Map of Gaps: the postcode lottery of specialised VAW services

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Intersecting opportunities

- CWASU links with NGOs
  - Historical
  - Through the End Violence Against Women Coalition (EVAW)
- A coffee break discussion
  - Mapping projects but no maps
  - Difficulty of getting message of fragility of sector across to politicians and media
  - Could we do it through maps – would they show what we knew?
  - A feminist geographer round the corner
- Endowment from Anita Roddick
  - Possibility to do the work we want to do, when we wanted to do it

EVAW: An unprecedented coalition

- Fragmented service provision and public policy
- Understandable pre-occupation in NGOs on survival
- Limited work across nations and regions of the UK
- Aim
  - space for thinking, action and campaigning,
  - a collective and coherent voice
  - a set of achievable aims
- Began with nothing but a few smart women
  - Funding for 3 years from Amnesty UK
- EVAW links 50 service providers, organisations and individuals
  - Across the nations and regions
  - Across forms of violence
  - Plus TUC, WI and Amnesty UK

Why women's services?

- Began in 1970s to address hidden/silenced issues
- Enable women to name what has happened, make sense of and address it
- Depth to understanding of violence
- Creative alternatives that met women's needs
  - Anonymity – helplines
  - Safety – refuges
  - Empowerment – self-defence
- Challenge to shift to criminal justice and state based resources
- And built confidence and institutions run by women
  - Re training/personal development – staff and service users

Aims

- To depict in visual form the ‘post-code lottery’ of service provision across the UK
  - Mapping the location and comparative availability of services
  - Mapping gaps
- To provide politicians, policy makers, NGOs with resources to base decisions and campaigns around
- To provide EVAW with a tool through which progress could be measured

Methodology

- Inclusion criteria
  - the organisation works primarily on violence
  - provides significant direct support to female victims of violence
- Data collection
  - Questionnaire distributed to service providers
  - Liaison with umbrella organisations
  - Published listings of services
  - Internet searches
- Data geo-coded at local authority level
- No fail safe methodology – no absolute accuracy
- Existence of a service tells us only part of availability
  - Does not measure capacity which can vary significantly

Responses and outcomes

- VAW sector
  - Provided confirmation of messages, but in a user friendly and powerful visual format
    - Under-resourcing of sexual violence and BME women
- Added language and argumentation to the historic and continuing contribution of NGOs, and human rights
  - Defined the specialised VAW sector
- Some contested the maps
  - Claiming there were more services
- Many politicians have used in speeches
- Brought the newly established Equality and Human Rights Commission fully on board
  - Trevor Philips made widely reported speech on ‘the undeclared war against women’

