



ROYAL NORWEGIAN  
MINISTRY OF JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SECURITY

Action Plan

# Action Plan against Domestic Violence 2012





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# Foreword

Domestic violence is a serious criminal and social problem that has consequences for health, gender equality and childhood. Violence creates insecurity, damages health and welfare, and prevents the individual from leading a full life. Violence against women is both a cause of gender inequality and a barrier to substantive gender equality. The public authorities have a responsibility to prevent all violence, and not least the violence that takes place within the family. The Government takes this responsibility seriously.

Domestic violence is particularly brutal. Relationships that are meant to provide security and trust are abused and instead promote insecurity, betray trust and violate personal dignity. Domestic violence encompasses a range of behaviour, from single episodes to extensive long-term abuse. It is committed by both men and women and affects both men and women. However, the victims of the most serious forms of violence are more often women. For many women this means that they are subject to long-term mental and physical violence as part of an all-encompassing regime of control and power. It is therefore important to focus particularly on men's violence against women.

Violence and abuse are part of many children's childhoods and daily lives. Children who are exposed to violence and abuse may be marked for life by these experiences. There is a high risk that they will become insecure and that their health and quality of life will be reduced even as adults. Childhood also has an intrinsic value. It is our responsibility to ensure that children grow up under good, secure conditions.

The Government gives priority to preventing and combating domestic violence by working for a more secure, just and egalitarian society. In line with its policy platform, the Government will continue, intensify and improve the work against domestic violence.

The measures in this action plan will be implemented in 2012, and some of them have a time limit that extends beyond the period of the plan. All of them will be funded from the existing budget frameworks of the ministries concerned. The action plan is the result of cooperation between the Ministry of Justice and Public Security, the Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion, the Ministry of Health and Care Services and the Ministry of Education and Research.



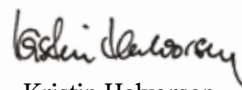
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# 1. Introduction

The Government is giving high priority to preventing and combating domestic violence. The Government considers it crucial to ensure that this form of violence receives more attention, that more cases are reported and that the measures for dealing with it, and for helping and protecting the victims, are further improved.

Norway is a party to a number of international conventions that provide a framework for combating domestic violence. The UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was incorporated into the Human Rights Act in June 2009 and is the most important international instrument for protecting women's rights in Norway. Norway is also committed to this work through its obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the new Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. Norway signed the Council of Europe Convention in July 2011, and the Government is currently considering which legislative amendments will be necessary in order for the convention to be ratified.

In the last 10 years the various governments have organised the work against domestic violence in national action plans. At the end of 2011, a status report was presented on *Turning Point*, the Government's Action Plan against Domestic Violence (2008–2011), according to which all the measures have either been or are in the process of being implemented. Some of the measures have a time frame that extends beyond the period of the action plan, which was 2008–2011. The status report, which can be found in Norwegian on the Ministry's website, provides an overview of the status of the various measures.

Under the action plans a functional structure has been built for national, regional and local efforts against domestic violence. The Norwegian Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies was established in 2004, and five regional resource centres for violence, traumatic stress and suicide prevention were set up during the period 2006–2008. Reception centres for victims of violence and abuse in every county, and children's houses, so far in seven towns, were also established. The structure has been further reinforced by the appointment of a family violence coordinator or team in each police district, establishing a nation-wide help and treatment programme for perpetrators, and making it a statutory requirement to establish a crisis centre service. What needs to be done now is to ensure that the structure has a sound professional basis and that there is a good

division of responsibility and close cooperation between these agencies and the other relevant services.

It will also be essential to ensure that the measures are suitably adapted to the different groups in need of help and protection, regardless of gender, age, sexual orientation, ethnic background and disability.

## WHITE PAPER AND ACTION PLANS AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Norway is at the forefront of the efforts to combat domestic violence. However, we have not reached everyone, and many people still suffer from this form of violence. We still need to intensify our efforts. Now that three action plans have been implemented, it is time to take stock of the work and to consider what would be the best strategy for further efforts. In order to ensure that the work on the new strategy is as targeted as possible, the Government intends to present a complete overview of the lessons learned since the National Commission on Violence against Women presented its report in 2003, *The Right to a Life Free of Violence* (NOU 2003:31 *Retten til et liv uten vold*). This will enable us to identify the problems and challenges that still remain and draw up a more focused strategy for our future efforts.

