



# **Consultation response**

## **'The future role and scope of the London Councils Grants Scheme'**

Submitted to London Councils

9 November 2010

Understanding and supporting  
women and their organisations

This document is available in other formats. Contact the Women's Resource Centre on 020 7324 3030 or [info@wrc.org.uk](mailto:info@wrc.org.uk)

The Women's Resource Centre is supported by



## **About the Women's Resource Centre**

The Women's Resource Centre (WRC) is a charity which supports women's organisations to be more effective and sustainable. We provide training, information, resources and one-to-one support on a range of organisational development issues. We also lobby decision makers on behalf of the women's not-for-profit sector for improved representation and funding.

Our members work in a wide range of fields including health, violence against women, employment, education, rights and equality, the criminal justice system and the environment. They deliver services to and campaign on behalf of some of the most marginalised communities of women.

There are over ten thousand people working or volunteering for our members who support almost half a million individuals each year.

For more information about this response or WRC, contact:

Ellen Storrar  
Development Officer  
Email: [ellen@wrc.org.uk](mailto:ellen@wrc.org.uk)  
Tel: 020 7324 3047

Women's Resource Centre  
Ground Floor East, 33-41 Dallington Street  
London EC1V 0BB  
[www.wrc.org.uk](http://www.wrc.org.uk)

## **About this consultation response**

This response is the result of the hard work of organisations working in the field of violence against women and children in London. The collection of evidence was co-ordinated by WRC, but could not have happened without the time, expertise and input of London's violence against women sector.

## Introduction

In the 25 years since the start of the London Councils (LC) grants scheme, LC has become one of the biggest funders of London's voluntary and community sector (VCS). It is also a unique funder of the violence against women and children sector, as it spends 12.7% (£3,349,997) of its annual £26.4m budget on frontline violence against women and children services for some of the most vulnerable in our society. In addition to this, policy and voice and second tier activities are also funded with a budget of £300,000 per year and these services enable front line services to better carry out their work through training, lobbying and other support.

The possibility of 'repatriation' of a substantial portion of the grants budget to local authorities is very worrying and has far-reaching consequences for the future of services for Londoners and the legacy of the grants scheme itself.

## The consultation

We have generally been satisfied with LC's approach to consultation. However, the current consultation on the future of the grants scheme is a great disappointment and extremely worrying. We would like to draw attention to the following problems in the deeply flawed consultation process:

1. **There is no indication that adequate equalities impact assessments (EIAs) are being carried out on any decisions concerning the future of the Grants Scheme.** This is not only in contravention of the emphasis that LC has placed upon training for funded organisations around equalities and the importance of collecting accurate equalities data, but it also does not fulfil LC's legal obligations duties under the Gender, Race and Disability Equality Duties. The Equality Act 2010 came into force on October 1<sup>st</sup> and you are also obliged to take into consideration the impact of any changes in funding arrangements on people with other protected characteristics i.e. LGBT people, people of religious or other belief and older people.
2. **The consultation period runs from 3 September to 10 November, and so is only 9 weeks long.** This is an insufficient period of time for all stakeholders to engage with the process and for a fully considered decision to be made. This is in breach of The Compact which states that government should conduct "conduct 12-week formal written consultations" with the VCS. This has placed a considerable burden on voluntary organisations, as not only do they need to continue delivering life-saving services, but must also respond to the consultation to ensure funding for these services is not lost.
3. **The designation of services into categories A, B and C (i.e. those best delivered regionally, sub-regionally and locally) does not appear to have been based on an open decision-making process.** For example, the categorisation of all front line violence against women and children services into category C. (i.e. local in nature) is in direct contradiction to the results of the scoping consultation which was completed in January 2010. In this consultation, these services came out strongly as needing to be delivered at a

regional or sub-regional level<sup>1</sup>. The rationale behind the categorisation has not been explained, making it hard for funded organisations to argue against it. Any decisions made relating to 'categorisation' should have resulted from full and open discussion with funded organisations.

### **Timescales for change**

We strongly oppose any reduction or 'repatriation' of the grants budget, especially a reduction which takes place with so little consultation and involvement of stake holders, including funded organisations, service users and other funders of London's VCS.

Any cut, reduction or change in funding arrangements must not take place before the current funding agreements have come to an end, after a full and proper consultation with London's VCS and after taking full account of the implications any decisions may have on equalities groups.

Any cut to the LC budget would be devastating for London's voluntary and community sector and would undermine the investment in the commissioning programme since 2008 and the long-term vision of the grants budget in the last 25 years. Cutting short funding to projects will not only mean that services are lost, but may mean that whole organisations are forced to close. The central role played by LC in funding London's VCS means that a loss of the Grants Programme would decimate London's VCS, which in turn would impact on national strategies which rely upon the expertise and involvement of voluntary and community sector organisations.

Some current projects are funded to run in different boroughs over the four years, so cutting funding half way through would mean that some boroughs will not have received any provision from particular services.

For example, if Service 59: prevention service around sexual exploitation, delivered by Barnardo's, was ended prematurely in March 2011, eight boroughs would experience the disruption of their preventative services, which are currently underway (Brent, Ealing, Harrow, Hillingdon, Newham, Redbridge, Tower Hamlets, Westminster) and eight more would receive no preventative work, as their service is due to commence from July 2011 (Bexley, Bromley, Greenwich, Hammersmith and Fulham, Lewisham, Merton, Sutton, Wandsworth). This situation is true for many funded organisations.

