

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

Community Safety Committee

14 January 2015

**REPORT ON SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT STRATEGY TO ERADICATE
VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS****Report by Executive Director (Housing and Community Care)****PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To inform members about Equally Safe, The Scottish Government Strategy Eradicate Violence Against Women And Girls and describe the proposals for governance and implementation in Perth and Kinross.

1. BACKGROUND / MAIN ISSUES

- 1.1 Equally Safe is Scotland's strategy for preventing and eradicating violence against women and girls.
- 1.2 The strategy has been produced by the Scottish Government and COSLA, with input from key justice agencies (Police Scotland and COPFS) and from third sector agencies which support women.
- 1.3 The Perth and Kinross Violence Against Women Partnership was consulted during the development.
- 1.4 The overall aim of the strategy is to prevent and eradicate violence against women and girls, creating a strong and flourishing Scotland where women and girls live free from abuse - and the attitudes that help perpetuate it.
- 1.5 Four key priorities are set out within the strategy:
 1. Scottish society embraces equality and mutual respect, and rejects all forms of violence against women and girls.
 2. Women and girls thrive as equal citizens: socially, culturally, economically and politically.
 3. Interventions are early and effective, preventing violence and maximising the safety and wellbeing of women and girls.
 4. Men desist from all forms of violence against women and girls and perpetrators of such violence receive a robust and effective response.
- 1.6 While the strategy sets out some early commitments, it explains how a phased approach will help ensure that longer-term change is sustained.
- 1.7 The Strategy Document is annexed to this report.

- 1.8 The strategy was discussed at the Perth and Kinross Violence Against Women Partnership and it was recognised that implementation will be a key priority for the Partnership in 2015 and beyond.
- 1.9 This was highlighted as a strategic partnership issue in the Vulnerability Theme report at the meeting of the Community Safety and Environment Delivery Group which took place on 21 November.
- 1.10 It was agreed that the Perth and Kinross Violence Against Women Partnership would be responsible for implementation and that the Community Safety and Environment Delivery Group would provide oversight. The implementation of the strategy was added to the Community Safety and Environment Delivery Plan which will be used to monitor progress.

2. PROPOSALS

- 2.1 It is proposed that that Perth and Kinross Violence Against Women Partnership should be responsible for implementation of the strategy with the Community Safety and Environment Group providing oversight.

3. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 3.1 This strategy strengthens the direction of travel on violence against women. The Perth and Kinross Violence against Women Partnership is strong and has been in place for over 10 years. The new strategy provides a focus for further development and improvement and is welcomed by the partnership.
- 3.2 The Violence Against Women Partnership will take ownership of implementation and report on progress to the Community Safety and Environment Group and ultimately to the Community Planning Partnership.
- 3.3 It is recommended that Committee:
 - (i) entrusts the Local Authority role in implementing the strategy to the Perth and Kinross Violence Against Women Partnership as it develops and takes forward a local Action Plan, which reflects the priorities in the national strategy.
 - (ii) instructs the Executive Director to bring a further report to Committee on the key elements of the Action Plan as it emerges.

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1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

Strategic Implications	Yes / None
Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement	Y
Corporate Plan	Y
Resource Implications	
Financial	N
Workforce	N
Asset Management (land, property, IST)	N
Assessments	
Equality Impact Assessment	N
Strategic Environmental Assessment	N
Sustainability (community, economic, environmental)	N
Legal and Governance	N
Risk	N
Consultation	
Internal	N
External	N
Communication	
Communications Plan	N

1. Strategic Implications

1.1 Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement

Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations

Violence Against Women and Girls has a significant effect on the safety and development of a large proportion of the population. It is a critical element with thin the Equality and GIRFEC agendas. It is very important that partners recognise this as a priority and invest resources in it.

If Violence Against Women and Girls can be eradicated inequality will be reduced and the communities of Perth and Kinross will be much safer.

1.2 Corporate Plan

Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations.

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If Violence Against Women and Girls can be eradicated inequality will be reduced and the communities of Perth and Kinross will be much safer.

2. Resource Implications

2.1 Financial

This report contains no proposals which would have a financial impact on the Council.

2.2 Workforce

There are no workforce implications arising from this report.

2.3 Asset Management (land, property, IT)

There are no Asset management implications arising from this report.

3. Assessments

3.1 Equality Impact Assessment

The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 places a duty on the Council to identify and assess the environmental consequences of its proposals. However, no action is required as the Act does not apply to the matters presented in this report. This is because the Committee are requested to note the contents of the report only and the Committee are not being requested to approve, adopt or agree to an action or to set the framework for future decisions.

3.2 Strategic Environmental Assessment

The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 places a duty on the Council to identify and assess the environmental consequences of its proposals. However, no action is required as the Act does not apply to the matters presented in this report. This is because the Committee are requested to note the contents of the report only and the Committee are not being requested to approve, adopt or agree to an action or to set the framework for future decisions.

3.3 Sustainability

There are no issues in respect of sustainability from the proposals in this report.

3.4 Legal and Governance

This report contains no proposals which would have a legal or governance impact on the Council.

3.5 Risk

There are no issues in respect of risk from the proposals in this report.

4. Consultation

4.1 Internal

The strategy was discussed at the Perth and Kinross Violence Against Women Partnership at which Child Protection, Housing, Adult Care and Safer Communities are all represented, and it was recognised that implementation will be a key priority for the Partnership in 2015 and beyond.

This was highlighted as a strategic partnership issue in the Vulnerability Theme report at the meeting of the Community Safety and Environment Delivery Group which took place on 21 November.

It was agreed that the Perth and Kinross Violence Against Women Partnership would be responsible for implementation and that the Community Safety and Environment Delivery Group would provide oversight. The implementation of the strategy was added to the Community Safety and Environment Delivery Plan which will be used to monitor progress.

4.2 External

The Strategy was subject to extensive consultation and amendment during development. The Perth and Kinross Violence Against Women Partnership and its constituent agency members were part of the process namely Police, Perth and Kinross Council, NHS Tayside, Womens Aid, RASAC, Barnardos,.

5. Communication

- 5.1 There are no communication issues in respect of the proposals in this report.

2. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 2.1 None.

3. APPENDICES

Equally Safe - The Scottish Government Strategy to Eradicate Violence Against Women And Girls.

EQUALLY SAFE

Scotland's strategy for preventing
and eradicating violence against
women and girls

At a glance

Our aim

Our aim is to prevent and eradicate violence against women and girls, creating a strong and flourishing Scotland where all individuals are equally safe and respected, and where women and girls live free from such abuse – and the attitudes that help perpetuate it.