The Government therefore intends to present a white paper on domestic violence in the course of 2012. The paper will summarise the status of the work, identify problems and challenges and set out objectives for the future work in this area.

The Government will follow up the white paper with a new action plan for the period 2013–2016. The new plan will be based on the recommendations in the white paper and the evaluations of the children's houses and the efforts of the police to combat domestic violence, which will be presented in 2012. Another important document will be the report on the issue of the use of the biological principle as a guide for the child welfare services, which was presented in February 2012. The evaluation of the administrative reform of the child welfare services may also lead to a number of legislative amendments intended for example to prevent children and young people from being exposed to violence and sexual abuse in foster homes.

The present action plan for 2012 is a follow-up to the action plan *Turning Point* and will apply in the period prior to the presentation of the white paper. It is intended to meet the need for continuity and strengthen the efforts against domestic violence in the short term.

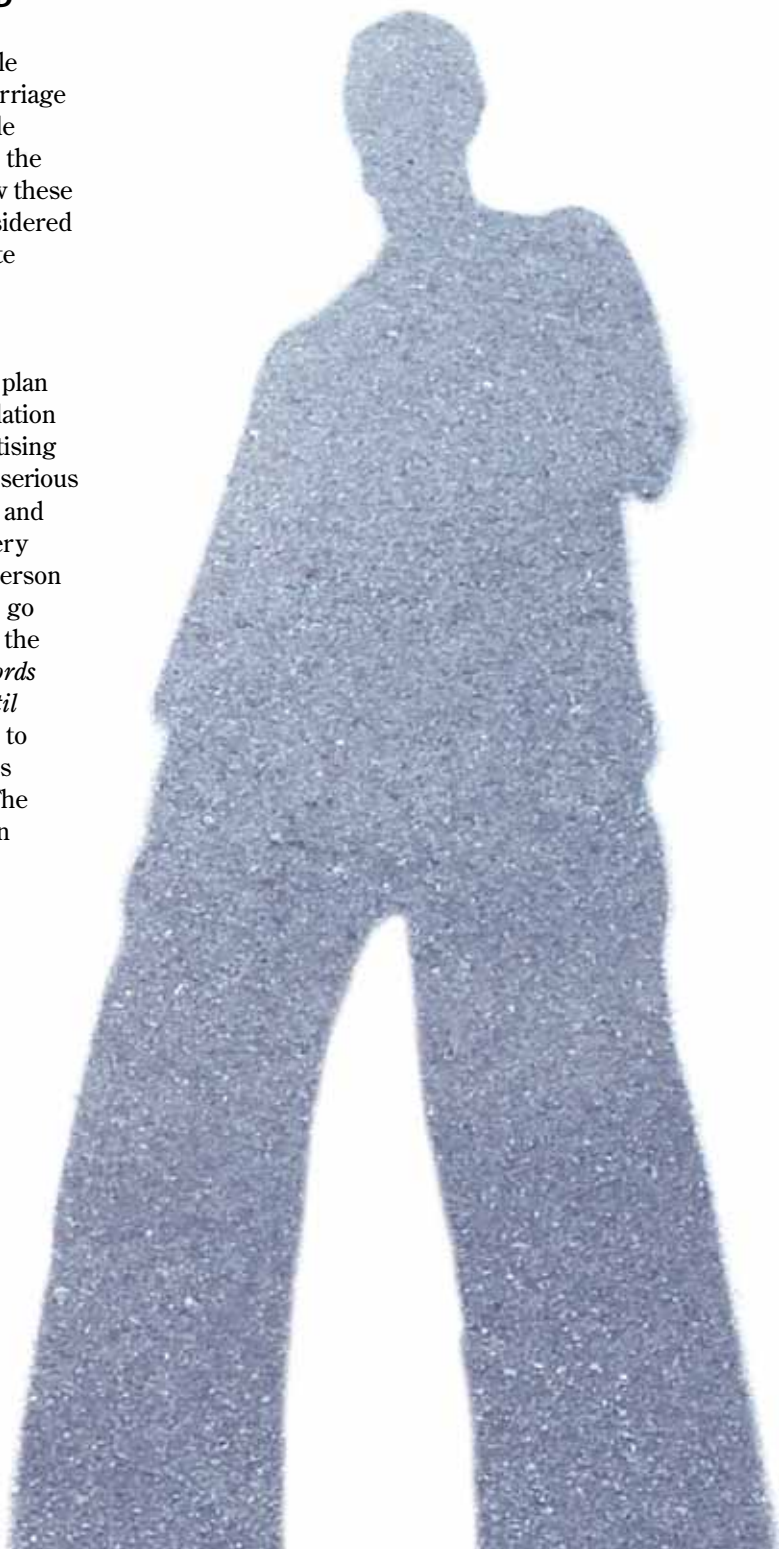
Many public and private institutions in the field have provided input to the work on this action plan. Some of the suggested measures have been included and the remainder will be considered in the context of the white paper and the action plan for 2013–2016.

