

Case study two: The United Kingdom

Realizing the multifarious and lasting impacts of gender-based violence on survivors, as well as on society and the economy at large, the Government of the United Kingdom commissioned a costing study in 2004. This was followed by an update in 2009. Then in 2014, the European Union commissioned United Kingdom researchers to conduct an European Union costing exercise, which produced a case study focused on the United Kingdom. The findings of these sequential costing exercises have enabled the United Kingdom to monitor cost trends over time.

1. Background and context

(a) National strategy and legal framework

The Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act came into legislation in 2004. This law, which focused on intimate partner violence, amended the 1996 Family Law Act and was seminal in terms of setting out several legal rights for women. For instance, the definition of a couple was extended to include same-sex partnerships, and a provision was made for the establishment and implementation of domestic homicide reviews. In 2012, the United Kingdom Government also published guidance on controlling or coercive behaviour to assist prosecutors to better understand the nature and features of this type of abuse. This was followed in 2017 by the introduction of the Controlling or Coercive Behaviour in an Intimate or Family Relationship Legal Guidance. This guidance addresses “controlling or coercive behaviour in an intimate or family relationship which causes someone to fear that violence will be used against them on at least two occasions; or causes them serious alarm or distress which has a substantial adverse effect on their usual day-to-day activities”.¹ The Strategy to end violence against women and girls: 2016 to 2020, was also published in 2016.

(b) Service provision

In global terms, the United Kingdom has demonstrated an excellent interdepartmental government response in relation to service provision since 2000, when independent domestic violence and sexual violence advocates were introduced. To operationalize this response, the Government invested approximately £57 million in housing-related support services for domestic violence survivors through the Supporting People programme for 2003-2004. They also invested £18.9 million in establishing and developing refuges (shelters) across the nation. However, the Minister for Women and Equalities acknowledged that despite the considerable size of investment, it was still insufficient to fully address the problem. A key challenge to gender-based violence service provision has been the underfunding of domestic violence and sexual violence advocates, in spite of their success. Recognizing their importance, the central Government agreed to fund these services on the basis that they would then be funded locally once their usefulness was established. This, however, did not materialize.

In 2014, there were approximately 200 domestic violence organizations in England and Wales providing a range of services: refuge accommodation, community outreach, independent advocacy services, single point of access services, culturally-specific services, child support

¹ See <https://www.cps.gov.uk/legal-guidance/controlling-or-coercive-behaviour-intimate-or-family-relationship>.

workers and a free 24-hour national domestic violence helpline run in partnership with Women's Aid, a grassroots organization. The helpline provides women and children with access to emergency refuge accommodation, an information service, safety planning and translation facilities. This service targets women, as the predominant victims of domestic violence, but it also caters for individuals calling on behalf of women experiencing domestic violence, such as friends, family or other agencies. Men seeking help are referred to an appropriate service. In addition, a forced marriage unit was established to lead on the Government's forced marriage policy, outreach and case work. As a joint unit with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Home Office, it provides support to individuals in the country, as well as aiding British nationals living overseas.

However, while the United Kingdom has been one of the European countries most actively engaged in providing services for survivors of violence, the existing level of service provision does not meet the standards set out in the Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. In addition, only 47 per cent of domestic violence incidents were reported to the police in the year 2008/2009. This low reporting rate has been attributed to several reasons, such as varying levels in police response, how reports of domestic violence are recorded, the fact that there are approximately 41 police services operating independently of each other at the time and the onerous nature of the juridical system. Another challenge undermining the provision of services is related to the central government's devolving of responsibility for these services to local authorities. While the refuges could count on the Supporting People programme (a central government programme) for core stable funding, the amount allocated was insufficient. In addition, immigrant women with insecure status or those fleeing their local area to access another refuge and who were experiencing a delay in transference of their claim had no access to public funds. This was particularly an issue for disabled women. This created cash flow problems for the refuges which needed to seek charitable funding to make up the deficit and this situation continues to the current day.

