

Safer Lives: Changed Lives

A Shared Approach to
Tackling Violence Against
Women in Scotland

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Women in Scotland**

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The Scottish Government
Victoria Quay
Edinburgh
EH6 6QQ

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SAFER LIVES: CHANGED LIVES FOREWORD

Violence against women has a high cost - it costs lives, literally; it blights lives and restricts opportunity. It perpetuates inequality and prevents the achievement of potential. It affects all of us in Scotland, not only the women and children who directly experience it or those that fear it, but also their families, communities and our economy. It must be eradicated if we are to have the Scotland to which we aspire.

In order to do this there needs to be a shared understanding, approach and commitment to tackling violence against women among all partners. We hope this document will assist those working to this end by providing a definition, setting out our guiding principles and suggesting a focus for the work over the coming period. Through the Concordat, local and national Government in Scotland have a new relationship, based on the mutual pursuit of shared outcomes. This approach to violence against women exemplifies that relationship. We are grateful too for the support of other key partners such as the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland and the Crown Office/Procurator Fiscal Service.

We are clear that violence against women is a consequence of continuing inequality between men and women, and it is also a barrier to achieving equality. Our approach is set firmly within the context of the Gender Equality Duty, which expects all public bodies to have due regard to eliminating discrimination and promoting equality between men and women. Tackling violence against women is therefore essential in meeting the Gender Equality Duty.

For many decades Scotland has been at the forefront of work to tackle gender based violence, and we have received international recognition for our work. The protection of women and children from all forms of violence is one of our highest priorities and both the Scottish Government and local authorities have committed significant resources to ensure we reap the benefit of the expertise, commitment and passion of those taking this fight forward across Scotland.

We would especially like to thank the National Group to Address Violence Against Women for their continuing work to ensure that this agenda is given the priority and focus it deserves. And of course we also acknowledge the vital role of the voluntary sector, which has traditionally driven this agenda, even in times when others did not fully appreciate the nature and extent of these terrible crimes and experiences. There is no doubt we would not be in the position we are in Scotland without their tireless, and often thankless, work over the past three decades.

Partnership working has brought us considerable success in recent years. We must continue to move forward and to take whatever action is necessary to achieve our ultimate aim; to create a Scotland in which violence against women no longer exists.

Alex Neil
Minister for Communities and Housing

Councillor Harry McGuigan
COSLA's Spokesperson for Community Safety and Wellbeing

1. INTRODUCTION

We want a successful Scotland where everyone has the opportunity to contribute to the nation's wellbeing and economic prosperity. We expect our communities to be strong, resilient and safe places, offering improved life chances for all and a better quality of life. We know however that violence is a major issue in Scotland and that it has significant impact on the wellbeing and potential of those affected. It also has cost implications for the economy and public purse. We are clear therefore that to improve outcomes for people in Scotland we need to take action to prevent and reduce the impact of violence on victims, their families and their communities.

Violence is unacceptable and we recognise that strong action needs to be taken to address its many forms. To this end we have developed a coherent programme of violence reduction which is being woven into policy developments across Government. To be sure of successful solutions and interventions, however, we need to fully understand the causes of violence and the ways in which it impacts on different groups of people. The evidence tells us that men's and women's experience of violence is different.

While male on male violence is the most common form of general public violence, there are a number of crimes, acts of violence and abusive behaviours that are perpetrated mostly by men and affect women and children disproportionately. Included in these are domestic abuse, rape and honour crimes all of which have their roots in the inequality between men and women in society. We refer to the continuum of these forms of gender-based violence as violence against women, the prevalence of which is extremely high in Scotland and rightly of major concern. It needs to be targeted specifically and demands a dedicated response which recognises the difference between this and other forms of violence. Most perpetrators and victims of other forms of violence, for example, do not share a home and are not linked together in a variety of ways including through a relationship or having children together.

The signing by the First Minister of the Women's Coalition Statement of Intent in December 2007 committed the Scottish Government to continuing to work with others to address violence against women in all its aspects, and to adopting a broad definition of violence against women which makes the links between domestic abuse, rape and commercial sexual exploitation.

The way in which agencies respond to violence against women has changed remarkably over recent years. We acknowledge the significant advancements made in challenging perpetrators and providing appropriate services to meet the needs of victims. We are fully committed to working with partners to further improve and engage around this agenda.

Violence against women is not only a consequence of gender inequality, it also perpetuates it. Tackling violence against women is therefore a prerequisite to reducing inequality between women and men in Scotland.

2. PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

The purpose of this document is to provide a shared understanding and approach which will guide the work of all partners to tackle violence against women in Scotland. This includes, but is not restricted to, the work of Community Planning Partnerships, Violence Against Women Multi-Agency Partnerships and Training Consortia around building capacity in the sector and the work of public bodies around meeting the statutory requirements set out in the Gender Equality Duty.

This shared understanding and approach is underpinned by a shared commitment across all partners to tackle violence against women as a fundamental activity towards achieving our National Outcomes (see 3.1 for specific Outcomes relevant to this area of work).

A shared approach is necessary to achieve greater consistency of service provision across Scotland, an increase in integrated working across this agenda within and outwith the Scottish Government and improved outcomes for women, children and communities. Ultimately, it should enable swifter progress to be made towards bringing about the changes in Scottish society that are required to eradicate violence against women.