### **THE EFFORTS TO COMBAT FORCED MARRIAGE AND FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION**

Domestic violence includes forced marriage and female genital mutilation. The Action Plan against Forced Marriage (2008–2011) and the Action Plan for Combating Female Genital Mutilation (2008–2011) are being continued in the form of new action plans for 2012. The question of how these subjects should be dealt with in the future will be considered in the course of 2012, and will be discussed in the white paper on domestic violence.

### **ACTION PLAN AGAINST RAPE**

The Government intends to draw up a separate action plan to strengthen the efforts to combat rape. Rape is a violation of personal dignity and can be one of the most traumatising crimes committed against an individual. It represents a serious problem for the justice sector and the health services, and about 1000 cases of rape are reported to the police every year. A large proportion of rapes are committed by a person close to the victim, and a large number are believed to go unreported. In 2008 the committee appointed to study the situation of rape victims presented its report, *From Words to Deeds* (Official Norwegian Report 2008:4, *Fra ord til handling*), in which it proposed a number of measures to prevent and combat this crime. Many of the measures have been implemented, but challenges still remain. The Government's action plan against rape will be based on the committee's report. Other important input to the national efforts to combat rape are the 2010 report on rape and the 2011 strategic plan to combat rape drawn up by the Oslo Police District, and the experiences of other police districts.



## 2. Awareness-raising and prevention

The cycle of violence can only be broken by implementing preventive measures. In addition to helping victims, we need tools and activities to prevent violence in intimate relations from occurring. Early prevention can also halt violence that is already being committed. Preventive measures can be targeted at the general public, at particular groups such as men, young people and people who have recently arrived in Norway or, more directly, at individuals and groups who have already developed violent behaviour.

Measures for the last-mentioned category include the nationwide intervention targeting perpetrators. This consists of a treatment programme under the auspices of the Alternative to Violence centre, making the anger management programme developed by the Brøset Centre for Research and Education in Forensic Psychiatry available to services and agencies such as the family counselling service, and the anger management programme offered by Reform – Resource Centre for Men.

Those who suffer most from domestic violence are women and children, while those who commit the most severe violence are mainly men. Men therefore have a particular responsibility to prevent such violence. However, even though much has been achieved, we have not yet managed to engage men to a sufficient extent. The Government wishes to mobilise more men in the fight to combat violence against women. Reform – Resource Centre for Men has recently started a project for preventing violence by intimate partners in Oslo through knowledge-sharing and dialogues for boys and young men in a relationship.

Under the Government's action plan for gender equality, *Gender Equality 2014*, a training programme will be designed on gender, bodies, sexuality and setting limits for girls and boys in upper secondary school. One of the aims of the training is to teach adolescents how to respond and set limits when they encounter discrimination, such as ignoring, ridicule and sexual harassment. The training is intended to make both boys and girls aware of the importance of gender equality, equal worth and mutual respect.

From a trans-generational perspective, domestic violence places heavy physical and psychological burdens on children and may be a contributing factor in their becoming perpetrators or victims of violence as adults. Witnessing a parent being abused is as harmful for children as being abused themselves. Children are particularly vulnerable because they are far less able to protect themselves than most adults.

While severe violence is usually perpetrated by men against women, mothers may also be violent and abusive towards their children. Children brought up in families that make use of physical and psychological punishment and controlling behaviour are particularly at risk. Violence and abuse of children can often be prevented by early intervention in the form of guidance, advice and support to the parents, and by competence-building for those who come in contact with children in their work.

Broad-based, cross-sectoral efforts are being invested in the area of early intervention. These include systematic monitoring of families at an early stage with a focus on prevention, and organising close, effective cross-disciplinary cooperation at the municipal level. One of the steps taken is the development of the educational programme "Early intervention – mental health, substance abuse and violence".

