

# EQUALLY SAFE QUALITY STANDARDS AND PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

## KEY LEARNING FROM 2017/18 DATA RETURNS

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Background**

The [Equally Safe Quality Standards and Performance Framework](#) was published by the Scottish Government, COSLA and the Improvement Service in May 2018, in close collaboration with the National Violence Against Women (VAW) Network and other stakeholders.

The Equally Safe Quality Standards and Performance Framework responds to the expectations set out in [Equally Safe: Scotland's Strategy for Preventing and Eradicating Violence Against Women and Girls](#) and in the [Violence Against Women Partnership Guidance](#), in relation to effective performance management.

The Quality Standards aim to capture data on the extent to which services, policies and processes that are most effective in tackling Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) are currently being delivered across Scotland. The Performance Framework aims to measure the impact that these services, policies and processes are having on the lives of people and communities affected by VAWG. Collectively, the two resources aim to support VAWPs to capture key performance data and facilitate a consistent approach to measuring and reporting on the progress being made to achieve the ambitions set out in Equally Safe at a local level.

Following the publication of the resource, the Scottish Government and COSLA wrote to all 32 Council Leaders and Chief Executives across Scotland in May 2018 to seek their assistance in ensuring that it was implemented locally. The Improvement Service also contacted all VAW Partnership leads to provide support with the data collection requirements and ensure they were aware of the timescales involved. The deadline for 2017/18 data returns was the 31<sup>st</sup> July 2018. It is noteworthy that as a self-assessment process, the results from local area VAWPs may be influenced by internal bias.

#### **Purpose of this Report**

This report pulls key learning from the first year of data returns and aims to provide an overview of the breadth of work taking place across Scotland to implement Equally Safe, and identify any areas where more support may be needed in the future.

The report is based on the Quality Standards and Performance Framework data that the Improvement Service received from 28<sup>1</sup> local authority areas as of the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2018 (an 88% response rate). Of the four local authority areas that did not submit any data by this date: two have

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<sup>1</sup> 28 local authority areas in total submitted some form of data return. 25 local authority areas submitted both Quality Standards and Performance data, while one provided Quality Standards data but no Performance data and two submitted Performance data but no Quality Standards data. Four local authority areas did not submit any data.

reported they are still in the process of finalising their data returns and hope to submit it in the near future; one has requested to wait until 2019 due to the fact they are currently in the process of setting up their VAW Partnership and no response was received from one local authority area.

## **PART 1: EQUALLY SAFE QUALITY STANDARDS**

### **Background**

This section of the report highlights the key learning from the Equally Safe Quality Standards data returns that were received from local authority areas across Scotland. The Equally Safe Quality Standards aim to:

- Highlight the types of services, policies and processes that are most effective in tackling VAWG and capture data on the extent to which they are currently being delivered across Scotland;
- Highlight what good practice looks like when supporting women and children affected by VAWG and provide a benchmark of excellence that organisations can work towards achieving; and
- Identify areas for improvement for organisations/ partnerships and help to increase their capacity and capability to identify and respond to women and children affected by VAWG.

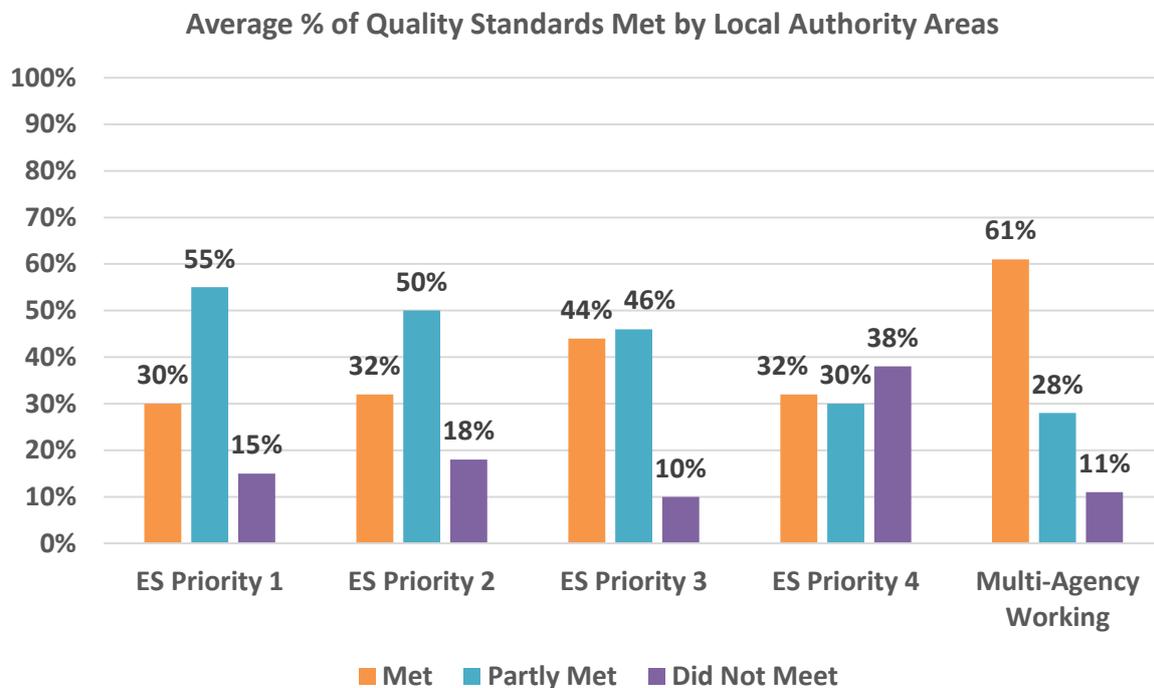
This section of the report is based on the 25 Quality Standards data returns that the Improvement Service has received as of the 30th September 2018. Of the six local authority areas that did not submit any Quality Standards data by this date: two have reported they are still in the process of finalising their data returns and hope to submit it in the near future; three have requested to wait until 2019 due to the fact that they did not have a VAW Partnership in place in 2017/18 and no response was received from one local authority area. A joint data return was submitted for the East Lothian and Midlothian local authority areas as they have one VAW Partnership that works across their two local authority areas.

The Equally Safe Quality Standards are broken into five sections. The first section aims to identify the extent to which the minimum standards and key activities that the Scottish Government and COSLA set out in the VAW Partnership Guidance are being met at a local level and the remaining sections aim to identify what services/ processes are in place that contribute to the four priorities set out in Equally Safe:

1. Scottish society embraces equality and mutual respect, and rejects all forms of violence against women and girls;
2. Women and girls thrive as equal citizens: socially, culturally, economically and politically;
3. Interventions are early and effective, preventing violence and maximising the safety and wellbeing of women, children and young people; and
4. Men desist from all forms of violence against women and girls and perpetrators of such violence receive a robust and effective response.

## Key Findings

As shown in the graph below, on average the area of the Quality Standards that most local authority areas report meeting is in relation to ensuring a multi-agency approach is taken to implementing Equally Safe (61%), followed by ensuring early and effective interventions are in place that prevent violence and maximise the safety and wellbeing of women, children and young people (43%).



On average, local authority areas report meeting fewer of the Quality Standards that relate to Equally Safe Priorities 1, 2 and 4, although a significant number of local authority areas report that they 'partly meet' these standards.

The remainder of this section of the report discusses the key learning from each of the Quality Standards in turn.

