

**NON.  
NO.  
NEIN.**

Say No!  
Stop  
**violence**  
against  
women

**Violence against women** is rooted in women's unequal status in society and that status reflects the unbalanced distribution of social, political and economic power among women and men in society. It is one of the most pervasive human rights violations of our time and a form of discrimination that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women <sup>(1)</sup>. Violence against women undermines women's dignity and integrity and imposes serious harm on families, communities and societies. In the EU, estimates suggest that 1 in 3 women (or 61 million out of 185 million) have experienced physical or sexual violence, or both, since the age of 15 <sup>(2)</sup>.

The full extent of violence against women is difficult to estimate, as it continues to be under-reported and stigmatised, meaning that what actually gets reported is only a fraction of the reality. In the United Kingdom (UK), 79 % of the population tend to trust the police, which is close to the figure in the EU overall (71 %) <sup>(3)</sup>.

In EIGE's Gender Equality Index 2015 it was found that where people tend to have more trust in justice institutions, levels of disclosed violence are higher <sup>(4)</sup>. It is estimated that in the UK, 44 % of women have experienced violence, which is 11 % higher than in the EU overall <sup>(5)</sup>.

The European Institute for Gender Equality has estimated that the cost of intimate partner violence against women in the UK could amount to EUR 13.7 billion per year. This figure was calculated according to the methodology used in EIGE's 2014 study <sup>(6)</sup>, which Member States can replicate, as done by Estonia in 2016 <sup>(7)</sup>.



## What are the facts?

- The 2014 European Union Agency Fundamental Rights survey data results show that since the age of 15:
  - 44 % of women in the UK have experienced physical and/or sexual violence;
  - 19 % of women in the UK experienced having been stalked;
  - 68 % of women in the UK have experienced sexual harassment <sup>(8)</sup>.
- The Crime Survey for England and Wales shows that 56 % of female victims of serious sexual assault experienced at least one incident of serious sexual assault by a partner/ex-partner since the age of 16 <sup>(9)</sup>.
- During the period 2014—2015, 1 797 rapes and 104 attempted rapes were reported to the police in Scotland <sup>(10)</sup>.
- From July 2015 to June 2016, sexual crimes reported to police in Northern Ireland increased by 9 % compared to the previous year <sup>(11)</sup>.
- From 2010 to 2012, an estimated 2.4 per 100 000 people in the UK were registered as victims of human trafficking <sup>(12)</sup>.

When trust in police is low, victims are less likely to report violence.



## Is violence against women a crime in the UK?

UK laws <sup>(13)</sup> criminalise many acts of violence, including rape, sexual assault, homicide, stalking, forced marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM) <sup>(14)</sup>.

Recent legislation includes stalking offences in England and Wales (Protection of Freedoms Bill) in 2012 and the Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Further Provisions and Support for Victims) Bill in Northern Ireland in December 2014, which criminalises the purchase of sex and establishes exit services for those involved in prostitution <sup>(15)</sup>.

The Abusive Behaviour and Sexual Harm (Scotland) Bill, passed in 2015, introduced an 'aggravator' for domestic abuse (enabling stronger sentencing for convictions), criminalised the disclosure or threatened disclosure of intimate images ('revenge porn'), and codified jury instruction regarding rape myths <sup>(16)</sup>.

In England and Wales, Section 76 of the Serious Crime Act 2015 addresses domestic violence and criminalises controlling or coercive behaviour 'in an intimate or family relationship' <sup>(17)</sup>. In September 2016, the Scottish government announced its intention to legislate in 2017 on coercive control by creating a specific offence for domestic abuse <sup>(18)</sup>.

## Good practices show the way

The UK provides its immigration officials with guidelines on how to take gender issues into account when assessing asylum claims, and this includes specific reference to FGM.

During the last review in 2010, the Home Office consulted non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and professionals working on asylum, and incorporated some of their suggestions. The document explains the cultural factors that may leave women unable to protest against FGM and gives clear examples of cases where FGM may justify asylum being granted.

Staff receive training on gender issues, and quality control procedures are in place to monitor decision quality and to ensure policy is kept up to date <sup>(19)</sup>.

