

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE MULTI-AGENCY GROUP ON COMMERCIAL  
SEXUAL EXPLOITATION  
THURSDAY 7 NOVEMBER 2019**

**Present:**

Saira Kapasi (*Co-Chair*), VAW Justice, Scottish Government  
Rory Hamilton, Police Scotland  
Yvonne Wilson, SACRO  
Kim McGuigan, COSLA  
Kirsti Hay, Violence Against Women Partnership Network  
Katie Cosgrove, NHS Health Scotland  
Roseann Cameron, Routes Out  
Linda Thompson, Women's Support Project  
Emma Ritch, Engender  
Anna Donald, Human Trafficking, Scottish Government  
Kim McLaren, VAW Justice, Scottish Government  
Kirstin McPhee, VAW Equalities, Scottish Government  
Leonie Stone, VAW Equalities, Scottish Government

**Apologies:**

Trevor Owen (*Co-Chair*), VAW Equalities, Scottish Government  
Katie Brown, Equally Safe, Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA)  
Sandy Brindley, Rape Crisis Scotland  
Rachel Tatler, Sexual Health and Blood Borne Virus Framework, Scottish Government  
Francois Roos, Child Protection, Scottish Government  
Stine Nielson, Child Protection, Scottish Government  
Dr Alison Scott, NHS Lothian  
Eilidh Dickson, Engender  
Alison Atkins, Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal (COPFS)  
Moira Mckinnon, Chair of the National Action Group on Child Sexual Exploitation  
Bronagh Andrew, TARA

**1. Welcome and apologies**

Everyone welcomed to the meeting and apologies noted. Special welcome made to Kim McGuigan from COSLA and Yvonne Wilson from SACRO joining for their first meeting.

**2. Minutes of previous meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed with a request that the suggestion of regional workshops for the workplan in the discussion is added.

ACTION: Secretariat to add this to minutes of 28 May.

**3. General update**

A general update was provided from Scottish Government officials on the progress of the Equally Safe Joint Strategic Board and in particular matters arising from the meeting of 29<sup>th</sup> October 2019.

Engender provided an update on the National Advisory Council on Women and Girls, which has been tasked to present recommendations to the First Minister each year for three years. An accountability day was held for the second year of these recommendations on 6 November 2019 enabling academics and women's organisations to check for progress from the Scottish Government against recommendations. Areas included:

- Forensic medical services
- Misogynistic harassment
- Legal aid and advocacy for survivors of men's violence

The notes of this meeting will be published on the National Advisory Council's webpages on One Scotland in the next few weeks.

<https://onescotland.org/equality-themes/advisory-council-women-girls/>

The next session of the Advisory Council will focus on policy coherence.

#### **4. Scottish Government Funding – ‘Addressing prostitution and reducing the harms associated with prostitution’.**

Funding has been identified to support initiatives to reduce harm and support women to exit. Application and assessment will be managed by an independent third party. Applicants will be required to demonstrate that their bid is in line with a criteria including adopting an understanding of prostitution as set out in Equally Safe. The criteria is being refined and secretariat will alert members to any developments with this proposed fund.

Kirsti offered to share this information with the Violence Against Women Partnership Network as their representative.

Officials addressed concerns raised by members on the gender competence of the assessment. An independent third party assesses the Equally Safe Violence Against Women and Girls Fund and the final assessment panel will include Scottish Government officials with Equally Safe policy experience. The assessment process will depend on the number of applications received. Members of this multi-agency group may potentially bid for funds are not invited to take part in the assessment panel due to a conflict of interest.

Members recommended that any successful bids be aligned to service improvement rather than training requests and that applications be required to attach a Violence Against Women Partnership to support the project. In addition, NHS Scotland commented that it would be helpful to ensure that the applicant can evidence that the project has directly impacted on women who have engaged with the service. This would help minimize the bids for training.

If members have further recommendations they should email them to Kim McLaren.

## **5. Scottish Government's commitment to consult on:**

- **Scotland's approach to challenging men's demand for prostitution - recognising it as a form of violence against women;**
- **reducing the harms associated with prostitution; and**
- **supporting women to exit**

The Scottish Government's programme for government commits to a national consultation on challenging men's demand for prostitution. Discussions on prostitution are challenging but there is common ground to be found on keeping women safe despite the polarity of views.

