



Equally Safe

Year Three Update Report

November 2020



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
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Equally Safe

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November 2020

“As First Minister, I want to ensure that Scotland leads the way, that the generations of women and girls that come after me grow up with equal opportunities in a truly equal society.”

Nicola Sturgeon, First Minister of Scotland (January 2020¹)

1 <https://www.gov.scot/news/first-minister-welcomes-progress-on-equality/>

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Foreword

We are pleased to present the Year 3 report for Equally Safe, our strategy to prevent and eradicate violence against women and girls, which contains details of important milestones and achievements over the lifetime of the strategy. It reflects progress and challenges over the last year, much of which has taken place in the unprecedented climate of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Equally Safe was originally developed by the Scottish Government and COSLA in association with a wide range of partners from public and third sector organisations and was first published in June 2014, with an updated version published in March 2016. The strategy provides an overarching framework for change and outlines our vision for a Scotland in which every woman and girl is safe and free from gender based violence in all its forms. In order to help us implement this vision, we published our Equally Safe delivery plan in November 2017 which promotes a collaborative approach that recognises the different roles and expertise of organisations from the public, private and third sectors. The delivery plan contains a clear outcomes framework with indicators to demonstrate progress nationally and locally towards preventing and reducing this violence and tackling the pervasive inequalities that create the conditions for it. There has been significant activity and progress in relation to a number of actions contained within the Delivery Plan and some key pieces of work are highlighted within this report.

However, we are clear that there remains much to do if we are to realise our ambition to make Scotland truly Equally Safe. There is no doubt that the COVID-19 pandemic and the economic and social harms caused has highlighted the importance of continuing to work together to ensure women and children receive the crucial support that they need and that perpetrators of this violence are held to account.

This strategy demands major and sustained change but we firmly believe that, by continuing to work together to deliver on our shared commitments, we can realise our ambition of preventing and eradicating violence against women and girls. We can create a Scotland to be proud of, where all of our citizens are Equally Safe and violence against women and girls is consigned to history.



Christina McKelvie

Christina McKelvie MSP
Minister for Older People
and Equalities



K. Parry

Councillor Kelly Parry
Community Wellbeing
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Introduction and Overview

Introduction and Overview

Violence against women and girls is a fundamental violation of human rights. It has no place in our vision for a safe, strong and successful Scotland. Equally Safe is Scotland's Strategy to prevent and eradicate violence against women and girls (alternatively known as gender based violence). For the purposes of the strategy and this report, violence against women and girls includes (but is not limited to):

- physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family (including children and young people), within the general community or in institutions, including domestic abuse, rape, and incest;
- sexual harassment, bullying and intimidation in any public or private space, including work;
- commercial sexual exploitation, including prostitution, lap dancing, stripping, pornography and trafficking;
- child sexual abuse, including familial sexual abuse, child sexual exploitation and online abuse;
- so called 'honour based' violence, including dowry related violence, female genital mutilation, forced and child marriages, and 'honour' crimes.

The gendered analysis that underpins Equally Safe recognises that women and girls are disproportionately affected by violence precisely because they are women and girls. It recognises that this violence stems from deep rooted and systemic gender inequality and the subordinate position women occupy in society in relation to men. We recognise we will not make progress unless we tackle the root causes of women's inequality, and challenge the outdated gender stereotypes and societal attitudes towards women and girls that allow gender based violence to flourish. The Equally Safe Delivery Plan contains 118 actions across four overarching priorities in order to help us do this. The actions and activities in the plan are designed to deliver against these priorities and associated objectives. This report provides an insight into our key actions and achievements over the life of the strategy.

Governance and Monitoring Progress

Governance and Monitoring Progress

When the Delivery Plan was published in November 2017, the focus of the Scottish Government and COSLA shifted to ensuring effective implementation of the actions within the Plan through collaboration between partners and key stakeholders. In order to ensure we took this forward effectively, we instituted fresh governance arrangements to identify emerging issues, drive progress, scale up participation, and maintain rigorous accountability. This has included:

- Establishing a refreshed Joint Strategic Board co-chaired at Ministerial/ Spokesperson level by the Scottish Government and COSLA. This group focuses on influencing strategic direction and identifying major emerging issues in relation to gender based violence.
- Forming a Joint Delivery Group, co-chaired at official level by the Scottish Government and COSLA. Its main focus will be to ensure that every agency and organisation are delivering their commitments under the Delivery Plan.
- Establishment of an Experience Expert Panel, enabling us to build on learning from our pilot participation projects to ensure that survivors of gender based violence continue to influence the implementation of the plan.

A number of multi-agency groups to bring focus to specific forms of violence have been established, including on commercial sexual exploitation, Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage.

Through the life of the Delivery Plan, the Scottish Government has sought and received updates from agencies and organisations in relation to their progress against the actions and objectives within the Plan. COSLA's Community Wellbeing Board has raised awareness of the need for the adoption of a holistic response to the ambitions of Equally Safe across COSLA's Boards and will continue to track and report on all linked progress. The narrative within this report sets out key achievements against some of the actions and associated objectives over the lifetime of the strategy and delivery plan.

COVID 19 – Responding to Violence Against Women and Girls

COVID 19 – Responding to Violence Against Women and Girls

The COVID-19 pandemic, and the measures necessary to maintain public health by controlling the spread of the coronavirus, are no excuse for the perpetration of violence against women and girls (VAWG). National and local government, public bodies and the third sector worked hard to understand the impact of the pandemic on women and children and to adapt their services in an unprecedented and challenging climate. From the outset of the pandemic, tackling domestic abuse in particular has been recognised as a continued priority. Across Scotland, professionals within local authorities and other key community planning organisations worked incredibly hard to reduce risks to, and help safeguard, people within their local communities. Front line third sector organisations worked rapidly to redesign their services to ensure that women and children could continue to be supported and new referrals accepted.

Although reports and evidence suggested that initial referral rates dropped during the first few weeks of lockdown, reports from services suggest that referral rates have gradually increased in later weeks.² Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, a number of relevant impacts and risks have emerged, including greater risk of domestic abuse due to lockdown and challenges in access to safe housing, constraints in terms of safe spaces, challenges for front line services in offering support, increased risk of sexual exploitation, and perpetrators being more hidden. Justice Analytical Services (JAS) have published regular reports on the impact of COVID-19 on people experiencing domestic abuse and other forms of violence against women/girls during phases 1,2 and 3 of Scotland's routemap. The most recent update was published in November 2020.

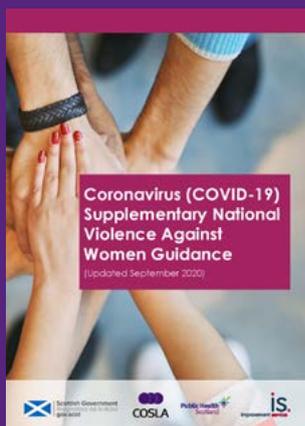
Throughout the pandemic, national and local government have instigated arrangements to help co-ordinate a **strategic and measured response** to the pandemic. The Scottish Government chairs a fortnightly catch up with victim support organisations, public bodies and local government to ensure bodies are aware of important developments across the sector and to provide a forum for discussion on how to respond to these. The Equally Safe Joint Strategic Board met virtually on 22 April to discuss the Covid-19 response.