The 2008 financial crisis led to additional funding cuts, which affected the level of service provision throughout the United Kingdom. Over the past ten years, domestic violence services have been pressured to reduce their costs in tandem with a big push by central government to get local authorities to undertake competitive tendering to contract out services. Janet Veitch² described the claim that this approach was partly driven by the European Union Procurement Directive as simply an excuse, as the directive allows for exemptions. Over time, many local shelters lost their contracts as they were undercut by large national housing providers (which have lower unit costs than small community-based organizations), and minority-led organizations were affected the most.

Indeed, research conducted in 2008 mapped the gaps,³ highlighting disparities in domestic violence and sexual violence service provision across England and Wales. It revealed that one third of authorities did not have services in their area and were thus in breach of their public sector equality duty. The particular issues that emerged included the long distances some women had to travel to access services and discrepancies between the range of services and the response of these

² Janet Veitch is an Associate Gender Adviser at the British Council.

³ Maddy Coy and Liz Kelly, "Map of gaps: the postcode lottery of violence against women support services in Britain" (2008). (unpublished report).

services to disclosures of violence (unless the case involved child protection). At this time, the focus was also placed on high risk groups (those at risk of homicide). While this is understandable, individuals considered lower risk potentially did not get the help they needed to prevent further violence in their lives. Given the limited number of refuge spaces, there was also a lack of understanding of the potential for women to become homeless, as well as the time required to source new accommodation.

The 2008 study also included the development of a costing methodology for an average violence against women service, number of refuges for n size of population over a lifetime, for example. As the Home Office considered the costs unfeasible, a ready reckoner with lists of tables of standard costs was instead developed and made available on the Home Office website for local authorities to calculate costs.

(c) Data

According to Philippa Olive of Lancaster University, even though the way the data is collected does not capture the full extent of the problem, the United Kingdom has had reasonably good data on the prevalence and incidence of domestic violence and gender-based violence since 1996.

2. Rationale for costing studies in the United Kingdom

(a) Initiation and study team

Given the lack of information on domestic violence in the last decade, the Women and Equality Unit commissioned the first costing study in **2004** using data from 2001.⁴ Sylvia Walby, a professor at the University of Leeds, was contracted to undertake the study.⁵ In **2009**,⁶ the study was updated using estimates based on 2008 data.

Then in **2014**, another study was commissioned by the European Institute for Gender Equality,⁷ which built on the 2004 report. This study was conducted by Sylvia Walby and Philippa Olive, and coordinated by the EIGE gender-based violence team at the European Institute for Gender Equality. The Institute oversaw the strategic governance, while acknowledging the expertise of the research team. The team held numerous consultations with third sector organizations to estimate the costs. Walby, along with her colleagues Jude Towers and Brian Frances, had been developing a methodology to analyse the British Crime Survey data on prevalence and severity of gender-based violence. Walby and Olive reported to and discussed directly with the Institute, who had an internal team working on the project. The next section provides an overview of each of the three studies.

⁴ Sylvia Walby, “The cost of domestic violence” (London, Women and Equality Unit, 2004). Available at http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20060715143031/http://www.policyhub.gov.uk/news_item/domestic_violence_weu.asp.

⁵ The research team was led by Professor Sylvia Walby (Lancaster University), June Greenwell, Purna Sen and Jennifer Turner; Sam Brand and Jamie Thorns from the Home Office Economics and Resource Analysis Unit provided expert advice.

⁶ Sylvia Walby, “The cost of domestic violence: up-date 2009” (Lancaster, Lancaster University, 2009).

⁷ Sylvia Walby and Philippa Olive, “Estimating the Costs of Gender-based Violence in the European Union”.

(b) Motivation for costing studies

The 2004 study sought to better understand the full cost of domestic violence as the basis for action within the financial policy framework. The United Kingdom undertook the costing study to complement the existing legal and policy frameworks which were based on fairness and justice, and to address the gaps in the existing data. The rationale behind the 2009 update was the realization that there were several reasons for changes to the costs: a reduction in the rate of domestic violence; the development of public services led to their greater use by survivors of domestic violence; and technical adjustments due to inflation and to growth in GDP. The 2014 study was then initiated in response to the push towards gender neutrality across the European Union, to meet Goal 5 of the SDGs on violence against women and to establish an evidence base to argue for increased funding to the sector.