### **The categorisation of services**

We were very disappointed to see that all front line violence against women and children services have been categorised into C, i.e. 'local in nature'. We believe that the only way of ensuring sustainably funded, and effective services is to fund these at a pan-London level and see any categorisation as 'C' as equivalent to a loss of this service. We place all front line violence against women and children

---

<sup>1</sup> Appendices 3 and 7, Agenda Item 7, London Councils Grants Committee Meeting, 24/03/2010, [http://londoncouncils.gov.uk/committees/agenda.htm?pk\\_agenda\\_items=4045](http://londoncouncils.gov.uk/committees/agenda.htm?pk_agenda_items=4045)

services, along with second tier and policy and voice, in category A, i.e. best delivered regionally, for the reasons given below. These arguments are well-known and regularly reiterated, but we feel it is necessary to outline them once more given the serious threat to the Pan-London funding from London Councils. It is essential that the arguments and rationale behind the categorisation process, so funded organisations can make fully informed responses to the consultation.

## **The argument for pan-London funding**

### **General funding issues**

Over the past few years the voluntary sector has seen a significant shift from grant giving to commissioning<sup>2</sup>. Increasingly, local authorities are reducing their use of grant aid and boroughs such as Waltham Forest now solely use competitive tendering to commission services<sup>3</sup>. Voluntary organisations have reported inequality and lack of confidence in competitive commissioning processes and local authorities have displayed a tendency towards contracting bigger organisations<sup>4</sup>. In a survey of London's VCS conducted by Voluntary Sector Forum in 2010, 67% said they were not confident of getting local authority funding. This commissioning approach has been thought to be encouraging 'super providers' (organisations with contracts in multiple boroughs) and a WRC study has shown that over a three year period at least seven women's refuges in London had been taken over by larger organisations<sup>5</sup>.

Sustainability is key in ensuring a diverse and effective women's sector and many women's organisations are struggling to meet demand. Women's VCOs are chronically under resourced<sup>6</sup> and many organisations are deeply concerned about funding cuts.

In the economic downturn we anticipate a contraction of general funds which will consequently impact on funding for the third sector and we are already seeing this in London. A study by LVSC asked for figures from all 32 London boroughs and has shown that the VCS in London has experienced funding cuts totalling about £50m in the past 12 months<sup>7</sup>. As levels of funding are reduced it is likely that value for money will be decided by the lowest possible costs and this may worsen the

---

<sup>2</sup> Women's Resource Centre (2008), *The Impact of Commissioning and Procurement on the Women's Voluntary and Community Sector*, Women's Resource Centre: London  
[http://www.wrc.org.uk/includes/documents/cm\\_docs/2008/i/impact\\_of\\_commissioning\\_on\\_wvc\\_s.pdf](http://www.wrc.org.uk/includes/documents/cm_docs/2008/i/impact_of_commissioning_on_wvc_s.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

<sup>5</sup> Women's Resource Centre (2007), *Why women only? The values and benefits of 'by women, for women' services*, Women's Resource Centre: London  
[http://www.wrc.org.uk/includes/documents/cm\\_docs/2008/w/whywomenonly.pdf](http://www.wrc.org.uk/includes/documents/cm_docs/2008/w/whywomenonly.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Women's Resource Centre (2009), *Not just bread but roses too: Funding to the women's voluntary and community sector in England 2004-07*, Women's Resource Centre: London  
[http://www.wrc.org.uk/includes/documents/cm\\_docs/2009/f/final\\_report\\_version1.pdf](http://www.wrc.org.uk/includes/documents/cm_docs/2009/f/final_report_version1.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> *Voluntary sector funding in London has been cut by £50m in a year, survey finds*. Taken from Third Sector Website 07/10/2010:  
<http://www.thirdsector.co.uk/news/archive/1027618/Voluntary-sector-funding-London-cut-50m-year-survey-finds/>

position of women's organisations. Women's organisations are often excluded from tendering processes as commissioners wish to enlist a generic provider to save money<sup>8</sup>. A reduction of third sector funding may increase cost consciousness and encourage funders to disregard the social value of services. Finally, in many cases funding from LC enables organisations to lever other sources of funding. Loss of LC funding would not only mean a reduction in money in terms of that from LC, but also that available from other funders.

### **Inconsistency of local funding**

The levels of funding LC provides is very substantial when compared with figures for central and local government funding. A withdrawal of LC funding would leave a large gap in provision and it is likely that the VCS and specifically VAW organisations would get even less funding, as it would force them to rely upon local authorities for this funding, via the commissioning process.

London has a world class women's sector and a third of women's organisations in England are located in the capital. As funding contracts in the economic downturn local councils cannot be relied upon to fund key women's services. Funding violence against women (VAW) services is discretionary and as such local councils are not required to fund these essential, life-saving services. Increased dependency on local funding will compromise the sustainability of women's services and subject organisations to short term funding cycles and further financial struggles. We are concerned that adequate funding will not be a priority for local boroughs; therefore this makes the unique 12% VAW budget from LC even more crucial.

The Map Of Gaps 2, an EHRC document regarding inconsistency in VAW services and the postcode lottery women face in access to life saving services, states "Whilst not seeking to argue against local decision making in a general sense, there is extensive evidence within the UK, and internationally, that without a strong steer from the centre, VAW and gender equality more broadly will be designated a priority in only a minority of areas." The kind of leadership needed to provide this steer can come from a regional body and LC is in an excellent position to show how sustainable and forward-thinking funding of services can change lives. Any reduction in the LC budget for VAW services would further worsen the postcode lottery that women and children face when accessing services.

The services that LC funds are often some of the most forward-thinking and ground breaking in the sector. The ability of organisations to deliver these services though LC funding not only impacts on the lives of women and children in the capital, but innovative practice and ideas developed through these services also has a national and international impact.