An engagement plan is being developed to help engage the full range of views. Members were asked to support the drafting of the consultation and officials would be engaging early on an individual basis and then with the Group once a draft is in a more polished state.

The Joint Strategic Board recommended including questions on the following areas:

- decriminalisation of women
- primary prevention and wider societal position
- the dynamics of human trafficking and organised crime
- social security and impact of a potential change in government

The consultation will need to be a manageable size but cover wider topics than challenging men's demand, recognising that the issue is complex. The aim is to provide a helpful basis to encourage constructive discussion on challenging demand, identifying inconsistency of practice across Scotland and the drivers to entering prostitution which will support the Scottish Government's development of policy in this area.

Engender recommended that the consultation offer organisations that do not specialise in prostitution but have regular interaction with women engaged in prostitution, e.g. housing associations or homelessness organisations, to give their views on how austerity has impacted the women they work with.

Any members with further recommendations are asked to email Kim McLaren.

## **6. Workplan**

Members repeated recommendations for a series of regional workshops to develop the workplan, along with suggestions for dedicated facilitators for one day or half day sessions and that the new workplan be more outcome focussed.

Regional workshops would help to address geographical and demographic challenges, similar to the approach for the development of the Human Trafficking strategy. Members suggested that the Secretariat could approach both the membership of this group and local VAWPs for help in coordinating, facilitating, arranging venues and suggesting attendees. They recommended a minimum of

three events, with a focus on prostitution rather than wider CSE as this will help to steer focussed discussions.

The workplan should recognise all forms of CSE but the group reflected on whether one element of CSE is taken at a time, recognising that CSE encompasses a range of offences. Prostitution was favoured as the first item for the plan to consider. However, discussion should include raising awareness the importance of challenging pornography, and of the links between prostitution and human trafficking.

Katie Cosgrove noted that NHS Health Scotland will hold a joint conference organised by GCC Women's Services, Health Scotland & the Women's Support Project on 3 March 2020 in the Trades Hall in Glasgow: 'Purchasing Power – men who buy sex.' Link below. This provides an opportunity to link with alcohol and drug partnerships, housing, DWP, mental health services, all of which experience the consequences of CSE but whose national plans make no mention of violence against women and girls and its impact on their areas. This event and the workplan could provide information on what the needs of women involved in prostitution are for different sectors, and to link this into other policy and service delivery design at national and local level.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/purchasing-power-men-who-buy-sex-tickets-91113642357>

**ACTION:** Justice VAWG and Secretariat to look into setting up regional workshops in January/February 2020 to tie into the consultation on challenging demand.

## **7. Fact-finding visit to Sweden to investigate the Nordic model, where the purchase of sex has been criminalised**

Police Scotland gave an update on the presentation on the Nordic model in Sweden, which covered challenges in implementation and legislation. They estimated that 1,000-2,000 women are involved in prostitution in Sweden, the vast majority of whom are non-Swedish. Contrast this with Germany where there are around 400,000 women involved in prostitution, 98% of whom are trafficked and migrants. This has particular relevance given the increase of trafficking victims into the UK. There were substantial costs and resistance from police upon implementation. Criminalisation of purchase has resulted in means-tested fines but very few appearances in court. There are four hubs in Sweden set up to deal with prostitution and human trafficking together.

Engender gave an update from a colleague on the visit. There has never been a prison sentence, most perpetrators avoid court altogether so privacy is a key concern of theirs. There was no mention of routes into prostitution. Attitude change is seen as an indicator of success rather than prosecution numbers. No women buyers have been found so far. Implementation and investment in resourcing and training is key, and Swedish officials see the recent French law as an improvement on their own as it is more comprehensive. There has also been a growth in "sugar dating" that they are struggling to apply the law to. Their officials are considering adoption of the Norwegian extraterritoriality offence to prevent men buying sex abroad. In Sweden fines are used a sanction to direct behaviour, rather than a purely punitive measure, but views of fines may differ in Scotland.

ACTION: Engender representative to circulate their notes on the visit to group members and create a public blog of the key points.

## **8. AOB**

None

## **9. Next meeting**

The next meeting of the Group will be arranged by the Secretariat.

Secretariat, Scottish Government  
14 November 2019