Understanding violence against women

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Violence against women…

- Is not random interpersonal violence
- It is based in women's inequality
- It requires specialised services and a strategic policy response

The United Nations definition

- Violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately

- states may be …responsible for private acts if they fail with due diligence to prevent violations of rights or to investigate and punish acts of violence, and for providing compensation

Understanding violence against women

- Repeated domestic violence is largely perpetrated by men against women(89%)
- Rape is largely perpetrated by men against women(92%)
- Childhood sexual abuse is largely perpetrated against girls (twice as many girls as boys)
- Sex trafficking is overwhelmingly of women and girls
- Forced marriage largely affects girls and young women (85%)

A consequence of women's inequality…

- Women are more vulnerable to violence within the home and in public spaces
- Poor opportunities within labour markets in the developing world make women susceptible to sex trafficking to this country
- Women's greater poverty makes them more vulnerable to sexual violence

A cause of women's inequality

- Domestic violence causes loss of wages due to sick absence
- Sexual violence reduces women's earnings over the lifetime
- Sexual harassment contributes to labour market segregation, reducing women's earnings

This analysis of violence against women determines:

- Our policy solutions: strategic, prevention focused
- The delivery of specialist services: joined up, sustainable

The Gender Equality Duty

The Equality Act 2006 says that a public authority shall in carrying out its functions have due regard to the need –

(a) to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment, and

(b) to promote equality of opportunity between men and women.

Definition of a public authority “any person who has functions of a public nature.”

“The Equality and Human Rights Commission intends to make the treatment of violence against women the first acid test of their fulfilment of their duties under the Act.

Trevor Phillips, November 2007

Addressing VAW strategically

Perspective

Gender Equality

Human Rights

Due diligence

Non-discrimination

Policy

Integrated strategy on all VAW and intersections

Agreed definition

Research and disaggregated statistics

Analysis of causes of VAW

Mainstreaming VAW into all policy areas

Prevention

Education

Work with perpetrators

Public awareness

Self-defence for women and girls

Provision

Specialised women s sector

- Women s Centres
- Rural provision
- BME women

Statutory Sector

Protection

Provision

Support networks

Civil law

Safety in public space

Non-discrimination

Prosecution

Data monitoring

European models of good practice

Procedural justice for victim-survivors

Holding perpetrators accountable

Non-discrimination

Prosecution

DV, Crime and Victims Act 2004

Sexual Offences Act 2003

FGM Act 2003

Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002

Protection from Harassment Act 1997

SDVCs

Non VAW specific legislation i.e. ABH, GBH

Policy

Action Plan for Tackling Violence

Separate initiatives on:

Sexual Violence

Domestic Violence

Trafficking

FGM

Prostitution

Forced marriage

Initiatives such as Supporting People, maternal health

Protection

Civil law remedies

MAPPAs

MARACs

Risk assessment tools

Provision

IDVAs

ISVAs

SARCs

Forced Marriage Unit

FGM Clinics

RCCs

Refuges

Prevention

Perspective

Conclusions

- Violence against women is a distinct social phenomenon
- It reinforces women's inequality, by reducing women's engagement with public life and the labour market
- It reduces women's agency and voice
- It requires a strategic response through policy and sustainable, specialist services