



HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT

Joint Committee on Human Rights

Oral evidence: [Violence against women and girls](#), HC 594

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Written evidence from witnesses:

- [End Violence Against Women Coalition](#)
- [Children's Commissioner for England](#)
- [Restored](#)

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Members present: Baroness Berridge (Chair); Baroness Buscombe; Baroness O'Loan; Mr Virendra Sharma; and Sarah Teather

Questions 51-63

Witnesses: **Professor Liz Kelly**, Co-Chair, End Violence Against Women Coalition, Sue Berelowitz, Deputy Children's Commissioner for England, and Chris Green, Director, White Ribbon Campaign gave evidence.

Q51 Baroness Berridge (Chair): Good morning. Thank you very much for coming to this session. This is part of an ongoing inquiry we are having into violence against women and girls, and, first of all, I want to thank the witnesses for coming today. We do not take for granted that people, who are often working for the charitable sector, give up their time in order to come and help us with our inquiries, so I want to thank you for coming today. This session is public, as you will see, but also televised, so that you are aware of that. If you could just introduce yourselves for the purposes of the record—starting from left to right—that would be great.

Chris Green: I am Chris Green. I am Director of the White Ribbon campaign.

Sue Berelowitz: Morning. Sue Berelowitz, Deputy Children's Commissioner for England.

Professor Kelly: Liz Kelly, Professor of Violence Against Women at London Metropolitan University, and here representing the End Violence Against Women Coalition.

The Chair: Great. Thank you very much. I will begin with the first question. Prevention measures are a vital part of ensuring there is a generational shift in relation to attitudes and behaviour towards violence against women and girls. Do you think that the Government is currently putting

sufficient effort and resources into prevention compared to the other areas of combating violence against women and girls?

Sue Berelowitz: Shall I start?

The Chair: Yes, please do.

Sue Berelowitz: I do think there is a lot of good work taking place, but the one area where I would really like to see a big push is around work in schools. PSHE, and relationships and sex education, should be mandated across all schools. It was a recommendation, in fact, in two of our reports, under the Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups. That is what young people themselves told us they want, and they are really calling for that, because there is so much concern amongst young people about the levels of violence, intimidation, misogyny, and gender-based violence in particular, but also against those who are lesbian, gay or bisexual, for example. I do understand that the Secretary of State for Education is now looking at that. It has been encouraged up to now, but I understand she is now looking at mandating that. That will be a very big step in the right direction, and then, of course, the curriculum needs to be right. I can provide you with some information about that, if that is helpful.

The Chair: Thank you.

Professor Kelly: I would say that 10 years ago there was hardly any effort on prevention, and I think that implicitly suggests that violence against women and girls is inevitable—that we cannot change it; we cannot do anything about it. We at ERAW believe that a different world is possible, but we have to share that vision, and that vision has to be communicated everywhere, throughout the whole society. We do not think that there is sufficient leadership on the issue. There are certainly not sufficient resources, or investment, or belief in a long-term programme that moves across changes in Government. This needs to be a cross-party commitment, because actually we are talking about a long-term process of change, and we need it to not be lost if there is a change of Government.

There is formal recognition now from Government, through the violence against women and girls strategy, and perhaps most strongly in the work of DFID, that actually there is more commitment and investment in prevention internationally than there is at home. That is something of a contradiction. But it is still the weakest part. It is not an afterthought any more, but it is still on the margin. It is not at the centre of the work that is happening around violence in the UK.

Q52 Baroness Buscombe: I agree, there seems to be more of an accent on violence against women internationally than at a domestic level. Do you think that is because politicians feel more comfortable dealing with it at a distance, and that they are terrified of upsetting communities that have a very different view on this at the domestic level? Politicians are afraid of upsetting them.

Professor Kelly: I think we have a hypocrisy about human rights. We talk about human rights internationally for others, and we are mealy-mouthed about it at home. If we could have a common discourse that, actually, human rights is for everyone, and it is not the case that it is only girls in the global south who have really difficult discriminatory situations—that, actually, this happens here, too—then I think we might be able to have a more constructive conversation about it.

Chris Green: With regards to that, and with regard to human rights, the UN regard violence against women and girls as the worst human rights violation in the world today. The Secretary

General said that. But spending on prevention or spending on services is not a comparison because it is going to require vast amounts more service provision as prevention develops. As prevention goes up, awareness raising goes up and as awareness goes up, we will have more disclosures. We have experienced that when we have worked with local authorities. They have had an impressive awareness raising campaign around November, which is the UN International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and Girls. However, they have said that, as well as raising awareness—particularly among men, which is what we do—it has ensured there has been a lot more disclosures as well. That means more money for service delivery at the same time.

Q53 Sarah Teather: You have already touched on some of this, but we have phrased it in a slightly different way. Whereas you have already started by telling us what the gaps are, we were wondering whether you might be able to tell us what is actually happening already. It is helpful to know what the good things are. In relation to Article 12 of the Istanbul Convention, around promotion of changes in social and cultural patterns of behaviour for men and women, we wondered what you were aware of that is currently being undertaken to try to change patterns either, particularly for Sue, around education, or, for any of you, within the media. So it is a positively phrased question, rather than just looking at the gaps.