This document will therefore:

- provide a definition of violence against women to underpin existing work and form the basis for future work;
- highlight the links between different forms of violence against women to support joined-up policy and practice development around the issue;
- guide the development of a shared approach for local and national work on violence against women underpinned by partnership;
- actively promote the development of existing effective measures and the adoption of new measures, at a local and national level, to address violence against women;
- ensure that work on violence against women is carried out across the 4 P's - Prevention, Protection, Provision and Participation.

Prevention - to prevent, remove or diminish the risk of violence against women and its impacts on children and young people

Protection - to protect women from victimisation, repeat victimisation or harassment by perpetrators and protect the children and young people affected

Provision - to provide adequate services to deal with the consequences of violence against women and children to help them to rebuild their lives

Participation - to ensure policy making and practice development around violence against women is shaped by the experiences, needs and views of those who use services

This document is not an action plan – all partners involved in driving forward this work will require to develop their own action plans in order to be able to monitor and report on progress.

3. POLICY LEVERS

3.1 National Performance Framework and Policy Context

Work to address the causes and consequences of violence against women is necessary to achieve the national outcomes:

We live our lives safe from [crime](#), disorder and danger.

We have tackled significant inequalities in Scottish society.

We have improved the life chances for [children, young people and families](#) at risk.

Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed.

We have strong, resilient and supportive [communities](#) where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others.

Our approach complements and interacts with a suite of Government policy agendas which aim to improve the lives, experiences and opportunities of children, families and communities. Included in these are Action on Violence in Scotland, Respect & Responsibility and *Getting it right for every child* which underpins the National Domestic Abuse Delivery Plan for Children and Young People.

Crucially, taking forward our shared approach will contribute to enabling the civic and societal changes described in the suite of Frameworks – *Achieving our Potential* (<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/11/20103815/0>), *Early Years* (<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/01/13095148/0>) and *Equally Well* (<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/226607/0061266.pdf> or <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/254248/0075274.pdf>) – which underpin our shared commitment to eradicating inequality and discrimination in Scotland.

3.2 Gender Equality Duty

Just as we recognise that violence against women is a consequence of continuing inequality between men and women, so it is also a barrier to achieving equality. The tools available to lever change in gender equality are therefore integrally relevant to tackling violence against women.

Our approach is set firmly within the context of the Gender Equality Duty, which expects all public bodies to have due regard to eliminating discrimination and promoting equality between men and women. The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has made it clear that, as part of its function to monitor public bodies on their compliance with the Duty, it will take into account actions which authorities and agencies undertake to address violence against women.

It has been thought by some that the Gender Equality Duty means gender specific services cannot be provided or that all services have to be open to both men and women. This is not the case. Where the evidence demonstrates a particular need for gender specific services then it is entirely consistent with the Gender Equality Duty to provide them. It is important that authorities and agencies understand the requirements of and the opportunities provided by the Gender Equality Duty to advance work to combat violence against women, and that this is included in training for staff.

3.3 Ministerial Priorities for Gender Equality

Ministers have a responsibility under the Gender Equality Duty to identify priorities for achieving gender equality on which they will provide some leadership across the public sector. They are also required to report on progress on these priorities in 2010.

3.4 International context

The United Nation's Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the **Global Platform for Action** adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 link this approach to tackling violence against women with commitments made by the UK Government.

CEDAW is an international convention adopted in 1979 by the United Nations General Assembly. Described as an international bill of rights for women, it came into force on 3 September 1981. CEDAW is one of the most highly ratified international human rights conventions, having the support of 185 State parties. It was ratified by the UK in 1986.

CEDAW is a powerful tool for articulating, advocating, and monitoring women's human rights. The Convention's enforcement is monitored through a reporting system mechanism used to keep an eye on government accountability within the respective country and at the United Nations.

The Platform for Action reaffirms the fundamental principle that the human rights of women and of the girl child are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights. As an agenda for action, the Platform seeks to promote and protect the full enjoyment of all human rights and the fundamental freedoms of all women throughout their lives.

In addition, there is the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, which entered into force in the UK on 1 April 2009, and the 'Palermo Protocol', formally the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children. This is a protocol to the UN Convention on Transnational Organised Crime.

Recommendation Rec(2002)5 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the protection of women against violence was adopted on 30 April 2002.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is an international human rights treaty that grants all children and young people (aged 17 and under) a comprehensive set of rights. The convention gives children and young people over 40 substantive rights. These include the right to:

- Special protection measures from all forms of physical and mental violence including sexual abuse and exploitation;
- Access to services such as education and health care;
- Develop their personalities, abilities and talents to the fullest potential;
- Grow up in an environment of happiness, love and understanding;
- Be informed about and participate in achieving their rights in an accessible and active manner.

All of the rights in the convention apply to all children and young people without discrimination. The principles, values and core components of *Getting it right for every child* are based on the UNCRC.

The Scottish Government has endorsed the World Health Organisation framework for governmental action on violence, as a public health approach can provide some strategic context.

4. SHARED UNDERSTANDING OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

4.1 Violence Against Women: A Definition

For the purposes of this approach, we define violence against women as actions which harm or cause suffering or indignity to women and children, where those carrying out the actions are mainly men and where women and children are predominantly the victims. The different forms of violence against women – including emotional, psychological, sexual and physical abuse, coercion and constraints – are interlinked. They have their roots in gender inequality and are therefore understood as gender-based violence.

