

Wales Violence Against Women Action Group

PRESS RELEASE

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ONE YEAR LEFT TO PROTECT WOMEN IN WALES

- **Violence Against Women (Wales) Bill expected this time next year**
- **Welsh Government, National Assembly has one year to get it right, say campaigners**

Campaigners today (Wednesday) are reminding the Welsh Government and Assembly Members that they have one year left to deliver an effective law to tackle the unacceptable prevalence violence against women and girls in Wales.

Following a long-running campaign to ensure that the Welsh Government prioritises the tackling of violence against women, the Minister for Communities and Local Government, Carl Sargeant AM, has committed to introducing an effective Welsh law to prevent violence, protect survivors and provide appropriate support services by the end of 2013.

Campaigners have today released a calendar for 2013, with alarming statistics for each month of the year illuminating the prevalence of violence against women in Wales.

Every year in Wales:

- **50,769** women will experience a total of **203,075** incidents of domestic abuse – but there will only be **3,385** successful convictions;
- **29** women will seek help to deal with forced marriage;
- **2,485** sexual offences against women will recorded by the police – however it is estimated only **12%** of victims report to the police;
- **23** women will be victims of trafficking;
- **278** rape cases will be prosecuted – but there will only be **146** successful convictions;
- **30** women will experience so called honour based violence;
- **7** women will die at the hands of their male partners or ex-partners;
- **1904** women will access refuges due to fleeing from domestic abuse;
- **57** women with no recourse to public funding will be turned away from refuge;
- **2,949** women experiencing domestic abuse will ring the All Wales Domestic & Sexual Violence Helpline;
- **149** women will ring BAWSO's helpline for women in minority ethnic communities who might be facing violence;
- **18** girls will experience female genital mutilation.

The Wales Violence Against Women Action Group, a campaigning coalition of specialist violence against women organisations, has launched an authoritative report giving their priorities for the

new legislation and making recommendations to the Welsh Government.

Naomi Brightmore, Chair of the Wales Violence Against Women Action Group, said:

“The Welsh Government has made some good progress at policy level on tackling violence against women in Wales in recent years, and this new legislation is an excellent opportunity to make a concrete difference to the lives of women and children affected by violence and abuse.

Our new report has been developed over the past year by expert organisations that deal with survivors of violence against women every day. It outlines key priorities, including a reduction in the prevalence of *all* forms of violence against women and support for women who experience violence; equal access to specialist support services; compulsory preventative initiatives in schools and other educational settings; improved responses to women from the health service, and workplace initiatives to assist female employees.

The new legislation could mean that Wales is seen to be at the forefront of tackling violence against women, which affects tens of thousands of women in Wales each year. It is vital that the Welsh Government, and Assembly Members who will vote on the Bill, use the next year to listen to the expertise of the violence against women sector, and to get it right for women in Wales. For the new legislation to make a real difference, it must be informed by the priorities, evidence and recommendations in our new report.”

ENDS

- Please visit www.walesvawgroup.com and @walesvawgroup to keep up to date with the campaign for an effective Violence Against Women Bill in Wales. Our report “Priorities for the Violence Against Women (Wales) Bill” with more detail on all the issues raised above is available to download, in addition to our 2013 Calendar.
- For more information and to arrange interviews, contact Cathy Owens on 07738 718638