3. 2004 United Kingdom costing study

(a) Methodology

Objectives

The objectives of the study were as follows: (1) to translate domestic violence into monetary terms, so that its costs would be given the appropriate significance; and (2) to inform policy and enable discussions within the Finance Department, where funding of domestic violence posed an issue.

(b) Intended audience

- Government – to raise awareness that the cost of response is much less than the cost of inaction and to address domestic violence by investing in prevention and response services;
- Society - to raise awareness of the seriousness of the problem and to create space for public debate.

(c) Scope of the study

This research estimated the costs for a range of individuals (both women and men) and social institutions in relation to domestic violence - physical force, sexual violence and threats that cause fear, alarm and distress, often amounting to patterns of coercive control, including stalking. While some definitions of domestic violence include violence perpetrated by other family members, the definition used followed Home Office practice by restricting the inquiry to intimates, namely a current or former husband/wife, current or former partner, or current or former girl/boyfriend. While most of the violence reported was perpetrated in the home shared with the abuser, some of the violence was experienced after the relationship ended. The Home Office defines domestic violence as: “Any violence between current and former partners in an intimate relationship, wherever and whenever the violence occurs. The violence may include physical, sexual, emotional and financial abuse.”⁸

The costs calculated were for England and Wales in 2001. Direct and indirect costs were estimated in the following areas: (1) services largely funded by government including the criminal justice and health care systems (including mental health); (2) social services; (3) housing, civil

⁸ Home Department, “Safety and justice: the Government’s proposals on domestic violence”, Report presented to Parliament (London, 2003) p. 6.

legal services; (3) lost economic output as a result of disruption of employment, sustained by employers and employees; and (4) human and emotional costs borne by the individual victim/survivor.

(d) Methods and cost calculation

The methodology employed was based on the Home Office framework for costing crime as noted by Brand and Price (2000). This framework was developed to include the specific costs that result from domestic violence, including mental health care, emergency housing and refuge, social services and civil legal costs. These were derived from a review of international literature on costing studies of domestic violence and of crime. The study also built on the programme of research in the Department of Transport to estimate the full cost of injuries sustained in road traffic accidents, which provides the basic estimates for health care, lost economic output and human costs in the Home Office research and in the study.

Three key types of data are needed to cost domestic violence: (1) the extent and nature of domestic violence, including both the number of victims and the number of incidents; (2) the extent and nature of the impact of domestic violence on victims' lives and society, including the extent to which it leads to the use of services, disrupts employment and causes pain and suffering; (3) the cost of service provision, lost economic output and the public's willingness to pay to avoid the human costs of pain and suffering.

Data on the extent and nature of domestic violence was taken from four sources – the 2001 British Crime Survey on intimate partner violence intimate partner violence self-completion module on Inter-Personal Violence (BCS IPV, Walby & Allen 2004), the Criminal Statistics for homicides, reports from agencies and a review of previous research. The self-completion module on interpersonal violence provides data on domestic violence, rape, sexual assault and stalking by intimates in terms of the number of victims and incidents, the extent of injuries and some information on the use of services. NGO reports were also used to enhance the understanding of the extent to which domestic violence led to service use, while the evidence from previous research was employed where there were gaps in the main data sources.

Cost estimates were generally rounded to the nearest thousand, except for estimated costs per incident or where more precise figures were available from administrative records. According to the study, “whenever there was doubt or choice regarding the costs, the more conservative assumptions were employed”.⁹ The criminal justice system, health care, social services, housing and refuges and civil legal services were identified as key areas and within each domain a number of specific institutions were identified for more detailed investigation. Though complex, the extent to which people use potential services (as not all survivors seek help) was also estimated. As the level of service use reported in the British Crime Survey for intimate partner violence was very low (only helpful for a few major services) and service providers collect little data routinely on the extent to which their services are accessed as a consequence of domestic violence, important sources of data included ad hoc instances of data collection, specialist studies of service use and research on the extent of service use for injuries from incidents other than domestic violence. In particular, the study drew on research from the

⁹ Sylvia Walby, “The cost of domestic violence” (2004), p. 15.

Department of Transport on the implications of different types of physical injuries sustained in road traffic accidents (use and cost of medical services, lost employment and economic output, public's willingness-to-pay to avoid such pain and suffering) and used them as a barometer for similar damage within domestic violence.