An example of this is The Emma Project at the nia project. It is the only service in London to provide a specialist refuge specifically for women experiencing violence who use substances problematically. The Senior Support Worker has developed

---

<sup>8</sup> Women's Resource Centre (2008), *The Impact of Commissioning and Procurement on the Women's Voluntary and Community Sector*, Women's Resource Centre: London  
[http://www.wrc.org.uk/includes/documents/cm\\_docs/2008/i/impact\\_of\\_commissioning\\_on\\_wvc\\_s.pdf](http://www.wrc.org.uk/includes/documents/cm_docs/2008/i/impact_of_commissioning_on_wvc_s.pdf)

and delivered training in conjunction with the Stella Project to a number of refugees in Ireland to provide them with the tools to be able to effectively work with women with drug and alcohol issues. The feedback received from this training highlighted how useful it was to have practice examples to see that the work could be done. The project has also supported the development of good practice in Scotland and has had international reach as far as New Zealand where best practice advice and support and policy information from the nia project has enabled a similar organisation to lobby for funding in New Zealand. All this was made possible by London Councils funding and

LC funding transcends the politics of local decision making and secures funding for 'less popular' groups such as LGBT people and women with no recourse to public funds. Boroughs do not have a strong record on commissioning specialist services and pan-London funding helps to provide funding where there is most need. As local authorities are placed under pressure to make their money go further whilst reducing council tax, it is likely that funding for specialist services will be reduced in the economic downturn. Reliance on local funding would jeopardise diverse services, as the arguments around funding priorities can be dictated by local politics rather than actual need.

### **Unique disadvantages faced by the women's sector**

Women's organisations face unique disadvantages in accessing alternative forms of funding. Commissioning processes often exclude women's organisations from tendering processes as commissioners wish to enlist a generic provider (serving men and women) to save money<sup>9</sup>. This problem is intensified by the minute influence women's VCOs exert on policy decision making due to commissioners' lack of understanding about the conditions needed to achieve women's equality or the differing needs between women/girls and men/boys.<sup>10</sup> Gender neutral policies are fuelled by the misperception that gender equality has been achieved and this contributes to the under valuation of the importance of women-only services<sup>11</sup>.

In a Women's Resource Centre (WRC) study of 101 organisations, 70% of respondents felt that being a women-only organisation made it harder to access funding<sup>12</sup>. Respondents stated that they felt they had to justify the need for women-only services, indicating a perception that they equate to a form of exclusion for men, rather than the most effective way to meet women's needs<sup>13</sup>.

The precarious position of women's organisations is heightened by the under representation of women in local decision making processes. Women's organisations represent around 7% of the total voluntary and community sector, however they account for fewer than 2 percent of voluntary and community

---

<sup>9</sup> Women's Resource Centre (2008), *The Impact of Commissioning and Procurement on the Women's Voluntary and Community Sector*, Women's Resource Centre: London  
[http://www.wrc.org.uk/includes/documents/cm\\_docs/2008/i/impact\\_of\\_commissioning\\_on\\_wvc\\_s.pdf](http://www.wrc.org.uk/includes/documents/cm_docs/2008/i/impact_of_commissioning_on_wvc_s.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Women's Resource Centre (2006), *Why Women?*, Women's Resource Centre: London  
[http://www.wrc.org.uk/includes/documents/cm\\_docs/2008/w/whywomenonly.pdf](http://www.wrc.org.uk/includes/documents/cm_docs/2008/w/whywomenonly.pdf)

sector representatives on local strategic partnerships (LSPs)<sup>14</sup>. LSPs are a vital way of securing local contracts, and as government increasingly devolves funding to local authorities this inequality reduces women's organisation's access to income. Despite the implications of this disparity, gender equality is not treated as a priority and remains unmonitored by 80% of local councils<sup>15</sup>.

The combination of the aforementioned factors means that women's VCOs cannot compete for funding on an equal playing field. Pan-London funding provides an essential opportunity to address inefficiencies featured in local decision making and promote equality to ensure that women receive the services they need. LC funding provides a safeguard for the protection of services that benefit the majority of London's population.

### **Pan-London funding works**

Pan-London funding makes a huge difference to WRC members; one key example of this is the funding of the free phone National Domestic Violence Helpline. LC provides 11.5% of the helpline's funding, but in fact 35% of the callers are from London, indicating the high demand for the service from Londoners. Beneficiaries of the helpline service come from all London boroughs; while the contribution of each borough to the funding of the service is small, the impact on the availability of the service to residents is large. This service has been categorised as 'C' and as this evidence shows, funding this service locally would not make any sense in terms of value for money of consistent service delivery.

For a relatively small funding contribution each borough is benefiting from economies of scale so that residents get a helpline service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. A helpline that is funded by and for residents in just one London borough is unlikely to be able to offer the same availability in terms of number of hours. Purely local "helpline" services often offer staff who take calls between other duties, have limited availability and are only able to signpost rather than offer the in-depth support and information needed to those experiencing domestic violence. This kind of in-depth support and advice ensures that women are able to access services, both statutory and voluntary, as quickly and efficiently as possible, thus saving statutory services money, as women are accessing the right kind of support at the right time.

The vast majority of VAW services funded by LC provide a range of support and expertise that individual boroughs would be unable to fund locally. Pan-London funding allows women's organisations to provide added value by enhancing the quality of services provided to women across London.