Experience indicates that a greater focus on domestic violence leads to a greater number of victims contacting the welfare services and the police, and makes the services concerned more alert to the possibility of violence in the home. The violence surveys initiated by the Government in 2003, 2005 and 2008 have been a success in this regard.

### 1. Early intervention

The educational programme "Early intervention – mental health, substance abuse and violence" is intended to teach personnel how to practise early intervention in order to prevent children from growing up in an atmosphere of violence and conflict. This is done by providing help to pregnant women and families with small children at an early stage in order to prevent a negative development over time. One important aspect of the programme is that personnel from different services come together in the learning process, thus promoting cross-sectoral and cross-disciplinary cooperation and leading to better and more effective early intervention. District nurses are an important group in this connection. The programme was implemented in 15 pilot municipalities in 2010–2011. It is being evaluated, and the report will be presented in June 2012. The programme will subsequently be implemented nationwide.

**Responsible ministries:** Ministry of Health and Care Services, Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion

**Implementation:** 2012



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**2. Raising the level of competence in schools about violence and abuse**

The Ministry of Education and Research will hold a public consultation on a proposal for more focused goals in the relevant curriculums to teach children about violence, hurtful behaviour, setting limits and sexuality.

**Responsible ministry:** Ministry of Education and Research  
**Implementation:** 2012

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**3. Course on communication and conflict management at upper secondary schools**

In cooperation with schools and the family counselling service, the Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs has developed an educational programme for upper secondary school pupils on communication and conflict management, with a focus on couples and family relationships. Work is being done on methods for making the course material and web portal accessible to upper secondary schools from 2012.

**Responsible ministries:** Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion, Ministry of Education and Research  
**Implementation:** 2012

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**4. Measure for engaging boys and men in the efforts to combat violence against women**

The measure is intended to influence the attitudes of boys and young men and encourage them to play an active role in combating violence against women. The Government supports the project "United against rape" under the auspices of Reform – Resource Centre for Men. This is an awareness-raising campaign targeted at young people that will be offered to for example schools. The campaign is being conducted in cooperation with youth NGOs.

**Responsible ministry:** Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion  
**Implementation:** 2012

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**5. Survey of domestic violence 2012**

As part of the efforts to raise awareness about domestic violence and focus on the issue as a serious social problem, a new survey of domestic violence will be conducted in 2012 on the model of the surveys of 2003, 2005 and 2008.

**Responsible ministries:** Ministry of Justice and Public Security, Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion, Ministry of Health and Care Services, Ministry of Education and Research  
**Implementation:** 2012



### 3. Assistance and protection

Under the previous action plans, a number of measures were implemented to ensure that victims of domestic violence receive the necessary assistance and protection. These included legislative amendments, strengthening police efforts to combat domestic violence and establishing structures to ensure integrated follow-up of individual victims.

A particular challenge is to ensure that assistance to victims of violence is based in the municipalities. The Act relating to municipal crisis centre services (the Crisis Centre Act), which entered into force on 1 January 2010, provides an important framework for municipal efforts against domestic violence. The Act makes the municipalities responsible for the content and quality of crisis centre services and for cooperation between the various services.

Steps must also be taken to ensure that victims with special needs receive the necessary help and protection. These include children, persons with disabilities and those with mental health and substance abuse problems. Also women with immigrant backgrounds may be in a situation that makes them particularly vulnerable to violence and abuse.

Domestic violence does not necessarily stop as the partner/spouse grows older. Vulnerability increases with age, and over time the probability that the victim will be able to break away from a destructive relationship decreases. Violence may also be committed by persons other than the partner/spouse, such as adult children. Thus there is also a need to strengthen the help offered to older victims.

There may be a need for special measures for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people (LGBT persons). Other groups may also have special needs, such as women victims in Norwegian prisons who need help to work through their experiences of domestic violence.

The use of arranged dialogues (restorative justice) in cases of domestic violence has been tested in a number of police districts in cooperation with the mediation service. The dialogues have been conducted at an appropriate point in criminal proceedings and in cases where a barring order has been imposed. A pilot project implemented in Sør-Trøndelag on arranged dialogues involving child and adult victims of domestic violence has given the mediation service new knowledge and new methods to work with in such cases. The project has also revealed the need to strengthen coordination between the various services that offer assistance to victims.