The British Crime Survey is a nationally representative survey of 40,000 people conducted annually. While most of the questions in this survey are asked by the interviewer face-to-face, the questions concerning domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking are answered by the participant reading the questions from a computer screen and entering their responses directly onto a laptop. This method substantially increases both confidentiality and disclosures of domestic violence which were approximately five times more compared to the face-to-face part of the survey.¹⁰

4. Key findings

- Total cost of domestic violence to society was approximately £23 billion, of which £3.1 billion was borne by the state (criminal justice system, health system, social services, social housing and legal aid bills to support victims). This amounts to over £5.7 billion per year;
- Lost economic output (cost of time off work due to injuries) was estimated at £2.7 billion, over half of which was borne by employers;
- The cost of domestic violence to the criminal justice system was approximately £1 billion a year. This is nearly one quarter of the criminal justice system budget for violent crime. The largest single component is that of the police;
- The cost to the National Health Service for physical injuries was around £1.2 billion a year. This includes general practitioners and hospitals. Physical injuries accounted for most of the National Health Service costs, while mental health care was estimated at an additional £176 million;
- The annual cost to Social Services was nearly £250 million - overwhelmingly for children rather than for adults, especially those experiencing the co-occurrence of domestic violence and child abuse;
- Expenditure on emergency housing (local housing authorities and housing associations for those homeless because of domestic violence; housing benefits for such emergency housing; and refuges) amounted to £160 million a year;
- Civil legal services cost over £300 billion, equally divided between legal aid and the individual. This includes both specialist legal actions such as injunctions to restrain or expel a violent partner, as well as divorce and child custody;
- The cost of pain and suffering amounted to over £17 billion a year.

Employing the data generated in the 2009 update of this study, the table below provides a comparison of costs between 2001 and 2008. It shows that there has been a reduction in the cost of lost economic output due to the decrease in the rate of domestic violence.

¹⁰ Sylvia Walby and Philippa Olive, "Estimating the Costs of Gender-based Violence in the European Union".

Cost of domestic violence based on data from 2001 and 2008

	Costs 2001 £m	Costs 2008 £m
Services	3111	3856
Economic Output	2672	1920
Human and emotional costs	17,086	9954
Total	22,869	15,730

5. 2014 United Kingdom costing study

(a) Methodology

Objectives of the study

EIGE sought to illustrate the extent of collection of administrative data across the different sectors in EU member states. Their specific objectives were as follows:

- Explore the range of costing methodologies available;
- Review how other studies were conducted to identify the most robust approach that could be employed using a range of sectors costed and methodologies;
- Explore how the field had advanced to seek innovations.

(b) Intended audience

The European Institute for Gender Equality wanted to collate information on gender-based violence and costing methodologies that could be shared with all European Union member States. In addition to society and the government, as was the case in 2004, the research was intended to provide a tool for European Union member States to calculate gender-based violence service costs.

(C) Scope of the study

To ensure that the study did not produce an overestimation of the costs that would undermine their credibility, the team included any costs for which they could obtain robust data. The focus was placed on the extent to which European Union countries spend money on specialized services, as opposed to criminal justice and health care, and the cost for society so as to reinforce gender-based violence as a public problem rather than an individual one. The Institute costing exercise includes a case study on the United Kingdom, which calculated costs for intimate partner violence (physical and sexual violence perpetrated by a current or former partner) against women. It also estimated the broader category of gender based violence (physical and sexual violence perpetrated by either an intimate partner or other family member, and sexual violence by any perpetrator). The study included women and men survivors.

In addition to including the costs estimated in 2004, the 2014 study estimated: (1) some costs specific to victims of domestic violence; and (2) a small fraction of out-of-pocket expenses. The latter included the cost of setting up a new home and a calculation of self-funded civil legal expenses, which were likely an underestimation of the full personal, out-of-pocket costs. The following costs were not included at all or were not costed sufficiently due to the absence of robust quantitative data: long-term health; mental health (mental health impacts are included in health sector costs and the cost of pain and suffering, although only partially); long-term effects on children; reduced productivity and the increased likelihood to rely on social welfare (requires data on prior history of domestic violence alongside welfare payment information, which is not

available in the United Kingdom); additional costs of income support for households that descend into poverty as a result of fleeing domestic violence; specialist government costs (such as prevention efforts, national action plans, data, research, reports, conferences, education, training and information materials).

