



1.0 This Submission

1.1 This submission is in response to the enquiry by the Communities and Culture Committee into domestic abuse and the effectiveness of the Welsh Assembly Government's Domestic Violence Strategy 2005.

2.0 BAWSO background

2.2 BAWSO was established in 1995 in response to particular concerns in Wales about BME women and children being made homeless through a threat of domestic abuse or as a result of fleeing from domestic abuse. It is a Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) Accredited Support Provider delivering services to over 300 women and children at any one time. BAWSO receives WAG core funding and plays a role in influencing national policy through its membership of the WAG Working Group on Domestic Abuse. BAWSO is affiliated to Welsh Women's Aid.

2.3 During its initial years BAWSO focused on establishing refuges in Cardiff and Newport, and later in Swansea, as places of safety with accompanying support services. Services included, and still include, direct one to one support to BME women and their families housed in refuge accommodation to ensure that they progress towards re-establishing their lives and moving on to better housing and life opportunities.

2.4 This process of moving on is now supported by outreach and resettlement workers who also support women who have not, or cannot, physically remove themselves from their home to avoid violence. Floating Support workers help women who move into social housing, and all these support services are complemented by a language support programme providing translation and interpretation services.

2.5 BAWSO now provides a number of projects to support its key work. These include Volunteering, Mentoring for boys, Community Awareness raising, Community cohesion initiatives, Information giving, personal development support for users, and a 24 hour help line.

2.6 In delivering specialist support services to BME women BAWSO works in partnership with statutory and voluntary organizations and, importantly, complements and strengthens mainstream provision.

2.7 BAWSO specialist services are delivered to all minorities including travelers and women from EC States including those from Eastern Europe (See Appendix 1).

3.0 Specialist support to BME women

3.1 The position of BME women in confronting abuse is distinct. For BME women the family structure of which they are a part is invariably strong and their role within it is highly prescribed and their personal freedoms are restricted. Domestic abuse may not be condoned by all family members but it is infrequently questioned or challenged. By design or default families collude to maintain traditional power relationships and behaviour and as a result a woman is almost completely isolated in confronting abuse within marriage. In the worst instances the abuse, most particularly the mental and emotional abuse, includes other members of the family.

3.2 For many BME women it is not possible to differentiate between abuse experienced as a woman and abuse experienced as a black and minority person. The abuse reflects a degree of social exclusion that characterises their lives as individuals and citizens. In most cases they are not employed and have no separate disposable income, live in poor housing, and lack the education and opportunities to progress. As a consequence they are ill equipped to escape abuse.

3.3 This isolation is made all the greater by language barriers and cultural differences that reduce chances to question the acceptability of violence and block off ways of escaping from it. Seeking help through trusted family members, friends, or even children, can be very dangerous when discovery would lead to violent retribution.

3.4 Most importantly BME women possess little confidence in mainstream support agencies. Their justifiable fear is that pleas will not be taken seriously and that important concerns about being safe but being able to adhere to religious, cultural and dietary practices will be regarded as 'fussy'. BME women confronted with abuse and seeking help also have racism to contend with.

3.5 The impact of flight for a BME mother and her children is enormous. The emotional and practical stress of trying to establish a new existence is heightened by the prejudice and racism inherent in an exacting and judgmental society. 'Moving out' removes almost everything that determines the identity and 'sense of belonging' for a mother and her children. With it ends much of their self esteem and self worth, and contact with all those who formally affirmed their position and value. Their exposure to ridicule and racism replaces the domestic abuse as they flee from violence.

3.6 There is an added burden on women confronted by domestic abuse. The abuse against them is frequently witnessed by their children who internalise the experience and are drawn at one and the same time to protect their mothers or siblings and to abandon them in self defense.

3.7 For some BME young women who seek to flee from arranged or forced marriage or honour threats, their lives often involve abduction, physical and sexual violence, threatening behaviour, imprisonment, emotional blackmail, mental intimidation, and the removal of all social and economic freedom, and subjugation to all kinds of demeaning and humiliating actions. Their lot is extreme.

3.8 Equally humiliating is abuse by the practice of partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or injury to the female genital organs for spurious cultural or other reasons. Female genital mutilation (FGM) is practiced in more than twenty-eight African countries and among African immigrants across the world, in parts of the Middle and Far East, and in Europe including the UK.

3.9 The trafficking of BME women within the sex trade is particularly pernicious. Trafficking gangs make escape particularly difficult and the level of abuse is often extreme and cause enduring physical and mental injury.

3.10 For women seeking to escape violence the outside world is truly hostile. Attitudes are harsh and meager resources are available to sustain them in their flight. Highly vulnerable are BME women who have entered the UK and then seek to escape violence without carrying the documentation necessary to confirm their identity, marital status, right to welfare benefits, and case to avoid deportation.

3.11 It is this breadth and depth of experience that determines the black perspective on abuse towards BME women. This has shaped the pattern of services currently provided by BAWSO and is shaping its future plans¹.

4.0 Recommendations to the inquiry:

Recommendation 1. Ensure that all victims of domestic abuse are visible through the availability of sound data.

4.1.1 The figures used to quantify and justify services in the field of domestic violence are insufficient and sometimes unsound. BAWSO is of the view that many figures seriously underestimate the incidence of abuse but what is needed are fewer estimates and more evidence based on substantiated facts.

4.1.2 BAWSO research efforts are gradually contributing to the dissemination of current and correct facts. An extract from recent BAWSO research that illustrates the importance and impact of sound research and data provision is set out in Appendix 2.

4.1.3 The SPriNT database recently installed and activated within BAWSO is proving its worth. As time progresses a clearer and more precise picture of need, the pattern of service delivery, and the effectiveness of interventions is being built up. This information is able to inform organisational policies and practices, and improve governance and management decisions.

4.1.4 Resources allocated now towards research and other initiatives designed to enable statutory & voluntary bodies to effectively capture, store, and retrieve data would be truly valuable.

4.1.5 Actions directed towards establishing and maintaining a sound baseline of information for Wales would be invaluable.

