

Equally Safe

Short Life Delivery Plan

SUMMER 2022 - AUTUMN 2023



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
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Foreword

Violence against women and girls, in all its forms, has no place in Scottish society. It damages health and wellbeing, limits freedom and potential, and is a fundamental violation of human rights. Our Equally Safe Strategy envisions a strong and flourishing Scotland where women and girls thrive as equal citizens and live free from all forms of violence and abuse. The Scottish Government, COSLA and all our partners remain committed to preventing and eradicating all forms of violence against women and tackling the underpinning attitudes that perpetuate it.

Equally Safe was originally published in 2014 and updated in 2016, and our Equally Safe Delivery Plan was published in 2017. Despite the Covid-19 pandemic which necessitated a focus by all delivery partners on the challenges posed by it, we have achieved so much and have a lot to be proud of. There is increasing awareness of the prevalence and the pernicious effects of violence against women and girls in Scotland; we have strengthened the law in this area; and we have taken forward a great deal of work to ensure those working in the public sector are equipped with the resource and knowledge to confidently and sensitively work with those affected by violence against women and girls. We continue to increase our investment into frontline services: last year the Scottish Government's Delivering Equally Safe Fund committed a record £38 million over two years to 121 projects focusing on providing vital support to survivors, and on essential work to tackle gender-based violence through preventative measures. Furthermore, the Scottish Government recently launched an independent strategic review of funding and commissioning of services tackling violence against women and girls. Our ambition is that this review will allow us to develop a more consistent, coherent, collective and stable funding model that will ensure high quality, accessible specialist services across Scotland for women, children, and young people experiencing any form of gender-based violence.

We know there is still a great deal of work to be done. However, the Scottish Government and COSLA are absolutely committed to maintaining our momentum, and realising our ambitions under the Equally Safe Strategy of a future where gender-based violence is a thing of the past in Scotland.

This short-life delivery plan comprises of 33 actions that will be taken forward over the remainder of this phase of Equally Safe. This plan develops the many achievements of its predecessor, confirms and builds upon our existing priorities and commitments, and considers what needs to be achieved as

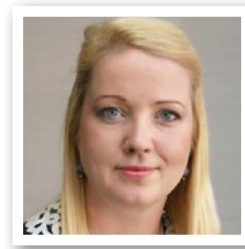
Scotland recovers from the pandemic in an increasingly digital environment. Our intention is that this will act as a bridge, taking us from where we are now, towards a new phase of Equally Safe which will be refreshed and developed throughout the lifespan of this plan.

As co-chairs of the Equally Safe Joint Strategic Board, we are committed to ensuring that Equally Safe continues to deliver real change for women and children in Scotland. We look forward to working closely with everyone to realise our ambitions under this delivery plan; to build on our many achievements to date and to continue our progressions towards an Equally Safe Scotland through our next phase of Equally Safe.



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Introduction

Introduction

Equally Safe is Scotland's Strategy to prevent and eradicate violence against women and girls. The aim of the strategy is to foster collaborative working between partners across society to achieve a Scotland in which women and girls are safe to thrive, fulfilling their potential free from violence and abuse.

Equally Safe recognises that women and girls are disproportionately affected by various forms of violence and abuse precisely because they are women and girls, and that perpetrators of such violence are overwhelmingly male.

It recognises that this violence is an abuse of power and stems from deep rooted and systemic gender inequality and the subordinate position women occupy in society in relation to men.

As such, the strategy challenges the notion that violence against women and girls is inevitable or acceptable and prioritises primary prevention. We believe this is the best route to tackle and challenge the attitudes that underpin violence against women and girls and ultimately prevent it taking place. This is a long term ambition, but by promoting gender equality, preventing gender-based violence and responding effectively when it occurs now, we continue to challenge and change the attitudes which enable such violence and abuse to flourish. We also need to ensure that interventions are early and effective, helping to prevent violence from recurring and maximising the safety and wellbeing of women, children and young people. And we need to ensure that men desist from all forms of violence against women and girls, and that perpetrators of such violence receive a robust and effective response.