## What is being done to eliminate violence against women in the UK?

Scotland launched 'Equally Safe: Scotland's strategy for preventing and eradicating violence against women and girls' in 2014 <sup>(20)</sup>. In Wales, the 'Right to Be Safe' strategy was launched in 2010 <sup>(21)</sup> and in 2016 the Westminster government released a cross-government strategy called 'Ending Violence against Women and Girls' (2016—2020) <sup>(22)</sup>.

The UK signed the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) on 8 June 2012 but has not yet ratified it <sup>(23)</sup>. The Istanbul Convention is the most far-reaching international treaty to tackle this serious violation of human rights.

## How are women and girls protected?

Women experiencing domestic or sexual violence in the UK have access to emergency barring orders, but the procedures around them differ between Wales, England, Scotland and Northern Ireland (local information is available via women's helplines) <sup>(24)</sup>.

A number of other protection orders (for example, non-harassment orders and interdicts in Scotland; non-molestation and occupation orders in Northern Ireland, Wales and England; domestic violence protection orders in England and Wales), are available to women and children experiencing various forms of violence, including stalking, forced marriage, domestic and sexual violence <sup>(25)</sup>.

### What help is available in the United Kingdom?

For women and children experiencing domestic violence, the UK has over 348 shelters with 4 744 beds <sup>(26)</sup>.

The UK has networks of rape crisis centres, including 144 specialist sexual assault services <sup>(27)</sup>.

The UK has multiple national women's helplines run by women's NGOs in the various countries of the UK; all operate 24/7 and are free to call. These services cover specialist rape and sexual assault, forced marriage and domestic violence helplines <sup>(28)</sup>.



### England

National Domestic Violence Helpline  
(0808 2000 247)

Rape Crisis Helpline (0808 802 999)

### Northern Ireland

Domestic and Sexual Violence Helpline  
(0800 917 14 14)

### Scotland

National Domestic Abuse and Forced  
Marriage Helpline (0800 027 1234)  
Rape Crisis Scotland Helpline  
(080 88 01 03 02)

### Wales

Live Fear Free Helpline (domestic abuse  
and sexual violence) (0800 8010 800)  
Rape Crisis Helpline (0808 802 9999) <sup>(29)</sup>