Sue Berelowitz: Thank you. The first thing that springs to mind is female genital mutilation, and there has been a huge drive by the Government on that. I absolutely take Liz's point about looking beyond the borders of this country, but also now, clearly, within the borders of the United Kingdom, the Government have taken a very strong stance about that, and have alerted every single school. There is a much more heightened awareness about the dangers of female genital mutilation, and I think that touches on the point Chris made about prevention and needing to still work on enforcement, in this sense, the realities of what is going on. We are still lacking convictions, but there is a very strong message going out there, so I think that is really laudable. That is one of the very positive things that has happened. There are the beginnings of work around early enforced child marriage, but I think that that is still a poor sister, if I can put it like that, in the context of female genital mutilation and early enforced child marriage. We are doing work on that, which I can tell the Committee about another time, but the concern is that that is very widespread, actually, when I talk to women from minority communities where that happens.

I think it is a mixed picture. There is definitely some good work taking place. There are lots of NGOs that are doing good work. They get their money from Government. CAADA, for example, is doing some really excellent work. Their young people's programme has been entirely funded by Government, for two years, to work with young people on this issue about interpersonal violence. They are doing excellent work; it is a very big national programme. What we really need, though—I am sorry, I am now getting into what the gaps are as well—is something systematic and long-term. So I think my message would be: "lots to celebrate, and more to do."

Sarah Teather: You were saying that if PSHE were compulsory that would make a big difference. Do you think that PSHE alone would be enough, really, to change attitudes?

Sue Berelowitz: No, nothing on its own. It needs to be part of a wider picture. This is really a child-protection issue. I am obviously only talking about children in this context. We recently published a National Framework for Child Protection, a new approach to child protection, which set out everything that needs to be done, in a co-ordinated fashion, from Government right through to frontline, covering prevention through to recovery, including protection and enforcement. So all of those components need to be in place. I particularly mention relationships

and sex education in the context of PSHE, because this really is about relationships and respect, more than sex, quite frankly. PSHE must be part of this component, but it cannot be the only thing. It cannot be the only thing. It must be matched by all the other work that needs to take place.

Professor Kelly: I would also highlight the “This is abuse” campaign, organised out of the Home Office, which has, I think, got better and better over the last four or five years, but it is not used strategically as it could be. For example, some schools do not even know that it exists. There is not a systematic way of alerting the schools that, each November, this is going to come up, and they could actually use it as a resource. I agree with Sue about FGM, but, actually, Government did not use that as an opportunity to locate FGM within a wider violence against women framework. It was an issue on its own. So there is work happening, but it is in pieces and it is disconnected. That is a problem, I think.

Q54 Baroness O’Loan: Article 12 of the Convention also asks that measures be taken to encourage all members of society, but particularly men and boys, actively to contribute to preventing violence against women. I would like to ask Mr Green, particularly, how supportive the Government have been of your campaign. What other initiatives are you aware of that specifically encourage men and boys to contribute?

Chris Green: That particular piece of the Convention is very dear to my heart. I was on the task force for the Council of Europe, which sat well before the Convention was written, and that was probably my one contribution. I was with some women’s organisations that were far more eminent than I was, so I was very pleased to listen to those, but I was very pleased that that bit was in.

The Home Office strategy in 2008 said, “Over the last year, the Government has also been working hard to get more men involved as a powerful lobbying force to challenge the culture and behaviour that enables—and excuses—violence against women.” It was not done then, and it is not being done now. I would say this, but I think it is hugely important to engage with men. It is men’s responsibility; we commit 90% of violences against women. It is men’s responsibility because women’s organisations want men to get involved, and men listen to other men in lots of situations.

I will just give you a couple of examples of the way we do that. It is very important to have things on the PSHE curriculum, and to develop relationship and sex education appropriately, but we do not want to let adult men off the hook, and say, “Oh, well, I never got taught this in school.” We engage with sports teams and with music venues; we have awards schemes for them, as well as for local authorities. That is our way of getting it to be a mass campaign. When you get the coach of Leeds Rhinos Rugby League Football Club forwarding something to all their supporters, it goes out to 30,000 more followers who would not ordinarily be receiving the sorts of messages that we are talking about. I get a little bit of joy in my heart when I see that happening, because maybe—just maybe—people then start to take the baby steps towards changing behaviour.

PSHE is not the answer on its own. What we are doing is not the answer on its own, but it does start to address all the violences against women—not just domestic abuse, not just FGM, but all the nine other areas as well.

Baroness Buscombe: In which case, Chris, do you think a footballer convicted of rape should get his job back as a footballer, whilst other clubs are just focusing on swearing and so on, which is far easier to tackle?

Chris Green: No. I have added my name to the 150,000 people who also think that.

Professor Kelly: I would also like to add that I think we have an interest in work that enables men and boys to challenge each other about their behaviour.

Chris Green: Hear, hear.