To achieve this our priorities are to ensure that

Scottish society embraces equality and mutual respect, and rejects all forms of violence against women and girls	Women and girls thrive as equal citizens: socially, culturally, economically and politically	Interventions are early and effective, preventing violence and maximising the safety and wellbeing of women and girls	Men desist from all forms of violence against women and girls and perpetrators of such violence receive a robust and effective response
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Our key objectives

Positive gender roles are promoted	Women and girls feel safe, respected and equal in our communities	Justice responses are robust, swift, consistent and coordinated	
People enjoy healthy, positive relationships	Women and men have equality of opportunity particularly with regard to access to power and resources	Women and girls access relevant, effective and integrated services	Men who carry out violence against women and girls are identified early and held to account by the criminal justice system.
Individuals and communities recognise and challenge violent and abusive behaviour		Service providers competently identify violence against women and girls, and respond effectively	Men who carry out violence against women and girls must change their behaviour and are supported to do so

National Performance Framework outcomes

We live our lives free from crime, disorder and danger	We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society	We have strong resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others	Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed
We have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk	Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to people's needs	We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people	We live longer, healthier lives

“There is one universal truth, applicable to all countries, cultures and communities: violence against women is never acceptable, never excusable, never tolerable.”

United Nations Secretary-General, Ban Ki-Moon

Contents

	Page
Foreword	
By Shona Robison MSP & Councillor Harry McGuigan	5
Equally Safe	
Introduction	8
Our strategic approach	12
Where we are now	16
Where we want to be	20
How we will get there	35
The next step	44

Foreword

Violence against women and girls, in any form, has no place in our vision for a safe, strong, successful Scotland. It damages health and wellbeing, limits freedom and potential, and is a violation of the most fundamental human rights.

This strategy, has been developed by the Scottish Government and COSLA in association with a wide range of partners including our specialist Violence Against Women support organisations such as Scottish Women's Aid and Rape Crisis Scotland alongside Police Scotland and Health Scotland. It is our country's strategy to take action on all forms of violence against women and girls.

By this we mean violent and abusive behaviour directed at women and girls precisely because they are women and girls, carried out predominantly by men. Behaviour that stems from ongoing inequality between men and women, and includes domestic abuse, rape, sexual assault, forced marriage, female genital mutilation (FGM) and prostitution.

Whatever form it takes, violence against women and girls can have an immediate and long-lasting impact on the individuals and families directly involved. It impacts on the wider health, wellbeing and safety of our communities breeding a culture where this type of harm tolerated – sometimes even condoned – and as a result is allowed to continue. This is quite simply unacceptable for modern day Scotland and does not reflect the country of equality we aspire to become.

On a practical level, the cost implications of failing to address the prevalence and implications of violence against women and girls are significant¹, amounting to an estimated £1.6 billion for domestic abuse and £4 billion for violence against women in all its forms. Expenditure that could be used elsewhere and help Scotland realise its full potential.

This isn't to say we haven't made progress in recent decades. The work of our partners and a wide range of organisations over many years has placed violence against women firmly on the agenda of government and mainstream services. Significant investment in services and provision have been made by consecutive Scottish

¹ Costs allow for a Scottish population roughly 10% of England and Wales, using figures from the 2009 update of *The Cost of Domestic Violence* by Walby S (2004), available at <http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/sociology/profiles/sylvia-walby/>; and *Hard knock life* by Justine Järvinen J, Kail A and Miller I (2008), available at <http://www.rapecrisisscotland.org.uk/workspace/publications/Hard-knock-life001-copy.jpg>, pages 10 & 11

Governments and local authorities. The issue is a priority for the police and of key importance to statutory agencies who are serious in tackling perpetrators and addressing violence against women.

However it is clear that much more needs to be done, building on where we've been and where we are now in relation to understanding what works. We need to eliminate the systematic gender inequality that lies at the root of violence against women and girls, and we need to be bold in how we do it. At the same time, we need to make the best use of increasingly limited resources, giving careful consideration to where to make further investment.

Each and every area of government and wider society has an important role to play in tackling this pernicious issue. Specialist organisations remain key in supporting those affected by violence and abuse of course, but it is not just an issue for them. It needs the engagement of the full range of interests including, local authorities, Police Scotland, NHS Scotland, Community Planning Partnerships, the civil and criminal justice systems, social work, housing, media, the business sector, employer bodies, trade unions, third sector organisations along with individuals and communities too.

It is only by working together across every area of Scottish life that we will successfully prevent and eradicate violence against women and girls.

This then, is a strategy that demands major and sustained change from us all so that we can create a Scotland to be proud of, where all our citizens flourish and are **Equally Safe**.

Shona Robison MSP,
Cabinet Secretary for
Commonwealth Games,
Sport, Equalities and
Pensioners' Rights

Councillor Harry McGuigan,
COSLA spokesperson on
Community Wellbeing and
Safety

1. Introduction

“I can’t believe how different I feel now. I’m so much stronger and no longer blame myself for the past.”

Service user,
West Lothian Domestic and Sexual
Assault Team

1. Introduction

1.1 Our aim

Our aim is to prevent and eradicate violence against women and girls, creating a strong and flourishing Scotland where all individuals are equally safe and respected, and where women and girls live free from such abuse – and the attitudes that help perpetuate it.

Ambitious? Undoubtedly. But to aspire to anything less is unacceptable. No woman or girl in Scotland should be subject to violence or abuse of any kind, physical or non-physical.

There are no quick fixes to this deep-rooted problem. Instead it requires significant social, cultural and attitudinal change over the long-term; change that calls for the sustained commitment not just of a wide range of partners but individuals and communities too.

In the drive to achieve our long-term aim we are clear about the importance of focusing on prevention but we must also be realistic and recognise that women and girls will continue to experience violence in all its forms today, tomorrow and for some time to come. Therefore, intervention services remain key. As a result both prevention and intervention will remain fundamentally important in our future work.

All forms, all women

Equally Safe is Scotland's strategy to tackle *all* forms of violence against women and girls: domestic abuse, rape and sexual assault; sexual harassment and intimidation at work and in public; stalking; commercial sexual exploitation such as prostitution, pornography and human trafficking; dowry-related violence; female genital mutilation (FGM); forced marriage; and so-called 'honour' based violence. We know that our approach is more developed for some of the forms of violence and abuse than others and this strategy will provide a framework for helping to address this as part of future work. The strategy recognises that women and girls are at risk of such abuse precisely *because* they are female and it aligns with the UN definition of violence against women that includes the girl child, reflecting that this risk is present throughout life. It is gender, rather than age, that predicts an individual's likelihood of experiencing inequality and the forms of violence described above, with girls, young women and adult women all at risk because they are female.

Clearly, boys and men can also experience violence and we are in no way diminishing the seriousness of that experience or proposing to alter the support on offer to them. What we are aiming to highlight however, is that being female in itself can lead to a range of discrimination and disadvantage, including experiencing male violence, and that this has to stop.

Not only that but violence against women can have significant consequences beyond those experienced by the individual. Children and young people growing up in the same family setting can be badly affected, whether as victims of violence directly or as witnesses to violence.

Strategic framework

Over the following pages, we set out our national strategy for preventing and eradicating violence against women and girls, informed by engagement with partners and the experiences of service providers and service users.