**PRIORITY 1: SCOTTISH SOCIETY EMBRACES EQUALITY AND MUTUAL RESPECT, AND REJECTS ALL FORMS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS**

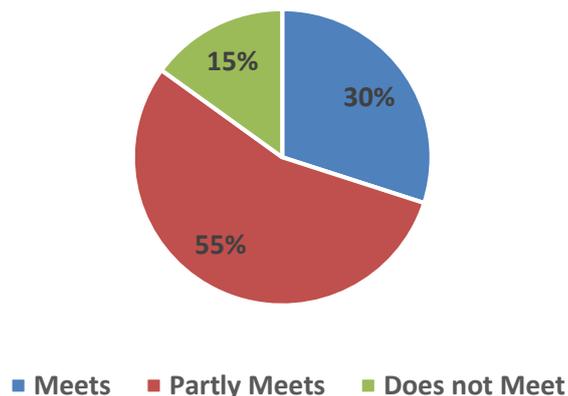
**1.1 Detailed Findings**

This section of the Equally Safe Quality Standards aims to generate learning on the extent to which services, policies and processes are in place at a local level that the evidence-base suggests will help to achieve the following short-term and medium-term outcomes that contribute to Priority 1 of Equally Safe:

- People have increased understanding of all forms of VAWG (causes, consequences and appropriate responses); and
- Tolerance of VAWG is reduced and people are more likely to recognise and challenge it.

As shown in the chart below, on average, local authority areas report meeting 30% of the Equally Safe Quality Standards that relate to Priority 1 of Equally Safe.

**Scottish society embraces equality and mutual respect, and rejects all forms of VAWG**



Key findings from this section of the Quality Standards (QS) include:

***Quality Standard 1: Proactive engagement and communications take place in the local community to increase people’s awareness and understanding of the causes and consequences of VAWG, and the role they can play in tackling it.***

Of the local authority areas that provided a data return, 24% said they meet the QS, 72% said they partly meet the QS and 4% indicated they did not meet the QS. While the majority of local authority areas noted they only ‘partly meet’ this quality standard, areas provided a wide range of examples of awareness raising activities that took place in 2017/18 to raise awareness of the causes and consequences of VAWG including 16 Days Campaigns, becoming a White Ribbon city and local media campaigns.

***Quality Standard 2: The VAWP regularly collects/analyses data to understand people’s attitudes in relation to VAWG, and use that to inform future awareness raising activities.***

Of the 25 local authority areas that provided a QS data return, 8% said they meet the QS, 52% said they partly meet the QS and 40% reported they did not meet the QS. While some local authority areas provided examples of consultations they had undertaken to capture their local community's attitudes in relation to VAWG, the majority noted that this is not something that they have had the capacity to do regularly. However, a number of the areas that reported that they either do not currently collect this information or do not collect it regularly noted that they plan to do this in the future.

***Quality Standard 3: All primary and secondary schools deliver age-appropriate, evidence-based interventions to raise children, teachers and parents' understanding and awareness of gender-based violence, positive, healthy relationships and consent, as part of a whole school approach to tackling VAWG.***

Of the 25 local authority areas that provided a QS data return, 36% said they meet the QS, while 32% said they partly meet the QS. 32% indicated they do not meet this QS. Due to the number of primary and secondary schools that exist in their area, a number of VAW Partnerships highlighted challenges in reporting on this quality standard accurately and noted that their responses were based on estimates.

***Quality Standard 4: Youth work organisations deliver interventions to raise young people's understanding and awareness of VAWG and the importance of positive, healthy relationships.***

Of the 25 local authority areas that provided a QS data return, 24% said they meet the QS and 76% indicated they partly meet the QS. Similarly to Quality Standard 3, a number of local authority areas noted that, while they are aware that a number of youth organisations operating in their local area deliver interventions on positive, healthy relationships, it is difficult to quantify how many do this.

***Quality Standard 5: There is clear up to date and accessible online guidance about the services available to support families affected by VAWG and how to access them. This online guidance is well promoted, particularly amongst target groups.***

Of the 25 local authority areas that provided a QS data return, 56% said they meet the QS, while 44% indicated that they partly meet the QS. A number of local authority areas noted that, while there is information online about local support available to women and children affected by VAWG, this is not collated in one space. A number of other areas also outlined plans to review the information that is available in the next year, and make sure that it is up to date and accessible for potential service users.

## **1.2 Examples of Good Practice**

The Quality Standards data returns highlighted a number of examples of good practice that are happening in local authority areas across Scotland in relation to the promotion of equality and mutual respect, and the rejecting of all forms of VAWG:

- **Working in partnership to raise awareness of the causes and consequences of VAWG**

The Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women Partnership (DAVAWP) in Dumfries and Galloway reports having undertaken a broad programme of public awareness on all forms of

violence against women, which has included becoming a White Ribbon Area; sharing awareness raising information online and via printed materials and utilising the skills and expertise of the South West Rape Crisis and Sexual Abuse Centre to work with peers in other agencies to increase youth engagement outside of schools.

- **Consulting with women and children to improve on service provision**

In 2017, Glasgow VAW Partnership's Implementation Group undertook a large piece of work to consult with women on their experiences of service provision in order to help identify any improvements that are needed to services or referral processes across the city. Similarly, in 2017 Edinburgh VAW Partnership undertook a wide-ranging consultation on the service response to domestic abuse across the city and used the findings from this to develop a Domestic Abuse Strategy and Improvement Plan which is currently being progressed by the Partnership.

- **Collecting and analysing data to understand attitudes to VAWG**

In 2016/17, North Lanarkshire VAW Partnership carried out a community-wide survey to capture learning on people's attitudes to VAWG. The feedback highlighted some concerning attitudes particularly around rape, highlighting that victim blaming attitudes still persist. A second survey was then issued in 2017/18 dealing specifically with rape, sexual violence and harassment. Following this work, a task group of the North Lanarkshire VAW Partnership was established to create a campaign to challenge these attitudes. Work on this is ongoing with North Lanarkshire Council's Campaigns Manager.

- **Adopting a whole school approach to preventing VAWG**

In September 2017, Stirling established the Schools Gender Based Violence Network, which initially operated as a sub-group of Stirling VAW Partnership. This Network has brought together gender based violence partners from Schools, Learning and Education; NHS Forth Valley; Stirling & District Women's Aid; Forth Valley Rape Crisis; Stirling Council Safer, Connected Communities Team; Stirling Council Youth Team and Forth Valley Child Sexual Exploitation Project Board. The network successfully surveyed all Stirling primary and secondary schools (mainstream and Additional Supports Needs units) on how Relationship, Sexual Health and Parenthood Education (RSHPE) is taught. This provided baseline information to set improvements against and new learning resources are being developed to support young people's understanding of gender based violence within RSHPE.

Additionally, West Lothian VAW Partnership has recently undertaken a wide range of prevention work with local schools and has supported the roll out of the Zero Tolerance Respect Pack to all primary and secondary schools in the local authority area. As a next step, West Lothian VAW Partnership plans to gather feedback from schools in relation to the number of children and young people receiving violence prevention education.

### 1.3 Looking Ahead

A number of local authority areas identified activities they would undertake over the next year to promote equality and mutual respect and tackle all forms of VAWG:

- Improving information available online and exploring opportunities to bring together key information from partners' individual websites onto one webpage so it is more accessible for users.
- Increasing the level of prevention work that takes place in schools and ensuring there are mechanisms in place for members of VAW Partnerships to be actively involved in this work and to receive feedback on the impact it is having on children and young people's knowledge and awareness of VAWG issues.
- Increase connections with youth organisations and develop clear strategic plans for how to work with those organisations in the future, to better engage with young people.
- Improving local data collection and analysis in relation to attitudes about VAWG.

### 1.4 Barriers

Challenges were noted in terms of attitudinal data collection:

- Some felt the public, and women who have experienced VAWG in particular, may be fatigued by the need for data from services – this can influence the validity of survey/questionnaire data
- Concerns were raised that work to dispel misinformation is negated by the attitudes of some local representatives

### 1.5 Feedback/ Recommendations

A number of suggestions were made for work that could be undertaken nationally, to support local authority areas to meet the Quality Standards in this section of the Equally Safe Quality Standards and Performance Framework. These included:

- **Supporting a whole-community approach to tackling VAWG**  
It was suggested that a toolkit could be developed to support public sector and third sector partners to take a joined-up approach to engaging with local communities and increasing their awareness and understanding of the causes and consequences of VAWG. It was noted that Rape Crisis Scotland has previously developed an effective toolkit for engaging children and young people and this ensures accurate, consistent and effective messages are delivered to all participants and there may be opportunities to learn from this in developing a similar tool to support whole community approaches.

