Women's Support Project

Mapping of Local Support for Women in Glasgow

Traditional Harmful Practices and Services Available to Black Asian Minority Ethnic Women

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The Labyrinth Project

Women often have a range of issues in their lives including Violence Against Women & Girls (VAWG), financial, employment and legal issues, but it can be hard for them to access the support they need across multiple agencies. There is a lack of joined-up, holistic, women-centred services despite many groups and organisations doing good work with and for women. The Covid-19 pandemic has increased the impact of these issues. With partners across England, Scotland and Northern Ireland, the Labyrinth Project aims to support women's spaces and services to help them, and the women they support, to emerge stronger from the damage that the pandemic is having on women's lives.

Funded by a grant from the Department for Digital, Culture, Music and Sport, the Labyrinth Project is contributing to system change for women by building capacity and forging stronger networks of support and shared learning locally and nationally.

The Labyrinth Project is formed of the three strands below:

- Local Capacity Building – strengthening the women's sector at a local level by mapping the support currently available, building networks and increasing the influence of the women's sector on local strategy and decision making.

- The Empowering Women Fund grants scheme - supporting organisations that are led by and for women to build their capacity and develop innovative ways of empowering women in their local area.

- National Women's Centre for Excellence – building a collection of knowledge, evidence, resources and tools based on experience by and for organisations within and supporting the women's sector.

Women's Support Project
www.womenssupportproject.org.uk

The Women's Support Project is a feminist voluntary organisation, recognised as a Scottish Charity. The Project works to raise awareness of the extent, causes and effect of male violence against women, and for improved services for those affected by violence. Key themes in our work have been highlighting the links between different forms of male violence and promoting interagency responses to the abuse of women and children.

Contents

1. Introduction

Purpose of the mapping

The purpose of this mapping is to gather information and knowledge that would equip organisations supporting women to identify good practice, gaps in service provision, barriers to access services for Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic women, particularly those with the experience of harmful practices and capacity building needs to better support women with experience of gender-based violence. This mapping exercise was commissioned as part of the Labyrinth project in the current COVID-19 pandemic context to also analyse and interpret how the latter has exacerbated gender-based violence and impacted service provision and delivery. The mapping of women's services in Glasgow seeks to identify good practice, capacity building and gaps in current women services to provide culturally sensitive support to BAME women who have experienced harmful practices, including those less frequently addressed in public discussion and practitioner training e.g. Bride-Price/Dowry abuse, family in-law and Inheritance abuse, polygyny abuse, virginity and hymen reconstruction abuses.

National context:

Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)

'Equally Safe' sets out a joint Scottish Government and COSLA strategy to prevent and eradicate violence against women and girls in Scotland.

https://www.gov.scot/publications/equally-safe-scotlands-strategy-prevent-eradicate-violence-against-women-girls/

Aim of Equally Safe
- To work collaboratively with key partners in the public, private and third sectors to prevent and eradicate all forms of violence against women and girls

Priorities
- Scottish society embraces equality and mutual respect, and rejects all forms of violence against women and girls
- Women and girls thrive as equal citizens – socially, culturally, economically and politically
- Interventions are early and effective, preventing violence and maximising the safety and wellbeing of women, children and young people
- Men desist from all forms of violence against women and girls, and perpetrators of such violence receive a robust and effective response

Delivering Equally Safe Fund

The DES Fund currently provides grant funding for Third Sector and other organisations to tackle violence against women, and to support those affected. The current funding is available up to September 2023. www.gov.scot/publications/delivering-equally-safe-fund-projects-funded/

'Violence Against Women' Partnerships and National VAW Network
Each Local Authority has a VAW Partnership to progress and coordinate work, with some being more active than others. A minority of areas have dedicated staffing, such as Partnership Managers and Training Officers, with work in other areas led by lead officers.

The National VAW Network is based in the Scottish Government Improvement Service.

The Network aims to improve the capacity and capability of VAW Partnerships to implement Scotland's strategy for preventing and eradicating violence against women and girls at a local level and to support Partnerships to engage effectively with community planning processes. www.improvementservice.org.uk/products-and-services/consultancy-and-support/tackling-violence-against-women/national-violence-against-women-network

What works to prevent violence against women: a summary of the evidence
Rebekah Miller Justice Analytical Services, Scottish Government, 2020

https://www.gov.scot/publications/works-prevent-violence-against-women-girls-summary-evidence/documents/

Work to address harmful practices

Forced Marriage

The Forced Marriage etc. (Protection and Jurisdiction) (Scotland) Act 2011 came into force in November 2011. It introduced Forced Marriage Protection Orders (FMPO) to protect people from forced marriage, or who are already in a forced marriage. To extend protection to those at risk, forcing someone into marriage was made a criminal offence in Scotland in September 2014.
www.gov.scot/policies/violence-against-women-and-girls/forced-marriage/

