

## **Legal aid cuts and domestic violence against women:**

### **A guide to gathering evidence to send to the UN**

Those working with victims of all forms of violence against women are currently preparing the shadow report to submit to the UN Committee. The concern is that the gateway is denying victims of violence access to justice. To help with this report, the working party preparing the report (led by Cris McCurley, Partner at Ben Hoare Bell) needs your help. What is needed is empirical evidence that victims of violence are still unable to obtain the proof necessary to qualify for legal aid.

All of the evidence collated will be compiled into a report and sent to the UN CEDAW Committee. Your assistance and co-operation is invaluable, as it will help paint a full picture about the impact of the cuts on the lives of women in the UK.

Your assistance is gratefully received in gathering the following:

#### **Case studies:**

Please send stories of women's experiences where they have been affected by a lack of legal aid in as much detail as you can (but please don't send the actual evidence)

#### **Delays and difficulty in getting proof:**

What has been the impact of delay in obtaining proof? What problems have women had in getting a letter to support their actual application for legal aid?

#### **Why have they had problems getting a letter supporting their application for legal aid?**

- Language barrier
- Administrative problems
- Cultural and social barriers
- Not being believed
- The wrong kind of letter being provided
- Healthcare officials not understanding what was required in the letter or being unwilling or unable to assist
- Cost

#### **Outcome:**

What was the consequence of all of the above?

#### **Submit your evidence**

Please send all completed forms to Cris McCurley: [CrisMcCurley@benhoarebell.co.uk](mailto:CrisMcCurley@benhoarebell.co.uk)

#### **[Form for lawyers](#)**

#### **[Form for NGOs](#)**

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Smita Shah at Garden Court Chambers at [smitas@gclaw.co.uk](mailto:smitas@gclaw.co.uk) or Cris McCurley.

Thank you,

Smita Shah, Barrister  
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