It starts with a shared understanding of the causes, risk factors and scale of the problem. It highlights the need to prioritise prevention. And it set out how we will develop the outcomes, indicators and performance measurement needed to realise our aim and priorities. This will be done by working collaboratively with partners, across policy areas and with a wide range of interests; by making best use of available resources and with clear governance and process.

What the strategy doesn't do is list the specific activity required of each of the different partners involved. Because **Equally Safe** is not a delivery plan. It's a strategic framework to help organisations and partners – individually and within Community Planning Partnerships – align their work with one shared goal: a strong, flourishing Scotland where women and girls live free from violence and the attitudes that help perpetuate it. The relevant outcomes and indicators and the actions we need to take to deliver our aim and priorities will be developed with partners.

1.2 The wider context

Not only is it our moral duty to take action against violence against women and girls, it is also our legal duty as set out by several international treaties and human rights obligations.

Amongst them are The Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (2011)²; The Global Platform for Action (1995)³ calling on governments to take integrated measures to prevent and eliminate violence against women and girls; The Human Rights Act (1988)⁴; and The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), an agenda for action to end discrimination against women.

Scotland is fully committed to meeting the benchmark set by each of these international treaties and obligations.

National Performance Framework

Preventing violence against women and girls is also essential to achieving the Scottish Government's overarching purpose: *"to focus government and public services on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth."*

It contributes to the Scottish Government strategic objectives in particular safer and stronger, healthier, and wealthier and fairer – and to eight of the national outcomes contained in the National Performance Framework.

Equally Safe also provides a strategic framework for the delivery of the Scottish Government's equality outcome on tackling violence against women⁵.

Wider policy

Work to prevent and eradicate violence against women and girls is interwoven into several other Scottish Government strategies, programmes and frameworks. These range from Curriculum for Excellence (2002), Equally Well (2008), Early Years Framework (2009), Early Years Collaborative (2012) and National Parenting Strategy (2012), to the Strategy for Justice in Scotland (2012) and Getting Our Priorities Right (2013).

² <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1772191>

³ <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/>

⁴ <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/human-rights/what-are-human-rights/the-human-rights-act/>

⁵ This is of 13 equality-related outcomes introduced by Scottish Government in 2013 as part of meeting its responsibilities under the public sector equality duty within the Equality Act 2010

Adding to these, Scotland's first National Action Plan for Human Rights (SNAP) 2013-2017 explicitly recognises that taking action to address violence against women and girls is needed to ensure we realise the human rights of all our citizens.

2. Strategic approach

“I feel more confident, like
I’m getting my life back and
I believe in myself again.”

Service user, East Ayrshire Women’s Aid

2. Strategic approach

2.1 A shared understanding

To be fully effective in our work, it's important that everyone involved has a shared understanding of violence against women and girls: the causes, risk factors and scale of the problem in Scotland.

The Scottish Government definition states:

“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.”

This is not to suggest that all men are violent. To be clear, the majority of men are not violent. Nor is it to deny that women use violence or that men use violence against men, including male partners.

But evidence shows that men commit the vast majority of violent crimes and sexual offences. During 2012-13 alone, there were 60,080 incidents of domestic abuse recorded by the police in Scotland.⁶ Of these, 44,916 (80%) had a female victim and a male perpetrator.

Evidence also shows that the tactics of coercive control – behaviour that seeks to strip away the victim's freedom and sense of self – are rooted in gender inequality, roles and assumptions.

Risk factors

Whilst violence against women and girls occurs across all sections of society, not all women and girls are at equal risk.

Some factors can increase vulnerability to abuse and keep women trapped; factors such as age, financial dependence, poverty, disability, homelessness, insecure immigration status and ethnicity.

Addressing these additional risks therefore, will be a key requirement in our future work to prevent violence against women and girls. With this in mind, equality analysis and assessment will be an integral part of the process around the development of outcomes and interventions; the purpose of which will be to identify the impact of the strategy on the diversity of women and girls and, in doing so, inform targeted and appropriate preventative action.

⁶ Domestic Abuse Recorded by the Police in Scotland 2012-13, <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/10/2411>, (Section 3.1 - incidents of domestic abuse recorded by the police)

The scale of the problem

Without doubt, violence against women and girls is a problem of global concern. But just what is the scale of the problem here in Scotland? Realistically, we only know the tip of the iceberg as all too often incidents of violence and abuse against women and girls go unreported.

However, the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS⁷) – an annual survey measuring adults' experiences and perceptions of crime in Scotland – collects information on women's experience of sexual victimisation and stalking through the self-completion section of the questionnaire and found that:

- 3% of adults had experienced serious sexual assault (including forcing or attempting to force someone to have sexual intercourse or take part in another sexual activity when they did not want to) since the age of 16. This varied by gender, with 4% of women experiencing serious sexual assault since the age of 16 compared with 1% of men.
- 8% of adults experienced at least one type of less serious sexual assault (including indecent exposure, sexual threats and sexually touching when it was not wanted) since the age of 16. This proportion was higher for women, with 13 per cent experiencing at least one form of less serious sexual offence since the age of 16, compared to two per cent of men.
- 6% of adults reported experiencing at least one form of stalking and harassment in the last 12 months. While the overall risk of stalking and harassment was equal for men and women, the risk varied according to the type of stalking and harassment. For example, of those who reported receiving unwanted emails or texts, 49 per cent were male and 51 per cent were female. In contrast, of those who experienced someone waiting or loitering outside their home or workplace, 71 per cent were female and 29 per cent were male.

These figures represent a mere snapshot but they do give some indication of the scale of the problem in present-day Scotland.

There is also evidence to suggest that adolescent and young women face a higher risk of violence from a partner than older groups. For example, the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey found that younger adults were more likely to have experienced abuse by a partner in the last 12 months, with rates varying from 5% of 16-24 year olds who had contact with a partner or ex-partner in that time to less than 1% of those aged 65 or older.

⁷ National Statistics – 2012/13 Scottish Crime and Justice Survey

In another study, published by NSPCC, one in three 13 to 17 year olds reported some form of sexual partner violence⁸.

2.2 Setting our sights on prevention

Focusing on prevention in itself isn't new. In **Safer Lives: Changed Lives (2009)** prevention of violence against women and girls was a key objective. What is new is the level of priority we will assign to it.

Equally Safe will see a step change in emphasis on preventing violence from occurring in the first place, and where it does occur intervening at the earliest possible stage to minimise the harm caused.

Of course, we must continue our efforts to reduce levels of abuse and provide effective services for women and girls affected by violence and for perpetrators to change their behaviour and desist from further violence. However, by eradicating the problem altogether we can deliver even better outcomes.

Better for the individuals and communities we help keep safe from harm. Better for society as women and men enjoy greater equality. And better for the economy by enabling expenditure currently directed towards reactive measures to be redirected elsewhere.

