

**Domestic Abuse  
Prevention  
in the Big Society**  
by  
David Gadd

[david.gadd@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:david.gadd@manchester.ac.uk)

# All change? Domestic abuse policy since May 2010

*Together we can End Violence Against  
Women and Girls Strategy* to *Call to End  
Violence Against Women and Girls*

Deficit Reduction and the Comprehensive  
Spending Review, 2010

Big Society: less with more or more for less?:

Raoul Moat: irrelevance? abuser? legend?

## ***Together we can end violence against women and girls: Nov 2009***

- A multiply tiered system of intervention
- Schools-based agenda to:
  - Promote healthy relationships, gender equality and non-violence.
  - Deal emotions and ‘challenge the way in which some men and boys behave towards women and girls’.
- ‘All men can and should play a part’



# Policy goes AWOL: May to July 2010

- *Together* archived before *Call to Action* launched
- Moat: shoots 3 people, manhunt, Gascoigne, Facebook, Goliath Legend
- Cameron: Belated condemnation, but Big Questions unasked



# May @Women's Aid

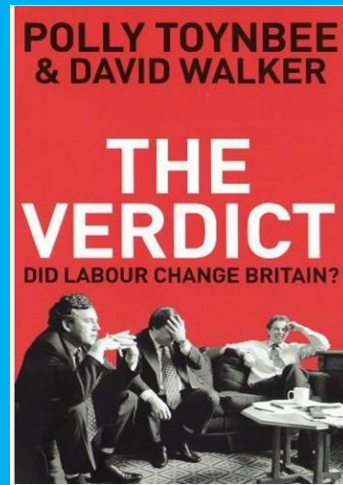


- Don't mention Moat
- Labour said to have 'throw[n] money' at the problem of violence against women, 'regardless of whether this was the best way to fix things'
- Women's Aid 'the model' of the Big Society:
- 'a society in which we all work together to address problems, conscious that government has a role to play but that it does not have all the answers'

# Did Labour Change Britain?

'Labour moved against 'honour' killings. A new forced marriages unit was soon dealing with 5000 inquiries and 300 cases of forced marriage a year... The BCS found one in four women (and one in six men) experiencing domestic violence at some point in their lives. The Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 made breaching a non-molestation order a criminal offence. The government planned 120 new specialist courts with staff trained to support victims; successful prosecutions increased, and cases collapsing when the victim withdrew through fear fell in number.'

(Toynbee and Walker, 2010: 174)

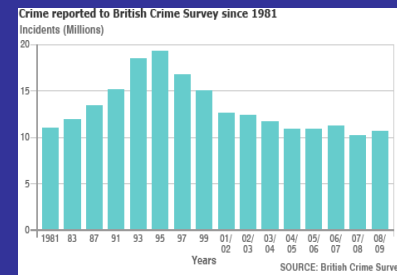


# Falling rates of domestic

2004/05 -2009/10:

- 6% to 4% for men victimized in last year
- 8% to 7% for women victimized in last year

USA and Australia witness similar falls.



# Number of partner/ex-partner homicides in UK

| Year | 2001<br>/02 | 2002<br>/03 | 2003<br>/04 | 2004<br>/05 | 2005<br>/06 | 2006<br>/07 | 2007<br>/08 | 2008<br>/09 | 2009<br>/10 |
|------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Rate | 101         | 118         | 106         | 96          | 105         | 90          | 91          | 101         | 95          |



# *Call to End Violence Against Women and Girls*

- Less precise on prevention:
  - an advertising and awareness campaign,
  - a helpline
  - meetings with journalists and business.
  - review of the 'sexualisation and commercialisation of childhood'
  - Discipline and educating out prejudice
- More ambitious on protection:
  - Rehabilitation; Payment by results, Payback.
- More ambiguous on provision

Call to End  
Violence Against  
Women and Girls:  
Action Plan

# Rebalanced Public and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sectors

Rape crisis

IDVAs and ISVA funded

Access to benefits for women with indefinite leave to remain

Reducing managerialism in child protection following Munro

But Munro has also noted the importance of:

- Equipping and trusting practitioners to live with risk
- Ensuring 'sufficient provision of local early help services for children, young and people and families'
- Joined up provision with services for adults

# Big Cuts via Localism

- £819 million from children's services
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector Crises: Poppy Project, MANN and North Devonshire Women's Aid
- NSPCC scaling back local projects
- EHRC reduced.
- Housing benefits reduced by £1.8billion.

