

## **National Commission into women facing domestic and sexual abuse and multiple disadvantage**

### *Community of Practice on Women's Multiple Disadvantage: call for applications*

As part of a new National Commission into women facing domestic and sexual abuse and multiple disadvantage that is being led by AVA and Agenda, we are looking to recruit up to twenty professionals to found a community of practice on women's multiple disadvantage.

In addition to being a platform for practitioners across England and Wales who are passionate about working with women affected by multiple disadvantage to come together and learn more about the specialism, community members will also have the opportunity to contribute to the Commission itself.

This paper sets out:

- 1) details of the commission on domestic and sexual abuse and multiple disadvantage (p.2)
- 2) details of the community of practice (p.2)
- 3) the role and expectations of community members (p.3)
- 4) person specification for community members (p.3)
- 5) an example application form (p.4)

**All applications must be submitted online by 5pm on December 20<sup>th</sup>, 2017.**

**The webpage for applications is [here](#)**

If you have any questions about the community of practice, please contact Jennifer Holly at the email address above or call 07379 484 925 on Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday.

We look forward to hearing from you.

## **What is the commission on women facing domestic and sexual abuse and multiple disadvantage?**

AVA (Against Violence and Abuse) and Agenda, the alliance for women and girls at risk, have been funded by the Lloyds Bank Foundation to establish a new National Commission into women facing domestic and sexual abuse and multiple disadvantage.

The links between sexual and domestic abuse and multiple disadvantage are well established, with 60-70% of women using mental health services having experience of domestic abuse and women who have experienced domestic and sexual violence three times more likely to be substance dependent than non-abused women.

Women with these experiences often face additional problems including poor physical health, homelessness, imprisonment and involvement in prostitution. Yet despite this high level of need, the complexity of this group of women's lives is poorly understood by policy makers. In turn, practitioners in both domestic and sexual abuse services and other public services are limited in their ability to support this group. When women are unable to access support not only do their needs go unmet but they can be trapped in abusive relationships or in other insecure and precarious situations at risk of further abuse. This high profile Commission aims to improve understanding and address these issues.

The Commission is being chaired by Baroness Hilary Armstrong and brings together senior leaders across different sectors and specialisms. More information about the Commission members can be found [here](#). The Commission will take oral and written evidence from a range of experts including a peer research group, made up of experts by experience, and member of a new community of practice on women's multiple disadvantage.

The Commission will produce and publish a report in the autumn of 2018 with clear recommendations to influence policy and practice.

## **What is the community of practice?**

AVA and Agenda are looking to recruit up to twenty professionals to found a community of practice on women's multiple disadvantage. The idea of a community of practice was coined in the early 1990s as being "groups of people who share a concern or passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly"<sup>1</sup>.

As such, the community of practice on women's multiple disadvantage aims to provide a forum for practitioners with a passion for and commitment to working with women affected by multiple disadvantage to come together and learn from and with one another to maximise their ability to effectively support women.

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<sup>1</sup> The term was originally used in Lave, J. and Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. The definition used here was found on a related website: <http://wenger-trayner.com/introduction-to-communities-of-practice/> [accessed 15/11/17].

As noted above, the members of the community practice will have the additional opportunity to feed into the work of the new national Commission on women facing domestic and sexual abuse and multiple disadvantage by:

- 1) providing written evidence to the Commission.
- 2) possibly giving oral evidence to the Commission.
- 3) reviewing the Commission's draft report in terms of its practical implications and support the development of the final report with recommendations for the Commission to consider.

### **The role and expectations of community members**

Members of the community of practice on women's multiple disadvantage will be asked to:

- 1) attend a minimum of two out of four themed networking events held jointly with the Commission's peer researchers over the length of the Commission to feed into the evidence presented to the Commission and help generate new ideas.
- 2) attend free AVA training on subjects of relevance to your role and of interest to you.
- 3) regularly contribute to community online activities, including online discussions about practice issues, review guidance and articles on practice matters, consider emerging evidence from the Commission.
- 4) get manager's support to participate as the role will require attending training/meetings and otherwise contributing to the work of the community that may require time away from your professional duties.
- 5) pay for own travel expenses for training and networking events.

We want to create a community of practice that is a vibrant space for practitioners who otherwise might be isolated in their place of work to learn and grow together. **As such we are looking for professionals who:**

- 1) can demonstrate a passion for and commitment to supporting women affected by multiple disadvantage.
- 2) have recent experience of working with women affected by at least two of the following: violence against women and girls, including involvement in prostitution or sexual exploitation; mental distress; problematic substance use; homelessness; involvement in the criminal justice system.
- 3) are currently employed or self-employed in a field directly related to women's multiple disadvantage.
- 4) are looking to develop their professional knowledge and skills around working with women affected by multiple disadvantage.
- 5) have the potential to feed back their learning into their own organisation, and further to influence practice more broadly in their local area of work (with support).

**By joining the community of practice on women's multiple disadvantage, we hope you will gain:**

- 1) enhanced knowledge about supporting women experiencing multiple disadvantage.
- 2) a sense of community from being in touch with equally committed professionals from across in England and Wales
- 3) involvement in a high profile national project, including the opportunity to shape national-level policy.

**How do I apply?**

If you are interested in becoming a member of the community of practice on women's multiple disadvantage, please view the application form questions below and **complete your application online on this webpage:**

<https://avaproject.org.uk/community-practice-womens-multiple-disadvantage-call-applications/>

**The deadline for applications is 5pm on December 20<sup>th</sup> 2017.**

If you have any questions please feel free to email Jennifer Holly at [jennifer.holly@avaproject.org.uk](mailto:jennifer.holly@avaproject.org.uk) or call on 07379 484 925.

Your name	
Your job title	
Who do you work for?	
What part of the country do you work in?	
Contact email	
Contact number	
Please tell us a little about yourself.	
What experience do you have that makes you suitable for the role?	
What three key things do you think you will bring to the Community of Practice?	
What do you hope to achieve by joining the Community of Practice?	
How will you feed any learning you gain through the Community of Practice back into your organisation and the wider local area where you work?	

<p>Manager's name</p>	
<p>Manager's email address</p>	
<p>Manager's telephone number</p>	
<p>Please confirm you have support from your line manager for this application.</p>	
<p>Please confirm your line manager has agreed to you having time away from your main role to participate in the activities of the Community of Practice.</p>	

**Please note we will contact your line manager before confirming your membership in the community of practice.**