#### 6. Evaluation of the municipalities' implementation of the Crisis Centre Act

The municipalities' implementation of the Crisis Centre Act is to be evaluated. The evaluation will examine changes made as a result of the Act, including changes in the organisation and content of the help received by the victims, use of resources, adaptation to the needs of the various user groups (such as children, men, women with immigrant backgrounds, persons with mental health problems, substance abusers and persons with disabilities), changes in user groups, and cooperation with the other welfare services. User satisfaction will also be evaluated. The extent to which the municipalities comply with the requirements set out in the Act, whether there are weaknesses or omissions in the legislation and whether the supervision by county governors is adequate will also be examined.

**Responsible ministry:** Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion

**Implementation:** 2012–2014

#### 7. Continuation of Alarmtelefonen – a helpline for children and young people

The national helpline for children and young people who have been exposed to violence, abuse or neglect will be continued after the project period (2009–2011) and made permanent. Changes in the organisation will be considered and made in 2014. The telephone number is 116111 and the website is [www.116111.no](http://www.116111.no).

**Responsible ministry:** Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion

**Implementation:** 2012–2013

#### 8. Protective Services for the Elderly – national helpline

Protective services for older people exposed to violence will be strengthened. The national helpline provides help and support to people over 62 years of age who are exposed to domestic violence. The service will be continued and making it permanent will be considered.

**Responsible ministries:** Ministry of Health and Care Services, Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion, Ministry of Justice and Public Security

**Implementation:** 2012

## 9. Individual and group counselling for women in prison and at the Pro Centre who have been exposed to violence

The cooperation project between Bredtveit Prison and the Oslo Crisis Centre on a service for women prisoners who are victims of violence and abuse will be continued in 2012. The project will be extended to include women at the Pro Centre in Oslo. In addition to direct help in the form of individual and group counselling, the project includes further development of methods for reaching this group of women and providing information about domestic violence to the Correctional Services.

**Responsible ministry:** Ministry of Justice and Public Security

**Implementation:** 2012

## 10. Centre for child victims of violence

A pilot project is to be conducted to examine the need for a centre for child victims of violence and abuse. The aim will be to offer children and their parents a stay at the centre, where the focus will be on coping and recovering their zest for life. The centre is envisaged as a supplement to other forms of help such as the children's houses. The pilot project will be carried out by Stine Sofies Stiftelse.

**Responsible ministry:** Ministry of Justice and Public Security

**Implementation:** 2012

## 11. Mediation service in cases involving honour-related violence

The use of arranged dialogues (restorative justice) will be further developed for cases involving honour-related violence, including forced marriage, female genital mutilation and controlling behaviour, through educational programmes, competence-building and methodological development under the auspices of the Sør-Trøndelag Mediation Service.

The project will be linked with the multicultural information and dialogue centre in Trondheim.

**Responsible ministries:** Ministry of Justice and Public Security, Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion

**Implementation:** 2012–2013

## 4. Detection and prosecution

Detecting violence and abuse at an early stage is crucial. More knowledge and better tools for detecting abuse in day-care centres, schools, municipal services and the specialist health services will increase the number of reported cases of suspected abuse of children and/or adults suffering from domestic violence or other serious neglect.

The guidelines *In the Best Interest of the Child - Cooperation between Day Care Institutions and the Child Welfare Service* (published by the Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion in 2009) emphasises the duty of day-care institutions to provide information to the child welfare service. The main purpose of the guidelines is to ensure that children who live under conditions that may be detrimental to their health and development receive the necessary help and care without unnecessary delay. The child welfare service is in a unique position to detect violence and abuse and to follow up reports by others of violence concerns. Population studies have shown that there is a substantial gap between the prevalence of violence against children and the relatively small number of cases where the child welfare services cite physical abuse as the reason for intervention. It appears that health personnel and others who come in contact with children either do not detect symptoms of abuse or for some reason refrain from reporting it. In the book *Children Who Live with Domestic Violence – Grounds for Protection and Help* published as part of the project “Children who live with domestic violence (2004–2009)” (measure 26 in the action plan *Turning Point*), a separate chapter is devoted to detecting violence and methods that can be used by the child welfare and other services.

The Ministry of Health and Care Services and the Ministry of Justice and Public Security have appointed working groups to examine legislation and practice regarding the duty of confidentiality and the duty and right to provide information.

