

What is the problem we're trying to solve?

Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) damages health and wellbeing, limits freedom and potential and is a violation of human rights.

Risks, dangers and harms caused by VAWG to individuals, families, communities and societies can be complex. In some cases, long term or even lifelong levels of support from specialist or universal services are required to provide safety, security and recovery. This can only be provided through considerable public spend and investment in informed, safe and sustainable specialist and universal service responses.

There remains a lack of shared understanding that it is women's inequality in society that is a cause and consequence of VAWG. Gender inequality continues to be rooted in society and tolerated.

Progress made towards equality targets has recently been inhibited by the impacts of the covid pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis.

While all women, children and young people are at risk of experiencing harm from VAWG, people with protected characteristics face increased levels of risk or both experiencing and accessing appropriate support for VAWG.

Perpetrators of VAWG may not be held accountable for their choices and the harms they cause and may not be robustly supported to change their attitudes, values, beliefs and behaviours.

What will we do to tackle this problem?

We are committed to adopting an evidence-based approach to identifying the specific activities that will be delivered as part of this strategy.

Our review of the existing evidence on 'what works' to prevent and eradicate VAWG along with consultation and engagement with experts by experience and profession has informed our commitment to prioritise actions which will:

- Prevent VAWG before it occurs
- Support early intervention
- Build a broad and shared understanding across our society and communities of what VAWG is and how it impacts those who experience it, its impact on society more generally, the scale of the problem and what causes it
- Build political, institutional, sectoral, organisational, community and personal commitment and contribution to the prevention and tackling of VAWG
- Hold perpetrators of VAWG to account, supporting change where possible
- Deliver sustainable, informed and safe specialist and universal service responses for victims/survivors that is holistic and meets the victim's individual needs
- Promote an intersectional approach to preventing, recognising and responding to the compounding inequalities and risks some women, children and young people may experience

What outcomes do we want to achieve?

Short-term outcomes

People have increase understanding of the causes, consequences and appropriate responses to VAWG.

People develop an understanding of positive, safe and healthy relationships from an early age.

Policy and practice adopts a gender lens to addressing the inequality women and girls experience at different ages and stages of life.

Fewer people adhere to harmful gender stereotypes.

Women, children and young people affected by VAWG are identified early and receive the support they need, at the time they need it.

Men and boys have an increased understanding of positive, healthy and safe relationships.

Men who perpetrate VAWG are identified at an early stage.

Medium-term outcomes

Tolerance of VAWG is reduced and people are more likely to challenge VAWG.

Power, decision-making and material resources are more equally distributed between men and women.

Women and girls are safe, respected and equal in our communities.

Women, children and young people's safety and wellbeing needs are being met.

Women, children and young people are supported to recover from the violence, abuse and trauma they have experienced.

Men and boys who perpetrate VAWG change their harmful behaviours, and are supported to do so.

Men who perpetrate VAWG are held to account by the justice system.

Long-term outcomes

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 reject all forms of violence against women and girls, and perpetrators of such violence receive a robust and effective response.

What is our overall vision?

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 perpetrate it.

How will we do it?

Lived Experience

The voices of women, children and young people with lived experience of VAWG will be listened to and respected, and will be used to shape policy and practice.

Workforce Care, Support and Development

Professionals working within universal and specialist services will have the knowledge, skills and support they need to effectively respond to victims/survivors.

Trauma-Informed and Person-Centred

The systems and services that victims/survivors come into contact with will be person-centred and trauma-informed, and will address the additional barriers some victims/survivors may face to accessing support.

Evidence and Data

We will take an evidence-based approach to investing in systems and services that will improve outcomes for women, children and young people, and will use evidence and data to measure progress and performance.

Collective Leadership

There will be strong collective leadership at a local and national level across all key policy agendas that have a role to play in improving outcomes for women, children and young people affected by VAWG.