Our approach is **informed** by the definition developed by the National Group to Address Violence Against Women based on the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (1993) which follows:

Gender based violence is a function of gender inequality, and an abuse of male power and privilege. It takes the form of actions that result in physical, sexual and psychological harm or suffering to women and children, or affront to their human dignity, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life. It is men who predominantly carry out such violence, and women who are predominantly the victims of such violence. By referring to violence as 'gender based' this definition highlights the need to understand violence within the context of women's and girl's subordinate status in society. Such violence cannot be understood, therefore, in isolation from the norms, social structure and gender roles within the community, which greatly influence women's vulnerability to violence.

Accordingly, violence against women encompasses but is not limited to:

Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, within the general community or in institutions, including: domestic abuse, rape, incest and child sexual abuse;

Sexual harassment and intimidation at work and in the public sphere; commercial sexual exploitation, including prostitution, pornography and trafficking;

Dowry related violence;

Female genital mutilation;

Forced and child marriages;

Honour crimes.

Activities such as pornography, prostitution, stripping, lap dancing, pole dancing and table dancing are forms of commercial sexual exploitation. These activities have been shown to be harmful for the individual women involved and have a negative impact on the position of all women through the objectification of women's bodies. This happens irrespective of whether individual women claim success or empowerment from the

activity. It is essential to separate sexual activity from exploitative sexual activity. A sexual activity becomes sexual exploitation if it breaches a person's human right to dignity, equality, respect and physical and mental wellbeing. It becomes commercial sexual exploitation when another person, or group of people, achieves financial gain or advancement through the activity.

In recognising this definition, there is no denying or minimising the fact that women may use violence, including violence against a male or female partner. Although less common this is no less serious and requires to be addressed.

In using the term 'violence against women', it is recognised that this departs from the normal dictionary definition of 'violence', which generally requires some form of exertion of physical force. Inclusion of these behaviours or activities as part of the spectrum of violence against women, and indeed the use of this term itself, is accepted internationally as evidenced by a number of definitions developed by the UN and EU, and, where necessary, we will make clear the distinction between our definition and normal and legal usage of the term 'violence'.

4.2 Violence Against Women: What the evidence tells us

Violence against women affects thousands of women and children every year from all parts of the country and from all backgrounds. Recurring themes in women's descriptions of men's violence include the use of tactics of control, humiliation and degradation, the abdication of responsibility by the male abuser and the attribution of blame to the woman. These are found regardless of the woman's relationship to the perpetrator and regardless of whether or not the experience is a discrete event.

Indeed, significant numbers of women experience repeated victimisation or patterns of abusive behaviour and more than one type of violence over the course of their lives. Factors such as poverty, age and disability may increase a woman's vulnerability as may alcohol and substance misuse.

Violence against women can and does have a significant impact on children and young people. This includes children and young people who are directly or indirectly harmed through domestic abuse of the non-abusing parent, usually the mother. There is significant evidence of links between domestic abuse and emotional, physical and sexual abuse of children. In the context of domestic abuse, the safety and wellbeing of children is closely linked to that of the adult victim.

Children and young people are also significantly affected by forced marriage with 30% of cases reported affecting minors¹. Given the hidden nature of forced marriage it is difficult to capture an accurate picture of the scope of this issue in Scotland; however we know the devastating consequences, with those affected often:

- becoming estranged from their families and wider communities;

¹ UK Government Forced Marriage Unit <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/fco-in-action/nationals/forced-marriage-unit/>

- losing out on educational opportunities as they are taken prematurely from school;
- suffering physical and psychological abuse;
- presenting a high rate of self-harm and suicide rates.

Rape and sexual assault are serious crimes which violate both physically and emotionally and are fundamental breaches of human rights. The majority of rape victims are women and in common with other forms of violence against women, sexual crimes are perpetrated primarily by men known to the victim.

Under Scots law the legal definition of rape as it currently stands only covers crimes perpetrated against women. Police records show that there were 1,053 reported rapes and attempted rapes in 2007/08, however we recognise that many more incidents will have gone unreported. Women from ethnic minority communities, those who are disabled or who are worried about their immigration status as well as women working in the sex industry or homeless women face significant barriers to reporting².

For many victims, their experience of rape or sexual assault is not a one-off incident. Some may be assaulted, regularly or periodically, over a long period of time, for example by an abusive partner. Others, such as women trafficked for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation, may be assaulted by different people at different times in their lives.

Most assaults are carried out by someone known to the victim. This includes sexual partners, casual acquaintances, family members and others. Most rapes are committed indoors, usually in the home. Rape and sexual assault are often part of domestic abuse, alongside physical and emotional abuse. Nearly half (45%) of rapes reported to the 2002 British Crime Survey were committed by perpetrators who were victims' partners at the time of the assault³. However, many women who experience domestic abuse find the sexual violence the most difficult aspect to speak about.

The trafficking of women for sexual exploitation has gained increasing attention over the last few years, as awareness of this global criminal activity has risen. Again it is extremely difficult to assess accurately the numbers of women involved. The UK Action Plan on Tackling Trafficking 2007⁴ estimated that some 4,000 women might be trafficked into and within the UK per annum. In Scotland between September 2007 and March 2008 during the second nationwide police led anti-trafficking operation (Pentameter 2), 59 potential victims were recovered. 15 of those were believed to have been trafficked for sexual exploitation and were all female⁵.