Guidance has been produced. Although measures necessary to prevent the spread of the virus were introduced, these rules have not prevented women and children leaving their home to escape domestic abuse. Guidance³ was intended to highlight that advice or rules do not prevent anyone from taking measures to escape or keep themselves safe from domestic abuse.

2 <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-domestic-abuse-forms-violence-against-women-girls-during-phases-1-2-3-scotlands-route-map-22-11-august-2020/pages/3/>

3 <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-domestic-abuse/pages/overview/>

Coronavirus Supplementary National Violence Against Women Guidance



At the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic, COSLA Leaders instructed the development of Supplementary National Violence Against Women Guidance for local authorities and other key community planning partners. The guidance aims to help ensure that a sustainable, joined-up approach to safeguarding the needs of women, children and young people experiencing VAWG during COVID-19 is embedded at a local strategic level. It is intended to support the strong leadership already being demonstrated by Local Government and other key community planning partners across Scotland in ensuring effective protection and provision of support for people experiencing VAWG. The Guidance was published in May 2020, and updated in September 2020, by the Scottish Government and COSLA with support from Public Health Scotland and the Improvement Service.

A Covid-19 **Children and Families** Collective Leadership Group involving senior leaders across the children's sector was established in May to review intelligence about the impacts on children, young people and families and to provide local and national leadership in delivering a response. The intelligence includes weekly data reports from the 32 Chief Officer Groups and Police Scotland and broader evidence reports. The Leadership Group held a 'deep dive' on domestic abuse and children and young people in June involving key stakeholders, and officials have formed a cross-governmental domestic abuse group to consider explore and take forward subsequent recommendations. On 31 March, the Scottish Government issued supplementary [National Child Protection Guidance](#). This was in recognition of the likelihood of a rise in child protection concerns due to the impacts of the pandemic on families including increased likelihood of domestic abuse. We also know that child contact presented an issue for many families and we have therefore reflected current guidance and advice on Scotland's Parentclub website.⁴

The Scottish Government and COSLA have refocused work on **commercial sexual exploitation** (CSE) to support those at risk. This includes raising awareness of the needs of women engaged in CSE and ensuring that professional working in housing, health and mental health services are able to identify and respond to women engaged in CSE in an effective way, including signposting them to specialist

⁴ <https://www.parentclub.scot/articles/staying-safe-during-coronavirus>

support services where available. Officials have engaged with the Encompass Network to monitor the situation on the ground, and COSLA have established a short life working group to bring together key partners to explore how Scotland can better support vulnerable women engaged in CSE, including support for women, where they seek it, to exit from CSE.

Work has been taken forward to ensure women and children's access to **housing**. Already a leading cause of homelessness in Scotland, we are cognisant of the increased vulnerability of women and children living with an abuser. Scottish Women's Aid and the Chartered Institute for Housing Scotland published guidance⁵ for social landlords on housing, domestic abuse and Covid-19 to help ensure social landlords respond in an informed way to domestic abuse in order to prevent women's and children's homelessness; support victims of domestic abuse effectively; and hold perpetrators to account. The Scottish Government and COSLA wrote in May⁶ to all Local Authorities Chief Housing officers, Chief Executives of Registered Social Landlords and the Scottish Association of Landlords to highlight the importance of landlords using best endeavours to bring empty properties (voids) back into use where they can safely do so and also the importance of developing and reviewing domestic abuse housing policies to help support victims of domestic abuse both during and after the pandemic. An updated Ending Homelessness Together Action Plan⁷ has been published with a renewed focus on tackling domestic abuse, and work continues to develop a domestic abuse prevention pathway.

Women who have **no recourse to public funds** (NRPF) are particularly vulnerable as access to support is limited. To provide guidance for local decision-makers on supporting people in this category, COSLA have published a framework⁸ to support local authorities and their partners in local decision making. Local authorities have statutory safeguarding duties towards all people in Scotland, regardless of their immigration status. The updated homelessness action plan includes commitments to develop and implement human rights-based accommodation pathways for women and children with no recourse to public funds who are experiencing domestic abuse; explore alternative routes through which to provide accommodation to people with no recourse to public funds; and extend funding for projects that provide advocacy

5 <http://www.cih.org/resources/PDF/Policy%20free%20download%20pdfs/CV19%20Scotland%20Domestic%20Abuse%20guidance.pdf>

6 <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-joint-letter-to-housing-sector-on-voids-processing/>

7 <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/strategy-plan/2020/10/ending-homelessness-together-updated-action-plan-october-2020/documents/ending-homelessness-together-updated-action-plan-october-2020/ending-homelessness-together-updated-action-plan-october-2020/govscot%3Adocument/ending-homelessness-together-updated-action-plan-october-2020.pdf?forceDownload=true>

8 http://www.migrationscotland.org.uk/uploads/Guidance%20Covid%2019%20Supporting%20People%20with%20NRPF%20200420_0.pdf

and legal advice to destitute asylum seekers and people with no recourse to public funds.

To ensure services were equipped to respond and offer crucial help and support to women and children affected by gender based violence, **additional funding** has been allocated. At the end of March, over £1.5 million was allocated to Scottish Women's Aid, ASSIST and Rape Crisis Scotland from the Scottish Government's immediate priorities fund to ensure they could continue to provide much needed support to survivors and adapt service provision to take into account the restrictions.⁹ £60,000 was provided to the Encompass Network to enable Covid-focussed services for destitution support, trauma counselling, advocacy and to provide a bridge to national mainstream support. The Network established themselves as a central point for updated information for women, and staff in key services. At the end of September, an additional £4.25m in funding was also announced to help projects and services across Scotland respond to the increase in demand for services during the pandemic.¹⁰

Examples of good practice locally

- Across **Scotland**, local Cedar (Children Experiencing Domestic Abuse Recovery) projects have been unable to offer their regular model of in-person group work. During spring and summer 2020, Cedar Projects engaged with service users to identify what support was required by families and what support could be offered within the restrictions. In response to this feedback, coordinators began offering a suite of virtual support, including phone and virtual 1-1 support for mothers and children, virtual wellbeing support groups for different age ranges of children, helped mothers access emergency support around food, finances and the courts, and provided activity/craft packs for children, developed virtual activities and resources for mothers and children to complete, and provided wellbeing packs for mothers. While this support focused on wellbeing, mental health and practical support, rather than therapeutic recovery, it remained based on the ethos of the Cedar model by continuing to be trauma informed, focused on supporting mothers to support their children, and provided weekly structured support for families where required. Evaluation from projects has been positive in terms of the impact on children and their families.