Professor Kelly: Part of the issue is that too many men, who are not violent and abusive, are silent about the attitudes that support it in others. I think there is some really interesting work developing around this idea of “bystander approaches”, encouraging everybody that they are responsible to intervene if they see something happening that should not be happening. So it is not approaching men and boys as potential perpetrators, but it is approaching them as citizens and members of a wider community, all of whom are part of helping to stop this happening. In addition, I would say that BIS has an important role in relation to colleges and universities. I think we probably do not have a single university that has appropriate procedures for sexual violence that happens on campus. If we compare that to the US, where they actually have a law about it and a huge amount of prevention work, we are not even at the starting gate.

Chris Green: Can I just add to that?

The Chair: Yes, certainly.

Chris Green: The NUS is running a consent campaign and training. It should not be up to the NUS to be running it. It should be up to those campuses, and those managements of those institutions themselves. Public Health England is funding one bystander pilot programme. We are working on another one at Lincoln University and they are running one at the University of the West of England. But it ought not to be pilot programmes. It should be mandated that new university students start to get consent education when they start to move into this new environment.

Q55 Mr Sharma: It is especially in terms of the ICT sector, where there are increasing levels of sexual, violent and degrading material easily available. To what extent are the private sector and the media participating in discussions with the Government and bodies that assist in combating violence against women, about tackling this problem? That is a long question, but I am sure you can give a brief answer.

Sue Berelowitz: I can give you some kind of answer, but not probably as comprehensive as you would like, I am afraid. Whether either of my colleagues would do better, I am not sure. I am not party to those discussions, but I am aware especially that No. 10, the Prime Minister, is extremely exercised about this. I know that he has had discussions with the internet service providers, and I have certainly followed that up with my own discussions with Facebook, who tell me that they are very exercised about it, and they have put measures in place.

What I would say, however, is that I do think that we have a long way to go. You cannot open the newspaper, including this morning’s *Metro*, without seeing yet another report about the impact on children of what is going on over the internet. Our own studies into the impact on children of viewing adult pornographic materials, for example, tell us that they are being profoundly affected by what they see. They are accessing this stuff at a massive rate, especially for boys—nearly 100% of boys from Year 9 up.

In terms of bullying, we do know that cyber-bullying is a major issue. I was just reading recently the statistics from Sonia Livingstone, who has done a huge research project, a longitudinal study,

across the EU. She and her researchers have interviewed 25,000 young people. There has also been a very interesting study come out of Girl Guiding, just to give you two examples. We are talking about very high percentages of children—something like 93% of children between the ages of 7 and 16—being on the internet, including using social networking sites. Between one-quarter and one-third of them are reporting that they face threats, bullying, unkindness and things that have made them profoundly unhappy. Most worryingly, when you get to the 11-ups, something like 22% of children will tell their parents or a teacher about what they have encountered. They tend not to tell; they deal with it on their own, or they might tell a friend. Again, we are talking about large numbers of children, really, being affected by this stuff, and needing a lot of support that they are not getting at the moment.

The Government has taken it seriously. I was present when the Prime Minister gave a very important speech about this at the NSPCC last year, and stated his commitments. I just do think we have got quite a long way to go still, actually, and we need another push on this. There are some very serious issues. Part of the challenge is that a lot of the materials come out of the United States, and in the United States Constitution freedom of speech gets in the way of them imposing the right restrictions in the United States. We are in a global world, but more definitely needs to be done.

Mr Sharma: Do you think government departments are joined up in their approach to preventing violence against women?

Professor Kelly: Not really. We have consistently called for a more joined-up approach. There is good work, as we have said, but it is actually located in particular departments and it is dependent on there being a Minister who actually has an interest. If the Minister does not have an interest, then that department is not active as it could be. We have always argued that violence against women and girls needs to be threaded through all the policy areas that it is relevant to—which actually means most Government departments—but that is actually not the case. We have some beacons of good practice, but most departments are lagging far behind.

It is not a priority. I would say that that has been the case, although we are crossing our fingers and thinking change might be on the way in relation to the Department for Education. It is the case in terms of the Department of Health, Department for Culture, Media and Sport, and the Ministry of Defence, for example. We know that there are very high levels of violence against women in the military, both within the military itself and also their relationships with others outside. There has been a reluctance to even have a conversation with us about what could possibly be done and how we could work in dialogue with them. So we actually think it is not joined up.

The Chair: Professor Kelly, you mentioned, just then, the DCMS. Now, obviously, the post at the moment is the Minister for Women is also the Secretary of State for Education, but the position of Minister for Women is also in the Government's Equalities office, which is in DCMS. Now, have any of you got any specific comments on that way of organising the role?

Chris Green: I would say it is too big for somebody to be able to grasp all those briefs. It would be good if there was a ministerial appointment for violence against women and girls. I was also going to mention about the inter-ministerial group, which is good but does not go far enough. We are a grassroots organisation on the ground, and we do not see that group making any significant difference to our work.

There used to be an annual assessment from an external organisation. It was partly Women's National Commission and partly End Violence Against Women and Girls. It used to be something called "Making the Grade", and it really focused the minds of some of the departments. Some of them made great strides in between one assessment and the next, based on the recommendations that had been sent to them.

