

# Focus on Women

Issue 6 2007

Welcome to the sixth edition of the Rights of Women Policy Newsletter *Focus on Women*.

Legal aid has dominated much of the legal policy agenda in recent months. The Carter report, an independent inquiry into legal aid was released in July 2006 and the Government's consultation on the implementation of the report recommendations closed in October 2006. In this issue of *Focus on Women* we examine the background to the report and consultation, highlight the reforms and our concerns, and the implications for the women's sector.

Since the last edition of *Focus on Women* there have been several consultations on family law including cohabitation and transparency in family courts. This issue of *Focus on Women* looks at changes to enforcement of child contact orders, as set out in the Children and Adoption Act 2006. As with previous issues we continue to follow the implementation of proposed equality laws, and discuss the postponement of the implementation of the prohibition of discrimination on the ground of sexual orientation in the provision of goods and services. This issue also contains an analysis of the recent and important House of Lords case of *Fornah* which determined whether female genital mutilation could found an asylum application in the UK. Our updates

section tracks developments in areas we have previously highlighted in *Focus on Women*, including abortion, the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act and forced marriage.

I would like to thank the many recipients of *Focus on Women* who replied to the feedback questionnaire sent out with the last edition and provided us with useful information. As promised, all returned feedback forms were entered into a draw to receive a free copy of Rights of Women's latest publications **From A to Z: A woman's guide to the law** and **Rights of Women's Revised Domestic Violence DIY Injunction Handbook** (second edition) and a copy of the forthcoming publication **Rights of Women's Revised Child Contact Handbook** (second edition) (check the next issue of *Focus on Women* for further information). We are pleased to announce that Kiaura Women's Service in Staffordshire "won" the draw. Kiaura Women's Service provides support for women who are in or have left an abusive relationship.

If you have any feedback or comments on *Focus on Women*, please send these to Sanchita Hosali, our Policy Officer, at [sanchita@row.org.uk](mailto:sanchita@row.org.uk)

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## Access to Justice: A legal aid update

Recently, there has been much debate about the Government's legal aid reforms. The legal aid system in England and Wales provides Government funding so that those who cannot afford legal advice and representation can still access justice, provided they meet the qualifying requirements under the system.

### **Carter report and 'Legal Aid: a sustainable future'**

There were two key documents published in July 2006 which looked at the way the Government "buys" legal aid services from lawyers. Firstly, the "Carter report", which was the outcome of an independent year-long review of buying legal aid (called 'Legal Aid – a market based approach to reform').<sup>i</sup>

Secondly, the Government published the consultation paper 'Legal Aid: a sustainable future' ('Sustainable Future')<sup>ii</sup> which built on the recommendations contained in the Carter report. This consultation paper was produced jointly by the Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA), the Government department responsible for legal affairs, and the Legal Services Commission (LSC), the public body which is responsible for legal aid.

The reports propose very significant changes to the way the LSC buys and pays for all legal aid services, recommending a "market based" approach. This will begin with fixed or graduated fees for lawyers rather than the current hourly fees. Legal aid services will then move to an open competition process where lawyers bid for work.

### **Fees and open competition**

On the face of it, the market based approach driven by competition might to some sound like a good idea. However, the new scheme will seriously jeopardise access to legal advice and representation for vulnerable people and in particular, for women. The new 'fixed fees scheme' cannot take into account the complexities of different cases or the particular needs of a diverse range of individuals. Rights of Women run the only two national legal advice lines on family law and sexual violence, and we know that women's legal cases will involve more work than the current fixed fee proposals will allow. This is because women are more likely to have experienced or be at risk of domestic violence, be involved in full-time care of children, elderly or disabled relatives and be in an economically weaker position than men. Cases will require still more time if a woman has language or literacy issues, mental health problems, a disability, or is housebound or in prison.

<sup>i</sup> Available at [www.dca.gov.uk](http://www.dca.gov.uk)

<sup>ii</sup> Available at [www.dca.gov.uk](http://www.dca.gov.uk) or [www.legalservices.gov.uk](http://www.legalservices.gov.uk)

Rights of Women is very concerned that the restrictions of the fixed fees scheme will mean that in reality lawyers will be financially rewarded for taking on simple cases, leaving some of the most vulnerable women, those with complex needs, without access to a lawyer or legal representation.