9 <https://news.gov.scot/news/tackling-violence-against-women-and-girls-during-covid-19>

10 <https://news.gov.scot/news/tackling-violence-against-women-and-girls-2>

- **Fife** Council Housing Services have a close working relationship with Fife Women's Aid. At the start of lockdown it was evident that there would be a significant pressure on women living with abusive partners and increased pressure on Women's Aid refuge. In response to this, the Council quickly identified six additional properties to be managed by Women's Aid. Cedar, Women's Aid and Educational Psychology also worked closely together to support schools prepare for children returning after living with domestic abuse during lockdown. This included preparing and disseminating information about what to look out for, highlighting available support services and signposting to other support resources. The Council also supported negotiations to enable specialist services to safely link with schools.
- In order to ensure that women experiencing domestic abuse who are at the highest risk of harm continued to receive high quality support during the pandemic, local authorities have moved their Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) meetings from face-to-face to virtual meetings. Consultation with professionals across **Inverclyde** has highlighted that this shift has allowed action planning for high risk victims to take place more regularly and has supported multi-agency partners to work more effectively and efficiently together to meet women and children's safety needs. Within **Glasgow**, processes were put in place to support Education Services to provide immediate feedback to schools following MARAC to ensure a Hub Education place was offered to children who had been noted as aligned to either the client or the perpetrator.
- Throughout the pandemic, NHS **Ayrshire & Arran** have continued to help mitigate the effects of VAWG by engaging and supporting those affected by abuse who engage with local health services. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, NHS Ayrshire & Arran has developed a suite of resources to support self-isolation for those at risk of domestic abuse as well as guidance and resources to support staff to identify and respond effectively to domestic abuse and other forms of VAWG during periods where women and children are at heightened risk locally.
- Local authorities have also supported communication and awareness raising activities during the pandemic. For example, **Western Isles** VAW Partnership ran a social media and community engagement campaign during lockdown to ensure women were aware of the local and national support services available to them during this period of heightened risk, and the pathways to accessing the services.

Looking forward

Covid-19 will be with us for some time to come, and the population will continue to feel the economic and social impact. Both the Scottish Government and COSLA will continue to prioritise tackling violence against women and girls, and we will explore how future iterations of the Equally Safe strategy reflect the context of the pandemic as well as the direction of travel around recovery and renewal.

Overarching Priorities

Overarching Priorities

The following reflects progress in relation to the overarching priorities outlined in the Delivery Plan:

Human rights

- » The Scottish Government continues to support ratification of the Istanbul Convention and has liaised with the UK Government on outstanding articles, specifically on extra-territorial jurisdiction (ETJ) of offences under the Convention.
- » The Domestic Abuse Bill introduced in the Westminster Parliament will, if passed, make provision to provide Scottish courts with ETJ over the other criminal offences covered by the Convention, including assault, sexual offences committed against adult victims and stalking.
- » The Scottish Parliament has approved a Legislative Consent Motion for the relevant areas of that Bill that fall within the competence of the Scottish Parliament.
- » The National Human Rights Taskforce continues its work, including consideration of incorporation of relevant international human rights treaties such as the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The Taskforce is expected to report in March 2021.
- » Legislation on incorporating the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) has been introduced to Parliament. The Scottish Government's approach to tackling violence against women and girls continues to form part of our input to international human rights treaty reviews, and the Scottish Government and COSLA collaborated on a submission to the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women around VAWG and Covid-19.

Gender equality

- » A key priority remains engagement with and response to recommendations from the First Minister's National Advisory Council on Women and Girls. The latter focus of the Council has been on improving intersectional gender architecture and embedding this within policy development in Government.

Children and young people

- » We have continued to strengthen links with work in relation to Children and Families, and a cross-Directorate group focused on children, families and domestic abuse has been established in the Scottish Government to drive this forward.

- » The Children (Scotland) Bill¹¹ passed by Parliament will improve protections for victims of domestic abuse and their families, and ensure that the voice of children is heard in contact cases.

Intersectionality

- » We understand that women and children have varied and complex needs and have sought to understand these through engagement with stakeholders who work with women and children in BME and LGBTI communities.
- » We have also scaled up work in respect of women with learning disabilities and have created a working group in the Scottish Government in recognition of the fact that disabled women and girls are at greater risk of violence than non-disabled women and girls and women with a learning/intellectual disability are more likely to experience sexual abuse than other disabled people.

Men and boys

- » In October 2019 the Scottish Government hosted a roundtable event to explore our policy position in respect of men as victims; as perpetrators and as allies in our fight to prevent and eradicate violence against women and girls. Learning from the event was shared with stakeholders and we have used it to help inform our approach in this area.
- » We have continued to fund services which provide support to men including the Men's Advice Line, ASSIST and SACRO's Fearfree service.
- » We also continue to fund and engage with White Ribbon Scotland to help progress initiatives to engage with men and boys to understand the crucial role they play in calling out unacceptable behaviour.

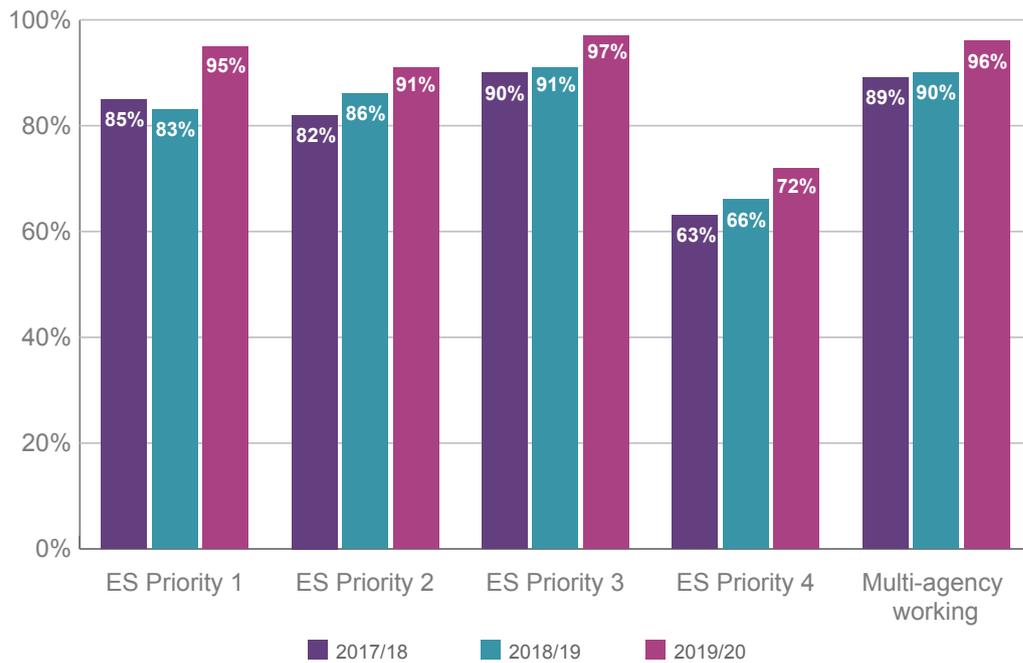
Local delivery

- » With funding from the Scottish Government, COSLA has recruited an Equally Safe Policy Co-ordinator. This post supports further focus by COSLA's leadership and implementation of Equally Safe across Local Authorities in Scotland.
- » The Scottish Government has also funded the Improvement Service (IS) to provide support to all multi-agency VAW Partnerships across Scotland to help them to measure the progress being made to implement Equally Safe at a local level and identify any areas for improvement.
- » To support this, in May 2018 the Scottish Government, COSLA and the Improvement Service published the 'Equally Safe Quality Standards and Performance Framework'. The key findings from the 2019/2020 data returns

11 <https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/112969.aspx>

are outlined in this report.¹² The following graph highlights the progress that VAW Partnerships have made in progressing the priorities set out in Equally Safe, since the publication of this framework:

3 Year Comparison % of Quality Standards 'Met' or 'Partly Met'



Improving participation of lived experience

- The Scottish Government has worked in partnership with Young Scot to launch the online resource 'That's not Ok'.¹³ The resource was developed with Rape Crisis Scotland, Scottish Women's Aid and Young Scot are hosting a series of workshops with children and young people from various different backgrounds and with lived experience, to help shape, develop and refine the content.
- Also, through the Victims' Taskforce the Scottish Government are striving to improve support, advice and information for victims of crime and their families as they interact with the Scottish criminal justice system. This taskforce has a specific gender based violence work stream led with Rape Crisis Scotland and incorporating the voice of lived experience is a crucial strand of this work.
- To help facilitate increased participation Rape Crisis Scotland has established a Survivors' Reference Group: a diverse group of survivors from across Scotland willing to share their experiences and expertise to make policy and practice better.