Sue Berelowitz: May I add to that? I would just say that the Home Office is showing leadership on this. That is where the leadership is at the moment. They are showing a great deal of commitment to this area. So that is welcome.

Professor Kelly: We would want to say also the CPS, who actually have had a violence against women strategy for the past seven years, partly coming out of Making the Grade. They were recently commended for a World Futures award to do with work on violence against women. So I would also want to put the CPS into the "they're the leading lights" box.

Baroness Buscombe: By putting this with the Minister for Women, is this an issue of language as much as anything else? Then people think the problem is parked. Then men will think, "Well, this is all about women's issues, and therefore that is not really our issue." We should perhaps therefore rethink the way we label—I hate the word—the person who should be actually tackling this. Is that what you were saying?

Sue Berelowitz: I think there is merit in that, quite frankly. I think there is a danger in people thinking that somehow this is an issue that is confined to women to have to deal with, really. It is a societal issue. I would say it is about equalities, so I think there needs to be a debate about where this sits. What I would absolutely concur with is that I think there should be a ministerial position on its own, whatever it's going to be labelled eventually, with a very clear mandate to work across all Government departments.

Professor Kelly: The human rights framing makes it very clear that violence against women and girls is a cause and a consequence of women's inequality. So if we are locating it within that framework, then it needs to sit in a political naming of that, I would say.

Sue Berelowitz: The Cabinet Office, possibly.

Chris Green: If anybody goes to the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Domestic and Sexual Violence, for example, it is not often that you see men attending.

Sarah Teather: That is quite hard. There are not many women in Parliament.

Baroness O'Loan: My question was that the Convention understands violence against women to be both cause and consequence, which is the language that you have just used. I just want to ask if there is anything any of you want to add in terms of whether the Government's approach in relation to prevention is consistent with the Convention's understanding of cause and prevention. You have already addressed the issue.

Professor Kelly: I do not think violence against women and girls has ever been integrated into the gender equality strategy. It is referred to, it is mentioned. It is not that it is forgotten, but it is not seen as a core pillar of that work, and it needs to be.

Chris Green: Hear, hear.

Professor Kelly: We know, from the Nordic countries, that you can make progress on all the conventional gender equality measures—so representation in parliament, equal pay—and still the level of violence against women stays the same or, in some cases, is higher than countries which have not achieved that. Violence does not automatically follow other gender equality indicators. It needs to be addressed specifically and directly, and it needs to be within that project. I do not think the two policies intersect and thread through one another in the way that they should. I think that we have had far too much emphasis in Britain on dealing with it through a criminal justice framework, which makes sense, because the Home Office has been the lead ministry. So it is not a critique of the Home Office, but it does mean that we have had an unbalanced way of thinking about, “How do we deal with this issue?” We need more engagement from Health, from Education, and from Culture, Media and Sport.

Chris Green: We have a White Ribbon awards scheme for local authorities. One of the things we demand is that the local authority has a group from other departments, including health, housing, the police, as well as community safety. Otherwise it is just siloed into “Community safety—oh, nothing to do with us.” It is the same whether you are dealing with a small local authority, or whether you are dealing with the Government.

Q56 Baroness Buscombe: Article 16 of the Istanbul Convention calls on state parties to take necessary measures to set up or support programmes for domestic violence perpetrators and for sex offenders. Is the Government doing enough in this respect, in your view?

Chris Green: No.

Sue Berelowitz: No.

Professor Kelly: Absolutely not. We have not had any innovative development in work with sexual violence offenders since the 1980s. That is whether we are talking about adults or whether we are talking about young people. There is some work, still, in some of the children’s charities, but actually there was a flowering of interesting, innovative ways to deal with them. I feel like we have gone back to a situation where, almost implicitly, we are saying, “We don’t think you can change” about sex offenders.

In relation to domestic violence, we have two parallel tracks. One is through the criminal justice system delivered by prisons and by probation. That had a programme called the IDAP programme, which now is not going to be used anymore, so a generic offender programme, which will not be specific about domestic violence, will now take its place.

In the community, we have programmes, most of which belong to Respect, who do focus directly on domestic violence, but they are so poorly funded in most cases. They are constantly having to shape-shift to follow various funding streams rather than deliver what it is they think might work.

So we have never invested properly in work with perpetrators and I do think that it is because there is something that sits underneath, which is that we do not think they can change, so we do not demand that they change.

Sue Berelowitz: May I add to that? I can give you an example from young people in prison. We have a right of entry into any place where a child is cared for other than their private home and we exercise that right in relation to children’s prisons. I happen to lead that work and I am in one of the three types of children’s prisons every month, so I am speaking to youngsters who have committed crimes or are remanded every single month and I was in a secure children’s home just a few weeks ago. It has 16 people in residence, six of whom were in for very serious sex offences.

They were already convicted and one of those was rape. There was no work taking place with those boys at all on their sex offending, which is of profound concern. I have been raising this with the Youth Justice Board for some time because I am finding the same wherever I go. There are little bits and pieces happening occasionally, but they are little bits and pieces.