Forced Marriage practitioner guidance was provided in 2014. This includes links to Scotland's domestic abuse and forced marriage helpline, and other services offering support across Scotland www.gov.scot/publications/forced-marriage-practitioner-guidance-update-2014/pages/8/

The Scottish Government Forced Marriage Network brings together the key statutory and voluntary agencies to share their expertise and good practice. The group works to raise the practical and policy issues of forced marriage, including exploring the Network's role in the

development of service provision to those affected by forced marriage, as well as educational/awareness raising work. https://www.gov.scot/groups/forced-marriage-network/

Female Genital Mutilation

Legislation to prevent FGM was strengthened in 2005. The Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation (Scotland) Act 2005 made it a criminal offence to have female genital mutilation carried out in Scotland or abroad and increased the maximum penalty from five to 14 years imprisonment.

In 2014 the Scottish Refugee Council and The London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine produced the report 'A Model for Intervention in Scotland'. This scoping study identifies populations potentially affected by female genital mutilation in Scotland and explores interventions across the European Union (EU) in the areas of participation, prevention, protection and the provision of services, presenting a baseline of Scotland-specific data and recommendations for the development of a Scottish model of intervention. The report provided recommendations, including the need for community involvement. "Finally, work with communities is vital to all areas of intervention. For without a genuine and effective commitment to the participation of affected communities in work on this issue, not only will we fail to understand the true levels of potential risk faced by women and girls in Scotland today, we will run the risk of further marginalising the community voices that are the most effective advocates for change." (Page 45)

www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Tackling-Female-Genital-Mutilation-in-Scotland-A-Scottish-model-of-intervention.pdf

The Scottish Government established a National FGM Working Group, and in 2016 published a national action plan.

www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-national-action-plan-prevent-eradicate-fgm/

A three year progress report was provided in 2019. www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-national-action-plan-prevent-eradicate-female-genital-mutilation-fgm-year-three-progress-report/

Multi-agency guidance was provided in 2017, providing a framework for agencies and practitioners to develop and agree processes that promote the safety and wellbeing of women and girls.

www.gov.scot/publications/responding-female-genital-mutilation-fgm-scotland-multi-agency-guidance-978

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The Female Genital Mutilation Guidance and Protection Bill was passed by the Scottish Parliament on 24th April 2020. This Bill amends the Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation (Scotland) Act 2005 and aims to strengthen the legal protection of those at risk of FGM. The Bill allows courts to impose new FGM Protection Orders. Work on the guidance was paused due to the pandemic, and the Act has not yet been implemented. www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/female-genital-mutilation-protection-and-guidance-scotland-bill

Information and resources on FGM

The FGM Aware website is a practitioner source for information and resources, including a training presentation and short video. The FGM Aware Network provides opportunities for training and networking. www.fgmaware.org

Child Marriage

There are several global campaigns against child and early marriage. In the UK activists have campaigned to close the "legal loophole" which allows under-18s to marry with parental or judicial consent. This loophole, it is argued, can and has been exploited in order to force under-18s to marry as the onus is on the child to protest. Over 25% (199 cases) of Home Office's Forced Marriage Unit cases involved individuals under 18 years old in 2020.

However, these figures do not include purely religious or cultural ceremonies. The legal age for marriage in England and Wales will now be raised from 16 to 18 after the Westminster government backed a Bill that will ban 16- and 17-year-olds marrying with parental or judicial consent.

Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age)
www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-01/0192/200192.pdf

Young people aged 16 and 17 can marry without parental consent in Scotland. Currently there is no legislation tabled to increase the age of marriage. To date UK campaigns have mainly been directed at the Westminster Parliament, with less public debate in Scotland, but this is likely to change following the Westminster decision.

Virginity testing and hymenoplasty.

In October 2021 it was reported that the Westminster government has promised to ban virginity testing and hymenoplasty, in England "as soon as possible". The Virginity Testing (Prohibition) Bill will prohibit virginity testing procedures and make associated provision about education. https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2815

The Scottish Government is currently considering these issues.

Demography (Population change)

In the most recent Scottish census (2011) 91.8% of people identified as 'White: Scottish' or 'White: other British'. This was a decrease of 2% from the 2001 figure. 221,000 people identified as being part of a white minority group: 4.2% identified as Polish, Irish, Gypsy/Traveller or 'White: Other'. This includes 61,000 people who identified as 'White: Polish', 54,000 people who identified as 'White: Irish', 29,000 people who identified as 'White: Other Western European' and 4,000 people in Scotland identified as 'White: Gypsy/Traveller'

2.7% of Scotland's population identified as Asian, Asian Scottish, or Asian British. This was about 141,000 people, split between: 50,000 people who identified as 'Pakistani', 34,000 people who identified as 'Chinese', 33,000 people who identified as 'Indian', 21,000 people who identified as 'Other' and 4,000 people who identified as 'Bangladeshi 'Asian ethnicities.