2 National Strategy to Address Domestic Abuse, Scottish Executive, 2000, pg 1; Preventing Violence Against Women – Action Across the Scottish Executive, Scottish Executive, 2001, pg 55.

3 <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/bcs1.html>

4 www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/human-trafficking-action-plan

5 www.amnesty.org.uk/uploads/documents/doc__18605.pdf

4.3 Violence Against Women: Extent of the Problem

- World Health Organisation Multi-Country study into Women's Health and Domestic Violence Against Women found that between 1 in 2 and 1 in 10 women will experience some form of violence at some point in their lives⁶;
- One in 4 women will experience domestic abuse from a partner in her lifetime⁷;
- There were 49,655 incidents of domestic abuse in Scotland recorded in 2007/08 (an increase of just under 2% on the previous year)⁸;
- 54% of cases reported to the police in 2007/08 involved repeat victimisation⁹;
- Women were the victims in 85% of the reported incidents of domestic abuse in Scotland in 2007/08¹⁰;
- 83% of rapists are known to the woman they rape¹¹;
- There has been a significant increase in the numbers of women giving evidence in rape trials in Scotland who have been asked about their sexual history or character¹²;
- 1,053 rapes or attempted rapes were recorded in 2007/08 in Scotland¹³;
- There were 1,666 incidents of indecent assault in the same period¹⁴;
- In 53% of homicide cases in Scotland¹⁵ over the last ten years, where a woman aged 16-69 was the victim, the main accused was the woman in question's partner¹⁶;
- Female homicide victims are most commonly killed in a dwelling with the motive being rage/fight with a partner¹⁷;
- Teenage mothers seem to be particularly likely to experience domestic abuse. A small American study found that 70% of teenage mothers at one hospital were in a relationship with a violent partner¹⁸;

6 http://www.who.int/gender/violence/who_multicountry_study/Chapter3-Chapter4.pdf

7 <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs04/hors276.pdf>

8 <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/11/21110133/0>

9 See Footnote 8

10 See Footnote 8

11 <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs04/hors276.pdf>

12 www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/09/12093427/9

13 <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/09/29155946/7>

14 See Footnote 13

15 Homicide in Scotland, Statistical Bulletin, 2006-07, <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/207004/0054998.pdf> p10, section 6.5, accessed 25 March 2009

16 In considering the relationship of the main accused person to a victim, **partner** includes: spouse, separated or divorced spouse, cohabitee, lover, boy/girlfriend but not necessarily ex-boyfriend/girlfriend pre-2000/01, as these may have been recorded as simply acquaintances. Partner figures for 2000/01 onwards **do** include ex-boyfriend/girlfriend.

17 Homicide in Scotland, *Statistical Bulletin*, 2006-07, <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/207004/0054998.pdf> p11, section 6.8, accessed 25 March 2009

18 Harry Kissoon et al. 'Prevalence and patterns of intimate partner violence amongst adolescent mothers during the postpartum period', *Archives of Paediatrics and Adolescent Medicine*, Vol, 156, No. 4, 2002 quoted in *Women's Aid, Safe*, Issue 26, 2008, p7)

- A recent Scottish study involving 1,395 young people aged 14-18 found that a third of young men and a sixth of young women thought that using violence in intimate relationships was acceptable under certain circumstances. The same study found that 17% of young women had experienced violence or abuse in their own relationships with a boyfriend¹⁹.
- The ‘Raising the Issue of Domestic Abuse in School’ Study revealed that 32% of pupils in one secondary school in Scotland disclosed anonymously that they were currently experiencing or living with domestic abuse²⁰.
- It is difficult to quantify the scale of the problem of Female Genital Mutilation in Scotland. A study in 2007 for England and Wales estimated that nearly 66,000 women aged between 15 and 49 living in the UK had undergone FGM and over 20,000 girls were at risk²¹;
- Although we recognise that the known cases of forced marriage i.e. brought to the attention of the Forced Marriages Unit will be much smaller than the actual number of incidents, 40 cases from Scotland were notified to FMU during the period January to October 2008²²;
- Between 78%²³ and 86%²⁴ of stalking victims are female, with between 18% and 31% experiencing sexual violence within the context of stalking behaviour.

It is widely recognised that many incidents of violence and abuse go unreported. Therefore these figures, stark as they are, represent only the tip of the iceberg. Furthermore, many women may experience intimidation, harassment and abuse but do not describe/see it as a crime or an offence or think of reporting to the police. The importance of linking into the evidence which can be collated from the work of voluntary groups and agencies is therefore key. There is however considerable difficulty with data collection and this is an issue which needs to be addressed.