Challenging the norm

Prevention challenges the notion that violence is inevitable or acceptable. It demands a fundamental change in the societal attitudes, values and structures that give rise to and sustain the problem.

It's the most ambitious approach we can take, demanding a determined effort over the long-term. It requires those working in public service delivery to engage with communities and those affected by violence and abuse to re-imagine and redesign existing services with a renewed and increased focus on prevention, and those working in other sectors, including the private sector, to identify where they can pursue preventative measures.

It's also the most challenging approach as the positive effects of preventative measures may take some years to deliver noticeable benefits at a time when public resources are already squeezed and demand for measurable results is heightened.

But prevention is the *only* approach if we are to achieve our aim of a strong and flourishing Scotland where all individuals, regardless of gender, live **Equally Safe**.

⁸ http://www.nspcc.org.uk/Inform/research/findings/partner_exploitation_and_violence_wda68092.html

3. Where we are now

“Having someone who understood and knew how important protecting my confidentiality was and who put me in touch with Women’s Aid was life-saving.”

Service user, Ross-shire Women’s Aid

3. Where we are now

Much good work is already underway, both in terms of preventing violence against women and girls, and dealing with the consequences when it does occur.

Gender inequality is a root cause of the problem and despite the many advances being made there remain persistent inequalities between men and women. The gender pay gap of 13.3% is one example⁹; the overrepresentation of women in lower paid sectors and underrepresentation of women in senior posts is another.

To help tackle this, the Scottish Government has launched an extensive programme aimed at increasing employability, addressing the gender pay gap, improving the flexibility of work and reducing occupational segregation – including a commitment that 40% of places on public boards should be filled by women.

Related to this, the Scottish Government has legislated, via the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, to increase the level of funded early learning and childcare for three and four year olds and Scotland's most vulnerable two year olds.

Shaping opinion

In terms of shaping public opinion, partner organisations are raising public awareness through initiatives such as the Zero Tolerance, White Ribbon and Together We Can Stop It campaigns, encouraging men, women, boys and girls to take action.

We're also encouraging equality and mutual respect from an early age through the Curriculum for Excellence with its guidance on relationships, sexual health, and parenthood education, as well as programmes such as REACT which focuses on improving relationships and reducing violence and aggression, and Roots of Empathy which promotes emotional competence and empathy.

In tandem, the Mentors in Violence Prevention Scotland Programme (MVP Scotland) is working hard to tackle gender stereotyping and attitudes that condone violence against women and girls, while the national learning resource Sexual Health and Relationship Education (SHARE) is being updated to include advice around sexting, body image, pornography and media.

⁹ <http://www.closesthegap.org.uk/content/gap-statistics/>

Indeed, the media has a key role to play, sometimes giving a negative portrayal of women and girls. Developments in press self-regulation through the Leveson Inquiry and the subsequent Royal Charter on the self-regulation of the press agreed by the Scottish and UK Governments will allow for third party challenge to inaccurate portrayal of women and girls in general, in addition to the existing ability for an individual to challenge inaccuracy in relation to herself.

Crosscutting policy areas

Beneficial work is also being done in other policy areas that impact on women and girls at risk of, or experiencing, violence.

Of particular note are the 2012 Homelessness Commitment which establishes strong housing rights for those assessed as unintentionally homeless; the development of the Housing Options approach; and the Refreshed Framework for Maternity Care which advances the quality of pathways of care for women.

Improving and increasing services

For those women and girls affected by violence and abusive behaviour, we're improving the consistency and availability of mainstream and specialist services across Scotland.

The Scottish Government has allocated £10.3 million to frontline services for victims for 2012-2015. Local authorities are commissioning specialist services that are critical to prevention and early intervention. At a national level Scottish Women's Aid, Rape Crisis Scotland and Zero Tolerance are key to Scotland's forward looking stance on violence against women. And at a local level third sector women's organisations such as Women's Aid groups, Rape Crisis centres and ASSIST continue to provide a key component of the support available.

Together, we're improving identification and response to victims and promoting greater clarity and uniformity across practices and procedures. To date, this has resulted in advances such as the NHS Scotland National Gender Based Violence Programme; Standard Operating Procedures for Human Trafficking, Inter-agency Guidance for Child Trafficking; and Prostitution and Sexual Crime Investigation.

Criminal justice response

We also now have a single national police force, Police Scotland, which in its first year established the National Rape Task Force and Domestic Abuse Task Force – each with their own dedicated investigations teams – as well as a National Honour Based Violence (HBV) Action Plan and Prostitution Working Group. The senior level commitment to this agenda within the police service in Scotland has been exemplary and the focus on driving down the incidence of domestic abuse in particular has been a positive development. During the first year of operation of Police Scotland, 2013-14, the proportion of domestic abuse incidents which resulted in a crime report increased by 6.3 per cent. The detection rate for all sexual crimes improved by 7.6 per cent and for rape by 10.4 per cent. Historic reporting of crimes dating back more than a year increased and now account for 26% of all sexual crimes and 36% of reported rapes.¹⁰

Recent years have seen a concerted effort to improve other aspects of the criminal justice response to violence against women and girls.

This includes: reform and clarification of the law such as the criminalising of Forced Marriage and a new statutory offence of 'stalking'; the introduction of a Procurator Fiscal for Domestic Abuse and lead prosecutors for human trafficking and female genital mutilation (FGM); and the launch of a dedicated National Sexual Crimes Unit;.

These developments are in addition to the expansion of specialist courts to deal with domestic abuse offenders, as well as post-court education intervention via the Caledonian System. Victims' rights within the criminal justice system have also been strengthened through the Victims and Witnesses (Scotland) Act 2014. Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences have been established in all Police Scotland Divisions, and the work of ASSIST in the former Strathclyde Police area has been key in supporting women and children affected by domestic abuse throughout the court process.

¹⁰Police Scotland Management Information for year End 2013/14:
<http://www.scotland.police.uk/assets/pdf/138327/232757/management-information-year-end-2013-14>

4. Where we want to be

“I wish I’d come to you
the first time I was assaulted
instead of leaving it so long.”

Service user, Victim Support

4. Where we want to be

4.1 Aims and priorities

Our overarching aim is to prevent and eradicate violence against women and girls. To achieve it, we have identified our key priority areas around which work to determine outcomes, indicators and performance measurement will be developed.

We know that these have to be informed by the knowledge, skills and experiences of a broad range of individuals: from those working directly in the sector, to those working in areas that have broad relevance to the violence against women and girls agenda, through to service users themselves.

By channelling our collective resources into the development of ambitious outcomes we can make even greater progress.

Our work will be shaped around the following key priorities

- Scottish society embraces equality and mutual respect, and rejects all forms of violence against women and girls
- Women and girls thrive as equal citizens: socially, culturally, economically and politically
- Interventions are early and effective, preventing violence and promoting women's safety and wellbeing
- Men desist from all forms of violence against women and girls and perpetrators of such violence receive a robust and effective response

In this section, we look at each priority area, what the supporting evidence tells us, the key objectives and the approach that will be taken to shape relevant Violence Against Women outcomes, indicators and performance measurement to ensure delivery of this strategy for Scotland.

