy relationships and include a focus on 'sexting' and online manifestations of abuse.

We also know that younger children can be exposed to negative gender stereotypes so we are updating our Media Smart resources (with the Advertising Association) to help teachers and parents improve primary school children's understanding of how gender is represented in the media and their resilience to negative content.

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.who.int/violence\\_injury\\_prevention/violence/gender.pdf](http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/gender.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> National household survey of ACEs and their relationship with resilience to health harming behaviours in England Bellis MA, Hughes K, Leckenby N, Perkins C, Lowey H, *BMC Medicine* 2014, 12:72

<sup>11</sup> EU Kids Online Research in 2013.

<sup>12</sup> Comscore 2015



## Violence against Women and Girls Strategy 2016 - 2020

We have worked with Universities UK to establish a taskforce to explore what more can be done to support the higher education sector to prevent and respond to incidents of violence and sexual harassment against women, hate crimes and other forms of harassment on university campuses and the communities in which students live.

The taskforce brings together university leaders, students, experts and external organisations to consider the current evidence, the work that universities are already doing to address violence against women and girls and what more needs to be done. Amongst other actions the taskforce will work with the higher education sector to develop a set of principles and new guidance on tackling sexual violence and harassment along with a series of practical recommendations that universities and students' unions can adapt and implement to suit their own context. The taskforce will report in autumn 2016.

We are developing Government communication resources to support local areas to develop campaigns to raise awareness of VAWG with consistent messages. For example, the new offence of domestic abuse not only addresses a gap in the law to tackle controlling or coercive behaviours, but can also be used as a vehicle to build wider public awareness that domestic abuse extends beyond episodes of physical violence, and that patterns of psychological manipulation and control can be as harmful.

Starting from the premise that men can be a powerful force in challenging negative behaviours, we will engage men and boys in challenging VAWG by working with organisations to support widespread awareness about VAWG and how men can be involved as an integral part of approaches to prevention. For example, the successful CPS *#ConsentIs* campaign focused on creating a public discussion about consent and included work to partner up with groups engaging men as change agents on VAWG issues such as the White Ribbon Campaign<sup>13</sup>.

## Protecting people online

Exposure to unsuitable material at an impressionable age can affect someone's attitude to violence and abuse. Young people today have access to unprecedented quantities of information and entertainment through the internet and of course some of this material may be harmful. To help ensure proper protections are in place, Baroness Joanna Shields was appointed as Minister for Internet Safety and Security in May 2015.

We continue to work with a wide range of partners including internet service providers (ISPs), mobile network operators, schools, charities, regulators and civil society to drive progress, particularly through the UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS). Thanks to the energy and commitment of ISPs around 90% of UK consumers can now easily switch on parental controls. Filters are also provided on

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.whiteribboncampaign.co.uk>

mobile phones and on public wifi to protect children from accessing inappropriate internet content.

Despite these safeguards, children and young people may still be able to access unsuitable material such as pornography. To tackle this we are currently consulting on introducing age verification mechanisms to restrict the access that those under 18 have to pornographic websites. To further protect young people, online music videos produced in the UK will now include age ratings – a step towards delivery of the manifesto commitment that all online music videos will be age rated. As a next step, we want to encourage the US labels to develop a similar approach.

To succeed in tackling VAWG at an earlier stage it is also critical to do all we can to tackle child sexual abuse. The WePROTECT Summit hosted by the Prime Minister in December 2014 in London marked a watershed moment in the battle to remove child sexual abuse material from the internet worldwide; identify and protect victims; and strengthen co-operation between law enforcement agencies to track down perpetrators.

To drive the initiative forward a WePROTECT Advisory Board has been established to act as a catalyst to coordinate a diverse range of stakeholders to tackle online CSE and set out the programme of concrete actions to build capacity globally. WePROTECT will merge with the Global Alliance Against Child Sexual Abuse Online to create a single global organisation with the influence, expertise and resources to transform how online CSE is tackled across the world.

The Government is also responding to new forms of online offending, for example by introducing a new law making 'revenge porn' a specific criminal offence. To support victims of this distressing crime, we launched a dedicated 'revenge porn' helpline in February 2015 which has taken over 3,300 calls, relating to over 620 individual cases. The Stop Online Abuse website, also established in 2015, provides practical advice for women and LGB&T adults on how to recognise abuse, steps to take to report it and how to get online content removed.

We also recognise that the rise in the number of people using online dating services can create new opportunities for perpetrators to target and abuse women. We will work with law enforcement and online safety forums to ensure the risk is analysed and understood, that appropriate safety advice is provided and that all victims have the confidence to report these crimes.

### Traditional harmful practices

We will continue to challenge the cultural attitudes that may underpin practices of FGM and forced marriage and ensure professionals have the confidence to confront these issues.

Our outreach work to prevent forced marriage and FGM is fundamental to this. The FGM Unit, set up in 2014, will continue to act as a hub for gathering and sharing effective practice and delivering outreach support to local areas. To date, the Unit

## Violence against Women and Girls Strategy 2016 - 2020

has provided over 600,000 information materials on request to community groups and frontline professionals.

We will use the findings from community projects funded by the previous Government to inform our ongoing engagement with survivors of FGM and community groups. The outcomes of the Casey review into cohesive communities and new improved health and prevalence data on FGM will further support targeted outreach work to change the attitudes and behaviours which can underpin this practice.

We have provided £2.5 million to support a project across five London boroughs<sup>14</sup> working with social workers and hospital based FGM clinics, and to the Barnardo's and Local Government Association (LGA) National FGM Centre. The centre provides social care expertise through a highly specialised team of skilled social workers with extensive experience of working with those at risk of FGM. We will use the findings from this project to support improvements in the social care response across the country.

Although FGM is practised by secular communities, it is often claimed to be carried out in accordance with religious beliefs. Over 350 faith leaders from all the major faiths have already signed a declaration condemning FGM and making it clear that all religions will work together to end it for good. We will continue to work with faith leaders to increase signatories to the declaration and to practically use the declaration to drive cultural change.

We have launched a £3 million national FGM Prevention Programme in partnership with NHS England designed to improve the health-based response to FGM and actively support prevention<sup>15</sup>. The ongoing programme will ensure that the NHS can care for survivors of FGM, support health professionals and take action to safeguard girls from harm.

Our dedicated Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) leads efforts to combat forced marriage both at home and abroad<sup>16</sup>. In 2014, the FMU gave advice or support related to a possible forced marriage in 1,267 cases<sup>17</sup>. In addition, the FMU runs an extensive outreach programme with over 100 events a year being run across the country. We will continue the FMU's extensive outreach work, working with communities and front-line professionals to highlight the issues and raise awareness of the support that is available.

We know that these crimes have historically been hidden and we want to ensure that more victims have the confidence to come forward to get the support they need and that perpetrators are brought to justice. To do this, we must make sure that the

<sup>14</sup> Chelsea, Hammersmith and Fulham, Kensington, Tower Hamlets, Waltham Forest, Westminster

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-women-and-girls-at-risk-of-fgm>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/forced-marriage>

<sup>17</sup> Cases includes people or groups of people thought to be at potential risk of future forced marriage, those currently going through a forced marriage and those who have already been forced to marry. This statistic includes all initial contacts with the FMU via the helpline or by email relating to a new case.

police response is as good as it can be. While HMIC's recent report into so called 'honour-based' violence found some areas of good practice, it also raised some serious concerns about the police handling of these issues. Further detail on how we will implement HMIC's recommendations is in Chapter 4.

### Earlier identification and intervention to prevent abuse

Our aim is to identify victims and offenders at the earliest opportunity, intervene effectively to prevent violence and abuse from escalating and tackle high-rates of re-victimisation. Figure 1 on page 27 sets out how all agencies can contribute to realising this ambition.

We have already introduced measures to achieve this. For example, the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS) allows anyone with concerns about a relationship to obtain information on previous violence committed by the partner and thus make informed choices about their options. There have already been 1,900 disclosures under the scheme. Evidence shows that repeat offending by perpetrators of domestic and sexual violence is common<sup>18</sup> so we want the scheme to be used even more and we will publish an evaluation of DVDS to promote its wider uptake.

Engaging the public through awareness campaigns and bystander programmes can provide additional opportunities for victims of violence and abuse to receive the help they need at an earlier point. Our approach to supporting partnership working and making VAWG 'everyone's business' is set out in more detail in Chapter 3.

#### *Moving to an integrated family model of support*

Intervening early, and recognising how domestic and sexual abuse impacts on different family members, is vital to stopping violence from escalating and reducing the harm to victims and their children. We will scale up approaches to ensure that this happens more widely and consistently, and that risk and need identification for all members of a family takes place at the same time.

There is a wealth of innovative practice being developed at a local level to work with health, schools, and housing providers to identify and support victims and their families at an earlier stage and provide effective wrap-around support.

For example, SafeLives' 'One Front Door' and Women's Aid's 'Change that Lasts' models are two approaches based on providing a wrap-around package of care for victims and their families which can help transform how services are structured. The Government has provided £2 million in funding to support these models and the findings from these programmes will be used roll out effective approaches more widely and as a basis for embedding widespread service reform.

The importance of considering overlapping and multiple problems is shown in *Understanding Troubled Families*<sup>19</sup>, a report published as part of our original

<sup>18</sup> [http://www.cps.gov.uk/publications/docs/cps\\_vawg\\_report\\_2015\\_amended\\_september\\_2015\\_v2.pdf](http://www.cps.gov.uk/publications/docs/cps_vawg_report_2015_amended_september_2015_v2.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/336430/Understanding\\_Troubled\\_Families\\_web\\_format.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/336430/Understanding_Troubled_Families_web_format.pdf)

Troubled Families Programme's (2012-15) independent national evaluation. This showed that 29% of troubled families were experiencing domestic violence or abuse on entry to the programme. Of these families, 39% also had a young offender, 62% had a truanting child and 60% of families included an adult with a mental health problem compared with 40% in families where there was no domestic violence.

The Troubled Families Programme has been expanded to work with a further 400,000 families with a broader range of problems over five years, up to 2020. It is delivered locally by all 150 top tier local authorities. The programme encourages and supports a new way of working: it incentivises services to come together and co-ordinate the support they provide, working with and understanding the needs of the *whole family* instead of constantly reacting to their individual problems. The expanded Troubled Families Programme now includes domestic violence and abuse as one of the six core themes that local programmes are seeking to respond to.

Our intention is that this programme acts as a catalyst for local services to make fundamental changes to the way they support the most vulnerable families, including those families experiencing domestic violence and abuse. Figure 1 on page 27 sets out how the Troubled Families Programme's approach reflects our wider ambition to embed early intervention and prevention in local areas through driving integrated working between local partners and workforce transformation.

### ***Strengthening the role of health services***

Abused women use health care services more than non-abused women and they identify health care workers as the professionals they would be most likely to speak to about their experience<sup>20</sup>.

GPs, midwives, health visitors, mental health, drug and alcohol services, sexual health and Accident and Emergency staff are all well placed to identify abuse. They have the opportunity to intervene early and direct victims to the most appropriate statutory and non-statutory services. The new NHS Mandate recognises the vital role of the NHS in tackling abuse and violence and expects NHS England to ensure the NHS helps to identify violence and abuse early and supports victims to get their lives back sooner.