In the last few years the number of cases of domestic violence reported to the police has risen, and the police now have considerably more knowledge and competence in this area. The Government has ensured that all police districts have a full-time position for a family violence coordinator, and the largest police districts have a special team for investigating domestic violence and sexual abuse. The Police Directorate has issued guidelines for dealing with these cases, and in Circular No. 3/2008, the Director General of Public Prosecutions issued updated guidelines for investigation and prosecution in domestic violence cases. In addition the Government has raised the penalty limits and strengthened the position of the victims in criminal cases. The right to counsel

for the aggrieved party and the right to compensation for victims of violent crimes have also been extended.

The work on domestic violence carried out by four police districts (Oslo, Søndre Buskerud, Hedmark and Salten) is being evaluated by the National Police Academy. The results of the evaluation will be presented in 2012 and will provide a picture of the challenges and problems faced by the police when dealing with these cases. It will also provide important information on which efforts need to be intensified through the new action plan that will apply from 2013.

The Spousal Assault Risk Assessment (SARA) instrument will be tested in 2011 at the police stations of Stovner, in Oslo, and Horten. The SARA checklist is designed to ensure that all information resources have been consulted, and the instrument has a score form to screen for risk factors of spousal assault and other domestic violence so that preventive measures can be taken. The use of the SARA will be evaluated at the end of the trial period.

### 12. Detection by the health services of physical abuse of children

The Norwegian Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies is in the process of completing a web-based manual for personnel in the specialised health services to be used in cases of suspected child maltreatment and abuse. Expanding the manual to include personnel in the dental health and municipal health services is being considered. The manual, together with a training programme, will be made available to these services in the course of 2012.

**Responsible ministry:** Ministry of Health and Care Services

**Implementation:** 2012

### 13. Implementation of the SARA risk assessment instrument

The Spousal Assault Risk Assessment (SARA) will be gradually implemented at all police districts in Norway as from 2012 if the evaluation of the trial at Horten and Stovner police stations is positive.

**Responsible ministry:** Ministry of Justice and Public Security

**Implementation:** 2012

## 5. Cooperation and coordination

Domestic violence is an area that involves many different agencies and interests, where there is a great need for more knowledge and where coordination is a challenge. Violence may affect many different aspects of the victim's life. This means that victims often need help and follow-up from several different services, and cross-sectoral cooperation is therefore essential.

There is still a need for closer cooperation and coordination between the various agencies, and steps should be taken to establish knowledge platforms and test appropriate models for cooperation at the local and regional level. Cooperation across services and traditional sector divides is required if help is to be adequate and effective. Individuals and groups in need of help should receive comprehensive, integrated assistance from the authorities.

In 2008 the Norwegian Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies and the regional resource centres for violence, traumatic stress and suicide prevention issued guidelines for the development of municipal action plans. The regional resource centres also provide assistance to municipalities in their work with the plans. The action plans are intended to put domestic violence on the agenda and coordinate and raise awareness of the spheres of responsibility of the various agencies and the assistance they can provide. Although many municipalities have made good progress in these efforts, there are still large regional differences with regard to the adoption and implementation of the plans. There is thus a need for further efforts by the regional resource centres to facilitate and assist municipalities with drafting and implementing the plans. The evaluation of the municipalities' implementation of the Crisis Centre Act will include the question of how far the municipalities have fulfilled their obligation to coordinate the various services under section 4 of the Act.

### 14. Municipal action plans against domestic violence

In order to assist more municipalities to adopt action plans against domestic violence, the guidelines for drawing up such plans will be updated and re-launched as a web-based product. The Norwegian Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies and the regional resource centres for violence, traumatic stress and suicide prevention will cooperate on this. The regional resource centres will intensify their efforts to assist municipalities in developing and implementing their action plans and submit annual reports on the number of

plans that have been completed or are in the process of being drafted.

**Responsible ministries:** Ministry of Justice and Public Security, Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion, Ministry of Health and Care Services, Ministry of Education and Research

**Implementation:** 2012

### 15. Conference on cooperation and coordination models

The Government will arrange a national conference on domestic violence, where models for cooperation, coordination and implementation of measures and plans will be presented, see measure 14. A prize for cooperation and coordination will be awarded to municipalities with good, long-term and locally based cooperation projects for preventing and combating domestic violence.