Priority 1: Scottish society embraces equality and mutual respect, and rejects all forms of violence against women and girls

“I believe changes can be made to end violence but it must go back to the roots of education and gender conditioning.”

Service user,
Kingdom Abuse Survivors Project

4.1.1 Priority 1

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

We want to ensure that:

- Positive gender roles are promoted
- People enjoy healthy, positive relationships
- Individuals and communities recognise and challenge violent and abusive behaviour.

What we know

Research shows that community attitudes towards violence against women and girls are a key predictor of perpetration of such abuse. Not only that but they can also heavily influence women's own responses to victimisation, as well as those of wider society.¹¹

Gender stereotypes play a central role, with individuals who hold discriminatory attitudes being more likely to tolerate violence and abuse against women. So an important first step when adopting a prevention focused approach is to raise awareness of what constitutes violence and abuse, and that it is unacceptable in any form.

Similarly, it's important to increase awareness of the appropriate actions that can be taken in response to violence against women, whether in relation to services for those affected or legal responses. Evidence shows the criminal justice system has an important role not only in dealing with perpetrators but also in shaping community perceptions, with strong legal sanctions encouraging community intolerance of violence against women and girls.

The media, too, has a powerful influence in either reinforcing or challenging the attitudes and norms that contribute to violence against women. Numerous studies link sexualised violence in the media to increases in violence towards women, rape myth acceptance and anti-women attitudes.¹² This is particularly worrying when the images used involve very young women.

¹¹ Flood M and Pease B (2006) The Factors Influencing Community Attitudes in Relation to Violence Against Women: A Critical Review of the Literature. Melbourne: Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth)
http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/~media/ProgramsandProjects/DiscriminationandViolence/ViolenceAgainstWomen/CAS_Paper3_CriticalLiterature.ashx

¹² Hagemann-White C et al (2010) Review of Research on Factors at Play in Perpetration
http://ec.europa.eu/justice/funding/daphne3/multi-level_interactive_model/bin/review_of_research.pdf

Despite the power of the media, it is generally recognised that cultural change can't be achieved through media campaigns alone, though some community development initiatives have been found to increase the effectiveness of such campaigns by reinforcing messages at the local level.¹³

Going forward

So going forward an important first step when adopting a prevention-focused approach will be to raise awareness of what constitutes violence and abuse, what underpins it and that it is unacceptable in any form.

The earlier that there is a shift in discriminatory cultures, attitudes and behaviours the better, and primary and secondary schools are key settings for early intervention. Adolescence in particular is regarded as a crucial time to intervene – it's during this key transition point in life that young people develop their social and sexual identities.

Education professionals therefore have a huge opportunity to lead the way in attitudinal change, being in a prime position to nurture the next generations on positive gender roles and healthy, equal relationships from an early age.

Leadership in key organisations and agencies will be crucial in helping to develop positive cultures and behaviours around violence against women.

Likewise there is a role to be played in workplaces to champion a culture of zero tolerance of harassment and abuse and one in which there is understanding of the needs of those experiencing violence and domestic abuse.

The different forms of violence against women will demand specific interventions and these will be explored further as part of the development of outcomes and actions resulting from this strategy. For example we would expect to work with others to reduce the demand for Commercial Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and ensure that women working in this area have other options than being driven into this work as a result of poverty, substance abuse or manipulation by abusive partners.

¹³ Flood M (2007) Preventing violence before it occurs: A framework and background paper to guide the primary prevention of violence against women in Victoria
<http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/~media/ProgramsandProjects/DiscriminationandViolence/PreventingViolence/frame%20web.ashx>

Achieving the objectives under this priority will require concerted action across the Scottish Government, wider public sector, private sector, third sector and communities. Quite simply, the more we all do to tackle the root causes of violence against women and girls, the sooner we'll achieve our shared goal of preventing and eradicating the problem altogether.

Priority 2: Women and girls thrive as equal citizens: socially, culturally, economically and politically

“Education has provided more opportunities and gave me a new outlook on life.”

Service user, SAY Women

4.1.2 Priority 2

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

We want to ensure

- Women and girls feel safe, respected and equal in our communities
- Women and men have equality of opportunity particularly with regard to access to power and resources

What we know

Research shows that societies in which women's participation is valued, and where there are fewer economic, social or political differences in power between men and women, have lower levels of violence.¹⁴

Tackling poverty amongst women therefore is key if we're to reduce gender-power imbalances, as is improving access to decision-making structures, processes and political representation.

However this alone won't suffice. We know from Scandinavian countries, where high levels of violence against women and girls persist despite being close to achieving gender equality in the workforce¹⁵, that the attitudes and structures that underpin the violence must also be addressed.

Adding to the problem, welfare reforms being introduced by the UK Government are predicted to have a significant negative impact on women's resources. Under the new Universal Credit system, payment will be made as one single household payment – representing a loss of independent income for women in couples where the Universal Credit is to be paid to the man. The single earnings disregard meanwhile, may weaken the incentive for many second earners and in turn, see a return to a male breadwinner model and a reduction in women's financial independence.¹⁶

¹⁴ VicHealth (2010) National survey on community attitudes to violence against women 2009 : changing cultures, changing attitudes - preventing violence against women : a summary of findings.
http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/~media/ResourceCentre/PublicationsandResources/PVAW/NCAS_CommunityAttitudes_report_2010.ashx

¹⁵ Kelly L and Lovett J (2012) Awareness raising activities to fight violence against women and girls in the UK
http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/exchange_of_good_practice_uk/uk_discussion_paper_uk_2012_en.pdf

¹⁶ Scottish Government (2013) The Gender Impact of Welfare Reform
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0043/00432337.pdf>

This is in addition to welfare reforms already implemented that impact disproportionately on women.

Alcohol and drug misuse are other secondary factors that can increase both the frequency and severity of violence against women and girls. As with poverty amongst women, addressing these alone will not eliminate violence, but it will support broader prevention efforts.¹⁷

Research has shown that women express much higher levels of fear for their personal security in public places, whether on or waiting for transport, or in the use of car parks, particularly at night. This fear can, in turn, place a constraint on the mobility of women and their participation in public life as they factor personal safety into routine decisions and activities.¹⁸

Going forward

We want the women of Scotland to enjoy the same opportunities in life as men.

This includes women being economically independent, with equal opportunity to achieve their full potential in all sectors and at all levels of the labour market. This requires continued action to tackle the barriers to work facing different women, to eliminate the pay gap, and to address the overrepresentation of women in lower paid jobs and the underrepresentation of women in senior positions. If this is to happen there has to be a better understanding of the value and nature of women's contribution to Scotland's economy and society, which includes women being equally represented in public and political life, with opportunities to participate in the decision making processes in our country.