### **No family law reprieve**

During the consultation period much concern was expressed about the application of the proposed reforms to family law issues, such as those involving children or domestic violence. In October, after the close of the consultation, the Minister for Constitutional Affairs who heads the DCA, Lord Falconer, stated “We know that the proposals are not yet right - we will not be introducing a policy, in relation to family and civil, until we believe it is right.”<sup>iii</sup> Many thought that this signalled a reprieve for family law, and the possibility of rethinking the reforms.

However, in another speech in November Lord Falconer dismissed this interpretation. He categorically stated that there “is no retreat in our position for reform – we stand by the principles of fixed and graduated fees, as a prelude to competition, in all areas of legal aid – civil, family, immigration, and criminal.”<sup>iv</sup>

Later in November the LSC and DCA announced their plans to push forward with the proposed reforms on legal aid.<sup>v</sup> Whilst the Government has agreed to delays in implementing the changes which will take place between 2007 and 2008, the changes themselves are to go ahead. The Government has agreed to run another consultation in early 2007 (although no date has yet been provided) which will look at the fee levels for family law work before implementing changes.

### **Rights of Women’s concerns**

Rights of Women has serious concerns about a market based legal aid system. The provision of services based substantially on lowest cost runs the risk of lowest “common denominator” legal aid which contradicts one of the key purposes of legal aid, namely providing access to justice for some of the most vulnerable of people. We are concerned about the impact the legal aid reforms are likely to have on women who already face difficulties in accessing justice under the current system, especially in the area of family law.

We know from our callers and women who attend our training that the number of ‘advice deserts’ (where there are no legal aid services available) are increasing. We are very concerned that the legal aid reforms will result in a further reduction in the number of lawyers providing advice and representation, particularly in family law. A recent Law Society survey found that 82% of family practitioners believe that their firm is less likely to undertake legal aid work in the future. Women are affected by these changes because their lower economic status means that they are less likely to be able to afford to pay for legal advice, and as women are often primary carers it can be difficult for them to travel out of their area to seek legal advice.

### **Impact on women’s organisations and the voluntary sector**

Rights of Women believe that the legal aid reforms will have a significant impact on women’s organisations and the voluntary sector as a whole. Voluntary sector legal advice provision, particularly in women’s organisations, is already under-resourced and overstretched. However, there are concerns that as women find it increasingly difficult to

iii Speech by Lord Falconer ‘Law Society Conference’ Law Society, 13 October 2006, available at [www.dca.gov.uk/speeches/2006/sp061013.htm](http://www.dca.gov.uk/speeches/2006/sp061013.htm)

iv Speech by Lord Falconer ‘Legal Aid - The Way Forward’, Legal Aid Forum, Law Society, 7 November 2006 available at [www.dca.gov.uk/speeches/2006/sp061107.htm](http://www.dca.gov.uk/speeches/2006/sp061107.htm)

v ‘Legal Aid Reform: the way forward’ available at [www.legalservices.gov.uk](http://www.legalservices.gov.uk)

access justice, organisations providing legal advice, such as Rights of Women, are likely to have to take the strain of problematic legal aid provision.

Although the consultation on the legal aid reforms has closed, there will be opportunities to engage with additional consultations dealing with the details of the reforms, such as the fees for family law work. If your organisation supports women either by providing advice or signposting to legal organisations and you want to consider looking at future consultations, they will be available from the DCA website [www.dca.gov.uk](http://www.dca.gov.uk) or the LSC website [www.legalservices.gov.uk](http://www.legalservices.gov.uk). For further information about access to justice and campaigns on legal aid reform see also:

- The Access to Justice Alliance [www.accesstojusticealliance.org.uk](http://www.accesstojusticealliance.org.uk)
- The Advice Services Alliance [www.asauk.org.uk](http://www.asauk.org.uk)
- The Law Society's What Price Justice Campaign [www.whatpricejustice.law.society.org.uk](http://www.whatpricejustice.law.society.org.uk)

## Rights of Women welcomes the House of Lords judgment in *Fornah*: FGM and asylum law in the UK

Rights of Women welcomes the recent House of Lords' judgment in the case of *Fornah v Secretary of State of the Home Department*.<sup>i</sup>

Ms Fornah claimed asylum in the UK because she feared that she would be forced

to undergo female genital mutilation (FGM) if she remained in Sierra Leone. However, the Home Office refused to grant her refugee protection arguing that she did not fear persecution for one of the reasons outlined in the Refugee Convention. Instead they granted Ms Fornah humanitarian protection, a more limited form of protection allowing her to remain in the UK, because they accepted that if she was returned to Sierra Leone she would be subjected to inhuman and degrading treatment. To return someone to such a risk would be in breach of our Government's obligations under the European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR). Ms Fornah appealed the decision to deny her refugee status and her case went to the House of Lords.

