

<b>Assessment No</b>	999	<b>Owner</b>	ilse.sanchezposso
<b>Resource</b>	HSCP	<b>Service</b>	Joint
	<b>FirstName</b>	<b>Surname</b>	<b>Job Title</b>
<b>Head Officer</b>	Lesley	James	Head of Service & Chief Social Work Officer
<b>Members</b>	Ilse Sanchez Posso - Violence Against Women and Girls Lead Officer, WD HSCP Alan Somerville - Detective Superintendent CID, Police Scotland Annie Ritchie - Senior Manager Children and Families, WD HSCP Laura Smith - Service Manager Justice Social Work, WD HSCP Emily Aitken - Programme Lead for Trauma Informed Practice, WD HSCP Anna McLaughlin - Locality Manager, Victim Support Scotland - South West		
	<i>(Please note: the word 'policy' is used as shorthand for strategy policy function or financial decision)</i>		
<b>Policy Title</b>	West Dunbartonshire Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy		
	<b>The aim, objective, purpose and intended out come of policy</b>		
	The aim of the Strategy is to provide a robust and co-ordinated response to Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) through collaborative working between key partners in the public, private and third sectors. This response is aimed at preventing and eradicating VAWG, to ensure that we have a strong and flourishing West Dunbartonshire where all individuals are equally safe and respected, where women and girls live free from all forms of violence and abuse – and the attitudes that help perpetuate it.		
	<b>Service/Partners/Stakeholders/service users involved in the development and/or implementation of policy.</b>		
	West Dunbartonshire HSCP Children and Families Social Work West Dunbartonshire HSCP Criminal Justice West Dunbartonshire HSCP Adult Services West Dunbartonshire Housing Services West Dunbartonshire Education Services NHS Women's Aid Victim Support Police Scotland Scottish Fire & Rescue Other third section organisations and leading Domestic abuse charities. Women with lived experience of VAWG throughout third sector organisations and domestic abuse charities.		
<b>Does the proposals involve the procurement of any goods or services?</b>			No
<b>If yes please confirm that you have contacted our procurement services to discuss your requirements.</b>			No
<b>SCREENING</b>			
<i>You must indicate if there is any relevance to the four areas</i>			
<b>Duty to eliminate discrimination (E), advance equal opportunities (A) or foster good relations (F)</b>			Yes
<b>Relevance to Human Rights (HR)</b>			Yes
<b>Relevance to Health Impacts (H)</b>			Yes

<b>Relevance to Social Economic Impacts (SE)</b>	Yes
<b>Who will be affected by this policy?</b>	
<p>This Strategy aims to achieve a West Dunbartonshire where all individuals are equally safe and respected, and where women and girls live free of violence and abuse, and the attitudes that help to perpetuate them. Therefore, this Strategy affects everyone that live, work and/or study in West Dunbartonshire, but in particular, women and girls and those that are or have been victims/survivors of Gender-Based Violence.</p>	
<b>Who will be/has been involved in the consultation process?</b>	
<p>In the consultation process, we will involve the West Dunbartonshire Violence Against Women and Girls Partnership, whose partners are public sector and third sector organisations, that work directly and indirectly with victims/survivors of GBV and perpetrators. We will also consult with women and girls with lived experience of Domestic Abuse through the third sector organisations that work with them in West Dunbartonshire.</p>	

**Please outline any particular need/barriers which equality groups may have in relation to this policy list evidence you are using to support this and whether there is any negative impact on particular groups.**