**Responsible ministries:** Ministry of Justice and Public Security, Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion, Ministry of Health and Care Services, Ministry of Education and Research

**Implementation:** 2012

### 16. National website on domestic violence and rape

Work will be started on a national website on domestic violence and rape. The question of whether this should be published as a separate website or as part of an existing one will be considered. The aim of the website will be to provide an overview of relevant public and private agencies and of the research and available material in the field. The target groups are the public authorities, organisations, professionals, victims and other individuals, and other actors whose work brings them in contact with problems related to domestic violence and rape.

**Responsible ministries:** Ministry of Justice and Public Security, Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion, Ministry of Health and Care Services, Ministry of Education and Research

**Implementation:** 2012



## 6. Knowledge and competence

In order for their efforts to be effective, authorities and organisations that come in direct contact with victims need thorough knowledge about the extent, nature and consequences of domestic violence.

The Norwegian Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies has been commissioned to conduct a national prevalence survey of domestic violence. The results will be available in 2013/2014. The Centre also conducts a number of research projects, including studies of domestic violence in families with immigrant backgrounds and of how cases involving violence and abuse issues are handled in the context of the Children Act and the Child Welfare Act.

The help and treatment service provided to perpetrators by Alternative to Violence, and the anger management programme developed by the Brøset Centre for Research and Education in Forensic Psychiatry are being evaluated. The Government has commissioned a study to survey and estimate the socio-economic consequences of domestic violence. More knowledge is also needed on substance abuse as a risk factor for domestic violence, and on other social groups, their exposure to domestic violence and its consequences, and their need for help and protection.

In almost half the cases where women have been murdered, the perpetrator was a current or former partner. A study of femicides is to be conducted to identify risk factors, with a view to improving the development of prevention strategies and protection measures. The study will be started as soon as the necessary approval has been obtained. In the meantime the Centre for Research and Education in Forensic Psychiatry in Oslo has published a review of the literature dealing with existing research on intimate partner homicide.

The Ministry of Health and Care Services is following up the proposal in *Homicide in Norway in the Period 2004–2009* (Official Norwegian Report 2010:3, *Drap i Norge in perioden 2004–2009*), to establish a permanent research-based scheme for reviewing all cases of homicide in Norway. The work is being done in cooperation with subordinate agencies and Norwegian research institutions and specialists.

New and more detailed knowledge will build further competence on domestic violence among occupational groups and specialists. The Government is giving priority to competence-building in the courts, the police and the relevant public services.

In the last few years both the expertise of and the number of positions in the municipal child welfare services have been increased. However, there is still a need to systematise and spread knowledge in this area to allow more cases of violence to be detected and ensure that more children receive adequate help.



The Government is drawing up a white paper on education and training for the various occupations in the welfare services. The white paper will discuss areas of expertise that are common to all personnel in the health and social welfare sectors, and the importance of placing the welfare services in a position to provide effective and appropriate help to victims of violence and abuse.

#### 17. Domestic violence in Sami communities

A study will be conducted in cooperation with the Sámediggi (the Sami parliament) on domestic violence in Sami communities. The findings will be used as input to the measures being developed in this area by the Government and the Sámediggi.

**Responsible ministries:** Ministry of Education and Research, Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion, Ministry of Health and Care Services

**Implementation:** 2012–2013

#### 18. Violence and substance abuse

In order to increase knowledge of substance abuse as a risk factor, cooperation will be established in 2012 between the Norwegian Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies and the Norwegian Institute for Alcohol and Drug Research on research in the field of violence and substance abuse.

**Responsible ministry:** Ministry of Health and Care Services

**Implementation:** 2012

#### 19. Knowledge about groups of children and young people who are at risk of violence and abuse

More systematic knowledge is needed about which groups of children are at risk of violence and abuse. A project will be launched to raise awareness of the existence of these groups, examine their specific problems and assess their need for help. In 2012 the Norwegian Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies will be commissioned to:

- a) issue a publication on women/mothers who commit physical and psychological violence towards their children, including sexual abuse,
- b) establish the knowledge status on violence and abuse between young people, with proposals for follow-up. The report will include knowledge about:
  - violence and abuse in young couples – extent and nature,
  - vulnerable groups of children and young people, for example with disabilities,
  - ways in which children and young people are victimised, physically and psychologically, by violence, threats of violence and sexual harassment through digital media,
  - sibling violence and abuse, for example in large families and religious communities.

**Responsible ministry:** Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion

**Implementation:** 2012

#### 20. Study of the exposure of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transsexuals to domestic violence

The exposure of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transsexuals to domestic violence will be examined. The study will include the extent and nature of the violence, the situations in which it occurs, its consequences and the victims' need for help and protection. It will include both children and adults. The study will be carried out by the LGBT Knowledge Centre – National Centre for Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity under the Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs.

