



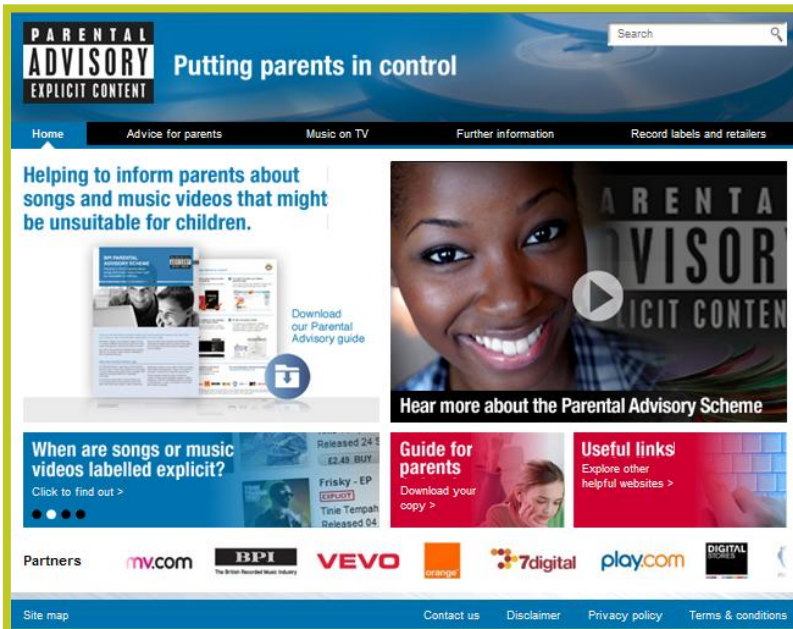
# Faith & Policy Watch

January 2012

*What can I do?*

Each month Faith & Policy Watch will provide simple ideas for getting involved in social policy. Look for this symbol!

## Bye Buy Childhood



www.parental-advisory.co.uk

Explicit content in music and video downloads in the UK will now contain a parental advisory warning, after the British Recorded Music Industry (BPI) extended its parental advisory scheme to online content. The Parental Advisory Scheme, a voluntary initiative for record labels and retailers, has been in operation since 1995 and comprises the Parental Advisory Logo and guidelines for record companies and retailers.

The Parental Advisory Logo is applied when the lyrics of a song or a music video contain strong

language; reference to or images of violence, physical, or mental abuse; or sexualised, discriminatory or dangerous behaviour. This will now be applied to a number of online retailers, digital music stores and websites which host music and videos; as well as on CDs and DVDs. The guidelines are set out to inform record companies and retailers about when the Logo should be applied, with a view to ensuring consistency throughout the industry. The Logo will not be used to cover music performances broadcast on television as these are regulated by the communications regulator, Ofcom. For further details, go to [www.parental-advisory.co.uk](http://www.parental-advisory.co.uk)

This month, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport is due to publish a consultation on the age-rating of music videos – Faith & Policy Watch will keep you posted.

*What can I do?*

In last month's edition we highlighted the sort of imagery that is now considered unacceptable in outdoor advertising. If you see some outdoor advertising that you are unhappy with contact the ASA. They investigate every single complaint.

Write to: Advertising Standards Authority, Mid City Place, 71 High Holborn, London WC1V 6QT  
Phone: 020 7492 2222; contact via the website: [www.asa.org.uk](http://www.asa.org.uk); or go to [www.parentport.org.uk](http://www.parentport.org.uk)

The ASA also wants to hear whether their guidance reflects the expectations of parents, grandparents, other family members and other carers of children.

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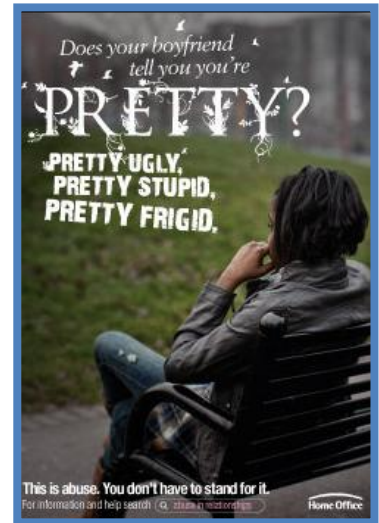
# Violence Against Women and Girls

- Each year in the UK around 1.2 million women suffer domestic violence.
- On average two women are murdered by their current or former partner each week.
- Around one in four women will experience domestic abuse in their lifetime, often accompanied by years of psychological abuse.

## Violence Against Women Action Plan: progress review (UK and worldwide)

In March 2011 the Home Office produced the *Call to End Violence Against Women and Girls: Action Plan*. The Plan listed 88 action points and at the Review stage in November, 22 points had been completed. These include:

- The launch of a youth prevention campaign to tackle teenage relationship violence, which aims to prevent teenagers becoming victims or perpetrators of abusive relationships. Go to the campaign's excellent website at [www.thisisabuse.direct.gov.uk](http://www.thisisabuse.direct.gov.uk)
- Action to protect children from premature sexualisation, through the recommendations of the Bailey Review.
- The re-publication of a handbook for adult victims of sexual violence, *From Report to Court*, to improve communication about the justice system with victims.
- The launching of e-learning training for GPs on violence against women and children, to help GPs understand the scale of the problem, identify the signs and to know what to do.



