

INFORMATION NOTE

Supplementary information on the research report entitled "Strategies and measures in tackling domestic violence in selected places"

1. Background

1.1 At its meeting on 8 July 2008, the Subcommittee on Strategy and Measures to Tackle Family Violence, during the deliberation of the research report entitled "Strategies and measures in tackling domestic violence in selected places", requested the Research and Library Services Division to provide the following information:

- (a) ratio of domestic violence cases to population in the selected places;
- (b) factors attributing to Boston being ahead of the other selected places in combating domestic violence;
- (c) evaluation on the effectiveness of the actions taken by the governments of the selected places in tackling domestic violence; and
- (d) implementation dates of the strategies and measures of combating domestic violence in the selected places.

1.2 This information note provides information on the ratio of domestic violence cases to population in the selected places. As the relevant statistics in these places are expressed in various terms, a direct comparison is not feasible.

1.3 As regards Boston being ahead of the other selected places in combating domestic violence in respect of taking lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people into account when formulating domestic violence policies, Massachusetts has enacted a civil rights law recognizing the rights of an individual regardless of his/her sexual orientation, which applies to Boston all the same. As such, the domestic violence strategies and measures adopted in Boston are equally applicable to all citizens in the city regardless of their sexual orientation.

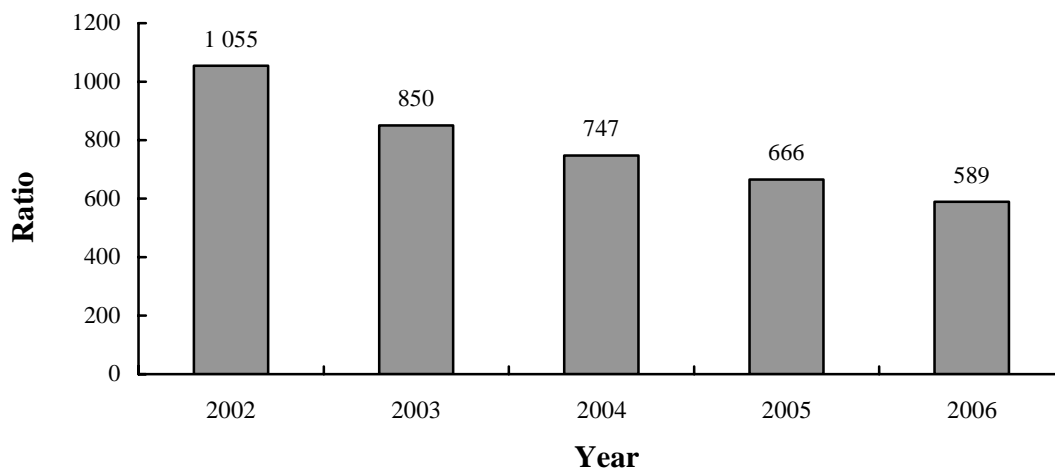
1.4 Regarding the evaluation on the effectiveness of the actions taken by the governments in the selected places, the research report has covered most of the relevant reviews conducted. In any event, this information notes provides information on the findings of a recent review of the Specialist Domestic Violence Courts (SDVCs)¹ in the United Kingdom (UK).

1.5 This information note also provides a timetable showing the implementation dates of the strategies and measures of combating domestic violence in Hong Kong, the UK, Canada, New Zealand and Boston.

2. Ratio of domestic violence cases to population

2.1 Since no single standard indicator is adopted in the selected places for measuring the frequency of occurrence of domestic violence, it is not possible to compare them against this aspect. Figure 1 to Figure 3 show the respective situation in the UK, Canada and New Zealand. In the UK, the frequency is measured in terms of the number of domestic violence cases per 100 000 population, whereas in Canada, the rate of sexual assault per 100 000 population is employed as the indicator. In New Zealand, such situation is expressed in terms of the number of recorded offences of male assaulting female per 100 000 population.

