

Deputy Chief Constable Amanda Blakeman

10 October 2022

Dear DCC Blakeman,

Inquiry into Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence – migrant women

Thank you for your response dated 24 August as part of the Committee's work on the above inquiry. Your letter was noted at our meeting on 3 October and we agreed to seek further clarification in relation to some of the points raised.

We noted that in terms of language services and interpretation you state that: "Forces will also utilise the services of BAWSO to facilitate communication if required". Other evidence has suggested that BAWSO is facing immense pressure due to high levels of demand (across a range of its services) and limited resources. We would therefore welcome further clarification on the type of situations and circumstances in which Police Forces are likely to need BAWSO for provision of language and interpretation services and, if possible, an estimate of how this compares with the use of the Language Line for the same purpose.

As regards data sharing you state that:

*"For those victims subject to Domestic Abuse/Sexual Violence and/or Modern-Day Slavery Offences a MARAC (Multi agency Risk Assessment Conference) will take place **where information will be shared with partners** to mitigate risk and put the relevant support mechanisms in place."*¹

Concerns around data-sharing and the role that can play in terms of immigration abuse are one of the key themes of our inquiry. We would be grateful if you could please clarify what type of data is shared, by which agencies, and under which specific circumstances? We want to make it clear to victims of gender and sexual violence that they can seek help without with risk of data being shared with the immigration services; so one of our recommendations is likely to be the need to be clear that data will not be shared with the immigration services, unless there is an exceptional reason for doing so, eg combatting organised modern slavery.

The Committee is in the process of finalising its draft report – a copy of which will be shared with you ahead of publication. However, so that the Committee may take your response to our questions into consideration before publication I would be grateful for a reply by **noon on Friday 14 October** if possible please.

¹ Our emphasis

Thank you again for your contribution to the Committee's work.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light yellow background. The signature is written in a cursive style and reads "Jenny Rathbone".

Jenny Rathbone MS

Chair of the Equality and Social Justice Committee
Welsh Parliament