¹ Further reference can be made to the current BAWSO Business Plan and the most recent (2007/08) Annual Report

Recommendation 2. Make the monitoring and evaluation of funding and services a requirement for support providers

4.2.1 It is too easy to report 'good progress' and the 'delivery of outcomes' without reference to robust and verifiable monitoring and evaluation practices. Progress must be measurable and must go beyond claiming the establishment of a new initiative or a number of new projects to evidencing their impact.

4.2.2 Sound monitoring and evaluation will enable attention to be paid to services that are not effective and gaps in provision. It will also balance claims of progress and success where they are exaggerated or unsubstantiated.

4.2.3 The current determined approach towards policy and project reviews is entirely correct and must be maintained if the appropriateness and quality of services is to improve.

Recommendation 3. Ensure the highest level of professional intervention to violence against women support services

4.3.1 Matters surrounding domestic abuse and particularly those related to and often indistinguishable from the wider matter of abuse against BME women, including forced marriage, honour crime, trafficking and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), are the subject of considerable interest. An increasing number of organisations and initiatives are involved within Wales and beyond. Interest from government and the media can be easily excited.

4.3.2 It is increasingly essential that there exists a sure footed acknowledgement within government and the Welsh statutory sector of those experienced and professional agencies that deliver high calibre services that are regulated by external bodies charged with maintaining standards. Interest in these matters may be extensive. The number of Welsh organisations able to deliver professional responses is few. Recent BAWSO recommendations related to services provided to trafficked women (set out in Appendix 3) illustrate the need for professional expertise in this and corresponding fields.

4.3.3 Partnership working between all interested parties is necessary and valuable. Understanding the realistic contribution of partners is an important component to effective and successful partnership working.

Recommendation 4. Deliver a consistency of services across Wales

4.4.1 As with many services the approach and facilities available to support women facing abuse varies significantly across Wales. This variable pattern of provision is complicated by a rapidly increasing recognition of a very significant degree of need in North Wales which has remained hidden from view. Recent figures from BAWSO work in North Wales illustrate this and a note is set out in Appendix 4.

4.4.2 BAWSO's experience of supporting women with NRPF has revealed a disturbing inconsistency in the understanding and level of service across Local Authorities throughout Wales.

4.4.3 Perhaps this is not unexpected as NRPF is by definition outside the framework of statutory obligation and a matter of discretion, most often held by local practitioners.

4.4.4 Statutory services are more characterised by their differences than by their similarities, and as a result the quality as well as the availability of services is a 'postcode lottery'.

4.4.5 BAWSO's experience of the inconsistency of services is reflected in health provision. In particular GP's are profoundly reluctant to admit women with NRPF onto their patient lists, or to visit, and prescriptions are not free for them or their children.

4.4.6 The current determination to address the breadth and consistency of services across Wales is very welcome.

Recommendation 5. Ensure the delivery of services that are Children and Young People centred

4.5.1 It is increasingly the case that resources are insufficient and diminishing for child care and the support of young people from families in which the mother is confronted with violence. BAWSO is currently undertaking research into the importance and impact of child care and support of young people, its cost benefit, and the shortfall in resources.

4.5.2 The needs of children and young people are extensive. Bullying, truancy, anti-social behaviour, depression, and low level crime can be prevalent.

4.5.3 Services must take account of very distinct gender boundaries within some BME communities where the roles and responsibilities and expectations of boys and of girls are very different. In addition, the language requirements placed on BME young people can be profound as they are required to interpret for parents and practitioners at moments of severe conflict, thus involving them directly in matters surrounding abuse, which in turn necessitates intense and specialist support.

4.5.4 Children from Eastern Europe are as vulnerable to the exclusion and disconnection caused by domestic violence as are children from other BME communities.

4.5.5 Currently BAWSO delivers mentoring for boys and a project for young girls (SEREN) in partnership with Banardos and Taff Housing Association.

4.5.6 There is scope for more extensive and broader services in support of children and young people.

Recommendation 6. Provide more cohesive and resourced responses to the needs of women with no recourse to public funds (NRPF)."

4.6.1 This recommendation incorporates five sub-recommendations

To rapidly address ways of raising awareness among women of the 'domestic violence rule'.

Careful monitoring to take place of the time taken by the Home Office to adjudicate decisions related to the domestic violence rule in Wales to be implemented in order to assess the cost relating to NRPF that is incurred

That a simple formulae of support be agreed for bodies supporting women with NRPF be considered by WAG at the soonest opportunity.

That WAG considers a tendered research project to monitor the incidence and response to women with NRPF over the next two years.

That the matter of Women with NRPF be considered as a priority for both health and social services in future partnership working.

4.6.2 A large and rapidly growing number of women fall almost entirely outside the current pattern of policy and provision on violence towards women. They have no right to receive services and are afforded minimal protection against their abusers. These are women who have 'No Recourse to Public Funds'. In 2006/07 to 2007/08 BAWSO committed £242,800 plus outreach support to women with NRPF.

4.6.3 The (NRPF) rule prohibits anyone entering the UK on the basis of marriage from reliance on public housing or public benefits until their immigration status is resolved².

4.6.4 This arrangement makes the position of many women who enter the country as wives or who are trafficked as sex workers, very vulnerable indeed. With few exceptions they believe that their residency is extremely vulnerable and that they can easily be deported unless they submit to the whims of the men and gangs that control them.

² For a detailed analysis of the impact of NRPF on women see Saheli 'Forgotten Women' March 2008

4.6.5 Repatriation may hold additional fears of retribution depending upon their previous behaviour and their adherence to cultural practices³.

The domestic violence rule

The 'domestic violence rule', introduced in 2002, goes some way towards dealing with this situation by protecting any women who is married or living with a settled partner and can prove that she is a victim of domestic abuse (not necessarily from her husband or partner). Such a woman can remain in the UK indefinitely.

However, few women know of, or turn to, the domestic violence rule and they either suffer abuse or escape and face the daunting prospect of proving their status without documentation or other evidence.