¹² The statistics from the Equally Safe Quality Standards and Performance Framework are based on data received from 26 local authority areas in 2018, 31 local authority areas in 2019 and 13 local authority areas in 2020

¹³ <https://young.scot/campaigns/national/thatsnotok>

Yello!

Yello! are an expert group of young people who have experienced domestic abuse and the civil courts. They are part of the Improving Justice in Child Contact project, a European Union funded partnership project across five countries seeking to enhance children's participation in decision-making. Yello! work closely with Scottish Women's Aid to advise and inform policy and practice. They had a significant positive impact on the shaping of the Children (Scotland) Bill, participating throughout the Bill's journey through Scottish Parliament to ensure MSPs were informed of their views and recommendations on how the Bill could be strengthened for other children and young people.



Key Achievements:

Priority One

Achievements in Relation to Priority One

Scottish society embraces equality and mutual respect, and rejects all forms of violence against women and girls

Objectives

- Positive gender roles are promoted
- People enjoy healthy, positive relationships
- Children and young people develop an understanding of safe, healthy and positive relationships from an early age.
- Individuals and communities recognise and challenge violent and abusive behaviour

Equally Safe prioritises primary prevention and challenges the notion that violence is inevitable or acceptable. Many of the actions that have been or are still being delivered under this priority are intended to raise awareness and challenge the existing attitudes that create the societal conditions for gender based violence to flourish. Key highlights are summarised in this chapter.

In schools

- The Scottish Government is taking forward a range of actions aimed at developing mutually respectful, responsible and confident relationships amongst children and young people. The 2019/20 Programme for Government contained a commitment to produce national guidance for schools which will set out the range of support and practical prevention and intervention measures available. Prevention and early intervention are key elements of an approach focussed on ensuring we get it right for all of our children and young people.
- A Gender based violence/sexual harassment in schools Short Life Working Group has been established to identify effective practice; identify gaps and develop a number of resources to support primary and secondary schools to address incidents of gender based violence/sexual harassment. Existing work in schools on anti-bullying as well as learning within the curriculum on safe and healthy relationships, as part of relationships, sexual health and parenthood education, will complement work towards this commitment.
- Equally Safe at School is an intervention designed to support schools to take holistic measures to prevent gender based violence and respond appropriately when it occurs by promoting gender equality hand-in hand with preventing and improving responses to gender based violence. Intervention mechanisms that have been trialled have included an assessment, an action group formed of students and staff, staff training, a review of the curriculum

and relevant policies and a young-person led initiative or campaign. The project has been piloted by Rape Crisis Scotland, with support from Zero Tolerance, in six secondary schools within 3 local authorities, enabling intervention materials and approaches to be refined. Evaluation has been completed and an online platform is under development for full roll out in 2021.

- Local Rape Crisis centres deliver an evidence-based intervention to young people in secondary schools across Scotland. From 2018-2020 they reached 42,900 young people in over 200 schools with programmes of up to 3 workshops. Prevention Workers deliver workshops modules that cover gender, consent, sexual violence and how it can be prevented, sexualisation and pornography, social media, the impact of sexual violence and how to access support. The programme aims to provide consistency in approaches to the prevention of sexual violence and contributes to Equally Safe in its aim to address the systematic inequality, attitudes and assumptions that give rise to violence and abusive behaviour. Feedback from young people continues to demonstrate high levels of agreement with the messages of the workshops and that young people self-assess as having gained knowledge and understanding in relation to sexual violence. One key aim of the Equally Safe delivery plan was to extend the programme into every local authority, and this has now been achieved with support through Scottish Government funding. Despite most schools having been unable to accommodate prevention workshops as a result of COVID-19 restrictions put in place earlier this year, prevention workers have adapted materials for remote delivery, as well as engaging with young people via social media and further developing relationships with partner organisations.
- All 32 local authorities are engaged with the Mentors in Violence Prevention programme, a peer education programme that gives young people the chance to explore and challenge the attitudes, beliefs and cultural norms that underpin gender-based violence, bullying and other forms of violence. All but three of these authorities have begun a roll out to secondary schools and sixteen local authorities now have their own trainers. Approximately 190 schools have a trained staff team who have delivered mentor training to seniors who in turn have delivered the MVP programme to younger learners.

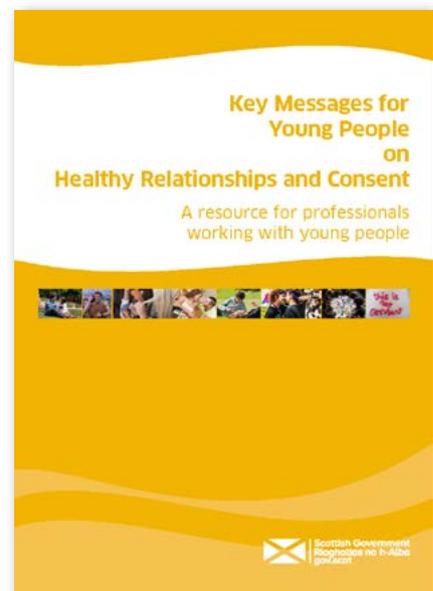
In colleges and universities

- The Scottish Government has provided additional funding to support the implementation and roll out of the Equally Safe in Higher Education toolkit Toolkit and its adaptation and adoption for the college sector. It has been adopted by a number of Higher Education Institutions across Scotland. Work in this area is driven forward by the Equally Safe in Colleges and Universities Working Group and as part of this Rape Crisis Scotland has been working

with the college and university sector, Rape Crisis centres and Women's Aid groups as well as other strategic partners to build capacity for, and facilitate the delivery of training to college and university staff. Last year training was delivered to 15 institutions by 14 Rape Crisis and Women's Aid groups, and this year the focus is on conversion to online delivery. An online learning tool for students on gender based violence was also developed and this is now being made freely available to institutions.

Support for professionals working with children and young people

- » In May 2019, the Scottish Government published a new resource for professionals to help them support young people's understanding of healthy relationships and consent. This means that wherever a young person seeks advice - whether from a teacher, a health professional or a youth worker – they should receive consistent, age appropriate information. The 'Key Messages on Healthy Relationships and Consent' have been developed as part of the Scottish Government's work on supporting positive relationships and sexual wellbeing in young people. The messages set out that relationships should be mutually respectful, consensual, positive, healthy – and enjoyable. They are applicable to all romantic relationships regardless of whether they are in same sex or mixed sex relationships.



