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University responses to forced marriage and violence against women in the UK:

Report on a pilot study

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1. Summary

Violence against women (VAW) and forced marriage (FM) affect students in post-secondary education but little is known about how these issues present to staff working at colleges and universities and how the institutions respond. The purpose of this pilot study was to gather initial evidence about these matters and explore how institutional responses can be enhanced, considering both internal procedures and links with specialist services in the community.

We use the term post-secondary education as an umbrella term for higher education universities and colleges, and further education colleges. The term higher education institutions (HEIs) is used mostly in reference to UK institutions that typically draw students 18 years and older and prepare them for professional or research-oriented jobs. Further education (FE) colleges refers to UK institutions that typically draw students 16 to 18 years old and prepare them for vocational and technical jobs. In addition, we use the terms universities and colleges interchangeably when referring to HEIs in the United States, which we do on occasion for comparative purposes. We use the different terms in order to acknowledge the variety of legal, social and cultural contexts post-secondary education institutions constitute.

This report is informed by feedback gathered in 16 stakeholder interviews with staff at two HEIs in the southeast of England, local police officers, and local community-based specialist service providers¹. Data collection was restricted to two HEIs, due to the exploratory nature of this research and the limited financial support and time-frame we had available for securing institutional participation.

Note that students were not interviewed as our main focus in this pilot study was on staff and institutional perspectives. The pilot study used a small non-random sample, which may not necessarily be representative of HEIs in the UK. Nonetheless, we believe that the evidence gathered is useful and can inform university policy and future research in this area. This report presents aggregated findings across the two participating HEIs.

We found that individual front line staff members see up to 15 cases per year of VAW students, mostly domestic violence but also sexual assault, and cases in which family members other than an intimate partner abuse the student. Cases of FM appear to be almost invisible to university staff but specialist service providers in the community stated that they worked with victims of FM who were students.

The 'institutional response' appeared to be a matter of individual staff member expertise and commitment. Systematic institutional policies or response protocols dedicated to the issues were lacking. Managerial support for front line staff varied considerably; acquiring specialised training depended on individual staff motivation and the supportiveness of individual line managers. Referrals within the HEIs were not formalised but appeared to work well within the immediate peer context of front line staff; referrals to community-based services were not formalised and depended on how well individual staff knew the local community and relevant national services and resources. Staff members expressed interest in more specific training on VAW/FM and on cultural sensitivity.

¹ Specialist service providers refers to organisations that specialise in working with women (and men) affected by VAW and/or FM such as domestic violence project and rape crisis centres, and organisations that work with Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) women in the UK, or those dealing specifically with potential and actual victims of FM

2. Policy and research context for the pilot study

2.1 Policy context

The pilot study addresses forced marriage within the broader problem of violence against women, following recent research and the recommendations of the End Violence Against Women Coalition² and the UK government's strategy for ending violence against women and girls³. The UK Department of Education also adopted this perspective, in which forced marriage is included within a broader definition of violence against women⁴.

The UK government's 2011 action plan on violence against women and girls noted that colleges "can play a vital role" in prevention (see fn 3, p. 8). While the plan seems to view this role primarily in terms of teaching young people about healthy relationships, we suggest that HEIs have a broader responsibility to students. We know from this pilot study, recent UK research (see next section) as well as international research that victims and survivors disclose VAW/FM to HE staff (mostly to frontline student services but also to teaching staff⁵). Furthermore, as we detail in sections 2.2 and 2.3 below VAW disproportionately affects female students, and FM disproportionately affects students from backgrounds where FM may be prevalent. Both VAW and FM can severely challenge or even end students' ability to pursue education⁶. In addition, support with these issues may require specialised knowledge and skills because of the complex interpersonal and social dynamics of these abuses and because the likely presence of perpetrators within students' family or social networks creates particular risks to students' safety and well-being⁷. Finally, HEIs fall within the public sector equality duty (set out in section 149 Equality Act, 2010) toward protected groups based on religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation that came into force in England, Scotland, and Wales on 5 April 2011 (with specific duty regulations for England 10 September 2011), and which concerns the elimination of unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation, and the enhancement of equality of opportunity.

Furthermore, under the Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act 2007 a person can get a forced marriage protection order (FMPO). An FMPO can be applied for by the victim, a relevant third party, or with the leave of the court, any other person. Any other person could include someone from student services, which implies that reporting of FM at HEIs is an important issue. In addition, local authorities are relevant third parties who do not need the prior leave of the court to make an application for a FMPO, which means that HEIs working in partnership with local authorities is also important in this context.

As we will show in the next section VAW/FM not only present as problems within post-secondary education but also affect some students disproportionately. The current policy context urges educational institutions to be aware of these issues and properly prepared to address them, and those who fall within the public sector equality provisions are challenged to meet their duties accordingly. In particular, this may be an issue of what the equality duty terms "indirect discrimination"⁸, in which an institutional policy or practice, for instance about offering generic student support services, is applied to all students but may not sufficiently address the specific needs of students dealing with VAW/FM. This suggests to us that post-secondary education is called upon to become more aware of VAW/FM and take steps to address the specific needs of victims and survivors such as through specialised

² Gill, A. & Anitha, S. (2011). *Forced marriage: Introducing a social justice and human rights perspective*. London: Zed Books. And Coy, M., Lovett, J. & Kelly, L. (2008). *Realising rights, fulfilling obligations: A template for an integrated strategy on violence against women for the UK*. London: End Violence Against Women.

³ <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/crime/call-end-violence-women-girls/vawg-action-plan?view=Binary>

⁴ <http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/healthandwellbeing/safeguardingchildren/a0072231/forced-marriage> [retrieved 23 March 2012].

⁵ Branch, K.A., Hayes-Smith, R., & Richards, T.N. (2011). Professors' experiences with student disclosures of sexual assault and intimate partner violence: How "helping" students can inform teaching practices. *Feminist Criminology*, 6(1), 54-75.

⁶ Horsman, J. (2006). Moving beyond "stupid": Taking account of the impact of violence on women's learning. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 26(2), 177-188.

⁷ The UK's Forced Marriage Unit gives specific guidance at <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/when-things-go-wrong/forced-marriage/info-for-professionals>; see also Ely, G.E. & Faherty, C. (2009). Intimate partner violence. In J.T. Andrade (Ed.), *Handbook of violence risk assessment and treatment: New approaches for mental health professionals* (pp. 157-177). New York, NY: Springer.