### The Refugee Convention and 'membership of a particular social group'

Under the Refugee Convention a woman will be recognised as a refugee if she can prove that:

- She has a well founded fear of being persecuted because of her race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or her membership of a "particular social group" (the "convention reasons") AND
- She is outside her country, AND
- Her country is either unwilling or unable to protect her from the persecution.

To gain refugee protection you have to be able to show that you have been persecuted for one or more of the above Convention reasons. The Convention reasons most commonly relied upon, race, religion, nationality and political opinion, whilst being difficult to apply in some cases have clear and well understood meanings. The meaning of "particular social group" however, has been the subject of much legal debate. The United Nations Refugee Agency – the Office

<sup>i</sup> The full legal citation for the case is *Fornah v Secretary of State of the Home Department* [2005] UKHL 46. The judgment is available to download from the House of Parliament website at: [www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200506/ldjudgmt/jd061018/sshd.pdf](http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200506/ldjudgmt/jd061018/sshd.pdf)

of the High Commissioner for Refugees – defines a particular social group as “a group of persons who share a common characteristic other than their risk of being persecuted, or who are perceived as a group by society. The characteristic will often be one which is innate, unchangeable, or which is otherwise fundamental to identity, conscience or the exercise of one’s human rights”.<sup>ii</sup>

### **Judgment in *Fornah***

The issue in Ms Fornah’s case was whether being at risk of FGM made her a member of a “particular social group”. The Court of Appeal had held by a majority (2:1) that it was not possible to identify a particular social group independently of the persecution that was feared – FGM. The House of Lords unanimously rejected this circular and misleading argument. The House of Lords held that the particular social group that Ms Fornah belonged to was “women in Sierra Leone”. Lord Bingham, who gave the lead judgment, explained that the common characteristic shared by all women in Sierra Leone is that they are perceived by society as inferior to men. He also said that to “define the group in this way is not to define it by reference to the persecution complained of: it is a characteristic which would exist even if FGM were not practised, although FGM is an extreme and very cruel expression of male dominance”.<sup>iii</sup>

### **Gender persecution and human rights protection**

The judgment given by Baroness Hale is also important because she addresses gender-related and gender-specific persecution. Gender-related persecution is persecution that women face because of their identity as women. Gender-specific persecution is harm that is suffered only or mainly by women. Some examples of gender-related and

gender-specific persecution include domestic and sexual violence, punishment for relationships outside of marriage or outside of heterosexual norms, forced marriage and so called “honour” crimes. Although the Refugee Convention does not list gender as a reason for persecution Baroness Hale noted that gender-based persecution is still relevant to the Refugee Convention. This is because international human rights laws such as the Intentional Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women contain protections to secure gender equality. Those countries that have signed up to these laws (“parties”), which includes the UK, are obliged to interpret and apply the Refugee Convention in a way which is compatible with this commitment to secure gender equality.<sup>iv</sup>

### **The importance of refugee status**

Although Ms Fornah already had humanitarian protection it was important that she gain protection under the Refugee Convention. Refugee status is the highest form of protection available in the UK. Being granted refugee status gives important rights such as the ability to work, claim benefits and apply for family members to join you (“family reunion”). Also, while the ECHR protected Ms Fornah from being returned to Sierra Leone, not all countries who are parties to the Refugee Convention are parties to the ECHR, it is important that these States are prevented from denying protection to women who fear FGM and other forms of gender-based persecution protection.

### **Women’s work**

Baroness Hale is the UK’s first female Law Lord. Not only did she give a powerful judgment in Fornah but she has also made

ii UHCR Guidelines on Membership of a Particular Social Group ( 7th May 2002)

iii Para 31 of the judgement

iv Para 86 of the judgement

important comments on the particular forms of persecution that women may face. It is interesting that when the case was heard by the Court of Appeal (before being appealed to the House of Lords) the Court did not give a unanimous judgment. Whilst the two male judges refused refugee protection Lady Justice Arden disagreed with their approach. Rights of Women believes that decisions like these show the importance of having a judiciary and legal system that is representative of society as a whole and that there needs to be much more done to ensure that more women, and Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) women in particular, reach senior positions in the legal profession and judiciary.

## Implementation of Sexual Orientation Discrimination Laws Postponed

The Government has postponed the implementation of proposals to prohibit sexual orientation discrimination in providing goods and services. This ban will make it unlawful to discriminate against people on the basis of sexual orientation in areas such as providing NHS services or accommodation in B & Bs or hotels. Originally the ban was due to be implemented in October 2006. However, following reported disagreement between several Government Ministers implementation has been postponed until April 2007.