Figure 1 – Ratio of domestic violence cases per 100 000 population in the UK between 2002 and 2006



¹ SDVC Programme refers to a specialized way of dealing with domestic violence cases in the Magistrates' Courts. There are two types of SDVC: (a) clustering – all cases being grouped into one court session to deal with pre-trial hearings, bail applications, pleas, pre-trial reviews, pre-sentence reports and sentencing; and (b) fast-track court procedure – specific pre-trial review sessions being allocated for domestic violence cases, with one in four court slots dedicated to all further hearings/trials of these cases. Such courts deal solely with adult criminal proceedings.

Figure 2 – Ratio of sexual assault per 100 000 population in Canada between 2003 and 2007

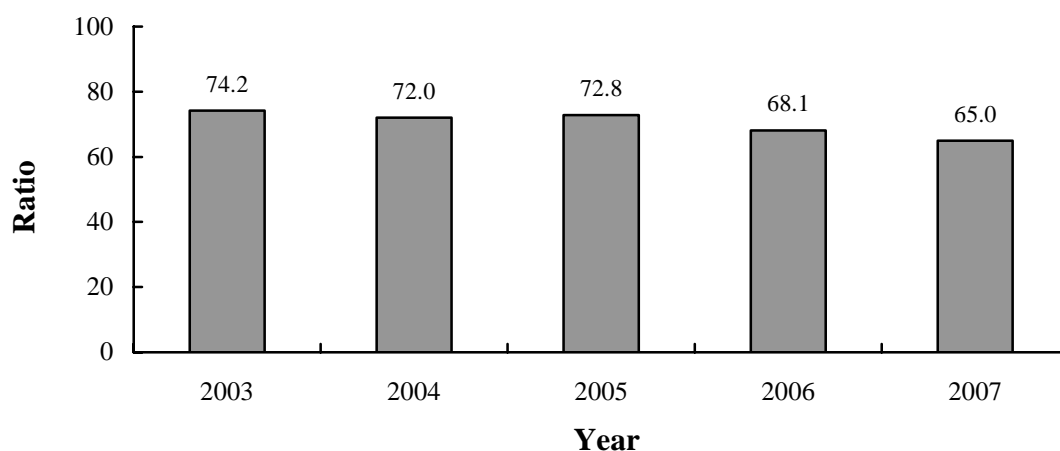
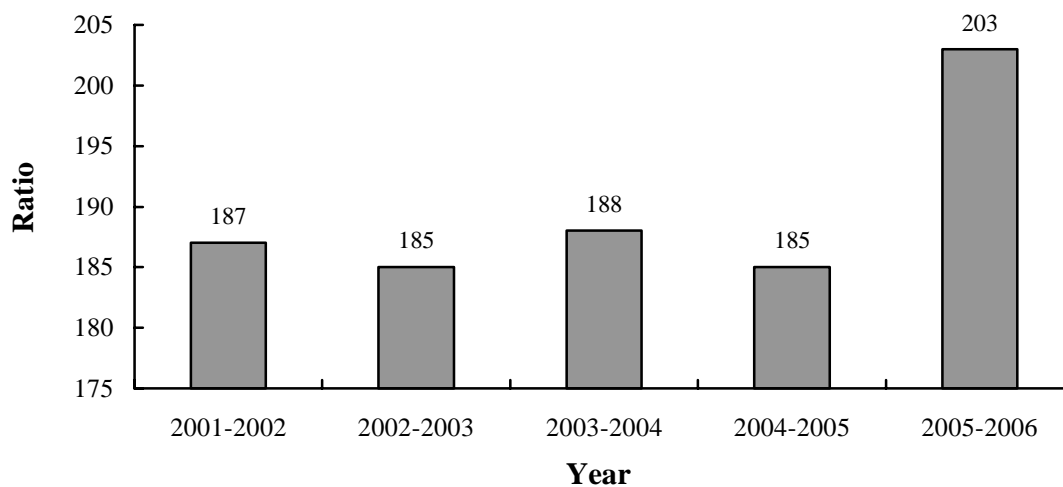