⁸ Guidance document available at <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/new-equality-act-guidance/equality-act-guidance-downloads/>.

training for frontline support staff and more systematic referral practices to specialist services in the community.

2.2 Research on domestic violence, sexual assault and sexual harassment against female students

In the UK, attention to students as victims of VAW/FM has been intermittent with little systematic research in this area, compared to the U.S. and Canada where universities have been addressing rape and sexual assault on campus since the 1980s⁹ (and more recently, driven by Congressional legislation and significant funding, other forms of abuse such as domestic and dating violence and stalking, although attention to FM is relatively rare¹⁰). However, in the UK this situation is changing and research on violence against female students, in particular, is (re)emerging as an area of research and policy¹¹.

In 2010 the National Union of Students (NUS) released the first UK-wide study of women students' experiences of abuse¹². The NUS survey estimated that 1 in 7 (14%) women students have experienced a serious physical or sexual assault while a student at university; 12% have been stalked; 16% experienced unwanted kissing, touching or molesting; and over 10% were a victim of serious physical violence. 68% of women students reported one or more kinds of sexual harassment on campus during their time as a student (a similar survey was recently undertaken in Australia¹³).

The NUS UK survey provides a base line estimate, which universities can use to gauge how many of their female students may experience some form of abuse while at university. To arrive at such an estimate the NUS percentages can be extrapolated (see Fisher, Cullen & Turner, 2000¹⁴ for an example of such extrapolation). For instance, based on the NUS survey's 14% estimate of female students who experience a serious physical or sexual assault while at university, one would expect that per 10,000 female students, approximately 1,400 may experience a serious physical or sexual assault.

The NUS survey found that most perpetrators were other students known to the victim. Consistent with similar findings in violence against women and criminology research the vast majority of instances were never formally reported¹⁵. The NUS study also found that only 10% of women who were seriously sexually assaulted reported the assault to the police. Of the 90% of women who did not report serious sexual assault to police about half did not report because they felt ashamed or embarrassed, and slightly less than half did not report because they feared they would be blamed. The NUS report also found that only 4% of women who were seriously sexually assaulted reported the assault to their university. As we explain in detail in section 5.1.3 these data suggest that the actual prevalence of VAW students is severely underreported, with most cases never coming to the attention of university staff, and that many victims and survivors may therefore miss out on support from their HEI. This might mean that they receive no support at all because they may not have the opportunity to report elsewhere as their educational studies might provide them with the only viable opportunity to report and seek support as it may be one of the only places where they are able to attend and speak freely.

⁹ Karjane, H.M., Fisher, B.S., & Cullen, F.T. (2006). Sexual assault on campus: What colleges and universities are doing about it. Office of Justice Programs. U.S. Department of Justice.

¹⁰ <http://www.calcasa.org/category/campus>; <http://www.ovw.usdoj.gov/ovwgrantprograms.htm> [both retrieved 1 March 2012].

¹¹ Phipps, A. & Smith, G. (2012). Violence against women students in the UK: Time to take action. *Gender and Education*, 24(2). 1-17.

¹² NUS (2010). Hidden marks: A study of women students' experiences of harassment, stalking, violence and sexual assault. National Union of Students.

¹³ Sloane, C. & Fitzpatrick, K. (2011). Talk about it survey. National Union of Students (Australia).

¹⁴ Fisher, B.S., Cullen, F.T., & Turner, M.G. (2000). The sexual victimization of college women. Research report. U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics.

¹⁵ Fisher et al. (2000). Ullman, S.E. (2010). Talking about sexual assault: Society's response to survivors. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. Smith, K., Coleman, K., Eder S., & Hall, P. (2011). Homicides, firearm offences, and intimate violence 2009/10-Supplementary volume 2 to Crime in England and Wales. Home Office Statistical Bulletin, 01/2011.

2.3 Research on forced marriage

The empirical context of this pilot study is also informed by work on FM because the majority of victims of FM are young women in the traditional age bracket for attendance at FEIs or HEIs. According to the Forced Marriage Unit (FMU), a joint initiative of the Foreign & Commonwealth Office and the Home Office, in 2011 (the most recent FMU statistics available), the FMU gave advice or support on 1,468 cases related to FM. The majority of victims (63%) were between 16 and 25 years old (that is, within the traditional FE to HE age bracket). Seventy-eight percent of victims were female; 22% were male¹⁶.

Similarly, based on a survey of local and national organisations addressing FM the National Centre for Social Research (NCSR) estimated that in 2008 there were between 5,000 and 8,000 cases of FM in the UK (96% female victims; 4% male victims). Of these, 26% concerned victims 16 to 17 years old, 40% concerned victims 18 to 23 years old, and 20% concerned victims 24 and older, which means that over 60% were in the age bracket of HE and FE students.¹⁷ (The FMU and NCSR data are based on reported cases and possibly underestimate the actual prevalence of FM in the UK as many are likely to be unreported.)

Thus, although FM prevalence data specifically for students is lacking (the NUS survey did not address FM), the data from the FMU and the NCSR suggest that a significant number of FM cases involve victims who are in the age bracket for FE and HE students.

Furthermore, most of these victims are likely to be young women, and they are likely to come from specific ethnic backgrounds. In the 2011 FMU statistics 70% of the cases involved families from South Asian communities (2008 FMU statistics as well as the NCSR data suggest that over 90% of cases were from South Asian communities). Thus, FM is likely to affect in particular a subgroup of young people at the typical age where they would enter into or be in post-secondary education (young women from South Asian backgrounds). This has implications for the equality duty of public education institutions as they ought to avoid indirect discrimination based on, among several categories, gender and ethnic background.

The FMU statistics quoted above show that in 2011 around 925 of the cases the FMU was aware of involved 16–25 year olds. These are young people in the FE and HE age bracket. FM-related issues may have prevented them from entering post-secondary education in the first place, but if they did enter, they probably would have struggled with these issues while at university. However, as seen in 5.1.3 below, cases of FM rarely are seen in the HE context. This suggests two problematic scenarios. One is that FM prevents some young people from entering post-secondary education altogether. The other is that FM may be nearly invisible in this context and students struggling with it may miss out on a potentially important source of support. This would be all the more troubling if colleges and universities were one of the social contexts young people struggling with FM were still allowed to enter.