African, Caribbean, or black groups made up just over 1% of the population, an increase of 28,000 since 2001. More than 36,000 people identified as African, Caribbean, or Black, split between: about 30,000 people who identified as 'African' and just under 7,000 people who identified as 'Caribbean or Black'.

Mixed or other ethnic groups accounted for under 1% at 34,000 people, split between: 20,000 people who identified as 'Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups', 9,000 people who identified as 'Other: Arab', 5,000 people who identified as 'Other: Other ethnicity'

In Glasgow, 17.3% of the population identified as an ethnic minority. This included: 3.8% Pakistani, 2.4% White: Other, 2.1% African, 1.9% White: Irish, 1.8% Chinese, 1.5% Indian, 1.4% White: Polish.

The percentage of minority ethnic groups in other Scottish cities was recorded as: Edinburgh 17.9%, Aberdeen, 17.1% and Dundee, 10.6%.

https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/census-results/at-a-glance/ethnicity/

How the mapping was undertaken

The mapping of BAME services in Glasgow has taken multiple forms including an online survey, consultation with webinar participants (56 people) and with a group of older women service users from the Stronger Together community group. 5 virtual (focus group workshop) consultation of BAME women service users (from Asian, African, and Arabic background, etc.)

We initially scheduled face to face focus group consultations as we thought the dynamic and rate of participation would have been better as opposed to online consultation, due to

multiple factors e.g., IT level and aptitude in using meeting tools such as zoom, teams, language barriers and use of interpreters during consultation interfering with the flow of discussion and ideas to include, children being at home, and being at the usual space as hindrance in engagement.

However, due to new government COVID-19 guideline limiting face to face contacts in group settings, and organisations being overwhelmed with the rise in support requests and referrals, we reverted to the online consultations for all sessions and selected women who were more or less technology adept.

The online survey questionnaire was mainly targeted at third sector organisations and community groups working with Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups, especially those working on violence against women, immigration, migrant and refugee support, benefits and money advice, community-based learning. 46 organisations were invited to complete the survey, of which 15 were women only services, and 9 were BAME organisations or community groups.

We received 28 responses of which 8 were repeat responses from some organisations and therefore were disregarded. The current mapping is based on 20 responses from the organisation shown in appendix A.

2. Local context

The Glasgow Violence Against Women Partnership is the city-wide multi-agency partnership supporting the delivery of Equally Safe in Glasgow with membership consisting of representatives from statutory and voluntary organisations in Glasgow (Police Scotland; Glasgow Health & Social Care Partnership; GCC Education Services; GCC Community Empowerment; Community Justice; Crown Office Procurator Fiscal; Wheatley Group; Scottish Fire & Rescue; Standing Group on Violence Against Women and NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde; Glasgow Life and Department of Work & Pensions).

Its aim is to improve agency responses to women, children and young people who have experienced male violence through participation for better provision and improved legal protection to prevent further abuse of women, children, and young people.

Scotland's demography has changed significantly over the past 20 years with the increase of Black African, Middle-East, Eastern-Asian and European communities. We chose to focus our mapping exercises on understanding the services that are available to women and girls with the experience of gender-based violence harmful practices; and their journey to accessing these services. Given the short-term funding available, we have limited our mapping to the city of Glasgow.

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3. Findings

What support is currently available for women in the area(s)?

In Glasgow, women's organisations have been supporting women affected by gender-based violence for decades and their services are subdivided by location area and/or specific aspect of gender-based violence they specialise in. Glasgow Women's Aid, the largest domestic abuse specific agency, works across the city, Glasgow East Women's Aid covers the North-East and Clydebank Women's Aid is based to the west of Glasgow. Glasgow and Clyde Rape Crisis Centre focuses on work around sexual violence; leading and providing services to survivors of rape, sexual assault, harassment, and stalking, including the Ruby Project which is a specialist service for BAME women. The Women's Support Project (WSP) is a Glasgow based organisation with both local and national remit. Its Rights & Choices project supports migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women who are isolated and/or have experienced violence. WSP national remit revolve around building capacity to respond to violence against women, e.g. through policy development, practitioner training, developing resources on commercial sexual exploitation and harmful practices, including FGM.