And we want women to feel safe where they live and work and to be confident that they can go about all aspects of their lives without fear. We expect to work with partners to determine the appropriate outcomes, indicators and measurements for this priority and to develop an accompanying plan of action for delivery.

¹⁷ UN Women (2012) Handbook for national action plans on violence against women
<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/vaw/handbook-for-nap-on-vaw1.pdf>

¹⁸ Greenan L (2004) Violence Against Women: A literature review. Edinburgh: Scottish Government
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/37428/0009571.pdf>; End Violence Against Women Coalition (2008) Realising Rights, Fulfilling Obligations: A Template for an Integrated Strategy on Violence Against Women for the UK
http://www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk/data/files/resources/16/realising_rights.pdf

Priority 3: Interventions are early and effective, preventing violence and maximising the safety and wellbeing of women and girls

“It gave me the confidence to believe in myself; huge difference and a huge source of help; without it I would still be in a mess.”

Service user,
Caithness and Sutherland's Women's Aid

4.1.3 Priority 3

Interventions are early and effective, preventing violence and maximising the safety and wellbeing of women and girls

We want to ensure

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

What we know

The role of third sector organisations is key to the support and provision to those affected by violence and domestic abuse.

Organisations such as Scottish Women's Aid, Rape Crisis Scotland, the Women's Support Project and ASSIST provide both direct support and input to strategic developments.

Statutory agencies of course have a vital role in delivery of services and in the safety and wellbeing of women and children affected by violence and abuse. The working together of statutory and third sector in multi-agency activity has been especially productive. For example the use of Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs) has been invaluable and the multi-agency partnerships where they have linked in well to the local area, have been helpful.

Women and girls can have different support needs, depending on the form(s) of violence experienced and individual circumstances. Our responses must be similarly diverse, recognising the connection between different aspects of inequality and discrimination, and responding with a range of complementary mainstream and specialist support services. There is a range of expertise and support already available in organisations and services which have been in place and funded by the Scottish Government and others over many years. And in the period ahead there is scope to look at what other support can be developed to achieve the outcomes and deliver the actions which will be determined as part of taking this strategic framework forward.

Some of the areas where diversity of provision is relevant include::

- Maternity, mental health, primary care, substance misuse, A&E, community nursing and sexual health services
- Safe accommodation
- Counselling and support services

- Advocacy and legal services
- Longer-term support for the recovery of those affected by violence.

It's not just the range of services we provide that is important. Where, how and when we provide them is also critical. Early identification is essential to eliminating violence and its subsequent negative consequences in women's lives. We have known for some time that only a minority of those affected by violence report it to the police or seek help from specialist women's services.¹⁹ Whilst work by both women's organisations and statutory agencies including the police continues to address the issue of reporting, this remains an issue.

It's vital that practitioners working across the range of mainstream services that come into daily contact with women and girls are able to identify those at risk and offer an appropriate, safe and consistent response - from police officers, teachers, community workers, social workers and housing officers, to GPs, midwives, dentists, bar reporters, and children and young people's services.²⁰

Then and only then can we be sure of offering those affected or at risk a professional, capable and compassionate response from their very first point of contact; an integrated response that's quick and easy to access, shares information between services and in doing so, spares women the ordeal of having to repeat their experiences over and over.

Greater consistency and information sharing between services will also increase our collective ability to keep women safe and hold perpetrators to account, along with encouraging individual organisations to consider the implications that their actions have on other services in the system.

Going forward

We want an integrated system of mainstream, specialist and third sector services capable of delivering a coherent and consistent response across a diverse range of needs – but that also allows for flexibility to reflect local circumstances.

We want to have clear priorities for public sector agencies: from routine enquiry within NHS services to support early identification, through to

¹⁹ Greenan L (2004) Violence Against Women: A literature review. Edinburgh: Scottish Government
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/37428/0009571.pdf>

²⁰ UN Women (2012) Handbook for national action plans on violence against women
<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/vaw/handbook-for-nap-on-vaw1.pdf>

clear national and local protocols, and data collection and information sharing protocols.

And we want to ensure that women with complex needs or at additional risk of discrimination are supported.

We also want to intervene sooner for better outcomes. A number of projects are already adopting an early intervention approach – a trend most evident with regard to domestic abuse where the tendency towards repeat abuse highlights the importance of acting early to prevent further harm or abuse.

As we outline later, we expect to work with partners and relevant interests to determine the appropriate outcomes, indicators and measurements for this priority and to develop an accompanying plan of action for delivery.

Priority 4: Men desist from all forms of violence against women and girls and perpetrators of such violence receive a robust and effective response

“I used to feel it was my entire fault and I felt ashamed. I now know and believe for the first time the abuse was the fault and responsibility of my abuser.”

Service user,
Kingdom Abuse Survivors Project

4.1.4 Priority 4

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

We must ensure that:

- Justice responses are robust, swift, consistent and coordinated
- Men who carry out violence against women and girls are held to account by the criminal justice system
- Men who carry out violence against women and girls are identified early and held to account by the criminal justice system.

What we know

The criminal justice system has an important role in the enforcement of the law and prevention of violence against women.

The robust approach of the police and COPFS to the detection and prosecution of offences involving domestic abuse sends an unequivocal message that there is no place for this type of offending in our society and it will not be tolerated. Perpetrators of domestic abuse can expect the full force of the law to hold them to account for their behaviour.

Prosecution is important for survivors because it addresses the crime they have experienced. It also can help their psychological recovery by acknowledging their status as victims. This can be especially important for the victims of rape.²¹

Unfortunately, there are still barriers to prosecution: from victims' reluctance to report a crime, through to institutional barriers such as the length of time each stage of the process takes. As a result, attrition rates are still higher than we would hope them to be.²²

It's not just prosecution outcomes that are of note. It is important that victims are treated respectfully during the justice process and that they are supported through the life of case – from reporting through to giving evidence and in the period after. Organisations like ASSIST provide this function in the context of specialist domestic abuse courts.

Internationally, there is growing consensus that prosecution alone is not enough to eradicate the problem of violence against women and

²¹ Ford DA and Breall S (2003) Violence Against Women: Synthesis of Research for Prosecutors. US Department of Justice. <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/199660.pdf>

²² End Violence Against Women Coalition (2008) Realising Rights, Fulfilling Obligations: A Template for an Integrated Strategy on Violence Against Women for the UK http://www.endviolenceagainstown.org.uk/data/files/resources/16/realising_rights.pdf

girls. Where appropriate, perpetrators must also be supported to change their behaviour and they must be identified early.

Currently, perpetrators are most commonly identified through the reporting to or identification by the police although there is some evidence that a small minority of perpetrators may be identified by seeking help at crisis moments, such as a partner leaving or when child contact issues arise²³; media advertising and signposting by social welfare agencies are other potential routes that perpetrators have suggested would be effective²⁴. A key question however is what opportunities are there for intervention once a perpetrator is identified by whatever means.

