

VAW Partnerships

Equally Safe highlights the need for agencies across every area of Scottish life to work together to tackle violence against women and girls. At a local level, Violence Against Women Partnerships (VAWPs) are recognised as the key driver for this multi-agency work.

These Partnerships are responsible for bringing together all the key public sector and third sector organisations working to prevent and eradicate violence against women and girls within each local authority area, and ensuring that an effective and strategic approach is taken to progressing the priorities set out in *Equally Safe*. While the specific membership of each VAWP will vary depending on the needs and priorities of the communities in which they are operating, key members are likely to include representatives from Adult and Child Protection Committees, Community Safety Partnerships, Health and Social Care Partnerships, Alcohol and Drugs Partnerships, Education, Housing, Social Work, NHS, Police Scotland, Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal, Rape Crisis, Women's Aid and other relevant organisations.

Importantly, VAWPs offer a single point of contact for the breadth of work being taken to tackle VAWG at a local level and avoid duplication of effort and resource.

Core Activities of VAW Partnerships

The primary function of VAWPs is to ensure that best use is made of all available resources in the community and that women and girls affected by violence and abuse receive integrated, relevant and effective services. In order to do this, key activities undertaken by VAWPs include:

- **Ensuring women and girls affected by VAWG receive early and effective interventions**
Effective partnership working both between VAW Partnerships and other local strategic organisations and partnerships is essential to ensuring that women and girls affected by VAWG receive early and effective interventions. At a local level VAWPs play a key role in providing links to other organisations and partnerships working to improve the safety and wellbeing of women and girls affected by VAWG and ensuring perpetrators are held to account for their behaviours. They may also support other multi-agency arrangements that are in place at a local level, including Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs), Multi Agency Tasking and Co-ordination (MATACs) and Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPAs).
- **Promoting a preventative approach to tackling VAWG**
Equally Safe highlights the need to make a decisive shift towards preventing violence against women and girls by addressing its root causes. At a local level, VAWPs play a leading role in engaging with other strategic partnerships and stakeholders within their CPP (including representatives from FE/ HE institutions) and helping to ensure that

they prioritise tackling gender inequality and social attitudes in their own strategies and plans.

- **Disseminating learning and training**

VAWPs play a key role in ensuring that both specialist and non-specialist organisations have the knowledge and skills they need to identify and support women and girls affected in an appropriate way. This may include producing learning resources, sharing best practice and organising training. They also provide quality assurance for local services and policies, ensuring they are evidence informed and contribute to the outcomes and activities in the VAWP's strategic plan.

For more information about the work of VAWPs and how they support and connect to other strategic organisations and partnership working to tackle gender inequality and VAWG at a local authority level, please refer to the [Violence Against Women Partnership Guidance](#).

Other Support and Resources

VAWPs are supported in this work by the Improvement Service; the national improvement organisation for local government in Scotland. The Improvement Service's aim is to help Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) and their partner organisations to improve the health, quality of life and opportunities of all people in Scotland through community leadership, strong local governance and the delivery of high quality, efficient local services.

The Improvement Service currently coordinates the work of the National VAW Network, which aims to improve the capacity and capability of local VAWPs across Scotland to implement the ambitions set out in *Equally Safe* at a local level and to support Partnerships to engage effectively with community planning processes. Funded by the Scottish Government, the Network brings together VAWP Coordinators/Lead Officers across the country with other key stakeholders including the Scottish Government, COSLA and Police Scotland to share information, learning and resources and ensure that there is meaningful engagement and a coordinated approach taken on relevant issues.

In partnership with VAWPs, the Improvement Service also produces a range of briefings to raise awareness of the causes and consequences of VAWG, and highlight examples of good practice across Scotland where multi-agency partnership working is making a positive difference in tackling VAWG. A series of briefings on topics including 'why violence and abuse is a gendered issue', 'good practice in preventing and eradicating domestic abuse' and 'engaging men in tackling violence against women' are available to read on the [Improvement Service website](#).

For more information about VAW Partnerships (including the contact details for the Coordinator/ Lead Officer in each local authority area), please contact vaw@improvementservice.org.uk or visit the [Improvement Service's website](#).