Regarding Traditional Harmful Practices and service provision for Black Asian Minority Ethnic, there are 2 south-Asian led agencies specialised in honour-based violence, forced marriage and domestic abuse (Hemat Gryffe Women's Aid and AMINA the Muslim Women's Centre). Saheliya provides support and a wide range of activities for BAME women, to improve mental health and wellbeing.
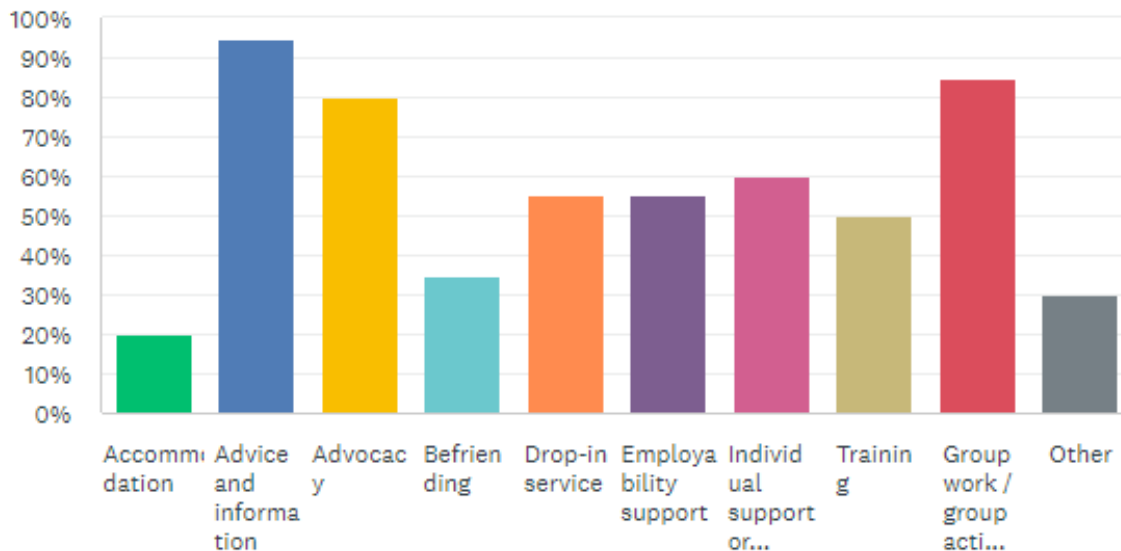
The VAWG work in Glasgow focuses specifically and directly on supporting women with issues related to the main aspect of GBV with few of the mainstream VAWG specialist organisations providing other forms of support to women related to education, continuous education, employment, etc. Respondents to the survey identified the following as their primary service provision: (the percentage is based on total of 20 responses)

- About 95% organisations said that they provide advice and information to women, with 85% also providing group work or group activities
- 80% organisations undertake advocacy work (to include supporting women who want to engage with reporting/justice system).
- 64% of respondents provide Individual support or counselling
- 61% have drop-in as part of their service
- 57% providing gender-based violence training to external agencies, volunteers, and community members.

Of the 20 respondents only the 3 specialist VAWG BAME organisations said they provide employment related support to women, the 11 other organisations providing employment support to women are non-specialised VAWG organisations but engaging with BAME

women to certain extent. "… Some activities for women… employability in our Refugee Integration Project…"

Graph 1

Graph 1 — bar chart showing percentages for: Accommodation (~20%), Advice and information (~95%), Advocacy (~80%), Befriending (~35%), Drop-in service (~55%), Employability support (~55%), Individual support or… (~60%), Training (~50%), Group work / group acti… (~85%), Other (~30%).

What are the main gaps in support?

We consulted 12 women aged 65 and over, and 42 women aged between 25 and 55 (mostly from Asian, African, and Arabic backgrounds). We used social capital as means of engaging with some groups as it was very difficult to identify BAME older women groups and established African organisations that engage with VAW in Glasgow. We partnered with Amina the Muslim Women Centre to engage with Asian women. Consultations were conducted in English, Urdu, Lingala, and French.

Older Women

Most of the older women identified isolation as being the main issue for them due to culture, their age and underlying health problems. They said this has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic as some of them were already house bound prior to the national lockdown due to health conditions, with some of them having stayed home for more than a year without meaningful social and human contacts, and depending sometimes on the good will of community members for cultural food supply, essential items, etc. BAME older women have also reported a decline in their social skills, mental and physical capacity, abilities, and capability. The above has resulted in an increase of mental illness, social anxiety, and fear of using public space such as buses, post of office, supermarket, etc. due to their vulnerabilities.

Lack of organisations and projects to support particularly elderly African women and lack of language-appropriate, culturally-informed and sensitivity in mainstream older people

organisations and projects constitute a major gap in service provision and barrier for BAME elderly women.

