



**REPORT TO: POLICE AND FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES COMMITTEE ON
16 NOVEMBER 2023**

**SUBJECT: THEMATIC REPORT – VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND
GIRLS**

**BY: DETECTIVE CHIEF INSPECTOR CAROLINE GRAY, NORTH
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1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Committee on the work of the Violence against Women and Girls Partnership.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (J) (4) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to the monitoring of delivery of the Police and Fire & Rescue Services in Moray.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Police and Fire & Rescue Services Committee scrutinise and note the information contained within this report.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Moray Violence against Women and Girls Partnership (MVAWGP) reports through the Moray Public Protection Chief Officer's Group. It is currently chaired by Police Scotland and is the key multi-agency driver of implementation of the Scottish Government's Equally Safe strategy across Moray. The objective of the Equally Safe strategy is to prevent and eradicate violence against Women and Girls, creating a strong and flourishing Scotland where all individuals are equally safe and respected, and where woman and girls live free from such abuse, and the attitudes that help perpetuate it.
- 3.2 Following a period of dormancy during the COVID-19 Pandemic, the MVAWGP began work again in early 2022 with the hiring of Equally Safe Development Coordinator (ESDC), Dr Emma Plant. DCI Caroline Gray, Police Scotland, is the current chair of the group.

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- 3.3 The partnership hold meetings on a quarterly basis which are attended by representatives from Police Scotland; Moray Council; Health; Education; Housing; Ministry of Defence; Moray Rape Crisis; Moray Womens Aid along with a number of other third sector organisations.
- 3.4 The objectives of the partnership are as follows:
- Professionals and community members recognise VAWG and respond effectively
 - VAWG support is accessible for all who need it
 - VAWG support is effective and does not further traumatise victims
 - Men and boys stop inflicting violence against women and girls
- 3.5 Actions are agreed which meet the needs of these objectives. Progress is reviewed and updated at the quarterly MVAWGP meetings.

4. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 It was recognised that there was a lack of understanding regarding Domestic Abuse (DA) amongst the partnerships workforce – both statutory and third sector. To remedy this, a programme of online training sessions was devised by the ESDC to run throughout the year. This included the following subjects:
- Trauma Informed Practice & VAWG
 - Responding to Sexual Violence
 - Domestic Abuse & Coercive Control
- 4.2 A total of 466 individuals have attended training on these topics in the last 12 months with the courses attracting very positive feedback. Further training is being designed for rollout in 2024 with new topics relating to the impact of DA on children; sexual harassment legislation, the impact on the workplace and also around civil and criminal court procedures. Further bespoke training on a range of related topics such as Coercively Controlling Domestic Abuse has been requested by a number of agencies and there are plans to deliver this over the coming months.

5. SAFE & TOGETHER

- 5.1 The Safe & Together Model of Domestic Informed Practice has begun its local rollout. The Safe and Together Model is a model of dealing with incidents of domestic abuse which focuses on keeping the child/children safe with the non-offending parent; supporting the non-offending parent and intervening with the perpetrator to reduce risk of harm to the child.

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- 5.2 Four Partnership staff have undergone training to enable them to deliver this training to practitioners, with two to progress for accreditation to deliver training to supervisors and managers. In total, 156 people, from both statutory and third sector agencies in Moray, are now fully qualified practitioners. Several hundred more have attended 1 hour briefings to introduce the model. Processes are in the place to enable a review of the success of the roll out and to help identify any challenges.

6. CHOOSE TO CHANGE

- 6.1 A request has been received for the ESDC to review & update Moray Criminal Justice Social Work's two year VAWG Perpetrator Programme 'Choose to Change' to ensure it is fit for purpose. Particular attention will be paid to ensure the programme compliments the regional shift to using the Safe & Together Model of Domestic Abuse Informed Practice.

7. MULTI-AGENCY RISK ASSESSMENT CONFERENCE (MARAC)

- 7.1 A Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) is a meeting which is held to discuss the most high risk cases of domestic abuse and sexual violence, to share information and to safety plan to safeguard a victim. The MARAC Steering Group was reconstituted in October 2023. Four awareness raising sessions on the process have been delivered in the last 12 months.

8. MULTI-AGENCY TASKING AND CO-ORDINATION (MATAAC)

- 8.1 MATAAC is the Multi Agency Tasking and Co-ordination process of identifying and tackling serial perpetrators of domestic abuse. Meetings are held on a monthly basis and are attended by representatives from Police Scotland; Moray Council; Health; COPFS and others to enable discussion around disruption and enforcement action and safeguarding measures for any identified new partners.