Going forward

We must make it clear in everything we say and do that violence against women and girls in any shape or form will not be tolerated in Scotland. We want to reinforce the consistent message that all forms of violence against women and girls are not acceptable and perpetrators must expect to receive a response which is proportionate but equally swift and effective.

We want women and girls affected by violence and abuse to be supported by a sensitive, efficient and effective justice system. In this context, we will explore how long it takes a case involving violence against women or girls to move through the court process and the impact on the victim and effect on the level of attrition. Relevant links should also be made between the experience of women and girls within the criminal and civil justice systems.

We want the men who carry out such violence to be identified earlier and held to account for their behaviour.

We want robust enforcement to address re-offending and to ensure that men get the support they need to change their behaviour at the earliest opportunity.

²³ Hester M et al (2006) Domestic Violence Perpetrators: Identifying Needs to Inform Early Intervention <https://mobile.worcestershire.gov.uk/cms/pdf/Domestic-Violence-Perpetrators-Identifying-needs-to-inform-early-intervention.pdf>

²⁴ End Violence Against Women Coalition (2008) Realising Rights, Fulfilling Obligations: A Template for an Integrated Strategy on Violence Against Women for the UK http://www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk/data/files/resources/16/realising_rights.pdf

The specific outcomes, indicators and actions which will deliver against this priority will be developed with partners as explained in the next section of the Strategy. As part of this, we will also consider where it is appropriate to set targets to drive improvement.

5: How we will get there

“I want to give my opinion...
to help other women in the
same position.”

Service user, Argyll and Bute Rape Crisis

5. How we will get there

5.1 Achieving the change

We're clear about the need to address the full spectrum of violence and abuse against women and girls, and the systematic inequality that underlies it. We've identified our aim and priorities and set out the framework for achieving these. If we are to make the transformational change we envisage in this critical area, we need to develop an ambitious and aligned programme of action, with a robust performance framework including appropriate outcomes, indicators and targets. In this section, we explain how we intend to take this forward.

Equally Safe isn't about starting from scratch. As has been established, there's a great deal of activity already underway within the Scottish Government, local authorities, Police Scotland, statutory and specialist third sector organisations and agencies, and communities.

Rather, it's about each and every one of us ensuring that our joint future work is aligned with and contributes to agreed outcomes, objectives and ultimately our end goal of preventing and eradicating violence against women and girls.

Get it right and we'll not only go a long way to achieving our vision of a strong, flourishing Scotland where all individuals are equally safe and respected, we'll also contribute to the Scottish Government's overarching purpose and outcomes as set out within the National Performance Framework.

Leading the way

Helping drive the step change needed will be the Violence Against Women Joint Strategic Board – a high-level group of senior leaders able to push for change and ensure momentum is sustained within their individual organisations and sectors.

Chaired jointly by the Scottish Government and COSLA and involving Police Scotland and key stakeholders, the Board will oversee delivery of the strategy, monitor progress and identify emerging issues.

A phased approach

Our agenda is as broad as it is far-reaching, reflecting the importance of prevention and effective early intervention, as well as recognising that different individuals have different characteristics and needs.

As such, it's unrealistic to expect that all aspects can be progressed at the same speed or that one all-encompassing action plan can conquer all.

More realistic is that we adopt a phased approach to the development and delivery of our outcomes and objectives, creating a transformative programme of action that can evolve and be added to in order to deliver meaningful change over the long-term.

The first phase of work (2014-15) will concentrate on four initial areas of focus: primary prevention, capacity and capability, and justice – these are described below. In these focus areas, expert working groups will draw from the best available evidence and expertise to develop recommendations which will inform detailed action plans to be delivered in the second phase (2015-18). The fourth focus area is accountability: this will underpin all our activity going forward. The accountability working group will be charged with developing a robust performance management framework. This will include clear outcomes and indicators, and, where appropriate, targets to drive improvement.

Initial areas of focus:

Engagement with partners during the development of Equally Safe highlighted four recurring themes; themes that we want to focus on in the first phase of implementation.

These are:

- **Primary prevention - Contributing to priorities 1 and 2** With greater emphasis on primary prevention than ever before, we want to explore the existing evidence on what works with regards to preventing violence against women and girls. In particular, identifying additional ways of addressing the systematic inequality, attitudes and assumptions that give rise to violence and abusive behaviour, and scoping the costs associated with this activity in time for the next Spending Review. Throughout, we will consider primary prevention in the widest context: society, community and the individual

- **Capacity and capability -Contributing to priority 3** There exists a wealth of expertise in supporting and responding to the needs of women and girls affected by violence and abuse, not least within third sector specialist service providers such as the Women's Aid and Rape Crisis Networks. But we cannot rely on specialist providers alone – statutory services including health, education, social work and housing need to be just as competent in identifying and responding effectively to violence. Therefore we will need to consider and improve the capacity and capability that exists across these services and beyond
- **Justice - Contributing to priorities 3 and 4** The justice system has a key part to play in keeping women and girls safe from violence and abuse and supporting their recovery. It's also central to how we respond to perpetrators of violence against women and girls. So we will review a 'whole systems' approach within the justice system. This includes consideration of the law relating to sexual offences and domestic abuse, for example whether the current law reflects the true experience of victims of long-term abuse – coercive control included; whether additional specific criminal offences are required; the support available for victims; the time taken to complete cases and the impact of justice interventions in changing perpetrator behaviour and wider public attitudes. Police Scotland is introducing Multi-Agency Tasking and Co-ordinating Groups (MATAC) across Scotland to target serious and serial offenders of domestic abuse and is committed to developing a Performance Framework to measure outcomes, recidivism and rates of re-offending.
- **Accountability – contributing to all four priorities**
Violence against women and girls requires a visible focus within strategic national and local planning. In order to increase prioritisation of the issue and enable deeper understanding of how effective we are at combatting and addressing it, we need to take a more overt approach to our collective public accountability. This will include as a matter of urgency developing a Performance Framework with appropriate outcomes and indicators to enable us to measure our performance and progress, as well as supporting strategic investment planning, building on the these outcomes and indicators, to ensure that women and girls throughout Scotland benefit from consistently high-quality services.

These four areas are by no means the sum of activity required. However, by focusing on a small number of key areas at the outset our intention is to make the strongest possible start – building momentum

early on, instilling confidence and enthusiasm in partners, and showing that we're serious about delivering real and lasting change for the women and girls of Scotland.

Phase 1 workstreams

Delivery of these four initial areas of focus will be taken forward by expert working groups, coordinated by the Scottish Government. The working groups looking at primary prevention, capacity and capability and justice will be tasked with identifying gaps in current activity, and making recommendations to inform an action plan. The delivery of the action plans will be governed by the performance management framework developed by the accountability working group.

Appointed by the Violence Against Women Joint Strategic Board, the expert working groups will be drawn from the wide range of partners with a wealth of experience and informed by the experience of those women and girls who have been subject to violence or abuse.