For the purposes of the strategy and this delivery plan, violence against women and girls includes (but is not limited to):

- Domestic abuse
- Sexual Violence (including harassment, sexual assault and rape, and child sexual abuse)
- Commercial sexual exploitation
- Child sexual exploitation
- So called "Honour" based violence, including female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

The definition we have adopted of violence against women and girls explicitly includes **children of all genders** as subject to harm through violence and

we reflect this in our delivery plan. This reflects the Scottish Government's commitment to developing and implementing relevant pieces of legislation, including the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill and the new Human Rights Bill, in a way that meaningfully embeds the experiences and recommendations of survivors of abuse.

Since the Delivery Plan was published in 2017 much work has been undertaken and real headway made. Further information on this can be found in our report Equally Safe: final report - gov.scot (www.gov.scot) which outlines progress made since then, including actions taken during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The 2017 Equally Safe Delivery Plan ended in 2021. It was agreed with stakeholders that a high level, interim Delivery Plan should be developed to run until the Autumn of 2023. This approach allows us collectively the time to shape a complete renewal of the Equally Safe Strategy and Delivery Plan, taking account of the post-Covid landscape, developing policy areas such as the growing focus on misogyny and the findings of the Violence Against Women and Girls: Strategic Review of Funding and Commissioning Services.

The refreshed interim Delivery Plan contains a total of 33 different actions across four overarching priorities in order to help us do this. The actions and activities in the plan are designed to deliver against our priorities and associated objectives. Our priorities are:

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

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

Priority 3 – Interventions are early and effective, preventing violence and maximising the safety and wellbeing of women, children and young people.

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

Priority 1

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

Priority 1

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

Objectives

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

No.	Objective / Action	Timescales	Action Owner
1	As set out in the Women’s Health Plan, we will encourage NHS boards to engage with the Equally Safe at Work employer accreditation programme.	By end of 2022	The Scottish Government
2	With Public Health Scotland, and alongside the Improvement Service, we will work through our Collaborative Framework on Gender Equality and Gender-based Violence to establish and begin delivery of a programme of activity in line with agreed deliverables. Activities will focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strengthening the focus and maximising the impact of public services in addressing gender equity and furthering a public health approach to addressing violence against women and girls/ gender-based violence. ➤ Strengthening support for local systems to enable evidence-based decision making. 		

No.	Objective / Action	Timescales	Action Owner
2 cont.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Supporting improvement in embedding gender equity across respective policy portfolios. ➤ Engaging with the Scottish Government and local partnerships to deliver fair, equitable and sustainable funding for local systems and drive improvement in services to focus on gender equality to improve population health outcomes. 	By Autumn 2023 and ongoing	COSLA and Public Health Scotland
3	We will define a public health approach to tackling violence against women, working with a range of partners to refine and implement the contribution of the public health system in policy and practice. This will focus on how violence against women and gender inequality are connected to each of the public health priorities; and what actions are required to improve the outcomes for women and children in our communities.	By Autumn 2023	Public Health Scotland.
4	We will continue to support work with our partners in the statutory, third sectors, and affected communities to raise awareness of so-called honour-based violence.	Ongoing	The Scottish Government
5	We will design, develop and implement a bespoke Police Scotland strategy to tackle all forms of violence, abuse and intimidation of women and girls.	Commitment from Annual Policing Plan (Draft) 2022/23	Police Scotland

Priority 2

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

Priority 2

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

Objectives

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

No.	Objective / Action	Timescales	Action Owner
6	We will continue to address barriers to greater diversity in local elected office through COSLA's Barriers to Elected Office cross-party Special Interest Group (pending re-establishment by COSLA's new administration) and action plan, including actions to encourage more women to consider standing for election as councillors.	By Autumn 2023	COSLA
7	We will support the Scottish Government led implementation and monitoring group to progress implementation of the recommendations set out in the Improving Housing Outcomes for Women and Children Experiencing Domestic Abuse in the Social Rented Sector Report. This aims to prevent homelessness due to domestic abuse.	By end of 2023	The Scottish Government
8	We are taking forward the Scottish Government Rented Sector Strategy Consultation on a New Deal for Tenants. This was published in December 2021 and is open until April 2022; the consultation recognises that domestic abuse is the most common reason for women to make a homelessness application, and that other forms of gender-based violence may leave victims unsafe in their homes. The consultation seeks views on:		