### Getting equal

In March 2006 the Government issued its consultation 'Getting Equal: Proposals to Outlaw Sexual Orientation Discrimination in the Provision of Goods and Services'.

Discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in the workplace has already been prohibited by the Discrimination in Employment (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003. However, discrimination in goods and services has not yet been prohibited, unlike discrimination on the basis of other equalities issues such as race or disability.

Rights of Women, in our response to the consultation (available at [www.rightsofwomen.org.uk](http://www.rightsofwomen.org.uk)), emphasised our concerns about the influence of faith-based lobbies seeking extensive exemptions to the prohibition on discrimination in goods and services. We highlighted our strong objection to exemptions which would offer any religion protection to discriminate on grounds of sexual orientation, with the effect of disadvantaging lesbians and/or bisexual women and/or those associated with them. Rights of Women is keen to ensure that the law deals with discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in the same way as discrimination on other grounds. Any other option is incompatible with the purpose of equality and rather than addressing discrimination simply perpetuates it by creating a different system of legal protection.

### Staying unequal, at least for now?

Following the close of the consultation in June 2006, the Government announced that it would be implementing the prohibition on goods and services in October 2006. However, following a Government reshuffle in the summer and continued lobbying from religious organisations, the issue of a ban has become more controversial. Reports in the press alleged that some members of the Government who openly identify as Christian or Catholic were concerned about the implementation of the ban, particularly in relation to faith schools and faith-based adoption agencies. Others in Government were reported as fully supporting the implementation.

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# Consultations

A significant amount of our policy work relates to responding to consultation papers from the Government and other bodies. Through our engagement in the consultation process, we aim to ensure that women's voices are heard at every stage of policy formation. Our recent consultation responses are available online ([www.rightsofwomen.org.uk](http://www.rightsofwomen.org.uk)) and include:

- *Cohabitation: the financial consequences of relationship breakdown;* and
- *Confidence and confidentiality: Improving transparency and privacy in family courts.*

During 2007, Rights of Women plans to engage with forthcoming consultations such as the Department for Work and Pensions' *A New System of Child Maintenance* (closing date 13 March 2007). We will also be examining consultations which, although not currently published, are due to take place at the start of the year. These include continuing consultations on the implementation of legal aid reform.

## Get Involved!

Rights of Women generally encourages women's organisations to engage in the policy decision-making process, either through drafting responses or by endorsing the responses of others in the sector.

Using our experience of addressing women's rights issues, organisations in the sector have valuable contributions to make to debates on law and policy, and this can and does lead to changes. For example, in December 2006 the Sentencing Guidelines Council (SGC) published its final report on its June consultation looking at sentencing for domestic violence (for further information on the SGC and the consultation see *Focus on Women* Issue 5 Autumn 2006). The final text from the SGC had at least three changes which were highlighted by Rights of Women's response to the consultation. These changes were, the deletion of violence between two brothers as an example of domestic violence, as it did not recognise the gendered nature of violence; the inclusion of a reference to the definition of harm in section 31(9) Children Act 1989 (as amended by section 120 Children and Adoption Act 2002), under which harm can include a child witnessing violence; and removing reference to the remorse of the perpetrator when considering non-custodial sentences.

If you would like to endorse any future consultation responses written by Rights of Women, please send a short letter or email to the appropriate Government body or department supporting our submission. If you would like more information on endorsing our consultation responses please contact our Policy Officer, Sanchita Hosali, at [sanchita@row.org.uk](mailto:sanchita@row.org.uk)

It was subsequently decided that implementation would be delayed until April 2007. Rights of Women is pleased that the ban on sexual orientation discrimination in provision of goods and services is now scheduled for implementation in 2007, and we will be following the implementation of the prohibition. However we are disappointed that implementation has been delayed. We are concerned that the delay in implementation fails to protect lesbians and bisexual women, and those associated with them, from discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation in the provision of goods and services.

The Government Minister responsible for the implementation of the prohibition is Ruth Kelly, the Women and Equality Minister, and further information can be found on the Government's Women and Equality Unit's website [www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk](http://www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk)

## From A to Z: A woman's guide to the law

On the 21st September 2006 Rights of Women launched its latest publication *From A to Z: A woman's guide to the law*, at the British Library. The event was well attended, with key addresses from Harriet Harman, QC, MP, Minister of State in the Department of Constitutional Affairs and Denise Robertson, Agony Aunt, Writer and Broadcaster.