BAME Women

It was clear from the offset during consultations that the current terminology, forms, and language used to describe gender-based violence does not to some extent capture cultural and traditional lived experiences of some BAME community groups.

The survey shows that 56 to 78 percent of respondents have supported women who have experienced Forced marriage, Female Genital Mutilation and honour-based violence indicating that these are the main forms of VAWG harmful traditional practices most women focussed organisations would be familiar with.

However, in relation to other forms of harmful practices the survey shows that not many organisations (including specialist VAWG BAME, mainstream other organisations) were able to identify them as part of their regular service provision, with only up to 11% of respondents having supported women for sex selective abortion, Breast flattening, Hymen reconstruction, widow rite; about 17% of respondents have supported cases of virginity test and widow inheritance. Child marriage, polygyny and dowry related abuse and other uncommon forms of THP were supported by between 38 and 44 percent of our respondents.

Graph 2
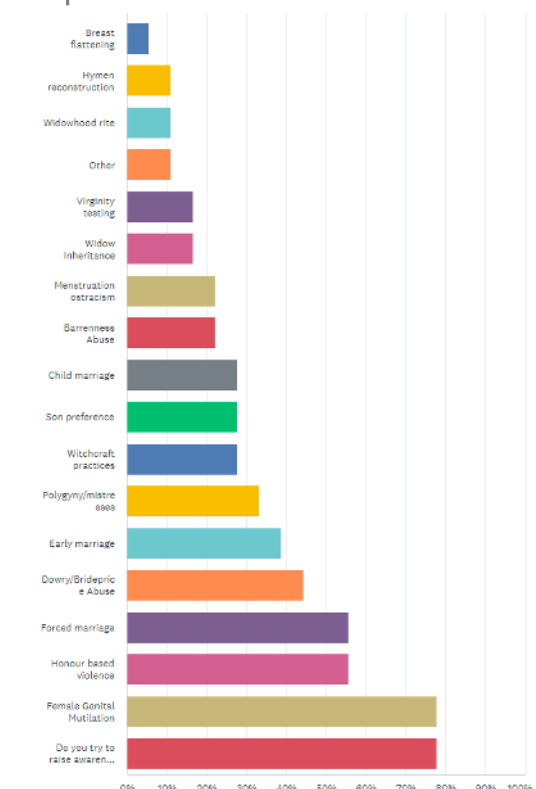
The main and constant themes emerging from the mapping by professionals during the survey and service users' consultations include lack of culturally sensitive and language appropriate community led spaces and organisations for Black African women to interact, learn and get support for issues such as gender-based violence, employability, wellbeing, legal rights, and community empowerment. There is a lack of capacity building forums in communities to raise awareness, educate and handle hard conversations such as cultural issues (conflicts, gaps, etc.) and taboo, etc.

There is also a lack of expertise and of well qualified and experienced BAME workers in VAWG/HTP to deliver culturally sensitive and language appropriate support, to inform approaches in view to address and respond to other forms THP VAW (mentioned above). BAME women and organisations are more likely to secure respectively unpaid volunteering positions in VAW sector and every other sector, and less likely to secure (as organisations) considerable lasting funding to run specialist BAME projects and organisations.

Trauma informed VAWG and mental health services are lacking cultural-sensitive and language appropriate workers to provide direct support to BAME women. Women said: "...insensitive responses, no culture diverse activities...", "sometimes the Scottish words can be confusing to understand, and I want them to slow down...", "Yes, I am Urdu spoken so it does make issues for me..."

The one size fit all approach to funding for BAME is resulting in lack of fair distribution of funding available to BAME organisations, meaning that the remaining minority ethnic organisations struggle to provide adequate support to communities who are often left out, and labelled "hard to reach" communities. Under-representation of BAME women and of African led organisations is an issue at strategic level, policy and decision making, including VAW forums.

What barriers prevent women from accessing services?

Barriers preventing BAME women from accessing services are multiple, the most common ones being cultures, language, and socialisation. Minority ethnic women are often at the intersection of both their own traditional and western cultures conflicting with one another leaving them uncertain of how to pursue their own culture while attempting to embrace their new home culture without having to let go of either of them. The adaptation to what is to them, an unfamiliar and new culture requires unlearning part or their entire culture to accommodate new social norms, which often create identity conflicts.

Their upbringing, role, and socialisation as submissive girls then women, often condition them into accepting or rather accommodating injustices inflicted on them in their society, translating to what one of the respondents referred to as: "BAME women themselves often

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minimise their experience of abuse for fear of being ostracised and isolated from community and friends…".

Repeated experiences and continuous exposure to abuse from authorities, institutions in their countries of origins (sometimes in their country of migration) have stripped their trust, causing them to lack the confidence to report any abuse following under the protective characteristics beg it racial, gender, etc.

