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Shadow Pandemic



**#signalforhelp: online campaigning to support those
experiencing violence in isolation**



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KEY FINDINGS



Social isolation as a response to the health crisis exacerbated vulnerabilities, resulting in socio-economic consequences that became the catalyst for stress and led to an increase in domestic violence globally.



COVID 19

68% of respondents who are women living with their abuser during lockdown said they felt they had no one to turn to during lockdown
The National Domestic Abuse Hotline saw 25% increase in calls since March of 2020

The level of protection and personal support that women's shelters provide is also extremely vital because survivors are more likely to be killed after leaving their abusive partners



Shelter

Homelessness amongst women is higher in younger age groups: 28% female versus 20% male for under 25s

BAME specific issues not addressed: access to translators, misunderstanding of culture, religious practices not being acknowledged as well as prejudice and assumptions about one's ethnicity



Funding

Women's Aid Domestic Abuse Report 2019, 31.9% said their access to money during the relationship was controlled by the perpetrator



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THE POLICY



(i) Reach out to Survivors: Addressing Intersectional Barriers and Creating Points-of-Contact



Addressing intersectional barriers:

- The creation of multi-lingual support services
- Intersectionality training
- Further funding for and collaboration with LGBTQ+ -specific support services
- The establishment of accessible points of contact that will bridge technological and economic barriers

Points of Contact:

- The creation of discrete and accessible points of contact is essential for the safety of survivors
- In-person contact points in places such as supermarkets and clinics will make it easier for the survivor to report without the knowledge of their abusers

(ii) Implementation of Subsidised Shelters and Refuges



The Scottish Government must immediately implement a funding program for women's shelters and refuges across Scotland. Stable and consistent funding would dramatically reduce the financial burden support services are facing due to poor policy and exacerbated further by the COVID-19 pandemic.

(iii) Comprehensive Funding for Support Services



The Government must continue to offer financial aid beyond the initial grant offered in the first month of the pandemic. Long term financial support will allow these organisations to implement long term solutions that will support victims beyond the bounds of national lockdown.

(iv) Efficient and Equity-Based Financial Support for Survivors



The Government must continue to offer financial aid beyond the initial grant offered in the first month of the pandemic. Long term financial support will allow these organisations to implement long term solutions that will support victims beyond the bounds of national lockdown.



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LOBBYING WITHIN THE UNIVERSITY



Lack of infrastructure within the university :

Report and Support

A platform for reporting distressing situations related to sexual violence, harassment, domestic abuse, stalking and more.

The University's platform for reporting will be available soon.

We recommend you access via VPN from off campus networks where possible. If you have issues accessing, please email reportandsupport@ed.ac.uk

Share



Being students at the University of Edinburgh, we also see scope to lobby our proposals at the university level in order to positively impact the student community. Each policy proposal could be very well adapted for this goal through bettering the Student Support services training for domestic abuse; improving community awareness and creating points-of-contact for students wanting to reach out and get help; repurposing empty university-owned accommodation for rapid rehousing of student-survivors; and, finally, setting up financial support, much like we saw with hardship payments at the beginning of the pandemic. Key gatekeepers that we feel could help us manifest such changes are: Edinburgh University Student Association, the Feminist Society, Girl Up Edinburgh and the noisy movement.