

Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Cydraddoldeb a Chyfiawnder Cymdeithasol](#) ar [Drais yn erbyn menywod, cam-drin domestig a thrais rhywiol: menywod mudol](#)

This response was submitted to the [Equality and Social Justice Committee](#) consultation on [Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence: migrant women](#)

MW06

Ymateb gan: | Response from: Dr Alexandria Innes, Violence and Society Centre at City, University of London and the UKRI Prevention Research Partnership VISION Consortium





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Response to Consultation:

Consultation - Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence:
Migrant Women

Equality and Social Justice Committee

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I am responding to two of the terms of reference, on behalf of the Violence and Society Centre at City, University of London and the UKRI Prevention Research Partnership VISION Consortium.

Terms of Reference:

1. Consideration of the barriers preventing migrant women and girls in Wales from accessing services and additional barriers faced by women with insecure immigration status, or whose immigration status is dependent on a spouse or employer or those who have No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPf).
2. Whether the Welsh Government could take any steps to mitigate the disproportionate impact UK immigration policy has on survivors in Wales and deliver its aspiration of Wales as a 'Nation of Sanctuary'.

Response 1:

Barriers preventing access to services for migrant women and girls:

Status related. The fear of immigration removal is often greater than the fear of abuse. This was initially evidenced in Kimberle Crenshaw's seminal work (1991) and has been variously developed in academic research (Anitha 2010, 2011; Mirza 2016; Femi-Ajao 2018). People in insecure status are incentivised to avoid reporting abuse (Gail 2017; Bejinariu and Troshynski 2020).

Dependent statuses always include a power imbalance and it is common for immigration status to be used as a threat in abusive relationships, whether these relationships are intimate partner or employer-employee.

People in insecure statuses are often lacking access to community support, or are entrenched in particular communities that discourage reporting (Femi-Ajao 2018). People in insecure status might



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be isolated: this is a particular effect of the asylum system and dispersal practices which consciously remove people from their potential support communities (Spicer 2008).

Any migrant women might face a lack of knowledge regarding standardised reporting practices and cultural or functional norms. Lack of language ability can also prevent reporting: not just on a practical level, but also in terms of possessing the confidence to report abuse and seek help.

Structural and institutional racism creates additional barriers to reporting violence and to receiving needed support for women and girls (El-Enany 2020; Mayblin 2017).

Response 2:

To mitigate the disproportionate impact UK immigration policy has on survivors in Wales there needs to be a well-publicised commitment that anyone who seeks support for abuse will not have their status reported to the Home Office. This commitment must include police, educators, health care providers and specialised services.

Some research has shown that availability of legal advice to seek a route to remain that is not dependent on an abusive spouse or partner allows that route to be used more effectively (Ammar et al 2012). Free, accessible legal assistance with complex immigration rules would help women and girls in insecure status.

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