(d) Methods and cost calculation

The methodology involved the following steps:

- Review of studies costing gender-based violence in European Union and Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries;
- Evaluation of methodologies employed (comprehensiveness, robustness, replicability, simplicity, feasibility);
- Identification of preferred methodology;
- A case study - building on United Kingdom example and extrapolated to European Union.

It was possible to apply a state-of-the-art costing methodology uncovered through the literature review because the United Kingdom has one of the most highly developed statistics systems and cost-benefit methodologies. The governmental cost-benefit methodology includes benchmarks for some costs and established practices for adjustments over time and space. The country is unique in having annual survey data on the number of incidents of violence by crime classification, by injury, by the gender of the victim and by relationship with the perpetrator. Employing the Home Office methodology, a tailored analysis was performed on the data from the British Crime Survey on intimate partner violence face-to-face survey to produce the best estimates of the incidents by frequency, severity, gender of victim and relationship with the perpetrator. The findings were taken over an average of six years, increasing the sample and thereby ensuring robust disaggregation and more detail than what is routinely available in normal government statistics.

The European Union (2014) report on costing is useful for higher and middle-income countries. It also serves as a good reference for the Arab region to learn about the different methodologies available.

The tailored analysis involved examining the differences between the face-to-face survey data and the computer-assisted survey data and multiplying the face-to-face data by 3.8, based on rate of disclosures across a number of years (to ensure the year examined was not an outlier). In addition, data limitations made it necessary to aggregate some crime categories (“serious and other wounding” were put together under “wounding”; “rape and sexual assault” became “sexual violence”) to avoid small numbers. A proportionate adjustment was made for Scotland and Northern Ireland based on population size to provide estimates extrapolated to the United Kingdom level.

The United Kingdom case study was based on the data from 2012. The study did not adjust previous valuations for changes to GDP so that a consistent method for updating costs was applied across cost items. Also, in the intervening period (2003–2012), economies had both grown and shrunk. Monetary valuations established for the years before 2012 were adjusted to present day prices using the Bank of England Inflation Calculator. No adjustments were made in relation to “discount rates”, following the practice in the “global burden of disease” methodology. The United

Kingdom costs were initially calculated in pounds sterling and then translated into euros using the European Commission's calculator.

The unit cost approach was employed to estimate the cost of each incident by adding the estimated unit costs in each crime type of lost economic output, utilization of the health and criminal justice systems and an estimation of the value that the public places on avoiding such injury. Established Home Office estimates were employed based on average United Kingdom daily output per head of lost economic output from incapacity to work for each type of violent crime. The emotional and physical impact of each type of crime was formulated from simulated statistical probability modelling of the prevalence of physical health injuries reported to the Crime Survey for England and Wales and prevalence of psychological health injuries identified in the research literature. To apply this methodology to gender-based violence, the unit cost was multiplied by the number of incidents of each type of violence.

In relation to health-care costs, the United Kingdom health system records information on the extent and cost of the treatment provided on average to address each of the types of health outcomes that typically result from specific injuries were employed. Estimates were based on the level of injury and the estimated proportion of survivors seeking help. This method, modelled on the prevalence of injuries per category of violent crime reported to the Crime Survey for England and Wales, provides an assumed average health treatment cost for each category of crime.¹¹ The average unit cost for the criminal justice system was formulated per incident of crime reported in the crime survey. As such, it was weighted according to the probability that an incident would be reported, recorded, investigated and prosecuted. Employing an updated version of Walby's 2004 method and data from 43 local police forces reported by HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Local Authority Expenditures (HMIC 2012), estimates were produced for: (1) the total costs and (2) cost of no-crime domestic incidents by the proportion estimated to be gender-based violence and intimate partner violence perpetrated against women and men.