Accordingly, BAWSO's first recommendation is to greatly elevate understanding among women of their right to remain in the UK is not jeopardised if they report domestic violence.

Sadly there is a wide belief among women facing domestic violence that a flight to safety will result in destitution or repatriation.

Many women find themselves initially unable to prove any right of residence and have no recourse to public funds.

Categories of women affected by no recourse to public funds rule.

NRPF rule affects women fleeing from abuse differently depending upon their circumstances. Generally speaking they affect the following categories of women:

Asylum seeking women fleeing domestic violence⁴

Women from countries where their life is at risk due to their divorced or separated status, or some other gender related circumstance, may seek asylum in the UK.

If they enter into a relationship in the UK which results in them suffering from domestic violence they cannot then be in receipt of public funds until their asylum application is adjudicated in favour of UK residency.

Women with a spousal visa

Numerous women enter the UK each year as spouses of UK residents. Most come from Asia and Africa which are outside the EU and its stringent immigration rules.

³ For a further analysis of this area of concern see 'No recourse, no safety' The Governments failure to protect women from violence. Amnesty International and Southall Black Sisters.2008

⁴ For a detailed analysis of ways to support women with NRPF see 'How can I support her?' Domestic Violence, Immigration, and women with NRPF. Southall Black Sisters.

Any such woman must reside in the UK for a two year 'probationary period' with her 'sponsor' after which she can apply for permanent 'settlement'.

The two year rule and settlement relies on the sponsor filing the necessary papers. Abusive husbands frequently threaten not to file these papers and to return the woman to her country of origin to face the accompanying shame and humiliation, unless they do all that is required of them however demeaning.

Any woman who endeavours to break free from such a degree of subjugation needs to be singularly brave. Few succeed.

Understandably those who do escape do not fully understand their real status and have no means of evidencing it. Until such time as this is resolved they have no recourse to public funds.

Women from Accession States

Following the expansion of the European Union in 2004 many families from the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia entered the UK enjoying the same rights as all other EU citizens. However, this entitlement is dependent upon continual employment. If a period of unemployment is encountered Housing Benefit or homelessness assistance is problematic.

There are other routes to establishing a right to reside through self employment and length of residency etc. However, a woman who flees domestic violence and is no longer dependent upon her husband forfeits any recourse to public funds and can only sustain herself through employment, which is often impossible as a result of her skills level and responsibility for child care.

Trafficked women

Increasing numbers of trafficked women are entering the UK and forced into prostitution. All these women are illegal residents and have no recourse to public funds.

The most exploited and physically and emotionally tortured women receive the least support.

Single Women

Single women who are in abusive relationships may access some benefits depending upon their individual circumstances but no additional support is available to them if they flee from violence, and all too frequently statutory services are insufficiently resourced and prepared to provide any services.

Generally speaking single women are not regarded as a priority and the incidence of attempted suicide is high.

Married women or partners to men who are not settled in the UK

Women who are the partners of men who are in the UK under immigration restrictions because they are students or on working visas etc have no recourse to public funds. In addition, residency status tends to be complex and the adjudication prolonged during which no state support is available.

The duration and cost of NRPF

The Home Office claims that an application under the domestic violence rule takes 28 days. BAWSO's records show that the length of time taken for adjudication varies between 6 and 12 months.

In 2006/07 BAWSO supported 50 women with NRPF. Of these 8 were accommodated in refuges and 2 in safe houses. The remaining 40 were provided with outreach support in the absence of available safe accommodation⁵.

In 2007/08 the number of women with NRPF rose to 77. 20 were accommodated in refuges and 5 in safe houses. The remaining 52 were provided with outreach support, again in the absence of sufficient accommodation.

The length of stay for all 127 accommodated women with NRPF amounted to 1217 months.

The cost to BAWSO of supporting each woman amounts to the lost occupancy revenue plus the cost of support. Occupancy income amounts to £14,617⁶ for each woman per year (£1,218 a month).

The cost to BAWSO of supporting women with NRPF in accommodation between 2006/07 and 2007/08 was £242,800⁷

The cost of outreach support to be added to this sum is calculated at £84,378 (over the two years).

The total expenditure of BAWSO has been £327,178⁸ on supporting women with NRPF during this period.

The amount saved by the state under current benefit arrangements was at least £395,280⁹

BAWSO is of the view that the figures related to its own work represent a small proportion of the women with NRPF. A swift telephone survey of four Women's Aid organisation reveals that between them they handled 26 cases of women with NRPF over the last two years. Accordingly,

⁵ See Figure 2

⁶ It is worth noting that this is £7,624 less than a woman who receives benefit.

⁷ 200 months of provision during the period.

⁸ Excludes the cost of support to children – 63% of all women with NRPF had had at least 1 child, and up to 3.

⁹ Excluding outreach support costs.

an extremely serious degree of unmet need is being revealed that is far beyond any assessment made from BAWSO figures.

Alarming BAWSO figures reveal that BAWSO alone was obliged to turn away 72 women with NRPF during 2007/08. This number appears to be increasing rapidly. During April and May 2008 33 women with NRPF were turned away. By the end of 2008 it is anticipated that BAWSO will have turned away up to 165 women with NRPF.

The ethnicity of women with NRPF between 2006/07 and 2007/08 is set out in figure 1.

BAWSO alone faced a 54% increase of referrals from 2006/07 to 2007/08. This was remarkably high perhaps because of the opening of the BAWSO office in Wrexham in April 2006.

Whereas future trends cannot yet be predicted any year on upward trend will generate an intolerable financial burden.

Currently the statutory sector saved £395k and BAWSO filled the gap at a cost of £327k.

This cannot continue but these women cannot be cast out onto the street.

The Welsh framework of social policy, and the existing pattern of regulations surrounding benefits, fails some of the most vulnerable women in Wales. BAWSO is taking steps to generate additional earned income through making its training and language support capabilities available as a community enterprise and BAWSO will continue to maximise the impact of the resources it commands. It is committed to supporting these women where the State fails to do so, but in future this effort must be a joint effort based on a common acknowledgement of need and a joint willingness to resource an adequate response.