# Women, violence & poverty

Most abuse victims cope alone.

- Only 21% of victims say they have reported the worst assault they have experienced to the police
- Those on low incomes and in social housing are most vulnerable
- Women's unemployment rising, social housing reduced, new costs associated with applying for child maintenance.
- Has Cameron forgotten the 'central role that gender inequality plays – both as a cause and a consequence of violence against women'?

# The Costs of DV

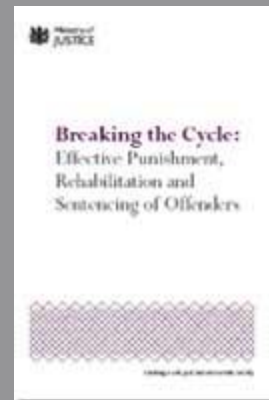
| Services                | Cost 2008 £m |
|-------------------------|--------------|
| Criminal justice system | 1261         |
| Health care             | 1730         |
| Social services         | 283          |
| Housing and refuges     | 196          |
| Civil legal services    | 387          |
| <b>Total</b>            | <b>3856</b>  |

# Bringing more offenders to justice

- = Rehabilitation?
- = Payment by results?
- = Payback?

But:

- 12% of prisoners have never had a job;
- 47% have no qualifications;
- 24% were in care as children
- 20% have 'mental and emotional problems'



## The Limitations of the 'Siren Call of Law'

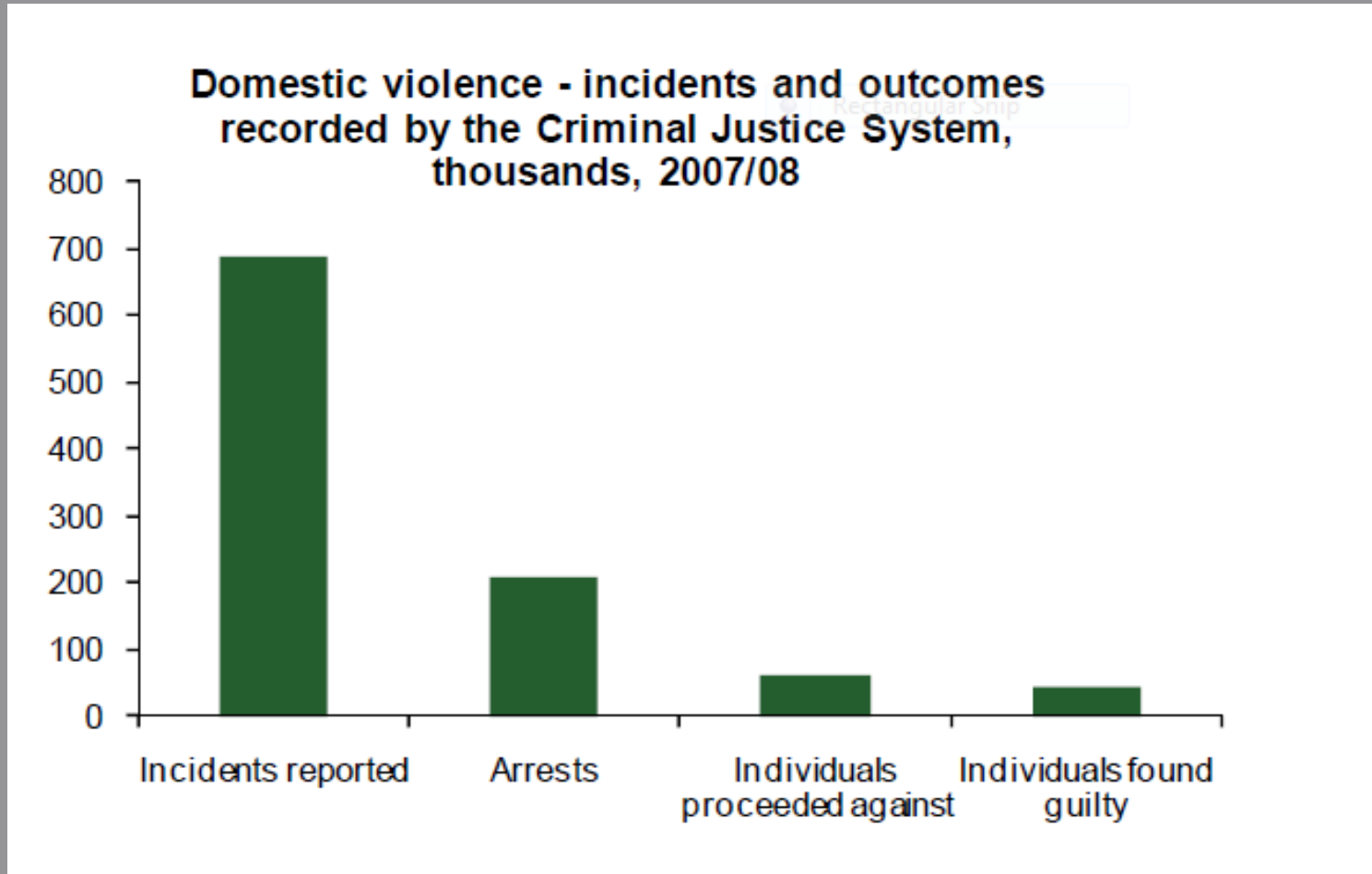
### Presumptive Pro-arrest and Prosecution Policies