A range of effective interventions can make it easier for NHS services to play their part. For example, the Identification & Referral to Improve Safety (IRIS) model in health practices is a domestic violence and abuse training, support and referral programme to support GPs in asking about and responding to such disclosures. The model is currently running in 33 areas and we will promote it to local commissioners in 2016/17. In addition, Public Health England has funded free online training (through Against Violence and Abuse (AVA)) to improve awareness amongst healthcare professionals, based on the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidance on domestic abuse.

<sup>20</sup> [http://www.domesticviolencelondon.nhs.uk/uploads/downloads/DH\\_4126619.pdf](http://www.domesticviolencelondon.nhs.uk/uploads/downloads/DH_4126619.pdf)

## Violence against Women and Girls Strategy 2016 - 2020

We are ensuring that processes already in place are as effective as possible and considering how routine enquiry into domestic abuse in maternity and mental health services can be more firmly embedded, as well as expanding routine enquiry of abuse in childhood and adulthood in a range of targeted services. We are also supporting the 'Spotting the Signs' toolkit for sexual health clinic workers to engage and support young girls abused by gangs.

We are supporting mental health services to improve their responses to both victims and perpetrators of domestic and sexual violence by funding the Promoting Recovery in Mental Health (PRIMH) project. The project is working with two Mental Health Trusts<sup>21</sup> to develop and evaluate responses to domestic and sexual violence including how both risk and victim recovery are managed. The project will provide expert input to safeguarding, clinical and recovery frameworks. It will also contribute to developing strategies to deal with perpetrators of domestic violence.

### **Supporting integration**

For the most isolated women, being able to understand and speak basic English can be the first step in understanding that domestic abuse is a crime and that help is available before it reaches crisis point. We have announced a new English language offer worth £20 million over this Parliament to help at least 40,000 women in the most isolated communities get training in basic English.

This funding is a first step in a new Cohesive Communities Programme that will implement the recommendations of the Casey Review into opportunity and integration in isolated and deprived communities. Following the final report of the Casey review, we will consider what additional action we need to take to ensure that women from isolated communities vulnerable to VAWG receive more help at an earlier stage.

### **Women and girls affected by or involved with gangs**

Women and girls can experience significant harm as a result of their association with gang members, including sexual violence and exploitation. We are taking action to address this through our work to end gang violence and exploitation which has a twin focus of reducing gang-related violence and protecting vulnerable people who are at risk of being exploited by gangs.

It is a priority to safeguard gang affected women and girls and we are supporting Young People's Advocates (YPAs) to work with this critical group. The Government will continue to fund YPAs, based in London, the West Midlands and Manchester, until at least March 2017, giving direct support to vulnerable women and girls who have been victims of, or are at risk of, sexual violence by gangs, and raise awareness of these issues with local partners.

It is important that local agencies have access to relevant information and tools that they can use to continue to identify and help vulnerable girls and young women,

<sup>21</sup> Camden & Islington NHS Foundation Trust and Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

whether as victims of abuse or to help them to leave gangs. We will continue to share innovative approaches so that our partners can adopt effective ways of working with these vulnerable women and girls affected by gangs. We are bringing together a range of information and tools in the Ending Gang Violence and Exploitation knowledge hub, which is an online resource to help practitioners to access the information and support they need.

## Perpetrators: Changing behaviours to prevent abuse and reduce offending

A sustainable approach to preventing abuse is dependent on changing the attitudes and behaviours of perpetrators. We will work with agencies and local areas to ensure that appropriate perpetrator programmes, prison and probation rehabilitation approaches, and mental health interventions are available.

Within domestic abuse, there are high levels of repeat victimisation and less than 1% of perpetrators receive a specialist intervention. Previously, the evidence base for perpetrator interventions has been mixed, contributing to a shortage of such programmes. However, local areas are increasingly recognising the importance of tackling perpetrators as the root cause of abuse, drawing on a growing evidence base for their value as illustrated by the recent Mirabal project findings<sup>22</sup>.

For example, Respect, SafeLives and Social Finance have formed a partnership to create a new type of intervention for perpetrators of domestic abuse. The pilot, referred to as 'Drive', will work with perpetrators on a one-to-one basis to challenge them to stop their abusive behaviour, and hold them to account if they do not. It will operate in Sussex, Essex and South Wales in partnership with the Police and Crime Commissioners in each area as well as other agencies. The victims affected by perpetrators on the programme will also be offered additional support.

The Government will support, promote and help to evaluate such innovative models, focused on earlier intervention, tackling re-victimisation, taking a whole family approach and a long-term goal of independence based on victims' needs and choices through our VAWG service transformation fund to be launched in 2017.

We will also harness new technologies to disrupt persistent offenders of domestic abuse and stalking, reduce re-offending and provide better protection to victims. We will support the trial of new GPS proximity tracking technology to manage and disrupt persistent offenders and offer greater protections to victims.

New civil orders introduced by the Government provide critical tools for frontline agencies to manage risk and prevent offending. New FGM Protection Orders and Sexual Risk Orders for example can place restrictions on potential offenders by prohibiting a range of behaviours to manage risks of abuse, including preventing foreign travel or restricting the use of the internet. The notification requirements for

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.dur.ac.uk/resources/criva/ProjectMirabalfinalreport.pdf>

sex offenders are a crucial tool in the management of these individuals within the community. We have already strengthened and extended these and will continue to ensure that the police and other agencies have the powers they need to protect the public from those who continue to pose a risk.

FGM Protection Orders (FGMPOs) were fast-tracked for implementation in July 2015. This civil order may be made for the purposes of protecting a girl at risk from FGM or one against whom an FGM offence has been committed. The first FGM Protection Order statistics, published in December, show that these orders, although still relatively new, are being used to good effect by a wide range of applicants including victims, their family members, the police and local authorities.

Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPOs) provide critical breathing space for victims by restricting a perpetrator from returning to their home. Our proposal to introduce a new civil Stalking Protection Order will tackle perpetrators of this frightening and distressing crime at an early stage to help prevent victims becoming targets of a prolonged campaign of abuse, sometimes lasting for many years.

As we drive improvements to tackle perpetrators, we expect to see an increased use of the range of protection orders available to tackle domestic abuse, forced marriage, sex offenders and those who pose a risk of sexual harm. The Government will continue to robustly monitor the use of protection orders to promote wider take-up, better enforcement of breaches and consider making breach of a DVPO a criminal offence.

To stop the most serious offending, the Policing & Crime Bill puts existing safeguards on firearms licensing around domestic violence on a statutory footing. These include ensuring that a review of a licence holder's suitability takes place after any domestic incident and that an applicant with a history of domestic violence will not usually be granted a licence.

## Building the evidence base

Commissioners and service providers need access to the best available evidence of what works in early intervention and tackling perpetrators. We will work with the College of Policing and Early Intervention Foundation to systematically capture existing evidence, identify gaps in knowledge and research, and strengthen commissioners' understanding of what is effective. Our global £25 million flagship research and innovation programme (2013 to 2018) called 'What Works to Prevent Violence'<sup>23</sup> is generating a body of evidence which will inform new prevention programmes.

We will explore what more can be done through applying data analytics principles to VAWG to support targeted interventions. Greater Manchester, through support provided by Government innovation funding, has applied these principles to build a

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-works-in-preventing-violence-against-women-and-girls-review-of-the-evidence-from-the-programme> (Department for International Development)



forensic map of offending trends and victim needs. We will support local areas to learn from these initiatives through our support for commissioners (see Chapter 2).

## Internationally

We remain committed to preventing VAWG overseas as well as domestically. We need to intensify international action to prevent all forms of VAWG in all contexts, including FGM, CEFM, and the use of sexual violence in conflict and tackle harmful norms and gender inequality more broadly. Building on the agreement within the Global Goals, we continue to build international momentum in recognising the major barrier VAWG presents to reducing poverty and increasing stability internationally. Prevention initiatives include programmes that work with men and boys to tackle the harmful gender norms driving VAWG as well as programmes to empower women and girls.

We will scale up our efforts to prevent intimate partner violence – the most prevalent form of VAWG globally. Baroness Verma, in her role as Ministerial Champion for tackling VAWG Overseas, will work alongside the Rt Hon Baroness Anelay of St Johns in her role as the Prime Minister's Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict, to tackle the root causes of VAWG and prevent these human rights abuses from being committed.

Women and girls are frequently subjected to sexual violence in conflict settings. Under the Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative (PSVI) we will continue to work to prevent violence from occurring including through the ongoing impunity that exists for these crimes and by providing training on the International Protocol on the Documentation and Investigation of Sexual Violence in Conflict<sup>24</sup>. We will also support conflict affected states in their efforts to build better national mechanisms to address sexual violence and support survivors.

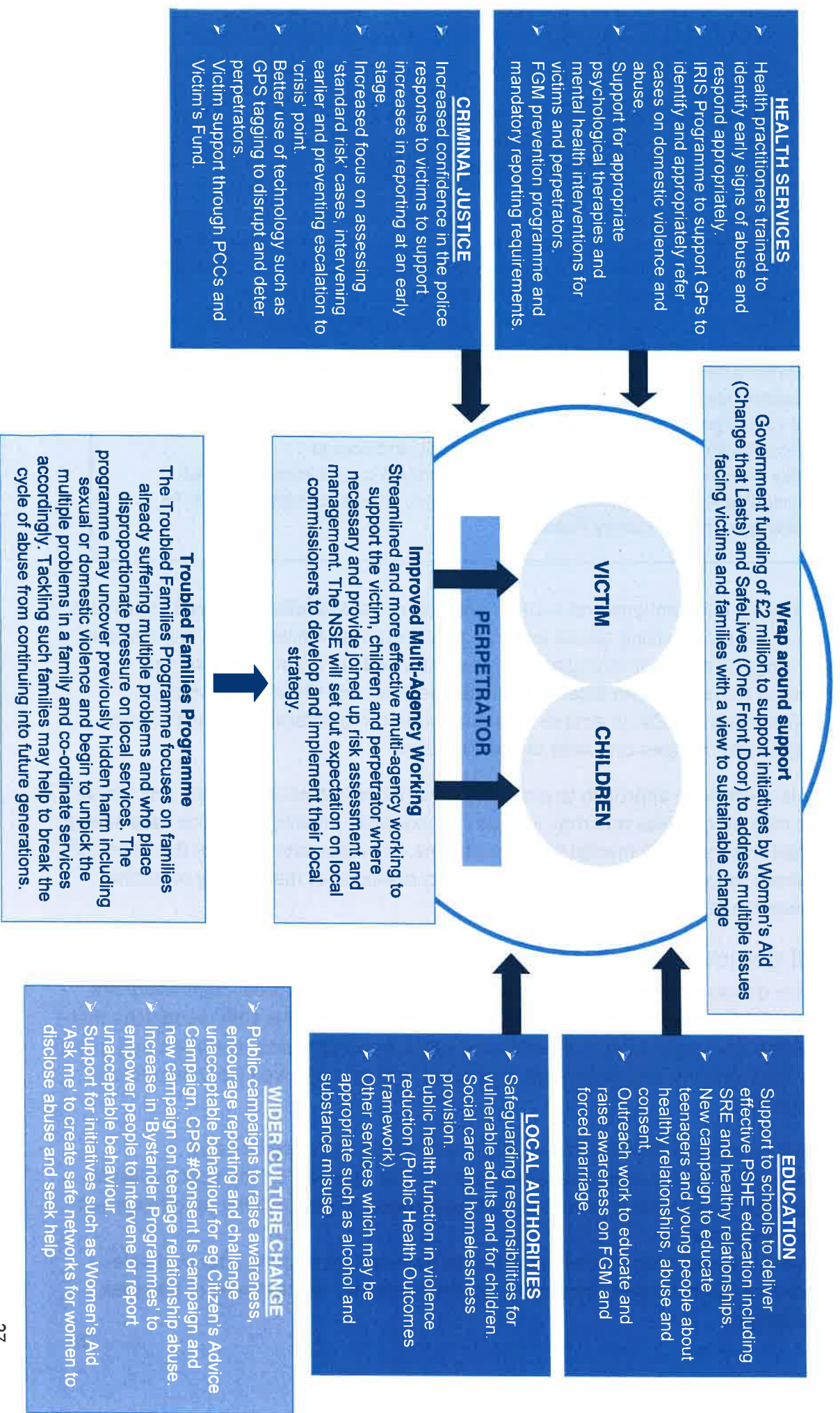
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<sup>24</sup> The Protocol is a set of practical guidelines for first responders and those working directly with survivors in the documentation and investigation of these crimes.