The lack of language appropriate and cultural informed services or activities were identified as one the most basic and practical barriers preventing BAME women from accessing services. Women said being supported by a worker from a similar ethnic background in language familiar to them creates a safe place for them to engage with services. It alleviates worries and anxiety BAME women often experience when engaging with non-culturally informed organisations particularly on sensitive issues such as mental health and gender-based violence. BAME women find it easy to connect and build rapport with support workers who are relatable to their culture, language, colloquial and non-verbal gestural and expression which do not translate in other languages. "Yes, anyone who speaks my language…" Workers have also identified language as one the obstacles that stand in the way of women engaging with mainstream services: "… English language… and do not have people skills so not sure how to talk to others…"

BAME women's barriers in accessing services are very complex, they also include the fact that service providers lack understanding of how women's culture have shaped them and their lack of understanding of other forms of gender-based violence that are unique to their cultures and traditions.

Women on spouse visa, joint immigration claim or status would stay longer in abusive relationship due to their dependence on their spouse's status, income, constituting therefore a major barrier from engaging in meaningful support from organisation as they have to prioritise their status, survival over their own safety and well-being.

Finally, lack of childcare for BAME women was brought up in the survey and consultation, it prevents women from attending group works, joining training for personal development and delays women's integration and affect their independence. The following comment was made in regard with childcare "… I have a daughter and that makes it difficult to access and use resources i.e. go to English classes…"

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Graph 3
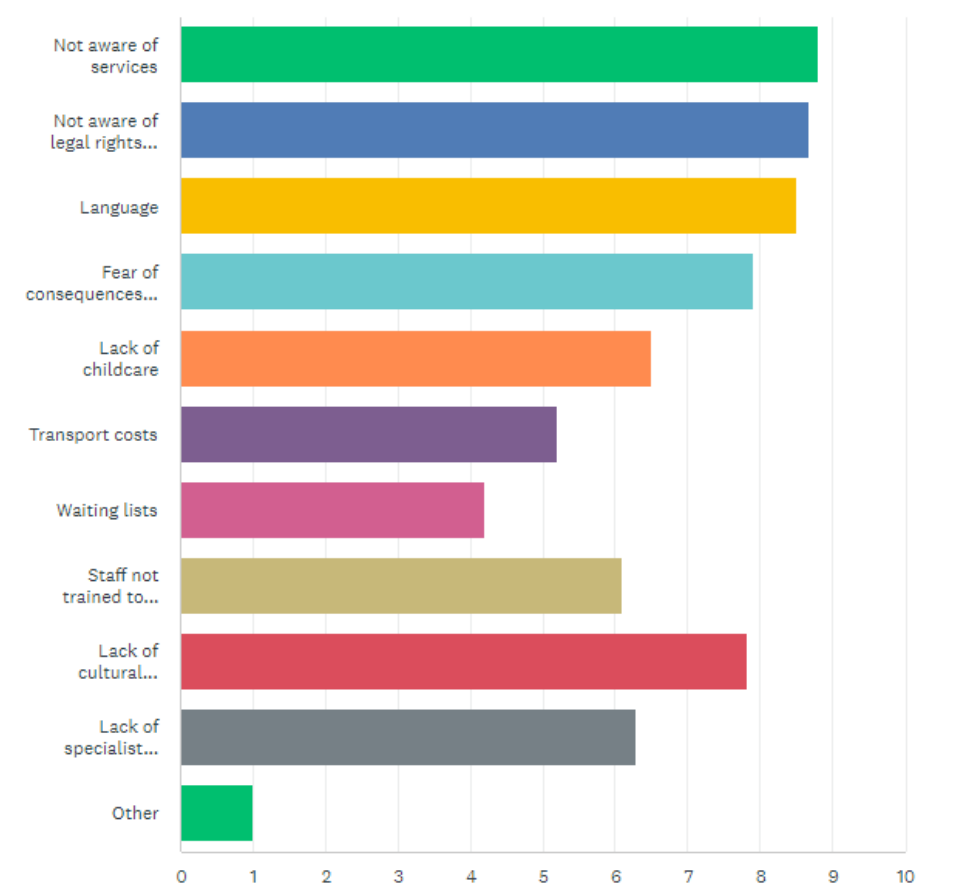
Respondents' comments captured further barriers preventing BAME women from accessing services such as lack of family support due to honour and shame associated with their abuse, lack of financial support and funding for women with No Recourse to Public Funds, Support services not understanding their fundamental needs due to their precarious financial state and limited access to other forms of supports.

How well are BAME women's voices represented in the area?

There are several mechanisms utilised to represent women's voices in decision making, planning and development of services as well as service delivery in Glasgow.