The cost of meeting the needs of women with NRPF is significant and appears to be escalating rapidly. It reveals a serious gap in provision resulting from the direction of social policy and corresponding benefit regulations. Accordingly, the matter requires a number of actions by government, and support to NGO's as they seek to fill the gap in the interim.

BAWSO recommend that the Welsh Assembly Government and WLGA and other appropriate bodies address how the needs of those who fall outside the statutory safety net are to be met if at all, and how professional practices and standards of care can be established, monitored and evaluated.

BAWSO understands that the legislative framework and associated practices related to children and young people involved in cases of NRPF is more prescribed but further work needs to be undertaken to assess to what extent the appropriate level and quality of service is being delivered.

Mention is necessary of the need to enhance and strengthen the provision of interpreting and translation services available to cases of NRPF. BAWSO is exploring the extension of its services to make them available to voluntary and statutory bodies.

FIGURE 1 THE ETHNICITY OF WOMEN WITH NRPF ACCOMODATED BY BAWSO BETWEEN 2006/07 and 2007/08

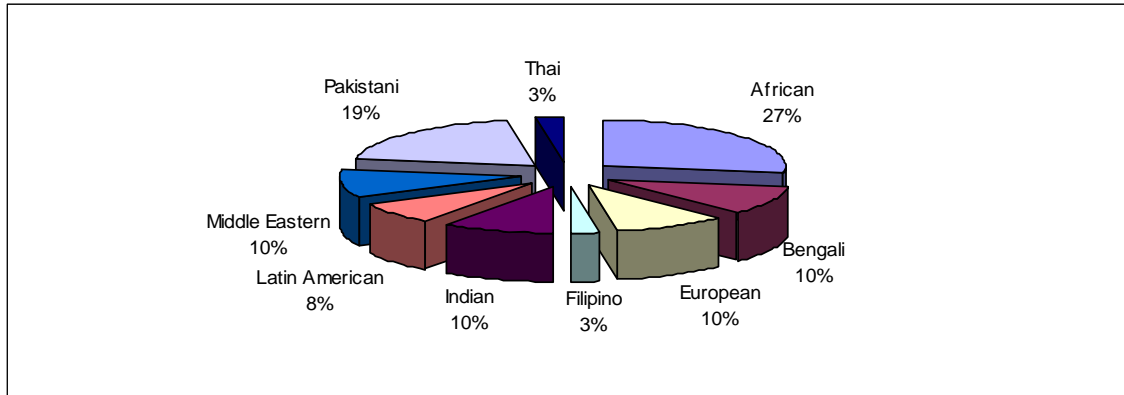
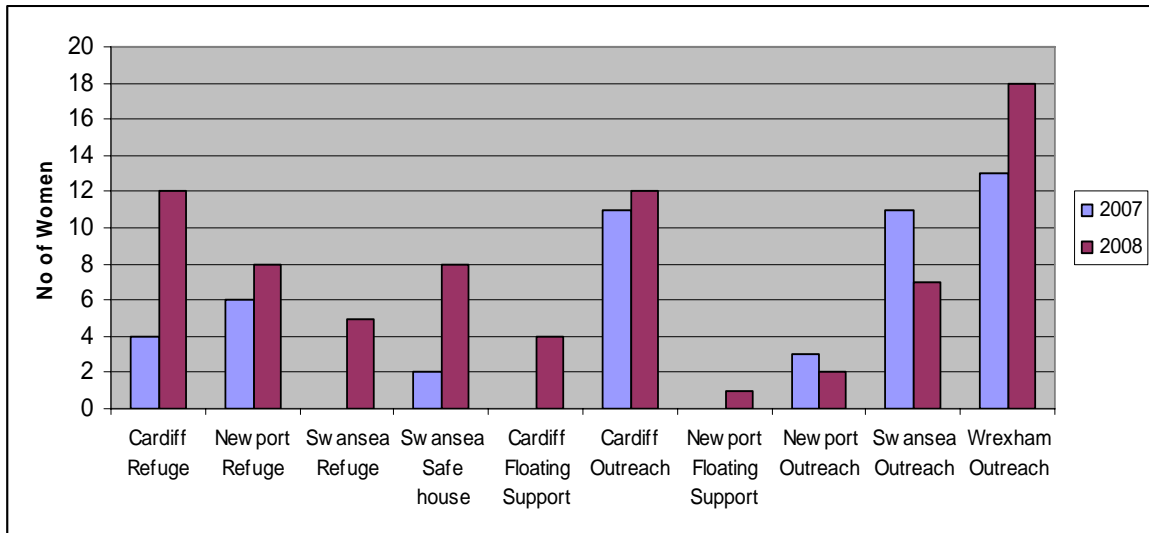
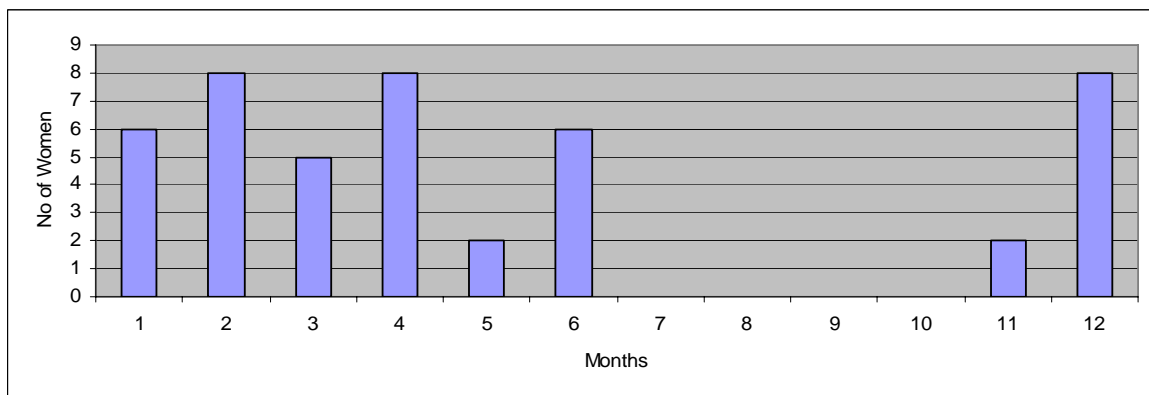


FIGURE 2 NUMBER OF WOMEN WITH NRPF SUPPORTED BY BAWSO BETWEEN 2006/07 and 2007/08



NUMBER OF MONTHS OF ACCOMMODATION DELIVERED BY BAWSO TO WOMEN WITH NRPF



Recommendation 7. IDVA's & SDC's – acknowledge the additional needs of BME women.