“Whilst clear categories and definitions are important for statistical and research purposes, we must never forget that these are developed for a specific purpose – to count the extent of violence. They do not reflect the experiential reality, which is always more complex...” (Liz Kelly Domestic Violence: Enough is Enough Conference, London 2000)

19 Burman, M and Cartmel, F (2005) Young People’s Attitudes Towards Gendered Violence, Edinburgh: NHS Scotland

20 Alexander, H, Macdonald, E and Paton, S (2005) ‘Raising the Issue of Domestic Abuse in School’, *Children and Society*, Vol. 19, No. 3, pp187-198

21 Dorkenoo et al ‘A Statistical Study to Estimate the Prevalence of Female Genital Mutilation in England and Wales’. Foundation for Women’s Health, Research and Development (FORWARD) <http://www.forwarduk.org.uk/key-issues/fgm/research>

22 UK Government Forced Marriage Unit <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/fco-in-action/nationals/forced-marriage-unit/>

23 1998: Tjaden & Thoennes

24 2005: Dr Lorraine Sheridan – Study for Leicester University

4.4 Cost of Violence against Women

Violence against women is unacceptable and a violation of human rights, but it is also a major drain on the public purse and the economy. In addition to the human and emotional costs there are costs to the criminal and civil justice system, health service, social services and housing.

Difficult though it is to quantify, a study in 2004 conducted for the UK Government's Women and Equality Unit by Sylvia Walby²⁵ estimated that the cost of domestic abuse in England and Wales was £23 billion. The cost to the public purse of violence against women is estimated to be almost double this figure at £40 billion (A study by Jarvinen et al in 2008 New Philanthropy Capital Report – Violence against women: Hard knock life). Given the Scottish population is roughly 10% that of England, this indicates that some £2.3 billion could be the cost to the Scottish public purse of domestic abuse and £4 billion the cost of violence against women.

4.5 Violence Against Women: impact on equality groups

There is little available evidence recorded on the experiences of minority ethnic women, lesbians, bisexual and transgender women, disabled women, women of different ages or faiths. What research has been undertaken recognises that there are specific issues which need to be addressed.

In 2007/08 there were 1,084 reported incidents of domestic abuse by same sex partners and ex partners, however it is acknowledged that there is under-reporting. Victims may feel reluctant to come forward for fear of prejudice and vulnerability to threats of being 'outed' from their abusers. Others may not believe that what they are experiencing is something that can be reported. A study in 2006 found that more than a third of respondents said they had experienced domestic abuse from a same sex partner²⁶. Over time those experiencing such violence have found it difficult to find appropriate support and have recognised that their needs may not be best served by existing provision. The Scottish Government is currently funding a project to improve the response from mainstream service providers to LGBT individuals affected by domestic abuse and to help identify what specific provision/services might be required.

Research suggests minority ethnic women tend to suffer domestic abuse for a longer period before reporting it, with estimates showing that on average, it will take a minority ethnic women ten years to leave a violent partner²⁷. They may also experience abuse from other family members. The report *Policing and the Criminal Justice System – Public Confidence and Perceptions: Findings from the 2004/05 British Crime Survey* also highlighted that confidence in the Criminal Justice System is higher amongst those without a disability or illness.

25 <http://www.equalities.gov.uk/>

26 <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/sps/downloads/FPCW/cohsarfinafinalreport.pdf>

27 Izzidien, Domestic abuse within South Asian Communities: the specific needs of women, children and young people, NSPCC, 2008, p15

4.6 Men as Victims

Police statistics evidence that year on year there has been an increasing number of men reporting experiencing domestic abuse. 6,165 men reported being abused by a female partner to the police in 2007/08. These figures are small in comparison to the number of incidents where women were the victims and whilst it is recognised that women are more likely to experience repeated abuse and over a longer time, and the severity of the abuse is likely to be greater, it is nevertheless important to address the needs of men appropriately.

In 2002, research²⁸ was undertaken on male victims to ascertain the nature of the violence they experienced and their particular needs. The evidence did not point to a need for specific provision but suggested that existing services should be more responsive. The Government at the time took action to raise this with authorities.

We recognise however that the evidence base is dated. In the light of increasing numbers of men reporting to the police, there is a need to have robust evidence and greater understanding of what if any specific needs men might have. The Scottish Crime and Justice Survey will provide a fuller picture of the nature and extent of partner abuse, including experience of partner abuse, frequency of abuse, relationship to respondent, reporting to police and reasons for not reporting to the police, physical and emotional effects (including injuries), and who or which organisations the victim informed. This will be available in late 2009 and we will subsequently consider what further work needs to be undertaken.

Men can be the victims of forced marriage and suffer the devastating effect on their lives, however, the statistical information available shows that the majority of those affected are women. Male victims often have more freedom to decide whether or not to consummate the marriage or seek a divorce and are more likely to find their way back into the community and society once they have left a forced relationship.²⁹

28 www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/09/15201/9609

29 Council of Europe Ad Hoc Committee on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (CAHVIO (2009) 3, Strasbourg, March 2009, pg 16.

5. SHARED APPROACH TO TACKLING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

5.1 The Approach

Violence against women is both complex and wide in its scope. We know that there are limited resources and that it is important to ensure that we all try to move this agenda forward together. This will be assisted if we share a common understanding of the problem, its nature and roots and if we are able to work together in its resolution.

COSLA has been engaged in the development of this approach and we will work collaboratively with them and other partners as appropriate to ensure that the agenda is tackled proactively. Members of the National Group to Address Violence Against Women, all of whom represent organisations or sectors, have also contributed to the development of Safer Lives: Changed Lives.