*From A to Z: A woman's guide to the law* is a unique and accessible guide providing women with information on an extensive range of legal topics, from Abduction to Zero Tolerance. This A to Z guide covers different areas of law including:

- asylum and immigration law;
- criminal law;

- discrimination and employment law;
- the English legal system;
- family law;
- housing;
- human rights law; and
- welfare and consumer rights.

Denise Robertson highlighted that *From A to Z: A woman's guide to the law* is 'sorely needed'. Harriet Harman noted that women can only get their rights if they know what they are and that you don't need a lawyer if you have *From A to Z: A woman's guide to the law*, announcing that she will have this brilliant publication 'closely by my side at all times'.

*From A to Z: A woman's guide to the law* is essential reading for all women, and those organisations that provide support, advice and advocacy for women.

*From A to Z: A woman's guide to the law* is available to purchase for £10 (including post and packaging) directly from Rights of Women. To order your copies, please download an order form from [www.rightsofwomen.org.uk](http://www.rightsofwomen.org.uk) and return it with a cheque made payable to 'Rights of Women' to Rights of Women, 52-54 Featherstone Street, London, EC1Y 8RT. For further information about *From A to Z: A woman's guide to the law* please visit [www.rightsofwomen.org.uk](http://www.rightsofwomen.org.uk) or contact us on 020 7251 6575/6 or [info@row.org.uk](mailto:info@row.org.uk).

## Updates

### Abortion

The recent attempts to restrict abortion laws have continued since the last edition of *Focus on Women*. On the 31 October 2006, the Conservative MP Nadine Dorries introduced a Bill in Parliament to reduce the time limit for having an abortion from 24 to 21 weeks. The bill was overwhelmingly

defeated with 108 votes for and 187 votes against. On the 23 November 2006, the annual ballot to decide which 20 MPs will be able to bring private members bills in the 2007, was held. Of the twenty names, 11 are Conservative MPs and nine are Labour MPs; none of the other parties had one of their MPs names drawn from the ballot. There is concern over whether those MPs whose names are on the ballot will use their private members bill to further try to restrict abortion laws. Abortion Rights held a meeting the day before the ballot to lobby parliament about the need to re-focus the debate on women's reproductive rights rather than emphasising misleading claims of medical advances. For further information contact Abortion Rights on [www.abortionrights.org.uk](http://www.abortionrights.org.uk)

### **Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004**

We recently asked our local MP, Emily Thornberry, to raise a parliamentary question in the House of Commons, about when the remaining provisions of the DVCVA will come into force. Harriet Harman, Minister of State for the Department of Constitutional Affairs which is responsible for the Act, replied that making the breach of a non-molestation order a criminal offence will cost the public purse £2.8 million per year. She estimated that widening the group of people able to apply for the protection of a non-molestation order or occupation order under the Family Law Act 1996 to include non-cohabiting couples as set out in the DVCVA would cost a further £2.9 million. This response led many to believe that the provisions would not be implemented in the foreseeable future. However, shortly before going to print, Rights of Women received confirmation from the Government that the remaining sections of the DVCVA will be implemented in the summer of 2007. Rights of Women will be following the implementation of the DVCVA and highlight any updates in future editions of *Focus on Women*.

### **Domestic Violence and Sanctuary Schemes**

On the 19th December 2006 Ruth Kelly, the Minister for Equality and Head of the Communities and Local Government Department, announced that every local authority in the country should make 'sanctuary schemes' available. 'Sanctuary schemes' have previously been trialled by various local authorities, including within London. Sanctuary schemes involve the creation of a 'safe' room within a survivor's home, which is intended to provide protection from a violent perpetrator, usually combined with a mechanism such as an alarm or telephone to alert the police. The Government have placed the expansion of the scheme in the context of a 'major new drive to help prevent victims of domestic violence from being forced out of their own homes with their families being uprooted and made homeless' (Communities and Local Government News Release 2006/0181).

Ruth Kelly's department has issued guidance to local authorities on the use of sanctuary schemes, under which these measures should only be used where the survivor chooses to use them, there has been a safety assessment and the perpetrator no longer lives in the home. There will be no new funding for the schemes. Rather, the Government will be providing a £74 million homelessness grant to local authorities in 2007 which it expects authorities to use to fund the schemes, amongst other homelessness prevention measures. Rights of Women will be following the progress of sanctuary schemes and will highlight developments in future editions of *Focus on Women*.

