



advance

Diversionary and Community Cautions:
Draft Code of Practice consultation
response

October 2023

About Advance

Advance is a national charity which empowers women and girls to lead safe, just, and equal lives so that they can actively engage and flourish in society. Led by and for women, we are specialists with 25 years of experience working to improve the outcomes for women and girls affected by domestic abuse and trauma, including those in contact with the criminal justice system.

Advance's whole system approach is aligned with our values of collaboration and innovation, partnering with statutory and non-statutory organisations, to develop and **deliver specialist community-based services in a Coordinated Community Response**.

We create **systemic change to meet women's needs and improve their access to services** across the whole system, including criminal justice, health, social care, and housing, ensuring women and children are safe and enabling consistency and continuity of support throughout their journey.

Introduction

1. We welcome the opportunity to respond to the consultation on the draft Diversionary and Community Cautions Code of Practice. As an organisation, we have a unique perspective on this issue. As the leading specialist provider of women's Commissioned Rehabilitative Services (CRS), we support over 2,800 women on probation and in contact with the criminal justice system each year. In addition, we support 6,000 women and girls per year affected by domestic abuse.
2. These experiences are for many women inextricably linked; we know that **at least 57% of women in contact with the CJS have experienced domestic abuse**, although this figure is likely to be much higher.¹ Evidence shows that their offending is directly linked to their experience of domestic abuse and other gender-based trauma.²
3. Advance has led on the development and delivery of the London Women's Diversion Service since 2019, one of the first specialist women's Diversion services available in England and Wales.³ These services divert women who have committed low-harm offences away from the criminal justice system and into dedicated support services tailored to women's needs. This aims to break the cycle of offending, therefore reducing overall demand on the police and criminal justice system.
4. The new Diversionary Caution OOCs must be **delivered in tandem with rehabilitative support** as part of a specialist Diversion service. In this context, the two tier-framework is an opportunity to break the cycle of harm and trauma experienced by women in contact with the criminal justice system at the earliest opportunity, by enabling them to access support to address underlying issues which motivate their offending.
5. We are concerned that the introduction of the two-tier framework does not ensure that there are appropriate services for women. The specialist women's services providing vital support, including women's centres, keyworker support and advocacy, mental health, domestic and sexual abuse, substance recovery and housing, are already above capacity and are not able to take on additional referrals without additional funding. This will leave women without support, setting them up to fail

¹ Ministry of Justice (2019), [Female Offender Strategy](#). London: MoJ

² Prison Reform Trust (2017), ["There's a reason we're in trouble". Domestic abuse as a driver to women's offending](#). London: PRT.

³ Other service providers include Together Women, based across Yorkshire.

in meeting their conditions set by the police, resulting in a perpetuation of the cycle of offending, costing more for the public purse.

6. We are particularly concerned about the use of Diversionary cautions for perpetrators (and victims) of domestic abuse. We believe that Diversionary Cautions are **not an appropriate response** to DA-related offences, the reasons for which are explored below.

Background

7. Advance leads London's Women Diversion Service (LWDS), funded and supported by the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC). It was launched in September 2019 across four London boroughs and in 2 of the 12 Metropolitan Police Basic Command Units (BCUs). As of Autumn 2023, this was expanded to 3 BCUs (across 6 London boroughs). **Operational and strategic collaboration with the Metropolitan Police is at the heart of the service**, meaning that we have expert knowledge of the operational and strategic issues relating to women's Diversion.
8. We believe that a Whole System Approach⁴ is essential to improving outcomes for women, enabling them to access appropriate, specialist support as early as possible to prevent further escalation in harm or criminality. Embedding gender- and trauma-informed understanding and support for women throughout criminal justice proceedings must start with first contact and arrest.
9. The new framework and Code of Practice offer a chance to embed nationally a gender-responsive Whole Systems Approach which meets the needs of women, improves justice outcomes, and reduces demand on statutory services. This approach has been identified by Government departments and agencies as best practice for women in contact with the criminal justice system. It is essential that this practical guidance enables officers to adopt this best practice approach; however, provisions to meet this standard are not currently included in the guidance, meaning that decision-makers are not being given the practical support needed.
10. To facilitate positive outcomes for women, it is essential that the new Code of Practice gives clear, actionable advice to decision-makers who are issuing cautions and referring women to appropriate support services. This advice should acknowledge the gendered nature of domestic abuse and the specific issues disproportionately faced by women in contact with the criminal justice system. It is also essential that the advice is informed by the long-lasting, insidious nature of trauma caused by abuse and criminal justice involvement.
11. Any advice which advocates for increased referrals to women's specialist Diversion services **must** be backed up by resourcing and funding for these services nationally. Women who receive a Community or Diversionary Caution **must** be able to access appropriate and effective specialist services which enable them to meet the conditions of their caution. Failing to provide this support could lead to a waste of public funds and will in effect set women up to fail.