Figure 3 – Ratio of recorded offences of male assaulting female per 100 000 population between 2001-2002 and 2005-2006



2.2 In Boston as well as the state of Massachusetts, annual statistics on domestic violence have not been gathered on a regular basis, and thus are not available. In any event, the National Census of Domestic Violence Services collects, on an annual basis, an unduplicated count of adults and children seeking services from domestic violence shelter programmes during a single 24-hour survey period across states in the United States. According to the survey, in Massachusetts, 1 017 victims were served in one day in 2006,² and that figure increased to 1 316 in 2007.³

2.3 In Hong Kong, statistics on domestic violence have been made available since 2006. In 2006, the ratio of domestic violence cases per 100 000 population was 69, and this ratio increased to 108 in 2007.

3. Evaluation of domestic violence strategies and measures in the UK

3.1 In the UK, the government published a report entitled *Specialist Domestic Violence Courts Review 2007-08* in March 2008, outlining the findings of a review of 23 SDVCs. The findings show that SDVCs:

- (a) bring more perpetrators to justice – areas with SDVCs had higher successful prosecution rates comparing to those without SDVCs;
- (b) improve the support, safety and satisfaction of victims – more victims were referred to the Independent Domestic Violence Advisers (IDVAs)⁴ service; and
- (c) increase public confidence in the criminal justice system as a result of the success in items (a) and (b) above.

² National Network to End Domestic Violence (2006).

³ National Network to End Domestic Violence (2007).

⁴ IDVAs are trained professionals who offer victims a point of contact during and after the court proceedings on their cases.

4. Timetable showing the implementation dates of the strategies and measures of combating domestic violence in selected places

Year	United Kingdom	Canada	New Zealand	Boston	Hong Kong
1988		The Family Violence Initiative, providing shelters to abused women and their children, was launched.			
1992				The Domestic Violence Program, providing information, training, education and technical assistance relating to all aspects of domestic and sexual violence, was launched.	
1996			The <i>Domestic Violence Act 1995</i> took effect.		
1997				(a) An Executive Order on Policy on Domestic Violence was issued by the Governor of Massachusetts; and (b) an Executive Order directing Boston to adopt a Zero Tolerance for Domestic Violence Policy was published by the Mayor of Boston.	
1999				The Judicial Oversight Demonstration Initiative, bringing together judges, defense attorneys and prosecutors, advocates for women and batterer intervention specialists, probation agents and the police to develop strategies to enhance victim safety and the oversight of perpetrators in the communities, commenced.	
2000				The paper entitled <i>Zero Tolerance for Violence</i> , outlining the policy and programmes on tackling domestic violence occurred both at home and in workplace in Boston, was published.	
2001					The Working Group on Combating Violence, developing strategies and coordinating public bodies to combat domestic violence, was established.

4. Timetable showing the implementation dates of the strategies and measures of combating domestic violence in selected places (cont'd)

Year	United Kingdom	Canada	New Zealand	Boston	Hong Kong
2002	<p>(a) The <i>Specialist Domestic Violence Court Programme</i>, enhancing the effectiveness of the court system for victims, was established; and</p> <p>(b) a training pack on domestic violence was jointly published by the Central Police Training and Development Authority and the Association of Chief Police Officers.</p>		<p>Te Rito, the New Zealand Family Violence Prevention Strategy, setting out the government's goals and objectives, guiding principles and a five-year implementation plan to work towards the vision of families living free from violence, was launched.</p>	<p>(a) The <i>Domestic Violence Law Enforcement Guidelines</i>, setting forth appropriate and effective responses to domestic violence for police departments in Massachusetts, was revised;</p> <p>(b) the <i>Guidelines for Judicial Practice: Abuse Prevention Proceedings</i>, providing guidelines on judicial proceedings under the <i>Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 209A</i>, was also revised;</p> <p>(c) the <i>Report on Findings from Statewide Hearings in Massachusetts: The Economic Impact of Domestic Violence on Survivors and Their Children</i>, stipulating the needs for income support and stabilization services for domestic violence victims, was published; and</p> <p>(d) another report entitled <i>Voices of Survival: The Economic Impacts of Domestic Violence, A Blueprint for Action</i>, providing service providers, businesses, sponsors, legislators and activists practical ways to ensure that no one in Massachusetts was forced to live in a violent condition because of financial dependence, was published.</p>	