3. Research questions

Our research questions were informed by the findings about VAW and FM reported above. These suggest that violence against female students is common but mostly underreported and therefore nearly invisible to HEIs, which may be even more pronounced with regard to FM. Therefore, our primary research questions were:

- How do issues related to FM and VAW present to university staff?
- How do the institutions respond?
- How could these responses be strengthened?

¹⁶ Statistics obtained from the FMU.

¹⁷ Kazimirski, A, Keogh, P., Kumari, V. et al. (2009). Forced marriage: Prevalence and service response. National Centre for Social Research.

4. Methodology

The conceptual framework for this study is informed by the national and international research literature and relevant policy. Our framing of “institutional response” is informed by comprehensive campus approaches of the type that have been developed in particular in the U.S. over the past years and with which Prof. Klein has had several years of experience¹⁸. In addition, we took the UK VAW policy context into account as described above and sought advice from the FMU and specialist service providers.

The stakeholders of interest for this study included front line staff at the HEIs (defined as those who provide direct support to students whether in student services or pastoral care contexts or any other contexts, e.g. debt advisers), other HEI staff (teaching staff, managers), local police officers dealing with VAW/FM, and specialist service providers in the community. The framing of the interview questions made it clear that VAW and FM were included within the remit of the questions and this was also brought to the attention of the interviewees. In addition, the framing also made clear the disproportionality of VAW and FM, while indicating that incidents of violence against men or FM involving men, if any, were similarly within the remit of the interviews.

A research assistant (RA) contacted the stakeholders and set up interviews. Interviews with front-line and teaching staff focused on how issues of VAW/FM present and how staff responses can be enhanced, including internal procedures and referrals to specialist services. Interviews with management focused on institutional structures and commitments. Interviews with staff at specialist service providers focused on working relationships between service providers and HEIs, referral practices, gaps in services, and ways to integrate universities into multi-agency systems.

Interviews were undertaken face-to-face and over the phone. Each interview followed the question format given in Table 1 below. Interviews were not recorded but instead the RA took notes, which were reviewed and discussed with him by Prof. Freeman and Prof. Klein. The specific findings from these interviews were then set into, and interpreted within, a broader empirical context as it emerges from the UK research discussed above and the pertinent international literature.

¹⁸ See also <http://www.umaine.edu/safecampusproject/> and <http://calcasa.org/category/campus/>.

Table 1 Staff roles and scope of interview

Role of staff	Focus of interview
<i>Staff in student services</i>	<p><i>What issues have you seen relating to VAW/FM, relationship issues?</i></p> <p><i>How do students present these?</i></p> <p><i>What services are in place?</i></p> <p><i>How prepared do you feel to deal with these issues?</i></p> <p><i>What sort of training have you had to address these issues?</i></p> <p><i>What is the relationship between university and community services?</i></p> <p><i>How is information on cases kept, tracked, or statistics kept?</i></p> <p><i>How supported do you feel by university (including opportunities for professional development in this area)?</i></p> <p><i>Are there any other issues that come to your mind relating to this topic which we have not covered?</i></p> <p><i>What would further strengthen your responses to VAW/FM?</i></p>
<i>Staff providing pastoral care</i>	<p><i>What issues have you seen relating to VAW/FM, relationship issues?</i></p> <p><i>How do students present these?</i></p> <p><i>What services or supports do you offer?</i></p> <p><i>How do you work with other staff at university / in the community?</i></p> <p><i>What would further strengthen your responses to VAW/FM?</i></p>
<i>Teaching staff</i>	<p><i>What issues have you seen relating to VAW/FM among students?</i></p> <p><i>How prepared do you feel to address these with students?</i></p> <p><i>How aware are you of university or community resources?</i></p> <p><i>How has institution addressed issues?</i></p> <p><i>What would further strengthen your responses to VAW/FM?</i></p>
<i>Management</i>	<p><i>Have issues related to VAW come up in your daily work?</i></p> <p><i>How has the university responded?</i></p> <p><i>What has your role been in responding to these issues?</i></p> <p><i>How does university support front-line staff?</i></p> <p><i>Are there policies in place for dealing with these issues?</i></p> <p><i>How have they been developed and implemented?</i></p> <p><i>Is there opportunity for professional development in these areas?</i></p> <p><i>What would further strengthen your responses to VAW?</i></p>
<i>Community-based service providers</i>	<p><i>Are those approaching you students?</i></p> <p><i>Are there particular barriers or facilitating factors when supporting students?</i></p> <p><i>Do you have any working relationship with universities or colleges? Is there a referral system in place? How easy or difficult is it to find and access the right contact points and people at university?</i></p> <p><i>What would further strengthen your responses to victims who are students?</i></p>
<i>Police</i>	<p><i>Have you had cases involving VAW among university students?</i></p> <p><i>What has been your experience working with universities on such cases? What would strengthen your work on VAW cases involving students?</i></p>

5. Findings

5.1 How do issues related to FM and VAW present in university contexts?

This will be addressed under three headings: Access and disclosure, complexity of issues, and visibility of the problem.

5.1.1 Access and disclosure

We found that about 50% to 80% of students who sought support approach front line staff directly and on their own initiative; the others came to front line staff through various routes, including referrals from other student services staff, tutors, or teaching staff, suggestion by another student; chance meetings on campus; or after informal outreach.

Students usually came alone to speak to frontline staff; in a few cases a friend accompanied them.

There may be a time lapse between a VAW incident and the victim's decision to turn to HEI support (one interviewee estimated this time lapse at about two months).

Front line staff did not always use a systematic process to gauge the effect of their services on students. Some staff members relied on verbal feedback of how a student felt after meeting with the staff member. Other staff members used standardised questionnaires about students' feelings and levels of mental health. Many individual front line staff said they followed up on a case by case basis to see how a student was doing. All front line staff had the impression that the students who came to them were satisfied with the support they received. This is consistent with a finding in the UK NUS survey that the few students who did seek support from the university said they were satisfied with what they received. We believe this is an encouraging convergence of findings that speaks to the importance of student support services. We also think this suggests that such services have untapped potential in that they would benefit more students if VAW and FM were acknowledged more widely, resource information was prominently displayed on HEI premises, disclosure of abuse encouraged, and existing student support services were enhanced through specialised staff training and a more systematic approach to making referrals to specialist agencies in the community.