Summary of recommendations

Women in contact with the Criminal Justice System

12. Specialist Diversion services should be offered to **all women in contact with the criminal justice system at point of arrest**, regardless of police action and outcome, including community resolutions

⁴ Ministry of Justice (2018), [A Whole System Approach for Female Offenders](#). London: MoJ

as well as OOCs, to ensure better outcomes for women and fewer demands on police and court resources.

13. Women should have **one condition which focuses on rehabilitation**, the needs for **which should be assessed by specialist women's service** providers to ensure an appropriate response which is trauma-and gender-informed. The new Diversionary Caution OOCs must be **delivered in tandem with specialist rehabilitative support** as part of a specialist Diversion service.
14. **Specialist women's support services should be co-located at all BCUs**, including within custody suites, to improve joined-up working and decision-making with the police, and should also be commissioned to deliver regular training to decision-makers.
15. There **must be a clear recognition and assessment of the disproportionate barriers access to Diversion support for Black and minoritised women**, ensuring this is addressed in this guidance.
16. **All decision-makers should be trained regularly** on the importance of gender specific Diversion services and on referring women to specialist community support services at point of arrest. This needs to recognise and address the concerns raised in the Casey report, regarding systemic issues of misogyny and racism which act as barriers to appropriate responses and referrals to diversion services by the police.

Use of cautions for domestic abuse-related crime

17. Domestic abuse is a serious crime and Diversionary cautions are not appropriate penalty for domestic abuse-related crimes, instead **all domestic abuse offences should be referred to the magistrates' courts for an assessment on further action**.
18. **Further research and policy development work must be undertaken** by the MoJ, Home Office and criminal justice agencies, in collaboration with domestic abuse specialists, to assess the suitability of the use of Diversionary Cautions for DA-related incidents before any guidance on this is released. This should be aligned with the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and Serious Crime Offences 2015, which recognises that domestic abuse is a serious crime which requires appropriate responses by the criminal justice system; conditional cautions are unlikely to be an appropriate response.
19. The use of Diversionary Cautions to respond to domestic abuse-related crimes **must** be informed by the understanding that domestic abuse is a gendered issue. **Women who are charged with domestic-abuse related crimes should be offered gender-specific support by specialist services over a Diversionary Caution**, as they are very likely to also be a victim of abuse.
20. **Police forces and the courts must work closely together**, and with specialist organisations as part of a Whole System Approach, to share information and understand previous criminal history to accurately identify perpetrators and victims of domestic abuse.

Strategic context and public policy

21. Central government and criminal justice agencies have made repeated commitments to tackling violence against women and girls (VAWG) and domestic abuse in recent years. VAWG has this year been included within the Home Office's Strategic Policing Requirement which recognises the issue as a national threat alongside terrorism and organised crime. The National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) has identified a bronze, silver and gold standard service for police forces, and recognised women as the key cohort that should be in receipt of a gold standard service at the earliest opportunity. Mark Rowley, Commissioner for the Met Police, has committed to delivering gender-responsive services, rebuilding trust and confidence and increasing safety for women in London. We await the delivery of the Joint Justice Plan from the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and police forces nationally.

