

'From Street to Home'

Workstream 4. (deliverable: 4.1)

Final Recommendations

**Funded by the Directorate General Justice of the
European Commission, Daphne Programme**

Grant Agreement Number: JUST/2011/DAP/AG/3127

Commencement date: December 2012

Completion date: December 2014



With financial support from the DAPHNE Programme of the European Union

This report has been produced within the scope of the project 'From Street to Home: Investigating how an integrated approach to housing provision and social support can reduce the threat of violence against women' funded by the European Commission, Directorate-General Justice.

Authorship:

Morag MacDonald, Birmingham City University
David Kane, Birmingham City University

This publication has been produced with the financial support of the DAPHNE Programme of the European Union. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of Morag MacDonald and David Kane and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Commission.

For further information please contact:

Professor Morag MacDonald (project co-ordinator)

Social Research and Evaluation Unit
Birmingham City University Attwood Building
City North Campus
Perry Barr
Birmingham
B42 2SU

Tel: 0044 121 331 6305
Mobile: 0044 7767777431
Email: morag.macdonald@bcu.ac.uk
Website: <http://streettohome.eu/>

Workstream 4 deliverable 4.1 (English)

Final Recommendations

Project final recommendations are drawn from research conducted by each partner in their own country, feedback collected following dissemination events and reflection on best practice visits undertaken during the duration of the project.

The recommendations presented here are those that have broad implications for all EU member states. Reference should be made to each individual partner report for country-specific recommendations. Headings have been used to categorise recommendations on a thematic basis as follows:

Partnership and Collaboration

The follow-up must be interdisciplinary, requiring collaboration between the various services and treatment options. At present there is too little collaboration between these kinds of services, and the existing collaboration is often very person dependent. (Norway).

Furthermore, many women with drug addictions are or have been victims of DV and vice-versa. Consequently, drug services should be able to address and assist victims of DV and services addressing specifically victims of DV should be able to address drug addictions as well. This could be achieved through more cooperation between these different services [and an interdisciplinary approach]. (Germany)

Multi-agency partnership should be enabled and encouraged. (UK)

Create an interdisciplinary working network by means of formal agreements, based on a comprehensive intervention through case management that will foster the recovery of dignity and quality of life. (Spain)

Combine forces to prevent and detect gender violence early on and to prevent and reduce the harm caused in the pathways of descent towards social exclusion. (Spain)

Flexibility of Response

...the system must be flexible, there must be room for trial and error and trying again. Good relationships and trust must be strived for, and that demands time. (Norway)

Given the need for the implementation of many activities in a short time, and in order to reduce bureaucracy, social service providers should have greater autonomy in the *placement procedure and risk assessment*. (Bulgaria)

Breaking the cycle of abuse.

Many of the interviewed women had an unhappy childhood and were somehow neglected as child. Two of them as well as both worst adult perpetrators were abused as child. Consequently, we would recommend extending early prevention of sexual abuse against children and teenagers by supporting at an early stage parents and children in families at risk and developing social early-warning systems. (Germany).

Create resources that will offer accommodation and social support exclusively for women who suffer from gender violence and severe social exclusion, which will attend to the specific needs of this group and will permit them to abandon the circle of violence and exclusion. (Spain)

Raising public awareness

[There is] an inadequate public awareness and discussion of the issue “violence against women” [The issue needs to be] on the public and political agenda. (Germany)

Raising the awareness of the public, and women in particular, that domestic violence in any form is not something shameful and reprehensible, a taboo subject. This may be one way to encourage representatives of the so-called "Hidden population" victims of violence to seek help. Raising the awareness of society and lobbying could be also an effective tool for development of adequate response to women’s real needs. (Bulgaria)

Society in general and the public powers in particular should visualise and recognise women suffering severe social exclusion, as survivors of gender violence and they should modify the laws and regulations necessary for them to be protected as such. (Spain)

Guarantee individual and collective work with women, with men, with professionals and with society as a whole with respect to the sex-gender system, stereotypes and gender roles, and gender violence in all those institutions that are socialising agents in this society: Education system, health system, media, legal system, social services, etc. (Spain)

Training and Expertise

Gendered vulnerability and strategies are areas of expertise that need to be strengthened in the social support network, and likewise competence in substance abuse and psychiatric measures in crisis centres. (Norway)

The police and legal authorities should be trained and [be sensitive] to issues of DV: Victims of DV should be taken seriously, supported, protected and referred to adequate social services. There should be some cooperation between police, legal system and such social services. (Germany)