Students rarely disclosed abuse at the beginning of a conversation but "it ekes out once you gain their trust". Usually, other problems were brought up initially (or were the reason a student was referred) such as falling behind academically, missing classes, or having financial problems. Conversation about these presenting problems may reveal underlying issues of abuse. That does not mean, however, that students avoided talking about abuse. When the atmosphere was right and abuse addressed directly students talked about it.

5.1.2 Complexity of issues

Many interviewees saw the cases that came to their attention as complex and often involving multiple traumas. Those experiences of abuse that came to the attention of staff were usually part of a bigger story of struggles against vulnerability and hardship. Such cases included patterns of:

- Domestic violence from an abusive partner or husband
- Trying to leave a domestically abusive relationship while providing for a child
- Exploitation and abuse of a student economically dependent on relatives
- Psychological abuse from father and physical abuse from brother
- Ostracism from parents because student had an abortion
- Students struggling where parents hold conservative faith perspectives
- Husband initiates or escalates abuse when student is at or returns to university
- Chronic injuries and illness due to abuse from father
- History of abuse as child or growing up witnessing violence
- Multiple abusive relationships (abuse from family members and intimate partners)
- Risk of abuse against students' children with associated complexities of navigating the often "contradictory legal worlds"¹⁹ of domestic violence services and children's services
- Cases with ongoing litigation that may interfere with provision of support
- Woman may be in the UK on a marriage visa and fear deportation when separating from abusive husband
- Physical violence in context of FM
- Split loyalties toward family/husband; dependence on family/husband
- Mental health problems as symptoms of pressure, exploitation, and abuse
- Emotional and psychological abuse, often escalating into physical abuse.

Many interviewees saw different forms of VAW as interrelated (in particular links between emotional abuse and other forms of abuse, and emotional abuse as precursor to other forms of abuse).

5.1.3 Visibility of the problem

We found that individual front line staff saw up to 15 cases per year of VAW students (depending on the front line staff this was up to 50% of the entire case load; for other staff VAW cases were a smaller proportion of their case load). These were mostly cases of domestic violence in which a husband or boyfriend abused the student, but also sexual assaults, and cases in which relatives abused the student. Cases of FM appeared to be almost invisible to university staff but one specialist service provider in the community said that last year they worked with about 3 students threatened by FM.

Table 2 summarises the number and type of cases of VAW/FM seen that involved students

¹⁹ Hester, M. (2009). The contradictory legal worlds faced by domestic violence victims. In E. Stark & E. Buzawa (Eds.), *Violence against women in families and relationships: Making and breaking connections* (pp. 127-146). New York: Praeger.

Table 2 Types of cases see, training and perceived institutional response

No.	Gender of interviewee	Frontline support	Number / type of cases seen that involved students
1	F	Yes, HEI	8–12 cases of VAW per year (50% of case load) (no FM; but imam has dealt with "a number of occasions recently)
2	M	Yes, HEI	3 cases of VAW in past year (no FM)
3	F	Yes, HEI	12–15 cases of VAW per year (no FM)
4	F	Yes, HEI	15 cases of VAW per year (no FM)
5	M	Yes, police	Many VAW cases but not recorded whether they involved students
6	M	Supervisor, HEI	6 cases of VAW per year (10% of case load); occasional cases of male victims of rape; 1 case of FM about every 3 years
7	F	Yes, specialist service	About 8 cases of VAW students per year (in recent years 4 cases per year) (one case of FM several years ago where mature student presented with DV issues in a marriage she had been forced into)
8	M	Yes, police	Per year about 8 cases of girls where FM is issue; about 6 cases of FM out of 20–30 cases of HBV; 6 cases of violence involving students over past two years (not clear whether these 6 cases involved FM)
9	F	Yes, specialist service	3 cases last year of FM feared by students in further education; 1 case of FM feared by student in higher ed (pressure on girls to drop out of college)
10	F	No, HEI	Not directly; rarely in context of reflecting back on past experiences
11	F	No, HEI	2 cases of VAW over course of career, one of these FM (flagged up through non-attendance and falling behind academically)
12	M	Yes, HEI	1 case of past VAW every two years (students reflecting back), no FM
13	F	No, HEI	4 cases of VAW per year (not FM)
14	M	No, HEI	5 cases per year of female students being harassed
15	M	Yes, Police	At least 2 cases of VAW students per year
16	F	Yes, HEI	2 cases of threat of FM over career; 2–3 cases of VAW students per year

F=Female; M=Male; VAW=Violence against women; FM=Forced marriage; HBV=Honour-based violence; HEI=Higher education institution; DV=Domestic violence; N/A=Not applicable

	<i>Do you have specialised training to address VAW or FM?</i>	<i>Does HEI have specific services for VAW/FM?</i>	<i>Does HEI have formal links to community services?</i>	<i>Does HEI have formal assessment of support w/VAW/FM?</i>
	No	No	No	No
	No	No	No	No
	No	No	No	General notes system
	Yes (DV)	No	No	Not about VAW/FM
	Yes	N/A	N/A	N/A
	No	No	No (and would be too complicated)	No (but assess feelings/ mental health)
	Yes	N/A	No formal link to HEI, neither bilateral nor multi-agency	General exit questionnaire
	Yes	N/A	No specific experience working with HEIs	N/A
	Yes	N/A	No experience working with HEIs	N/A
	Yes	Good general student services	Individual staff have excellent links	N/A
	No	No	No specific knowledge about community services; would rely on internet search	N/A
	No	Unaware	Unaware	Unaware
	No	No data	HEI keeps database of specialist support agencies	General feedback form
	No	No, general student services	Unaware	None
	Yes	N/A	No formal links with HEIs but informal contacts	N/A
	Yes	Internal referral system	Makes regular referrals	Feedback

The figures in Table 2 reflect estimates by the interviewees of the number of cases in which students disclosed VAW/FM to service providers or authorities, or HEIs. There are two ways to interpret these figures. One is to equate the low number of disclosures with the size of the problem at HEI, in which case one would conclude that there is very little VAW/FM against students at university. This is almost certainly wrong.