7.1 A more pronounced understanding is necessary of the position of BME women benefiting from the support of Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVA's) and Special Domestic Courts (SDC's).

7.2 BME women are most frequently under the most severe pressure from family members to acquiesce and accept any abuse they endure. Any action of defiance or escape is contested and punished. Every threat is deployed to retain the honour of the family and maintain the status quo. Often abuse is condoned and kept secret.

7.3 Accordingly, supporting BME women seeking to flee violence and to survive when they have left the abusive household can be very intense and expensive. Considerable expertise and a keen comprehension of cultural, community and religious norms and beliefs are necessary to support such women.

7.4 These imperatives for supporting BME women need to be better and more widely understood.

Recommendation 8: Enhance language support services

8.1 In the same vein far greater understanding is required of the necessity for, and the allocation of resources towards, the provision of language support services.

8.2 Interpretation and translation lie at the heart of successful communication as no service can be wholly effective or efficient if facts and feelings are lost or confused in poor dialogue or understanding.

8.3 Economies of scale can be secured through the unified and shared provision of language support services currently provided by BAWSO.

Recommendation 9: Recognise links between health and domestic abuse

9.1 Insufficient recognition exists of the severe mental health needs of women having domestic violence. Efforts to connect Social Services and Health Services leading up to and at the point of delivery are critical as is the need for specialist support and language services.

9.2 BAWSO believes that considerable research and dialogue will be necessary to successful dovetail health and social services provision to women facing abuse. This activity should be planned, resourced, and carefully monitored and evaluated.

Recommendation 10: Urgently consider the requirements for specialist refuge provision

10.1 There is a pressing need backed by robust evidence for the provision of specialist refuges for BME women, trafficked women, young women, and women with a history of drug misuse. All such provision warrant urgent consideration.

10.2 The strength of evidence and argument for such provision is illustrated by recent work by BAWSO on the need for a BME refuge in North Wales. This is set out below:

10.3 BAWSO opened its offices in Wrexham in May 2006 with one Support Worker.

10.4 The initiative was launched following careful consideration of research findings on the needs of BME women in North Wales entitled *'Hidden needs- Transparent Agenda'*.

10.5 The research revealed that the incidence of violence against BME women in North Wales was not well understood and that existing evidence was scarce and data collection and evaluation generally poor. However, the evidence that was collected and available suggested a potentially very large number of BME women subject to violence and no specialist service available to them.

10.6 From the moment the BAWSO offices opened the extent of the need became apparent. The proportion of individual cases displaying prolonged and serious violence had not been anticipated, and the number of referrals, 70 in the first 25 weeks, including self referrals, was almost three times what had been anticipated as a high maximum.

10.7 Over the first five months of operation all resources were directed towards supporting the large number of high needs referrals being received. By the sixth month (October 2006) the first wave of referrals had been assessed but the capacity of the small team was entirely committed in the support of 48 users. 22 further urgent cases formed a waiting list until further resources could be marshaled to meet their needs.

10.8 Between June 2006 and August 2007, as knowledge of BAWSO services in North Wales infiltrated BME communities, referrals increased on a month by month basis totalling 104 (involving 129 children).

10.9 In the period between September 2007 and the present (June 2008) 74 new women accompanied by 63 children were supported.

10.10 Of the total number of referrals received 41 have been for immediate refuge accommodation¹⁰ (with 56 children).

10.11 Of these 41 women 9 were accommodated in a BAWSO refuge in South Wales. 13 women requested a BAWSO Refuge in North Wales but in its absence returned to their abusive partner or found accommodation with friends. 8 were placed in refuges in and around other parts of Wales. 6

¹⁰ Since 27 April 2006

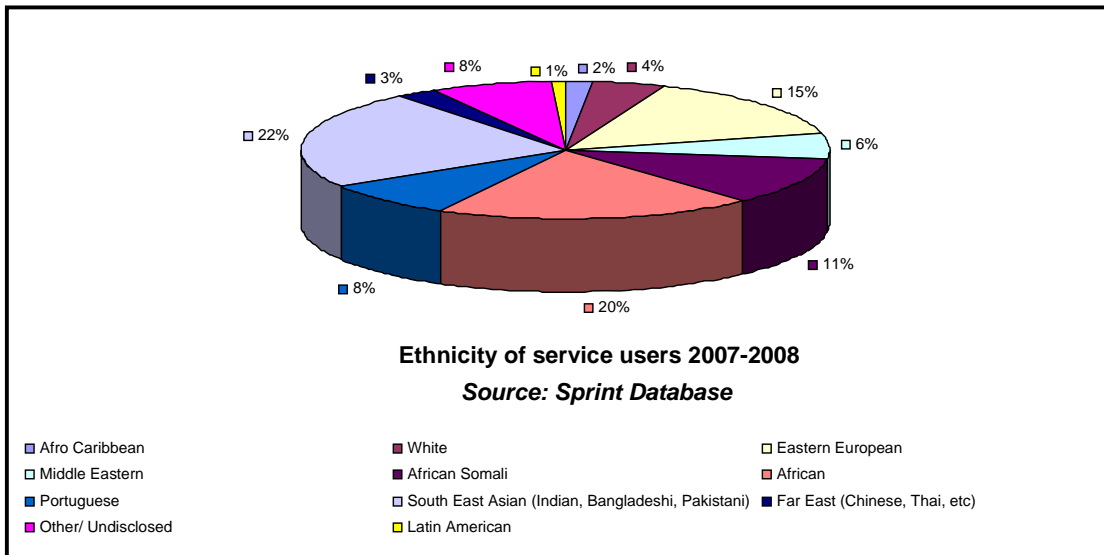
women were placed in refuges in England. 5 decided not to pursue refuge support (See attached schedule).