Knowledge and understanding of the impact of trauma on women ought to be made part of the training for criminal justice agencies and other front-line services. (UK)

Boost continuous and compulsory training programmes for the different professionals who intervene in the care of women who have to cope with violence, both in generalist resources (health, education, social services, Judiciary, police corps) and specialised resources. [Spain]

Recognising the link between violence, housing and homelessness

If surveys and initiatives for the homeless do not take violence into account as a factor in homelessness, this will make the provision of targeted and effective help more difficult. In turn this can lead to the homelessness assuming a more permanent form, which may be difficult to rectify using only social housing instruments, and then homelessness will instead be classified as a social policy category, an identity. (Norway)

In the social housing field there has been too little focus on violence as a dimension in the design of the housing, and on the ability of those living there to retain their accommodation. Violence as a dimension should be mapped in all the work on temporary and permanent housing and would constitute a platform for more knowledge-based social housing initiatives for the target group as a result. (Norway).

Provision of services should be participatory and based on the expressed needs of service users.

Housing policies and programs should use a "gender and cultural oriented approach" and take into account the ways in which social services and housing policies respond to women's real needs. (Bulgaria)

Other gender-specific considerations in housing should address such issues as safety from violence and access to children. (Bulgaria).

Service providers should acknowledge that provision for women with multiple needs is designed to meet their requirements at different stages of their recovery. (UK)

Agencies should recognise that the needs of women to solve their homelessness requires different approaches that are holistic and women centred. (UK)

...the development of efficient services requires an approach that is fully in line with the real needs of women, making customers (when possible) active participants in the planning and provision of necessary services. (Bulgaria)

Apply the gender perspective both in the design and in the intervention carried out in the resources that intervene with women suffering the risk of and/or social exclusion. Guarantee a long-term and holistic intervention based on key tools, such as: accommodation and social support; empowerment and networking, which will attend to the different pathways of women and offer services that adapt to the intensity required in the life course of each one of them (case management). (Spain)

Sustainability and Cost Effectiveness

Financing the accommodation of vulnerable groups must be realized on a long-term basis (rather than project based), prioritizing the sustainability of time-tested and approved programs (Bulgaria).

Agencies should collect key data and use robust mechanisms (e.g., cost-benefit analysis model) to ensure effective evaluations of their interventions to demonstrate effectiveness and value for money. (UK)

Conduct [studies] that analyse the cost-benefit of establishing holistic and long-term intervention[s] ...that will offer accommodation and psychosocial health support for women suffering high social exclusion. [Spain]

A Vision for Europe

The project has indicated that Member States are currently at different stages of implementing effective approaches to address need. With this in mind, a Vision Document (see separate document) has been prepared that recommends a realistic minimum standard of provision is formulated and implemented. There are a number of practise standards that indicate what is required to improve the lives of women with experience of domestic violence and abuse. The standards that follow are informed and underpinned by the lived experience of women's experiences of domestic violence and abuse and the interviews with key stakeholders who provide services for the women. We recommend that a minimum standard of provision should be predicated on the following:

1. **Holistic service provision** to include help with accessing safe and secure housing;
2. **Empathetic, accepting and non-judgemental service delivery;**
3. **Empowerment** –women are able to identify and express their needs and to make decisions in a supportive and non-judgmental environment.

4. **Increased awareness** of mental health issues affecting women among both professionals and the public;
5. **Partnership between agencies** - services that women access should operate within a situation of inter-agency cooperation, collaboration and coordinated service delivery that complements and minimises duplication.
6. **Sustainability of service provision** – moving away from sole reliance on NGOs to state provision
7. **Commitment to keep women out of prison** - as many of their crimes are related to DV, abuse and exploitation.
8. **Confidentiality** –women’s confidentiality is respected and observed and they are made aware of situations where their confidentiality may be limited.
9. **Advocacy** – workers advocate for the needs of women affected by DV and abuse on an individual basis as requested by the women and with her consent
10. **Focussing attention** on children - recognising that early intervention is needed to break the cycle of abuse

Further, responses to meeting the needs of women with multiple needs should:

- Be cost effective and include a cost benefit focus;
- Include compelling impact assessments;
- Not replicate existing services and compete against each other for funding;
- Be sustainable and not reliant on NGO or external funding;
- Include a joined-up approach across criminal justice systems;
- Consist of committed partnerships;
- Foster a highly collaborative community to share and adopt best practice;
- Lend themselves to standardisation;
- Lend themselves to interoperability and re-use across national and international boundaries.