The other way to interpret the figures in Table 2 is in the context of a base rate estimate. The best such estimate to date seems to come from the NUS report (see fn 12 supra). Extrapolating from the NUS report, if 14% of female students experience a serious physical or sexual assault while at university, this would mean that over the course of 4-5 years (the average length of time students spend at university) there may be 1,400 cases in a population of 10,000 female students. The HEIs that participated in this pilot study both have female degree student populations in the range of 12,000-14,000²⁰. Thus, the hypothetical extrapolation to 10,000 female students is meaningful and case numbers derived from it could be viewed as lower bound estimates.

Continuing along this line of reasoning, if 4% of 1,400 female students who were assaulted reported this assault to university staff (we use the 4% figure as this is the relevant figure found in the NUS survey of those who reported serious assault to their educational institutions) there might be about 56 reports over 4-5 years. This figure of 56 reports is quite consistent with the higher case loads some of our interviewees reported: case loads of 12-15 VAW cases per year would translate into 48-60 cases over four years.

One can draw three cautious conclusions from this. One, the 4% NUS study estimate of reported assaults is consistent with case loads reported by some of our interviewees. Two, this consistency may be limited to ideal circumstances in which a frontline staff person can provide confidential service, has specialist VAW experience, and probably has been able to build good rapport with students over many years of service. Three, even under such ideal circumstances only a small fraction of likely cases of serious assault ever come to the attention of HEIs, while up to 96% of serious assaults may be invisible to HEI's.

5.2 How do institutions respond and how could these responses be strengthened?

From the feedback we obtained in this study it appears that the institutional response is up to the expertise, determination, and commitment of individual frontline staff. The HEIs had no specific services for VAW/FM but provided general support through counsellors, advice workers, and chaplains. Our interviewees were not aware of systematic institutional policies and procedures addressing VAW/FM.

An 'institutional response' can be thought of as comprising multiple levels from core priority to individual staff training and information strategy. These levels are suggested by current best practice models for VAW intervention and the emergence of 'whole domain' approaches, in which an institution such as a school or university makes its contribution to intervention one of its core responsibilities²¹. One example of such a comprehensive approach, the 'spectrum of prevention', includes six areas where institutions can take initiative, from "strengthening individual knowledge and skills; [to] promoting community education; educating providers; fostering coalitions and networks; changing organizational practices; [and] influencing policy and legislation"²². Applied to the post-secondary education context, we submit that a comprehensive institutional response should include the following:

- (1) Institution recognises its contribution to intervention/prevention as one of its core responsibilities;

²⁰ UCAS data for 2012, www.ucas.com, retrieved 1 March 2012.

²¹ Twemlow, S.W., Fonagy, P., & Sacco, F.C. (2004). The role of the bystander in the social architecture of bullying and violence in schools and communities. In J. Devine et al. (Eds.), *Youth violence: Scientific approaches to prevention* (pp. 215-232). New York: New York Academy of Sciences.

²² Cohen, L. & Swift, S. (1999). The Spectrum of Prevention: Developing a comprehensive approach to injury prevention. *Injury Prevention*, 5, 203-207. Also available through http://www.preventioninstitute.org/index.php?option=com_jlibrary&view=article&id=105&Itemid=127 [retrieved 22 March 2012].

- (2) Institution is integrated into local multi-agency working with community-based specialist service providers, law enforcement and others;
- (3) Institution has written policies and response protocols that give specific guidance on steps to take when students disclose VAW/FM;
- (4) Institution offers consistent support for front line staff from line managers;
- (5) Institution encourages specialised training on VAW/FM through continued professional development;
- (6) Institution offers consistent and easily accessible institution-wide information about VAW/FM.

We used these aspects of a required institutional response as a template for organising our discussion of feedback from the interviews which we summarise below. The "what staff want" sections within each section are distillations of the various comments scattered throughout the individual interviews, which we have organised under the individual headings of required institutional response.

5.2.1 Contribution to intervention as core responsibility for HEI

Perhaps the traditional view of HEIs' role in regard to VAW/FM is reflected in the comment of one interviewee that HEIs are sympathetic but can do only so much because they are HEIs. This view is reminiscent of comments documented in a corporate survey in the U.S. from the early 1990s, in which human resource personnel and managers said that domestic violence was a problem for their companies that affected their bottom line but that responsibility for dealing with this problem lay with the local domestic violence projects²³. We are not arguing that HEIs should be expected to make VAW/FM go away, but rather that they need to recognise HEI- specific opportunities to contribute to intervention and prevention. This requires a shift in perspective.

First, HEIs need to see VAW/FM as problems that directly affect their own students, not merely be aware of VAW/FM as societal problems elsewhere (VAW also affects employees, but the focus in this pilot study is on HEI responses to students in these matters). HEIs have specific legal duties towards students, such as the Equality Duty, in addition to wanting students to do well academically. Thus, HEIs need to make their contribution to intervention and prevention of VAW/FM a core organisational responsibility, not something that is optional. While education or research may be the central mission of an HEI, pursuit of this mission is possible only when core responsibilities for safe and supportive learning and teaching environments are assumed (as fire and building safety and public health considerations are core responsibilities).

Second, HEIs need to address the crippling underreporting in this area. The practice experience in the VAW field suggests that victims and survivors come forward when they feel that the benefits of disclosure will outweigh the risks²⁴. Risks include fear of not being believed or dismissed, fear of retribution, and fear that neither help nor justice will come of telling the institution. Benefits of disclosure include being able to talk about troubling issues, getting emotional support and validation, and finding one's way to further resources, which in turn may help end or escape abusive contexts.

What staff want:

- Clear commitment from deans, management, and governors to the well-being of students disproportionately exposed to risk of abuse
- Acknowledgement that students' life outside HEI affects their studies and academic success
- Series of roundtables to get staff involved and interested
- Ongoing policy response or women's safety working group looking at staff and student welfare (confidentiality and cultural awareness are essential; HEIs could bring in specialist service providers or consultants to help develop policy and staff training for frontline staff)

²³ Roper Starch Worldwide for Liz Claiborne (1994). *Addressing Domestic Violence: A Corporate Response*. New York: Roper Starch.

²⁴ Ullman, S.E. (2010). *Talking about sexual assault: Society's response to survivors*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

- HEI to make more of existing resources, for instance by acknowledging and supporting teams of frontline services staff that have developed strong collaborative working relationships, and by supporting staff development through more opportunities for specialised training on VAW/FM that can enhance existing expertise
- HEIs to support students by supporting the staff members who work directly with students.