## **PRIORITY 2: WOMEN AND GIRLS THRIVE AS EQUAL CITIZENS: SOCIALLY, CULTURALLY, ECONOMICALLY AND POLITICALLY**

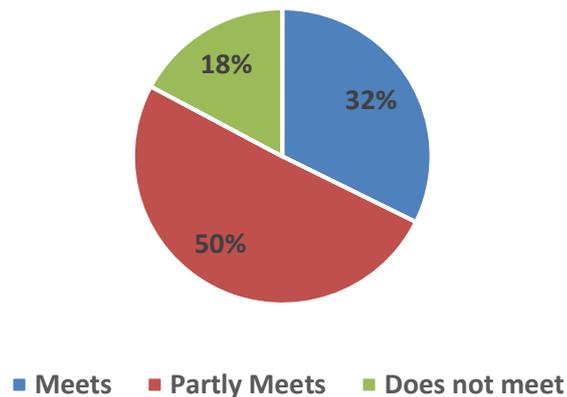
### **2.1 Detailed Findings**

This section of the Equally Safe Quality Standards aims to generate learning on the extent to which services, policies and processes are in place at a local level that the evidence-base suggests will help to achieve the following short-term and medium-term outcomes that contribute to Priority 2 of Equally Safe:

- Fewer people adhere to gender stereotypes; and
- Power, decision-making and material resources are distributed more equally between men and women.

As shown in the chart below, on average, local authority areas report meeting 32% of the Quality Standards that relate to Priority 2 of Equally Safe.

**Women and girls thrive as equal citizens: socially, culturally, economically and politically**



Key findings from this section of the Quality Standards include:

***Quality Standard 1: Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) are routinely undertaken when developing all major new policies, processes and services at a local level in partnership with Equality Groups, to ensure they do not discriminate against women and to identify ways to promote women's equality through them.***

Of the local authority areas that provided a QS data return, 12% said they meet the QS, while 64% said they partly meet the QS and 24% indicated they do not meet the QS. A number of VAW Partnerships expressed concerns that while EIAs are undertaken by public sector partners when developing new policies, processes and services, these are often undertaken in a tokenistic way and with little focus on promoting women's equality. Other areas noted that equality groups are rarely involved in undertaking these assessments.

***Quality Standard 2: Public Sector employers publish a gender pay gap and an equal pay statement (including gendered occupational segregation information), gather and use gender-disaggregated***

***data, in line with the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), and develop an equality outcome on gender and employment.***

Of the local authorities that provided a QS data return, 60% said they meet the QS, 28% said they partly meet the QS, while 8% said they do not meet the QS. The majority of local authority areas noted that the Council and, in some cases, other local public sector partners comply with the requirement to publish a gender pay gap and equal pay statement. A small number of areas highlighted that their Council has yet to develop an equality outcome on gender and employment but that work is currently ongoing to do so<sup>2</sup>.

***Quality Standard 3: VAWPs regularly engage with local equality groups to ensure they are aware of the VAWG agenda and understand the inequalities that underpin it.***

Of the local authority areas that provided a QS data return, 12% said they meet the QS, while 76% said they partly meet the QS, and 8% indicated they do not meet the QS. A number of local authority areas highlighted that while their VAW Partnership regularly consults with women's equality groups and VAWG organisations on relevant issues, they do not routinely consult with other equality groups operating in the local area<sup>3</sup>.

***Quality Standard 4: Public Sector workplace policies are gender-sensitive and recognise the barriers to women's workplace equality.***

Of the local authority areas that provided a QS data return, 52% said they meet the QS, 40% said they partly meet the QS, while 4% indicated that they do not meet the QS. The majority of local authority areas that reported partly meeting this standard highlighted that while they have specific VAWG and maternity policies in place, they have not reviewed other policies to ensure they are gender-sensitive. Additionally, a number of other local authorities noted that they would welcome guidance on how to ensure workplace policies are gender sensitive and examples of how policies can help to address barriers women may face in the workplace. One local authority area noted that their policies are intentionally 'gender-neutral'<sup>4</sup>.

***Quality Standard 5: Public Sector workplace policies recognise that employees may be affected by VAWG and communicate / support clear paths for women experiencing this.***

Of the local authority areas that provided a QS data return, 40% indicated they meet the QS, while 48% said they partly meet the QS and 8% indicated that they do not meet the QS. A number of local authority areas noted that while public sector partners have domestic abuse policies in place, they do not have policies addressing other forms of VAWG including sexual harassment. However, a number of areas noted that this is something that organisations were currently looking at remedying<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> 4% did not provide an answer to this QS

<sup>3</sup> 4% did not provide an answer to this QS

<sup>4</sup> 4% did not provide an answer to this QS

<sup>5</sup> 4% did not provide an answer to this QS

***Quality Standard 6: VAW Partnerships (and their member organisations) actively engage with the scoping and development of the Equally Safe Employer Accreditation Programme.***

Of the local authority areas that provided a QS data return, 8% indicated that they meet the QS, 36% reported that they partly meet the QS, and 52% indicated that they do not meet the QS. While Councils have only recently been invited to engage with the Equally Safe at Work accreditation, a high number of local authority areas noted that they would be interested in actively engaging with this work in the coming year as either a pilot or shadow area<sup>6</sup>.

## **2.2 Examples of Good Practice**

The Quality Standards data returns highlighted a number of examples of good practice that are happening in local authority areas across Scotland in relation to supporting women and girls to thrive socially, culturally, economically and politically:

- **Putting in place robust policies to identify and respond to public sector employees affected by VAWG**

North Ayrshire Council has developed specific policies on domestic abuse, which concentrate on VAW and Dignity and Respect at Work. This reinforces North Ayrshire Council's zero-tolerance policies towards harassment, bullying and victimisation on any grounds, including gender. These policies outline clear procedures for raising concerns; methods of investigating and resolving complaints; penalties for perpetrators; and signposting to internal and external sources of support.

Additionally, South Ayrshire Council has developed e-learning modules to train managers in how to support employees who are affected by domestic violence and stalking.

- **Use and development of Equality Impact Assessments**

At Orkney Islands Council (OIC), Equality Impact Assessments are undertaken during the development and review of all Council policies. The OIC Equalities Officer is a member of the Domestic Abuse Forum, and this helps to ensure that equality issues relating to women are fed into assessments. Direct engagement with women's equality groups take place when policies and proposals are open for public consultation and in cases where a policy or proposal is of specific relevance.

Additionally, West Lothian Council has taken the approach of developing 'Integrated Impact Assessments' which include human rights and socio-economic factors. Alongside consultation with the internal Equality Advisor, Integrated Impact Assessments are undertaken whenever policies are developed to ensure they do not discriminate against women and also to identify ways to promote women's equality.

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<sup>6</sup> 4% did not provide an answer to this QS

## 2.3 Barriers

Partnerships identified a number of barriers in meeting this group of quality standards:

- The quality of gender focussed indicators in Equality Impact Assessments (EIA).
- Limited knowledge outwith statutory bodies of EIAs; and moreover, the use of EIAs is not consistent within statutory bodies.
- Capacity issues in terms of time and resources to consult with all equalities groupings during the EIA process.