Examples of good practice locally



- **Argyll & Bute** have developed the Council's Domestic Abuse website in 2019 and it now includes the Equally Safe plan and up to date information about services to assist victims of Domestic Abuse. Members of the VAW Partnership have ensured that their websites are up to date and reflect the work of the partnership. During the COVID-19 situation the partnership has worked with a range of groups (CPP, Caring for People) to raise awareness of domestic abuse and the services available to assist; this includes putting out information to show men concerned about their behaviour where they can get help.
- The **Glasgow** VAWP developed Equally Safe Young People, a guidance document for youth workers. A corresponding workshop was developed to support youth workers integrate this into practice which Under Pressure materials from Zero Tolerance and exercises developed to use the guidance. A training for trainers workshop was developed and a cohort of 10 facilitators were trained to support the delivery of the workshop directly to youth workers. Subsequently, through the HSCP Youth Workers Providers Training Programme workshops were then offered directly to youth workers.
- In **East Ayrshire**, a "Gender 10" resource was launched recently to promote gender equality within schools, taking on a whole school approach. The VAWP have agreed to adopt a public health approach to map current activity in line with Equally Safe, Curriculum for Excellence and the national Relationships, Sexual health and Parenthood Resource (RSHP). Ayrshire College continues to engage with East Ayrshire in training and development and more recently has partnered with the Star Centre, East Ayrshire Women's Aid and Rape Crisis to deliver staff training based on the Equally Safe First Responder Model for colleges and universities in Scotland. Working in partnership with NHS Ayrshire & Arran, they have been involved in raising awareness of gender based violence, in particular domestic abuse in LGBT+ relationships.
- In the **Scottish Borders**, there has also been a collaboration with Youth Borders to support youth workers to deliver key components of the national sexual violence programme with Scottish Borders Rape Crisis Centre providing training, support and evaluation of the collaboration. This will significantly increase the reach of the prevention work to a wider audience of young people.

- In **South Lanarkshire**, a Partnership Communications Strategy is forthcoming which includes targeted public awareness raising campaigns of identified key VAW themes; this includes public exhibitions and events, social media campaigns, surveys and posters and leaflets being displayed in all supermarkets and pharmacies across South Lanarkshire. Individual partner agencies, such as Women's Aid South Lanarkshire, Lanarkshire Rape Crisis and MVP also run local awareness raising campaigns.

Key Achievements:

Priority Two

Achievements in Relation to Priority Two

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

Objectives

- Women and girls are safe, respected and equal in our communities
- Women and men have equal access to power and resources.

We recognise that gender inequality is a root cause of violence against women and girls, and despite advances, there remains a persistent inequality between men and women. Many of the actions being delivered under this priority are intended to place women on a more equal footing with men, with access to the same power and resources. Key highlights are summarised in this chapter.

In education and training

- Education Scotland is leading on the commitment to extend and embed the Improving Gender Balance and Equalities (IGBE) Programme nationally. This commitment, to help address unconscious bias, gender stereotyping and tackle inequity, is set out in the national STEM Education and Training Strategy.¹⁴ Officers are working with schools and early learning and childcare (ELC) settings, providing professional learning and ongoing support in planning and delivering actions to tackle gender bias and improve gender imbalances in participation, subject choice and learner pathways from the early years onwards. To date, officers have engaged directly with over 50 school clusters, and have had over 2200 engagements with practitioners. The officers are also engaging with local authorities, RICs and wider local and national partners to build capacity and to ensure a coherent, joined-up approach. A self-evaluation framework designed to support schools/settings to reflect, discuss and plan for an ongoing and sustainable approach to improving gender balance for all learners has been developed and will be tested over autumn 2020.

In the workplace

- Equally Safe at Work is an employer accreditation programme developed by Close the Gap, to enable local authorities to progress work on gender equality; prevent violence against women (VAW); and better support employees who are victim-survivors. The pilot of the programme was launched in January 2019 in seven local authorities lasting 12 months,

¹⁴ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/science-technology-engineering-mathematics-education-training-strategy-scotland/>

concluding in January 2020. Throughout the pilot, qualitative and quantitative data was collected to measure whether the programme has been effective in progressing work on gender equality and VAW. Key findings from the evaluation data included line managers' improving their ability to recognise the signs of VAWG and more gender sensitive employment practices. Close the Gap have continued to support councils and have produced guidance for early adopter councils on violence against women, work and Covid-19, and are currently working on guidance to support early adopter councils to prioritise gender equality in plans for recovery and returning to work.

- » The new expanded £800,000 Scottish Government Workplace Equality Fund for 2019/2020 is continuing to focus on supporting older workers, women, disabled people, and those from a minority ethnic background. The fund now also supports women transitioning through the menopause, victims of domestic abuse and workers who are experiencing social isolation and loneliness (such as unpaid carers). It is also encouraging businesses with innovative projects to embed fair work dimensions in the workplace. A total of 22 projects, involving a range of employers, are receiving funding totalling £800,000.

Gender pay gap in median hourly earnings¹⁵



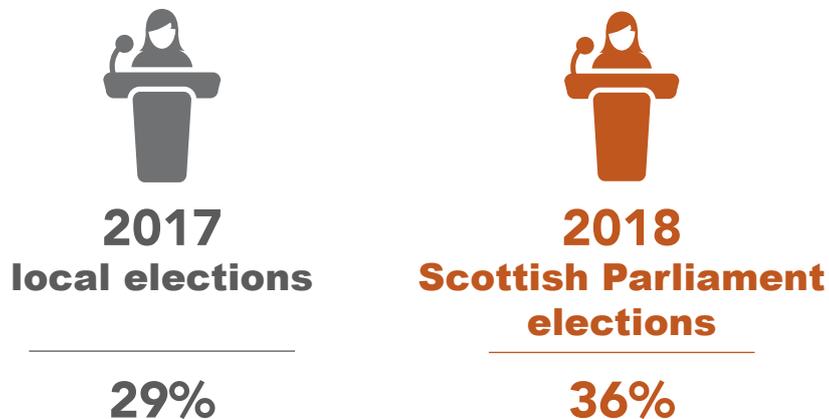
In politics

- » In November 2018, COSLA President Cllr Alison Evison hosted the 'Achieving Gender Equality in Local Politics' conference. This conference brought together women in politics and public life who are in a position to help remove barriers to participation. It provided a platform for networking and idea sharing, encouraging participants to set their own goals for how they personally can contribute to achieving positive change. Following the conference COSLA launched both a story sharing campaign and a safe online

¹⁵ Data from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings. <https://www.gov.scot/collections/labour-market-statistics/#annualsurveyofhoursandearnings>

space, 'Women in Local Government', which aims to provide peer support both for women considering entering Local Government and those already active within it. The Group has continued to meet virtually since the outbreak of Covid-19, seeking to deliver on its action plan and consider how emerging issues impact or potentially impact on gender equality in elected office. Areas of work have included raising the profile of female members, development of guidance on the menopause, peer mentoring and safety.

Proportion of MSPs and councillors elected who are women



UK Local Government Associations: Joint Statement on Civility in Public Life

The intimidation and abuse of Councillors, in person or otherwise, undermines democracy; it can prevent elected members from representing the communities they serve, prevent individuals from standing for election and undermine public trust in democratic processes. These harmful behaviours, whether occurring towards, between or by elected members are entirely unacceptable. Across our four nations COSLA, LGA, NILGA and WLGA commit to promoting Civility in Public Life, positive debate and resultantly supporting the wellbeing of our elected members



In the community

- » Police Scotland has worked with the Scottish Women's Rights Centre and Rape Crisis Scotland to release of the FollowIt app for victims of stalking. This app provides a safe platform to safely



record and store incidents of stalking. Police Scotland has also worked with on the launch of a Scottish version of the Brightsky app which provides information and advice on a wide range of gender based violence matters.

