

The Editor  
The Law Society's Gazette  
6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Newspaper House  
8-16 Great New Street  
London  
EC4A 3BN

Via email to [jonathan.ames@lawsociety.org.uk](mailto:jonathan.ames@lawsociety.org.uk)

Dear Sir,

The results of the Gazette's third annual legal aid survey make depressing reading (see [2004] Gazette, 5 February, 18). Rights of Women is particularly concerned with the identification of family law as 'one of the biggest problem areas'.

We strongly agree with Godfrey Freeman's analysis that vulnerable members of society may find it very difficult to get help with family problems, and moreover that this would be especially dangerous where women are experiencing domestic violence. We believe the current and worsening situation will lead to real threats to the safety of women and children who are unable to get access to legal help. Callers to our free legal advice line already report some problems with accessing help. Problems of access are especially acute for women from rural communities.

Rights of Women is extremely concerned that this crisis in publicly funded work is impacting now on the provision available to women experiencing domestic violence, and that it will have catastrophic consequences for the safety of such women if it goes unaddressed.

Yours sincerely,

Bethan Rigby  
*Policy and Information Officer*