[www.thisisabuse.direct.gov.uk](http://www.thisisabuse.direct.gov.uk)

The action plan also sets out targets to end violence against women (VAW) in other parts of the world, for example by ensuring the UK's humanitarian assistance works to prevent and respond to VAW and supporting the EU's *Plan of Action on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment and Development*. To read the full Action Plan Progress Review, go to <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/crime/call-end-violence-women-girls/action-plan-progress-review>

## Consultation on the definition of domestic violence (England and Wales)

The Home Office has launched a consultation on how the Government, across all departments, should define domestic violence. It is also seeking views as to whether to amend the definition of domestic violence to include coercive control; and whether to extend it to include those aged 16 and 17; or indeed anyone under 18 as well as adults. The current definition was introduced in 2004 and classifies domestic abuse as:

“ any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse [psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional] between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality ”

To read the consultation, go to <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/about-us/consultations/definition-domestic-violence/> Mothers' Union will be responding.

What can I do?

- ⇒ Pray for all women and girls caught in abusive relationships.
- ⇒ Take a look at Restored [www.restoredrelationships.org](http://www.restoredrelationships.org) Restored is an international Christian alliance working to transform relationships and end all forms of violence against women, through the church taking action. They have produced a number of resources, including a pack for churches, podcasts, reports and fact sheets.

## Law Commission proposals on inheritance (England and Wales)



The Law Commission has made a number of recommendations on intestacy and family provision i.e. what happens to a person's assets after their death if they have left no will. Following research and public consultation, the Law Commission has presented two draft Bills, which the Government will now consider. The main proposals are that:

- The surviving spouse or civil partner should be the primary beneficiary and should only be required to share the estate with any children where the estate exceeds a certain amount. If there are no children, the spouse or civil partner should take the whole estate.
  - Children who are adopted after the death of the parent should not lose their entitlement to share in that parent's estate, because of the adoption.
  - The presumption that where the deceased's parents were not married the father of the deceased should also be presumed dead should be removed, if the father is named on the deceased's birth certificate.
- For a child to claim family provision following the death of a parent, the definition of 'child of the family' should no longer be limited to those whose parents were married or in a civil partnership.
  - A surviving partner of a cohabiting relationship (i.e. not married or in a civil partnership; but living together) should have an automatic share in their deceased partner's estate if they cohabited for five years, or two if they had a child together.

To read the full report, go to

<http://www.justice.gov.uk/lawcommission/publications/intestacy.htm>

## Children's Access to Parents

In December, Charlie Elphicke MP secured a debate in the Commons on children's access to parents who don't live with them. Around three million children in the UK live apart from a parent, and one million of them have no contact with the non-resident parent three years after separation. In recent years the number of court applications and the number of backlogged cases in the system have increased. Mr Elphicke called on the Government to give children the legal right to see and know both their parents through reasonable access and contact, and argued that mediation is a faster and better way to ensure regular contact between children and non-resident parents than court proceedings.



In his response, the Minister for Children and Families, Tim Loughton promised that the Government intends to address the issue of long court proceedings, stating that:

*“Our vision is to establish a clear expectation that, under normal circumstances, a child will have a relationship with both his or her parents, regardless of their relationship with each other. We want to achieve that by creating a climate in which separating parents are able to see through their personal differences and to recognise the importance of their both remaining involved in their child’s lives. For those who need support to focus on their children’s needs, there will be a range of interventions to facilitate the making of practical and lasting agreements. This will be a society where family courts are a last resort, used to determine only the most difficult cases, particularly those where there are welfare concerns... Crucially, parents will adhere to court orders in the knowledge that action to enforce breaches will be swift and decisive”.*

The Government is currently considering the recommendations of *The Family Justice Review* and will publish a full response on the Ministry of Justice website in due course.

## New Year Reflection: One Strong Star

I stand gazing at the cold winter sky,  
thirty minutes after midnight  
on the first day of the new year.  
What I see catches my heart  
and draws me into profound hope.  
There in the black winter sky  
one strong star sings a silent melody,  
illuminating the heavily clouded heights  
with a powerful, assuring presence.  
I hear it calling to every human soul  
whose life yearns for something more.  
One strong star sends a brave song  
to those who doubt their own courage.  
It shines for the soreness of the planet  
and for all who die daily  
in their coffins of discouragement.  
I stand gazing at that single star  
resonating with the shining message:  
none of us need doubt our ability to survive.  
Hope comes in little ways -  
it only takes one shining star,  
one faithful friend,  
one wisp of inspiration,  
one touch of creation's beauty,  
one deep sip of love  
to keep the illumination alive in us.  
In the snow laden clouds of the first day  
of the new year

I bow to the heavens and turn homeward  
grateful for the quiet in my heart,  
and for the singing of a lone star sending  
strength  
to every corner of the cosmos.

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