The other thing that concerns me in that regard is many of those lads in our secure facilities are assaulting their partners or other females—and there may be males too, of course—when they are in the community. That may not be the offence for which they are serving a sentence or for which they have been remanded, but no work is being done with them to deal with their attitudes towards females when they come out and it is a very, very serious missed opportunity. There are many gang-involved boys, for example, in our prisons, particularly those in the south-east of England—Feltham, Cookham Wood and so on—and we have commissioned research into what it is like for children to grow up in a gang-involved neighbourhood. That very in-depth, two-year study was done for us by Bedfordshire University and it is quite clear that the young people who grow up in those neighbourhoods, if they are male, are carrying out very serious violence of all kinds against females and the girls just assume that that is part of growing up. As one girl said, “Welcome to my generation. It is just what happens”. I have quotes, but I will not take your time to read them to you today, but the attitudinal issues are immensely important to address. We need to do that in our prisons. There need to be concerted programmes in our prisons to do that, as well as, of course, in the community. I can add more to that, but I know you are pressed for time.

The Chair: We do need to move on, but do you have any brief comments, Mr Green, on that?

Chris Green: Yes, two to that. One is that the geographical isolation of perpetrator programmes leads to more dropout, because you are asking men sometimes to drive 100 miles after work for an evening meeting and then home again afterwards and they start to drop out, inevitably.

The second one is that I absolutely concur with the attitudinal work that is required. You often find one-off poster campaigns going on about violence against women. It does not work. What we need is ongoing work week by week by week.

The Chair: Thank you. Thank you so much for your time this morning. We will move on to the second panel, but if there is anything further that you wanted to raise with us that you have not yet put in your written evidence or that we have questioned you about today, please feel free to communicate with our staff about that. Thank you once again for your time.

Examination of Witnesses

Emily Burnage, Preventative Education Project Worker, RISE and **Peter Grant**, Co-Director, Restored.

Q57 The Chair: Good morning. I would like to repeat my welcome. Thank you very much for providing your written evidence and also coming here today. We do not take for granted that particularly voluntary groups give of their precious resource and time to come and assist us here in Parliament. This is part of an ongoing inquiry into violence against women and girls. If you could, please, introduce yourselves personally for the record, thank you very much.

Emily Burnage: My name is Emily Burnage. I am an education outreach worker based in Brighton at RISE.

Peter Grant: I am Peter Grant. I am the Co-Director of Restored.

The Chair: Thank you very much. I will begin. Article 12 of the Istanbul Convention requires the Government to take the measures necessary to promote changes in the social and cultural patterns of behaviour of women and men with a view to eradicating prejudices, customs, traditions and all other practices that are based on the idea of the inferiority of women or on stereotyped roles for men and women. How do you think the Government can achieve that and are you aware of any current measures that aim to promote such changes and, if so, what has been your experience of those measures and the impact they have upon the communities that you particularly work with?

Peter Grant: To see change of this magnitude requires a very broad-based response. When we look at patterns of what has achieved social change over the past decades, it has been the interaction of legal reform and structurally, but also a very wide range of cultural and other factors. What we see in the UK at the moment is a divergence between the strengthening of the legal frameworks, but the attitudes in society are probably moving in the wrong direction in terms of our popular culture, in terms of the objectification of women, in terms of the seeping of pornography into popular culture. What is required is a very broad-based response, an ongoing response that includes a wide range of participants, from politicians through to those involved in the arts and media and also, given Restored's particular focus, the engagement of faith and faith leaders in that response.

Looking for a concrete example of the kind of movements underway, it was interesting, in your last discussion we were hearing about this idea of men's movements and the engagement of bystanders and so on. Restored is working on a campaign called "First Man Standing", which is asking ordinary men to respect women, to challenge each other and to sign up to the White Ribbon pledge never to commit, condone or remain silent about violence against women. It is when we get those popular movements coming from the bottom up, coinciding with a top-down change in culture that we are going to see change in society.

Emily Burnage: I would echo that. What we need to see is a change in leadership. Certainly coming through the House of Lords today, what I saw was lots of imagery of men in positions of power and I think we need to see better representation of women in the Shadow Cabinet, in the Cabinet, here in the House of Lords and in leadership positions. That would be really helpful for young women and young men growing up and seeing that and seeing that your voice is equal whoever you are and wherever you are coming from.

I work in schools and, certainly for me, my role is about trying to embed and entrench ideas around gender and equality in schools and adopting a whole-school approach very early on, so that teachers are modelling good, positive relationships with children and their fellow teaching staff as well and modelling that from a very young age. We have those discussions around gender and violence against women very early on, because we do see those influences having a massive impact on how young people interact with each other and their relationships.

Q58 Sarah Teather: I am just laughing about the idea that we have any influence over trying to encourage other women to come in here. I have been trying for years.

Following on from Elizabeth's opening question, which was about the influence of culture, custom, religion, tradition or honour, I want to get your feedback on whether or not you think there are cases where such things have been used to justify criminal behaviour; whether or not you know of cases where that has been successful; whether you think the UK is doing enough to try to change attitudes there. It is a general question and I have some other supplementaries.