### **Over the course of the Parliament we will:**

- Educate, inform and challenge young people about healthy relationships, abuse and consent, and engage men and boys in challenging VAWG.
- Protect people from online abuse and exploitation, and new kinds of offending driven by technological change.
- Challenge the cultural attitudes that underpin traditional harmful practices like FGM and forced marriage.
- Make early intervention and prevention the foundation of our approach to VAWG across all services, whilst maintaining levels of crisis response services.
- Make early detection and prevention a priority for the health and public health services, and mainstream this into the work of all health professionals.
- Work with agencies and local areas to ensure adequate mental health provision for victims and perpetrators of VAWG as well as the development and provision of preventative and harm reduction programmes for perpetrators.
- Challenge the stigma suffered by survivors of sexual violence in conflict and promote justice for them, including through further implementation of the International Protocol on the Documentation and Investigation of Sexual Violence in Conflict.
- Invest in generating world class evidence on VAWG to use abroad and at home including research to inform primary prevention programmes and working with men and boys.

FIGURE1: EMBEDDING EARLY INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION



## Chapter 2: Provision of services

### Outcomes by 2020

- Local partners assess the needs of victims and survivors and their families, have local strategies to ensure they can access the right support at the right time.
- No victim is turned away from accessing critical support services delivered by refuges, rape support centres and FGM and forced marriage units.
- Services are transformed to provide support at an earlier stage so that fewer victims will reach crisis point and need refuge, or other secure accommodation.
- Better access to integrated pathways of support to meet the needs of victims experiencing multiple disadvantages.
- A robust global evidence base in place to support interventions that work and to inform commissioning decisions domestically and abroad.
- More survivors of violence are supported through overseas programmes, including in conflict and humanitarian settings, through charitable trusts, for example, the Big Lottery Fund.

Good quality interventions and support can make the difference between short-term safety or simply surviving abuse and living a secure and fulfilled life. It is important that a range of provision is in place to meet the needs of victims, and we are committed to working with local authorities, the NHS and Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) to ensure a secure future for specialist FGM and forced marriage units, refuges and rape support centres.

There is no generic approach to providing services to victims of violence and abuse. Needs may be complex and may include, for example, housing provision, assistance with debt or support for mental health problems. Provision should meet the needs of the diverse range of victims whether long term residents of that locality or victims who have moved in more recently.

### Local commissioning, leadership and accountability

We have devolved responsibility for local service provision to local commissioners, including PCCs, health and local authority commissioners. This shift recognises that local areas are best placed to assess local need, to design comprehensive and good quality interventions, and to be held to account through improved local democratic accountability.

The best local areas take a strategic approach to this responsibility and:

- Carry out evidence-based assessments of need, drawing on the best available data, and taking into account the particular needs of BME women and those with complex needs;
- Base commissioning on their local needs assessment and the best available evidence of what works, innovating where necessary to meet new or complex challenges;

## Violence against Women and Girls Strategy 2016 - 2020

- Pool budgets across different agencies to make best use of available resources;
- Design coherent pathways of support and incorporating innovative approaches to early intervention, including support for all family members, including children;
- Involve local third sector organisations in commissioning, recognising that they have important insight into victims' needs, including those from BME backgrounds;
- Show strong leadership and prioritisation of VAWG, supported by clear local accountability for service provision;
- Know that women may travel far from home when fleeing violence, so ensure their provision is open to all (recognising that some women from their own area are likely to seek support elsewhere); and
- Collaborate across local authority and service boundaries, recognising that provision must be flexible to meet women's needs.

These are the approaches Government wishes to see replicated across the country. Our approach will maintain local freedom and flexibility, while providing dedicated national support for critical provisions, and to help local areas who need it rise to the level of the best.

To develop our understanding of local provision, we reviewed domestic abuse services in 2015<sup>25</sup>. Findings from that review, which drew on evidence from the voluntary sector and local areas which can also be applied to wider VAWG services, found that while some areas are excellent, too many still fall short of the best. The review indicated that:

- Services have grown organically over time with many areas struggling with disparate local funding streams, short term funding and disjointed local commissioning practices;
- There is a pressing need for more consistent and robust data collection to inform local need and provision;
- Services are focused on high risk victims and crisis interventions meaning that 'standard risk' cases may not be a priority for intervention until they have escalated to crisis point;
- Increased reporting has placed additional pressure on all victims services including specialist services, for example those supporting BME, disabled and LGB&T victims of violence and abuse; and
- Victims with the most complex needs find it particularly difficult to access appropriate support, further intensifying the risks they face.

The Government is clear that protecting women and girls from abuse means putting an end to these shortcomings and raising all areas to the level of the best. Building on the findings of the review, our ambition is to reform services to support earlier models of intervention with victims, perpetrators and their families, at the same time as maintaining crisis provision. For the most high risk victims at crisis point, refuges and rape support centres are a vital and proven source of support. But such services

<sup>25</sup> Review carried out the Department of Communities and Local Government

are only part of the answer. If we are to meet the needs of victims arising from increased disclosure and better early identification of abuse, we need to help more victims at the earliest opportunity and ensure fewer suffer repeat abuse.

To achieve this and support local areas to improve the way services are planned and delivered locally, we will set out our clear expectations of local service providers on VAWG in a National Statement of Expectations (NSE). We are developing the NSE with local areas and the voluntary sector and will publish in due course.

The NSE will, for the first time, provide a supportive framework for local areas on effective local commissioning. It will reinforce the importance of bringing local service providers together, understanding local need, developing a strategy to meet the identified needs, commissioning services accordingly and setting out clear leadership and joint accountability for delivery. Local partners will also need to ensure that provision is made for victims moving away from their home area and those moving into a new area due to abuse.

To ensure that the full range of VAWG issues is properly understood by local commissioners we have published specialist FGM guidance for health commissioners to ensure that have the information they need to provide effective services for their local patient populations.

To further support local areas we will provide practical tools and guidance to help commissioners:

- Understand what 'success' looks like for victims and their families and highlighting the need to engage directly with victims themselves and consult with service providers;
- Access robust sources of data, evidence and service standards, including health needs;
- Calculate the costs of VAWG on different agencies to support cross-sector buy-in to commissioning;
- Support clearly defined outcomes and indicators based on prevention and early intervention; and
- Understand their duties and responsibilities enshrined within the Equality Act 2010 and victims' legislation, which take account of the particular needs that BME, LGB&T and disabled women may have and the barriers they may face.

We want local areas to have access to the best possible expertise to help them on this transition to excellent VAWG services. We will establish a peer network in partnership with the local and national experts to provide targeted, collaborative support to local areas to embed effective commissioning and disseminate good practice. We will work with a range of partners including the Local Government Association and PCCs to ensure that this is targeted at the areas who most need it.

## Central Government Funding

The previous Government, while recognising that local areas were best placed to commission services to meet local need, committed £40 million of stable funding for domestic and sexual violence services. This helped to provide a national network of rape support centres, independent domestic violence advisers (IDVAs), independent sexual violence advisers (ISVAs), national helplines and MARAC co-ordinators.

The previous Government also took urgent action to address emerging pressures on services by providing £7 million for sexual violence services in response to increased reporting, and an additional £10 million for refuges. A £3.5 million fund announced in 2015 boosted the provision of domestic violence services including safe accommodation, refuges and specialist services.

Over the next four years, the Government will provide £80 million funding for VAWG services. We will use this increased level of central funding to support transformation in local service delivery, drawing on good practice emerging from the move to local commissioning such as pooling budgets and service innovation. We will work with charitable trusts, like the Big Lottery Fund, and the specialist sector to ensure Government funding complements their investment in services.

We will take a phased approach in providing central funding to maintain critical services and sequence service transformation.

Throughout the spending review period we will continue central funding to support national helplines, recognising that these are best commissioned at a national level. We have continued funding for rape support services at current levels in 2016/17 and we will ensure this funding remains throughout the Spending Review period.

In 2016/17, we will also continue to fund a network of community based support through IDVAs, ISVAs and MARAC co-ordinators, and through our support package for local commissioners we will ensure these services are firmly embedded in the local landscape according to local need. From April 2017 onwards, local service provision will be supported through a new VAWG Service Transformation Fund.

Through the Fund, we will move from a model of direct national match-funding for individual posts to a model of supporting such services through funding local programmes which encourage new approaches incorporating early intervention, establish and embed the best ways to help victim and their families, and prevent perpetrators from re-offending. We will ensure the Transformation Fund work to drive improvements in local commissioning and specialist guidance for health commissioners delivers a secure future for FGM and Forced Marriage Units and meets the needs of those women and girls experiencing multiple disadvantage (BME, LGB&T women and girls and disabled and older women).

While we work towards fewer women facing a domestic abuse crisis, we will continue to ensure that no woman is turned away from the support she needs.

Refuges and other forms of specialist accommodation-based services play a vital role in providing this support and we are looking to local partnerships to strengthen provision in this area. The Department of Communities and Local Government will launch a fund to support the provision of accommodation-based support services and the local reforms needed to meet the National Statement of Expectations.

This two-year fund will be available to local areas who can demonstrate that they are taking steps towards meeting the NSE, and provide specialist accommodation-based support based on an assessment of local need including women from BME backgrounds and those who come from other areas. We will strongly encourage local areas to collaborate with one another through the fund so that partnerships join up across borders to meet the needs of women who may flee to seek support, and collaborate on specialist provision.

Because this provision is so critical, we will review this approach after two years. If we are not reassured that women are receiving the support they need, then we will consider if moving to a national model of provision will improve these services.