The Standing Group on Violence Against Women (SGVAW) has over 150 years of combined experiences in working with women and girls. The Standing Group represents voluntary sector women's organisations at the Violence Against Women Partnership (GVAWP). and feeds in directly from the group on issues such the Multi-Agencies Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC), the value of women only space, etc. ensuring that views of its members and of women, girls and children engaging with their services are heard on those ongoing challenging issues.

The Glasgow 'VAW' sector is well developed with diverse organisations supporting women, girls, and children at various capacities and with different forms of gender-based violence. The sector has 2 well established south-Asian women led organisations and 1 Project (Hemat Gryffe, Amina MWC and the Daisy Project) that provide support to BAME women who have experienced gender-based violence with a focus on Honour-based violence, forced marriage, domestic abuse, etc, whilst Saheliya supports women on a wide range of issues.

The current mapping did not highlight the mechanism used to capture and ensure that under-represented groups' views and voices are heard at strategic, decision making and implementation levels.

However, the GVAWP has established a Women Asylum Immigration and Refugee working group (WAIR group) to identify and initiate appropriate responses to issues/gaps in services affecting women from the wide range of migrant communities who are living in Glasgow with or without status or leave to remain and who have experienced some form of gender based violence either here in the UK or in their country of origin.

Its aim is to improve the co-ordination and accessibility of services to women and children from communities who have restricted/limited immigration status here in the UK who are experiencing or have experienced gender-based violence in Glasgow or in their country of origin; by improving access to information about rights and services, addressing worker training and support issues and improving operational and strategic co-ordination of service responses

What are the capacity building needs of the sector?

The following have been identified as capacity building needs for organisations to support BAME women:
- Understanding harmful practices and other forms of violence against women more likely to be experienced by BAME women and girls
- Legal rights and protection for BAME women in immigration system (services are not confident in providing women with advice on their legal right in immigration mater)
- Support for women with no recourse to public funds,
- Immigration and violence against women,
- Female Genital Mutilation,
- Brexit pre-settled / settled status and rights, etc.

We are developing a training programme for third sector and community-based services and groups.

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How good is joint working and collaboration?

Glasgow has an extensive network of 3rd sector voluntary organisations, while some are grouped in geographical area such as the Integration networking North, South, East and west, others are based on work field such as women's sector (Rape crisis centres, women's aid, Routes Out etc.), ESOL Forum, and the Glasgow Violence Against Women Partnership, which in turn isa member of the National VAW Network. Some women's sector organisations are linked into national strategic work, for example, Women's Support Project.

Where effective joint working is well established, this seems to be mostly between third sector organisations and statutory organisations such as Social Work, Health, Police, Education and Legal organisations. Cross-sectorial joint working however, is mainly focused on networking, sharing of resources, online events, etc. Joint work between mainstream women organisations and BAME and cross-communities (BAME to BAME) is yet to be established.

Responders attributed the increase of online collaborative work especially online events to the COVID-19 lock-down and made the following comments: "Joint working is crucial in order to provide support to BAME women". "We are a new organisation and struggling to establish collaboration work with well-established organisations". "We sometimes invite organisations that work with BAME women to deliver a training to our volunteers…"

Participants from both the survey and consultations (during the focus group discussions) have repeatedly highlighted the lack of representation of Black African Minority Ethnics at the strategic level, that most Black African led organisations were still unaware of membership criteria for existing forums, platforms, or partnerships, etc. and would like to see better collaboration work being established between main stream and African led organisations as well as with Asian led organisation in view to respond to the needs of these communities, to learn and share good practices and cultural sensitive approaches.

What impact has COVID-19 had on provision/capacity?

The Glasgow BAME mapping exercise didn't capture clear responses on how COVID-19 has impacted women's services provision and their access to the latter. We have based our responses on previous surveys ran in Glasgow (Left out and locked down: impact of COVID-19 for marginalised groups in Scotland, by Glasgow University and Early impact of Covid-19 on Muslim & Black Minority Ethnic women in Scotland, by AMWC) in Scotland. Although these surveys were not specific to Traditional Harmful Practices and BAME women's experiences, they highlighted cross cutting issues faced by some BAME women, asylum seekers and refugees.

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Overall, COVID-19 has significantly impacted women and the sector, even more so BAME women, and we would anticipate their social issues to have been exacerbated by factors such as immigration, non-recourse to public fund, high rate of unemployment or the restriction of it, deprivation and low education attainment, and heightened isolation, etc. as well as new emerging issues caused by the Covid-19 pandemic such as digital exclusion, home schooling for women with limited English or total complete illiteracy of it.

Other factors such as poverty due to immigration insecurity, unemployment or job insecurities (with a significant number of migrant people working zero-hour contracts) have all increased social inequality for BAME communities.