No.	Objective / Action	Timescales	Action Owner
8 cont.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Supporting victims of commercial sexual exploitation, including women subject to commercial sexual exploitation, in the rented sector; ➤ Amending legislation to ensure all joint tenants can end their interest in a private residential tenancy; and ➤ Enabling private landlords to initiate eviction proceedings to end a perpetrators interest in a joint tenancy and transfer the tenancy to a tenant who was subject to domestic abuse, allowing the victim/ survivor to remain in the family home if they wish to. 	<p>Consultation closed in April 2022.</p> <p>Subject to consultation and Ministerial decisions, provisions may be included in Year 2 Housing Bill, which is expected to be introduced in Spring/ Summer 2023).</p>	The Scottish Government
9	We will establish stakeholder views on the current legal minimum age of marriage, and will consider any points arising related to ongoing work on violence against women and girls.	By Autumn 2023	The Scottish Government

Priority 3

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

Priority 3

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

Objectives

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

No.	Objective / Action	Timescales	Action Owner
10	We will take forward measures to criminalise the practice of virginity testing, and develop education and awareness raising measures to address the beliefs and norms that perpetuate this practice.	By Autumn 2022	The Scottish Government
11	We will consider our approach to the issue of hymenoplasty (hymen reconstruction surgery), including assessing whether a new criminal offence is needed in this space.	By end of 2022	The Scottish Government
12	We will develop education and awareness raising measures relating to the practice of hymenoplasty; sending a clear message that it is a form of violence against women and girls, and honour-based abuse.	By end of 2022	The Scottish Government
13	We will take forward work to fully implement the Female Genital Mutilation (Protection and Guidance) Act 2020. This will include the development of statutory guidance on FGM.	By Autumn 2022	The Scottish Government
14	We will take forward a refresh and republication of the Scottish Government's Statutory Guidance on Forced Marriage.	By end of 2022	The Scottish Government

No.	Objective / Action	Timescales	Action Owner
15	We will publish a learning report, and take forward any key recommendations, on MARAC. This report has been informed by a series of deep dive sessions with stakeholders.	By Autumn 2022	The Scottish Government
16	We will continue to support the investment of £100 million over three years to support frontline services, and focus on prevention of violence against women and girls from school onward. Work on delivering this will be ongoing throughout the lifespan of this plan, and beyond; and will include, among other funding, the Delivering Equally Safe Fund and funded initiatives such as That's Not Ok, Equally Safe in School, Equally Safe in Practice and Equally Safe at Work.	Ongoing	The Scottish Government
17	We will continue to support the running and management of the Scottish Domestic Abuse and Forced Marriage Helpline; and the National Rape Crisis Helpline.	Ongoing	The Scottish Government and Scottish Women's Aid
18	In line with the Local Government Blueprint we will continue to seek to respond to the gendered impacts of the pandemic	By Autumn 2023 and ongoing	COSLA

No.	Objective / Action	Timescales	Action Owner
19	<p>Through the Scottish Government’s vision for Justice in Scotland, we will continue to dedicate work within the Justice sector to ensuring that women and children get the help they need. Tackling domestic abuse and all forms of gender-based violence remains a key priority. We therefore remain absolutely committed to making improvements to the justice system, which will benefit and empower women throughout the system. Aligned to the Equally Safe Strategy’s key ambitions, the core principles of the Vision for Justice will deliver against Equality and Human Rights, acknowledging the key role that justice services can play in eliminating discrimination, advancing equality and taking a rights-based approach. Sitting under the vision will be a focused Women’s Leadership Panel to support the development of strategic outcomes which can guide and enhance the scope and update for gender competent policy making and the design of justice policies which can go further for women.</p>	Ongoing	The Scottish Government
20	<p>We will take forward work to commence the social housing provisions of the Domestic Abuse (Protection) Act to support new powers for the police and the courts to remove domestic abusers from the home; and in particular to change Scottish Secure Tenancies (SSTs) and Short SSTs, and underpinning regulation to give social landlords greater control to transfer tenancies to a victim/survivor.</p>	<p>Lay final regulations Summer 2022.</p> <p>Publish final guidance and revised Tenancy agreements by Summer 2022.</p>	The Scottish Government