We will also work toward new forms of services for victims with the most complex needs as too often they are turned away from services. We want to see innovation and creativity to ensure these vulnerable women get the help they need.

In addition to the core funding we are providing, tackling VAWG will also benefit from a range of other Government programmes including £720 million for the Troubled Families programme for 2016-20. We have protected the total budget for victims' services across the spending review period and protected the PCC victims' services budget at the 2015/16 level of £63 million. New funding to support children at risk of sexual abuse will additionally promote our early intervention approach, and direct funding to local areas through the Police Innovation Fund will also improve police partnership responses to tackling violence against women and girls.

Providing effective mental health interventions to address domestic and sexual violence and abuse remains a significant challenge. Last year, we increased the amount given to the NHS for mental health to £11.7 billion, and introduced for the first time access and waiting time targets from April 2015. We have made it clear that local NHS services must follow our lead by increasing the amount they spend on mental health. Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) will play a vital role in local commissioning of services to tackle VAWG including mental health.

Until the Government negotiates an end to VAT on sanitary products, we will provide £15m a year to support a range of women's charities. Receipts from VAT on sanitary products have already been used to provide a £2 million donation to Women's Aid and Safelives to work with specialist organisations to improve early responses and ultimately help to save the lives of abused women and children.



## Transparency

To ensure that people can hold their elected representatives to account, we will set out through the NSE that local partnerships should publish data about their local needs, and how they are providing services to meet them.

Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) are ideally placed to bring all local commissioners together, including those from health and local authorities, to develop collaborative and joined up commissioning. PCCs are already required to widely publish details of victim services funded via Ministry of Justice grants. Their commitment to supporting victims of VAWG is evidenced by over 65% of funding from the PCC competed fund in 2014/15 supporting VAWG-related services. The elections of PCCs later this year provides further opportunity to ensure that tackling these crimes is high on local agendas and encourage political drive to make improvements.

We will also consider how to strengthen inspection arrangements to reflect the multi-agency nature of VAWG services.

## Internationally

We will continue to support efforts to expand evidence-based approaches to prevention, response, and support for survivors. Response and survivor support includes the provision of comprehensive health, social, legal and justice services and legislative frameworks.

Addressing VAWG overseas is integrated into all UK humanitarian programming and we have funded a range of vital support to women affected by violence in conflict. For example, in Syria and the region, UK support is enabling NGOs, UN agencies and the Red Cross movement to provide specialist assistance to those affected by sexual and gender-based violence, including clinical care, and counselling, reproductive healthcare and cash assistance to particularly vulnerable households.

The UK founded the Call to Action to Protect Women in Emergencies in 2013 and continues to engage with Sweden as the current leader of the multiagency platform. We are committed to the implementation of the Roadmap to Action to ensure better outcomes for women and girls affected by humanitarian emergencies. Ministers across the UK Government will work to influence the international community at every opportunity to do more to tackle VAWG in all contexts.

### **Over the course of the Parliament we will:**

- Provide £80m of central government funding to support service transformation and support critical services.
- Support local commissioners to transform service provision through the NSE, a new peer support network and the VAWG service transformation fund.
- Promote resources available for health and social care professionals to respond to domestic abuse to increase their understanding of domestic violence and abuse and their ability to provide a supportive response to disclosures;
- Promote understanding of the needs of BME, LGB&T and disabled women who are victims of VAWG and victims of domestic abuse with multiple complex needs and support commissioners to provide appropriate support;
- Continue to scale up our VAWG programming overseas, making women and girls front and centre of international development work;
- Influence the international community to do more to tackle all forms of VAWG including on intimate partner violence in all contexts, all forms of VAWG in emergencies and in driving forward the Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative.

## Chapter 3: Partnership working

### Outcomes by 2020

- Multi-agency working in local areas is transformed with improved links to other areas of safeguarding, improved risk mitigation, and needs-led interventions for victims, children and perpetrators, supported by the framework set out in the NSE.
- Areas routinely have a VAWG partnership, rigorous needs assessment and local strategy with VAWG considered in line with drug and alcohol services, homelessness services and children's services to ensure wrap-around support for victims and their families.
- More children are safeguarded and more families supported through the collection and appropriate multi-agency sharing of information (for example on FGM).
- Consideration of violence and abuse is mainstreamed across businesses with more employers introducing policies to support staff who may be victims of domestic abuse or stalking.
- There is a greater focus on changing the behaviour of perpetrators through disruption, based on strong evidence of what works, and centred on victim safety.
- The global community will collaborate to build political will and institutional capacity to prevent VAWG and implement Global Goal 5 on gender equality, including the specific targets on violence against women and girls.

Government cannot tackle the complexities of VAWG in isolation. We know that partnerships work across national, regional and local boundaries in helping victims and providing an effective first response to violence and abuse. For example, in Northumbria engagement with domestic violence services increased significantly after support worker visited victims of domestic abuse alongside local police.

Violence against women and girls occurs across social-economic boundaries, across the cultural spectrum and in any circumstances. While there are some predictive factors that can be linked with a higher risk of becoming a victim or a perpetrator of VAWG, we must continue to increase opportunities for victims to come forward and receive help and to work alongside local agencies and organisations to share information and best practice on VAWG issues.

Our ongoing Troubled Families Programme is about intervening holistically in families with entrenched, multiple problems which may have been affecting the family for generations. Our network of Troubled Families Co-ordinators drive wider service reform in local areas by bringing together all local partners, including the police, schools and health services, to deliver joined up, effective interventions which bring about lasting change for families. We want to see this transformation in the way local services are delivered benefiting all those who are vulnerable due to domestic and sexual violence and abuse.

The national Troubled Families team will undertake a policy review to assess how local Troubled Families programmes support families affected by domestic violence. Best practice examples from this review and other relevant guidance and information on VAWG issues will be disseminated to local areas through the network of Troubled Families Co-ordinators

### Improved multi agency working

We know that multi-agency working has had a positive impact on tackling VAWG and it is a model we should continue to develop. The NSE will set out a framework for service provision and support local services to join up more effectively, undertake a comprehensive assessment of local need, and develop their local strategy in an open and transparent way in consultation with key stakeholders. We are also delivering a series of events to promote existing and new models of multi-agency working both locally and across local boundaries, identify the barriers to information sharing and build a network of local practitioners to share learning<sup>26</sup>.

Tackling VAWG requires a number of organisations in both the statutory services (including health, local authorities, the Crown Prosecution Service and probation) and voluntary and community services to work together. Following HMIC's inspection of the police response to domestic violence, we will work with inspectorates to progress the recommendation for further multi-agency inspections of these services. Such inspections should not only consider how individual services contribute to keeping victims safe, but also the quality of the partnerships and the ways in which joint working is scrutinised.

MARACs and Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASHs) share information to build a picture of the victim's situation and devise a risk management plan to reduce harm faced by the victims and their families. We will continue to fund MARAC co-ordinators and their accreditation in 2016/17, and establish a Home Office led 'task and finish group' to evaluate the effectiveness of the various models in place for MASHs. We will provide guidance and examples of good practice to illustrate how multi-agency arrangements can most effectively share information, assess risk and undertake joint safeguarding activities to protect victims of domestic abuse.

Working with voluntary sector partners, we will also help local areas to develop a more integrated approach to multi-agency working that looks at victims, their families and perpetrators in the round. Initiatives like the SafeLives '*One Front Door*' model can help to make the links between the risk faced by victims, child safeguarding needs and the risks posed by the perpetrators of abuse. Bringing together the expertise from the MARACs and MASHs can help to ensure that no risks or potential solutions are missed.

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<sup>26</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/338875/MASH.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/338875/MASH.pdf)

## Violence against Women and Girls Strategy 2016 - 2020

Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs)<sup>27</sup> are run by local areas as a multi-agency response to domestic violence and abuse. We will continue to promote learning from these reviews and update statutory guidance on DHRs in 2017 so that best practice is embedded and further learning is shared.

Following a public consultation earlier this year, we are updating the multi-agency guidance for all frontline professionals on FGM and putting it on a statutory footing. In addition, a new FGM mandatory reporting duty that requires regulated health and social care professionals and teachers to report 'known' cases of FGM in under 18s to the police is now in force. The aim is to increase the number of referrals to the police and increase prosecutions<sup>28</sup> and help strengthen our understanding of this form of abuse. The Government will continue to support frontline professionals with advice on how to discharge this new duty in a way that promotes an integrated safeguarding response.

Effective multi-agency responses are also critical in managing adolescent to parent violence. We published an information guide to support police, youth justice, health, education, social care, safeguarding and housing service providers and practitioners to respond to and prevent adolescent to parent violence and will ensure this is promoted across England and Wales.

### **Social care reform**

The vision paper 'Children's social care reform: a vision for change' published in January outlines the reform principles and our vision for change for children's social care. We will continue to implement the recommendations made by Sir Martin Narey in his report on the education of social workers which will support work to protect vulnerable children and adults.

For example, the Chief Social Worker, England (children and families) has published a set of standards for children and family social work as part of a radical shift toward a practice-focused system. These Knowledge and Skills statements set out specifically what child and family social workers need to know and be able to do and will be used to develop a national assessment and accreditation system to ensure that frontline practitioners, supervisors and leaders are equipped to deliver high standard social work. This will support efforts to tackle VAWG and complement our commitment to service transformation.

### **Making VAWG 'everyone's business'**<sup>29</sup>

Our recent review of services indicated that around that 85% of victims of domestic abuse seek help from professionals at least five times before getting the support they

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/revise-statutory-guidance-for-the-conduct-of-domestic-homicide-reviews>

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mandatory-reporting-of-female-genital-mutilation-procedural-information>

<sup>29</sup> Taken from the HMIC report in domestic abuse: <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/improving-the-police-response-to-domestic-abuse.pdf>

need<sup>30</sup>. It is vital that better use is made of these critical opportunities for identification and support. We will ensure that women can seek help in a range of settings as they go about their daily lives and have easy access to community based support at the earliest opportunity.

This is where partnership working can make a real difference and make every encounter with service providers an opportunity for intervention. There are good examples of how agencies not specifically associated with VAWG can make a real difference which the Government will promote.

### ***Citizen's Advice***

Citizens Advice is training frontline staff to ask about violence and abuse and support clients that disclose. This followed a pilot which showed that, in response to asking about domestic abuse in face to face settings by advisers, the disclosure rate from clients rose from less than 0.8% to over 20%. Forty local offices are now using the routine enquiry process. With a much higher number of clients now going through routine enquiry, the disclosure rate has reduced from the initial pilot rate, with 4-5% of clients disclosing current or very recent abuse. This is still far higher than the 0.8% baseline.

Recognising the important role of friends and family in helping abuse victims, Citizens Advice has also launched its 'Talk about abuse' campaign to encourage members of the public to be alert to signs of abuse, and providing information on what to do if they are concerned about a friend or family member.

### ***Friends, family and the public***

Bystander programmes are initiatives to empower people to challenge unacceptable behaviour and intervene safely if needed. A programme developed between Public Health England (PHE) and the University of the West of England (UWE) for example is helping to challenge sexual abuse on campus. We will promote the learning from this programme to support development of wider bystander programmes to help tackle VAWG.