Peter Grant: We work very much with churches and with the Christian tradition and there is a stream within Christian theology—we sometimes call it “toxic theology”—which combines the idea of submission of women and a dominant role of men within relationships and it has been used to justify abuse. What we would argue is that what you need is people from each faith community, from each ethnic community who are in a position to be able to speak in and to challenge the tenets of each religion, of each community, in their own language and to be able to say that such behaviour and such theology is unacceptable. At Restored, we aim to promote positive Biblical interpretations that clearly show the nature of the Bible as being in favour of equality, in favour of respect of women, in favour of loving relationships and in which violence is completely unacceptable. We are engaged in church training to try to help churches to get to grips with those issues, but it clearly is an issue that needs to be addressed and that is why engaging with faith communities and other specialist communities is very important.

Emily Burnage: At RISE, where I work, we also do outreach work with BME communities, including travelling and Gypsy communities as well and that is about empowering the women in those communities and educating them about relationships and their autonomy in those relationships and keeping them safe. It is about educating those communities as well. Rather than us coming in and telling, it is about educating those communities.

Sarah Teather: Are you aware of any cases where it has been successful as a justification within the criminal justice system?

Peter Grant: Successful as a justification in terms of individuals?

Sarah Teather: Yes.

Peter Grant: Yes, there are individuals who would justify their behaviour through these kinds of theologies.

Sarah Teather: Do they get success within the criminal justice system with that?

Peter Grant: No. This would be self-justification that needs to be challenged. However, it points to the fact that if we are really going to address this—and you talked about perpetrator programmes earlier—we have to challenge the attitudes and actions of men. We have to get to the deep level of beliefs and say, “What is driving this?” What do people have in their minds if they are willing to commit violence of this nature? What is their image of women, particularly? What is the framework that they are working from? Unless we get to those roots and start to address and challenge those fundamental frameworks, we are not going to see change.

Baroness Buscombe: I absolutely think this is a really important point. Peter, what you are suggesting and what you are saying takes huge courage. It was not long ago, I remember, when I was being thrown out of houses in Slough, among different faith communities, if I even began to question the position of women and particularly young girls and the way they are treated in their homes. Do you feel that we are making any headway on this at all and, also, do you think that what has happened and been exposed, ironically, by the media of what was happening in Rotherham may help in the longer term to change attitudes?

Peter Grant: Yes. What is emerging is an awareness of the fact that the need to speak out to protect women and children overrides the nature of traditions and so on within communities. I can only speak from within the Christian community perspective, but you asked about good examples of change. My Co-Director, Mandy Marshall, was the Church of England’s

representative to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women last year. They reached conclusions about violence against women that included a clear reference to the role of faith communities and that provided a foundation for action. Mandy was then able to participate in a debate at the General Synod earlier this year when the Church of England passed a motion on gender-based violence. That, in turn, has provided a platform for training at the diocesan level and for going down to church level to start to challenge attitudes, to say this is an important issue, this is an issue that churches must take seriously and to start to confront those attitudes. So there is potential and one of the key things is getting faith leaders and other people in prominent positions to stand up and speak out on this.

Q59 Mr Sharma: You mentioned that the Church has produced some literature in different languages as well. Did I hear you correctly?

Peter Grant: I did not say that, no.

Mr Sharma: No, okay. I thought you said there was information available in different languages, but it is important, when you said that you meet with BME communities, that information in the different languages is also available, so that they are well informed. Is the Church communicating with other faith groups on this issue as well or not?

Peter Grant: I have only limited awareness of what is going on within other faith communities. My sense is that there are individual projects and programmes. At Restored, we would love to work with an equivalent organisation based within the Muslim faith, the Hindu faith and so on. That is certainly the way ahead, because what it needs, as I say, is people who know the scriptures and the practices of their own community who can then speak in to that and challenge it and then come together, perhaps, in some broader coalition in front to address that. However, I strongly support your argument for having resources in a range of languages. We have a church pack that outlines approaches that churches can take in responding to survivors of violence, to perpetrators, challenging theology and so on. That is available in English, Spanish and Russian. We would love to broaden it out as much as we possibly could.

Emily Burnage: I just wanted to add that in Brighton and Hove we also have forced marriage and FGM as part of our PSHE curriculum and it is on our SRE framework, so we are trying to already challenge ideas that this is around culture and tradition, that abuse is abuse wherever it is and make that very clear to young people from a very young age.

Baroness Buscombe: Can I just ask: are you allowed into all faith-based schools, Emily?

Emily Burnage: I have 22 hours currently to do work in schools, primary and secondary, across Brighton and Hove. My work is about strengthening our PSHE framework, so I personally cannot go into every single school, but we have made our resources available online so any school can access them. Unfortunately, as you are probably well aware, PSHE and SRE are still non-compulsory, so it really depends on what the school chooses to take, but the resources are there should they wish to.

The Chair: Just before we come to question 12, can I just ask whether either of you have had any experience of being denied access to any school? Obviously, not for timetable reasons, but that they just do not want your message in the school.

Emily Burnage: It would be hard to say. There are some schools that we have better success with in the city, but I would not like to say why that would be.

The Chair: Right, but if you have those concerns do you have a mechanism to feed it back to the local authority that there seems to be resistance in a particular school?