4. Timetable showing the implementation dates of the strategies and measures of combating domestic violence in selected places (cont'd)

Year	United Kingdom	Canada	New Zealand	Boston	Hong Kong
2003	<p>(a) An Inter-Ministerial Group on Domestic Violence was established;</p> <p>(b) a consultation paper entitled <i>Safety and Justice: the Government's Proposals on Domestic Violence</i>, containing proposals for legislative and non-legislative changes to the way domestic violence should be dealt with in both England and Wales, was published; and</p> <p>(c) the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference, bringing professionals from various agencies to identify high risk domestic violence cases and devise intervention strategies for both victims and offenders, was introduced.</p>			<p>The Governor's Commission on Sexual and Domestic Violence, making recommendations to the Lieutenant Governor and the Secretaries of Public Safety and Health and Human Services on all aspects of sexual and domestic violence in Massachusetts, was established.</p>	<p>A study on child abuse and spouse battering was commissioned by the Social Welfare Department.</p>
2004	<p>(a) The <i>Tackling Violent Crime Programme</i>, seeking to improve evidence gathering and investigation capabilities to ensure that more domestic violence cases go to the court, was launched;</p> <p>(b) the <i>Guidance on Investigating Domestic Violence</i>, providing information on possible sources of evidence for the police when investigating domestic violence cases, was published; and</p> <p>(c) the <i>Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004</i>, enhancing the protection, support and rights of domestic violence victims and witnesses, was introduced.</p>	<p>(a) The <i>Criminal Harassment: A Handbook for Police and Crown Prosecutors</i>, providing guidelines on the investigation and prosecution of criminal harassment cases as well as the promotion of an integrated criminal justice response to stalking for the police and Crown prosecutors, was published; and</p> <p>(b) the <i>Project Managers' Guide to Performance Measurement and Evaluation</i>, providing guidance for Justice Canada to carry out the mandate of the Family Violence Initiative, was published.</p>	<p>(a) The Family and Community Services of the Ministry of Social Development, seeking to reduce the number of families affected by domestic violence, was established; and</p> <p>(b) the Families Commission, conducting research, advocating and promoting understanding of issues relating to families, was established.</p>	<p>The Family Justice Division of the Boston Police Department, providing assistance to victims of intimate crimes, was established.</p>	<p>(a) The <i>Procedural Guidelines for Handling Battered Spouse Cases</i> was published; and</p> <p>(b) the Working Group on Safety under the Women's Commission was set up to study the adoption of a multi-dimensional strategy to tackle domestic violence; enhance community support; and launch major public education and publicity campaigns to arouse public attention.</p>

4. Timetable showing the implementation dates of the strategies and measures of combating domestic violence in selected places (cont'd)