No.	Objective / Action	Timescales	Action Owner
21	We will continue to support the National Gender-based Violence and Health Network to facilitate the implementation of policy and practice locally to improve outcomes for women and girls. We will do this through public health advice and expertise, with a focus on understanding available data, evidence, and best practice.	By Autumn 2023	Public Health Scotland
22	We will continue to work in partnership with the Scottish Commission for people with Learning Disabilities, the Scottish Government and COSLA to focus on the needs of people with learning disabilities, and the delivery of the Gender-based Violence and Learning Disability Action Plan.	By Autumn 2023	Public Health Scotland
23	We will consider how the intersections of race, class, disability and gender challenge and contribute to our understanding of violence against women. We will use this to develop a programme of work to create inclusive responses to the needs of women in diverse communities.	By Autumn 2023	Public Health Scotland
24	We will improve and enhance our processes for managing and supporting those identified as at risk of harm through both crime and non-crime related incidents.	Commitment from Annual Policing Plan (Draft) 2022/23	Police Scotland
25	We will drive a co-ordinated approach to engagement and delivery of existing Violence Against Women and Girls Initiatives, to ensure maximum benefits to victims and drive prevention.	Ongoing	Police Scotland

No.	Objective / Action	Timescales	Action Owner
26	We will, through the National Human Trafficking Unit, work with partners across the Scottish Government Trafficking & Exploitation Strategy, to tackle commercial sexual exploitation and reduce the harm it causes.	Ongoing	Police Scotland
27	COSLA will continue to engage with the Scottish Government, professional bodies, and other key decision makers within local authorities and community planning organisations on how to support and strengthen local capacity to implement approaches to supporting women engaged in CSE. This will be carried out in line with learning outcomes from COSLA's Short Term Working Group on CSE. It will include working in collaboration with local and national stakeholders to identify what collective leadership and resources are needed to ensure that joined up, multi-agency approaches can be taken to improving outcomes for women engaged in CSE, including supporting women, when they choose to do so, to exit.	Ongoing	COSLA
28	We will support local multi-agency VAW Partnerships to implement the priorities set out in Equally Safe at a local strategic level, and ensure the safety and wellbeing needs of women, children and young people affected by gender-based violence are prioritised in local strategic responses to COVID-19 recovery, renewal and transformation.	By Autumn 2023	Improvement Service

No.	Objective / Action	Timescales	Action Owner
29	We will support local professionals working across a wide range of policy areas to (i) understand the importance of embedding survivor voice and lived experience into system and service design processes; and (ii) implement survivor-created tools and resources to ensure this happens in a high-quality, sustainable and trauma-informed way.	By Autumn 2023	Improvement Service and SafeLives
30	We will support local authorities, and other key partners, to measure the progress they are making in implementing domestic abuse-informed systems, services and workforces and the impact this is having on the lives of adult and child survivors of domestic abuse.	By Autumn 2023	Improvement Service and Safe & Together Institute

Priority 4

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

Priority 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

Objectives

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

No.	Objective / Action	Timescales	Action Owner
31	Our Programme for Government (2021/2022) includes a commitment to develop a model for Scotland which effectively tackles and challenges men's demand for prostitution. We established a short-life working group to help develop principles to underpin the model. Draft principles will be consulted in early 2022.	Initial phase of developing the model's approach to take place over 2022	The Scottish Government
32	We will continue to pilot the extension of the Caledonian System. This is an international recognised behavioural change programme for perpetrators of domestic abuse, which involves working with the whole family to reduce the risk of harm to women and children.	By Autumn 2023 and beyond.	The Scottish Government.
33	We will support the implementation of new legislation including: Vulnerable Witnesses (Criminal Evidence) (Scotland) Act 2019 and the Domestic Abuse (Protection) (Scotland) Act 2021.	Commitment from Annual Policing Plan (Draft) 2022/23	Police Scotland



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