## 2.4 Feedback/ Recommendations

A number of suggestions were made for work that could be undertaken nationally to support local authority areas to meet the Quality Standards in this section of the Equally Safe Quality Standards and Performance Framework. These included:

- **Providing more support and guidance on what constitutes high quality policies and processes to promote women's equality in the workplace**

To help drive forward improvements for women in local workplaces, it was noted that it would be useful to have more guidance on what best practice looks like in terms of high quality policies and processes, along with examples of 'gold star' policies and processes that can be adapted and adopted at a local level. It was noted, that it would be useful to raise awareness of the resources that Close the Gap has produced as part of the Equally Safe at Work programme, to help ensure that local authority areas that are not involved in the project as pilot or shadow areas are still aware of what good practice looks like in this area.

**PRIORITY 3: INTERVENTIONS ARE EARLY AND EFFECTIVE, PREVENTING VIOLENCE AND  
MAXIMISING THE SAFETY AND WELLBEING OF WOMEN, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

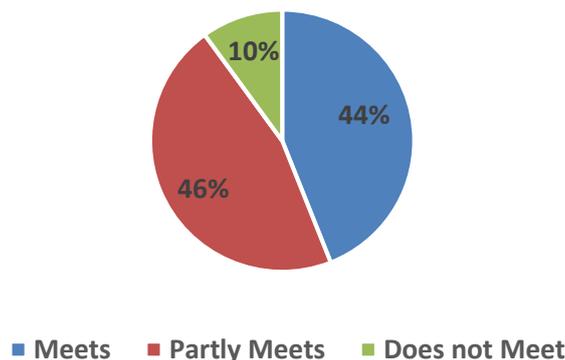
**3.1 Detailed Findings**

This section of the Quality Standards aimed to generate learning on the extent to which services, policies and processes are in place at a local level that the evidence-base suggests will help to achieve the following short-term and medium-term outcomes that contribute to Priority 3 of Equally Safe:

- Women and children affected by VAWG are identified at an early stage;
- Women and children’s safety needs are met; and
- Women and children’s wider wellbeing needs are met.

As shown in the chart below, on average local authority areas reported meeting 44% of the Quality Standards that relate to Priority 3 of Equally Safe.

**Interventions are early and effective, preventing violence and maximising the safety and wellbeing of women, children and young people**



Key findings from this section of the Quality Standards include:

***Quality Standard 1: Public Sector staff who come into contact with members of the public have received at least basic training in how to identify and respond to women and children affected by VAWG in an appropriate way.***

Of the local authority areas that provided a QS data return, 12% said they meet the QS, while 68% indicated that they partly meet the QS, and 20% said they do not meet the QS. The vast majority of local authority areas noted that a programme of multi-agency training is available to public sector staff in their area, but that training is often not mandatory and it is challenging to monitor what percentage of the workforce has undertaken training.

***Quality Standard 2: Routine Enquiry is regularly undertaken within the priority settings of maternity, mental health, substance misuse, A&E, community nursing and sexual health services.***

Of the local authority areas that provided a QS data return, 20% said they meet the QS, while 80% said they partly meet it. A number of local authority areas reported that while Routine Enquiry is currently undertaken in all priority settings, it is not yet undertaken by all relevant staff within these settings. A number of areas also noted that Routine Enquiry is not currently undertaken within A&E settings within their local authority area. In future, this data has the potential to be supplemented by NHS Scotland data returns on Routine Enquiry.

***Quality Standard 3: Regular Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs) take place, that meet Safe Lives' 10 Principles for an Effective MARAC.***

Of the local authority areas that provided a QS data return, 80% said they meet the QS, while 12% indicated that they partly meet the QS, and only 8% said they do not meet the QS. One area that reported they do not currently have a MARAC in place, noted that work is underway to introduce this in the coming year.

***Quality Standard 4: Staff in child welfare settings have received an appropriate level of training in the Safe and Together model.***

Of the local authority areas that provided a QS data return, 28% said they meet the QS, a further 28% said they partly meet the QS, and 44% said they do not meet the QS. A significant number of areas that reported not currently meeting this Quality Standard, noted that they are currently looking at how they can implement the Safe and Together principles in the year ahead.

***Quality Standard 5: High quality, refuge accommodation which provides emergency temporary housing is available for all women and girls affected by VAWG, who need a safe place to stay.***

Of the local authority areas that provided a QS data return, 40% indicated that they meet the QS, and 60% said they partly meet the QS. It was noted that this QS does not represent the variety of housing options that are available to women, with a number of VAW Partnerships suggesting that this quality standard should be amended to reflect the fact that different women may want different housing options and good practice is to strive to ensure that a variety of housing options are available locally, including support for women and children to stay in their own homes if this is their preference. A number of local authority areas also highlighted that adequate housing is not available locally for women with no recourse to public funds.

***Quality Standard 6: Follow-on/ resettlement support is available for all women and girls leaving refuge.***

Of the local authority areas that provided a QS data return, 84% said they meet the QS, and 16% reported that they partially meet the QS.

***Quality Standard 7: Specialist advocacy services are available for all women and children affected by VAWG, to enable them to address their support needs, take control of their lives and make informed decisions about their future.***

Of the local authority areas that provided a QS data return, 96% said they meet the QS, while the remaining 4% reported that they partially meet the QS. However, a number of areas noted that, while advocacy services are in place, they are not at a sufficient level to meet the needs of all women and children who may require advocacy support.

***Quality Standard 8: High quality, targeted interventions are in place to engage with women and children affected by VAWG who may experience additional vulnerabilities and barriers as result of race, sexual orientation, age or disability. This includes LGBTI people, minority ethnic women and girls, disabled women and girls (including those with learning disabilities), refugees and asylum seekers, and women of different ages and stages of life.***

Of the local authority areas that provided a QS data return, 36% reported that they meet the QS, while 60% said they partly meet the QS, and 4% indicated that they do not meet the QS. A number of areas noted that, while targeted interventions are in place to engage with some groups of women, they are not in place to engage with others. A number of areas noted challenges in engaging with LGBTI women and children in particular.

***Quality Standard 9: Consideration is given to how to meet the needs of women and children experiencing VAWG and have complex needs – substance misuse, mental health issues or trauma.***

Of the local authority areas that completed a QS data return, 40% indicated that they meet the QS, while 56% said they partly meet the QS. Only 4% said they did not meet the QS. A number of areas noted that they had identified gaps in working with women in the Criminal Justice System and those with substance misuse needs in particular, and that work was ongoing with relevant community planning leads on how to address these gaps together.

***Quality Standard 10: Specialist one-to-one and group-work support services are available for all children affected by VAWG, to help address their recovery needs (e.g. Cedar). This support is multi-faceted and promotes a consistent message from schools as well as targeted support from in-house or external agencies.***

Of the local authority areas that provided a QS data return, 32% indicated that they meet the QS, while 68% said they partly meet the QS. A number of areas noted that, while some services were in place to support children affected by VAWG, levels of provision are inadequate to meet demand. Others noted that the services in place are primarily targeted at children affected by domestic abuse, with little or no provision in some areas for children affected by sexual abuse and FGM.

***Quality Standard 11: Adequate levels of funding are provided for specialist VAWG services, with multi-year funding committed wherever possible.***

Of the local authority areas that provided a QS data return, 16% said they meet the QS, while 36% indicated that they partly meet the QS and 48% said they do not meet the QS. The vast majority of VAW Partnerships noted that funding is available for some VAWG services but not for others and that, even where funding is available, it is largely insufficient to meet demand. Funding for

preventative services was also highlighted as a key gap. Feedback indicated that this QS offers too much space for interpretation and that clearer criteria is needed to enable VAWPs to assess and identify improvements needed in their funding models.