Map of Gaps II, 2009: methodology becomes a tool for gender equality work

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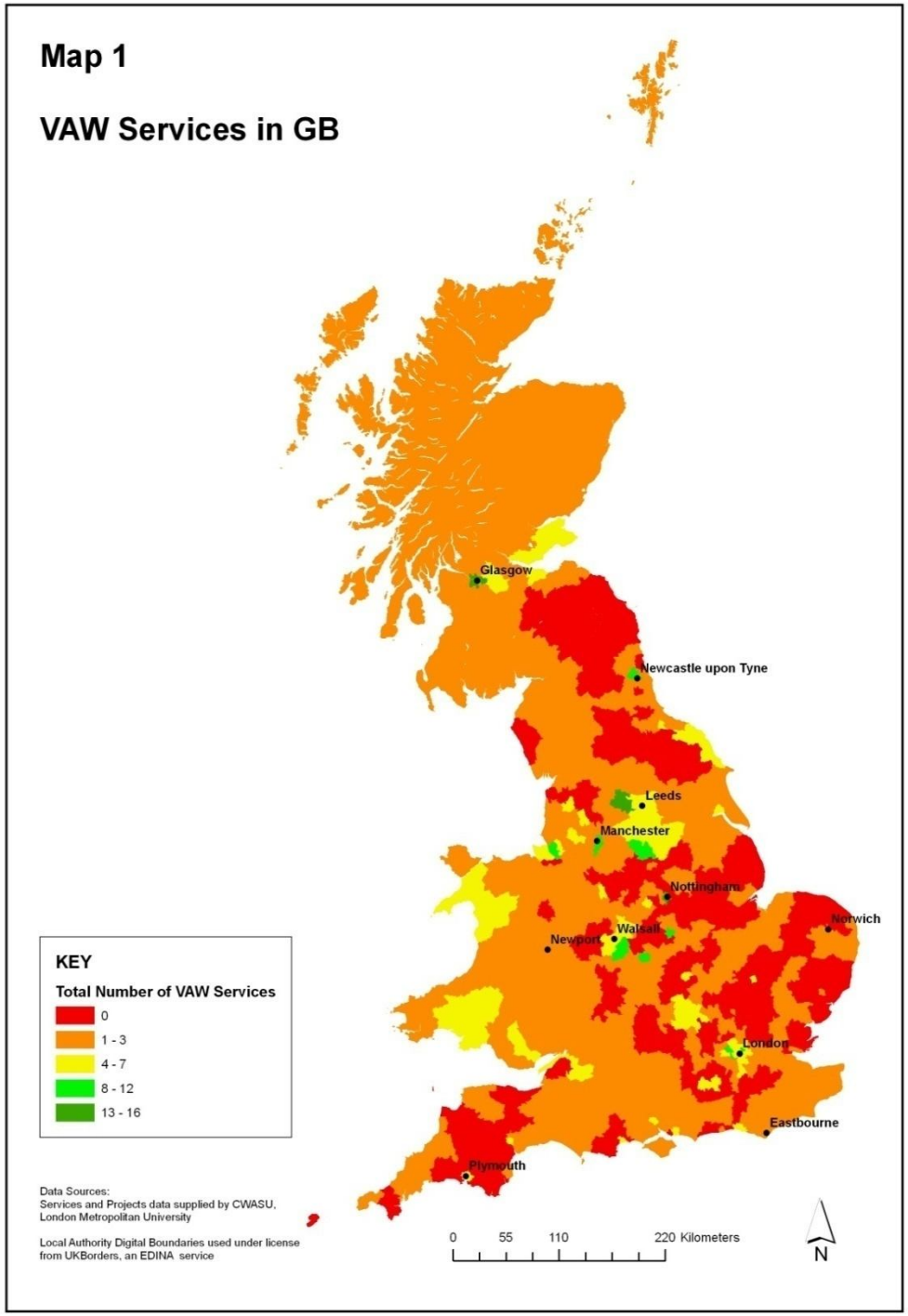
- Partner project with Equality and Human Rights Commission
  - To enable them to use enforcement duties
- Update data AND maps, so that change since 2007 could be documented
  - Liaised with umbrella organisations to check MOG1 data against their records
- Additionally to research:
  - services closed/opened
  - any subsumed into generic services through commissioing
  - document misinterpretations of Gender Equality Duty
    - ie local authorities arguing that NGOs must provide services to women and men

Findings – fragile provision

- Move to commissioning from needs based grants detrimental to VAW sector
  - Recognised by CEDAW Committee in 2008
- Funding crisis especially acute in Rape Crisis Centres
  - Majority of funding for less than 1 year
  - Average annual income only slightly more than the cost of investigating a single reported rape
- Absorption into generic provision - specialised domestic violence and sexual violence voluntary sector lost more services than were opened
- Increases in statutory sector but voluntary sector struggling to survive and on some measures diminished

