



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release, 28th October 2014 House of Lords: Domestic violence – a serious issue

The Domestic Violence Law Reform Campaign welcomes today's debate in the House of Lords where Peers will discuss domestic violence during the passage of the Serious Crime Bill.

The campaign by Women's Aid, Paladin and The Sara Charlton Charitable Trust, is calling on peers to consider the patterns of coercive control and psychological abuse which are central to domestic violence when debating the amendment. The organisations are also calling on the Government to consider responses to its consultation on the creation of a new offence of coercive control. The campaign responded to the consultation by proposing a new offence that criminalises the pattern of psychological abuse and coercive control, as well as mandatory training for the Police, the Criminal Justice System and other government agencies.

Laura Richards, Chief Executive of Paladin, National Stalking Advocacy Service said:

“The current legislative framework fails to recognise how serious domestic violence is. Change is now vital to close criminalisation gaps. We have campaigned and lobbied hard, as well as produced overwhelming and compelling evidence for criminalising psychological abuse and the pattern of coercively controlling behaviour that so often correlates to escalating risk and lethality.”

Polly Neate, Chief Executive of Women's Aid said:

“Domestic violence is serious, so serious that two women a week are killed by a partner or ex-partner. New legislation to criminalise coercive control, patterns of abuse, and psychological abuse, alongside specialist-led domestic violence training, is needed to equip the police and other agencies to effectively do their job.”

Rhea Gargour, Chief Operating Officer for The Sara Charlton Charitable Foundation said:

“One in four women experience domestic violence in their lifetime in the UK. This figure is unacceptable and our legal system must be fit for purpose so that it can effectively combat this problem. Criminalising coercive control, a pattern of behaviour and psychological abuse is the first step in encouraging victims to come forward and subsequently ensuring that when they do, something tangible can be done.”

The Domestic Violence Law Reform Campaign’s full response to the Home Office’s Strengthening the Law on Domestic Violence consultation can be found here:
http://www.womensaid.org.uk/core/core_picker/download.asp?id=4704

Ends

Case studies are available on request.

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Notes to editors

1. About Paladin

Paladin are a not for profit organisation (CIC Number 8361675) founded after the successful All Party Parliamentary Stalking Law Reform Campaign which led to the new stalking law.

The main aims of Paladin are:

1. To provide victim advocacy to individuals at high risk of harm.
2. To provide training
3. To scrutinise the new stalking laws
4. To continue to lobby Parliament for further changes to Law and Practice
5. Raise awareness of dangers and risks of stalking
6. Develop a victim’s network

For further information contact Paladin www.paladinservice.co.uk

2. About Women’s Aid

Women's Aid is the national domestic violence charity that co-ordinates and supports an England-wide network of over 300 local services working to end domestic violence against women and children. Keeping the voices of survivors at the heart of its work, Women's Aid campaigns for better legal protection and services, providing a strategic "expert view" to government on laws, policy and practice affecting abused women and children. In partnership with its national network, Women's Aid runs public awareness and education campaigns, bringing together national and local action, and developing new training and resources. Women's Aid provides a package of vital 24 hour lifeline services through its publications (available in 11 languages including English), websites (www.womensaid.org.uk and www.thehideout.org.uk), and running the Freephone 24 Hour National Domestic Violence Helpline in partnership with Refuge. Women's Aid is a registered charity no 1054154.

0808 2000 247: Freephone 24 Hour National Domestic Violence Helpline (run in partnership between Women's Aid and Refuge).

The Women's Aid Website can be found at: www.womensaid.org.uk.

This is a comprehensive website about domestic violence and its impact on women and children. The website has help sections for women experiencing domestic violence, as well as policy briefings and research findings. Women's Aid also runs a website for children and young people experiencing domestic violence www.thehideout.org.uk

3. About Sara Charlton Charitable Foundation

The Sara Charlton Charitable Foundation is dedicated to helping victims of domestic abuse in the UK. They have a clear understanding of what the sector desperately needs, funds IDVAs (trained workers who work with high risk victims of domestic abuse - those who are in danger of serious harm or death) across the UK and improve IDVA services at a local as well as national level. The SCCF also funds Prevention Workers, who are trained to educate children and young adults (male and female) on healthy relationships and domestic abuse. They work with schools and youth groups and can also act as a point of contact for those experiencing abuse in the home. They believe that it is fundamental to teach 12-18 year olds about the issue in order to break the cycle of abuse. For more information, visit www.saracharlton.org.uk.

Sara Charlton Charitable Foundation is a registered charity no 1139056

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