

1600 There were special crimes and punishments for women only. Women found guilty of gossiping and quarrelling were forced to stand in public with 'branks' over their head. A branks was made out of metal and had a mouthpiece to hold down the tongue, keep the mouth open and keep the women silent.

1782 Judge Buller ruled that a man could beat his wife with a stick as long as it was no thicker than his thumb. It was considered acceptable at this time that men would need to use violence to control and punish their wives.

1800 Before a woman married, her father or nearest male relative would make decisions for her until she reached the age of 21. When she married, her husband made decisions for her. A woman's husband owned all her possessions up until 1970.

1887 Women, for the first time, are allowed to study for university degrees.

1909 Women, known as suffragettes, who had been campaigning for the right to vote for almost 30 years, began to take militant direct action. Many went to jail for their actions. Some went on hunger strike and were force fed.

1919 Nancy Astor, the first woman MP to take up her seat, is elected at a by election.

1928 All women over the age of 21 are able to vote. Women struggled for almost 100 years for the right to vote at political elections.

1970's The first refuges for women experiencing domestic violence were opened in Scotland and England.

1976 A husband could claim damages for harm done to him when his wife had been raped, on the grounds that 'the exclusive possession of his wife's body had been violated.®

1989 Rape within marriage was recognized as a crime in Scotland. The law was changed in England and Wales in 1991.

1993 First zero tolerance campaign is launched by the Women's Committee of Edinburgh District Council. It is then taken up by local authorities across the UK. Violence against women became a policy priority of the Scottish Parliament, established in 1997.