The approach to tackling violence against women which we are developing in concert with partners is based on the following:

- **A shared narrative:** developing a shared understanding across the range of interests about what is meant by violence against women, its nature and its roots in gender inequality and men's abuse of power;
- **An integrated approach:** taking an integrated approach which fosters greater collaboration between providers and interests, embeds tackling violence against women across the range of relevant policy interests and demonstrates the links with key frameworks such as Equally Well, Achieving our Potential and Early Years Framework and relevant policy pillars such as Getting it right for every child and Violence Reduction;
- **A collaborative local approach** encouraging partnership working at a local level and supporting the development of local responses to tackling violence against women. Working in partnership with the third sector and public bodies and in particular to work collaboratively with local government and Community Planning Partnerships in the context of the Concordat. (<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/923/0054147.pdf>).

And it sets out the importance of work in the following areas:

- Increasing the focus on prevention and reducing the levels of violence against women;
- Considering the best means to support those experiencing violence and abuse including those more marginalised women and children;
- Improving the data and mechanisms for measurement of progress.

This approach to tackling violence against women builds on the extensive work already underway across Scotland, is informed by the wealth of experience gained in the delivery of the National Strategy to Address Domestic Abuse in Scotland (2000), draws explicitly on the work of the Expert Group on Violence Against Women and consultation with Multi-Agency Partnerships across Scotland and is shaped by the contributions from key stakeholders in particular the National Group to Address Violence Against Women.

Shared Approach: Guiding Principles

- Violence against women is a violation of human rights;
- Violence against women takes many forms and responses should take account of the links between them;
- Promoting equality between men and women is a key element in tackling violence against women;
- Socialisation of boys and girls from an early age is important and should emphasise equality and respect;
- Perpetrators should be held to account and made to take responsibility for their actions;
- Prevention of and reduction in violence against women are the key objectives;
- Solutions are best achieved through partnerships and collaborative working.

6. THE APPROACH IN PRACTICE

6.1 Where to direct attention

There is a need to:

- recognise the spectrum of violence against women of which domestic abuse is a part;
- provide appropriate support for those affected;
- provide protection and ensure safety;
- ensure the legal remedies and agency responses can deal adequately with perpetrator and victim;
- encourage reporting;
- improve data collection particularly with regard to the experiences of marginalised women and children;
- provide better measurement of outcomes and progress and most importantly;
- find effective means to prevent violence occurring.

6.2 What has been done already

Scotland has developed an international reputation for its work on violence against women and on domestic abuse in particular. It is looked to for its work on public awareness campaigns, its engagement of and work with children and young people, its strategic approach to all aspects of the agenda and particularly for its partnership working. Since the inception of the Scottish Parliament, significant investment and attention has been given to working towards a Scotland where women and children are safe in their homes, workplaces and communities.

Domestic abuse remains one of the key issues to be addressed as part of the work to tackle violence against women. The broadening of the agenda in no way diminishes the activity being undertaken or importance attached to tackling domestic abuse. The National Strategy adopted in 2000 provides a continuing framework for our activity on domestic abuse. It links directly to this broader approach on violence against women and is one of the policy pillars for the National Domestic Abuse Delivery Plan for Children and Young people.

Building on these firm foundations, this Government and its partners are driving forward activity on violence against women across a range of areas:

6.3 Current Activities

Actions by Scottish Government:

We are

- Investing over £44 million to drive forward work to tackle violence against women in 2008-11;
- Enabling women and children to access frontline support through funding 73 projects across Scotland tackling violence against women;
- Supporting the national infrastructure for work on violence against women through funding for Scottish Women's Aid and Rape Crisis Scotland;
- Increasing access to support for rape victims across Scotland through supporting the network of rape crisis centres;
- Helping those affected by domestic abuse and rape to obtain information and support by funding the Scottish domestic abuse and rape crisis helplines;
- Improving the process for dealing with perpetrators and supporting victims of domestic abuse through the domestic abuse court in Glasgow and providing dedicated support for victims;
- Increasing the support for courts across Scotland by the provision of a toolkit on domestic abuse which draws on the learning from the domestic abuse court in Glasgow;
- Improving the provision of perpetrator programmes and associated partner work through the development of the Caledonian Programme;
- Raising public awareness and highlighting the help available for victims through the media campaign *Domestic Abuse: There's No Excuse*;
- Reforming the law on sexual offences through the Sexual Offences (Scotland) Bill;
- Improving the capacity of agencies to deal with issues of violence against women by supporting 15 training consortia and the provision of national training co-ordinators;
- Supporting the development of the first Sexual Assault Referral Centre in Scotland;
- Continuing to explore the options for women with no recourse to public funds;
- Implementing a substantial programme of activity to address the needs of children and young people experiencing domestic abuse with young people participating in the process;
- Improving the identification of violence against women as part of the routine inquiry system with the NHS system in Scotland;

- Ensuring that children and young people across Scotland affected by domestic abuse have support through a network of children’s workers;
- Building the links between work with children experiencing domestic abuse and Getting it right for every child through four pathfinders across Scotland;
- Tackling human trafficking in Scotland. We are legislating to provide police with specific powers to close premises associated with human trafficking or child sexual exploitation. These measures are contained in the Criminal Justice and Licensing (Scotland) Bill, which was introduced into the Scottish Parliament in March 2009;
- Making it easier for courts to consider the application of a criminal non-harassment order by removing the precondition for a course of conduct amounting to harassment. This measure is also contained in the Criminal Justice & Licensing (Scotland) Bill.
- Addressing the issue of forced marriage by first consulting stakeholders and interest groups about what needs to be done.
- Working with the Violence Reduction Unit to embed violence against women into their work programme eg their campaign during late 2009 to improve police response to domestic abuse.