### ***Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance***

A housing officer may be a victim's first port of call and a nationwide alliance uniting housing providers is working to improve the housing sector's response. Housing providers are ideally placed to identify those carrying out domestic abuse and also those at risk, including children. The alliance is arming professionals with the necessary knowledge and skills to support residents to live safely and free of abuse.

We are supporting this approach by funding a project for Housing Officers to train over 300 frontline staff from a range of Local Authorities to provide them with the skills to recognise domestic abuse at an early stage and help the victim access the right support quickly.

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<sup>30</sup> Review led by Department of Communities and Local Government

### **Night Time Economy**

While crime in the night time economy has been falling steadily during the past 10 years, we know that 36% of victims of serious sexual assault reported that the offender was under the influence of alcohol<sup>31</sup>. We will continue to encourage local areas to prevent violence against women and girls in the night time economy, building on the work in a number of towns and cities which have established safe zones to provide protection for vulnerable people, or have introduced volunteers, such as street pastors or street marshals, to help keep people safe on a night out.

### **Public transport**

In partnership with Government, the British Transport Police (BTP) commissioned a Rapid Evidence Assessment entitled 'What works in reducing sexual harassment and sexual offending on public transport nationally and internationally?' to provide greater safety for women and girls. One outcome was the 'report it to stop it' campaign, which is encouraging more active engagement from bystanders and will be supported by a wider range of technological options to improve mechanisms for reporting.

### **Employment**

Employers have a critical role in both identifying abuse and developing robust workplace policies to support employees who may be victims of violence, abuse or stalking. Over 60 companies have signed up to the Domestic Abuse Responsibility Pledge promoted by the joint Health and Work Unit and the Corporate Alliance Against Domestic Violence. We will continue to encourage employers to make this important pledge to raise awareness of domestic violence and abuse in the workplace.

### **Armed Forces**

The Ministry of Defence has a robust policy on domestic violence and abuse and is working to raise awareness so that anyone who is experiencing abuse, or who are aware of someone who is, knows what to do to seek help. The professional welfare services of the Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force will work together with local authorities where appropriate to share good practice. When identified, support will be made available for victims (including children) and perpetrators.

#### **Case study**

Refuge, in partnership with The Co-operative Bank, launched a new campaign called 'My money, my life' to raise awareness of financial abuse in intimate relationships. To underpin the campaign, Refuge and The Co-operative Bank joined forces to carry out the UK's largest study to date to uncover the true scale of financial abuse in intimate relationships. The research found that one-in-five people in the UK reported that they have experienced financial abuse within an intimate relationship.

The 'My money, my life' campaign will inform those experiencing financial abuse about their rights and empower them to make positive choices about their own financial future. To support the campaign Refuge has produced a financial guide as a resource for those who have experienced financial abuse and will be working with The Co-operative Bank to drive change across the banking sector.

<sup>31</sup> [Focus on Violent Crime and Sexual Offences: 2013/14](#)

## Improving the asylum system

We are continuing to ensure that women subject to immigration control receive the support that they need. We have improved our guidance to immigration staff so that asylum caseworkers take all gender-specific factors into account, including for example FGM, and that they pursue sensitive lines of enquiry. Mandatory training for those making decisions on asylum cases has been reinforced with training on sexual violence, including the links between VAWG and memory loss.

We have also developed a new gender asylum action plan which builds on the actions set out in the previous VAWG strategy. Among other things, the plan considers how childcare facilities can be provided in all locations where asylum interviews take place. Such provision is vital in giving those who are seeking refuge the space they need to disclose relevant information. We are reviewing the information provided to women who seek refuge so that it clearly sets out their rights and access to services and we now guarantee a female interviewer for all asylum interviews (if requested at the screening stage). A process for signposting women who may have been the victim of sexual violence to existing relevant and appropriate support services has been introduced in collaboration with key partners.

This new action plan reflects the fact that we take the needs of those seeking asylum seriously and we will ensure that the asylum process is as gender sensitive as possible by making improvements when and where it is appropriate to do so.

## Working with Wales

In Wales, the Welsh Government is taking forward the implementation of the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015. The overarching objective of the Act is to improve the Public Sector response in Wales to gender-based violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence. It is intended to provide a strategic focus on these issues and ensure consistent consideration of preventive, protective and supportive mechanisms in the delivery of services.

A detailed implementation plan has been developed by the Welsh Government and a suite of statutory guidance is planned for consultation and publication over the next two years. The first National Adviser for Wales on Violence against Women, and other forms of gender-based violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence, has been appointed and will provide expert leadership, as well as leading on the development of a National Strategy for Wales.

A key mechanism for delivering the Act is the National Training Framework for Wales. The Welsh Government issued statutory guidance in respect of this in 2015, and a final version will be issued under the Act in 2016. The Framework sets out training requirements for all roles within the Welsh Public Service. Its requirements vary from increased awareness for all staff, to equipping relevant professions to facilitate and respond effectively and consistently to disclosures of abuse, right through to requiring professional qualifications.



## Violence against Women and Girls Strategy 2016 - 2020

The Framework will be accompanied by other policy interventions and statutory guidance in Wales which will include the introduction of:

- “Ask and Act”- a formal set of principles to be required of all public service organisations in Wales, providing earlier intervention for victims of violence and abuse, no matter whom they approach for help;
- More intelligent, partnership-led commissioning of services; and
- A range of education initiatives, including good practice guidance for schools and governors.

## Internationally

The global effort to eliminate VAWG cannot be undertaken without partnerships between countries and international agencies. The Global Goals, agreed by all countries including the UK, in September 2015, include targets on eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls in public and private spaces, as well as a target to eliminate harmful practices such as FGM and CEFM.

We continue to work closely with UN agencies and other international partners to support initiatives that advance gender equality and empower women and girls across the globe both through engagement at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women and through other key international fora such as the Human Rights Council.

Since 2012, the Women Peace and Security agenda and the Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict agenda have seen advances at the international level. NATO, the European Union and the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court have all revised their policies on responding to sexual violence. The UK is working with these three organisations - as well as a range of other international actors - to ensure these agendas are prioritised in their work.

The Ministerial Champion for Tackling VAWG Overseas and the Prime Minister's Special Representative on PSVI will lead our work internationally, driving forward partnerships to tackle VAWG. Both Ministers will continue their engagement with like-minded countries and allies to maximise opportunities to protect women and girls and strengthen their rights.

### **Over the course of the Parliament we will:**

- Help local areas to develop new and more integrated approaches to multi-agency working that support earlier intervention and swifter action to manage the risk from perpetrators and address the needs of their victims and families.
- Promote and embed the learning from Domestic Homicide and Serious Case Reviews.
- Drive more effective multi-agency responses to FGM and forced marriage through new statutory guidance and embedding best practice through outreach work with local areas.
- Strengthen links between local Troubled Families programmes with services supporting women and girls affected by violence and abuse.
- Continue to drive improvements to the asylum system through the new asylum gender action plan;
- Work internationally and domestically to ensure delivery of Global Goal targets on VAWG, FGM and CEFM.
- Continue to collaborate with international organisations and civil society as we drive forward the Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict initiative and work to end all forms of VAWG in all settings.

## Chapter 4: Pursuing perpetrators

### Outcomes by 2020

- Increased victim confidence in, and access to, the criminal justice system for all victims of VAWG, demonstrated by increased reporting of police recorded crime and continued increases in prosecutions.
- Improved victim satisfaction within the criminal justice system, including getting the first response right first time using Victim Satisfaction Surveys to assess impact of our work.
- An embedded robust approach to tackling perpetrators through greater scrutiny of their motives and behaviour with a reduction in re-offending;
- Improved use of new technology and rehabilitation directed with a measurable reduction in reoffending for these crimes – this is linked to the prevention work to break the abuse cycle (chapter 1).
- Greater transparency and accountability of the criminal justice system through improved data provision.

While we want to stop violence and abuse happening in the first place, where it does happen, perpetrators must be brought to justice. We will continue to ensure that effective sanctions are taken against perpetrators and that they are prevented from influencing children and other vulnerable people from becoming perpetrators in turn. We will also support sustainable behaviour change and robust disruption to reduce re-offending. This will not be possible for all offenders but is a critical element in stopping the cycle of perpetrators moving from one victim to the next.

Since 2010, we have seen significant increases in the reporting of VAWG offences to the police and in referrals from the police to the CPS. This is critical to bringing these hidden crimes out of the shadows. In 2014/15 prosecution volumes reached the highest levels ever recorded<sup>32</sup>.

This is encouraging and we want to see this trend continue. In investigating and prosecuting VAWG crimes, we will promote an even stronger focus on ensuring every report of violence and abuse is treated seriously from the time it is reported, every victim is treated with dignity, and every investigation and prosecution is conducted thoroughly and professionally.

We will also ensure evidence-led prosecutions are the focus of our approach, and continue to drive a culture change across all criminal justice agencies which recognises violence against women and girls as the serious crimes that they are.

### Improving the criminal justice response

A strong legislative framework is in place with a range of new offences now criminalised. A number of new civil protection measures are available and Chapter 1 includes details of how we will monitor and improve their usage.

<sup>32</sup>[http://www.cps.gov.uk/news/latest\\_news/highest\\_ever\\_numbers\\_of\\_violence\\_against\\_women\\_cases\\_being\\_prosecuted\\_and\\_convicted\\_in\\_england\\_and\\_wales/](http://www.cps.gov.uk/news/latest_news/highest_ever_numbers_of_violence_against_women_cases_being_prosecuted_and_convicted_in_england_and_wales/)

The introduction of the new domestic abuse offence of coercive or controlling behaviour in an intimate or family relationship should lead to a further increase in referrals and prosecutions for these offences. The new offence also provides an opportunity to develop a much more sophisticated response to VAWG across the criminal justice system, moving away from focusing on isolated incidents of violence and building up an evidence-led narrative to capture ongoing patterns of abuse, which can be just as harmful.

## Improving the police response

The court process can be lengthy but victims may not be able, nor want, to proceed to that stage if their first experience of the criminal justice system is negative. It is imperative that the first response by the police to all victims, particularly those who are vulnerable, is right first time, every time.

To support further improvements to the police response to domestic abuse, the Home Secretary will continue to chair a National Oversight Group to improve the police response to domestic abuse. The Group will ensure the recommendations from HMIC's reports into domestic abuse are fully implemented and ensure that action and learning is applied to other VAWG crimes such as sexual violence, stalking and honour-based violence.

The Group will continue to drive improvements to:

- Support updated domestic abuse action plans in every police force area;
- Develop a data set that provides police and crime commissioners, chief constables, and chief crown prosecutors with an enhanced view of how domestic abuse is dealt with in their area;
- Safely seek the views of domestic abuse victims to ensure that their experiences help improve the police response and they are empowered to challenge forces when their expectations are not met;
- Ensure training supports officers to understand the dynamics of domestic abuse and that their attitudes and behaviours reflect their knowledge;
- Promote police leadership, reward and recognition and selection and promotion processes to support a culture change which gives domestic abuse and other VAWG crimes the prominence they merit;
- Support innovative and evidence-based practice in the police response to tackling VAWG crimes; and
- Improve risk assessment frameworks for domestic abuse and honour-based violence.