22. Women in contact with the criminal justice system report multiple needs and trauma at a higher rate than men, and specifically:
- 71% of women report **mental health needs** compared to 47% of men.⁵
 - 46% report **problematic substance use** on entry to prison compared to 27% of men.⁶
 - 28% report **problematic alcohol use** on entry to prison compared to 17% of men.⁷
 - 53% women report experiences of **childhood abuse** compared to 27% of men.⁸
 - 57% of women who offend report experiencing **domestic abuse**; however, this figure is believed to be a lot higher.⁹
23. A gender-responsive approach to community safety is essential to ensure positive justice outcomes. The impact of women’s involvement with the criminal justice system disproportionately affects families and children, as women are more likely to be the prime caregiver.¹⁰ Women are more likely to be arrested for low-harm offences and often present with specific needs which, if not addressed, can lead to further cycles of harm and offending.¹¹
24. It is therefore vital the women in contact with the justice system are referred for specialist support which responds to their needs, to avoid perpetuating further harm and trauma. This support can genuinely transform lives. The LWDS delivers directly on these key strategic priorities and the new two-tier framework is an opportunity to embed evidence-based best practice nationally to further fulfil these commitments.
25. The service sees high levels of engagement from the women who are referred to us. **91% of the women in 2020-2021 engaged with the service**, for both conditional caution and voluntary/community resolution referrals. 82% of women have been successfully closed to the service since its inception in 2019. In particular:
- **100%** of the women reported feeling safer from domestic violence & abuse.
 - **89%** reported improvement in mental health & well-being.
 - **88%** reported improvement in problematic substance use.
 - **100%** reported improvement in accommodation.
 - **95%** reported feeling supported to make alternative, positive choices.
 - **93%** reported a reduced likelihood of reoffending due to support received.
26. The new framework offers **an opportunity to develop a national women’s Diversion approach which is centred on specialist support**, building on the MoJ’s Female Offender Strategy, as well as its development of women’s probation services launched in 2021. Implementing this approach nationally would have both financial and social benefits, reducing crime and improving trust and confidence between women and the police, as well as the wider criminal justice system.

Eligibility

27. Advance research indicates that only 6% of women arrested in three London BCUs were eligible for the LWDS, within the current legislative structure of OOCs. Most of the women supported on the

⁵ HM Chief Inspector of Prisons (2020) Annual Report 2019-20, London: The Stationery Office

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Williams, K., Papadopoulou, V. & Booth, N. (2012) Prisoners’ childhood and family backgrounds, London: MoJ

⁹ Ministry of Justice (2018) [Female Offender Strategy](#). London: MoJ

¹⁰ Ministry of Justice (2019), [Female Offender Strategy](#). London: MoJ

¹¹ Corston, J. (2007) The Corston Report: a review of women with vulnerabilities in the criminal justice system. London: Home Office

LWDS are not referred through a conditional caution. The eligibility criteria for Diversionary Cautions, and therefore access to rehabilitative support referrals, should be widened to **all women in contact with the criminal justice system at point of arrest**, regardless of the police action and outcome, to ensure better outcomes for women and fewer demands on police and court resources.

28. Early intervention at point of arrest could reduce the use of custodial sentences and reduce re-offending. **The levels of need reported by the women referred to LWDS closely reflect levels of need reported by women on probation** supported by an alternative Advance service. This demonstrates that missing opportunities for diversion perpetuates women's needs, which can lead to further harm and offending.
29. Assessment of eligibility which is informed by gender dynamics and the impact of trauma is also essential to ensure that women are offered Diversionary Cautions and can access the appropriate support to break the cycle of reoffending. As demonstrated above, women who offend often experience prevalent and complex needs which are products of abuse and trauma.¹²
30. Women's trust in the police has declined rapidly since high-profile cases of police-perpetrated abuse and other CJS failures. They are therefore not always likely to admit to a crime as they do not have faith in the proceedings. Conversely, there is evidence that women will admit more freely to offences when compared to men. This is perhaps because of the pressure to admit to an offence in order to take the path of least resistance. Admission (or non-admission) of guilt should not be a barrier to accessing appropriate specialist support.
31. This is compounded by Black and minoritised communities' lack of trust in police, as documented in the Impact Assessment of the new Code. There is clear evidence in LWDS that Black and minoritised women are not referred for Diversion support, compared to the demographic of women offenders in London. **There must be a clear recognition and assessment of the disproportionate impact on Black and minoritised women**, ensuring this is addressed in this guidance.
32. Co-locating specialist support workers from women's services in custody suites could increase women's trust in police proceedings and could successfully identify more women who would benefit from a Diversionary Caution and associated support, whilst also avoiding unnecessary or inaccurate admissions of guilt.
33. LWDS has seen considerable success with women who have previous offences and has seen very low levels of reoffending amongst the women we support. For example, in four years only 2 women have been arrested for non-compliance with their conditions and only 7% of women who engaged with two or more sessions were re-arrested (compared to 23.4% re-offending nationally). Eligibility guidance on using Diversionary Cautions for repeat offences should therefore be accompanied by training delivered by specialist organisations, to ensure that women who have previous convictions are still able to access appropriate support.

