

<b>COMMUNITY SAFETY FORUM</b>	Agenda Item 30  Brighton & Hove City Council
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## Report to Community Safety Forum: 12 December 2011

### Subject: Background Paper for Agenda Item 30:

New approaches to dealing with 'violence against women' and an update on the work of the *Rise* LGBT Independent Domestic Violence Advocate

Contact Office Name: **Eleri Butler** Tel: **29-1032**

E-mail: [Eleri.Butler@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:Eleri.Butler@brighton-hove.gov.uk)

Wards Affecte All

## 1. Introduction and purpose of report

- 1.1 UK governments have national strategies for addressing and preventing 'violence against women' crime types, which recommend every local area develops a coordinated approach to responding to and preventing violence against women. These crime types include:
- domestic violence,
  - rape and sexual violence,
  - female genital mutilation,
  - forced marriage,
  - crimes in the name of 'honour',
  - stalking,
  - sexual harassment,
  - sexual exploitation, including trafficking and the sex industry (prostitution and pornography).
- 1.2 Brighton and Hove has made a commitment to develop a Violence against Women strategy and action plan by the Spring, as set out in the Community Plan. Having a coordinated approach to addressing violence against women does not mean local services will neglect the abuse directed towards men and boys or perpetrated by women. Community safety and other statutory services will continue to provide services to all victims of crime and aim to bring all offenders to justice.
- 1.3 This background paper sets out why we need a new approach to address 'violence against women' in the city, and includes a summary of the awareness-raising events (Appendix A) held locally to mark the International '16 Days' to end violence against women (November 25 – December 10). A presentation will be delivered at the Forum meeting, which will:
- Summarise the work being done now to address violence against women and what this new approach to preventing violence against women will involve.
  - Provide an update on the work being done by the specialist Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (LGBT IDVA), commissioned by the partnership community safety team, and delivered by *Rise*, the local specialist independent domestic violence service.

## 2.0 Recommendation

2.1 That Community Safety Forum members contribute their views on how violence against women can be reduced and prevented in the city, and provide feedback on the work of the LGBT IDVA service presented at the Forum meeting.

### 3.0 **Background**

3.1 'Violence against women' is defined by the UK government (and internationally) as '*violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman, or that affects women disproportionately*'.

3.2 Every year in the UK 3 million women experience rape, domestic violence, forced marriage, stalking, sexual exploitation and trafficking, female genital mutilation or 'honour' crimes.

3.3 Worldwide violence against women and girls is a problem of pandemic proportions, and research indicates the vast majority of these violent acts are perpetrated by men and are experienced by women. In the UK:

3.3.1 More than one in four women will experience domestic violence in their lifetime and 89% experience repeat violence, often with years of psychological abuse. In 2009/10, women were the victim of over seven out of ten (73%) incidents of domestic violence (there were over 1 million female victims of domestic violence in England and Wales in the last year).

3.3.2 Over 400,000 women are sexually assaulted and 80,000 women are raped each year, and around 66,000 women who have experienced female genital mutilation are living in England and Wales. In 2010 the Forced Marriage Unit received 1,735 reports relating to forced marriage.

3.3.3 Home Office research shows 85 per cent of women in prostitution report physical abuse in the family and 45 per cent report familial sexual abuse; between 50-75% of women in prostitution entered before they were 18 years old; 95% of women trafficked into prostitution suffer physical and sexual abuse, with the same number experiencing symptoms of trauma similar to those suffered by torture victims.

3.3.4 The cost of providing public services (including health, legal and social services) to victims and the lost economic output of women affected by violence runs to billions of pounds each year. An indicative figure for the minimum and overlapping cost of violence against women and girls is £36.7 billion annually.

3.4 In Brighton and Hove women are disproportionately victims of domestic and sexual violence and abuse:

3.4.1 It is estimated that over 25,000 women and nearly 2,000 men could experience repeat domestic violence as adults, *at some point in their lives*; and nearly 55,000 women could *at some point in their lives* experience rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, trafficking and sexual exploitation (Domestic Violence Needs Assessment 2011, based on Home Office research).

- 3.4.2 Last year, it is estimated that between 5,389 and 10,984 women could have experienced domestic violence; 2,736 women could have experienced sexual assault, and 6,682 women could have been a victim of stalking (Domestic Violence Needs Assessment 2011, based on Home Office research).
- 3.4.3 Local police data on recorded sexual offences in 2008 and 2009 show that 89% of victims of police recorded sexual offences were female and 11% were male. In 2009/10 there were 328 police recorded sexual offences recorded by the police.
- 3.4.4 In 2009/10 there were 3,359 police recorded domestic violence crimes and incidents, of which 85% had male suspects/ offenders (the majority of these were intimate partners). 78% of police recorded domestic violence crimes and incidents were committed against women and 22% were committed against men.
- 3.4.5 Domestic violence also has a detrimental impact on children and young people and is the most common principal reason for children having a child protection plan in place.
- 3.4.6 Based on the local LGBT population, one in four - 8,750 lesbians, gay men, bisexual and transgender people - will experience abuse at some point in their lives.
- 3.5 Violence against women is both a cause and consequence of gender inequality; women and girls are more likely to be victims than men and boys, and young women in particular suffer higher levels of victimisation. Work to reduce and prevent violence against women is therefore central to the delivery of gender, as well as other, equality duties.
- 3.6 A coordinated approach is needed for these violence against women crime types because:
- women and girls are the substantial majority of victims of these crime types and many experience multiple abuse in their lifetime;
  - most often the perpetrators are men they know or are in relationship with;
  - the context is frequently one of abuse of power by men (or a group of men) to control their female victims (e.g. forcing them into marriage, prostitution, pornography or sex).
  - The gendered patterns and dynamics involved need to be acknowledged and understood in order to provide a coordinated approach to prevention and deliver appropriate and effective services.
- 3.7 The national White Ribbon Campaign, which is led by men, calls on all men to take more responsibility for ending violence against women and to work with women to prevent it. Cities and towns across the country are encouraged to work towards achieving 'White Ribbon City Status' by (1) increasing awareness, (2) involving men in prevention activities (3) altering attitudes and behaviour that lead to violence against women, and (4) providing services to reduce the impact of violence and abuse.
- 3.8 On 25 November (International Day to End Violence Against Women) a press release was issued to raise awareness of violence against women locally and the help available. Senior public figures in the city indicated their individual support for the White Ribbon Campaign pledge: to "*never to commit, condone, or remain silent about violence against women in all its forms.*" The press release is here: <http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/index.cfm?request=c1256814>.

3.9 *Brighton & Hove '16 Days' campaign brings together the events happening in and around the International 16 days to End Violence Against Women, between November 25<sup>th</sup> and December 10<sup>th</sup>. See the [16 Days brochure](#) (attached) for a summary of events that were held in and around the Brighton & Hove 16 Days. Alongside these events, the police used social media to highlight different aspects of their work in relation to these crime types.*

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*Eleri Butler, Domestic and Sexual Violence Strategic Coordinator, November 2011.*