### **Forced Marriage Bill**

During the Government's consultation in 2005 several women's groups, such as Rights of Women, Southall Black Sisters and Women's Aid, signalled their opposition to

the criminalisation of forced marriage (see Issue 4 of *Focus on Women* and [www.rightsofwomen.org.uk](http://www.rightsofwomen.org.uk) for Rights of Women's consultation response). In response to this opposition to criminalisation, Lord Lester, a member of the House of Lords, recently announced his intention to introduce a new civil law on forced marriage in 2007. The Bill, called the 'Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Bill', was published on the 17 November and is available online on the Parliament website [www.parliament.uk](http://www.parliament.uk)

The Bill, which is endorsed by Southall Black Sisters, aims to provide protection for the victims of forced marriage by creating civil remedies to be used in the family courts. The Bill proposes to allow victims to seek simple remedies before a marriage has taken place. The Bill also makes it unlawful to "aid and abet" a forced marriage and covers deception for the purpose of causing a forced marriage. The second reading of the Bill is likely to take place in late January 2007.

# The Noticeboard

## New Publications

### **From A to Z: A woman's guide to the law – launched September 2006**

This unique and accessible guide provides women with information on an extensive range of legal topics, from Abduction to Zero Tolerance. This A to Z covers different areas of law including asylum and immigration law; criminal law; discrimination and employment law; the English legal system; family law; housing; human rights law; and welfare and consumer rights.

*From A to Z: A woman's guide to the law* is essential reading for all women, and those organisations that provide support, advice and advocacy for women.

### **Rights of Women's Domestic Violence DIY Injunction Handbook Updated**

This new edition of Rights of Women's Domestic Violence DIY Injunction Handbook has been substantially updated to include all relevant changes to the law introduced by the Domestic Violence Crime and Victims Act 2004.

This extensive, detailed and accessible handbook enables women to obtain protection from violence and abuse. It is essential reading for all women considering applying for this form of protection, and for professionals who offer advice and support to women experiencing domestic violence.

# Forthcoming Publication

## **Rights of Women's Child Contact Handbook Updated**

By Alison Burt and Julia Thackray

This revised edition of *Rights of Women's Child Contact Handbook* has been substantially updated to include all relevant changes to the law introduced by the Adoption and Children Act 2004 and recent changes to CAFCASS.

This extensive, detailed and accessible handbook guides women through the law and procedure in relation to child contact. It is essential reading for all women dealing with child contact issues and for professionals who offer advice and support to women on relationship breakdown.

**For more information on all our publications, including order forms, please visit our website, [www.rightsofwomen.org.uk](http://www.rightsofwomen.org.uk) or contact us on 020 7251 6575/76 or [info@row.org.uk](mailto:info@row.org.uk)**

## **NEW! Information Sheets**

Rights of Women have produced a number of new and revised information sheets, these are:

- When Parents Separate – new!
- Dissolving Civil Partnership – new!
- Entering Civil Partnership – new!
- Financial Arrangements after Civil Partnership Breakdown – new!
- Child Support – revised!
- Domestic Violence – revised!
- Living Together – revised!
- Lesbian Parenting – revised!

**All information sheets are FREE and available by contacting Rights of Women on 020 7251 6575/76 or can be downloaded from our website [www.rightsofwomen.org.uk](http://www.rightsofwomen.org.uk)**

# Training Programme

## Rights of Women Outreach Training Programme

Through training we enable agencies and organisations to support women and ensure their rights are effectively protected.

Rights of Women is offering two exciting new training courses across England and Wales during 2007:

- **Black and Minority Ethnic Women and Violence:** This course examines the legal rights and remedies available to BME women experiencing violence and addresses issues such as forced marriage, trafficking, female genital mutilation and problems with asylum and immigration.
- **Domestic Violence and the Law – Updated:** This course provides an update on changes introduced by the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004. It examines the protection provided to women through civil remedies such as non molestation and occupation orders.

The Outreach Training Programme sessions will be

**February:** Cardiff and Exeter

**March:** Portsmouth and Brighton

**April:** Leicester and Cambridge

**June:** Birmingham and Middlesbrough

**September:** Manchester and Leeds

**For more information about the training courses, dates and venues and how to book a place, please see the Rights of Women 2007 Training Brochure, available at [www.rightsofwomen.org.uk](http://www.rightsofwomen.org.uk). Alternatively please contact Rights of Women on 020 7251 6575/6 or [training@row.org.uk](mailto:training@row.org.uk)**

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