Decision-making

34. **All decision-makers should be regularly trained** on referring women to specialist women's Diversion services at point of arrest. The Code of Practice should be delivered alongside detailed training led by specialist women's organisations who can challenge myths and instil culture change in the police. Decision-makers should be empowered to refer women for specialist support, without fear of 'doing the wrong thing' or any potential retribution for not pursuing harsher penalties, particularly in complex cases.
35. As discussed above, women in contact with the criminal justice system have specific and pervasive needs. Often women who offend have "fallen through the gaps" and opportunities to support them

¹² Ministry of Justice (2019), [Female Offender Strategy](#). London: MoJ

have been missed by multiple statutory services. This should form part of the decision-making on whether it is in the public interest to offer a caution or to release the woman without charge.

36. **Specialist women’s support services should be commissioned to be co-located at all BCUs and police stations**, including within custody suites, to promote gender-informed decision-making with the police.
37. **Specialist women’s diversion workers should also be commissioned to deliver training** to decision-makers. The LWDS conducts quarterly training with decision-makers within the active Diversion BCUs, which has been proven to have a significant impact on referral numbers.

Conditions and Women’s Needs

38. Understanding the underlying needs which lead a woman to offend is essential when applying conditions to a caution. Women given a Diversionary Caution **should have only one condition which focuses on attending a small number of appointments with women’s services for support and rehabilitation**. This further removes burden from police decision-makers and leads to the application of the most appropriate conditions.
39. **Women’s rehabilitation needs should be assessed by specialist women’s service providers and not the police**. Rehabilitation should embody holistic support within safe, women-only spaces which allow women to address their needs. This is in line with a trauma-informed approach that responds to the gender-specific experiences of women and the drivers to their offending. There is extensive evidence to demonstrate the effectiveness of this approach, which is strengthened by women’s own voices and lived experiences.¹³
40. The LWDS advocates for the vital role of specialist women’s services in providing a trauma-informed assessment of need and support, the success of which is evidenced by the low numbers of re-arrests and high levels of engagement among the women we support, both voluntarily and beyond their conditions.
41. The Code of Practice guidance around needs assessment is based on an Integrated Offender Management (IOM) model provided by the police. This is not aligned with the evidence around a best-practice, gender- and trauma-informed approach. The evidence of the LWDS over the last four years demonstrates that non-specialist criminal justice staff are not always equipped to make the most accurate assessment of a woman’s needs. In addition, evidence provided by London’s Blueprint for Women in Contact with the Criminal Justice System, the Metropolitan Police and women’s lived experience reinforces the importance of building on the LWDS assessment operating model for London and nationally.¹⁴
42. As stated in the Code of Practice, conditions should be achievable, appropriate, and proportionate. Unnecessary conditions which promote disengagement and set women up to fail should be actively discouraged in the Code and in related training. The LWDS was designed collaboratively with decision-makers and commissioners to ensure that conditions are achievable, appropriate and proportionate; for example, women are mandated to attend two sessions with the service and 97% of those referred meet this condition, with many going on to receive at least 6 months of support, which demonstrates that a low barrier to entry can lead to higher engagement. This avoids an IOM model which can set women up to fail.

¹³ Prison Reform Trust (2019), ‘There’s a reason we’re in trouble’: Domestic abuse as a driver to women’s offending. London: PRT.

¹⁴ Advance (2022), [Molly’s Story](#). London: Advance.