While most of the relevant civil legal costs are borne by the State through various legal aid schemes, some are borne by the victim/survivor. Both types of costs were estimated using 2012 data on divorces and Walby's 2004 methodology. The health-loss grounded approach recommended by the Home Office was also employed to calculate the public's willingness to pay. This methodology produces a cost of the physical and emotional impact on victims for each type of crime based on the burden of disease methodology, which measures health loss by functional/capacity loss. Specialized civil legal service (such as protection orders) and specialized victim service (such as refuges/shelters) costs were also calculated using Walby's methodology, which is widely paralleled in other studies.

¹¹ Ibid.

6. Key Findings

Intimate Partner violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The total cost was €33million/£26 billion per year• The cost of intimate partner violence against women was €13.8 billion• The cost of intimate partner violence against women and men was €15.4 billion
GENDER BASED VIOLENCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The cost of gender-based violence against women was €28.4 billion• The cost of gender-based violence against women and men was €32.6 billion• The cost of lost economic output due to Crime Survey for England and Wales was €4.2 billion
Services/Personal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The cost of health care was €1.9 billion• The cost to the criminal justice system was €4.7 billion• The cost for civil legal services was €405 million to the State and €230 million self-funded• The cost to social welfare was €1.3 billion• The cost for specialist services was €210 million• The cost for physical and emotional impact was €18.9 billion• Personal costs came to €840 billion
Total EU Cost	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Based on extrapolation, gender-based violence costs the EU €258 billion each year

7. Challenges: 2004 and 2014 studies

(a) Data

For the 2014 study, finding the **relevant sources of information** across the range of costs and examining the methodologies employed was time consuming, which raised **concerns regarding the robustness of the findings** and presented a challenge. Reviewing the literature was likewise **time consuming** because much is “grey literature” or unpublished reports and reports that are not available in academic journals. A careful iterative process was thus employed to source the relevant literature to the extent that was possible. **Synthesizing the complex web of data sources** was also difficult.

In addition, it was difficult to address missing data, which is why other European Union countries were encouraged to extrapolate their cost findings from the United Kingdom case study.

(b) Scope

The focus of each of the studies was on physical and sexual violence, rather than coercive control, as there was limited awareness of this issue at the time. In addition, the main challenges of costing gender-based violence in the United Kingdom context for the 2014 study were: **(1) the ability to measure the extent of violence (severity and frequency) disaggregated by sex and**

by relationship with perpetrator; (2) how to identify the extent of employment losses; (3) the measurement of the extent of service use; and (4) the measurement of the public valuation of the physical and emotional impact of gender-based violence. Though the British Crime Survey is world-leading in quality, findings from the survey that provide data at the level of disaggregation required by severity, frequency, sex and relationship with perpetrator are not routinely available. These challenges were addressed by performing a customized analysis of the raw survey data. Data on the extent of violence is not available in most countries at the required level of disaggregation. In addition, though the United Kingdom has established governmental calculations of some aspects of lost employment and of services used, these were not sufficient for the purpose of the study. As gender-based violence and intimate partner violence survivors use services beyond those accessed for other crimes, additional estimates for civil legal services, social welfare and specialized services (such as shelters and refuges) were required. Even in the United Kingdom, many major services either cannot or have great difficulty in measuring the extent of service use by survivors of gender-based violence and intimate partner violence. The estimates provided in the study thus required time-consuming searches for such data, as well as complex calculations.

Ideally, the European Union wanted a **system or formula where member States could input their numbers** and calculate costs. However, this was **not possible** due to the discrepancies in the rates of violence across European Union countries, as identified in the 2014 European Agency for Fundamental Rights European Union-wide survey (methodological, rather than differences in violence).¹² As member states do not have the disaggregated data required, extrapolation was deemed the only reasonable solution. Finally, recognising the **limits of the quality-adjusted life year (QALY) method to estimate health impact** (focused on physical health and an able-bodied perspective, the scale used involves hypothetical questions and lacks mental health indicators), the team had hoped to explore alternative options. However, the **tight timeline** precluded this and QALYs are backed by WHO and the Home Office. An additional limitation of the study is that only high-income countries were included because the team felt their methodologies were more appropriate for the European Union.