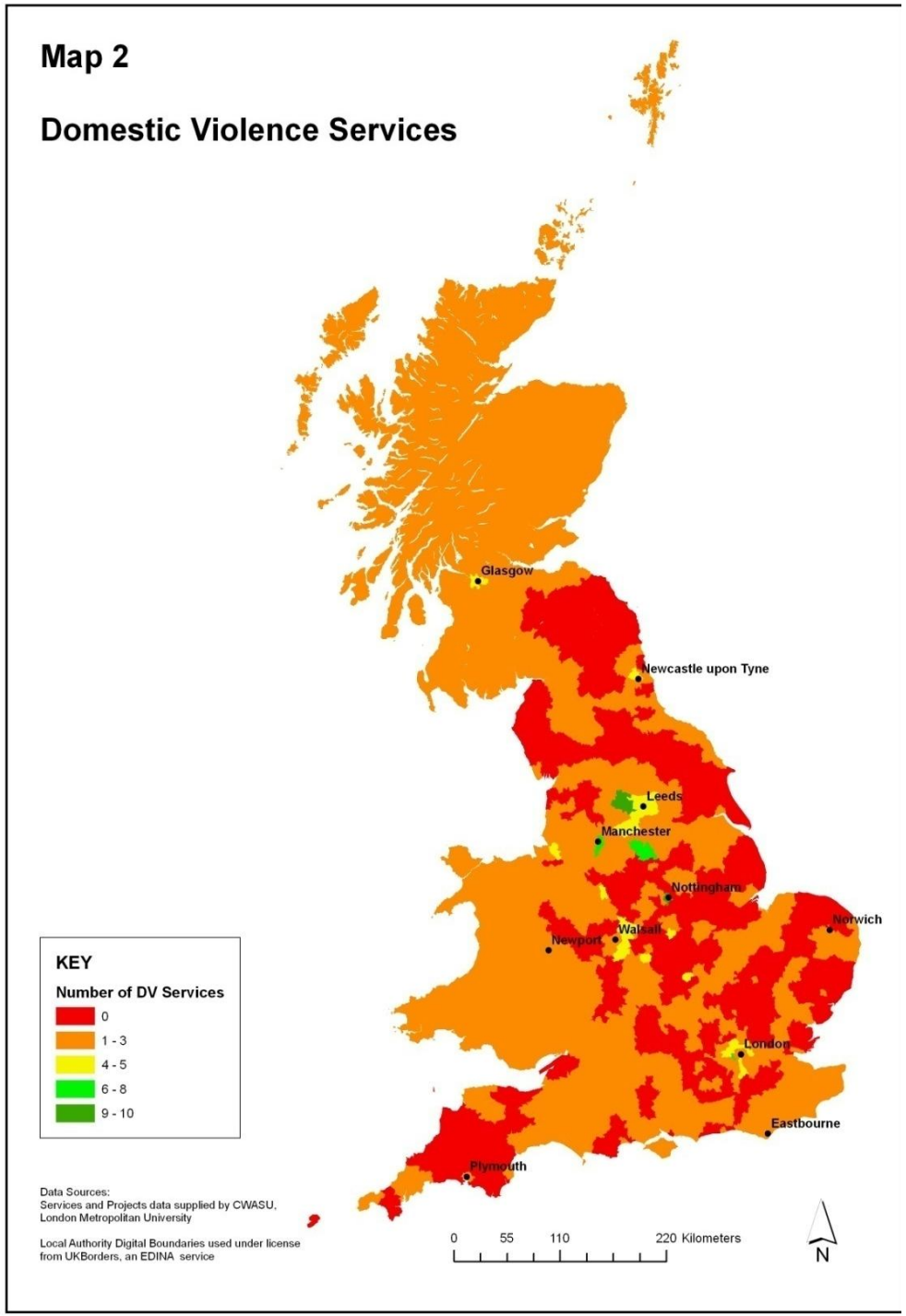
Overall map 2009

- Over a quarter (26.5%) of local authorities have no specialised VAW support service
- These areas face assessment of specialised service provision under gender duty obligations