Domestic abuse-related cautions

43. Domestic abuse (DA) is a pattern of behaviour, predominantly perpetrated by men against women.¹⁵ At least 57% of women in contact with the criminal justice system are victims of domestic abuse.¹⁶ Since 1997, Advance has delivered support to survivors of domestic abuse, including those in contact with the criminal justice system. Our work is therefore inherently driven by an understanding of the dynamics of domestic abuse.
44. We believe that Diversionary Cautions are **not an appropriate response** to DA-related incidents, and have three main areas of concern:
- There is a disconnect between the assessment of risk and the assessment of the seriousness of a crime.
 - There is the potential that victims will be wrongly identified as perpetrators when acting in self-defence, and therefore should not be subject to criminalisation.
 - Diversionary Cautions are not an adequate penalty for perpetrators.
45. The use of Diversionary Cautions to respond to domestic abuse-related crimes **must** be informed by the understanding that domestic abuse is a gendered issue. **Further research and policy development work must be undertaken** by the MoJ, Home Office and criminal justice agencies, in collaboration with domestic abuse specialists, to assess the suitability of the use of Diversionary Cautions for DA-related incidents before any guidance on this is released.

Risk assessment and serious crime

46. We are concerned by police-led risk assessments in relation to DA-related incidents. We know from our work that **risk is dynamic**, and that cases assessed as being “standard” risk have not always been accurately judged by professionals, particularly when this is based on one incident. An analysis of Domestic Homicide Reviews, both in London and nationally, found that risk was often not assessed as high or medium, meaning victims/ survivors were not safeguarded appropriately and therefore lead to dire consequences.¹⁷
47. In addition, we are concerned about the assessment of seriousness in relation to DA-related incidents. Annexe B of the Code of Practice states that Diversionary Cautions can’t be used if there has been a serious offence committed. With VAWG identified as a strategic policing threat (as discussed above) and the government’s VAWG Strategy and Domestic Abuse Plan, as well as the new Domestic Abuse Act 2021, it is amiss to assume or suggest that **DA-related incidents are anything other than always serious. We believe that DA-related incidents should always be dealt with by the courts.**
48. The guidance also indicates that Diversionary Cautions should not be used where there is evidence of coercive control. Non-physical abuse and threats are the most prevalent forms of abuse reported by respondents to Government’s Crime Survey for England and Wales.¹⁸ Non-physical abuse, including coercive control, emotional abuse, stalking, and harassment is reported by 75% of women

¹⁵ Office for National Statistics (2023), Domestic abuse in England and Wales overview: November 2022. Partner abuse in detail, Table 2. London: ONS.

¹⁶ MoJ (2019) Female Offender Strategy. London: MoJ

¹⁷ B. Montique (2019), [London Domestic Homicide Review \(DHR\) Case Analysis and Review of Local Authorities DHR Process](#). London: STADA

¹⁸ Home Office (2021), [Review of the controlling or coercive behaviour offence](#). London: Home Office.

seeking support from Advance for DA. Together, this indicates that **there is a very small chance of a Diversionary Caution being an appropriate measure for a DA-related incident.**

49. Annexe B of the Code of Practice also states that Diversionary Cautions cannot be used if the offender has no previous convictions or cautions for domestic abuse in the previous two years. We know that many victims live with abuse for between 2 and 3 years before seeking help.¹⁹ In addition, the Government’s own statutory guidance on the Domestic Abuse Act acknowledges that “domestic abuse involves repeat victimisation. Officers should consider the history and any patterns of behaviour to understand any incident within its wider context.”²⁰ **Including a two-year time limit in the Code is misguided and in contrast to the Government’s own advice.**
50. The process around risk assessment must be carefully thought through. Currently, DASH/ DARAs are conducted with police-identified victims. If an individual has been charged as a perpetrator, when in fact they are a victim (as discussed below), a DASH/ DARA should be carried out with them as the subject.

Women as victims/ survivors or perpetrators/ offenders of Domestic Abuse

51. We are concerned that victims/survivors of DA, who are overwhelmingly women, will be incorrectly and disproportionately given cautions. As mentioned, 57% of women in contact with the criminal justice system are known to be victims/ survivors of domestic abuse. Research has previously indicated that women are three times more likely than men to be arrested for a domestic abuse-related incident.²¹
52. **Women who are arrested for DA-related incidents should be offered gender-specific support by specialist services instead of a Diversionary Caution**, as they are very likely to also be a victim/ survivor of abuse. This should be reflected in the Code of Practice.
53. Survivors have reported to Advance and other domestic abuse specialist organisations that they were arrested and cautioned, therefore criminalised, when in fact they were the victim of domestic abuse themselves. Accepting a Diversionary Caution may be viewed as the preferred option by women when they do not feel safe and protected, rather than reaching out for the specialist support they need. This therefore continues to criminalise victims, rather than perpetrators. There should be **a review of data and evidence on women’s arrest for DA and criminalisation of women who are defending themselves** during DA-related incidents, to ensure that arrests and prosecutions are appropriate.
54. The low and declining number of prosecutions of perpetrators, who are overwhelmingly men, by the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), in the context of increasing reports from victims, reinforces our concerns around women’s disproportionate treatment.
55. Our evidence indicates that the rate of arrest of women for DA-related offences is proportionally very high as a percentage of total women arrested. We recommend that an evaluation is undertaken to compare the rate of men arrested for DA-related offences as a percentage of total men arrested, to clarify if this is proportionate.