***Quality Standard 12: All specialist VAWG services that receive funding at a local level: 1) are underpinned by a gendered analysis of VAWG, which recognises that VAWG is both a cause and consequence of women's inequality; 2) are shaped by and promote the views of women, children, and young people who have experience of VAWG; 3) demonstrate an understanding of the need for women-only spaces in the promotion of safety and recovery from VAWG; 4) adopt a rights-based, person-centred, needs-led approach to addressing the impact of VAWG on women, children, and young people that addresses the risks they face; 5) demonstrate a commitment to promoting children's rights and recognise that children and young people have their own unique needs in regard to VAWG; 6) support women in realising their choices with regard to housing and accommodation; 7) provide holistic, multi-faceted support for women, children and young people in partnership with other appropriate agencies; and finally, 8) are inclusive to lesbian, bisexual, trans and intersex (LBTI) women.***

Of the local authority areas that provided a QS data return, 56% said they meet the QS, while 40% said they partly meet the QS. All areas noted that they are committed towards meeting these standards<sup>7</sup>.

***Quality Standard 13: Public Sector partners have robust policies in place to strengthen approaches to tackle all forms of VAWG and processes are in place to ensure they are rigorously followed by all Public Sector partners.***

Of the local authority areas that provided a QS data return, 24% said they meet the QS, 72% said they partly meet the QS, while 4% indicated that they do not meet the QS. A number of areas noted that individual services have policies and processes in place but not multi-agency policies and processes. Other areas noted that, while they have policies in place in relation to some forms of VAWG (particularly domestic abuse and FGM), they do not have them for other forms of VAWG, with a number of areas reporting commercial sexual exploitation as a particular gap.

### **3.2 Examples of Good Practice**

- **Ensuring public sector and third sector organisations are trained to identify and respond to VAWG in an appropriate way**

In South Ayrshire, NHS Ayrshire & Arran Health Board has continued to work in partnership with Women's Aid to provide both Routine Enquiry Training and Risk Identification Checklist Training across the priority settings of Maternity, Mental Health, Substance Misuse, A&E, Community Nursing and Sexual Health Services. To further embed Routine Enquiry within the priority settings, NHS Ayrshire & Arran will be undertaking a Routine Enquiry Training Needs Analysis to review and update the Routine Enquiry for Gender Based Violence Training Pathway.

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<sup>7</sup> 4% did not submit an answer for this QS

In Dumfries and Galloway, it has been recognised that a strategic approach to training was required. As a result, a training programme has been developed that includes a focus on the impact of domestic abuse, rape and other forms of gender based violence. A Violence Against Women e-learning module is in development which will be accessible to Council and Third Sector employees. Similarly, the North Ayrshire VAW Partnership has created a new Domestic Abuse Training Package, which is currently being rolled out within the North Ayrshire Child Protection and Adult Support & Protection Teams. It is also being publicised and offered to all Partners and other external organisations.

In West Lothian, all Council staff who come into contact with members of the public will be receiving Tier 2 Domestic Abuse training which includes a 1-day training course on the dynamics of abuse and implications for practice (this will include a Safe and Together briefing). This training will be a rolling mandatory training programme, which commenced in November 2018 and, eventually, all front-line West Lothian Council staff will receive it.

In Fife, the VAW Partnership co-ordinates an extensive training programme based on priorities agreed by partners and linked to agreed strategic priorities. Partners are involved in the development of course content and delivery. Some courses are delivered by third sector colleagues on behalf of the VAW Partnership. Fife VAW Partnership promotes training, arranges venues and quality assurance. Most training is multi-agency and available to agencies across Fife. On occasion, particular training needs are identified and recently VAW training was made mandatory for all housing and customer service staff. Last year there were over 100 training instances attended.

- **Ensuring high quality housing options are in place for women and children affected by domestic abuse**

In Orkney, Orkney Housing Association Ltd has signed up to the Chartered Institute of Housing's (CIH) 'Make a Stand' campaign, and has committed to take positive steps to meet the needs of women and children affected by domestic abuse. The Housing Association has now completed that process and is in discussion with local authority colleagues about how to ensure women and children affected by domestic abuse have appropriate options and support available to them.

### **3.3 Barriers**

The majority of VAW Partnerships raised concerns about a lack of funding, both for specialist VAWG services and to support multi-agency working and system change across the local authority areas. Across local authority areas, organisations reported that short-term funding means they face a precarious future, compromising long-term planning for change. Funding for preventative services was also highlighted as a significant gap.

### **3.4 Feedback/ Recommendations**

A number of suggestions were made for work that could be undertaken nationally, to support local authority areas to meet the quality standards in this section of the Equally Safe Quality Standards and Performance Framework. These included:

- **Providing more guidance on what good practice looks like in terms of ensuring that women and children have high quality housing options available to them, that respond to their specific needs.**
- **Supporting a review of VAWG funding at a local and national level to help ensure that best use is made of all available resources.**

**PRIORITY 4: MEN DESIST FROM ALL FORMS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS, AND PERPETRATORS OF SUCH VIOLENCE RECEIVE A ROBUST AND EFFECTIVE RESPONSE**

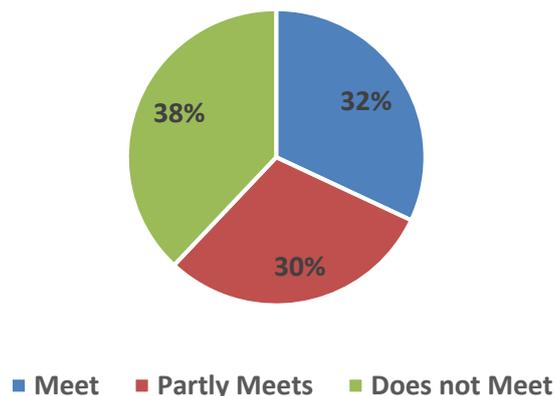
**4.1 Detailed Findings**

This section of the Quality Standards aimed to generate learning on the extent to which services, policies and processes are in place at a local level that the evidence-base suggests will help to achieve the following short-term and medium-term outcomes that contribute to Priority 4 of Equally Safe:

- Perpetrators of VAWG are identified at an early stage;
- Perpetrators are sanctioned/held to account for their behaviour; and
- Perpetrators are supported to change their behaviour.

As shown in the chart below, on average local authority areas report meeting a third (32%) of the Quality Standards that relate to Priority 4 of Equally Safe.

**Men desist from all forms of VAWG, and perpetrators of such violence receive a robust and effective response**



Key findings from this section of the Quality Standards include:

***Quality Standard 1: Public Sector staff who come into contact with members of the public have received training in how to identify and respond to perpetrators of VAWG in an appropriate way.***

Of the local authority areas that provided a QS data return, 16% said they meet the QS, while 72% indicated that they partly meet the QS, and 12% said they do not meet the QS. Most areas that provided training noted that this is primarily targeted at Criminal Justice Social Workers, with little training directed towards public sector staff in other areas. A number of areas that are currently in the process of implementing Safe & Together, noted that this has increased their focus on perpetrators.

***Quality Standard 2: Multi Agency Tasking and Coordination (MATAC) groups are in place at a local authority level, to identify high risk perpetrators of domestic abuse and ensure they are held to account for their behaviours.***

Of the local authority areas that provided a data return, 84% said they meet the QS, while 12% indicated that they partly meet the QS, and 4% said they do not meet the QS. A small number of areas noted that while MATACs are in place, attendance is not consistent and improvement planning work is being undertaken.

***Quality Standard 3: Specialist domestic abuse courts are in place to ensure women and children who experience domestic abuse receive an appropriate response from the criminal justice system. This includes ensuring women and children are fully informed and supported throughout a court process, and have appropriate opportunities to input their views.***

Of the local authority areas that provided a QS data return, 8% said they meet the QS, while 16% indicated they partly meet the QS, and the majority - 76% - reported that they do not meet the QS. A number of areas noted that, while specialist domestic abuse courts are not in place, services are available to support women and children to engage with the court process.

