The Good, the Bad and the Ugly (and the slightly strange)

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AVA
Against Violence & Abuse

The good

- We have a strategy!
- Recognition of and commitment to on-going dialogue with the VAWG sector
- The ring-fenced funding for IDVAs, ISVAs, MARACs and Rape Crisis
- Commitment to prevention
- Inclusion of an international section (details not included here)
- Reviewing the action plan every six months

- Commitment to rape awareness campaign
- Work planned with the UK media and music industry to challenge stereotypes
- Inclusion of MoD in the strategy
- Promoting the Equality Duty
- Independent VAWG advisory group for DfE
- Training for health visitors (again!)
- Reduce sexual and sexist bullying – and Ofsted to inspect this.

- Several actions to improve responses to stalking
- Addressing girls and gangs
- Several actions to improve communications with women supporting a prosecution
- Work to ensure that the asylum system is as gender-sensitive as possible.
- Various commitments to training and qualifications

- Consult on a revised definition of domestic violence to take into account younger victims
- Review impact of the Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Support the continued development of effective community-based alternatives to custody for women offenders and women at risk of offending along with producing some guidance and training

- VAWG training for Work Capability Assessors
- Increasing the overall number of Rape Crisis Centres

The odd

- Prevention is at the heart of the strategy… but all the money is in crisis work.
- All the domestic violence campaign work is focused on teenagers
- Rape campaign seems to be predicated on a belief that men rape by accident
- Plans to improve safety of lone workers – but evidence shows violence against women occurs whether or not they were alone.

- A national campaign to support and change the lives of families with multiple problems
- Reduce the access of children to internet porn
- NICE to produce guidance on preventing domestic violence (not VAWG)

The Bad

- No recourse plans are restricted to a tiny minority of women with insecure immigration status
- Very limited consideration of perpetrators
- No plans to engage with men
- Very vague commitment to vulnerable women – which seems to only mean BME women
- Lots of awareness raising activity… and not much else… except sharing good practice!

- Encourage the teaching of sexual consent within the curriculum
- Support local authorities and specialist organisations, in partnership with the Local Government Association, to work together to provide local support for women and girls affected by abuse
- Help local areas understand the overall benefit of investing in VAWG services.
- More health research

The ugly

- British efforts at Council of Europe to argue that violence against women is not a violation of human rights
- Legal Aid cuts / redefinition of domestic violence
- Housing ‘reforms’
- Housing benefit cuts
- NHS ‘reforms’
- Cuts to childcare provision
- Exclusion of trafficking and prostitution / redefining VAWG

Highlights of the new commitments

- Work with HWBB to understand VAWG
- Develop a support package for NGOs and commissioners to better understand one another
- Ensure PCCs understand the need to commission VAWG services
- Work with businesses to address VAWG in the workplace
- Develop a training package to support gang affected girls subjected to sexual violence
- Consider the needs of rural women affected by VAWG (brings Defra into the strategy)
- Fund ISVAs for young people
- Support community engagement to challenge attitudes and prevent FGM

MY VERDICT?

C+ Could do better