Specific group to consider	Needs	Evidence	Impact
<b>Age</b>	<p>West Dunbartonshire has an ageing and declining population. Research has shown that older people are more likely to suffer domestic abuse, less likely to attempt to leave before accessing support and more likely to be living with the perpetrator after accessing support.</p> <p>Younger people are affected by different forms of VAWG, including forms of violence and abuse related to new technologies. Legislation now recognises that children and young people are not simply witnesses to domestic abuse, they are victims of domestic abuse in their own right.</p>	<p>HSCP Strategic Needs Assessment 2022 WD</p> <p>SafeLives (2016) Safe Later Lives: Older people and domestic abuse.</p> <p>SafeLives (2017) Safe Young Lives: Young people and domestic abuse</p>	<p>The Strategy aims to the prevention and eradication of VAWG in West Dunbartonshire. VAWG can affect people in all age groups, but the ways and context can differ in every age group. The Strategy takes an intersectional approach to consider how protected characteristics like age impact on based violence and abuse, therefore the impact is positive.</p>
<b>Disability</b>	<p>The most recent information from the Scottish Household Survey carried out in 2019 reported that 26% of West Dunbartonshire residents had a lifelong time limiting condition.</p> <p>Studies have shown that disabled women are twice as likely to experience domestic abuse and are also twice as likely to suffer assault and rape.</p>	<p>HSCP Strategic Needs Assessment 2022 WD</p> <p>SafeLives (2017) Disabled survivors too: Disabled people and domestic abuse</p>	<p>The Strategy aims to the prevention and eradication of VAWG in West Dunbartonshire. Because VAWG is twice as likely to happen for disabled women, the impact of this Strategy, which takes an intersectional approach, is positive for people with this protected characteristic.</p>

<b>Gender Reassign</b>	<p>There is no national data about Gender Reassignment and GBV, however research shows that LGBTQ+ people experience higher rates of GBV and might have to deal with additional barriers seeking support or accessing the justice system. The peer consultation from LGBT Youth Scotland "LGBTQ+ young people's experiences of domestic abuse: in their own relationships and within families" shows that trans young people were more likely to experience domestic abuse than cisgender young people, with 74% of trans participants in the consultation reporting having experienced one or more forms of abusive behaviour from a partner or ex-partner, compared to 40% of cisgender participants.</p>	<p>HSCP Strategic Needs Assessment 2022 WD</p> <p>LGBT Youth Scotland (2022) Peer Consultation: LGBTQ+ young people's experiences of domestic abuse: in their own relationships and within families.</p> <p>SafeLives (2018) Free To Be Safe: LGBT+ people experiencing domestic abuse.</p>	<p>The Strategy aims to the prevention and eradication of VAWG in West Dunbartonshire. LGBTQ+ people experience VAWG at higher rates than people who is not in this group, therefore the impact of the Strategy on people with this protected characteristic is positive.</p>
<b>Marriage &amp; Civil Partnership</b>	<p>In 2022, 205 marriages were registered in West Dunbartonshire. In 2022, 4 civil partnerships were registered in West Dunbartonshire.</p>	<p>West Dunbartonshire Council Area Profile, NRS</p>	<p>The Strategy applies to everyone regardless of their marital status, and there is no national data on the impact of being married/civil partnership and experiencing VAWG, therefore the impact of this protected characteristic is Neutral.</p>
<b>Pregnancy &amp; Maternity</b>	<p>In 2022, there were 852 births in West Dunbartonshire. Studies have shown that violence can begin or escalate during or shortly after pregnancy, 30% of domestic abuse begins in pregnancy while 40–60% of women experiencing domestic abuse are abused during pregnancy.</p>	<p>West Dunbartonshire Council Area Profile, NRS</p> <p>SafeLives (2016), A Cry for Health: Why we must invest in domestic abuse services in hospitals.</p>	<p>The Strategy aims to the prevention and eradication of VAWG in West Dunbartonshire. Because research shows that violence can begin or escalate during o after pregnancy, with the risks attached not only to the mother, but also to the baby, the implementation of this policy will have a positive impact on this protected characteristic.</p>