Examples of good practice locally



- **Clackmannanshire** has updated their domestic abuse policy for employees of Clackmannanshire council, ensuring that the policy sets out expectations for all employees. They are also working with partner agencies to design and implement a wider domestic abuse policy to detail a minimum standard of care for all women who are or have experienced any form of gender based violence, including making it mandatory that every employer has a supportive domestic abuse policy in place. At a strategic level, tackling gender inequality and improving outcomes for women and girls is embedded into strategic guidance for all community planning partners across the local authority area.
- **Dundee City** have developed a new post of Gendered Services Project Manager which is funded through CORRA foundation for 2 years. The work of this post aims to ensure that the objectives set out in Equally Safe Priority Two are fully embedded in the local authority's work over the next 2 years. The VAW Partnership has also recently strengthened links with council leads for mainstreaming equalities who now link with the Gendered Services Group.
- **North Lanarkshire** Council has developed a GBV policy for the organisation as well as embedding Gender Based Violence Support Officers in a wide range of roles and services across the Council to offer support and guidance to employees who may be affected by gender based violence. The service is promoted in the public protection newsletters, regular email communication and information placed on the council's intranet.
- **North Ayrshire** is working to ensure that all employees who may have been affected by VAWG are able to access appropriate support and assistance. A Gender Based Violence Advisor role has been introduced within North Ayrshire, to support staff to bypass their line manager should they not feel comfortable approaching them around this subject.

Key Achievements:

Priority Three

Achievements in Relation to Priority Three

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

Objectives

- Justice responses are robust, swift, consistent and coordinated.
- Women, children and young people access relevant, effective and integrated services.
- Service providers competently identify violence against women and girls, and respond effectively to women, children and young people affected.

We recognise the importance of ensuring that women and children are supported and that service providers identify violence against women and girls and respond effectively. Key highlights are summarised in this chapter.

Improving the Justice response and changing the law

- On 19 March 2020, the Scottish Parliament unanimously passed the Female Genital Mutilation (Protection and Guidance) (Scotland) Act, and this received Royal Assent on 22 April 2020. This new Act will strengthen the existing legislative framework for the protection of women and girls from FGM, through making provision for Female Genital Mutilation Protection Orders and a power for Ministers to issue statutory guidance in relation to FGM.
- Underpinning the work of the Scottish Government's Chief Medical Officer Rape and Sexual Assault Taskforce is the Forensic Medical Services (Victims of Sexual Offences) (Scotland) Bill, introduced by the Scottish Government to the Scottish Parliament on 26 November 2019. This will enshrine in law a holistic healthcare and recovery focused model and will provide a legal framework for consistent access to self-referral services across Scotland. The Bill passed Stage 1 on 1 October 2020.
- The justice system should always take a victim-centred perspective in addressing sexual crime, and we are working with all partners to ensure this happens across the board. The Scottish Government has worked with partners (Police Scotland, Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) and Rape Crisis Scotland) to support a pilot to visually record rape complainers' initial statement to the police and consider the potential for these to be used in appropriate cases as evidence in chief in any subsequent trial. Applications to use these visually recorded interviews as evidence in chief could be combined with applications to take the witness' evidence by commissioner which, if granted, would avoid the need for the complainer to give evidence in person during any subsequent trial. The pilot launched in November 2019 and is being trialled in three areas of Scotland which have

rural and city locations, including one health care setting to embed a holistic response for the victim. A bespoke 3-week enhanced training course was designed and delivered to 22 specially trained Sexual Offences Liaison Officers (SOLOs). Rape Crisis Scotland is providing valuable advocacy support for victims with additional funding from the Scottish Government.

- On 5 October 2020, the Domestic Abuse (Protection) (Scotland) Bill was published by the Scottish Parliament. If passed, it will provide the police and courts with powers to make emergency notices and orders to protect people at risk of domestic abuse. These powers are intended to provide protection for people at risk of domestic abuse and remove some of the barriers to a victim staying in their own home.

Dr Marsha Scott CEO of SWA describes the Bill as “a milestone moment for women, children and young people experiencing domestic abuse, who for years have asked us why it should be them rather than their abusers, who have to leave their homes, pets and belongings to seek safety”.



- The Children (Scotland) Act gained Royal Assent on 2 October 2020. In cases involving domestic abuse, the Scottish Government wants to ensure that victims and children are protected appropriately during the family court process. Development of the Bill has been informed by views and experiences of children and young people through Power Up Power Down¹⁶ and the views of children and young people remain at the heart of the Scottish Government’s policy approach and development.

Improving Services

- The Scottish Government is funding a partnership project led by Scottish Women’s Aid with Engender and the Improvement Service to develop a sustainable framework to strengthen and scale up training on gender based violence at local, regional and national levels. This framework will support effective implementation of Equally Safe in everyday practice across public services. Initial stages of the project have focus focussed on attitudinal research and looking at core concepts around gender and how to translate these into workforce development and training.
- As a result of work done by the aforementioned CMO Taskforce on Rape and Sexual Assault on the improvement of healthcare and forensic medical examination services for people who have experienced rape, sexual assault

¹⁶ <https://womensaid.scot/project/power-up-power-down/>

or child sexual abuse, examinations no longer take place in a police station. The Taskforce is continuing its work to create Sexual Assault Response Coordination Services (SARCS) in each territorial Health Board, supported by Scottish Government funding towards infrastructure and workforce.

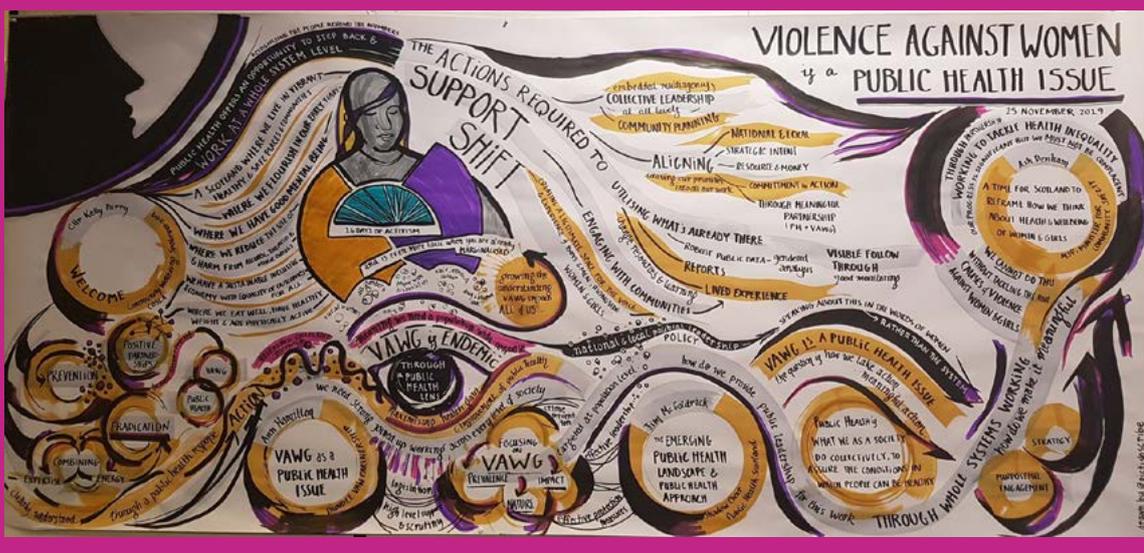
- The Scottish Government reiterated their commitment to exploring how the Barnahus concept could operate in the context of Scotland's child protection, health and justice systems in Programme for Government 2019-20. Progress is being made on the development of Scotland-specific standards for Barnahus. The Scottish Government has asked Healthcare Improvement Scotland, in partnership with the Care Inspectorate, to develop such standards, based on the European PROMISE quality standards which outline best practice for countries who wish to develop the model. The impact of Covid-19 interrupted the development phase of work and decisions were made to pause this whilst frontline services prioritised immediate responses required to respond to the pandemic.
- The Scottish Government has worked in partnership with Young Scot to launch the online resource 'That's not Ok'.¹⁷ The resource was developed with Rape Crisis Scotland, Scottish Women's Aid and young people themselves and contains important information for children and young people on gender based violence and where to go for advice and support.
- In March 2020, the Improvement Service and the Scottish Government organised a joint event to bring together VAW Partnership leads and Alcohol and Drug Partnership (ADP) leads to explore the benefits of adopting a whole systems approach to improving outcomes for women and children affected by both gender-based violence and problem alcohol and drug use and identifying actions needed at a local and national level to ensure a joined-up, person-centred approach is taken to supporting women and children with these multiple needs.

