**Impact of Covid 19 on violence against women – Norway**

**Question 1**

The number of persons contacting the police, the shelters and the round-the-clock helpline for victims have decreased during the Corona crisis. There is a concern that this is a consequence of the measures taken to combat the virus.

**Question 2**

Several information campaigns have been launches to inform the public about where thay can access help in a situation of violence. This informartion has been translated into english and is available om the Government’s Corona information page and is spread on social media. The message is directed to victims of violence, those who are worried they may commit violence and those who suspect that someone around them is vulnerable.

<https://www.regjeringen.no/en/topics/law-and-order/lov-og-rett--satsing/vold-i-nare-relasjoner/seek-help-if-you-experience-violence/id2696812/>

The Internet site *dinutvei.no* (your way out) is a national guide for assistance, information and knowledge available on rape and violence, both violence within the family and violence between previous or current spouses or partners. The webpage is operated by The Norwegian Center for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies (NKVTS) on behalf of The Ministry of Justice and Public Security. The webpage has around 10 000 users during a three week period. This has been relatively stable during the Corona siuation.

**Question 3**

Persons subjected to domestic violence during isolation (due to the pandemic) can seek shelters or other safe housing services. Alternatively, the perpetrator may be banned from visiting his own home or may be subject to other restrictions by the police or the court.

**Question 4**

To be able to keep the shelters open during the crisis, the Norwegian Government has decided that employees at shelters are defined as personnel in critical social functions. This means that employees of shelters are allowed to send their children to kindergarten and school, even if kindergartens and schools are closed (for the majority of the children).

The 45 shelters in Norway report on a weekly basis on the use of the shelters during the crisis, compared to the use of the shelters in a normal situation. Reports from week 14, with numbers from 44 out of 45 shelters, show that for 55 percent (24 centres) numbers are lower than usually, 34 percent (15 centres) say that the numbers are as usual, and 12 percent (5 centres) say they have more users than normally. No centres report that they are full.

**Question 5**

Yes

**Question 6**

The Covid-19 pandemic meant that Norwegian courts had to reduce their activities to prevent infection between the various participants in the court. Many court proceedings were therefore postponed, leading to difficulties for all parties involved, including the courts. However, on March 27, the Government introduced a new, interim regulation that made it possible to carry out court proceedings with new methods, such as by the use of video conferences.

The Witness Support Service of the Norwegian Red Cross is, under ordinary circumstances, a well-functioning support system for assisting persons in a vulnerable position, such as women who are subjected to domestic violence, who have been called to give evidence in a court case. Unfortunately, the Witness Support Service has not yet resumed, because maintaining social distance is very demanding when performing this particular service. The Red Cross has therefore decided to pause the service until the Covid-19 situation improves.”

**Question 7**

The necessary services including sexual assault centres and emergency health services have been available and accessible 24/7.

Public health information about intimate partner violence is presented through several official sites, among these helsenorge.no, <https://helsenorge.no/koronavirus/hjelp-ved-vold-i-naere-relasjoner>.

Help lines and chat services are operated to meet the needs from the exposed.

**Question 8**

The Norwegian Government has taken a number of measures to prevent transmission of the coronavirus and protect the population. On 12 March far reaching measures were announced, including the closing of schools and children’s day care centres. In addition a number of public services have been closed, among them the administrative services provided by the police. Services for victims in general are mostly open, but often based on on-line and telephone consultations to reduce risk for contamination.

The number of persons contacting the police, the shelters and the round-the-clock helpline for victims have decreased during the Corona crisis. There is a concern that this is a consequence of the measures taken to combat the virus.

**Question 9**

When the Government introduced measures to prevent transmission of the coronavirus and protect the population, the Police Directorate immediately established an apparatus for identifying and handling the consequences of the pandemic and the measures introduced. Measures taken by the Police Directorate are:

* + The National Criminal Investigation Service (NCIS) has been commissioned to prepare weekly intelligence reports describing the most likely developments. Already in the first report NCIS wrote as follows: *“The incidence of physical and mental violence in close relationships is likely to increase, especially if the situation becomes prolonged. In vulnerable families, problems are likely to intensify.”*
  + Weekly statistics on reported crime, including domestic violence, are issued.
  + The police website has been updated, especially with information on how the public can get in contact with the police. Media is also used for spreading information. The police districts have actively used the “Police online patrol” to provide up-to-date information.
  + The Police Directorate has given clear guidelines to the police districts to pay special attention to cases of domestic violence, both new cases and cases already under investigation.
  + The police districts are requested to work closely with local authorities on measures, especially with the child welfare services.
  + The Police can be reached by the emergency number (112), the nationwide telephone number (02800) or the police district telephone number. The Police Directorate is gradually considering reopening the public receptions. This will increase availability and opportunity for personal attendance.

**Question 10**

Meetings have been held between NGOs and the authorities throughout the crisis to ensure that particularly vulnerable people are taken care of. It has been important to continuously assess the impact of the intervention measures on the particularly vulnerable groups.

**Question 11**

We have no further information from Norway