## Endnotes

- (<sup>1</sup>) Council of Europe (2011). *Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, and its explanatory report*. Council of Europe Treaty Series No 10. Available at: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/treaty/210>
- (<sup>2</sup>) European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2014). *Violence against women: an EU-wide survey — Main results*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.
- (<sup>3</sup>) European Commission (2016). *Eurobarometer*. Available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/COMMFrontOffice/PublicOpinion/index.cfm/Chart/getChart/themeKy/18/groupKy/88>
- (<sup>4</sup>) European Institute for Gender Equality (2013). *Gender Equality Index — Report*. Available at: <http://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/Gender-Equality-Index-Report.pdf>
- (<sup>5</sup>) Ibid. The level of disclosed violence in the EU overall is 33 %.
- (<sup>6</sup>) European Institute for Gender Equality (2014). *Estimating the costs of gender-based violence in the European Union — Report*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg. Available at: <http://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/MH0414745EN2.pdf>
- (<sup>7</sup>) *The cost of domestic violence in Estonia*. Available at: [https://www.sm.ee/sites/default/files/content-editors/Sotsiaal/Norra/vagivalla\\_hind.pdf](https://www.sm.ee/sites/default/files/content-editors/Sotsiaal/Norra/vagivalla_hind.pdf)
- (<sup>8</sup>) European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, *Violence against women: an EU-wide survey — Main results*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2014.
- (<sup>9</sup>) [http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20160105160709/http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171776\\_394500.pdf](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20160105160709/http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171776_394500.pdf)  
In the UK an increase in reporting of sexual violence and domestic violence over the last 12 months has been detected in the Crime Survey for England and Wales: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/compendium/focusonviolentcrimeandsexualoffences/yearendingmarch2015/chapter1overviewofviolentcrimeandsexualoffences>
- (<sup>10</sup>) <http://www.rapecrisisscotland.org.uk/help-information/facts>  
*Recorded crime in Scotland 2014-2015*. Available at: <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0048/00484776.pdf>
- (<sup>11</sup>) <https://www.psnipolice.uk/globalassets/inside-the-psni/our-statistics/police-recorded-crime-statistics/2016/june/monthly-crime-bulletin-period-ending-jun-16.pdf>
- (<sup>12</sup>) Eurostat (2015). *Trafficking in human beings*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, p. 23. Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/sites/antitrafficking/files/eurostat\\_report\\_on\\_trafficking\\_in\\_human\\_beings\\_-\\_2015\\_edition.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/sites/antitrafficking/files/eurostat_report_on_trafficking_in_human_beings_-_2015_edition.pdf)
- (<sup>13</sup>) UK laws on violence against women reflect three legal jurisdictions: England and Wales, Northern Ireland, and Scotland. Scotland's legislative powers include policing and criminal justice, and in Scotland and Northern Ireland, unless a particular legal area is reserved to Westminster (for example, immigration), policy and policing are devolved. Criminal law in Wales is controlled by the UK Parliament but health and education policies are devolved to the Welsh Assembly.
- (<sup>14</sup>) Sexual Offences Act 2003, UK; Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009; Protection of Freedoms Act 2012; Prohibition of Female Circumcision Act 1985; Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003; Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation (Scotland) Act 2005. Available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk>
- (<sup>15</sup>) <http://www.legislation.gov.uk>
- (<sup>16</sup>) [http://www.parliament.scot/ResearchBriefingsAndFactsheets/S4/SB\\_16-31\\_Abusive\\_Behaviour\\_and\\_Sexual\\_Harm\\_Scotland\\_Bill\\_Stage\\_3.pdf](http://www.parliament.scot/ResearchBriefingsAndFactsheets/S4/SB_16-31_Abusive_Behaviour_and_Sexual_Harm_Scotland_Bill_Stage_3.pdf)
- (<sup>17</sup>) [http://www.cps.gov.uk/legal/a\\_to\\_c/controlling\\_or\\_coercive\\_behaviour](http://www.cps.gov.uk/legal/a_to_c/controlling_or_coercive_behaviour)
- (<sup>18</sup>) <http://www.gov.scot/About/Performance/programme-for-government>
- (<sup>19</sup>) <http://eige.europa.eu/gender-based-violence/good-practices/united-kingdom/clear-guidelines-whether-fgm-justifies-asylum>
- (<sup>20</sup>) <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0045/00454152.pdf>
- (<sup>21</sup>) <http://gov.wales/docs/dsjlg/publications/commsafety/100325besafefinalenv1.pdf>
- (<sup>22</sup>) [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/522166/VAWG\\_Strategy\\_FINAL\\_PUBLICATION\\_MASTER\\_vRB.PDF](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/522166/VAWG_Strategy_FINAL_PUBLICATION_MASTER_vRB.PDF)
- (<sup>23</sup>) [https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/treaty/210/signatures?p\\_auth=j0WpqY2l](https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/treaty/210/signatures?p_auth=j0WpqY2l)
- (<sup>24</sup>) WAVE (2015). *WAVE report on the role of specialist women's support services in Europe*, p. 87. Available at: [http://files.wave-network.org/researchreports/WAVE\\_Report\\_2015.pdf](http://files.wave-network.org/researchreports/WAVE_Report_2015.pdf)
- (<sup>25</sup>) <http://poems-project.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/United-Kingdom.pdf>
- (<sup>26</sup>) WAVE (2015). *WAVE report on the role of specialist women's support services in Europe*, p. 47. Available at: [http://files.wave-network.org/researchreports/WAVE\\_Report\\_2015.pdf](http://files.wave-network.org/researchreports/WAVE_Report_2015.pdf)
- (<sup>27</sup>) Ibid.
- (<sup>28</sup>) Ibid., p. 91.
- (<sup>29</sup>) Ibid.

## European Institute for Gender Equality

The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) is the EU knowledge centre on gender equality. EIGE supports policymakers and all relevant institutions in their efforts to make equality between women and men a reality for all Europeans by providing them with specific expertise and comparable and reliable data on gender equality in Europe.

## Contact details

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