17 <https://young.scot/campaigns/national/thatsnotok>

Conference: Violence Against Women is a Public Health Issue



Public health reform has provided a valuable opportunity to ensure that violence against women and girls (VAWG) is recognised as a public health issue at a local and national level. To help support this work, in November 2019, the Improvement Service, COSLA and Public Health Scotland held a national conference, with support from the Scottish Government and National Violence Against Women Network. The conference featured inputs from VAWG and Public Health experts who highlighted the links between VAWG and each Public Health priority. It also supported delegates to identify the key steps needed in order to ensure VAWG is embedded in each Public Health Priority going forward.



Examples of good practice locally



- **Argyll and Bute** Health and Social Care Partnership is currently rolling out training in Trauma Informed Practice to all relevant staff, with the aim of improving outcomes for women and children with complex needs. The local authority is also exploring the potential to roll out Routine Enquiry Training to teachers, social workers, social care workers and others key professionals to help ensure people experiencing domestic abuse are identified at the earliest possible stage.

- **Clackmannanshire** Council have adopted the Safe and Together model which is in the process of being rolled out to staff in all departments and is made available to all partners. As part of the new domestic abuse policy all staff are to receive basic domestic abuse training. Fire service staff have domestic abuse training to spot the signs of domestic abuse when they are carrying out fire safety visits.
- **Western Isles** have recently put together a training sub group who are working to roll-out training opportunities to public sector partners and identify training gaps across different policy agendas. They are currently working in partnership with the VAWP Highland Training officer and the Highlands and Islands MARAC co-ordinator to establish an annual training programme for all partners. This training programme is currently being adapted for delivering through digital platforms in order to meet current COVID-19 training guidelines.
- **East Renfrewshire** has strengthened its MARAC arrangements to ensure there is a consistent and structured multi-agency process in place across the local authority area to managing the risk posed by perpetrators of domestic abuse. Domestic Abuse Awareness Raising and MARAC Briefings, initially commissioned from Safe Lives, are now delivered in house by the Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator in partnership with Women's Aid/ Health Visiting and School Nursing colleagues. The local authority has undertaken a review of the training opportunities offered to partners which has led to specific courses being developed for Home Care and Telecare Staff in response to an identified need.
- **Dumfries and Galloway** is working to ensure that a joined-up, person-centred approach is taken to supporting women with multiple, complex needs across the local authority area. A conference was held in early 2020 to bring together local leads with responsibilities for gender based violence, community justice, suicide prevention and problem drug and alcohol use to identify shared outcomes that different policy areas are working towards and opportunities to develop joined-up pathways for women and children affected by these issues.
- **Dundee** has developed the ASPEN project which is an innovative collaboration between NHS Tayside and the third sector. The project has funded a consultant clinical psychologist to be based within Dundee Women's Aid in order to offer psychological assessment and treatment interventions to vulnerable women across the violence against women partnership organisations.

Key Achievements:

Priority Four

Achievements in Relation to Priority Four

Men desist from all forms of violence against women and girls and perpetrators of such violence receive a robust and effective response.

Objectives

- Justice responses are robust, swift, consistent and coordinated.
- Men who carry out violence against women and girls are identified early and held to account by the criminal and civil justice system.
- Relevant links are made between the experience of women, children and young people in the criminal and civil system

We recognise the importance of holding perpetrators of gender based violence to account and that our legislation reflects the reality of gender based violence. Key highlights are summarised in this chapter.

Improving the Justice response and changing the law

- In the first year of the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018, 1,065 charges¹⁸ under the new legislation were reported by the police to COPFS, with 96% of charges resulting in prosecution. Through the delivery of the Safelives programme, almost 14,000 staff have now completed training and 20,000 officers and staff have completed online learning. Police Scotland have provided additional training to 700 domestic abuse 'Champions' to sustain the change in skills, behaviour and attitudes of their peers; challenging inappropriate language and behaviour, checking service delivery, giving constructive feedback and congratulating good practice. The Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service, who prosecute criminal cases, have developed an in house package of training for prosecutors, including workshop training and self-completion e-learning on the new legislation to help prosecutors understand and appreciate the dynamics of controlling relationships. The Judicial Institute for Scotland also launched interactive blended training for all sheriffs and judges to support the implementation of the Act. The Scottish Women's Rights Centre (SWRC) launched a training video for solicitors,

"I am proud Scotland is leading the way with this ground-breaking legislation which uniquely recognises the effect of domestic abuse on child victims as well as adults."

Humza Yousaf, Cabinet Secretary for Justice



¹⁸ <https://www.copfs.gov.uk/images/Documents/Statistics/Domestic%20Abuse/Domestic%20Abuse%20and%20stalking%202019-20.pdf>

which discusses the benefits of a trauma-informed practice when working with those who have experienced domestic abuse. In order to continue to raise awareness of the new legislation the Scottish Government have worked with Safelives to develop a new online resource¹⁹ to help support people experiencing, or at risk of, domestic abuse.

Between April and March 2020:



1,065

charges under the Domestic Abuse Scotland Act (DASA) were reported to COPFS



96%

of charges reported to COPFS were progressed for prosecution



14,000

Police Scotland staff have completed Domestic Abuse Matters training

- » A working group has been established to take forward the development of a standalone offence of misogynistic harassment and consider how the criminal justice system deals with misogyny, including whether there are gaps in the law that could be filled with such an offence. This followed work by Lord Bracadale to review hate crime legislation, and the subsequent Scottish Government commitment to establish such a group.