***Quality Standard 4: High-quality, evidence-based court-mandated programmes are in place at a local level that work with perpetrators of VAWG to hold them to account for, and support them to change, their behaviours.***

Of the local authority areas that provided a QS data return, 48% said they meet the QS, while 28% indicated that they partly meet the QS and 24% said they do not meet the QS. A number of areas noted that they had applied for funding to introduce the Caledonian System<sup>8</sup> in their areas but were unsuccessful.

***Quality Standard 5: High-quality, evidence-based, non-court-mandated programmes are in place at a local level that work with perpetrators of VAWG to hold them to account for, and support them to change, their behaviours.***

Of the local authority areas that provided a QS data return, 8% indicated they meet the QS, while 20% said they partly meet the QS and 72% reported that they do not meet the QS. The vast majority of areas highlighted the importance of having non-court mandated perpetrator programmes in place and noted that this is something that they would be keen to develop in the coming year.

## **4.2 Examples of Good Practice**

- **High-quality programmes are in place at a local level to work with perpetrators**

In the Stirling local authority area, the 'Justice Star' Outcomes Assessment Tool is being implemented and will help to identify areas of perpetrators' lives that require additional support from partner agencies outwith the Criminal Justice Social Work team.

In Dundee, a Domestic Abuse Resource Worker has been appointed to work on a voluntary basis with perpetrators. An evaluation of the programme has been undertaken and has been assessed as being very successful.

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<sup>8</sup> The Caledonian System works with men convicted of domestic abuse offences to help them: recognise their abuse; take responsibility for themselves and their relationship with their ex/partners and children; and reduce their reoffending. All the services are based on risk and needs assessment, and are designed to prevent and minimise possible harm to women and children.

- **Training on identifying and responding to perpetrators**

In North Ayrshire, Caledonian Case Managers and Group Facilitators have attended training around assessing risk and working with men convicted of domestic abuse. Training that has taken place includes Personality Disorder; GIRFEC; Caledonian Case Manager; Spousal Abuse Risk Assessment; and Stalking Assessment and Management. Planned future training includes Spousal Abuse Risk Assessment Version 3 and Caledonian Group Work Training.

#### **4.3 Barriers**

Inadequate funding for perpetrator interventions was highlighted as a key challenge by a significant number of local authority areas. A number of areas noted that there are currently no perpetrator interventions locally, which limits their ability to hold perpetrators to account for their behaviours. Others noted concerns that the Caledonian System is only able to work with a small number of high risk offenders and highlighted the need to introduce high quality perpetrator interventions that can engage with perpetrators at a much earlier stage.

#### **4.4 Feedback/ Recommendations**

A number of suggestions were made for work that could be undertaken nationally, to support local authority areas to meet the quality standards in this section of the Equally Safe Quality Standards and Performance Framework. These included:

- **Developing and funding high quality non-court mandated interventions for perpetrators.**

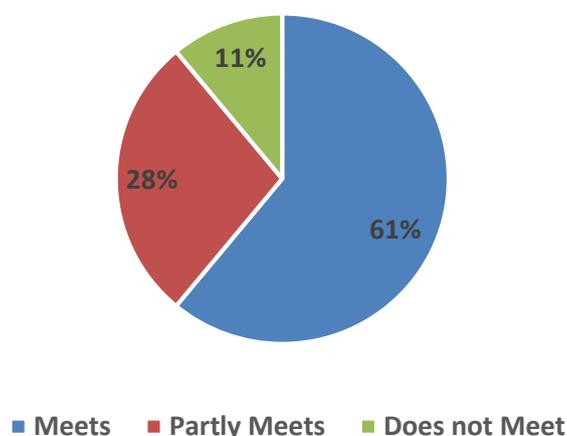
## **MULTI-AGENCY PARTNERSHIP WORKING**

### **5.1 Detailed Findings**

This section of the Equally Safe Quality Standards aims to generate learning on the extent to which the minimum standards and key activities that the Scottish Government and COSLA set out the 2016 VAW Partnership Guidance are currently being met at local level.

As shown in the chart below, on average local authority areas report meeting 61% of the Equally Safe Quality Standards that relate to effective multi-agency partnership working.

**Multi-agency partnership working**



Key findings from this section of the Quality Standards include:

***Quality Standard 1: There is a VAW Partnership (VAWP) in place that is responsible for working to prevent and eradicate all forms of violence against women and girls within the local authority area, including all forms of violence, sexual harassment, bullying and intimidation, commercial sexual exploitation, child sexual abuse and honour-based violence.***

Of the local authority areas that submitted a QS data return, 96% reported that they meet this quality standard and 4% reported that they partly meet this quality standard.

While this is a very positive finding, it is worth noting that, of the six local authority areas that did not provide a Quality Standard data return for 2017/18, the main reason given for that was that they did not have a VAW Partnership in operation during this period. However, all of those areas noted that they were currently in the process of setting up or refreshing their VAW Partnership.

***Quality Standard 2: The VAWP brings together representatives from the key Public Sector and Third Sector organisations working to prevent and eradicate violence against women and girls within the local area. Representatives from these organisations should be sufficiently empowered to advance the Partnership's agreed outcomes and activities within their own organisations/networks.***

Of the local authority areas that submitted a data return, 36% reported that they meet this Quality Standard, while 64% reported that they partly meet this quality standard. Of those that reported partly meeting this standard, the majority noted that, while the VAW Partnership does bring together all the key public sector and third sector organisations working to tackle VAWG in their area, some partners' engagement with the partnership can be irregular, and not all partners who attend have the appropriate level of authority to advance the VAW Partnership's activities on behalf of their organisation.

***Quality Standard 3: The VAWP has an agreed Terms of Reference, which outlines the VAWP's vision, membership, meeting and chairing arrangements and governance arrangements.***

Of the local authority areas that submitted a QS data return, 84% reported that they meet this quality standard, while 12% said they partly meet it and 4% reported not meeting it all as none of the QS criteria was met.

***Quality Standard 4: The VAWP has a strategic plan in place that outlines how the Partnership will implement Equally Safe at a local level, identifying the VAWP'S outcomes and activities and direct links to the CPP's Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP).***

Of the local authority areas that submitted a QS data return, 60% reported that they meet this quality standard, while 36% percent said they partly meet it and 4% reported not meeting it all. Of the local authority areas that reported partly meeting this Quality Standard, the majority noted that while they do have a VAW strategy in place, this does not link to their CPP's Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP). However, many noted that their VAW strategy does link to other strategic plans within their CPP, such as Public Protection Strategies, Community Justice Outcome Improvement Plans or Children and Young People Service Plans. A number of local authority areas noted they are in the process of developing a new VAWG strategy for 2018 onwards.

***Quality Standard 5: The VAWP has a framework in place for measuring its performance and progress towards achieving its agreed outcomes. Clear governance and reporting arrangements should also be in place to ensure that the Partnership is held to account for achieving its outcomes by an appropriate thematic group within the CPP.***

Of the local authority areas that submitted a QS data return, 24% reported that they meet this Quality Standard, 36% said they partly meet it and 40% reported not meeting it at all. The majority of local authority areas that reported not meeting or only partly meeting this standard, noted that they planned to put a performance management framework in place in the coming year, with most noting that they would adopt the Equally Safe Performance Framework.

***Quality Standard 6: The VAWP has a designated person who is responsible for coordinating its core activities and contributing to the work of the National VAW Network.***

Of the local authority areas that submitted a QS data return, 68% reported that they meet this Quality Standard, 24% said they partly meet it and 8% reported not meeting it at all as there is no designated person responsible for the VAW Partnership. It was noted that for some VAW Partnerships, though they have a co-ordinator who participates in the national network where possible, it is not their primary remit.

***Quality Standard 7: The VAWP has undertaken a self-assessment of its partnership in the last 3 years using the VAW Partnership Self-Assessment Checklist and developed an improvement plan in response to the strengths and areas for improvement identified by its members.***

Of the local authority areas that submitted a QS data return, 60% reported that they meet this Quality Standard, 12% reported that they partly meet it and 28% reported not meeting it at all as no self-assessment had been undertaken within the last three years.

