

Bristol Feminist Network (BFN) Position Paper

Violence against women and girls (VAWG)

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) has been called by the UN and Amnesty International 'the greatest human rights violation of our times'¹.

To paint a picture of the extent of violence against women and girls globally today, here are some stats:

- 1 in 4 adult women in the UK will experience violence within their intimate relationships in their lifetimes (IPV - intimate partner violence)².
- That figure rises to 1 in 3 for teenage girls, and women aged 16-19 are now the highest risk group for experiencing IPV.
- In the UK, 2 women a week are murdered by their partners and former partners, and the police receive 600,000 reports of IPV a year.
- In the UK, six women working in prostitution are estimated to be murdered each year.
- Internationally, 1 in 3 women will experience some form of sexual assault in their lifetimes³.
- In the UK, around 94,000 rapes happen each year. 130 rapes in Bristol each month. The conviction rate for rape is 6.5% (despite media hysteria, the false accusation rate is between 3-5%)⁴.
- Globally, 3 million girls are at risk of being subjected to female genital mutilation (FGM) each year⁵.
- 4 million women are trafficked each year across international borders and internally⁶.
- Globally, 60 million girls are sexually assaulted on their way to school each year⁷.

¹ <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=36997&Cr=sexual+violence&Cr1=>

² <http://www.womensaid.org.uk/domestic-violence-articles.asp?section=00010001002200410001&itemid=1280&itemTitle=Statistics%3A+how+common+is+domestic+violence>

³ Globally, at least one in three women and girls is beaten or sexually abused in her lifetime. (UN Commission on the Status of Women, 2/28/00)
From: <http://www.feminist.com/antiviolence/facts.html>
<http://oneinthreewomen.com/>
http://www.rape.co.za/index2.php?do_pdf=1&id=875&option=com_content
http://www.whiteribboncampaign.co.uk/Resources/violence_against_women
http://www.unifem.org/gender_issues/violence_against_women/facts_figures.php

⁴ <http://www.crimestoppers-uk.org/crime-prevention/latest-crime-statistics>
False accusation stats: Fawcett Society report on 'Rape: The Facts'
Rape rate stats: Fawcett Society report on 'Rape: The Facts' and the BCS figures cited here:
<http://www.ministryoftruth.me.uk/2010/11/29/rape-statistics-what-can-we-rely-on/>

⁵ <http://www.unmultimedia.org/radio/english/detail/113153.html>

⁶ <http://www.stopthetraffik.org/humantrafficking/problem.aspx>

⁷ http://www.actionaid.org.uk/102354/read_the_report.html

- Across the world, rape is a weapon of war. It is recognised by the UN as torture.

Bristol Feminist Network (BFN) believes that violence against women and girls is not inevitable. It can be prevented.

We campaign against rape culture, preventing and untangling rape myths, encouraging education on consent and respect, raising awareness of local and global issues on violence against women and girls. Each year we organise local Reclaim the Night events to:

- Support groups who provide services for victims and survivors of violence
- Improve justice for victims and survivors of violence
- Encourage better education around respect and consent

We campaign against victim blaming, rape myths and a culture that refuses to place responsibility on the perpetrator and instead focuses on the behaviour of the victim.

We also run letter writing campaigns, discussion groups and film nights around VAWG, and work closely with sister organisations, both in a fundraising and awareness raising capacity. These include:

- Bristol Rape Crisis
- The Bridge Sexual Assault Referral Clinic
- One25
- The Safer Bristol Partnership
- The Bristol University Centre for Gender Based Violence

We also work with the police and council to ensure that the campaigns they run on violence against women and girls do not focus on victim blaming.