



Tackling the Hidden Landscape of Domestic Abuse and 'Honour' Based Violence

"... every case of someone suffering domestic violence is one too many. We are determined not to let violent offenders get away with wrecking lives by stopping them committing crimes in the first place."

— Rt Hon Jacqui Smith MP, Home Secretary, February 2008

- 65% fall in the number of domestic violence incidents between 1995 and 2007/08
- The prosecution rate increased to 64% in 2007/08
- 83 female victims of homicide committed by partners/ex-partners in 2006/07 – The lowest level since 1999/00

— Domestic Violence Fact Sheet, Government Equalities Office, July 2008

Event Details

Title: Tackling the Hidden Landscape of Domestic Abuse and 'Honour' Based Violence

Date: Thursday 13th November 2008

Time: 10:15am — 3:40pm
(followed by networking drinks)

Venue: One Whitehall Place, Westminster, London

Organiser

Public Policy Exchange, in association with the Centre for Parliamentary Studies, holds regular interactive seminars which provide an invaluable interface for policy discussion, debate and networking. These special events offer local practitioners, civil servants and other stakeholders not only an insight into current policy thinking, but also the opportunity to feed into future policy development across all areas of public policy.

Overview

It is now four years since the *Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act* gained Royal Assent, promising "the biggest overhaul of laws on domestic violence since the 1970s" with "tough new powers for the police and courts to protect victims and prosecute abusers".

Although recent statistics released by the Government Equalities Office demonstrate that progress has been made in tackling domestic violence, significant challenges still remain to ensure that all those at risk receive the support and protection they need. Despite the increase in prosecution and conviction rates, domestic violence is still synonymous with chronic under-reporting and a postcode lottery in terms of access to support services for victims. Furthermore, Ministers now acknowledge that it is time to step up the fight against 'honour' based violence, which is estimated to affect up to 17,000 women in this country every year – An Action Plan to tackle the issue is expected to follow soon. The 'Honour Network', a dedicated forced marriage and 'honour' based violence helpline was set up earlier this year, with the aid of Home Office funding.

This special Public Policy Exchange symposium, hosted by the *Centre for Parliamentary Studies* offers a timely opportunity for local practitioners, police/probation service, health and other stakeholders to explore how the gaps in service provision can be plugged by a more effective implementation at the local level of the National Domestic Violence Delivery Plan. Delegates will also consider the steps needed to construct a robust framework for dealing with 'honour' based violence which has, until recently, remained a largely 'underground' phenomenon. As well as focusing on how sensitive cultural barriers can be overcome to encourage more reporting of 'honour' abuse, the afternoon session will tackle issues around better support and protection for victims. In addition, the session will examine how a cross-Government action plan would instil public confidence in the criminal justice system to ensure sufficient punishment and deterrence against 'honour' based crime.

Who should attend?

Domestic Violence Co-ordinators, Housing Officers, Police Service, Police Authorities and Fire Services, Probation Officers, Families Services Officers, Sure Start, Children's Trusts and Children's Centres, Health Service Professionals, Victim Support Representatives, Community Cohesion and Development Organisations, Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships, Community Safety Teams, Neighbourhood Policing Teams, Anti-Social Behaviour Coordinators, Drug & Alcohol Action Teams, Youth Offending Teams, Community Support Officers, Children and Youth Services, Housing Associations, Social Workers and Social Services Officers, Local Education Welfare Authorities, Teachers and Head Teachers, Criminal Justice Practitioners, Judges and Magistrates, Legal Professionals, Local Authority Officers & Councillors, Central Government Departments and Agencies, Equality and Diversity Practitioners, Third Sector Practitioners, Academics and Researchers

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