**Responsible ministry:** Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion

**Implementation:** 2012

## 21. Building competence on violence in the child welfare service

The competence and expertise of the child welfare service will be strengthened through the following steps:

- a) *Competence Development in the Child Welfare Service* (Official Norwegian Report 2009:8, *Kompetanseutvikling i barnevernet*), will be followed up, for example by arranging educational conferences in 2012.
- b) When updating current or drafting new publications for the child welfare service, the Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion will include references to sources where appropriate instruments for gathering information can be found and suggest procedures for cooperation with other services.

**Responsible ministry:** Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion

**Implementation:** start in 2012

## 22. Strengthening and coordinating expertise on violence against children

In order to improve and coordinate expertise on children and young people at risk of violence and abuse, cooperation will be established between relevant centres of expertise.

The cooperation will include research and knowledge-sharing with local welfare services and is intended to:

- a) prevent aggressive and violent behaviour among children and young people who have been exposed to violence, and
- b) identify and help introvert children/children with emotional problems resulting from violence.

**Responsible ministries:** Ministry of Health and Care Services and Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion

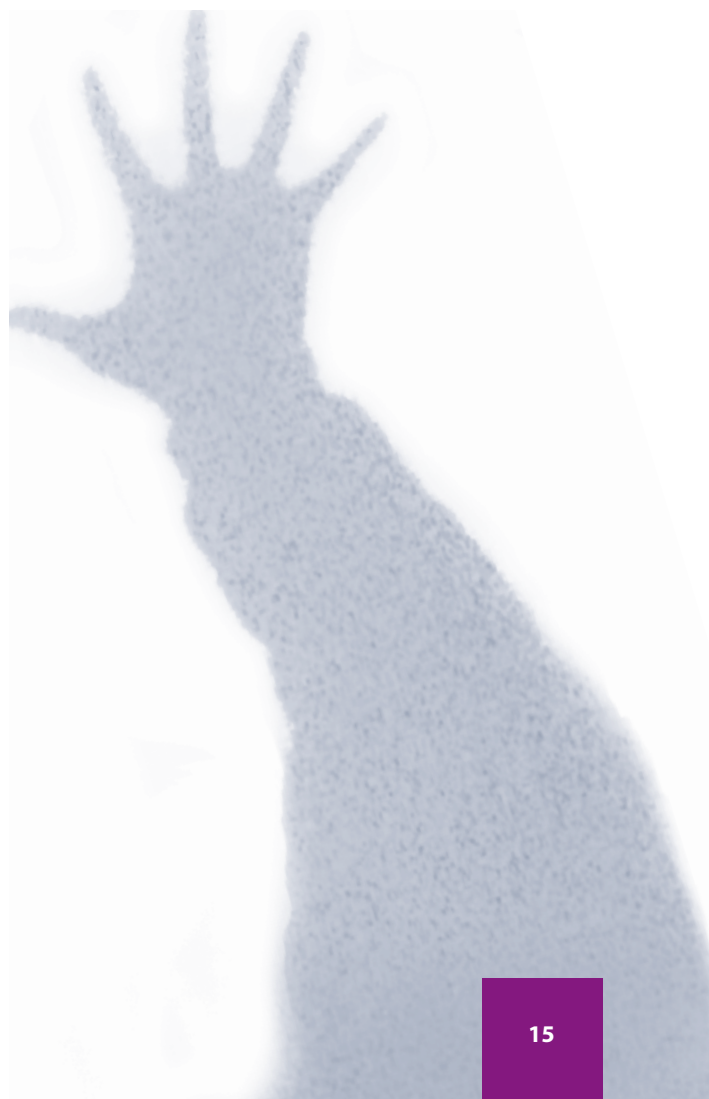
**Implementation:** start in 2012

## 23. Expertise on violence and abuse in the courts

Steps will be taken to strengthen the knowledge of judges and other professionals on the harmful effects of violence and abuse, and to build competence on suitable ways of proceeding in such cases. Cooperation on competence-building has been initiated with the Norwegian Courts Administration, which will focus on the treatment of cases under the Children Act that involve serious problems such as violence and sexual abuse.

**Responsible ministry:** Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion

**Implementation:** 2012–2013





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