Referral	Ethnicity	No of children	Source of referral	Refuge location	Requested N Wales BAWSO refuge
1	Kenyan	1	HV	N Wales	
2	Brazilian	1	HV	BAWSO	
3	Gambian	0	Neighbour	BAWSO	
4	Moroccan	2	SS	England	
5	Kenyan	2	Court	BAWSO	
6	Indonesian	2	Police	N Wales	
7	Somali	2	NGO	England	
8	Pakistani	2	NGO	BAWSO	
9	Filipino	1	SS	N Wales	
10	Portuguese	2	Housing	N Wales	
11	Polish	1	Police	N Wales	
12	Russian	1	Police	Withdrew	
13	Russian	1	Police	Withdrew	
14	Brazilian	1	Police	BAWSO	
15	Bangladeshi	2	Police	BAWSO	
16	Bangladeshi	2	Police	BAWSO	
17	Congolese	2	Police	England	
18	Polish	1	Police	N Wales	
19	Sierra Leonean	1	NGO	N Wales	
20	Not known	1	Friend	N Wales	
21	Not Known	5	Self		X
22	Not known	1	NGO	England	
23	Portuguese	2	SS	England	
24	Polish	1	Police		X
25	Pakistani	1	SS		X
26	Mauritian	0	Police	BAWSO	
27	Not Known	0	Self	England	
28	Polish	0	Self		X
29	Polish	1	Police	BAWSO	
30	Turkish	1	Police		X
31	Bangladeshi	4	SS		X
32	Bangladeshi	1	SS	Withdrew	
33	Polish	1	NGO	Withdrew	
34	Polish	1	Police		X
35	Polish	1	Police		X
36	Polish	1	Self		X
37	Polish	1	Police	Withdrew	
38	Lithuanian	1	Police		X
39	Polish	1	Police		X
40	Polish	1	Police		X
41	Bangladeshi	1	Police		X

10.12 The above figures evidence the level of need and illustrate that a BAWSO refuge accommodating 12 families if commissioned today would be immediately oversubscribed.

APPENDIX 1 THE BREADTH OF ETHNICITY COVERED BY BAWSO SERVICES

The ethnicity of all women service users supported by BAWSO in 2007/08



APPENDIX 2 EXTRACT: BAWSO RESEARCH ON FORCED MARRIAGE – providing sound data.

92 questionnaires were returned (8.9% of the total sample). It had been hoped to prepare organisations and agencies beforehand with phone calls to key individuals. However, resources were not then available and it is probable that fewer responses were received as a result.

The origins of responses received were as follows:

Questionnaire returns	Number
Health (Midwives, GP's, E&A, Women's Units)	34
Housing Associations	9
Local Authorities	2
Schools	7
Solicitors	14
Women's Aid	23
Police	3
TOTAL	92

The number of contacts with forced marriage recorded by professionals and practitioners in returned questionnaires was as follows:

Contact between professionals and practitioners with forced marriage between 1st April 2006 and 1st February 2007.

Index Number	Location	Response type	Number of BME women	Ages	Ethnicity
11	Flintshire	Women's Aid	1	20	Pakistani
13	Pontypridd	Health Visitor	3	42,23,36	Pakistani, Bangladeshi British born Asian
26	Monmouthshire	Women's Aid	1	19	Pakistani
29	Radnorshire	Women's Aid	1	32	White and Asian
31	Aberystwyth	Women's Aid	1	20	Bangladeshi
36	Llanelli	Solicitor	1	24	Pakistani
37	Cardiff	Health Visitor	3	20,21,19	Bangladeshi, British born Asian, Pakistani
76	Bridgend	Health Visitor	1	23	Pakistani
78	Aberystwyth	Solicitor	1	24	Pakistani
83	Deeside	Women's Aid	1	18	Pakistani
86	Aberdare	Women's Aid	2	39,18	Indian, Pakistani

TOTAL			16		
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Over and above these figures one Women's Aid group and one Solicitors firm reported that they had worked with forced marriage during the period but where unable to access records.

Returned questionnaires suggest that a very modest number of professionals are coming into contact with forced marriage. It is not possible to determine whether this is because the incidence of forced marriage is low and support is not being sought, or because it is higher but services are either not being sought or do not reach into the communities in which forced marriage occurs.

The BAWSO experience is that the incidence of forced marriage being presented by BME women is increasing. BAWSO figures are as follows:

	Cardiff	Newport	Swansea	Total¹¹
<i>Refuge</i>				
1996	2			2
1997	4			4
1998	5			5
1999	2			2
2000	2			2
2001	1			1
2002	2			2
2003	5			5
2004	3	2		5
2005	8	1		9
2006	8	2		10
2007	3	3		
<i>Outreach</i>				
2007	5		9	
<i>Advice Centre</i>				
2007		2		22
Totals	50	10	9	69

Most importantly, the returns illustrate that contact is first being made between BME women and professionals and practitioners at the point at which physical abuse is beginning to be used to coerce a woman into marriage or after marriage when the woman is seeking to flee. The schedule set out below records 7 BME women at point 7 and 9 BME women at point 9. This coincides with the age of BME women seeking help (average age just under 24 years).

