

Report

Report to:	Social Work Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	10 November 2021
Report by:	Director, Health and Social Care

Subject:	Gender Based Violence
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ ask the Committee to support the collaborative work of South Lanarkshire Gender-Based Violence Partnership
- ◆ note the local and national statistical information as detailed within the report
- ◆ bring attention to the National Violence Against Women (VAW) Network Position on Restorative Justice
- ◆ endorse the implementation of the Safe and Together Model across the multi-agency workforce

2. Recommendation(s)

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

- (1) that the statistics highlighted at Section 4, Crime and Justice Annual Report 2019-20, as detailed in point 4, be noted;
- (2) that the position as stated in the attached Position Statement on Restorative Justice, as detailed in point 5, be noted; and
- (3) that the implementation of the Safe and Together Model and roll out of Safe and Together Training across the multi-agency workforce, as detailed in point 6, be endorsed.

3. Background – Gender-Based Violence and Equally Safe

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 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. Crime and Justice Annual Report 2019-20

- 4.1. "Domestic Abuse recorded by the Police in Scotland 2019-20" has now been published. The report highlights that:

- ◆ the Police recorded 62,907 incidents of Domestic Abuse in 2019-20, an increase of 4% compared to the previous year. This is the fourth year in a row this figure has shown an increase. 3,619 of these incidents were recorded in South Lanarkshire, which is a 3.3% increase on the previous year
- ◆ in 2019-20, 40% of incidents of Domestic Abuse recorded by the Police in Scotland included the recording of at least one crime or offence
- ◆ the type of crime or offence that was most frequently recorded as part of a Domestic Abuse incident in 2019-20 was Common Assault, accounting for 34% of all crimes and offences recorded. This was followed by Breach of the Peace and similar offences accounting for 26% of crimes and offences
- ◆ in 2019-20, the highest percentages of incidents of Domestic Abuse that also included the recording of at least one crime or offence were in Dumfries and Galloway (54%) and Moray (51%), whilst the lowest were in Na h-Eileanan Siar (29%), Highland and South Lanarkshire (both 33%)
- ◆ following its enactment on the 1 April 2019, crimes recorded under the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 accounted for 4% of crimes and offences recorded as part of a Domestic Abuse incident in 2019-20
- ◆ there were 115 incidents of Domestic Abuse recorded by the Police in Scotland per 10,000 population in 2019-20. At a local authority level, Dundee City (166), Clackmannanshire (152) and Glasgow City (151) recorded the highest incident rates per 10,000 population. South Lanarkshire currently sits slightly below the national average with 113 recorded incidents of Domestic Abuse per 10,000 population
- ◆ where gender information was recorded, 82% incidents of Domestic Abuse in 2019-20 involved a female victim and a male accused. This was the same as in 2018-19
- ◆ in 2019-20, 15% of Domestic Abuse incidents involved a male victim and a female accused (where gender information was recorded). This decreased slightly from 16% in 2018-19
- ◆ 59% of incidents involved a victim or accused who had previously been recorded in a Domestic Abuse incident. 27% had no previous incidents
- ◆ 51% of incidents occurred between current partners, meaning 49% of incidents related to incidents where the relationship had ended

5. National Violence Against Women Network and Scottish Women's Aid Position Paper on Restorative Justice

- 5.1. Following developments to move forward with the Restorative Justice agenda the National VAW Network along with Scottish Women's Aid have developed a position paper outlining the need for further consultation and greater engagement with VAW professionals and specialist services before further work is undertaken to promote the Restorative Justice model in cases of Domestic Abuse, Sexual Violence/Abuse, Commercial Sexual Exploitation, Trafficking and Honour Based Abuse. South

Lanarkshire's GBV Partnership have endorsed this paper and are in full support of the position it outlines. The full paper is attached as an appendix to the report.