- 65% of referrals proceed with.
- 72% of cases proceeded with result in conviction.
- 46% chance of conviction if charges are pressed.

### But

- victims not necessarily safer
- 50% of offenders known to police, known to have abused gain within 3 years, 1 in 5 against a new partner
- Much domestic abuse does not result in a charge

# Ratio of reported incidents to convictions: 14: 1





# Convictions

- Do not necessarily culminate in treatment
- Fines, probation, & imprisonment
- Perpetrator programmes may work for *some* if properly resourced... But:



# Perpetrator Programmes

'The study has shown that the women's safety worker can be somewhat marginalised, and information not routinely shared... Delivering the group work elements of the programmes is challenging though and the manuals cannot guide the tutors in all the scenarios they may face... [E]valuation measures were often not completed and those that were completed may not have been given due attention.' (Bullock et al, 2010:pi-ii)

# Outside of Criminal Justice

'violent men, who are fathers, slip through the legislative framework, particularly in relation to residence and contact issues, and post-separation violence.'

(Featherstone & Peckover, 2007: 184)

# Raoul Moat

Had 'underlying problems'

- Was intensely paranoid
- Thought he had lost everything
- 'Just got out of the slammer to a totally fucked life...Lost my business. Kids to s[ocial] services. Gonna lose my home and lost my mrs of nearly 6 years to a copper... I'm not 21 and I can't rebuild my life'
- Was never subject to a treatment intervention for violence against women
- Believed in payback: 'watch and see what happens'

# Tackling prospective offenders?

- *Girls*: The 'underlying causes of women's offending' will be tackled
- *Boys*: 'Head teachers will be expected to take a strong stand against bullying – particularly prejudice-based bullying such as racism, sexism and homophobia. We will increase their authority to discipline pupils and maintain this discipline beyond the school gates.'

# What boys think about VAW

- Up to half think they might do it, in some circumstances.
- Most also think it is wrong, unmanly and cowardly.
- Violence towards women regarded as more acceptable in the contexts of fighting and infidelity.

## Boys' Attitudes can also be Defensive, explaining why...

- Some children are resistant to curriculum based learning about domestic abuse
  - Boys are less likely to talk to professionals than girls.
  - Those with emotionally impoverished backgrounds are harder to engage.
  - Some boys identify more with an abuser who appears invulnerable than a victim who appears damaged, depressed, or abandoning.
  - Sexual/intimate relationships become tinged with aggression, as a defence against vulnerability.
  - Men, like Raoul Moat, whose childhoods were emotionally impoverished, struggle to face up to their own dependency needs.

# The Big Quandary

1. Austerity measures may increase the number of women vulnerable to repeat forms of domestic abuse.
2. Firefighting through criminal justice may become more necessary, but will not eliminate the problem in the longer term. Policing and courts at limits?
3. Shifting the balance of spend from firefighting to prevention might pay dividends, but is very difficult when fires are ongoing.
4. Prevention work must engage young men with issues of vulnerability. Without it, more damaged young men will learn instead to 'look after themselves'; while fewer will be *big enough* to face up to the emotional dependency that is at root in so much violence against women and girls.