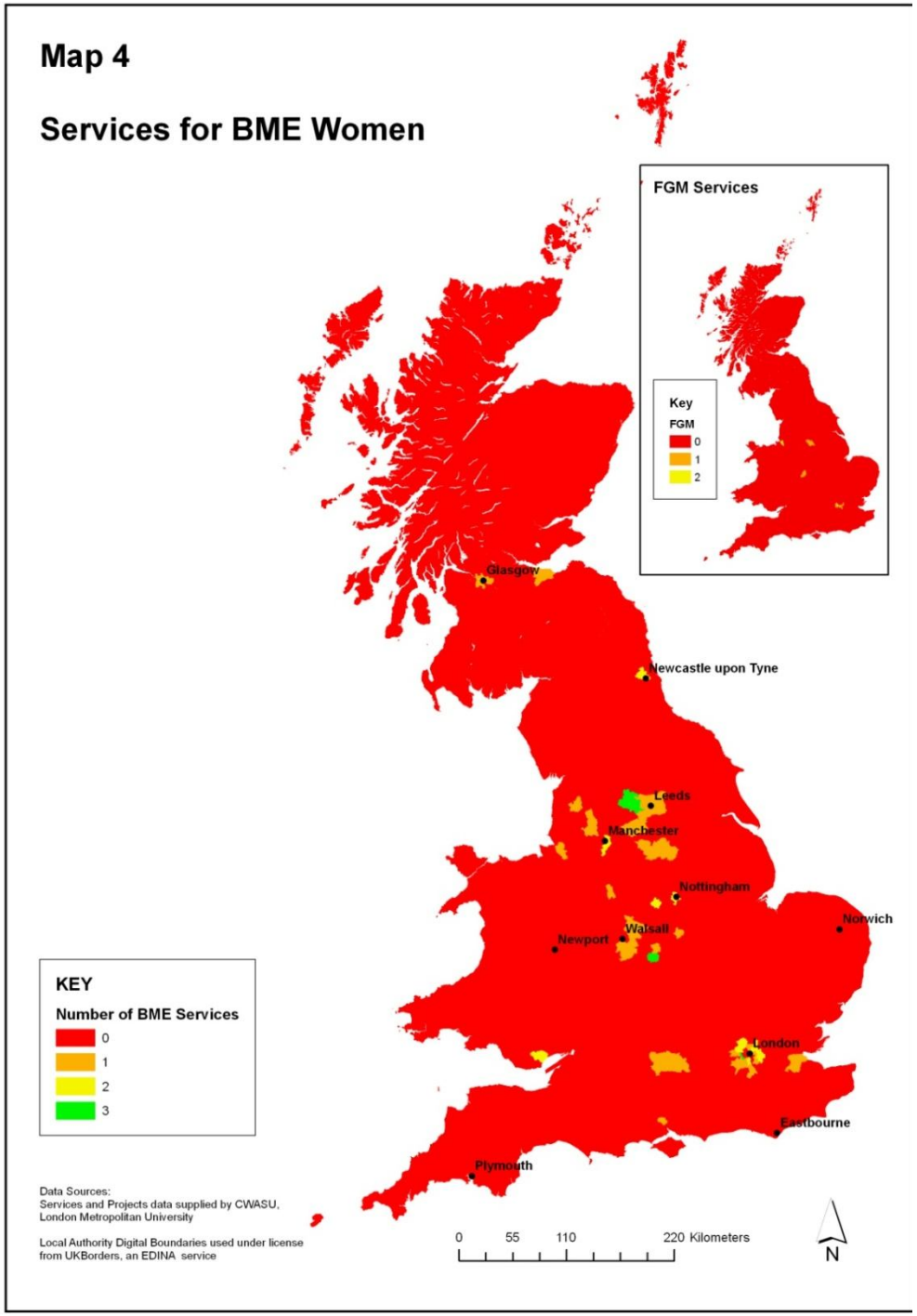
DV services

- Nearly one in three local authorities has no specialised service
- Specialised provision decreased by 0.3% since 2007