¹⁹ SafeLives (2015), [Ending domestic abuse: Getting it right first time](#). London: SafeLives

²⁰ Home Office (2021), [Domestic Abuse Act: Statutory Guidance](#). London: Home Office.

²¹ M. Hester (2009), Who Does What to Whom? Gender and Domestic Violence Perpetrators. *European Journal of Criminology*

Perpetrators

56. We believe that Diversionary Cautions are not an appropriate penalty for perpetrators of DA and that these cases should be subject to court proceedings. There are more appropriate penalties for perpetrators, including custody and restraining orders, which go further in removing the risk of harm to victims. It also increases the threshold for gathering proof and evidence relating to an incident, which could help address any potential disproportionate treatment of men and women who would otherwise be given a caution.
57. **Police forces and the courts must work closely together**, and with specialist organisations as part of a Whole System Approach, to share information and understand previous criminal history to accurately identify perpetrators and victims and establish the severity of a case. This will then lead to more appropriate penalties being issued.
58. Annexe B of the code of practice states that “Restorative Justice (RJ) will never be suitable for intimate partner domestic abuse cases.” It is also inappropriate for restorative conditions to be included as part of a Diversionary Caution for any domestic abuse-related crime, including familial abuse or other relationships which are not intimate partners. RJ and reparative apologies do not consider the power and control dynamics which are in play within domestic abuse, and therefore perpetrators should not be given the option to go down this route. Victims acting in self-defence should also not be expected to adhere to reparative conditions.
59. Ultimately, Diversion services are not and should not be used to break the patterns of behaviour of DA perpetration. The purpose of Diversion services, as discussed above, is to address the root causes of trauma and harm, which serves a different function to the delivery of perpetrator programmes.

Annex A – The Advance Diversion Service Model

60. Our approach is led by and for women, offering holistic and trauma-informed support to meet their needs, reflecting the core principles of Advance’s Minerva Approach and our partners’ services. We strongly encourage all Police and Crime Commissioners to procure and collaborate with specialist women’s services who advocate for this approach.
61. **On referral by the police**, each woman is supported by a dedicated specialist Diversion Keyworker, with expertise in building the trusted relationship which is at the heart of the service. The Diversion Keyworker offers emotional and practical support and advocacy to the woman throughout her engagement with the service. These Keyworkers are co-located in police stations and custody suites, meaning they have immediate and direct contact with women.
62. **In the initial stages**, the woman and her Keyworker work together to assess her individual needs and priorities, as well as risks, using a strengths-based approach, and agree a personal support plan to address these, with realistic, measurable targets. With this strong, trusting, and professional relationship in place, the women are supported to express her priorities and preferences and have agency in our process. Advance’s empowering approach contributes to her journey to divert her away from the criminal justice system.
63. After the initial two sessions, the police will be notified that the **woman has met her conditions** and the keyworker /service will continue support of the woman as appropriate, in line with her support plan.
64. **Support is offered for between three to six months**, based on the level of need and risk, with the option of an onward referral to our other services, such as Advance’s Minerva service for those assessed as high level of need, as detailed below in ‘Women’s Support Needs’. The Keyworker and the woman review priorities and progress regularly, ensuring the support is adapted to her current needs.
65. Support aims to address the needs considered as links to offending behaviour including mental health, domestic abuse, children, families, support networks, domestic abuse, problematic substance use, accommodation, finance and debt, education, and employment. The support plan includes an individualised programme of activities, including one-to-one support by the Keyworker, group sessions/workshops in Advance’s and its partners’ women’s centres, referrals to and advocacy with other specialist services where this is needed.