5.2.2 Integration of HEI in multi-agency working

Awareness of and familiarity with specialised community resources varies considerably across staff members. Some, in particular those who have been in their posts for a longer time, have a good understanding of what is available and have forged working relationships with individual service providers in the community. Others were unaware of community resources and said they would be confident that they would find necessary resources if they were looking for them.

Among the community-based resources that staff members said they had worked with on specific cases were faith and neighbourhood teams at the Local Authority, specialised police units (such as Sapphire Unit), social services, domestic violence support services, child care services, rape crisis support, Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Trans support services, cultural specialist organisations, mental health team at local NHS; sexual health clinic; police; and local GPs. One staff member said that they vet external agencies (but it was not clear how this was done).

Referrals to external services seemed to rely on a few staff members known to have good connections with the community. While this system may work well for as long as such as gatekeepers remain at university, it is likely to suffer or collapse when they leave the institution.

Our interviewees indicated that the HEIs had no written protocols or formal referral procedures for multi-agency working. Instead, multi-agency working was based on word of mouth and the working relationships and judgement of individual staff members.

A few interviewees said they did not know of specific services in the community but expected them to be there and felt confident they would be able to find them if needed. This may be the case but should also be considered in the context of very uneven service provision across the UK²⁵. HEI staff may overestimate the extent to which specialist services are actually in reach of their students.

Police perspective: HEIs were not seen as part of multi-agency working. Some police units have university link officers but these do not necessarily focus on VAW/FM. Referral protocols and having contact details at HEIs would be helpful (in particular for after hour contacts), for instance when creating safety plans for students living on campus. Individual police officers may think that it is irrelevant whether a victim is a student. However, support and safety may be related to the student's situation at university and finding alternate accommodation may be helped or hindered by being at university. Similarly, moving to a different area may have consequences for pursuing studies. Some students might not want police to approach university for reasons of shame and embarrassment.

Specialist VAW service provider perspective: In the caseload of one interviewee who was a community-based VAW service provider only few victims were students; over a ten-year period an estimated 7% of cases each year had involved students. Another community-based service provider also saw few students in the caseload but among these few relatively more cases of young women in FEIs than in HEIs. The interviewees mentioned only one case that was referred by a university, all other referrals came from police or social services. An established referral route with HEI would be helpful. HEIs and FE colleges are important for young women as pathways toward independence. HEIs could undertake more awareness raising through leaflets and posters or by having a specialist service provider come in and talk to students and staff. HEIs should consider that female staff may also be affected by VAW/FM.

HEI staff perspective versus community-based staff perspectives: HEI staff and community-based staff may develop different perspectives on VAW/FM due to differences in which these issues present

²⁵ Coy, M., Kelly, L., & Foord, J. (2007). Map of gaps: The postcode lottery of violence against women support services in Britain. End Violence against Women Coalition/Equality & Human Right Commission, UK.

to them. For example, our findings suggest that in HEI contexts students affected by VAW/FM may initially come to the attention of staff through academic or financial problems. In contrast, when a student turns to specialist services providers (or police) for help with VAW/FM it is probably clear that these are the underlying issues. Thus, VAW/FM may be more disguised in HEI contexts and more obvious to specialist services providers/police. It is possible that in response to seeing less of the desperation students may experience (compared to agencies who tackle these issues head on), HEIs may tend towards being too complacent and too slow to refer. In addition, HEIs are also likely to be much larger than VAW specialist service providers or specialist police units, so that it may be unrealistic to expect a single contact person for VAW/FM at a large HEI. Finally, with a view on developing campus-community relationships and integrating HEIs and FEIs into multi-agency working, this also means that potential differences in experience and perspective need to be addressed so that partners in multi-agency working develop realistic assessments of each other's remit, strengths, and limitations.

5.2.3 Written institutional policies and response protocols

Interviewees were not aware of specific HEI-based written policies or protocols on how to respond to students (or staff) affected by VAW/FM. Instead, generic counselling support was available. A recent study of violence against female students at five universities in the UK and continental Europe suggests that in the HE sector policy development specifically addressing VAW students is uneven. The study found that while all five universities had resources devoted to students' well-being in general, only one institution had specific policies to address sexual violence against female students, and one had measures devoted to gender equality (such as anti-sexual harassment policies)²⁶.

One interviewee suggested that there is an emerging debate in the professional student services associations about these issues and university-specific policies. One of the HEIs kept a list of external support agencies on website for use by staff and students.

What staff want:

- Set system for referrals
- Set response procedures
- Set system of record keeping
- Clear information about specialised community-based resources and who can help with what
- Knowledge of the best people to refer a student to / contact numbers for specialised services

Formalised procedures take time and energy to develop but have several advantages. One is that the very process of developing them requires relationship working and raises awareness. Once in place, formalised procedures give guidance to staff on how to proceed, which is particularly helpful when turnover is high. Formalised procedures allow a more systematic assessment of what works well and where things could be improved.

However, the U.S. experience, where written policies are common, shows that just having a written policy on the books is not enough; staff members also need to be trained on the policy and its implementation needs to be monitored periodically. In addition, formal guidelines must not undermine confidentiality or create situations in which victims are discouraged from disclosure because they fear they will unleash institutional processes that might further hurt or endanger them.

Furthermore, policy language and procedures offering specific guidance on how to support students should be informed by an intersectional gender analysis. This means that while offering services to all students, institutions need to take into account that all students are not affected equally by risks of VAW/FM. Rather, the life experiences and risks of victimization of students differ considerably depending on gender, and social, economic, and cultural background. Policies on VAW/FM need to be clear that most victims are female, that a minority of victims may be male (or transgender) and

²⁶ Feltes, T. et al. (2012). Gender-based violence, stalking and fear of crime. Final report to the European Commission. Directorate General Justice, Freedom and Security. <http://vmrz0183.vm.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/gendercrime/> [Retrieved 28 March 2012].

that circumstances can vary considerably based on class, poverty, religious or ethnic background, and age. Interviewees reported that very rarely they had a case where a male student came forward. The proportionality of cases needs to be acknowledged while designing support systems that work for all students.