In addition, the cross-agency Rape Monitoring Group, chaired by HMIC, will continue to provide regular force data digests on rape<sup>33</sup>, to promote transparency and provide forces and PCCs with the data to identify opportunities to further improve their response to victims, and to the recording and investigations of these crimes.

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/rape-monitoring-group-digests-and-data-2014-15/>

## Violence against Women and Girls Strategy 2016 - 2020

The College of Policing will continue to play a lead role in improving the police response to all vulnerable victims. New training on domestic abuse for first responders, supervisors and coaches is focused on 'making a change' in the culture of policing – an evaluation of this new training is currently underway. The College is launching national training for officers which will reinforce the need for evidence gathering to apprehend serial perpetrators. New Authorised Professional Practice (APP) on domestic abuse is now available<sup>34</sup> and new APP on stalking and harassment will be published by the end of 2016.

### The CPS response

We want to see further increases in prosecutions for VAWG offences. The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) will continue to build on their rigorous approach to prosecuting VAWG cases through regular reviews of guidance, training and policy. They continue to be accountable for performance on VAWG cases through oversight from the Director of Public Prosecutions and the publication of its annual VAWG Crime Report<sup>35</sup>.

To support prosecutors, the CPS has introduced a range of tools including guidance and training on the new domestic abuse offence, as well as on charging requirements and maximising evidential opportunities through an evidence gathering checklist jointly published with the police. An analysis of the approach taken in court areas which report exceptional performance on domestic abuse is underway and the learning and best practice will be shared with other local areas when available in the context of a review of Specialist Domestic Violence Courts.

The CPS is continuing with a significant programme of work in relation to rape prosecutions and in response to reviews of rape prosecutions. This includes seeking and providing Early Investigative Advice in order to build the best case possible.

### Supporting victims through the criminal justice system

Supporting victims through the challenging and often distressing process of bringing an offender to justice remains one of our main priorities and we have put in place measures to help improve victims' experiences in court. A revised Victims' Code was published in October 2015 which forms a key part of the wider Government strategy to transform the criminal justice system by putting victims first, making the system more responsive and easier to navigate.

Through the Serious Crime Act 2015, we have provided for the anonymity of victims of FGM, making it an offence to publish any matter that would be likely to lead members of the public to identify someone as the alleged victim. The prohibition lasts for the lifetime of the alleged victim. Our hope is that this may be an important factor in encouraging victims to come forward due to the personal and sensitive nature of the offence. We have also consulted with partners on providing lifelong

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/domestic-abuse/>

<sup>35</sup> <http://www.cps.gov.uk/publications/equality/vaw/>

anonymity for victims of forced marriage and we will look to bring forward legislation to afford victims the same anonymity as we have introduced for victims of FGM.

We are giving vulnerable victims and witnesses greater opportunity to give evidence from a location away from the court. We have also piloted and are considering rolling out pre-trial recorded cross-examination and have recruited more registered intermediaries – communication specialists who help vulnerable witnesses who need support to give their best evidence.

While victim testimony is important, we must make sure that all the possible evidence is considered when building a case so that more evidence-led prosecutions can ensure perpetrators are brought to justice without victims needing to go through unnecessarily adversarial court procedures. For example, body-worn cameras are an important tool in gathering evidence at a domestic abuse incident. They can be used to record the behaviour of the offender, the responses of adult and child victims, and the scene itself. These are powerful sources of evidence in any prosecution.

We are already seeing a number of police forces using body-worn cameras to assist in evidence gathering when attending domestic abuse incidents. Research from the London School of Economics<sup>36</sup> showed that using body-worn video increased public reassurance and reduced fear, reductions in malicious complaints against officers and moderated behaviour by members of the public. The College of Policing is working with police to support its wider roll-out through clear guidance.

We know that what is important to victims includes ongoing contact with key workers and professionals and being kept up to date with developments and final outcomes and we are ensuring that better use of technology is allowing victims access to information about the status of their case. For example, TrackMyCrime is a secure online system, hosted on police.uk which allows victims of crime to receive updates from the police on the investigation of their case. The system does not replace existing forms of communication, but provides greater choice for victims about when they receive an update on their case and how they interact with the police.

The Government is also working to raise awareness and improve understanding of the use of safe and competent restorative justice and how it fits within the criminal justice system. Wherever appropriate domestic abuse cases involving adults should be prosecuted. Alongside that, victims need support to cope with and recover from abuse. With effective risk assessment and safeguarding in place, restorative justice may help some victims to do this and we are developing a cross government position paper on the potential use of restorative justice services for victims in domestic abuse cases.

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<sup>36</sup> <http://etheses.lse.ac.uk/775/>

## Prostitution

We remain committed to tackling the harm and exploitation that can be associated with prostitution, whilst giving those who want to leave prostitution every opportunity to find routes out.

Our priority in this context is public protection: people involved in prostitution can be particularly vulnerable to sexual and other violent crime, and may in fact be victims of child sexual exploitation or modern slavery. Prostitution can be a complex and controversial issue, however the law and our response to rape and sexual assault is clear and unequivocal and we want to increase protection and access to justice for this often vulnerable group. This priority is reflected in the recently refreshed National Policing Sex Work Strategy.

We recognise that there are different approaches to prostitution. In this context, recent legislative changes in Northern Ireland, which in June 2015 adopted the so-called 'Nordic' model of criminalising all purchasing of sex and decriminalising all selling. We will assess the implementation and impact of such a change in the UK and carefully consider the recommendations made by the 2016 Home Affairs Select Committee (HASC) enquiry into prostitution.

## Supporting female offenders affected by violence and abuse

We know that many victims of sexual, physical and emotional abuse can also be drawn into offending behaviour<sup>37</sup>. The proportion of female prisoners that report experiencing some form of abuse during their childhood is twice as high as among male prisoners with many reporting that their offending was to support their partner or someone else's substance misuse.

We are working with regional areas to encourage a more effective joined-up approach to addressing these complex needs. Different models are under development in Greater Manchester, Wales and London. These models aim to develop a whole system approach to managing female offenders which can help improve victim outcomes as well as create cost savings.

The National Offender Management Service (NOMS) published 'Better Outcomes for Women'<sup>38</sup> earlier this year which sets out the commissioning principles for developing services for women in the criminal justice system. We will also be rolling out a new helpline for female offenders so that they can obtain support whilst in custody and on release. This follows a pilot helpline delivered at HMP Holloway by Women's Aid and Refuge. We will continue to build on this work to ensure that female offenders who are also victims of abuse can access the help they need to rebuild their lives and the break the cycle of offending.

<sup>37</sup> [http://www.womensaid.org.uk/domestic\\_violence\\_topic.asp?section=0001000100220048&sectionTitle=Women+in+prison](http://www.womensaid.org.uk/domestic_violence_topic.asp?section=0001000100220048&sectionTitle=Women+in+prison)

<sup>38</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/achieving-better-outcomes-for-women-offenders>

## Sharing intelligence

We are also ensuring that agencies share intelligence to better protect those who might be at risk. Border Force works closely with the police and airlines on joint FGM operations to target high risk flights and raise awareness, especially during the school holidays when girls may be most at risk. Border Force Officers, both in the UK and abroad, provide crucial extra intelligence and carry out additional checks on passengers in support of these operations.

In addition, Border Force's Safeguarding and Trafficking Teams have been given advanced training on FGM and forced marriage, including on what to look out for on the equipment which may be used to carry out FGM, so they have the right skills to spot potential perpetrators and deal sensitively with potential victims of FGM.

## Tackling online offending

The internet has revolutionised how we communicate and share information but it has also been used as a vehicle for online abuse, harassment, bullying and stalking.

We are working with the police-led Digital Intelligence and Investigation Programme and the College of Policing to drive improvements in police capability to investigate and prosecute online VAWG offences. We have introduced an 'online flag' allowing police forces to record instances of crimes such as stalking and harassment taking place online. New questions in the Crime Survey for England and Wales mean that we will be able to identify VAWG crimes with an online component. This data will be published in due course.

Legislation to deal with internet trolls, cyber-stalking and harassment, and perpetrators of grossly offensive, obscene or menacing behaviour has been strengthened. The Government has also acted in response to new kinds of online offending, for example by introducing a new law making the fast growing incidence of 'revenge porn' a specific criminal offence.

We expect to see prosecutions and convictions for this type of offending continue to increase significantly. CPS have recently published revised social media guidance which is currently out for public consultation highlighting the cross-over with VAWG offending, including 'revenge pornography' and the new offence of coercive or controlling behaviour in an intimate or family relationship, to further support prosecutors to deal with these crimes.

The internet has also facilitated the obsessive behaviour of stalkers, not only allowing them to gather more information and data on their victims, but also by enabling perpetrators to stalk those they have not met or only have a slight acquaintance with more easily. We will ensure that these victims are adequately protected and know where they can seek help. We will ensure that stalking is identified at the earliest opportunity so that appropriate interventions can be put in place to disrupt the underlying delusion of power and control which is prevalent in this type of offending.



We have consulted on introducing a new Stalking Protection Order to provide effective protection to all victims, and to ensure that victims of 'stranger stalking' have the same level of protection as those victims where stalking is taking place in a domestic violence and abuse context. We will publish the findings of the consultation in the summer.

Through updated police guidance on stalking, we will also support the police to identify ways to manage the significant volume of online material in abuse, harassment and stalking cases, so that evidence can be collected more easily and a strong case built to bring a prosecution.

**Using technology to secure justice**

A self-appointed holy man was sentenced at Birmingham Crown Court to two years' imprisonment after he pleaded guilty to sexually assaulting a woman during a supposed "healing ritual" in her home in February 2014. He visited the victim and ordered her to undress, and then under the guise of healing her he sexually assaulted her. The victim notified the police and he was arrested. He denied being anywhere near to the location of the assault, however, his mobile phone data was analysed which then put him near to the scene of the crime. The defendant was subsequently charged and pleaded guilty to sexual assault. This case highlights the actions of a predatory man who used his position of responsibility and trust to force a victim into performing sexual acts and thereby denying her free consent which is required in law.

**Using social media positively**

The internet can be used positively to engage the public and challenge misconceptions about VAWG and discuss sensitive issues. For example, the CPS launched a social media campaign, under the hashtag #ConsentIs, to encourage people to talk about consent within the context of sexual assault and rape. This was in partnership with Rape Crisis, End Violence against Women Coalition, Survivors Manchester, White Ribbon Campaign and the National Union of Students. The aim of the campaign was to increase understanding about consent, and how and why the CPS does and does not prosecute in these cases as we recognised that this is an area which is often misunderstood. The campaign was hugely successful, with a potential reach of over 10 million Twitter accounts and over 4,000 messages were tweeted about #ConsentIs during the run.

**Internationally**

Much of our security and justice work around the world focuses on delivering results for women and girls. Improving the security of women and girls, and enabling them to hold perpetrators of violence to account is crucial.