Year	United Kingdom	Canada	New Zealand	Boston	Hong Kong
2005	<p>(a) The first <i>National Report on Domestic Violence</i>, containing a National Domestic Violence Delivery Plan which set out the framework of tackling domestic violence, was published;</p> <p>(b) the Independent Domestic Violence Advisors system, offering victims a point of contact during and after the court proceedings on their cases, was introduced; and</p> <p>(c) a revised <i>Policy for Prosecuting Cases of Domestic Violence</i> and <i>Guidance on Prosecuting Cases of Domestic Violence</i> was published.</p>		The Family Violence Ministerial Team and the Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families, re-invigorating the initiatives put in place under Te Rito, were established.	The Family Justice Center of Boston, a collaborative venture consisting of public and private agencies in one location, commenced operation.	<p>(a) The District Liaison Groups on Family Violence, providing a platform for regular communication amongst public bodies, were introduced;</p> <p>(b) the following proposals to tackle domestic violence were announced:</p> <p>(i) launching two batterer intervention pilot projects;</p> <p>(ii) providing support to the Women's Commission to tackle domestic violence;</p> <p>(iii) launching a Family Support Programme to increase connection with vulnerable families;</p> <p>(iv) delivering preventive, supportive and counselling services for needy families;</p> <p>(v) strengthening district welfare planning and coordination;</p> <p>(vi) strengthening services and staff training relating to the handling of family crises and violence, and suicide; and</p> <p>(vii) reviewing the <i>Domestic Violence Ordinance (Cap. 189)</i>; and</p> <p>(c) a Working Group under the Police was set up to review existing measures and develop new measures, including:</p> <p>(i) enhancing investigation capabilities;</p> <p>(ii) enhancing information retrieval;</p> <p>(iii) enhancing supervision; and</p> <p>(iv) enhancing training.</p>

4. Timetable showing the implementation dates of the strategies and measures of combating domestic violence in selected places (cont'd)

Year	United Kingdom	Canada	New Zealand	Boston	Hong Kong
2006	<p>(a) The second <i>National Report on Domestic Violence</i>, updating the work done in 2005-2006 and stipulating key objectives for 2006-2007, was published; and</p> <p>(b) the <i>Overarching Principles: Domestic Violence and Breach of a Protective Order</i>, specifying definitive guidelines on sentencing in domestic violence cases, was published.</p>		The first report, outlining a programme of action on combating domestic violence for 2006-2007 and beyond, was published.		<p>(a) The existing mode of service provision and coordination for sexual violence victims was reviewed;</p> <p>(b) the existing <i>Procedural Guidelines for Handling Sexual Violence Cases</i> was reviewed; and</p> <p>(c) the report entitled <i>Women's Safety in Hong Kong: Eliminating Domestic Violence</i> was published by the Women's Commission.</p>
2007	<p>(a) The <i>National Domestic Violence Delivery Plan – Annual Progress Report 2006/07</i>, reporting the progress made in 2006 and outlining the objectives for 2007-2008, was published; and</p> <p>(b) the draft of the <i>National Service Standards for Domestic and Sexual Violence: Core Standards</i> was published.</p>	<p>(a) The <i>Tackling Violent Crime Bill</i> was introduced; and</p> <p>(b) specific legislation on domestic violence was introduced in six provinces and two territories.</p>	<p>(a) The <i>Programme of Action: Final Monitoring Report 2006/2007</i>, summarizing the status of actions taken in combating domestic violence, was published; and</p> <p>(b) the research report entitled <i>Living at the Cutting Edge: Women's Experiences of Protection Order</i>, recommending ways to improve the effectiveness of protection orders and other steps to address domestic violence, was published.</p>	<p>(a) The Governor's Council to Address Sexual and Domestic Violence, replacing the Governor's Commission on Sexual and Domestic Violence, was established to develop more concrete proposals to tackle domestic violence problems; and</p> <p>(b) a Zero-tolerance Policy for Domestic Violence in Massachusetts, exploring successful domestic violence prevention programmes and recommending a set of best practice to address both the public health and public safety aspects of domestic violence, was announced.</p>	<p>(a) The Family Council, formulating policies and initiatives relating to family support and integrating the work of the Youth Commission, Women's Commission and Elderly Commission on family support matters, was set up;</p> <p>(b) direct support for domestic violence victims and vulnerable families was intensified;</p> <p>(c) a new anti-violence programme for perpetrators was launched; and</p> <p>(d) prevention and tackling of domestic violence through public education and enhanced training for related professionals were promoted.</p>
2008	The report entitled <i>Specialist Domestic Violence Courts Review 2007-08</i> , outlining the findings of a review of 23 SDVCs, was published.				

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