Examples of actions by our key partners

Local authorities

Local government has always been a key partner in delivering services for women and children affected by men’s violence. In West Dunbartonshire, for example, in addition to funding the Multi-Agency Partnership on Violence Against Women, the local authority has also mainstreamed VAW posts within their core staff, providing a high level of continuity and longevity for the work. The Reduce Abuse Project based in Clydebank High School is co-ordinating and delivering domestic abuse prevention programmes to young people in secondary schools and other youth settings in West Dunbartonshire and identifying children’s needs in relation to this issue. A teaching and resource pack for teaching staff has been developed as well as a training programme to support teachers using the pack.

Police and Procurator Fiscal

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary has recently carried out a thematic inspection of Scottish Police forces' performance on domestic abuse. Following on from the groundbreaking *Hitting Home* report published in 1997, the new report (published in August 2008) makes a number of recommendations:

Establishing a national database of perpetrators; reviewing the role of the domestic abuse officer in line with good practice identified in the report; developing a common approach to training and support for officers; working towards implementing a single core model of risk assessment and management and reviewing and reinforcing quality assurance practices and processes for recording domestic abuse incidents.

The report notes that 'The quality of police intervention is critical to preventing further violence and abuse.'

The Association of Chief Police Officers (Scotland) has taken a strong position on all forms of violence against women. On domestic abuse in particular, there is a joint protocol between ACPOS and the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS), which was renewed in December 2008³⁰. The protocol seeks to "identify best practice and obtain consistency of approach in the investigation, reporting and prosecution of these cases, with a view to improving the service ... provided to the public, and in particular victims, in dealing with criminal conduct arising from domestic abuse incidents". All eight police forces across Scotland have taken significant steps to improve their response to violence against women over recent years.

Strathclyde Police has recently established a Domestic Abuse Task Force, the first of its kind in Scotland. The team of specialist officers will actively target the most persistent offenders, sending out a strong message to perpetrators whilst also providing protection and support for victims.

The pro-active team targets offenders who have been identified by divisions as presenting the most significant risk of harm to victims and their families.

Officers use a variety of skills and investigation methods such as intelligence gathering, surveillance capabilities and family liaison and crime scene management experience to target the most dangerous offenders.

The hand-picked, highly skilled officers who make up the 18-strong Domestic Abuse Task Force also work in conjunction with local police officers and partner agencies to ensure victims are fully supported and that they or their family or friends have the confidence to come forward to report abuse.

Tackling violence against women continues to be a priority for COPFS and COPFS has made substantial progress in 2 major areas: domestic abuse and sexual crimes.

30 In Partnership, Challenging Domestic Abuse, December 2008.

Domestic Abuse is an important area for COPFS because incidents of alleged domestic abuse represent a substantial number of the police reports received by prosecutors across Scotland. In the vast majority of these cases, reports concern allegations of violence against women. COPFS recognises the importance of a joined up response from the police and prosecutors in tackling domestic abuse and seeking to protect victims. The Joint Protocol referred to above is an excellent example of such an approach.

Training for all legal staff, Victim Information and Advice staff and precognoscers includes contributions from outwith the prosecution service and covers the effects of domestic abuse on women and the particular issues facing minority ethnic victims, lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender victims and male victims. There is also a dedicated specialist unit in Glasgow for the investigation and prosecution of domestic abuse cases.

COPFS is committed to tackling sexual crime. Following the publication of the COPFS Review of Sexual Offences in June 2006 which made 50 recommendations for change, COPFS embarked on a 3 year implementation plan. The aims of the Review were to make recommendations:

- To improve the standard of service provided by Crown Office and the Procurator Fiscal Service to victims and witnesses of sexual offences;
- For the development of comprehensive guidance for prosecution staff on the investigation and prosecution of sexual offences; and
- For the delivery of appropriate training to prosecution staff in the investigation and prosecution of sexual offences.

Through the implementation programme COPFS has introduced a specialist approach to the investigation of sexual crime; a programme of specialist training and systems to ensure early communication between police and prosecutors at the earliest stages of the investigation of sexual crime.

Health

In September 2008, the Scottish Government's Directorate of Healthcare Policy & Strategy issued a Chief Executive's Letter (CEL) on Gender-Based Violence. The letter details a 3-year programme to address the health consequences of gender-based violence and outlines the responsibility of all health boards to produce and implement a plan to specify how they will achieve the following 4 key deliverables of the programme:

- Introduction of routine enquiry of abuse in mental health, maternity, addictions, sexual & reproductive health, A&E and primary care settings;
- Dissemination of guidance on gender-based violence to staff;
- Production of an employee policy for staff with experience of abuse, and staff who are perpetrators of abuse;
- Multi-agency responses to abuse, with a particular focus on homelessness and child protection.

A National Gender-Based Violence Team has been created to support health boards develop and deliver on their action plans.