In contexts where the state is weak or absent, it is often the same people and institutions that deal with all types of crime and violence. Our work includes legal

empowerment initiatives, setting up family friendly courts and police stations, strengthening rape referral systems, and assisting justice systems in holding perpetrators of VAWG to account, as well as improving their ability to tackle inequality and discrimination issues.

Addressing impunity for crimes of all forms of violence is a key objective. We want to send a strong message to perpetrators that such crimes will not be ignored, and to survivors that the international community recognises the devastating impact that violence has had on them.

The International Protocol on the Documentation and Investigation of Sexual Violence in Conflict is being used by activists and NGOs to build a strong evidence base for future prosecutions (see chapter 1 for detail). The Protocol has been translated into six languages, and Kurdish and Lingala versions have been announced. Training on its use has been delivered in Iraq and Syria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Nepal, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kosovo and Colombia. The UK will continue to disseminate and support organisations using the Protocol throughout the rest of this Parliament. When we launched the Protocol in June 2014, we stressed that it was intended to be a 'living document': to be revisited and revised once a programme of training and awareness-raising was underway. The revision process began in January 2016 and will last for the remainder of the year.

### Over the course of the Parliament we will:

- Drive a culture change across all criminal justice agencies to recognise violence against women and girls as the serious crimes they are;
- Embed a range of new powers to deal with VAWG across the Criminal Justice System, and drive a response that addresses pattern of abuse rather than single incidents of violence;
- Support the wider use of evidence-led prosecutions through embedding thorough and professional investigations and the better use of new technology, and provide victims and witnesses with greater opportunities to give evidence from a location away from court;
- Promote the risk assessment of perpetrators, drawing on current risk models to ensure that the police, probation and frontline agencies are managing perpetrators effectively;
- Respond to cyber-enabled VAWG by working with the police led Digital Intelligence and Investigation Programme to drive improvements in police capability to investigate online VAWG offences;
- Continue to work internationally to enable women and girls who are survivors of violence to access justice and strengthen the capacity of the international courts and tribunals to prosecute crimes of sexual violence in conflict;
- Work to improve the capacity and capability of the judiciary, police, magistrates, prosecutors, advocates and lawyers, and to strengthen national, regional and international justice systems;
- Provide further training on the use of the International Protocol, including through regional training modules on its implementation in different local contexts and bespoke training packages.

**ANNEX A: ACTION PLAN****PREVENTING VIOLENCE AND ABUSE**

REF	ACTION	LEAD	DELIVERY DATE
<b>SCHOOLS AND EDUCATION</b>			
1	Develop new guidance in consultation with teachers for PSHE lessons specifically about gender equality.	GEO	April 2016
2	Fund the Freedom Charity to expand the 'Train the Trainers' project to reach a greater number of communities and empower teachers to deal with the topic of forced marriage sensitively and confidently.	GEO	April 2016
3	Publish a consultation report on updated statutory safeguarding guidance for schools, <i>Keeping Children Safe in Education</i> , to come into force in September 2016.	DFE	May 2016
4	Support women in isolated communities to understand that domestic abuse is a crime and to seek help if needed through our new English language offer to provide basic training in English to women who speak no English.	DCLG	June 2017
<b>RAISING AWARENESS</b>			
5	Launch the second phase of the national prevention campaign to challenge abuse in teenage relationships and promote understanding of healthy relationships and consent - including among LGB&T teenagers.	HO / GEO	February 2016
6	Launch a communications campaign to encourage the public to report all forms of child abuse to help address people's fear of reporting.	DFE	From March to autumn 2016
7	Develop Government communication resources to help inform local campaigns aimed at raising awareness of VAWG issues.	HO	May 2016
8	Update Media Smart resources (with the Advertising Association) to help teachers and parents improve primary school children's understanding of how gender is represented in the media and their resilience to negative content.	GEO	September 2016
9	Produce resource pack on women, girls and gangs to support identification of those at risk and effective interventions for frontline professionals.	HO	June 2016
10	Conduct or commission mapping of the evidence base and initiatives that engage men, boys and bystanders in VAWG prevention to identify how Government can build on these initiatives to further social change.	GEO	April 2017
11	Continue to work with faith leaders to increase signatories to the declaration condemning FGM and use the declaration to drive cultural change.	DCLG	Review by March 2017
12	Continue outreach work carried out by FGM unit and Forced Marriage Units to work with communities to highlight the issues and raise awareness.	HO / FCO	Review by March 2017
<b>TACKLING PERPETRATORS</b>			
13	Monitor the use of protection orders for a range of VAWG offences to promote wider take up and better enforcement of breaches.	HO	Review in June 2017
14	Publish an evaluation of the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS) to promote wider uptake.	HO	March 2016
15	Consider criminalising breach of a Domestic Violence Protection Order.	HO	June 2016

## Violence against Women and Girls Strategy 2016 - 2020

16	Support development of the evidence base on perpetrator programmes and support innovative approaches to working with perpetrators such as the Drive project to help achieve sustainable reductions in repeat offending.	HO	Review March 2017
17	Publish the findings of the consultation on introducing a new stalking protection order and if appropriate take forward legislation.	HO	Summer 2016
<b>BROADER SAFEGUARDING</b>			
18	Raise standards in social work and overhaul social work education and practice to improve the recruitment, retention and development of social workers under-pinned by a new regulator that will have a relentless focus on raising the quality of social work education, training and practice in both children's and adult's services.	DFE	All social workers assessed and accredited by 2020
19	Establish a What Works Centre, with up to £20m of funding, which will be an evidence-based resource to support social workers and work alongside the Chief Social Worker	DFE	Centre to be launched by end of 2016
<b>HEALTH SERVICES</b>			
20	Support improvements in responses of health professionals to VAWG for example through roll out of the IRIS programme, free online training and more firmly embedding routine enquiry into domestic abuse in maternity and mental health services. From April 2016 we will begin to introduce sensitive routine enquiry of adverse childhood experiences in a range of targeted services where people who have been abused are likely to present, for example sexual assault referral centres and sexual health clinics.	DH	From April 2016
21	Take forward with national bodies responsible for the health professional and public health workforce and other stakeholders the recommendation by the Chief Medical Officer that VAWG needs to be included in healthcare undergraduate training.	DH	March 2017
22	Work with health arms length bodies and other partners to expand and embed routine enquiry of abuse in childhood and adulthood in certain targeted services such as children's and adult mental health services, sexual health services, SARCs and substance misuse to improve early identification and support, and data for commissioners.	DH	Autumn 2016
23	Consider with the NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre how redevelopment of health services data sets such as emergency care data and mental health service data for children and adults might be used to improve prevention and the healthcare response to violence against women and children.	DH	March 2017
24	Produce an updated version of 'Responding to Domestic Abuse: A Resource for Health Professionals'.	DH	2016
25	Continue to deliver the FGM Prevention Programme, rolling out a new FGM Risk Indication System to improve NHS safeguarding systems and address the mental health needs of women and girls living with FGM.	DH	Review summer 2017
<b>INTERNATIONALLY</b>			
26	Work with partners to improve and communicate the evidence base on preventing violence against women and girls.	DFID	Ongoing to 2020
27	Challenge traditional attitudes to sexual violence in conflict and work to end the stigma suffered by many survivors, including men and boys, which leaves them ostracised from society.	FCO	Ongoing to 2020

## PREVENTING ONLINE ABUSE AND EXPLOITATION

REF	ACTION	LEAD	DELIVERY DATE
28	Establish an official Government working group to map out current issues, prevalence, initiatives and barriers to addressing gendered online abuse to improve understanding and co-ordinate the response to online manifestations of VAWG.	GEO / HO	December 2016
29	Publish the Government response to our consultation on age verification mechanisms to restrict access to pornographic websites by those under 18 and set out next steps.	DCMS	Summer 2016
30	Continue to ensure victims of revenge pornography have access to bespoke support and advice about their right to have the images removed from website.	GEO	Review April 2017
31	Work with law enforcement and online safety forums to analyse and understand the risks posed to women by online dating services and ensure appropriate safety advice is provided.	HO	September 2016
32	Explore options for using new technology to support victims, for example promoting the development of mobile phone Apps to help victims of forced marriage and stalking.	HO	December 2016

## PROVISION OF SERVICES

REF	ACTION	LEAD	DELIVERY DATE
<b>GOVERNMENT FUNDING</b>			
33	Provide £40 million over the spending review period to support domestic abuse services including refuge provision and other accommodation based services.	DCLG	2016 - 2020
34	Provide funding for core services (IDVAs, ISVAs and MARACs).	HO	March 2017
35	Provide funding for national helplines.	HO	March 2020
36	Continued funding for rape support services at current levels in 2016/17 and ensure this funding remains throughout the Spending Review period.	MOJ	March 2020
37	Launch a VAWG service transformation fund to support innovation in local practice and improved local approaches to multi-agency working.	HO	April 2017
<b>SERVICE TRANSFORMATION</b>			
38	Establish a network of experts in VAWG to provide targeted support to local areas to improve development of local VAWG strategies, and support effective whole family approaches.	HO	September 2016
39	Publish a National Statement of Expectations (NSE) to provide a framework for commissioning of VAWG services for local areas covering key elements of effective local commissioning practice.	DCLG / HO	May 2016
40	Support wider service transformation by disseminating examples of good practice such as pooling budgets and developing a needs-based approach.	HO	Review April 2017
41	Identify ways to incentivise local government and local commissioners to support innovation including use of payment by results models and social impact bonds.	HO	Review 2017

## Violence against Women and Girls Strategy 2016 - 2020

42	Work with stakeholders to develop agreed service standards that identify what 'success' looks like for VAWG services and consider how service providers, including commercial providers, should be held to account for the services they provide.	HO	December 2016
<b>COMMISSIONING OF VAWG SERVICES</b>			
43	Publish guidance and resources for commissioners to help develop an effective approach to VAWG service provision.	HO	May 2016
44	Develop a five year strategy for the commissioning of Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs).	NHS England	July 2016
45	Continue to invest in service improvements in SARCs and develop national performance indicators to quality assure and bench mark services across England.	NHS England	April 2016
46	Undertake a deep dive to get an accurate picture of SARC commissioning and provision across England	NHS England	April 2016
47	Undertake engagement events with CCGs to ensure their understanding of their commissioning role for therapeutic care for victims of rape and sexual abuse.	NHS England	April-Oct 2016
48	Promote best practice and standards in the local commissioning approach by agreeing principles for perpetrator programmes and interventions.	HO	Principles agreed by December 2016
49	Republish specification 30 defining the commissioning roles and responsibilities for SARCs.	DH / NHS England / Public Health England	April 2016
50	Support local areas to better calculate the costs of VAWG and the impact on their budgets by reissuing an updated version of our 'ready reckoner'.	HO	Summer 2016
51	Promote FGM resources available to health professionals to share with patients to increase awareness of FGM support and services available for onward referral and explore and agree with NHS England a framework for the national provision of FGM services.	DH	March 2017
52	Launch a new funding programme to develop and promote new forms of forms of services for victims with the most complex needs.	DCLG	April 2017
53	Launch a Social Impact Bond or other social investment initiative to increase diversity of provision for vulnerable victims with complex needs.	DCLG	April 2017
<b>IMPROVING DATA</b>			
54	Work with other Government departments, the College of Policing, the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners and domestic abuse organisations to develop a data set relating to domestic abuse which will enable more thorough analysis of how domestic abuse is dealt with in a force area.	HO	Data set agreed by June 2016
55	Develop an approach to the collection of data recorded by police forces in relation to HBV, FM and FGM in conjunction with the National Police Chiefs' Council. Consideration will be given to this data being recorded as part of the Annual Data Return.	HO	June 2016
56	Work with Women's Aid to investigate the capabilities of the UK Refuges Online (UKROL) for data collection and consider how to take forward the findings to contribute to broader data improvement on VAWG services.	DCLG / HO	December 2016