WRC research on the economic and social impact of the women's voluntary and community sector have shown that LC funding of women's VCOs is highly effective<sup>16</sup>. Analysis of two LC funded organisations; the Asian Women's Resource

---

<sup>14</sup> Gudnadottir, Elin, Sue Smith, Sue Robson and Darlene Corry (2007), *Where are the women in LSPs?*, Urban Forum: London

[http://www.wrc.org.uk/includes/documents/cm\\_docs/2008/w/womenlsp.pdf](http://www.wrc.org.uk/includes/documents/cm_docs/2008/w/womenlsp.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Matrix and Women's Resource Centre (2006), *The economic and social impact of women's voluntary and community sector-a pilot study*

Centre and the Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre have shown that women's VCOs yield greater value than the initial level of investment that they receive. As LC seeks to reduce its funding we insist it must extend its outlook to ensure its consideration of the social contribution of services and adopt a broad concept of 'value'. Analysis of the social return on investment will allow LC to have a holistic understanding of the impact of services and assess social, environmental and economic costs and benefits. Contributions of organisations cannot be solely captured by rigorous monetary evaluations and examination of SROI will allow organisations to demonstrate the positive externalities of their work; such as supporting statutory organisations.

## **Value for money**

In a time of public spending cuts and reallocation of resources, London Councils funding presents a compelling case for being excellent value for money. Working together and pooling resources is a tried and tested way of saving money. Islington and Camden are looking into the possibility of sharing chief executive and senior management in the future in order to save money and resources<sup>17</sup>. This kind of joined-up work has long been done by the women's sector, out of recognition of the value for money and joined-up service provision that it provides. The change in the London Boroughs Grants Scheme, towards a commissioning model, kept the pan-London model, as this was seen as being the system which provided the best value for money for the boroughs.

LC funding provides excellent value for money in terms of economies of scale. Firstly, commissioning services to work across London boroughs means that providing specialist services to individual residents is much cheaper than employing individual workers in each borough. Under service 42, Solace Women's Aid employ a drugs and alcohol worker to work across London and this enables 33 local authorities to split the wage of a specialist worker between them, rather than each of them having to pay for salary and recruitment costs individually. Secondly, the administration of the Grants Scheme for 33 boroughs by one established team at London Councils is a much more cost effective than each borough setting up schemes and administering them individually.

Finally, LC funding and its emphasis on specialist services for some of the most vulnerable people in London, goes some way to helping councils meet their equalities obligations under the Equality Act 2010. If money is removed from the LC grants scheme and this results in reduced services for individuals covered by the Equality Act, the obligation for providing these services will fall squarely on individual boroughs. The poor record of boroughs funding specialist services locally and thus failing to meet their equalities obligations means that London Councils funding is a cost-effective and practical way of going some way to meet these obligations.

## **The women's sector**

---

<sup>17</sup> *Camden and Islington councils announce intention to share Chief Executive.* Taken from Camden Council website 07/10/2010: <http://www.camden.gov.uk/ccm/content/press/2010/september/camden-and-islington-councils-announce-intention-to-share-chief-executive.en>

## The importance of women-only services

We value LC's approach to funding services around gendered violence, and specifically naming this violence as being against women and girls. LC needs to continue to fund women-only services. Women-only spaces are seen as a source of safety and sanctuary where women can discuss their shared experiences in a supportive environment<sup>18</sup>. In an ICS poll of 1000 women across the UK, 97% believed women who had been sexually assaulted should have the choice of accessing women-only support.<sup>19</sup>

From women's refuges to local counselling services, it is widely acknowledged that gender sensitivity is a vital way of ensuring effective service delivery<sup>20</sup>. 'Women report feeling emotionally and psychologically supported in women-only settings because their diversity and their needs are appreciated in the context of their complex lives'<sup>21</sup>. As shown in the field of health; women-only services provided by VCOs compliment the work of statutory services<sup>22</sup>. Generic provision often fails to recognise the importance of surrounding issues that impact on women's realities such as poverty, social isolation and past and present abuse<sup>23</sup>. Women's VCOs holistically address women's problems and provide a range of services that are supportive and responsive to women's requirements. As an active endorsement of this unique value, the government has commissioned women-only community day services for women with mental health issues and has pledged to eliminate mixed sex accommodation in hospitals by April 2010.<sup>24</sup>

Women-led organisations allow women to identify their own needs and co-ordinate their own responses to them. This is essential amongst minority female groups who experience greater levels of marginalisation and intersectional discrimination such as racism<sup>25</sup>. Women's VCOs are a vital gateway into accessing ethnic minority communities, and services that are led 'by and for' ethnic minority women have greatest success in promoting cultural sensitivity and integrating women.<sup>26</sup> This outreach empowers women to address discrimination, assert their rights and engage in mainstream opportunities that we often take for granted.<sup>27</sup> BME organisations both provide the help women need and enhance the voluntary sector as whole by publicising the unique plight of ethnic minority women<sup>28</sup>. These

---

<sup>18</sup> Women's Resource Centre (2007), *Why women only? The values and benefits of 'by women, for women' services*, Women's Resource Centre: London

[http://www.wrc.org.uk/includes/documents/cm\\_docs/2008/w/whywomenonly.pdf](http://www.wrc.org.uk/includes/documents/cm_docs/2008/w/whywomenonly.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Newbigging, Karen and Kathryn Abel (2006), *Supporting Women Into the Mainstream, Commissioning Women Only Community Day Services*, Department of Health

[http://www.socialinclusion.org.uk/publications/Womens\\_Day\\_Services\\_Doc.pdf](http://www.socialinclusion.org.uk/publications/Womens_Day_Services_Doc.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> *Same-sex accommodation*. Taken from NHS website, 22/01/2010:

<http://www.nhs.uk/choiceintheNHS/Rightsandpledges/samesexaccommodation/Pages/Overview.aspx>

<sup>25</sup> Women's Resource Centre (2007), *Why women only? The values and benefits of 'by women, for women' services*, Women's Resource Centre: London

[http://www.wrc.org.uk/includes/documents/cm\\_docs/2008/w/whywomenonly.pdf](http://www.wrc.org.uk/includes/documents/cm_docs/2008/w/whywomenonly.pdf)

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Järvinen, Justine, Angela Kail, Iona Miller (2008), *Hard Knock Life: Violence against women, a guide for Donors and Funders*, New Philanthropy Capital: London

organisations have played an essential role in placing issues such as so called honour killings and female genital mutilation firmly on public and political agendas.<sup>29</sup>

These organisations provide broader benefits to society by tackling social exclusion and promoting community cohesion. Women-only services across all areas promote solidarity, empowerment of women and gender equality by acknowledging the gendered nature of issues and seeking to redress female disadvantage<sup>30</sup>. These actions provide a source for social change by raising awareness of gender discrimination and unmet women's needs that wouldn't otherwise have been addressed<sup>31</sup>. Women-only services promote additional positive externalities such as assisting women's access to employment and challenging the underrepresentation of women by increasing women's involvement in public life.<sup>32</sup> Furthermore the externalities of women-only work help to support families by increasing the wellbeing of mothers<sup>33</sup>.

The need for work to address attitudes towards violence against women is clear. Women's Aid and Bliss Magazine conducted a survey of teenage girls in 2008 which showed that approximately 1 in 5 readers of the magazine had been physically hurt by a partner (for sixteen year old girls, this goes up to 1 in 4) and that nearly 25% of fourteen year old girls have been forced to have sex or do something else sexual they didn't want to do<sup>34</sup>. The prevention, protection and education work undertaken by organisations such as London Centre for Personal Safety and Tender in can only take place through informed, gendered and expert, women led delivery to address attitudes of young men and boys as well as women and girls. This work is essential in shaping healthy and safe relationships, preventing crime, improving social cohesion and civic society.

## **Violence against women (VAW)**

### **Prevalence in London**

- In 2009, 2,475 women in London reported being raped and 42,294 women reported being victims of domestic violence<sup>35</sup>.
- Last year, rape reports across the capital increased by 24.2% and women accounted for 93% of all victims<sup>36</sup>.
- On average only 10% of women who go to Rape Crisis Centres report incidents to the police.<sup>37</sup>

---

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Women's Resource Centre (2007), *Why women only? The values and benefits of 'by women, for women' services*, Women's Resource Centre: London  
[http://www.wrc.org.uk/includes/documents/cm\\_docs/2008/w/whywomenonly.pdf](http://www.wrc.org.uk/includes/documents/cm_docs/2008/w/whywomenonly.pdf)

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> *Women's Aid launches new teen domestic violence statistics with Bliss magazine*. Taken from Women's Aid website 07/10/2010:

<http://www.womensaid.org.uk/domestic-violence-press-information.asp?itemid=1857&itemTitle=Women%92s+Aid+launches+new+teen+domestic+violence+statistics+with+Bliss+magazine&section=0001000100150001&sectionTitle=Press+releases>

<sup>35</sup> Metropolitan Police FOI Request, January 2010

<sup>36</sup> Metropolitan Police FOI Request, January 2010

These statistics conceal the true extent of this violence as they only include women aged over 18, and violence against women is consistently underreported.

### **The social and economic cost of VAW**

VAW is a wide spread problem that has high social and economic costs:

- The financial cost of sexual violence to UK society in 2003-4 was £8.5 billion<sup>38</sup>;
- The annual cost to the UK of domestic violence has been estimated at £20 billion<sup>39</sup>
- Each incident of rape and its ensuing problems (such as unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases) cost the state £76,000.<sup>40</sup>

According to the government Sexual Violence and Abuse Action Plan, “much of this cost [of rape] is made up of lost output and costs to the health service resulting from long term health issues faced by victims. Addressing problems early should help prevent these long-term costs”<sup>41</sup>. Any work done by the women’s sector to prevent instances of rape and to mitigate its devastating effects results in a direct saving for statutory services across London. Many LC-funded services provide early interventions for women who suffer from violence; these services lessen the burden on public services, such as those provided by the NHS and local authorities, which are already under huge pressure. A well-funded women’s sector can help to reduce demand on these statutory services.

Violence against women is both a social and criminal issue, the repercussions of abuse reverberate across society and negatively impact on London as a whole<sup>42</sup>. Abuse leaves a lasting legacy on future generations and children exposed to domestic violence and abuse are at ‘greater risk of substance abuse, juvenile pregnancy and criminal behaviour than those raised in homes without violence’<sup>43</sup>. Men who are violent to their partners are likely to be violent to their children<sup>44</sup> and children are more likely to suffer from poor mental health, experience suicidal tendencies or repeat the cycle of violence that they have seen.<sup>45</sup> Research has shown that rates of domestic abuse were higher among women whose husbands were abused as children or who saw their mothers being abused.<sup>46</sup>

---

<sup>37</sup> Women’s Resource Centre (2008), *The Crisis in Rape Crisis: A survey of Rape Crisis (England & Wales) centres*, Women’s Resource Centre: London

<sup>38</sup> HM Government (2007), *Cross-government Action Plan on Sexual Violence and Abuse*, Home Office: London.