Emily Burnage: I work very closely with our standards and achievements team and they are excellent at challenging that and going into schools, so it is not an issue that has gone unnoticed; it is trying to be challenged.

Q60 Baroness Buscombe: Article 14 of the Istanbul Convention includes a number of provisions requiring state parties to take measures aimed at, first of all, raising awareness and understanding of violence against women, particularly amongst men and boys and, two, also the empowerment of women, including through educational materials. How do you think the UK is currently performing in this regard?

Emily Burnage: My view would be that there are pockets where there is some really good work being done, but provision in terms of PSHE and SRE is patchy, so it could be that some children and young people are leaving school with very little information around sex and relationships education. When we are talking about that, we are talking about violence against women and we are talking about consent, about healthy relationships and how gender underpins all of that. That is the work that we are trying to embed in schools currently in Brighton and Hove. What we really want to do is give children and young people the opportunity to talk about gender from a really young age and understand why it is important in terms of their relationships, in terms of aspiration and expectation and why things need to change for them. What we want to see is that SRE should be made a compulsory provision in both primary and secondary schools and it should be adequately resourced and supported by specialist providers on violence against women and girls. In Brighton and Hove, for example, the PSHE framework has been written, but with partners like me in the domestic violence programme, also from WISE, which is a specialist provider for sexual exploitation and also the Survivors' Network, which provides support around sexual abuse. It is underpinning the whole framework with a gender-based approach as well, because we know how important that is and it is giving young people and children the opportunities to explore that.

Baroness Buscombe: Is PSHE a national plan or is it local to your area?

Emily Burnage: PSHE is Personal, Social and Health Education, so—

Baroness Buscombe: Yes, but is there a national strategy for it? One of the add-on questions for this is: are there any specific difficulties with establishing a national plan for the provision of teaching materials for children about violence against women and girls?

Emily Burnage: There is a programme, but at the moment it is non-statutory, so although there is a framework and there are recommendations that schools should be providing PSHE, they do not have to provide it. At the moment, with the current climate in education where attainment is really important, PSHE is one of those things that can go by the wayside.

Peter Grant: I would like to fully support those comments. We have a particular focus on men and boys and the coverage just is not there. We know from research by the University of Bristol and the NSPCC of the very high levels of violence in teenage relationships that are there and yet there is not the framework that says not only how you recognise abuse but what a good relationship looks like. There is a very positive aspect to this, which is saying how much can we promote what good, healthy, positive relationships look like and then putting domestic abuse and so on in that context. However, for boys particularly there is a huge issue around masculinity

as well, of saying, “What does it mean to be a good man in our society?” when so many of the role models that are out there are violent, abusive and measuring success in ways that we would see are detrimental to women.

Baroness O’Loan: I just want to ask a quick supplementary. I have two issues actually. One is: do you experience violence by girls against girls in schools as a problem? In some areas I think it can be a growing problem. That is question one.

The second question I want to ask is: can you give us any idea how many schools do not provide PSHE as part of the curriculum, as part of creating a context within which children will learn well?

Emily Burnage: The issue with PSHE is how it is delivered. For example, some schools might have one day a year when they will do a condensed day and give all the subjects in one go and they have then ticked the box, it has been covered, but is that a meaningful way for young people? I do not think it is. What it needs to be is embedded throughout, from reception and across the curriculum as well. For example, I have given advice to RE teachers about FGM and how we can talk about that in the context of RS, so it is about looking and being creative about it is as well. However, for PSHE, if you looked at different schools they would have different models and would prioritise it differently as well. Does that answer your question? I am not sure.

Baroness O’Loan: I also just wondered whether there is a problem of violence by girls against girls.

Emily Burnage: I think there has always been violence by girls against girls and boys against boys. It does happen, but certainly what I see as the presenting issue at the moment is violence by boys against girls and men against women.

The Chair: Could I just ask a brief supplementary question? Do either of you do any work in terms of PSHE in the independent sector? We do tend to focus in these sessions on the provisions within the state system, but obviously this is no respecter of income.

Peter Grant: No.

Emily Burnage: No.

The Chair: Do you know of any organisations that are providing resources into the independent school sector?

Emily Burnage: No. If we were asked, it is something that we would go in and be able to do a workshop in, but no, I am funded by the local authority, so my focus is on local authority schools.

Peter Grant: I have nothing to add.

Q61 The Chair: Article 15 of the Istanbul Convention requires the state to provide or strengthen appropriate training of the relevant professionals dealing with victims or perpetrators of all the acts of violence covered by that Convention. What has been your experience, if you have any, of the level of training of professionals dealing with victims or perpetrators that you have come across in relation to your work and the communities that you serve?

Peter Grant: Our reflections on this would be largely second-hand. We are an alliance of organisations working on these issues. We would reflect on Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary report on the police and reflecting, basically, a patchy response. There are very good areas of practice; there are other areas where clearly the quality of professional services

provided is inadequate. We see a tremendous role for peer groups of professionals, whether it is medical, going across legal, indeed, even into the military and so on, to be able to raise standards themselves, to challenge, to bring about good practice and so on. That is an area we would like to see development in.