In addition, the strengths and limitations of existing services may need to be considered carefully. Generic support (such as listening and counselling skills) may be very well suited to open a conversation about abuse or to address symptoms such as anxiety, inability to concentrate or falling behind academically. However, addressing issues of VAW/FM usually requires more specialised knowledge, including knowledge of the dynamics of sexual and domestic abuse perpetration, the dynamics of survivor disclosure and recovery, and of the unique life contexts of ethnic, sexual or religious minorities. In addition, the threats posed by perpetrators of VAM/FM may require careful and informed safety planning, including awareness that particular risks may arise from the social or family networks of the victim/survivor.

5.2.4 Support for individual staff by line managers and professional peers

Assessment of support with cases from line managers, or the HEI in general, roughly fell into three categories. One, staff members considered support reasonably good, and felt that the university was very positive about supporting students. Two, staff members assumed support would be good if they needed it but had not had actual experience with this. Three, staff members felt they were left to their own devices, lacked support and direction from supervisors or the institution. This last category of respondents also felt that there were no specific supports at university for staff trying to support students who experience VAW/FM; that the institutions' approach to staff development and staff training was lamentable; and that nothing about staff support was embedded in organisational procedures but depended on the mood of the supervisor or line manager.

Team meetings are an important source of advice, backup and information for individual frontline staff. Many staff members commented on how well their immediate teams worked together and what an important source of guidance, support, and information their team members were. Most frontline staff felt supported by their peers at university, in particular where there were teams of staff working together closely and where one can draw on a range of professional skills.

Many staff members also felt supported within their professional associations such as AMOSSHE (the UK Student Services organisation), National Association of Student Money Advisors (NASMA), British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACAP) or faith associations. Others did not feel supported by their professional associations or felt they were directed to policies but then left alone. Some interviewees said that support at the HEI or within professional associations varies from individual to individual.

Individual teaching staff said there was limited formal support at their HEI but that in their experience informal support from friends and colleagues has worked well in the past.

Several interviewees felt their HEI took VAW/FM seriously, whereas others (in the same HEI) thought that the institution was not taking the issues seriously. Some thought that their HEI was sensitive to issues of VAW/FM but could not elaborate what that meant. Others felt it was difficult to say how supportive the HEI was.

One interviewee felt that it was a sign that an HEI takes serious the welfare of its students when the student services department is well-resourced and visible and thus better able to support students through a range of issues including visas, debt advice and counselling.

One interviewee pointed out that the HEI was supportive but might not know what really is going on for students. Low levels of reported cases and perceived student satisfaction with support received might mean that VAW/FM do not appear on HEI agendas as urgent problems in need of solution. One interviewee said that having about 5% of the student population using counselling at the HEI meant that counselling was a "well-used service".

We believe that these last comments warrant further attention. If a use rate of 5% means that a service is well-used, then services for even relatively small percentages of students are worthwhile services that contribute to the well-being of the entire student population. In addition, if institutions were to enhance student well-being even further, for instance by acknowledging the significance of VAW/FM and encouraging students to come forward and utilise frontline support services, then implications for staff capacity and resourcing need to be considered, as evidenced by the comment of the interviewee who observed the importance of a well-resourced student services department. This may include more opportunities for specialised staff training but may also mean that extra or dedicated staff may be necessary. The financial implications may not be particularly significant, but need to be considered.

What staff want:

- More consistent personal and peer support
- More support from line managers
- More opportunity to network with peers who do similar jobs
- Outside trainers brought in to help address challenging issues
- Better communication between academic staff and students services staff (and alerting academic staff to the potential reasons for sudden changes in performance or attendance so that referrals to student services are more quickly and easily undertaken)
- More awareness about VAW/FM for early identification and prompt referral
- More awareness of training opportunities

5.2.5 Specialised professional development for individual front line support staff

The kind of support that interviewees had offered students included confidential listening, non-judgemental listening, referrals to other services, contacting people on students' behalf, making arrangements for further support, financial, debt and welfare advice; accompanying students to meetings or appointments, following up with students on how they were doing after crisis intervention.

All frontline staff felt they had generic listening and support skills; a few said they had specialised training, for instance about mental health issues, or rape crisis support. Among teaching staff some said they had no specialised training and were not aware of any training on offer. Some frontline staff said they felt confident that they would be able to handle any case that comes to them; others said they felt less than confident and often at a loss what best to do. Some saw themselves as generalists able to link students to specialised services.

Self-confidence can be a reflection of having supported students successfully in the past, but it can also be a sign of over-confidence and lack of awareness of unique challenges in cases of VAW/FM. Self-confidence needs reality checks. Dealing with cases of VAW/FM often requires specific knowledge of the dynamics of domestic violence, sexual assault, sexual harassment or FM. Seemingly innocuous or well-meaning actions can lead to major mistakes.

Sexual and domestic violence, as well as FM and "honour-based violence" are much specialised areas and the problems they pose may challenge generic counselling skills. Professionals with highly developed skills in other areas may not always realise this, and may do more harm than good without specific training or a clear understanding where their limits are.

The dynamics underlying sexual and domestic violence are not always well understood beyond specialist services providers and specially trained police officers. Myths and victim-blaming continue

to be widespread, and mindless critical or blaming responses to a student's disclosure of abuse can amount to secondary victimisation²⁷. With regard to domestic violence, the risks posed by determined perpetrators can be considerable so that good safety planning is paramount²⁸. In cases of "honour-based violence" or FM, a well-meant effort to include a student's family in addressing the issues may further endanger her²⁹. Recent government publications directed at professionals in the education and health care sectors have warned in particular against attempts to resolve cases of FM through family counselling or mediation. Those assisting somebody where FM is suspected "should bear in mind that mediation as a response to forced marriage can be extremely dangerous." (see fn 7 supra). Similarly, forced marriage "should not be viewed as a 'generational or culture clash' that can be solved by mediation. Mediation, reconciliation and family counselling as a response to forced marriage can be extremely dangerous ... There have been cases of women being murdered whilst mediation was being undertaken."³⁰

Individual teaching staff said they would mostly rely on referring students to student services because they would feel unprepared to get into issues of VAW/FM with a student. The line between academic support and more personal support may be more blurred for staff who work in positions in which they may become more involved with students' personal issues. This may include personal tutors who might benefit from specialised training on VAW/FM.

Several frontline staff said they did not feel adequately equipped to deal with VAW/FM and would welcome more specialised training, including more training on cultural sensitivity.