Many small BAME led organisations did not have the capacity and resources to respond rapidly to the change that came with the pandemic, such as IT equipment, staff, and contingency plan to meet the needs of the community they were supporting. This has brought many to a complete halt while trying to figure out ways, resources and funding to implement new, emergency services adapted to the pandemic.

BAME women have reported compounded mental illness and social anxiety; services have seen an increase in requests for face-to-face social activities to resume as soon as possible as means of combatting these and to provide them with a sense of normality.

A great number of minority women with low education, limited IT and digital skills, whose first language isn't English and educated in systems that were different from the British continue to struggle in engaging with remote, online and virtual services, home schooling and/or supporting their children with basic homework.

On the other hand, the pandemic also brought to light inequalities that were easily overlooked for years, such as services adaptation to needs of BAME communities (the under-served communities such as African, Latinos, Chinese, Arabic, etc.), the necessity for more diversified services, and fair distribution of funding to BAME communities.

Women's organisations have reported to have seen between 29% and 50% of substantial increase in referral to their services, with about 64.29% increase in violence against women being recorded over the past 18 months. In contrast, BAME organisations have reported to have seen even greater increase in referral for cases of domestic abuse, group work and emotional support for the same period.

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4. Implications of the mapping for project development

The mapping of VAW BAME services in Glasgow has brought to light disparities in services, funding, representation and opportunities for under-represented minority ethnic communities in one hand; on the other hand, it has highlighted good practices and work championed by women organisations and south-Asian BAME led organisations.

Almost every respondent to the survey questionnaire and participants at focus group consultations have highlighted the need for better engagement and representation, and improved responses and services for minority women and girls, as well as a diversified minority ethnic community.

We considered capacity building needs from the point of view of minority ethnic communities and organisations, and well-funded main-stream organisations.

In attempt to try to understand funding disparities and gaps for BAME and African led organisations, respondents to the survey and participants to the focus groups have highlighted the need for funders to use an equity approach that recognises the complex needs and issues within the minority ethnic group in order to empower them to become autonomous organisations and communities.

Better reporting systems and accountability from well-funded organisations that "claim to" support BAME people in demonstrating the impact of their work in BAME marginalised communities that they support, particularly the under-represented BAME communities (minorities within the minorities). "… All organisations that claim to be working with the BAME community should have BAME people in a position …" "People who have lived experience should be allowed to speak for themselves but not someone who is only using their experience to receive funding".

Investing in building the capacity of "Black and Ethnic Minorities" to represent the voices of their communities at strategic and decision-making level. "The Government need to develop plans to support the development of talented BAME people to senior level positions". Creation of women only community based ESOL and other essential accredited training would shorten waiting list at colleges, empower women to become independent, break barriers that prevent them from accessing other mainstream support services and promote their integration.

Creation of Afro-descent and under-represented minority led organisation that is language-based and adaptable to provide culturally sensitive services to their peers for better reach and community involvement/engagement. Women said they are more at ease when communicating with support workers from their back-ground or/or in language close to their own as some culture and tradition do not translate. Some counselling practitioners have reported difficulties working around interpreters due to difficulty to build rapport and genuine empathy coming from a cultural understanding, etc.

The following training were most requested as capacity building need for non-BAME practitioners and organisation, to be delivered preferably by trained and professional members of community affected: understanding forms of harmful practices affecting minority ethnic communities, Female Genital Mutilation, working in language appropriate

and cultural informed approach, supporting women with no-recourse to public fund, legal right and protection, immigration and VAW, Brexit and Pre-settled status, etc.

Appendix A

List of organisations responding to the survey:

African Challenge Scotland
Amina MWRC (2 responses)
Anyiso
Award-Scotland
Daisy Project
Empowering women for change (2 responses)
Gilded Lily (2 responses)
Glasgow East Women's Aid
Glasgow Women's Aid
Glasgow Women's Library
Glendale Women's Café
Hemet Gryffe (5 responses)
Rape Crisis Scotland
Rugby Project
Saheliya
SAY Women
Scottish Refugee Council
Spirit of Springburn (2 responses)
Together for better Life
Women's Support Project - Rights & Choices

Glossary:

We use terms:

Mainstream: to refer to well established non-BAME organisations/groups etc.

BAME: in this context refers to Afro-descent, South-Asian and any other minority groups in the United Kingdom (E.g. Arabic, Afghan, Eastern-Asian, Latino, Eastern-European)

South-Asian led organisation: to indicate existing minority organisations and to highlight need for an inclusive diversity with a broader reach in culture, language, religion and race

African women: refers to afro-descent women used interchangeably

Arabic or Arabic women: used to describe community of people whose language is Arabic, deriving or with influence of Arab language, culture, or religion