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/Sexual-violence-action-plan2835.pdf?view=Binary>

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> UNICEF (2006), *Behind Closed Doors: The Impact of Domestic Violence on Children*, UNICEF: New York <http://www.unicef.org/protection/files/BehindClosedDoors.pdf>

<sup>44</sup> Järvinen, Justine, Angela Kail, Iona Miller (2008), *Hard Knock Life: Violence against women, a guide for Donors and Funders*, New Philanthropy Capital: London

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

Physical and sexual abuse has a detrimental effect upon women's physical and mental health, financial status and their futures<sup>47</sup>. Women who leave their partners whilst unsupported can go on to experience problems of destitution, prostitution, drug use and homelessness. Studies by charity Crisis indicate that domestic violence is the largest cause of female homelessness, 63% of women between 30 and 49 years cited domestic violence as the key reason for their homelessness<sup>48</sup>. There is a clear correlation between unemployment, domestic violence and homelessness. Financial difficulties contribute to greater tensions in relationships and levels of domestic violence are anticipated to increase across Britain during the economic down turn<sup>49</sup>.

Domestic violence also has a direct relationship with the prevalence of child poverty. This is brought out in the Treasury's Child Poverty Review report:

"Mothers experiencing domestic violence are more likely to become lone parents, less likely to be earning independently, and more likely to report their families getting into financial difficulties, with family incomes sometimes withheld from the victim and child as part of the pattern of abuse. All of this means those mothers are more likely to have lower incomes and places their children at greater risk of suffering poverty and higher risk of offending<sup>50</sup>"

London is the wealthiest region in the UK, but after housing costs are taken into account, it has the highest rate of child poverty: 39 % in 2005/6 to 2007/08. This means over 600,000 children in London are living below the national poverty threshold of 60 per cent of median income. The child poverty rate in Inner London is now 44 per cent and appears to be falling, while in Outer London it is 37 per cent and appears to be rising.<sup>51</sup>

### **The relationship between statutory services and frontline VAW services**

Consultation with LC funded organisations shows that the women's VCS gets many referrals from local authorities, the metropolitan police and the NHS. From this, it is clear that these statutory agencies rely upon the women's VCS to provide appropriate services to women and children who are victims of violence. A brief survey of the domestic violence web pages of 10 local authorities<sup>52</sup> shows that all of them direct their residents to services offered by the women's VCS, many of which are funded by LC. This shows that the statutory sector firmly relies on the women's VCS to deliver these crucial services to its resident women and children. Without the continuation of pan-London funding, it is likely that these services

---

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> *New Research Cites Domestic Violence as Biggest Trigger of Women's Homelessness* Taken from Crisis website, 07/10/2010, <http://www.crisis.org.uk/pressreleases.php/58/new-research-cities-domestic-violence-as-biggest-trigger-of-womens-homelessness>

<sup>49</sup> HM Government (2009) *Real Help Now* <http://www.realhelpnow.gov.uk/pdf/women.pdf>

<sup>50</sup> HM Treasury (2004) *Child Poverty Review* HM Treasury: London

[http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/spending\\_sr04\\_childpoverty.htm](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/spending_sr04_childpoverty.htm)

<sup>51</sup> London Child Poverty Commission (2010), *London Child Poverty Commission - Legacy Report*, London Councils: London

<sup>52</sup> Survey conducted in January 2010 on the following council websites: Islington, Hackney, Barking and Dagenham, Hounslow, Sutton, Havering, Brent, Redbridge, Lewisham and

(and possibly whole organisations) will disappear and the statutory sector will be left without appropriate referral agencies.

### **The specialisms of the women's VCS**

Women's VCOs acknowledge the diversity of the female experience and design and deliver services that are sensitive to women's needs<sup>53</sup>. London has the largest black and minority ethnic (BME) women's sector. Women's VCOs provide culturally specific support to women that are run by BME women themselves and who are most effective in engendering women's trust<sup>54</sup>. Many BME women find that their cultural identities and experiences of violence are misunderstood and misrepresented within mainstream services. It is not surprising then, that in a recent Imkaan survey<sup>55</sup>, 87% of BME women stated that they preferred to access specialist BME VAW services. Culturally specific services are also best-placed to respond to forms of VAW which disproportionately affect BME women e.g. forced marriage, female genital mutilation and 'honour'-based violence. Due to their unique reach into London's communities, women's VCOs are able to integrate marginalised women into voluntary support services and ensure that they receive the help that they need.<sup>56</sup> This kind of access is not guaranteed through generic statutory services.

The women's voluntary sector actively reaches out to women who are most at risk and work with socially excluded groups such as refugees and undocumented migrants<sup>57</sup>. Women with no recourse to public funds who experience domestic violence are placed in an even more precarious situation due to their immigration status<sup>58</sup>. Unable to access the state benefits such as housing benefit and income support, required to enter refuges, these women are left with limited routes to escape violence<sup>59</sup>. Despite funding difficulties some women's VCOs seek to provide refuge to female refugees and publicise their plight to authorities as their voices often remain unheard.<sup>60</sup>

### **The impact of the economic downturn**

The social impact of the economic downturn is only just beginning to be felt. In periods of economic downturn, women are more vulnerable due to a number of reasons: "women are more likely to live in poverty, especially in old age, have fewer financial assets, more likely to manage a household budget and act as shock absorbers when this changes, are more likely to experience violence, and as

---

<sup>53</sup> Women's Resource Centre (2006), *Why Women?*, Women's Resource Centre: London  
[http://www.wrc.org.uk/includes/documents/cm\\_docs/2008/w/whywomenonly.pdf](http://www.wrc.org.uk/includes/documents/cm_docs/2008/w/whywomenonly.pdf)