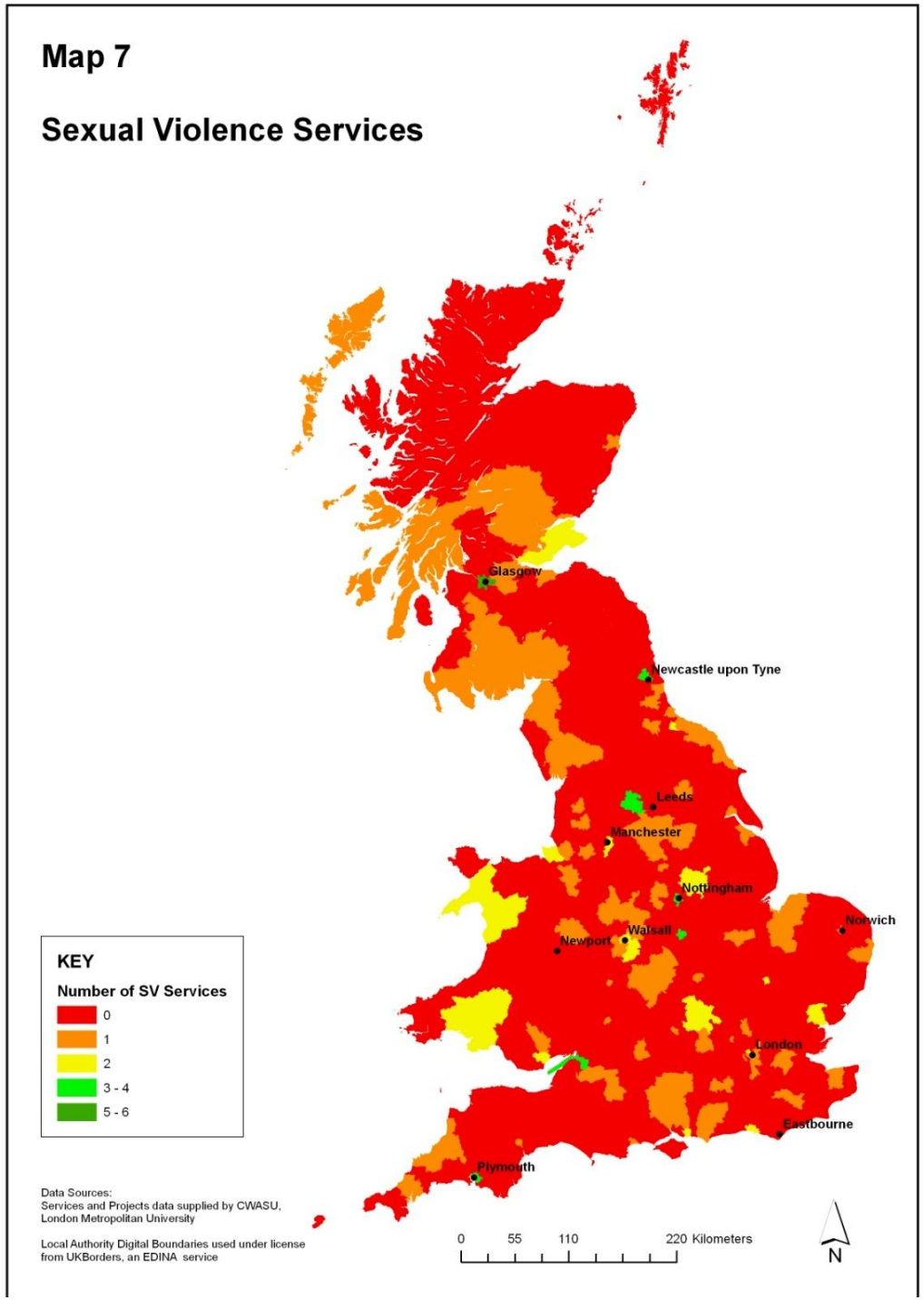
BME services

- No specialised BME services in the South West or the East of England
- One in 10 areas has a specialised BME service



Sexual violence

- Only one in four areas has a sexual violence service.
- Three quarters of all local authorities do not have a specialised voluntary/third sector sexual violence service



Scotland: a different story

- More equal distribution of provision
- Only part of the UK where there has been an expansion of Rape Crisis Centres.
- Glasgow – the most diverse provision across the UK
- Scottish government strategic approach - a benchmark
  - recognition that violence is a cause and consequence of women's inequality
  - commitment to enhancing capacity and diversity of provision, through a national fund

Challenges and Limitations

- Not possible to map across area boundaries
- Revisiting what constitutes a service
  - BME sector - services had contracted – meant range of provision organisations able to offer, whereas MOG maps organisations
- More detailed analysis at local level - layers of implications
  - Any glitches in coding revealed starkly on website

Policy outcomes

- High profile launch and media coverage by EHRC
- Some local authorities extremely hostile
  - Claims of inaccuracy from those asked to explain why they had no services
  - Claims that maps will prevent women from seeking help
- EHRC assessments currently underway
  - Working with CWASU to check claims against database
  - Will take enforcement action against some
- Consultation on VAW strategy in 2009 a focus on provision
  - Women said they wanted specialised women only services

Reflections

- Importance of coalitions and alliances
- Evidenced the conflation of VAW with domestic violence and its consequences for service provision
- To focus on national or local government?
  - Best is both/and – but campaigns need clear target and aims
- Some services report supportive approach from LA for first time ever – opened doors for dialogue
- Need to develop more sophisticated representations of services across governmental boundaries, and by populations

Next steps

- Enforcement action against local authorities under Gender Equality Duty
  - 93 local authorities received letter asking for evidence of consultation and extent of specialised service provision
- New project with EHRC
  - Mapping needs across nations and regions
  - Develop models to enable local authorities to gauge necessary levels of provision
    - Financial costs – GEN in Scotland partners