8. Impact of the Costing Studies

(a) Raised awareness

According to Jacqui Smith, the Minister for Women and Equalities at that time, “Professor Walby’s ground-breaking research findings send out a powerful message that although domestic violence occurs behind closed doors, it is everyone’s problem and we all have a part to play in eradicating it”.¹³ The 2004 report concluded with a review of the data needed to improve domestic violence cost estimates and to monitor the impact of policy development more effectively. In addition, the 2014 study contributed to a vibrant engagement from civil society, academia and the Government.

(b) Enhanced response

The cost estimates of violence produced led the Home Office to assess the resources allocated to intimate partner violence services. Costing exercises have also been used by civil

¹² European Agency for Fundamental Rights, “Violence against women: an EU-wide survey” (Luxemburg, Publications Office of the European Union, 2014).

¹³ Sylvia Walby, “The cost of domestic violence” (2004), p. 8.

society and businesses to determine resources. Furthermore, a Leeds-based NGO used the estimates to calculate costs at the local authority level across the United Kingdom, helping local NGOs to advocate for greater resources. In 2014, domestic violence organizations used Walby's 2004 study and the 2009 update to justify why it was worth investing in their services. Indeed, the estimates have been utilized by government institutions (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence; NHS), local government (Safer Portsmouth Partnerships; Devon County Council) and NGOs (Women's Aid; Refuge: Living Without Abuse).

The 2014 study was also a very useful means of explaining the economic impact of domestic violence on a large scale. All of the Walby costing studies were employed by domestic violence organizations to help advocate for funding. While they currently receive less resources, it has helped them to minimize funding cuts. The findings also raised awareness among some politicians who increasingly see domestic violence as more than an issue affecting solely women. Furthermore, the research introduced a new language around domestic violence in terms of the economic aspect of the problem. Indeed, due to financial cutbacks, there is an added benefit in being able to produce headline figures that get the attention of the government and can be used to influence allocation of resources.

Wider reach

The European Institute for Gender Equality have shared the findings widely in their reports to articulate the importance of allocating adequate resources to address the problem. These findings have also been used to underpin cost effectiveness studies of domestic violence intervention programmes.¹⁴ Another impact is how the study has been useful in explicating the different costing methodologies and methods available, as well as providing/supporting the impetus for other studies to be undertaken with momentum being seen across the world. This leads to capacity-building and development in the field. In addition, the study has been cited in 13 academic papers and numerous costing studies and has been read more than 100 times on the academic platform, ResearchGate. However, while the findings were reported in the media which is positive, the impact has been diluted because of the media's problematic reporting on and representation of victims and perpetrators of violence against women.

There are some important issues to bear in mind. According to the former director of Women's Aid, Hilary Fisher, the United Kingdom views itself at the forefront of addressing domestic violence and Aid, and indeed, in some ways, the country is very progressive. However, gaps in understanding and problems regarding service provision remain, particularly in relation to competitive tendering. As noted by Janet Veitch more recently, generic service providers underbid and then request additional funding to ensure service delivery after the contract has been awarded. As a result of this trend, domestic violence services have suffered and this situation has worsened over time. Moreover, while there has been a probable decrease in violent crime for some time, there has not been a comparable decrease in domestic violence.

The Government of the United Kingdom has declared addressing domestic violence a high priority, yet the sector has been weathering the impact of funding cuts since the 2008 financial crisis. As local authorities do not have the full financial resources required, it makes demonstrating

¹⁴ See Estela Capelas Barbosa and others, "Cost-effectiveness of a domestic violence and abuse training".

the good value of investment over time almost impossible, according to Fisher. Veitch maintained that some areas have good serviced in place, with support provided predominantly in relation to the criminal justice system, as the success of many of these services is measured against judicial criteria. In cases where ongoing support has been provided, there has been a reduction in the rate of women withdrawing domestic violence cases. However, increasing caseloads and a limited number of services across the nation have made it almost impossible to meet demand. Additionally, according to Veitch, health-care personnel do not feel they have the capacity nor the resources to treat a domestic vioelnce victim and do not consider it in their remit. Olive has expressed concern over health service resources for women getting lost amidst the focus on children. In other words, child protection driving and taking priority over the needs of the woman. Finally, even though women who become homeless as a result of domestic violence are considered the highest priority, there are still too few refuge spaces, resulting in the serious risk of these women becoming homeless.