

Scotland's Strategy to Address Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Who is the strategy for?

It is for everyone with a part to play in tackling violence against women: the Scottish Government, Local Authorities, voluntary sector organisations, NHS Scotland, Police Scotland, community planning partnerships, those working in the civil and criminal justice systems, social work, housing, trade unions, employer bodies, the business sector and further, higher and school education professionals.

2. How is the strategy being developed?

We are drawing on the knowledge, skills and experience of our partners and those who use services and have:

- carried out literature reviews of 'what works' in primary prevention; improving the safety and wellbeing of women and children affected by violence; and dealing with perpetrators effectively
- organised three stakeholder events to discuss priorities and themes; this included a meeting with the Scottish Government's National Group to Address Violence Against Women
- arranged awareness raising seminars for government colleagues delivered by experts in the field of tackling VAWG
- arranged focus groups with service users, group discussions with young people and a variety of meetings with partners
- invited contributions through the Violence Against Women Team's bulletin

3. Why are you not circulating a full draft of the strategy?

We are still in the process of developing the strategy in consultation with a wide variety of stakeholders, and our aim is to strengthen the commitments from all sectors who have a role to play in tackling violence against women.

For this reason, we have attached a draft outline of the strategy's proposed contents and, as we value the opinions of all those working to tackle VAWG in Scotland, we would be grateful if you could provide us with your views on how best we can work together to prevent it, and also ensure that victims receive high quality and timely support. This means that, all those with an interest in tackling VAWG will have the opportunity to shape the strategy.

4. I haven't encountered this kind of consultation process before - what exactly does it entail?

As you may know a traditional consultation approach involves a policy team from within the Scottish Government circulating a consultation document accompanied by a set of questions to which stakeholders are invited to respond.

We are extremely keen to use creative, proactive and focused ways of involving everyone with an interest of tackling VAWG in the strategy's development. So, in order to obtain detailed contributions, and ensure that a range of stakeholders are encouraged to engage in the process, we will be doing the following:

- arranging meetings with key stakeholders focused on strengthening the strategy's commitments
- inviting frontline service providers to host service user discussion groups. This will enable us to ensure that the strategy is built on their views and meets their needs.
- widely circulating the attached feedback form

We are departing from a traditional consultation approach and using a snowball method. So we would be grateful if you could forward these FAQs and the draft outline of the strategy to others who you think may be interested in responding.

5. How will I find out how my comments have been used?

We will produce a summary of the main points raised by the majority of respondents and whether or not they will be actioned. Although all comments and suggestions will be considered, as we are sure that you will appreciate, we may not be able to take every single one on board.

6. What is the timescale for this process?

The consultation process will take place between January and February, with analysis of responses being carried out in March 2014.

We then aim to publish the strategy in the Summer once we have been able to assess everyone's views.

7. Will the strategy focus mainly on domestic abuse?

No. Our aim is to focus on all forms of VAWG. This includes: commercial sexual exploitation, child sexual abuse, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, rape and sexual assault, as well as domestic abuse.

8. Will it focus on any particular areas i.e. prevention?

This strategy is not only about providing the best possible service to those surviving violence, but is also about making sure that we put into place measures which aim to tackle the root causes of this violence occurring in the first place.

This means that the Scottish Government wants everyone involved in tackling VAWG to consider how policies and services can be designed to fit with this agenda.

9. Where is this new strategy embedded in Scottish Government?

Although the strategy's development is being led by the Violence Against Women team, colleagues across the Scottish Government have been involved in shaping it and providing input. They will also ensure that it is effectively implemented. Key areas involved include: Justice, Health, Welfare Reform, Education and Housing.

10. What is happening with the gendered analysis?

Our work to tackle VAWG is based on the gendered analysis, and will continue to be. The Scottish Government's definition of VAWG will also remain the same. However we recognise that, like women, men who experience domestic abuse require a service specific to their needs, especially in light of the rising numbers of reported cases of male domestic abuse victims.

11. What's does this mean for funding within this sector?

As you may be aware, funding has already been allocated for the period of 2012-15. Funding after this period will be determined by the next spending review.