6. Safe and Together

- 6.1. The Safe and Together model is an internationally recognised suite of tools and interventions designed to help key public sector and third sector professionals to become Domestic Abuse-informed and promote multi-agency, collaborative responses to working with families experiencing violence and abuse.
- 6.2. In local communities across Scotland, women, children, and young people experiencing Domestic Abuse are at increased risk of harm during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Recent Vulnerable People Weekly Data Reports produced by the Scottish Government and SOLACE highlight that the number of children being placed on child protection registers has increased since the Pandemic, with Domestic Abuse being reported as a significant factor in 50% of these cases.
- 6.3. Lockdowns, school closures and other restrictions in place to control the spread of the virus, continue to make it harder for Social Workers and other key professionals to effectively assess for Domestic Abuse within families, intervene with the perpetrator and put high quality support plans in place for women and children. With local authorities and other public sector and third sector partners currently under unprecedented levels of pressure, there is a growing need to ensure workforces have the support they need to provide services to families experiencing Domestic Abuse in a way that holds perpetrators to account for their abusive behaviours and ensures and protects the safety and wellbeing of the child.
- 6.4. Research has shown that many of the current discourses around Domestic Abuse focus on single incidents of physical violence, separation, 'failure to protect' and are characterised by an invisibility of perpetrators. Survivors, usually mothers, are too often held responsible for the impact of Domestic Abuse upon their children. There has been a tendency to focus on their decision making, rather than the perpetrator's pattern of coercive control. They may be pressured to show that they are protective by carrying out drastic actions like moving home, ending the relationship, or calling the Police. However, the steps they are already taking to keep their children safe, to help them heal from trauma or to provide stability and nurturance often go unrecognised. At the same time there can be a lack of a systematic approach to holding perpetrators accountable for Domestic Abuse and for their parenting choices.
- 6.5. Domestic Abuse-informed practice can be defined as a perpetrator pattern, child centred, survivor strengths-based approach to working with Domestic Abuse. Having Domestic Abuse-informed practice, policies and systems means that survivors are more likely to see child protection systems and services as supportive resources, while cross system collaboration is likely to be improved through common frameworks and language. The Safe and Together Model, as a systems change framework, offers language, thinking and practices that help increase accountability for perpetrators as parents, reduce victim blaming and improve outcomes for children and families.

- 6.6. Supporting the implementation of Safe and Together locally will directly contribute to priority 3 of Equally Safe by helping service providers and other professionals to competently identify Domestic Abuse and respond effectively to women, children and young people experiencing abuse. Specifically, this project will promote local workforce wellbeing, capacity building and development by ensuring key staff have the training, tools, and other resources they need to identify and respond to Domestic Abuse within families in a way that promotes the safety and wellbeing of the mother and child and holds the perpetrator to account for their behaviours.
- 6.7. South Lanarkshire GBV Partnership and Child Protection Committee began the implementation of the Safe and Together Model to the multi-agency workforce in 2019. As part of the implementation plan, the need for a larger scale roll out of training has been identified to enable the Model to be fully embedded in practice.
- 6.8. The GBV Partnership was recently successful in their application to the Delivering Equally Safe Fund to secure additional funding from Scottish Government to further the roll out of training on the Model in South Lanarkshire.

7. Employee Implications

- 7.1. No employee implications associated with this report.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1. No financial implications associated with this report

9. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications

- 9.1. No Climate Change, sustainability and environmental implications associated with this report.

10. Other Implications

- 10.1. There are no other risks or sustainability implications associated with this report.

11. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 11.1. 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 Equality Impact Assessment is required.

Soumen Sengupta
Director, Health and Social Care

6 October 2021

Link(s) to Council Values/Objectives

- ◆ protect vulnerable children, young people, and adults
- ◆ deliver better health and social care outcomes for all

Previous References

- ◆ none

List of Background Papers

- ◆ Appendix 1 - National VAW and SWA Position Paper on Restorative Justice.

Contact for Further Information

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

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