Number of incidents or crimes of domestic abuse with a female victim recorded by police

2014/15: 41,564

2017/18: 44,265

2018/19: 44,576



Number of men convicted of domestic abuse

2014/15: 10,796

2017/18: 8,618

2018/19: 8,168

¹⁹ <https://www.daart.scot/#/>

Holding perpetrators to account

- The Caledonian System, a court mandated perpetrator programme for men, women and children, is now available as a court disposal in 19 local authorities, and 75% of the population of Scotland live in local authority areas which deliver the Caledonian. Bespoke training has been delivered to 226 workers as part of the roll out to the new Caledonian areas. Training and briefing on the Caledonian System has also been delivered to sheriffs and judges, and Caledonian has contributed to the design of the Domestic Abuse Matters training being delivered to Police Scotland personnel. The Caledonian are also working with the Safe and Together Institute to explore options to deliver training to Caledonian staff on Safe & Together. As of early October 2020, 778 men in the 6 new hubs have been or are being assessed for the programme and 323 orders have been made. More than 300 women have been contacted during the process of assessing their (ex)partner and 170 have taken up a service, which is 59% of those eligible. There have been 57 requests for a direct service to children. Across Scotland there are currently 798 men who have received a requirement to attend the Caledonian Programme as part of their sentence.
- The Scottish Government continues to explore options around perpetrator programmes, including a further roll out of the Caledonian System and the availability of non-court mandated behaviour change programmes. Initial work is underway to develop demonstration projects which will provide insight into what requires to be in place to deliver non-court mandated work safely, whether or not the area has access to the Caledonian, in particular women's and children's services which will be essential to mitigate risks.
- In 2019, the Scottish Government awarded funding to the Safe & Together Institute and the Improvement Service to provide support and tools to raise awareness of the Safe & Together model across Scotland, and support a shift towards embedding domestic abuse-informed practice across different policy areas. 'A Companion Document: The Safe & Together Model and Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programmes'²⁰ was developed in partnership with Community Justice Scotland and in consultation with practitioners trained in both Safe & Together and working with perpetrators. It specifically focusses on Scotland's Caledonian System as an example of an internationally-recognised perpetrator program that engages in an all-family approach that mirrors key values and practices in the Safe & Together Model. A Self-assessment tool and evaluation framework is being finalised which aims to ensure that systems and services are in place locally and nationally that embed and promote good practice by supporting local authority areas to

²⁰ <https://safeandtogetherinstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/LINKING-DOCUMENT-Caledonian7142020.pdf>

assess, measure and demonstrate the extent to which their workforces, systems and processes are domestic abuse-informed and identify any areas for improvement. Co-produced with local and national Safe & Together stakeholders, it includes a set of performance indicators which aims to support quality assurance and evaluation.

Consultation on Prostitution

In September, the Scottish Government launched the first ever national consultation on prostitution. Respondents are invited to give views on how we challenge men's demand for prostitution and also ensure support for women when they need it, including to exit prostitution. Views through the consultation are also being sought on men's attitudes to buying sex, educating young people, reducing the harms associated with prostitution and supporting women involved to exit. The consultation seeks views of everyone with an interest or an insight into the issues, including of course women with direct, lived experiences. A streamlined version of the consultation was also produced to support engagement.



Examples of good practice locally

- **Clackmannanshire** is currently working with community justice partners to develop a non-court mandated perpetrator programme, which will embed the principles of Safe and Together. To ensure that Criminal Justice Social Workers have the necessary knowledge and skills to engage with perpetrators of domestic abuse, the training for social workers is being reviewed to ensure it reflects best practice from the Caledonian System.
- In **Fife**, Criminal Justice Social Work Staff have undergone training to respond to perpetrators of domestic abuse and sexual violence. Fife is also rolling out Safe and Together training to encourage staff working within children and families teams and criminal justice teams to keep a focus on the perpetrator's behaviours and ensure they are able to adequately identify and record the harm that perpetrators cause to women and children.



- **West Lothian** Council has developed a Domestic Abuse Training strategy that aims to ensure all professional who come into contact with children and families have the appropriate level of knowledge and skills for their role. Tier 2 training has been developed for professionals who may come into contact with survivors and perpetrators of domestic abuse, which includes a Safe and Together briefing to help ensure professionals are able to recognise and hold perpetrators to account for their abusive behaviour.
- **East Renfrewshire** has created Safe and Together Champions who are now responsible for the delivery of range of training across the Local Authority and third sector and public sector partnership agencies, with the ambition of ensuring East Renfrewshire is 'Safe and Together aware'. In early 2020, the Champions met with survivors of domestic abuse (coordinated by Woman's Aid) to talk about their experiences of services during their most vulnerable times and making plans to leave. The key messages from these discussions have been embedded in practitioners' training to ensure it responds to the lived experience of women and children. Safe and Together Champions have also carried out consultations with practitioners in light of the increased challenges the pandemic has presented, to consider and plan for a new way of working and supporting people in this climate, recognising that this is a time of limited supports and heightened risk to women and children.

What Comes Next?

What Comes Next?

The Equally Safe strategy was published in 2014 and updated in 2016. With the Delivery Plan due to run until 2021 and the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, this report presents an opportune moment to take stock of what Equally Safe looks like in the future, both in terms of the strategic ambition and plans for delivery. We will commence discussions with stakeholders on future direction of travel at a scheduled meeting of the Equally Safe Joint Strategic Board at the end of 2020, before taking forward further engagement throughout 2021.

In parallel with those discussions, we will take forward the following priorities over the course of 2020/21 to the conclusion point of the Delivery Plan:

- » Progress legislation through the Scottish Parliament on domestic abuse protection orders and forensic medical services;
- » Relaunch the new Scottish Government Delivering Equally Safe Fund, which will provide £13m per annum over 2021-24 for projects and services tackling violence against women and girls
- » Consider the outputs of the National Taskforce for Human Rights as they relate to advancing gender equality and tackling violence against women and girls, and continue to work with the UK Government to secure ratification of the Istanbul Convention;
- » Progress a review of the funding and commissioning of front line specialist services, with an initial twin focus on domestic abuse and sexual violence;
- » Take forward stakeholder engagement on the outputs of the consultation on multi-agency intervention and risk assessment for victims of domestic abuse, to consider next steps in this area;
- » Develop an age and stage appropriate resource on key messages on healthy relationships and consent aimed at professionals working with younger children.
- » Continue to pursue our gender equality ambitions in education and learning via the mechanism of the Deputy First Minister's Gender Equality Taskforce in Education and Learning
- » Continue, through the CMO Rape and Sexual Assault Taskforce, to create a Scottish Sexual Assault Response Coordination (SSARC) service in each territorial Health Board supported by Scottish Government funding towards infrastructure and workforce
- » Implement a co-produced programme of work to tackle commercial sexual exploitation, taking into account emerging findings from COSLA's short life working group;
- » Consider future work to tackle Female Genital Mutilation, in conjunction with steps to prepare for the implementation of the 2020 Act;

- » Consider future work to tackle Forced Marriage and reinvigorate the focus of our stakeholder network;
- » Link in to work to develop an anti-destitution strategy, with a specific focus on women with no recourse to public funds who are at risk of domestic abuse
- » Recommence work to develop standards on the Barnahus model; and
- » Explore with stakeholders how to progress work to develop a Scottish approach to domestic abuse homicide reviews.

The Scottish Government and COSLA will also explore with professional bodies and other key decision makers within local authorities and community planning organisations how to support and strengthen local capacity to implement the next phase of Equally Safe. This will include working in collaboration with local and national stakeholders to identify what collective leadership and resources are needed to ensure a joined-up, multi-agency approach can be taken to improving outcomes for women and children in local communities across Scotland moving forward



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The Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

ISBN: 978-1-80004-289-6 (web only)

Published by The Scottish Government, November 2020

Produced for The Scottish Government by APS Group Scotland, 21 Tennant Street, Edinburgh EH6 5NA
PPDAS781566 (11/20)

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