## Violence against Women and Girls Strategy 2016 - 2020

INTERNATIONALLY			
57	Ensure that the UK's humanitarian action, including both assistance and protection, prevents and responds to violence against women and girls.	DFID	Ongoing to 2020
58	Support the strengthening of political and legal systems in favour of survivors of violence overseas.	DFID	Ongoing to 2020
59	Continue to scale up, including through others, provisioning of services for survivors.	DFID	Ongoing to 2020
60	Further training on the International Protocol in Burma, DRC, Iraq, Syria and Sri Lanka.	FCO	Ongoing to 2020
61	Build the capacity of grass-roots organisations and human rights defenders to support survivors to access local justice and other support programmes.	FCO	Ongoing to 2020

## PARTNERSHIP WORKING

REF	ACTION	LEAD	DELIVERY DATE
MULTI-AGENCY STRUCTURES			
62	Through the VAWG peer support network, work with local areas to streamline multi-agency structures, reduce bureaucracy for local agencies and encourage collaborative local commitment to tackling all safeguarding issues.	HO	Review in April 2017
63	Implement HMIC's recommendation (from their report into the police response to domestic violence) for further multi-agency inspections to consider how individual services contribute to keeping victims safe, the quality of local partnerships and the ways in which joint working is scrutinised.	HO	April 2017
64	Deliver HMIC's recommendation to commission a 'task and finish group' to evaluate the effectiveness of the various models in place for MASHs and CRUs in terms of the outcomes achieved for victims of domestic abuse through the National Oversight Group.	HO	Report back in Spring 2017
65	Publish updated guidance on best practice identified through Domestic Homicide Review quality assurance panels and support local areas to track how and when recommendations from domestic homicide reviews are implemented.	HO	April 2017
66	Work with NHS England, Public Health England, Health Education England and other partners to disseminate the findings from the policy research relating to violence against women and children and good practice arising from grants to third sector organisations.	DH	March 2017
67	Share learning from the approach Wales is taking to overseeing local areas' grip on tackling VAWG is shared to help inform local approaches.	HO	March 2017
68	Carry out an urgent review of Local Safeguarding Children Boards and take forward plans to centralise serious case reviews so that lessons from serious incidents can be learned more quickly and effectively.	DFE	Review completed by March 2016



Violence against Women and Girls Strategy 2016 - 2020

<b>MAKING VAWG EVERYONE'S BUSINESS</b>			
69	Fund a training project for Housing Officers, to be delivered by the National Practitioner Support Service (NPSS), and the women's sector, Safe Lives (SL) and Women's Aid (WA). The project will train 336 frontline LA staff from a range of LAs in how to identify and respond to domestic violence and abuse.	DCLG	Summer 2016
70	Support the development of Bystander Programmes such as that developed by UWE and PHE, and disseminate good practice.	HO	Review in June 2017
71	Continue to raise awareness of domestic violence and abuse in the private sector and encourage employers to develop robust workplace policies to support employees who may be victims of domestic abuse, violence or stalking.	HO	Review in Summer 2017
72	Continue to encourage organisations and private sector companies to sign up to the Domestic Abuse Responsibility Pledge.	HO	Review in Summer 2017
<b>INTERNATIONALLY</b>			
73	Ensure strong UK contribution to support delivery of implementing the specific targets on VAWG, FGM and CEFM within the Global Goals including through high level partnerships with key developing countries.	DFID	Ongoing to 2020
74	Continue to work with likeminded countries to strengthen the international system as we work to end all forms of VAWG in all settings.	DFID	Ongoing to 2020
75	Work with other governments, particularly the group of PSVI Champion countries, the UN, AU and other multilateral organisations and NGOs to drive forward the Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative.	FCO	Ongoing to 2020

**PURSUING PERPETRATORS**

REF	ACTION	LEAD	DELIVERY DATE
<b>IMPROVING THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE RESPONSE</b>			
76	Monitor the implementation of the new domestic abuse offence of coercive and controlling behaviour in an intimate or family relationship and ensure professionals have the tools and expertise needed in this area.	HO	April 2017
77	Continue working with international partners to change discriminatory laws and practices and to promote adoption of legislation to criminalise abusive behaviour and better protect victims.	FCO	Ongoing to 2020
<b>SUPPORTING VICTIMS AND FEMALE OFFENDERS</b>			
78	Continue to explore ways that vulnerable victims and witnesses can give evidence from a location away from the court and consider rolling out pre-trial recorded cross-examination in VAWG cases.	MOJ	Ongoing to 2020
79	Review the implementation and impact of legislative changes in Northern Ireland which introduce the 'Nordic' approach to prostitution (which criminalises all purchasing of sex and decriminalises all selling).	HO	April 2018
80	Support female offenders who are victims of violence and abuse to receive the interventions they need to stop offending and move into recovery for example by considering the models under development in Greater Manchester, Wales and London.	NOMS	Ongoing to 2020
81	Roll out a new helpline for female offenders who have been victims of violence or abuse so that they can obtain support while in custody and on release following the pilot helpline delivered at HMP Holloway.	NOMS	Ongoing to 2020

## Violence against Women and Girls Strategy 2016 - 2020

<b>REDUCING OFFENDING</b>			
<b>82</b>	Explore options to pilot joint police and mental health approaches to tackling stalking perpetrators, considering evidence from the Hampshire stalking clinic and the National Stalking Clinic.	HO	April 2017
<b>83</b>	Consider and respond to HMIC's recommendation to initiate a review of the existing legislative framework for all forms of HBV, including considering whether new legislation should be introduced	HO / MOJ	June 2016
<b>84</b>	Consider and respond to HMIC's recommendation to develop a national process to co-ordinate the collection and dissemination of all FMPOs and FGMPOs and other relevant orders.	HO / MOJ	June 2016
<b>POLICE RESPONSE</b>			
<b>85</b>	Continue to implement the HMIC recommendations to improve the police response to domestic violence and abuse through the National Oversight Group chaired by the Home Secretary.	HO	April 2017
<b>86</b>	Ensure that the views of victims of domestic abuse are incorporated routinely and consistently into national monitoring arrangements on the police response to domestic violence and abuse through the introduction of the Service Improvement Survey.	HO	May 2016
<b>87</b>	Deliver new training on domestic violence and abuse for first responders, supervisors and coaches which reinforces the need for evidence gathering to apprehend serial perpetrators.	COP	Ongoing to 2020
<b>88</b>	Publish new Authorised Professional Practice on stalking and harassment including new guidance on the use of Police Information Notices.	COP	Spring 2016
<b>89</b>	Review the guidance to forces to make sure that it is clear to officers the expectation about using body-worn video to gather evidence including to support investigations of domestic abuse incidents.	COP	Review progress March 2017
<b>CPS RESPONSE</b>			
<b>90</b>	Review policies, guidance, training and best practice across VAWG strands emphasising the need to ensure an offender-centric approach and to demonstrate an appropriate understanding of the needs of vulnerable victims.	CPS	Ongoing to 2020
<b>91</b>	Provide regular oversight, including bi-annually from the Director of Public Prosecutions, of VAWG prosecutions through regular performance reviews of CPS casework.	CPS	Bi-annual
<b>92</b>	Ensure transparency and accountability of VAWG prosecutions by the annual publication of a CPS VAWG Crime Report.	CPS	Annual
<b>93</b>	Continue to focus on harmful traditional practices including forced marriage, honour-based violence and female genital mutilation.	CPS	Ongoing to 2020
<b>94</b>	Address ways with others in the Criminal Justice System to improve the level of support provided to victims of VAWG crimes throughout the criminal justice process including through Specialist Domestic Violence Courts and the work of Victim Liaison Units.	CPS	Ongoing to 2020
<b>95</b>	Engage with stakeholders to inform the work of the CPS on VAWG including through quarterly meetings of the VAWG External Consultation Group, the Community Accountability Forum and, locally, through the work of the Equality, Diversity and Community Engagement Managers.	CPS	Ongoing to 2020

## ANNEX B: CAVEATS ON CPS DATA

### **CPS Data**

CPS data are available through its Case Management System (CMS) and associated Management Information System (MIS). The CPS collects data to assist in the effective management of its prosecution functions. The CPS does not collect data which constitutes official statistics as defined in the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007.

These data sets have been drawn from the CPS's administrative IT system, which, as with any large scale recording system, is subject to possible errors with data entry and processing. The figures are provisional and subject to change as more information is recorded by the CPS. We are committed to improving the quality of our data and from mid-June 2015 introduced a new data assurance regime which may explain some unexpected variance in some future data sets.

CPS VAWG data are dependent upon lawyers and administrative staff identifying applicable cases and flagging the case on the Case Management System. These data are accurate only to the extent that flags have been correctly applied.

CPS records include no indication of pre-charge decisions regarding sexual offences (excluding rape), as the Principal Offence Category of 'Sexual Offences' which includes rape and all other sexual offences is allocated to cases only at the conclusion of prosecution proceedings. Note CPS charging volumes cover those cases, by suspect, *forwarded* to the CPS for a charging decision and are not directly comparable in numbers with those prosecuted which cover cases, by defendant.

### ***Defendants Data***

Data showing the gender of **defendants** are held in the CPS Management Information System however the records are not always complete. The gender of the defendant is unknown in some cases and may not be recorded in others.

### ***CPS Defendant Data***

CPS data is calculated from the number of defendants prosecuted, for cases completed in the same time period.

### ***Victims Data***

The CPS collates data on victims from the Witness Management System used by Witness Care Units. The police are responsible for recording the gender of victims and updating the WMS but the data is not considered robust enough for publication however it is reported for domestic abuse cases.

### ***Police Referral Data***

Police referral data is calculated from the number of suspects forwarded to the CPS for charging, in a specific time period.

### ***Official Statistics***

The official statistics relating to crime and policing are maintained by the Home Office and the official statistics relating to sentencing, criminal court proceedings, offenders brought to justice, the courts and the judiciary are maintained by the Ministry of Justice. The figures given on court proceedings relate to persons for whom these offences were the principal offences for which they were dealt with. When a defendant has been found guilty of two or more offences it is the offence for which the heaviest penalty is imposed. Where the same disposal is imposed for two or more offences, the offence selected is the offence for which the statutory maximum penalty is the most severe.