<b>Race</b>	<p>In the UK Black and minority ethnic (BME) and migrant women in the UK face higher levels of domestic homicide and abuse driven suicide.</p> <p>BME women referred to MARAC typically self-report suffering abuse 1.5 times longer before getting help than people who identify as White, British or Irish. One in four BME victim/survivors report needing the aid of an interpreter to communicate effectively and one in five report having no recourse to public funds.</p> <p>Additionally, people from some BME communities, have an increased risk of suffering Honour-Based Abuse.</p>	<p>Scottish Government, Cosla (2023): Equally Safe Strategy, preventing and eradicating violence against women and girls</p> <p>Public Health Scotland (2023), Minority Ethnic Women and Violence Against Women and Girls.</p>	<p>The Strategy applies to everyone regardless of their marital status, and there is no national data on the impact of being married/civil partnership and experiencing VAWG, therefore the impact of this protected characteristic is Neutral. The Strategy aims to the prevention and eradication of VAWG in West Dunbartonshire. The Strategy takes an intersectional approach to respond appropriately to the risks that some people will experience due to being from BME communities, and intends to increase engagement with these groups, therefore the impact of this Strategy is positive.</p>
<b>Religion and Belief</b>	<p>There is no evidence that VAWG affects people differently due to their religion or beliefs, however VAWG against women from some religious and ethnic is often under reported. Additionally, women from religious and ethnic minority communities may experience forms of abuse which specifically relate to their beliefs or traditions.</p>	<p>Scottish Government (2017), Equality Impact Assessment - Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Bill</p>	<p>The Strategy aims to the prevention and eradication of VAWG in West Dunbartonshire. The Strategy takes an intersectional approach to respond appropriately to the risks that some people will experience due to being part of religious communities, therefore the impact of this Strategy is positive.</p>

<b>Sex</b>	<p>Women and girls are disproportionately affected VAWG, and that they experience it because they are women and girls, while men are more likely to perpetrate this violence. Women's inequality is both, the cause and consequence of VAWG. In the data provided by Police Scotland about domestic abuse recorded in 22/23, 83% of victims were female. 81% of incidents involved a female victim and a male perpetrator. In West Dunbartonshire, 52.2% of the population is female</p>	<p>Domestic abuse recorded by the police in Scotland, 2022-23</p> <p>West Dunbartonshire Council (2023), West Dunbartonshire in Numbers.</p>	<p>The Strategy recognises that the inequality between men and women is the cause and consequence VAWG and it takes a gendered approach which does not exclude men but recognises that women and girls are disproportionately affected by VAWG while men are more likely to perpetrate this violence, however the gendered approach, ensures that gender stereotypes who might prevent men who suffer domestic abuse or sexual violence from accessing support or reporting are taken into account, therefore the impact of this Strategy on this protected characteristic is positive.</p>
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	<p>In the data provided by Police Scotland about domestic abuse recorded in 22/23, 3% of cases had a victim and perpetrator of the same gender.</p> <p>Research shows that LGBTQ+ people experience higher rates of GBV and might have to deal with additional barriers seeking support or accessing the justice system.</p>	<p>HSCP Strategic Needs Assessment 2022 WD</p> <p>West Dunbartonshire Council (2023), West Dunbartonshire in Numbers.</p> <p>SafeLives (2018) Free To Be Safe: LGBT+ people experiencing domestic abuse.</p>	<p>The Strategy aims to the prevention and eradication of VAWG in West Dunbartonshire. LGBTQ+ people experience VAWG at higher rates than people who is not in this group, therefore the impact of the Strategy on people with this protected characteristic is positive.</p>
<b>Human Rights</b>	<p>VAWG is a fundamental violation of Human Rights and a major obstacle to the achievement of equality between women and men.</p>	<p>Scottish Government, Cosla (2023): Equally Safe Strategy, preventing and eradicating violence against women and girls</p>	<p>The Strategy aims to the prevention and eradication of VAWG in West Dunbartonshire, by implementing this Strategy we are contributing to upholding Human Rights in West Dunbartonshire, therefore the impact is positive.</p>

