Agenda Item

Report

Report to:	**Social Work Resources Committee**
Date of Meeting:	**10 September 2019**
Report by:	**Director, Health and Social Care**

Subject:	**Gender Based Violence Partnership**

1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- advise of the national and local position in relation to Gender Based Violence and the implications for South Lanarkshire

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

(1) that the content of the report be noted.

3. Background

3.1. Gender Based Violence (often referred to as gender based abuse or violence against women and girls) is an umbrella term that encompasses a spectrum of abuse experienced mostly by women and girls and perpetrated mainly by men. This spectrum of abuse includes:

- physical, sexual and psychological abuse including domestic abuse and rape
- sexual harassment and stalking
- commercial sexual exploitation, including prostitution, pornography and trafficking
- harmful practices, including so called 'honour' based violence, forced marriage and female genital mutilation

3.2. Tackling Gender Based Violence remains a key priority within Scotland. Equally Safe: Scotland's strategy for preventing and eradicating violence against women and girls sets out a clear vision of: '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.'

3.3. South Lanarkshire's Gender Based Violence Partnership (GBVP) is the mechanism to deliver on Equally Safe at a local, strategic level. The Partnership is committed to working collaboratively with key partners in the public, private and third sector to prevent and eradicate all forms of violence against women and girls in South Lanarkshire. The Partnership recognises that no agency alone has the resources, skills or reach to achieve the aims of Equally Safe. It is only by working between agencies, across all areas of life, that we will successfully achieve the vision and aims of Equally Safe.

4. Equally Safe

4.1. GBVPs are key in helping to achieve the visions and aims set out in Equally Safe. Partnerships are expected to use Equally Safe as a reference point in conducting their work and should be working in the context of the four Equally Safe 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 maximising the safety and wellbeing of women, children and young people
- men desist from all forms of violence against women and girls, and perpetrators of such violence receive a robust and effective response

4.2. The Equally Safe Quality Standards respond to the expectations set out in Equally Safe in relation to effective performance management. The quality standards aim to capture data on the extent to which services, policies and processes that are most effective in tackling Gender Based Violence, are currently being delivered across Scotland. The South Lanarkshire GBVP completes the quality standards tool on an annual basis in order to measure and report on the progress that is made to prevent and eradicate Gender Based Violence at a local level, with the ultimate aim of reducing inequalities and improving outcomes for some of the most vulnerable people in our society. It allows the Partnership to provide a consistent basis for measuring the progress being made to implement our strategy, measure activity and performance and allow us to identify areas for improvement on an ongoing basis, to help inform future strategic and service planning at a local level.

4.3. The Equally Safe Performance Framework was developed in conjunction with the quality standards. It allows local partnerships to capture key performance data and facilitates a consistent approach to measuring and reporting on the progress being made to achieve the ambitions set out in Equally Safe at a local level. The South Lanarkshire GBVP completes the performance framework tool on an annual basis to allow us to analyse useful data on an ongoing basis and evidence progress being made to achieve the activities and outcomes set in Equally Safe.

5. South Lanarkshire's Gender Based Violence Strategy and Action Plan

5.1. South Lanarkshire's strategy for preventing and eradicating Gender Based Violence 2019 – 2024, will outline our vision, priorities and proposed direction for the next five years and show how we will take short, medium and long term action to meet the outcomes set within Equally Safe. It is currently being developed in consultation with GBVP members, the wider multi-agency work force and survivors of Gender Based Violence.

6. Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences

6.1. Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) is the process which South Lanarkshire has in place locally to respond to high risk cases of domestic abuse. MARAC allows agencies to share information on the highest risk cases and create comprehensive risk management plans to improve victim safety and children's safety and wellbeing.

6.2. In 2017, South Lanarkshire's GBVP undertook a comprehensive evaluation of our local MARAC process, by completing a case review, collating victim feedback and collating feedback from MARAC agency representatives. Upon completion of this piece of work, six key areas for development were identified and an improvement plan created. All actions noted within the improvement plan have now been completed by South Lanarkshire's MARAC Steering Group, a sub group of the GBVP.

6.3. A follow up evaluation is now underway which will allow the Steering Group to measure change and continue to improve our MARAC process and ensure that the safety and wellbeing of victims remains a priority.

7. Mentors in Violence Prevention

7.1. Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) is a peer education programme that supports young people to safely challenge unwanted behaviours and encourage healthy relationships. Based on the 'bystander' approach, MVP motivates everyone to get involved in 'safely' challenging abuse. The programme sees students as a school's greatest resource in achieving this and trains senior pupils to act as peer mentors who then deliver sessions to younger students in the school.

7.2. MVP was initially piloted in four secondary schools in South Lanarkshire in 2016 and staff in seven additional schools have now also been trained to embed MVP in their schools.

8. 'Consent' Campaign

8.1 The Partnership undertook an attitude survey in 2018 which was completed by over 600 members of staff from across the Multi Agency Partnership. Understanding around the issue of 'Consent' formed part of the survey, and although generally there was understanding of what Consent looks like, there were some myths that were raised and need to be addressed.

8.2. The Partnership has therefore decided to use the national '16 days of action' campaign to highlight what Consent is and to tackle some of the myths around consent and the law. The Scottish Government's 'key messages on healthy relationships and Consent' will also be recirculated and promoted during this campaign.

9. Learning and Development

9.1. The Partnership continues to produce an annual calendar of learning and development events. To make the most effective use of resources, this programme continues to be shared with our colleagues in North Lanarkshire. The training calendar has been updated this year with new courses added including a course focusing on the new Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 and Safe and Together training (working with families affected by domestic abuse). The training calendar covers a variety of topics including domestic abuse, rape and sexual assault and prostitution.

10. Safe and Together

10.1. As a result of a successful funding bid, South Lanarkshire's GBVP in partnership with South Lanarkshire's Child Protection Committee, delivered a four day 'Safe and Together' training event attended by 39 key professionals.

10.2. The Safe and Together Model is designed to improve practice and improve how we work together with families where there is domestic abuse and concerns about children. It helps workers to partner with domestic abuse victims and engage with people who have committed domestic abuse to enhance the safety and wellbeing of children.

10.3. South Lanarkshire's GBVP are in the process of developing a Safe and Together implementation plan to ensure that learning from this model of practice is cascaded throughout the workforce. The GBVP has also been asked to provide representation on the Safe and Together UK Institute's stakeholder group which will allow us to stay informed of national and international developments and funding opportunities.

11. Equally Safe at Work

11.1. Equally Safe at Work is an accreditation programme which supports local councils to make progress on women's inequality in the workplace and to put a spotlight on how employers can better support employees who have experienced Gender Based Violence.

11.2. South Lanarkshire Council is currently one of the pilot councils who are working towards their bronze accreditation. A working group has been set up to take this forward with a focus on leadership, data, flexible working, occupational segregation, workplace culture and violence against women.

12. Employee Implications

12.1. There are no employee implications associated with this report.

13. Financial Implications

13.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

14. Other Implications

14.1. There are no risk implications associated with this report.

14.2. There are no sustainable development issues associated with this report.

14.3. There are no other issues associated with this report.

15. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

15.1. This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy, or recommend a change to an existing policy, function or strategy and therefore no impact assessment is required.

15.2. There is also no requirement to undertake any consultation in terms of the information contained in this report.

Val de Souza
Director, Health and Social Care

29 August 2019

Link(s) to Council Values/Ambitions/Objectives

- Protect vulnerable children, young people and adults

Previous References

♦ none

List of Background Papers

♦ none

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

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