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Thiara, Ravi K & Sumanta Roy (2010), *Vital Statistics: The Experiences of BAME Women and Children Facing Violence and Abuse*, Imkaan: London  
<http://www.rota.org.uk/Downloads/Vital%20Statistics%20Imkaan%20Summary%20Report%202010.pdf>

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Järvinen, Justine, Angela Kail, Iona Miller (2008), *Hard Knock Life: Violence against women, a guide for Donors and Funders*, New Philanthropy Capital: London

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

mothers and carers will need to make a complex set of decisions about their family and work life influenced by - among other things - the cost of childcare, the tax and benefit system, etcetera.<sup>61</sup>”

The Metropolitan Police reported an increase in domestic violence and rape in the year up to January 2009 and a number of domestic violence services have also reported an increase in referrals.<sup>62</sup> As the effects of the economic downturn continue to be felt, it is anticipated that these social trends will continue and the women’s VCS needs to continue to be funded to deal effectively with increased demands on its services. Funding from LC is especially important in a time of economic downturn, as there is a danger that a thirst for economic efficiency will encourage local councils to ignore the full social consequences of their policies and disregard the impact their funding decisions will have on women. Value for money will be decided by the lowest possible costs and vulnerable female service users will pay the ultimate price.

## The Olympics

Poppy Project research indicates there is evidence of trafficking in every borough of London and with the lead up to the Olympics there are substantial fears that sex trafficking will rise<sup>63</sup>. Trafficked women are often afraid to reveal their experiences to authorities due to threat of deportation and women’s projects can provide a haven for women and provide access to sources of support.<sup>64</sup> Sex workers are more vulnerable to being subjected to physical and sexual abuse and are ‘18 times more likely to be murdered’<sup>65</sup>. Despite their vulnerability, due to the controversial nature of their profession, prostitutes are often socially ostracised and treated with contempt.

Women’s VCOs allow women to access essential support without fear of judgement, and focus on their personal welfare rather than treating prostitution as a criminal issue<sup>66</sup>. Local authorities provide limited funding for prostitution services and often view them as a social nuisance, rather than providing a victim focused approach<sup>67</sup>. In the past boroughs such as Camden have used ASBOs as a way of shifting ‘the problem’ to another area<sup>68</sup>. By ‘passing the buck’ local authorities exacerbate women’s vulnerability by alienating them from their support systems and failing to provide assistance to women who are need.<sup>69</sup> Pan-London funding on violence against women helps to provide a comprehensive co-ordinated approach to address the causes and consequences of prostitution.

---

<sup>61</sup> Rake, Katherine (2009), *Are women bearing the burden of the economic downturn?*, Fawcett Society: London

<sup>62</sup> Ibid

<sup>63</sup> *2012 Games Sex Trafficking Fears*, Taken from BBC News website 23/02/2007: [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk\\_politics/6483407.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/6483407.stm)

<sup>64</sup> Järvinen, Justine, Angela Kail, Iona Miller (2008), *Hard Knock Life: Violence against women, a guide for Donors and Funders*, New Philanthropy Capital: London

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> London Assembly, 2005, *Street Prostitution in London*

<http://www.london.gov.uk/assembly/reports/pubserv/prostitution.pdf>

<sup>69</sup> Järvinen, Justine, Angela Kail, Iona Miller (2008), *Hard Knock Life: Violence against women, a guide for Donors and Funders*, New Philanthropy Capital: London

## **Second-tier and policy and voice services**

Second-tier organisations support frontline services to be effective and have a voice. Time pressed and money poor, women's VCOs often do not have the opportunity to vocalise their concerns or express the causes and symptoms of women's inequality. Gathering intelligence from hundreds of women's organisations, second-tier organisations act as a bridge between the VCS and politicians and helps to inform better policy making. The WRC has helped LC obtain information from women's organisations on repeated occasions and 27% of the voluntary and community organisations that responded to LC consultation on 'Commissioning Voluntary and Community Services' (January 2006) were supported by WRC to do so.

Uniting organisations enables VCOs to communicate with greater impact and allows smaller organisations to have their messages heard by a senior audience. For example, the WRC has raised the profile of the women's sector at an international level in its consultation response to the United Nations Women's Committee. The committee, for the first time, raised a number of key issues about the sustainability and engagement of the women's sector with the UK government. The second-tier is a vital way to communicate the needs of women and ensure appropriate policy solutions are implemented to remedy their problems.

LC funding enhances the effectiveness of the women's sector and enables organisations to exercise a degree of independence in campaign work. Second-tier scrutiny enhances democracy and helps to hold authorities to account. The second-tier is able to express difficult comments on behalf of VCOs and challenges gender inequality at all levels of government. Through lobbying and campaigning; umbrella organisations seek to prioritise women's issues on the political agenda. Promoting the work of frontline services is an important way of securing further funding and spurring swifter action to remedy women's difficulties. This impact is shown by the WRC's campaign on the financial sustainability of Rape Crisis centres. Our campaign directly led to two emergency funds being established (2008 and 2009) to prevent further centres closing. The research has helped London's only Rape Crisis centre to lobby the Mayor of London to resource extra services for women and girls in London.

Second-tier organisations challenge social attitudes and vocalising the voice of the sector plays an essential part in garnering public support and challenging social attitudes. Education provides the key to ending gender inequality and by raising awareness of women's issues women's, organisations act as the driving force towards that goal.

Second-tier research strengthens public policy and brings together information from hundreds of diverse women's groups. Their analysis provides an accurate snapshot of the issues arising in the women's sector and allows authorities to monitor core issues in London's communities. Policy units possess indispensable knowledge on women's issues and have a holistic understanding of how causes and consequences of gender inequality; and how they interact with other social issues. Policy teams are a source of innovation in women's research and provide

policy recommendations which offer solutions to women's problems. Second-tier expertise is renowned and respected and provides an essential source of information for authorities who wish to make informed policy choices about issues affecting women.