Working groups will be expected to report on their progress regularly to the Board, aiming to have programme underway and a first report on progress – including initial recommendations for the Joint Strategic Board to consider - by International Women's day (March 2015).

Early commitments

In addition to the activity initiated by the expert working groups, the Scottish Government and core partners will also support delivery by:

- **Supporting more robust and effective service delivery and planning arrangements** – including developing and funding the roll-out of a National Framework for Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC); renewing guidance to support Violence Against Women Multi-Agency Partnerships; and developing public health guidance to support the implementation of the strategy within the NHS
- Completion of roll-out of MATAC Groups across Scotland;
- Development of Performance Framework for MATACs to measure outcomes and rates of re-offending.

- Development, with partners, of a system for managing violent offenders under MAPPA legislation to include domestic offenders.
- Pilot of disclosure scheme – with a multi-agency group led by Police Scotland exploring the potential benefits and issues associated with introducing an equivalent to ‘Clare’s Law’ in Scotland.
- **Challenging all employers, particularly public sector employers, to support those who may be experiencing or at risk of violence or abusive behaviour** – and furthermore how they can develop a culture which contributes to the prevention of violence against women and girls through their HR policies and staff training
- **Encouraging and supporting the development of strategic commissioning with key statutory bodies and partnerships. This will build on the development of outcomes and indicators we jointly develop**, measuring the improvement of violence against women and girls outcomes and focus on prevention
- **Ensuring that key national strategies reflect and statutory bodies are aware of, and committed to, their role in achieving our aim** – in short, how they can contribute to the prevention and eradication of violence against women and girls
- **Actively taking forward the nine recommendations made in ‘Tackling FGM in the UK: Intercollegiate recommendations for identifying, recording and reporting’**

Everyone’s responsibility

Whilst these early commitments and expert working groups will help drive change, it’s up to all of us to consider what more we can be doing to prevent and eradicate violence against women and girls – starting now.

5.2 Building our capacity

What we do to prevent the causes and consequences of violence against women and girls is crucially important. But so too is **how** we do it.

There is a wealth of knowledge and experience for us to tap into and build upon. Much of which has been developed by our partners in the Violence Against Women Sector, such as Scottish Women's Aid, Rape Crisis Scotland, and Zero Tolerance from years of working directly with women and girls who have experienced violence or abuse.

Learning from service users

We also want to ensure that those affected by violence and abuse against women and girls have greater opportunity to help shape the development of policy and practice.

There are a number of positive examples to look to, including the National Domestic Abuse Delivery Plan for Children and Young People (2008), Safer Lives: Changed Lives (2009), Voice against Violence and the work of Scottish Women's Aid and Rape Crisis Scotland.

Now, we want to make it a standard feature of all our work, encouraging greater participation than ever before and ensuring that developments in services continue to be informed by those who use them.

In the words of one focus group participant: "Contributing to this makes me feel that something positive will come out of what I went through."

The further we reach out, the more insightful the feedback will be.

Increased strategic priority

We will increase the priority given to violence and abuse against women and girls in local and national strategic planning.

Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) bring together public bodies and others to work together to improve outcomes for people, focusing on prevention at a local level. CPPs agree their strategic priorities and resource and provide appropriate services in support of those priorities.

Some Single Outcome Agreements and Community Planning Partnership activities already reflect a strong focus on violence against women and girls, and this is to be welcomed. We will continue to work

with local partners to ensure that we learn from these CPPs about the benefits of focusing on violence against women as a strategic priority.

5.3 Making best use of resources

At a time when resources are already stretched it's never been more important to make the best use of the people and finances that we have.

That said, dedicated funding for violence against women and girls has been at all-time high in Scotland for several years now. Between 2012-2015 alone, the Scottish Government has allocated £34.5 million to tackling the issue.

Millions of pounds are spent across the public sector as a whole: on our criminal justice system; in our health, education, and social work services; and in providing services for women through the third sector. We need to consider our resources in this broader sense and ask how we can utilise these connected budgets and make public spending work even harder.

Take, for example, the great number of GPs working throughout Scotland. Primarily, their role is to keep people healthy but in doing so they are in a unique position to pick up on the early signs of violence and abuse long before that behaviour comes to the attention of Police Scotland, the courts or Women's Aid. We need to consider further examples like this.

We will maintain our substantial investment over the next period while we meet our early commitments and the expert working groups identify the resources required to deliver the changes we are seeking. This will enable us to determine the focus and any re-alignment of funding from the next spending review onwards.

5.4 Measuring our progress

We will assess our progress in relation to our aim and the outcomes that will be developed collaboratively, rather than the implementation of specific actions or activity.

We want to demonstrate a steady reduction in all forms of violence against women and girls, moving ever closer towards our overarching aim of preventing the problem altogether.

Requiring a significant step-change in policy, practice and societal attitudes over the long-term, it's unrealistic to expect dramatic improvement in the short-term. However the more ambitious we are and the sooner we start, the greater the difference we'll make.

Performance Measurement

Identifying outcomes and indicators and measuring the progress made in achieving change will be important to delivering on the priorities identified. To this end we will be developing a measurement framework setting out our agreed outcomes and a suite of high-level and intermediate indicators – and where appropriate targets - as part of the Accountability workstream. This will be undertaken as one of the first actions arising from this strategy.

This framework will be developed with partners and will align with the existing National Performance Framework currently embedded across the Scottish Government and within local authorities and the wider public sector. Indeed, a crucial component of our work going forward is that we are able to measure our performance at a local level.

Capturing and sharing new data

Violence against women and girls encompasses a wide range of behaviours and attitudes – some of which, but not all, constitute crimes.

There are still many gaps in our data. For example, there are no indicators to measure attitudes towards the different forms of violence against women and girls or broader gender stereotypes.

Helping to address this, the Scottish Government intends to survey a representative sample of the adult population at regular intervals. This will enable us to monitor whether public attitudes towards violence against women and girls are changing, and help inform future action.

However, as a multi-agency, multi-sector strategy Equally Safe requires all partners – at local, regional and national level – to put in place robust measures to capture and share data. Because the more complete our picture of the prevalence of the problem, the more effectively we can target our resources.

The next step

The Scottish Government and COSLA are immensely grateful for the enthusiasm shown by a wide range of partners so far; enthusiasm that has helped get our national strategy for preventing violence against women and girls to this stage.

As we proceed to implementation stage, we need to build on this enthusiasm. We need as a matter of priority to identify the outcomes and indicators of the performance framework and identify any gaps that exist. We need to put in place the actions required to deliver the areas of focus for Phase One, taking responsibility for delivering these actions, and building our capacity and capability wherever it's required.

The strategy creates an opportunity for us to all think differently and 'do differently', an opportunity to learn from the views and experiences of those affected and seek out new ways of overcoming the deep-rooted inequalities and attitudes that help perpetuate the problem.

Most of all, it's our opportunity to rid Scotland of violence against women and girls once and for all, so that all individuals, regardless of gender, are **equally safe** and respected.



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