Results on the position of BME women at the point of contact with professionals or practitioners (Key set out below schedule)

¹¹ Excludes Wrexham figures

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4) arranged	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8) forced	(9)	(10)
0	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	9	0

1. Parent/s are starting to think about their child getting married.
2. Parent/s beginning to talk about their child's marriage, perhaps suggesting or looking for potential partners.
3. The topic of marriage is freely discussed, resulting in a mutual acceptance or rejection of ideas or options.
4. An agreement to marry is made. Whilst the families of those who are marrying are involved in the process, the final decision lies with those who are to be married.
5. Marriage is discussed and arrangements begin, but with no mutual acceptance or rejection of ideas.
6. There is pressure to marry, which may take the form of emotional blackmail or appeals to conform to traditional family roles and values.
7. **Demands to accept a marriage proposal are accompanied by physical, mental and/or emotional pressure and/or violence.**
8. The woman concerned is maneuvered into going through the marriage ceremony against her will. Forced marriage takes place.
9. **Escaping from forced marriage which has already taken place.**
10. Homicide on the refusal of the woman to marry (including honour killing) / suicide before or after marriage.

Key findings of the research

The profile of support contact across Wales

It would appear as though relatively few practitioners in Wales find themselves in a position of supporting BME women facing forced marriage. However, if they do have such contact it tends to be at a point at which violence is being threatened or dispensed to ensure that the marriage takes place or after a marriage has taken place when the BME woman is fleeing from her husband.

The early stages of arranged marriage and forced marriage are not coming to the attention of professions and practitioners. Service users explain this by referring to the great difficulty BME girls have in resisting and avoiding marriage if expected and arranged by their family.

Professional and practitioner requirements

Professionals and practitioners are explicit about their need for training, support in producing policies and practices, receiving information on legislation and good practice, possessing information on support contacts, and accessing language and translation services.

Views of service users on improving services

Service users are of the view that there is too little publicity and marketing in place to alert BME women to safe escape routes and to contribute towards a more pronounced public rejection of violence against women. Particular initiatives are required in schools. They are also of the view that training is necessary for support workers that enables them to be culturally aware and to understand the needs of women facing forced marriage.

Responses to the findings

The following areas should be explored in response to these research findings:

For Policy Makers

- Encouragement for the joint production of an all Wales marketing strategy on forced marriage.
- Drive towards the provision of training and training standards for professionals and practitioners in forced marriage.
- Local Authorities and other bodies to possess and implement a joint strategy on forced marriage.

For Professional and Practitioners

- The orchestration of a programme of training and awareness-raising.
- The provision of specialist support for the production of policies and practices.
- The increased circulation of existing and new publicity and information on forced marriage.
- The joint funding of training on forced marriage.
- The increased operation of partnership.

For BME Women

- An extended involvement in devising policies and practices in the field of forced marriage
- Involvement in monitoring and evaluation of services available to BME women confronted by forced marriage.
- A marketing programme designed to get through to 'hard to reach' BME women.

For BAWSO

- A continuing contribution to joint discussions and projects related to forced marriage.
- The use of the new *SPriNT* database to monitor and evaluate cases of forced marriage.
- The provision of high quality training to voluntary and statutory bodies on violence against women and forced marriage
- The extended provision of translation and language services.
- Support for an initiative working in key schools across Wales.
- The pursuit of funded projects contributing to forced marriage services.
- The sponsorship of further small scale and cost effective research into forced marriage.

APPENDIX 3 EXTRACT: BAWSO RECOMMENDATIONS ON SUPPORT TO TRAFFICKED WOMEN

Recommendations for Action

BAWSO is concerned to identify practical measures that will put in place more robust, agreed, and understood policies and practices towards human trafficking, the effectiveness of which can be properly monitored and evaluated over time.

It is certain that the Police are key to the success of such a co-ordinated approach not least because trafficked women are most frequently imprisoned and threatened and not easily able to escape.

Everything possible should be learnt from the POPPY Project in London and TARA Project in Scotland, and other related initiatives within the EU. The exchange of information and experience should be arranged.

Recommendation 1

The exchange of information and experience between Wales and Human Trafficking projects elsewhere in the UK and EU should be arranged.

Referral Procedures

The effective referral of victims is of significant importance in delivering support. The European Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings places great emphasis on this and Amnesty International recommends that (the UK) government adopts a system of *'mandatory procedures for the identification and referral of victims'*.

BAWSO believes that this approach should be adopted and pursued in Wales at an early stage¹².

Recommendation 2

A Wales-wide referral procedures protocol should be drafted and agreed.

Protected Refuges

Amnesty International draws attention to the fact that the implementation of the Convention for Action Against Human Trafficking, with the introduction of reflection periods, decriminalisation and temporary residence permits, is very likely to increase demand for specialist secure

¹² The Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) has published a detailed report on this, providing recommendations and practical guidelines for developing such systems.

accommodation, as fewer victims will be detained within the immigration system or immediately repatriated.

Mention has already been made of the recent provision of a three-bedroom safe house.

The occupancy and contribution of this provision should be monitored and evaluated on a regular basis. Lessons learnt from its provision should be carefully considered. Particular attention should be paid to the security afforded to the provision in the light of the determination of criminal gangs to threaten and intimidate victims.

The quality of support to users of the facilities should be monitored and evaluated, and a better understanding developed of the emotional and health needs of women in these circumstances.

Recommendation 3

The quality and effectiveness of existing provision should be monitored and evaluated.

Dedicated Funding

Even after being rescued trafficked women have no recourse to public funds and often no access to the labour market. When put under pressure to seek employment or other means of financial support they are in danger of returning to prostitution as their only source of income.

BAWSO is of the view that the provision of dedicated funding needs to be made not only for accommodation and support services but also for living expenses.

BAWSO's experience of working with victims of violence indicates that the delivery of tailor made learning programmes addresses their short term and long term socio-economical needs. Funding for this provision should be considered.

BAWSO is in a position to deliver this training.

Recommendation 4

Provision should be made for support providers to access dedicated funds for women who have been trafficked into the UK.

Recommendation 5

Appropriate training programmes should be devised to meet the learning needs of women involved in trafficking.

Language

The importance of language support to traumatised and emotionally abused trafficked women should not be missed.

BAWSO is able to provide such language support and its availability should be noted and taken advantage of by practitioners.

Specialist health services

BAWSO would wish to draw attention to the importance of delivering health care in relation to the psychological needs of trafficked women in a secure setting that provides protection.

The same security is required for health services related to sexually transmitted diseases (STD).