What staff want:

- More specialised training about VAW/FM for frontline staff
- Guidance for teaching staff on warning signs for VAW/FM and how to refer students promptly to student services and/or community-based specialist services
- Advice line/ live resource for staff
- More preventative work
- Training on how to deal sensitively with cultural issues
- Training and awareness sessions/days/events about VAW/FM

5.2.6 Ease of access to information about VAW/FM

Even if HEIs offer information about VAW/FM it may be buried on institutional websites and difficult to find. One interviewee said that the university had a lot of "standardised" online information for students and staff but when interviewee and RA searched the university's website for information specifically about VAW they could not find anything.

- One interviewee felt that student services would be supportive and able to refer on as needed, but might not be seen by students as the right place to go to. Efforts to raise awareness of available services would need to take this into account. Students may not be aware that their HEI has services or they may not perceive them as suited to their needs. Such barriers may not only be an issue for services offered by professional staff but also for services offered by students. For instance, one interviewee who was an officer in the local Student Union remarked that although they (the Student Union) were there to help, "the issue won't always come to us". Frontline services may need a higher profile including student services, personal tutors, and residential advisors.

²⁷ Ullman, S.E. (2010). Talking about sexual assault: Society's response to survivors. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

²⁸ Davies, J.M., Lyon, E., & Monti-Catania, D. (1998). Safety planning with battered women: Complex lives/difficult choices. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

²⁹ <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/when-things-go-wrong/forced-marriage/info-for-professionals>

³⁰ Dealing with cases of forced marriage: Practice guidance for health professionals (2007). Foreign & Commonwealth Office London, Home Office, National Health Service.

- An HEI information strategy about VAW/FM should include multiple pieces of information such as:
- Acknowledgement that VAW/FM are common problems affecting students (and staff), that HEI considers them unacceptable and takes an active approach to early intervention and prevention
- Accurate and up-to-date resource information with phone numbers, email addresses or websites
 - Resources on campus (and whether they are confidential)
 - Resources in the community
- Where the HEI's policies and protocols for addressing VAW/FM can be found (on the website, at which office)

6. Conclusions and outlook

We draw two central conclusions from this study: one about the significant presence of individual frontline staff and one about an equally significant absence of an institutional response in the sense of making the task of addressing VAW/FM a core organisational responsibility.

One, due to the expertise, motivation and commitment of individual frontline staff members, student support services can offer valuable assistance to students affected by VAW/FM. The value of individual staff members is enhanced further where they have developed good working relationships with each other so that they effectively work as teams and can draw on each other's expertise and experience. This is particularly valuable where staff members have acquired, often on their own initiative, specialist training on VAW/FM and where they have been in their posts long enough to also know a lot about local community-based services and thus can give their colleagues informed advice. Also of considerable value is the interest of individual frontline staff in having more information and specialised training about VAW/FM.

Two, due to a lack of a comprehensive organisational strategy against VAW/FM the availability of the frontline support that can be so helpful to students appears to depend primarily on the individual initiative of frontline staff and their line managers. This appears to work well in some cases but cannot be considered a comprehensive institutional response of the kind we outlined above and we which summarise again below. An institutional response to VAW/FM that is left to individual initiative will collapse as soon as the staff member leaves her or his post. Based on interviewee feedback we assume that the institutions mean well as far as issues of VAW/FM are concerned. However, meaning well is not the same as doing well. It may be the first step towards a comprehensive organisational strategy but the next steps need to be taken, too.

Towards such a strategy, and in light of interviewee feedback as well as experiences with comprehensive institutional approaches elsewhere (and speaking as members of HEIs), we recommend that post-secondary education institutions

- (1) Make our contribution to the prevention of VAW/FM one of our core responsibilities by developing a comprehensive organisational strategy that is integrated into and clearly visible in key institutional documents such as strategic plan, health & safety policies, and student conduct codes;
- (2) Participate in local multi-agency working with community-based specialist service providers, law enforcement and others, and develop more systematic referral practices;
- (3) Develop written policies and response protocols that give specific guidance on steps to take when students disclose VAW/FM; then train staff on these policies; and monitor policy implementation on a regular basis;
- (4) As guided by such policies, direct line managers to offer consistent support for front line staff dealing with cases of VAW/FM, including support for specialised training opportunities;
- (5) Encourage specialised training on VAW/FM through continued professional development, including sending staff to workshops or hosting workshops with specialist service providers from the local communities;

- (6) Develop and implement public awareness campaigns that offer accurate and easily accessible information about resources for those affected by VAW/FM information throughout the institution (including campus-based and community-based resources) and that show students (and staff) that we are aware of the issues and are taking proactive steps to address them.

For post-secondary education institutions being proactive about sensitive issues such as VAW/FM may appear to be a risky proposition. The fear may be that an institution might expose itself to negative publicity. We argue that doing nothing and sticking the institutional head in the sand carries the greater risk of failing students. Moreover, the recent research on FM and on VAW students in the UK and abroad is contributing to an increasing global awareness that VAW/FM affects students and that institutions must act. Rather than being concerned about negative publicity and shying away from these issues this is a moment for educational institutions to be brave and lead.

Issues of VAW/FM in post-secondary educational contexts warrant more systematic research and policy development. Not only are VAW/FM serious problems but they disproportionately threaten the well-being and educational opportunities of some students, thus undermining efforts to widen access and enhance equality. More needs to be done to raise the visibility of VAW/FM at HEIs and FEIs and to develop the consciousness and capacity of these institutions to respond appropriately.

The Forced Marriage Unit has been undertaking a consultation on the criminalisation of forced marriage (ie creating a criminal offence of forcing someone to marry), as well as the criminalisation of breaches of the FMPO which are currently available under the 2007 Act. The consultation period ends at the end of March 2012. The outcome is likely to have further implications for how cases of FM will be treated (one likely outcome is that breaches of FMPO may be criminalised, in which case they would no longer be dealt with under civil rules, as they are at present, but under criminal rules).

All of this demonstrates the growing awareness of this issue as one which requires the involvement of all responsible agencies which must include HEIs as they are environments where FM may be disclosed, and where resources should be available to assist and support both students and the other agencies working in this area.

This pilot study has contributed to the evidence base onto which proactive institutional strategies may be built. However, the scope of this project was limited; we are only at the beginning of understanding the nexus of VAW/FM and post-secondary education. In order to enhance this understanding we plan to pursue further research in this area, expanding on the pilot and continuing it on a larger scale.

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