The Chair: Can I just ask you specifically in relation to professionals dealing with victims? Often, I presume, the vicar or the minister is the first or early point of report. Is it a standard part of the training at theological college for ministers to have some kind of awareness as to how to deal with victims who present and then where they can connect them within the local statutory framework?

Peter Grant: I think churches are incredibly important portals in that regard, whether it is in working with young people, as you say, with people disclosing violence and also having to deal with perpetrators. I would say that across the piece church leaders, vicars and so on are not well-qualified or trained. There are some patches of it. There has been good work that has gone over the years, particularly in the Methodist Church and, to some extent, in the Baptist Church, the Anglican Church in specific dioceses and so on. However, we would love to see a much more comprehensive approach to injecting these issues into the core of theological education, because we need to get trainee ministers and so on aware of these issues and knowing how to respond right from the beginning.

Emily Burnage: I would echo that. What we see is professionals who may not have had a lot of pre or post-qualifying experience or training around domestic violence and I am talking about teachers, social workers and the police. It is not only their understanding of domestic violence and abuse and the dynamics that go on around that. It is also about the understanding and the impact of trauma as well and how that can play out and the legacy of abuse and how long that can take. Quite often, we will work with women in crisis, but we will work with women and families years after they have left an abusive relationship and the impact of that relationship is being played out in their children's education, in their behaviour and the whole family dynamic as well. Therefore, better understanding and ongoing training and we would also argue that it should be included in core competencies for professionals, like social workers, health care professionals and the police. I should just add that Brighton has White Ribbon status as a police force, but there are still improvements to be made.

Q62 Mr Sharma: Article 12 of the Convention talks of the general obligation to take measures that take into account and address the needs of persons made vulnerable by particular circumstances and to place the human rights of all victims at their centre. Do you think the UK is complying with this obligation in relation to the communities you serve? As a supplementary to that, do you think the UK approach in this regard takes account of the intersectionality of victims?

Peter Grant: The broad answer to that, we would say, is no. There are some very good high-level statements that are made, but the evidence of this would be there if there were resources provided at the grassroots to the often very small organisations that are able to respond in a very much survivor-centred, victim-centred approach to this violence. The evidence is that the resources for those types of organisations, including faith-based organisations, are diminishing. We have that feedback from Mothers' Union, which is one of our members, saying that at the grassroots it is very difficult to get the resources to make that kind of a commitment into a practical reality.

Emily Burnage: We would see that as well. Our capability is impacted hugely by the amount of public sector cuts. Regarding our funding streams, we are looking at more cuts again, so that really compromises our ability to support survivors in the community.

Q63 Sarah Teather: We have talked a lot about standing up and preventing something from happening and changing attitudes, but when you find people who perhaps might accept that they have behaved in a way that they should not do—I am thinking about men—what work is in place to help them go on and to change their behaviour in the long-term, effectively long-term rehabilitation?

Peter Grant: The rehabilitation of men is absolutely critical and is equally under-resourced really. The evidence on perpetrator programmes is rather mixed. We would advocate that they have to have a very strong common basis in the dynamics of power and control and an understanding of the nature of the violence and so on in order to change men's attitudes and actions. On top of that, there is scope for additional, much more customised modules in those kinds of programmes to address the specific needs of men in different communities.

Sarah Teather: My question was more general really. A lot of what the session has been about today has been attitudes that are widely pervading rather than necessarily the ones that are so obvious that they come to the attention of the police, so that people will be referred into a perpetrator programme. However, for something that is much more under the radar, for those men what kind of support is there to help them to change?

Emily Grant: One of the things that we piloted and are now running that we started six years ago is a programme called Break4Change, which is child-to-parent violence. It is trying to to, firstly, not label young people who are acting aggressively or violently at home as perpetrators, because what we understood was that a lot of the young people who are accessing that service had come from abusive relationships and witnessed that themselves. Therefore, it is trying to get in there early and look at those relationships and those dynamics and how that is played out. Part of the whole-school approach that RISE and the standards and achievements team in Brighton developed was about looking at the broader scope around violence. So, at one end, I will go in and do an intervention with young people who have experienced abuse at home, but talking about protective behaviours and looking at trying to negotiate conflict in the playground as well. It is looking at how you can stop those violent behaviours progressing and the acceptance of violence as a way to resolve problems.

Peter Grant: Perhaps I could highlight as well our "First Man Standing" campaign. That is aimed at men who are not violent, calling on them to respect women and challenge each other, but out of that comes inquiries to us and to others about men who are saying, "Well, I think maybe I am being abusive" or, "How do you reflect on this behaviour?" Having that safe environment in which men can challenge each other, can talk about these issues is essential to that prevention and addressing men who perhaps are struggling with these issues as well.

Sarah Teather: Do you get success out of that?

The Chair: Sorry, I think we do need to wind up at this point. Thank you so much for attending and thank you particularly to members of the public as well who have come to hear the evidence today. If there is anything further that you wanted to raise that we did not ask you about, then please do get in touch with the Committee staff. Thank you for your time to give evidence.

