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# Why is Violence Against Women & Girls a Community Justice issue?

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# Equally Safe: National Strategy for Preventing & Eradicating VAWG

**Equally Safe** sets out the Scottish Government and COSLA's joint vision for a strong and flourishing Scotland where all individuals are equally safe and respected, and where women and girls live free from all forms of violence and abuse – and the attitudes that help perpetuate it.



**Equally Safe** identifies 4 key priorities, which include:

- Interventions are early and effective, preventing violence and maximising the safety and wellbeing of women, children and young people; and
- Men desist from all forms of violence against women and girls and perpetrators of such violence receive a robust and effective response.



# National Community Justice Strategy

The *National Strategy for Community Justice* sets out the Scottish Government's vision for Scotland is a safer, fairer and more inclusive nation where we:

- Prevent and reduce further offending by addressing its underlying causes; and
- Safely and effectively manage and support those who have committed offences to help them reintegrate into the community and realise their potential for the benefit of all citizens.

In order to achieve this vision the **National Community Justice Strategy** highlights the need for:

- Improved Community Understanding and Participation;
- Strategic Planning and Partnership Working;
- Effective Use of Evidence-Based Interventions; and
- Equal access to Services.



*“Community justice outcomes cannot be improved by one stakeholder alone. We must work in partnership to address these complex issues...*



*... High quality, person centred, & collaborative services should be available to address the needs of those who have committed offences, their families & victims of crime.”*

*(National Strategy for Community Justice)*



*We broker additional resources for local government to support improvement*

# Preventing and Reducing Offending at an Early Stage



**Women in the criminal justice system** are likely to have complex needs and have higher lifetime incidences of trauma than either male prisoners or women in the general population, including severe & repeated physical, sexual and emotional abuse & victimisation.



Additionally, a significant number of **men in the criminal justice system** experienced emotional, physical or sexual abuse during childhood or grew up in households where domestic abuse took place.



Consequently, an effective approach to community justice planning will recognise the **connections between VAWG and offending behaviour** & ensure effective interventions are in place that **address the risks of women and children affected by VAWG** becoming involved in the criminal justice system, and reduce their likelihood of reoffending in the future.



# Holding Perpetrators to Account & Reducing Reoffending



There are currently **low conviction rates** for domestic abuse, rape and sexual assault and other VAWG offences in Scotland.



Only a small proportion of those people who are convicted then going on to access **specialist perpetrator interventions** to hold them account for, and support them to change, their offending behaviours.



Consequently, an effective approach to community justice planning will ensure effective systems are in place to **identify and hold perpetrators of VAWG to account** for their offending behaviours, and ensure they have access to high-quality interventions to reduce their likelihood of reoffending in the future.



# Working towards Shared Outcomes



*We help support and develop effective and informed local political leaders*

# What Does Good Practice looks like?

1

## **Supporting effective partnership working between Community Justice Partnerships and Violence Against Women Partnerships**

A strategic approach to community justice planning requires that Community Justice Partnerships and VAW Partnerships co-ordinate their activities and collaborate effectively towards common goals.

2

## **Delivering effective prevention and early intervention for women and children affected by VAWG to divert them away from the criminal justice system and other negative outcomes**

Community justice approaches should recognise the impact that VAWG has on women and children and how this may affect their experiences of the criminal justice system, either as a victim or an offender.

3

## **Investing in support and services that hold perpetrators of VAWG to account for their offending behaviours and support them not to re-offend**

Robust systems should be put in place locally to identify perpetrators of VAWG and ensure they are held to account by the justice system. High quality, evidence-based interventions that support perpetrators of VAWG to change their behaviours are also key.





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# Thank you for listening!!!

For more information, please:

Email me at [Joanna.McLaughlin@ImprovementService.org.uk](mailto:Joanna.McLaughlin@ImprovementService.org.uk)

Visit the IS website at <http://www.improvementservice.org.uk/tackling-violence-against-women.html>

Follow us on twitter [@VAWNetwork](https://twitter.com/VAWNetwork) and [@Jo\\_McLaugh1in](https://twitter.com/Jo_McLaugh1in)



*We facilitate the sharing of skills, capacity, knowledge and expertise*