Training for practitioners

BAWSO is of the view that specialist training is required for staff supporting women who have been the victim of trafficking.

BAWSO currently provides a wide range of training in the field of violence against women and would be able to develop and deliver such training.

Recommendation 6

A clear programme of training for support staff and practitioners should be provided.

North Wales

There is little information on trafficking in North Wales, but it exists as North Wales Police have illustrated from their work and subsequent arrests.

BAWSO is of the view that a focus of support should be readily available in North Wales and would wish to support such provision through its work in North Wales based in Wrexham.

Recommendation 7

Attention should be paid to the provision of a clear pattern support across all of Wales and in North Wales.

Multi Agency Group

The existing WAG Working Party on violence against women provides a sound platform for future work on trafficking. It is recommended that a small number of its members combine to draw together all the elements for a policy on trafficking, and particularly referral procedures

Recommendation 8

A fixed life working group drawn from members of the existing WAG Violence against women working party should be established with an agreed remit.

Research

Continuing research and the collation of statistics related to trafficking will be an essential ingredient to devising sound future policies and practices.

BAWSO has resources to contribute to this work.

European wide intervention

Preventative measures need to be put in place to educate communities in countries identified as sources of trafficked women so that potential victims are aware of the legal requirements needed for travel into the UK and are warned about the practices of trafficking gangs.

BAWSO would wish to contribute to this work.

Recommendation 9

Raising awareness programmes should be delivered in European countries.

Conclusion

BAWSO very much welcomes the important contribution made by Amnesty International in its report 'Under the Covers'.

The WAG funding of a safe house is to be applauded, as is the degree of partnership working that has accompanied this initiative.

Much remains to be done and this will also require considerable joint working and collective effort.

BAWSO will contribute expertise and resources where it can effectively do so, and hopes that the value of this contribution can be maximised by the existence of a coherent and comprehensive joint strategy for Wales to counter trafficking and meet the needs of its victims.

APPENDIX 4 EXTRACT: Emerging needs in North Wales

2.1 BAWSO opened its offices in Wrexham in May 2006 with one Support Worker.

2.2 The initiative was launched following careful consideration of research findings on the needs of BME women in North Wales entitled '*Hidden needs- Transparent Agenda*'.

2.3 The research revealed that the incidence of violence against BME women in North Wales was not well understood and that existing evidence was scarce and data collection and evaluation generally poor. However, the evidence that was collected and available suggested a potentially very large number of BME women subject to violence and no specialist service available to them.

2.4 From the moment the BAWSO offices opened the extent of the need became apparent. The proportion of individual cases displaying prolonged and serious violence had not been anticipated, and the number of referrals, 70 in the first 25 weeks, including self referrals, was almost three times what had been anticipated as a high maximum.

2.5 Over the first five months of operation all resources were directed towards supporting the large number of high needs referrals being received. By the sixth month (October 2006) the first wave of referrals had been assessed but the capacity of the small team was entirely committed in the support of 48 users. 22 further urgent cases formed a waiting list until further resources could be marshaled to meet their needs.

2.6 Between June 2006 and August 2007, as knowledge of BAWSO services in North Wales infiltrated BME communities, referrals increased on a month by month basis totalling 104 (involving 129 children).

2.7 In the period between September 2007 and the present (June 2008) 74 new women accompanied by 63 children were supported.

2.8

The areas from which referrals came were as follows:

Referral origins	Referral numbers
Wrexham	99
Flintshire	17
Denbighshire	18
Conwy	16
Gwynedd	11
Anglesey	15
TOTAL	176

2.8 Of the total number of referrals received 41 have been for immediate refuge accommodation¹³ (with 56 children).

¹³ Since 27 April 2006

2.9 Of these 41 women 9 were accommodated in a BAWSO refuge in South Wales. 13 women requested a BAWSO Refuge in North Wales but in its absence returned to their abusive partner or found accommodation with friends. 8 were placed in refuges in and around other parts of Wales. 6 women were placed in refuges in England. 5 decided not to pursue refuge support (See attached schedule).

Referral	Ethnicity	No of children	Source of referral	Refuge location	Requested N Wales BAWSO refuge
1	Kenyan	1	HV	N Wales	
2	Brazilian	1	HV	BAWSO	
3	Gambian	0	Neighbour	BAWSO	
4	Moroccan	2	SS	England	
5	Kenyan	2	Court	BAWSO	
6	Indonesian	2	Police	N Wales	
7	Somali	2	NGO	England	
8	Pakistani	2	NGO	BAWSO	
9	Filipino	1	SS	N Wales	
10	Portuguese	2	Housing	N Wales	
11	Polish	1	Police	N Wales	
12	Russian	1	Police	Withdrew	
13	Russian	1	Police	Withdrew	
14	Brazilian	1	Police	BAWSO	
15	Bangladeshi	2	Police	BAWSO	
16	Bangladeshi	2	Police	BAWSO	
17	Congolese	2	Police	England	
18	Polish	1	Police	N Wales	
19	Sierra Leonean	1	NGO	N Wales	
20	Not known	1	Friend	N Wales	
21	Not Known	5	Self		X
22	Not known	1	NGO	England	
23	Portuguese	2	SS	England	
24	Polish	1	Police		X
25	Pakistani	1	SS		X
26	Mauritian	0	Police	BAWSO	
27	Not Known	0	Self	England	
28	Polish	0	Self		X
29	Polish	1	Police	BAWSO	
30	Turkish	1	Police		X
31	Bangladeshi	4	SS		X
32	Bangladeshi	1	SS	Withdrew	
33	Polish	1	NGO	Withdrew	
34	Polish	1	Police		X
35	Polish	1	Police		X
36	Polish	1	Self		X
37	Polish	1	Police	Withdrew	
38	Lithuanian	1	Police		X
39	Polish	1	Police		X
40	Polish	1	Police		X
41	Bangladeshi	1	Police		X

2.10 The above figures evidence the level of need and illustrate that a BAWSO refuge accommodating 12 families if commissioned today would be immediately oversubscribed.