Voluntary Sector

The sex industry is immensely profitable and rapidly expanding. In recent years the Scottish Government has addressed various aspects of sexual exploitation, such as street prostitution, adult entertainment/lap dancing and pornography. This public debate has increased awareness of commercial sexual exploitation as a form of gender-based violence and organisations are beginning to look at how they could/should address this within their work.

The Women's Support Project works on a broad range of issues including: sexual violence, child sexual abuse and incest; support for women whose children have been sexually abused; domestic abuse; prostitution and other forms of commercial sexual exploitation. As a result of their application to the Scottish Government's Violence Against Women Funding Stream, the Women's Support Project received funding to develop a national post to challenge the demand for prostitution and commercial sexual exploitation. Much of this work will be delivered in conjunction with Multi-Agency Partnerships and Training Consortia.

6.4 Focus of Future Activities

A Phased Approach

‘Safer Lives: Changed Lives’ is a framework, not an action plan or a definitive blueprint of everything that will be undertaken.

We recognise that it is unrealistic to expect that all aspects of such a wide ranging agenda can be tackled at the same time. We therefore suggest that a phased approach is adopted which recognises the opportunities which are presented at any given time to tackle a particular issue. While individual agencies may decide to take forward work on different specific aspects of violence against women, such as domestic abuse or rape and sexual assault, according to their own priorities, the overall direction of travel should always be consistent with the definition and outcomes contained in this document.

This approach is intended to have a lifespan beyond the current spending review period and we acknowledge that some of the aspects of violence against women referenced are not current priorities for action. However it will be possible to make progress on increasing safety for women and children without immediately extending activities across the entire agenda, and at this point it is not possible to predict what future developments might encompass.

Key issues to address:

As we have seen from the evidence there are three key issues which need to be considered further in this coming period:

1. Developing an effective approach to prevention and reducing violence against women. It has been easier over time to determine what is required to provide resources and activity to support women and children experiencing violence and abuse. It has been harder to focus on and take forward measures to **prevent** violence and abuse. This needs to be addressed;
2. Providing improved support for marginalised women and women and children with diverse needs. Whilst some support is available, it is clear from the limited evidence available that women from different backgrounds and with diverse needs may not have access to the same support. There is a need to establish what is required and how to realise this in a climate with limited resources;
3. The collection and collation of data on violence against women is a vexed question which was highlighted clearly in the literature review prepared for the National Group to Address Violence against women in 2005. A group is currently looking at data collection and this will be continued in order to develop effective means of measuring the extent of, and progress in addressing, violence against women.

To support the approach, the focus for the Scottish Government till March 2011 will be to work along with key partners to:

- a) Inform the work of the Violence Against Women Training Consortia so that support can be given to agencies and bodies in taking forward work on violence against women;
- b) Develop work with COSLA and local government so that appropriate guidance and information can be provided;
- c) Support the Violence Against Women Multi-Agency Partnerships to engage with local authorities and Community Planning Partnerships on local provision and strategies;
- d) Revise the guidance to Violence Against Women Multi-Agency Partnerships particularly in the light of the Concordat;
- e) Work with the EHRC, COSLA and other partners to articulate the linkages between work on violence against women and activity to tackle gender inequality;
- f) Encourage providers and key third sector organisations to consider closer collaboration and opportunities for greater integration of responses to different forms of violence. This does not imply, however, that services should ultimately be condensed into 'One Stop Shops'. Specialist services have an important role to play;
- g) Ensure greater cross-government collaboration across relevant policy interests which translates into integrated responses on the ground.
- h) Ensure further development of joint work with Violence Reduction Unit to enable consistent messages about violence against women to be promoted.

6.5 How will we measure progress?

As stated, the above will be the focus of our activities up to March 2011. Success indicators in the short term may therefore include:

- Progress addressing public attitudes to violence against women through ongoing national education activities including the annual Scottish Government *Domestic Abuse: There's No Excuse* campaign and Rape Crisis Scotland's *This is not an invitation to rape me* campaign (measured by campaign evaluations);
- Increased public confidence in service providers' response to violence against women (measured by reporting trends to police and support agencies);
- Increased understanding of the specific needs of women from different equality groups;
- More comprehensive collection of national and local data on the range of violence against women;

The approach, however, will continue to inform how we tackle violence against women beyond March 2011. As part of ongoing work, our objectives and indicators to measure progress will be developed and refined. Medium-term priorities we will work towards are likely to include:

- Sustainability of effective local and national approaches to tackling violence against women;
- Skilled and confident workforce across the range of practitioners;
- Individuals, families and communities empowered to take action against violence against women as it affects themselves and others.

In the longer term, the outcomes of work to tackle violence against women are:

- The achievement of gender equality in Scotland; and as a result
- the elimination of all forms of violence against women.

7. CONCLUSION

We believe that this approach, building on the groundbreaking work to date on domestic abuse, will put Scotland at the forefront of tackling violence against women. This work is central to the Government's purpose, and to several of our national outcomes. We are committed to making Scotland a safer place for all who live here.

Any form of violence, whether from a partner or ex partner, from a stranger or from someone in the workplace or community, is never acceptable. Violence blights lives and communities and holds us back from achieving all we can, as individuals and as a society. Violence against women in particular exacts a heavy toll, and in its widest sense impacts on all of us. We need to work together to end it.



**The Scottish
Government**

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