

PRESS RELEASE

**FROM: THE TUC, END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN COALITION AND
WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTRE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Tuesday 02 August 2011**

**Funding cuts by local authorities risk women's safety and support - say
the TUC, End Violence Against Women Coalition and Women's
Resource Centre**

Experts available for interview

Local authorities are ignoring Ministers' warnings that violence against women services should not be a soft target for funding cuts and are risking women's safety and support, according to the TUC, End Violence Against Women Coalition and Women's Resource Centre.

Research published by the False Economy campaign today (2nd August) shows that numerous support services for women are having their funding cut or withdrawn in the current financial year according to data gathered from 265 Local Authorities in England. These services are essential for women to access safety, justice and to rebuild their lives. They include domestic violence projects, specialist support for ethnic minority women fleeing violence and counselling services for survivors of childhood sexual abuse

Violence against women is far more widespread than is commonly thought: 60,000 women are raped each year, one in four women experience domestic violence in their lifetime and it is estimated that 20,000 girls under 15 are at high risk of female genital mutilation in the UK each year. Adequate provision of support after violence is one of the key objectives of the Coalition Government's strategy to end violence against women and girls.

Scarlet Harris of TUC said:

"The data uncovered by the False Economy website today presents an alarming picture. In spite of government assurances about the importance of violence against women services, many of these crucial services are being forced to close their doors or scale back their services due to funding cuts.

"Worryingly, we know that the cuts identified today are just the tip of the iceberg as funding for many of these services is likely to be reduced further in the coming years."

These are not "nice to have" services – these services are often quite literally a lifeline to vulnerable women and girls."

Vivienne Hayes of Women's Resource Centre said:

"Women's organisations provide some of the most cost effective services

across the UK for women and families in need. They have also long been grievously underfunded, and seeing these figures shows all too starkly the terrible impact these cuts are having on such vital services.

“Local authorities should not adopt a ‘slash and burn’ policy when it comes to cutting women’s organisations’ funding and should instead ensure that where possible financing is secured and the UK’s most vulnerable and marginalised women are supported. This data shows that a more sensible, pragmatic approach towards making savings locally is essential.”

Holly Dustin Director of the End Violence Against Women Coalition said:

“We already have very patchy provision of these essential services and by cutting funding to existing services, or withdrawing it altogether, Councils are leaving women high and dry at a time when they most need support to escape violence and rebuild their lives.

“Violence against women support services are not a luxury that can only be afforded in good economic times, they are core services that all women should have access to no matter where they live. We are calling for local authorities to ringfence funding for specialist services as part of local violence against women strategies, as some are already doing. We also think it’s critical that all local areas have specialist Commissioners who have expertise on these issues, and for there to be a national oversight mechanism to end patchy provision. ”

For further information and interviews call:

Sarah Brown at Women's Resource Centre on 020 7324 3040 or sarahbrown@wrc.org.uk

Sarah Green at End Violence Against Women Coalition on 07984 717 817 or Sarah.Green@evaw.org.uk

Spokespersons in the TUC press office can be contacted at: 0207 467 1372

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Notes to editors:

- For more information about the False Economy research go to falseeconomy.org.uk
- The **TUC** is the voice of Britain at work. With 58 affiliated unions representing 6.2 million working people from all walks of life, we campaign for a fair deal at work and for social justice at home and abroad. The TUC is a member of the End Violence Against Women (EVAW) coalition. For more information about the TUC go to www.tuc.org.uk
- The **Women’s Resource Centre** (WRC) is a charity which supports women’s organisations to be more effective and sustainable. It provides training, information, resources and one-to-one support on a range of organisational development issues. WRC also lobbies

decision makers on behalf of the women's not for-profit sector for improved representation and funding. For more information go to www.wrc.org.uk

- **End Violence Against Women** (EVAW) is the largest coalition of its kind in the UK calling for urgent action to end all forms of violence against women. A full list of members and more information about the coalition is at www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk
- Equality Minister Lynne Featherstone's statement in Parliament calling on local authorities to fund violence against women services
<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm110509/debtext/110509-0001.htm>
- The Coalition Government's strategy, *Call to End Violence Against Women and Girls*, was published in November 2010
- The Map of Gaps report by the End Violence Against Women Coalition and Equality and Human Rights Commission in 2009 showed very patchy provision with one in four local authority areas in Britain having no specialist violence against women support services
<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/key-projects/map-of-gaps/>