***Quality Standard 8: The VAWP has clear strategic links with other relevant thematic partnerships/groups within the CPP that are working towards shared outcomes. These may include Public Protection Committees, Health and Social Care IJBs, Community Safety Partnerships, Community Justice Partnerships, Alcohol and Drug Partnerships and Equality Groups.***

Of the local authority areas that submitted a QS data return, 60% reported that they meet this Quality Standard, 36% reported that they partly meet it and 4% reported that they did not meet it at all as they had no clear or active links with relevant partners within the CPP.

## **5.2 Examples of Good Practice**

The Quality Standards data returns highlighted a number of examples of good practice that are happening in local authority areas across Scotland in relation to effective multi-agency partnership working. These include:

- **Strong multi-agency partnership working between the third sector and public sector**  
Stirling VAW Partnership reports having strong engagement from key third sector and public sector partners, as well as active Elected Member support and attendance at Partnership meetings. The Partnership is currently coordinated by Stirling Council and Chaired by Stirling Women's Aid and reports having consistently strong contribution at a management level from local third sector partners working with women and children experiencing all forms VAWG, both at a Partnership level and within related sub group or project work.

In addition, Scottish Borders' VAW Partnership now has representatives from Survivors Unite as core members of their VAW Delivery Group – this is a new development which enables survivors to be involved in the delivery of Equally Safe.

- **Adopting a strategic approach to preventing and eradicating VAWG across the local authority area**  
Following an extensive strategic assessment of VAWG that Glasgow VAW Partnership undertook in 2017, the Partnership has developed a strategic plan to tackle VAWG across the city. A specific working group has been established to help progress the plan in line with the latest version of Equally Safe and the corresponding delivery plan. Glasgow VAW Partnership has also incorporated the learning from recent research conducted by Wise Women, which collated women's experiences of VAWG services into their new strategic plan to help ensure that services better meet the needs of women and children affected by VAWG.

- **Strong links and collaboration between VAW Partnerships and other key strategic partnerships and committees**

South Ayrshire VAW Partnership reports having strong relationships with other strategic partnerships working in their area, including Child and Adult Protection Committees. This collaborative working has led to the establishment of a Sexual Exploitation Joint Action Group in South Ayrshire, which has developed its own strategy and outcomes framework and reports to the VAW Partnership, South Ayrshire Child and Adult Protection Committees and South Ayrshire Community Safety Partnership. South Ayrshire VAW Partnership also report being an active member of Equally Safe Ayrshire – a Pan-Ayrshire group that has been established to look at shared areas of work. The next stage for Equally Safe Ayrshire will be to develop a strategic action plan which will link in with each of the three Ayrshire VAW action plans. The work of the VAW Multi-Agency Partnership is updated at the NHS Ayrshire & Arran GBV Steering Group.

### **5.3 Looking Ahead**

A number of local authority areas identified activities they would undertake over the next year to ensure a multi-agency approach is taken to implementing Equally Safe. These included:

- Undertaking a self-assessment of their VAW Partnership and developing an improvement plan;
- Encouraging senior buy-in from key third sector and public sector organisations in the VAW Partnership's work;
- Strengthening/ formalising links with other key local strategic partnerships working to shared outcomes, including Health and Social Care Partnerships, Community Safety Partnerships and Community Justice Partnerships;
- Working to ensure that tackling gender inequality and VAWG is recognised as a strategic priority by elected members and highlighted in relevant strategic plans;

If any VAW Partnerships would like support with undertaking these tasks, please contact the Improvement Service.

## **PART 2: EQUALLY SAFE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

### **Background**

This section of the report highlights the key learning from the Equally Safe Performance Framework data returns that were received from local authority areas across Scotland.

The Equally Safe Performance Framework aims to measure the impact that the work taking place locally to implement Equally Safe is having on the lives of women and children affected by VAWG. As Equally Safe recognises, robust systems are not currently in place to capture all the data needed in order to understand the progress that is being made to implement Equally Safe at a local level and therefore a key aim of the Equally Safe Performance Framework in the short-term is to help identify where there are gaps in data. It is hoped that the learning outlined in this section of the report will help inform and improve the type of data that is collected going forward, and identify areas where more resources may be required.

This section of the report is based on the 27 Performance Framework data returns that the Improvement Service received as of the 30th September 2018. Of the five local authority areas that did not submit any data by this date: one has reported they are still in the process of finalising their data returns and hope to submit it in the near future; two have requested to wait until 2019 due to the fact that their VAW Partnership did not have the capacity to collect this information in 2017/18 and no response was received from one local authority area. A joint data return was submitted for the East Lothian and Midlothian local authority areas as they have one VAW Partnership that works across their two local authority areas.

### **Key Findings**

Despite a significant amount of performance data being submitted by local authority areas, key findings from the data return included:

- In the main, the type and level of data requested in the Equally Safe Performance Framework is not currently being collected by third sector or public sector partners working to tackle VAWG in their local authority area, or it is being collected but not in a way that can easily be collated and reported on.
- There are particular gaps in the outcome data that organisations collect, with very few organisations currently appearing to have systems in place to measure and report on improvements in the levels of safety and wellbeing of the women and children they support.
- There appears to be an appetite from organisations to improve their data collection systems in future years, with a number of local authority areas sharing plans for the steps they aim to put in place to collect the performance data requested in future years. A number of organisations also noted that, while it is currently difficult for them to collect and/ or report on some of the indicators included in the Equally Safe Performance Framework, there will be upcoming opportunities for them to review their databases which will make this much easier to do.

## Equally Safe Performance Indicators – Detailed Findings

### ***Performance Indicator 1: Funding invested in preventing and eradicating VAWG at a local level***

This measure aims to help VAW Partnerships to understand the total level of investment that is being made to prevent and eradicate VAWG at a local level, and monitor any shifts in investment over time. It also aims to enable VAW Partnerships to measure and demonstrate additional resources that members of the VAWP are leveraging into the local authority area, through sources such as independent funders.

While all local authority areas were able to provide some data in relation to this indicator, most noted that the figures they provided under-represented the total amount of funding being invested in tackling VAWG across the local authority area. A number of reasons were given for this, including:

- Some third sector partner organisations being reluctant to share funding information as it is seen as commercially sensitive.
- Some public sector partner organisations finding it difficult to identify the parts of their budget being directed towards delivering VAWG related activities, and those going to core work.
- Challenges quantifying funding associated with carrying out routine training or work being undertaken as part of wider support.

In terms of how partners could be supported to better collect information on this indicator in future years, VAW Partnerships suggested it would be useful to:

- Have a more detailed template to collect information on this indicator, which could allow funding information to be recorded for each VAWG service that exists in the local authority area. It was noted that this financial information could also be useful in helping to identify which services are under-resourced or are at risk of their funding coming to an end.
- Have more clarity on what organisations should provide VAW Partnerships with in relation to this indicator. Specifically, a number of local authority areas highlighted it would be useful for the Performance Framework guidance to include more detail on whether VAWG services delivered by public sector partners such as Criminal Justice Social Work, Police Scotland and the NHS should be included under this indicator.

Examples of good practice identified in relation to this indicator include:

- Fife VAW Partnership is engaged in resource discussions with partner agencies on an ongoing basis. They reported that the inclusion of this indicator in the Equally Safe Quality Standards and Performance Framework has encouraged the development of a more comprehensive and specific system to collate information from specialist services. Partner agencies shared their financial information knowing the detail would not be shared inappropriately without their permission.