Second-tier research provides a strong evidence base which demonstrates the value of the women's sector and acts as a resource to frontline services wishing to exemplify their worth. For example, WRC research found that only 2% of Department of Health funding went to women's organisations. As a result, WRC brought women's health organisations together to form a consortium and apply to the Department of Health funding. The consortium was successful and has directly led to a number of actions to better address gender equality within the health sector.

Frontline services often lack the skills and capacity to review their work themselves and second-tier assistance in monitoring and evaluation enables them to articulate their value and ensure their survival. As value for money becomes the focus for authorities during public spending cuts the continued existence of the second-tier is imperative. Second-tier organisations such as the Women's Resource Centre have played a major role in promoting women's organisations political participation. Our current feminist participatory action project seeks to examine and address the reasons for women's exclusion from decision making processes and encourage them to influence their local priorities.

*"2nd Tier organisations have provided Service 42 with guidance throughout this consultation process. Prior to this they have ensured they are available to assist with queries and support around the annual monitoring forms which save London Councils time in sending back inaccurate reports. They provide fantastic training opportunities and are always available to deal with any service needs you have. 2nd tier organisation provide a valuable space to network thus creating even more opportunity to advertise and utilise the services available pan London."* (London Councils funded organisation)

Umbrella organisations increase the sustainability and effectiveness of women's VCOs. Capacity building is a key function of the second-tier and organisations seek to equip VCOs with the skills training they need to succeed. Organisations are firmly committed to the personal development of their members and provide specialised training support/advice tailored to the needs of individual VCOs. The second-tier facilitates cross sector learning and provides networking opportunities so members can also learn from one another. Organisations create forums to encourage women to connect with each other, share their ideas and resources and maximise their external impact by exploiting opportunities for joint working. With the threat posed by cuts in LC budgets, the second-tier will have a vital place in brokering partnerships between organisations should frontline providers be forced to merge to ensure the survival. With the sector trend towards the use of contracts in commissioning processes, the second-tier will again need to mobilise groups to work together to allow them to compete with larger organisations for alternate sources of funding.

### **Quotes from frontline funded organisations about the work of WRC**

*"2nd Tier organisations have provided Service 42 with guidance throughout this consultation process. Prior to this they have ensured they are available to assist with queries and support around the annual monitoring forms which save London Councils time in sending back inaccurate reports. They provide fantastic training opportunities and are always available to deal with any service needs you have. 2nd tier organisation provide a valuable space to network thus creating even more opportunity to advertise and utilise the services available pan London."*

*"The support offered by organisations like WRC, AVA and IMKAAN is invaluable to a small charity like JWA. We are able to network with other similar organisations, gain from their knowledge and experience, collaborate on projects and benefit from training. We are also able to feed into consultations and speak with one voice."*

*"Our work is front line, working with survivors of sexual violence, our expertise is not in campaigning or lobbying. It is essential that we rely on 2nd tier services to give our organisation a voice at the right level. WRC have given us essential training, provided support in every way, conducting SROI research, alerted us to funding streams and withdrawal of funding streams."*

*"It is important that the issues that affect women and their access to services are translated to other agencies and to policy makers. We have availed of training, conferences and have contributed to research on issues relating to women. Sometimes that is not heard or acted upon by Central Government but we firmly believe that communication and the dissemination of information is crucial of our clients are not to fall foul of the systems."*

*"We have attended trainings and seminars through the second tier which not only allows for us to increase our knowledge base but also provides an excellent opportunity for networking, sharing information and the possibility of joint working."*

*"Service 34 (Policy and Voice) has:*

- Provided a crucial source of information about policy developments that affect our work: e.g. the Mayor of London's violence against women and girls strategy, 'A Way Forward'; the government's recent Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy; and equalities legislation. This, in turn, has enabled us to inform schools of the policies that support the delivery of Service 72.*
- Promoted the results of our work to wider networks. For example, a 2-year evaluation of Tender's work in schools was completed in August 2009, which included results from Service 72. Service 34 supported the comprehensive dissemination of the work.*
- Provided free training and advice for meeting Tender's funding needs."*

*"It has been extremely important, as a bit of a newcomer in women's work, and as a service which is different to others in the funding stream, to be able to find ways to work positively with other women's organisations. The WRC has been a vital*

conduit for this work, helping us to make links and supporting our work to other organisations.”

*“As frontline services, we do not have the capacity to campaign, remain on top of all policy events / news or have the same level of influence as a minority group with little press coverage, as umbrella / second tier organisations specialising in our area of work. We have benefitted from participation in campaigns and directly from the successes of the NRPF campaign and the sojourner project, to which we have referred 5 successful cases. We have also, through attending trainings put on by second tier organisations, learnt how and where to secure legal aid for those with no regular legal status in this country who have experienced abuse. Before receiving this specialist training, we were not aware such support even existed.”*

*“Much of this [support from WRC] provides a valuable and cutting edge update for me. The second tier advice can be invaluable in breaking through a sticking point in a complex case. I have added my voice where offered the option, to important causes, as without supporting these, women's and children's voices will remain unheard and their injustices marginalised. Our service sometimes deals with very disenfranchised and voiceless members of society, so policy. advocating voices and second tier specialist advice and expertise, provide the tools and ammunition to ensure that they do obtain basic rights and that Every Child Matters is honoured for every child, regardless of the disadvantages that they are facing.”*