<b>Health</b>	<p>VAWG is a Public Health issue and causes serious short- and long-term physical, mental, sexual and reproductive health problems for women. Domestic abuse is considered one of the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) which affects children's health, well-being and development.</p>	World Health Organisation (2024), Violence Against Women	The Strategy aims to prevent and eradicate VAWG, and it aligns with the National Equally Safe Strategy, which takes a public health approach to addressing VAWG, focusing on a preventative approach to minimise the occurrence of VAWG within the wider society. The impact will be positive.
<b>Social &amp; Economic Impact</b>	<p>VAWG not only impacts the individuals and communities where it takes place, it impacts the whole society, and puts pressure on public services.</p> <p>There are human, social, and economic cost associated to this violence and abuse.</p> <p>In 2020, West Dunbartonshire contained 48 of 121 (40%) data zones amongst the most deprived 20% in Scotland.</p> <p>Women are more likely to live in precarious financial and economic situations than men, and VAWG contributes to this situation increasing women's vulnerability, or even entrapping them further in the abuse.</p>	<p>NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde (2024), Adult Health and Wellbeing Survey 2022/23</p> <p>Scottish Government, Cosla (2023): Equally Safe Strategy, preventing and eradicating violence against women and girls</p> <p>The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)</p>	By preventing and eradicating VAWG in Scotland we are contributing to reduce the inequalities between men and women, which make women more likely to live in poverty and prevents them for participating fully in society, therefore the impact of the Strategy on this area is positive.

<p><b>Cross Cutting</b></p>	<p>To improve equalities, uphold Human Rights and and tackle the impacts of violence, abuse, adversity and trauma, community planning partners must work collaboratively to avoid policy siloes, maximising resources, skills and capacity.</p>	<p>Improvement Service (2022), Tackling Inequalities, Trauma and Adversity across the Lifespan: Mapping Cross-Cutting Agendas.</p>	<p>Cross cutting To improve equalities, uphold Human Rights and and tackle the impacts of violence, abuse, adversity and trauma, community planning partners must work collaboratively to avoid policy siloes, maximising resources, skills and capacity. Tackling Inequalities Trauma and Adversity across the Lifespan (improvementservice.org .uk) The Strategy takes a multi-agency approach to VAWG, as it has an impact across all levels of society and all public, private and third sector have a role to play in preventing and eradicating this violence and abuse. By taking this multi-agency approach, it is recognised that we cannot work in isolation, and therefore the impact on this area is positive.</p>
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**Actions**

**Policy has a negative impact on an equality group, but is still to be implemented, please provide justification for this.**

**Will the impact of the policy be monitored and reported on an ongoing basis?**

The Strategy will be reviewed every three years. Using this Strategy, the WD VAWG Partnership will develop an action plan which will be monitored and will be reported periodically to the Public Protection Chief Officers Group.

**Q7 What is your recommendation for this policy?**

Introduce

**Please provide a meaningful summary of how you have reached the recommendation**

We recommend to introduce this Strategy because not only it will have positive impact in most of the protected characteristics, but it will support the vision of the HSCP Strategic plan of achieving a West Dunbartonshire where everyone lives in a place they can call home, in communities that care, doing things that matter to them, leading healthy, happy and fulfilling lives, by driving down the prevalence of gender-based violence and provide those affected with the support they need. The Strategy also goes in line with the National Equality Safe Strategy that wants to achieve a Scotland where all individuals are equally safe, and women and girls can lead lives free of violence and abuse and the attitudes that help perpetuate it. West Dunbartonshire is the fourth local authority with the highest incidents of domestic abuse reported to the Police in Scotland. Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), is a violation of Human Rights and a Public Health and Equalities issue, and it is a cause and consequence of the unequal position of women within our society. With the impact of VAWG in individuals and their communities, it is paramount that we work in partnership to prevent and eradicate it, and that is the aim of this Strategy.