## **Performance Indicator 2: No of referrals to specialist VAWG support services**

This measure aims to help VAW Partnerships to understand the progress that is being made towards the following short-term outcome:

- *Women and children affected by violence are identified at an early stage*

By collecting data on this indicator, the Equally Safe Performance Framework aims to help VAW Partnerships to identify the extent to which non-specialist services are identifying women and children affected by VAWG and referring them to services where they can access specialist support. It also aims to support specialist service providers to measure and demonstrate the level of demand for their services.

While all local authority areas were able to provide some data in relation to this indicator, and a small number of local authorities were able to provide a significant amount of data, the majority of VAW Partnerships reported being unable to break the number of referrals down by the categories requested in the reporting template. Specifically, a number of VAW Partnerships reported challenges in being able to break the data down by:

- Age - with a number of VAW Partnerships reporting that their partner organisations were not able to break referrals down by the age brackets listed, either because they did not record the age of the clients they worked with or because it was not recorded in a way that could easily be reported on. Additionally, a number of partners noted that they could break data down by whether they were by providing a service for children or adults, but were unable to report on whether services were for young women; and
- Repeat / New referrals – with a number of VAW Partnerships reporting that their partner organisations did not record whether the women and children they were supporting were ‘new’ or ‘repeat’ clients or did not record this in a way that could easily be reported on. Additionally, some partners queried the value of collecting this information.

Other issues/ barriers identified in relation to providing data on this performance indicator included:

- In some local authority areas, the source of a high number of referrals was recorded as ‘other’. It may be worth exploring whether this is because key referral agencies are missing from the reporting template and/ or whether some organisations are selecting ‘other’ when the referral source has not been recorded.
- A number of service providers highlighted in their returns that the women and children they work with have often experienced multiple types of VAWG for which they are seeking support, so it can be challenging to record numbers of referrals by the type of abuse experience. More guidance was requested on how this information should be recorded.
- The existing reporting template only allows organisations to provide information on ‘new’ or ‘repeat’ referrals but does not allow organisations to record information on existing clients they are working with. It was noted that services often work with clients for multiple years and that without a way to record this information, this performance indicator under-represents the demand for services.

***Performance Indicator 3: Average length of time women and children affected by VAWG need to wait to access specialist support services***

This measure aims to help VAW Partnerships to understand the progress that is being made towards the following short-term outcome:

- *Women and children affected by violence are identified at an early stage.*

By collecting data on this indicator, the Equally Safe Performance Framework aims to help VAW Partnerships to understand the length of time that women and children need to wait to access specialist support at a local level, and consequently how responsive services are to women and children's needs. This will help VAW Partnerships to identify the extent to which there may be unmet demand for specific services (indicated through long waiting times) and identify how this can be addressed.

A significant number of local authority areas reported in their data return that the local services operating in their area did not have waiting lists, so there was no data to report in relation to this indicator. Where local authority areas did provide data in relation to this indicator, they noted that the figures provided may under-represent waiting times for a number of reasons including:

- That while women and children may need to wait to access particular programmes or types of support, specialist VAWG services will always provide some level of support to them while they are waiting which may skew the figures in relation to this indicator; and
- Different organisations/ services may have different wait times, ranging from zero days to several months and reporting on waiting time as an average, may make it appear that all women and children are able to access the support they need sooner than is actually the case.

Feedback from VAW Partnerships suggests that this is an important indicator to collect information on but that more support may be required on the most meaningful way to do this.

***Performance Indicator 4 & 5: No of referrals to specialist perpetrator interventions and % of those referrals who successfully complete the intervention***

These measures aim to help VAW Partnerships to understand the progress that is being made towards achieving the following medium-term outcome:

- *Perpetrators are sanctioned/held to account for their behaviours.*

By collecting data on this indicator, the Equally Safe Performance Framework aims to help VAW Partnerships to identify the extent to which processes and interventions are in place at a local level to identify perpetrators of VAWG and to both hold them account for and support them to change their negative behaviours.

A quarter of VAW Partnerships reported having no perpetrator interventions in place in their local authority area, so did not provide any data in relation to this indicator beyond that. However, a number of those areas noted that they were hoping to implement perpetrator interventions in the future and would be able to provide performance data on these indicators, when the interventions were in place.

Of the local authority areas that reported having perpetrator interventions in place, the vast majority were able to provide data on the number of referrals to services and the number of those referrals that went on to complete interventions. However, organisations noted a number of challenges in using the number of referrals to calculate the percentage of completers, including:

- Referrals to perpetrator interventions do not always result in a perpetrator starting an intervention as they may not meet the eligibility criteria for the intervention, or there may not be space on it. For this reason, it was suggested that it may be more meaningful to calculate completion rates based on the number of perpetrators who start an intervention rather than the number of people who are referred to it; and
- Some perpetrator programmes (including the Caledonian System) take place over multiple financial years meaning that the number of people who are recorded as being referred to/ starting an intervention in one reporting period may not be the same people who complete it in that period.

In terms of how partners could be supported to better collect information on this indicator in future years, VAW Partnerships suggested it would be useful to adapt the reporting template to allow partners to:

- Record information on numbers of referrals, number of starters and number of completers. It was suggested that partners could also be prompted to use the comments box to provide any additional information about the reasons for non-completion if known;
- Collect information on other types of perpetrator interventions, including community interventions for sex offenders; and
- Record information on the numbers of women and children who also receive support through perpetrator programmes (such as the Caledonian System)

Given the increased number of local authority areas that will be delivering the Caledonian System from 2018/19 onwards, a number of partners noted that it would be useful if the performance data requested in the Equally Safe Performance Framework could align with the performance data being requested for the Caledonian System where possible.

***Performance Indicator 6 & 7: % of women and children who report feeling safer and having increased wellbeing as a result of the specialist support they have received***

This measure aims to help VAW Partnerships to understand the progress that is being made towards the following medium-term outcomes:

- *Women and children's safety needs are met; and*
- *Women and children's wider wellbeing needs are met*

By collecting data on this indicator, the Equally Safe Performance Framework aims to help VAW Partnerships to understand whether the work taking place to implement Equally Safe in their local area is having a positive impact on women and children's levels of safety and wellbeing. It is recognised in the guidance for the Equally Safe Quality Standards and Performance Framework that while this indicator is important in helping service providers to understand whether women and children feel safer and have increased wellbeing as a result of the support they receive, it does not

enable service providers to understand or report on the internal or external factors that impact on these outcomes. For this reason, the guidance recommends that organisations may also want to supplement the information collected through this indicator with qualitative data.

Of all the seven indicators included in the Equally Safe Performance Framework, local authorities reported having the most challenges in providing data on these two outcome indicators, with a number of VAW Partnerships being unable to provide any data on either of these two indicators. Where VAW Partnerships were able to provide data in relation to these indicators, the majority were only able to provide data in relation to increased feelings of safety. A number of reasons were given for challenges in reporting on increased levels of safety and wellbeing, including:

- A large number of organisations reported that while they assess service users' feelings of safety and wellbeing when they first engage with a service and use that information to plan their programme of support, many women and children exit a service without undertaking a final assessment, preventing organisations from reporting on 'distance travelled';
- Some organisations noted that all outcome information is recorded anonymously, meaning that they cannot measure or report on improvements in outcomes of individual service users;
- Some organisations reported that as they are not required to report on these outcome indicators to their funders (including the Scottish Government) they do not collect this information;
- A small number of organisations also noted that while they don't specifically ask the women and children who engage with their services about their feelings of safety and wellbeing, they assume that all the women and children they support will feel safer and have increased wellbeing through accessing their services.

In terms of how partners could be supported to better collect information on these indicators in future years, VAW Partnerships suggested it would be useful to:

- Provide more guidance, and where possible tools, on how to measure improvements in feelings of safety and wellbeing in robust and consistent way; and
- Provide opportunities for organisations to share case studies as well as performance data to demonstrate the impact of services of women's feelings of safety and wellbeing, and the internal and external factors that impact on this.