9. THE DISCLOSURE SCHEME FOR DOMESTIC ABUSE SCOTLAND (DSDAS)

- 9.1 The DSDAS scheme is a scheme which gives people the right to ask about the background of their partner. It also allows concerned relatives and friends the right to ask, with the disclosure being made to the person assessed to be at risk. Professionals can also submit an application to the scheme should they have any concerns regarding a service user. Two well attended sessions (approx. 45 persons) on the use of the Disclosure Scheme for Domestic Abuse Scotland were delivered by Inspector Claire Smith. This is intended to increase Moray's uptake of the scheme.

10. DOMESTIC ABUSE ACCREDITATION FOR SOLICITORS

10.1 Funding has been secured for two local solicitors to attend the Scottish Women's Rights Centre Domestic Abuse Advocacy accreditation course. Candidates are being contacted presently. There are currently no accredited solicitors within Moray.

11. COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY & MVAWGP WEBSITE

11.1 A Partnership wide communications strategy was agreed in February 2023.

11.2 The new Moray Public Protection website is close to being launched. This features a large section for the MVAWGP including details of the Partnership's business and foundation documents; overviews of all forms of VAWG, relevant national legislation & international legal documents and a comprehensive directory of local and national support services.

12. AWARENESS RAISING

12.1 From January - March 2023 a Moray wide awareness raising campaign was carried on local bus services, both internally and externally. Three messages were used:

- Domestic abuse doesn't always leave bruises – signposting to Moray Women's Aid
- Domestic Abuse is a parenting choice – signposting to RADAR
- Rape victims don't lie, rapists do – signposting to Moray Rape Crisis

12.2 In the following quarter Rape Crisis noticed an unusually large increase in service enquiries with Moray Women's Aid noting a smaller spike. It is assessed that the campaign had a positive impact on people's confidence in seeking support.

12.3 In order to reach the underserved Scottish Traveller Community a campaign featuring small (easy-to-hide) information cards will be rolled out to local shops (hairdressers, nail salons etc.) where survivors from this community tell us women may visit unsupervised. This will be followed up by specialist training on identifying VAWG and cultural awareness for Health Visitors and Nurse who are the only service workers reliably allowed into Moray's several Halting Sites.

13. 16 DAYS OF ACTION ON GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE 2023

- 13.1 The 16 Days of Action Against Domestic Violence campaign is a global campaign which starts on 25 November 2023, which is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Woman, and concludes on 10 December 2023, which is International Human Rights Day. The following activities are planned in Moray during that time.
- 13.2 An exhibit raising awareness about sexual assault ‘What Were You Wearing?’ will be held in the UHI’s outer gallery. An interactive workshop on the non-consensual sharing of intimate images will be delivered by the National Revenge Porn Helpline. All are welcome to attend.
- 13.3 A one hour briefing is scheduled for December on the practical application of the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2019. It is intended for delivery to every Police Officer in the region. It is being co-produced by the ESDC and several frontline Police Officers to ensure its relevance to their colleagues. Concise summaries that fit in Officer's equipment will also be printed and distributed as an aide memoire. Requests have been received to share this copy with VAWG Partnerships in Fife, Aberdeen & Edinburgh.
- 13.4 Discussions are underway to have the founder of the Everyday Sexism Project, Laura Bates, deliver a talk during the 16 Days period.
- 13.5 A ‘pop up’ event in Elgin where advice; guidance and literature can be obtained from representatives from a number of agencies is also planned.

14. SEXUAL EQUALITY & TACKLING MISOGYNY WORK WITH POLICE SCOTLAND

- 14.1 Earlier this month, an anti-misogyny workshop was delivered at the Scottish Police College by ESDC. Senior male officers from across Police Scotland attended and the feedback received was overwhelmingly positive. The workshop will now be redesigned to be delivered by male volunteers to their peers within the force starting with North East Division (inc. Moray).

15. HORIZON SCAN

- 15.1 Going forward, the ESDC’s funding is due to expire in March 2024 with the possibility of one-year’s extension.
- 15.2 Following the publication of the Independent Review of the Funding & Commissioning of VAWG Services, it is likely that VAWG Partnerships will shortly be placed on a statutory footing.
- 15.3 Equally Safe is currently undergoing revision with publication expected by the end of 2023.

16. CONCLUSION

- 16.1 Moray Violence Against Women and Girls Partnership has remained dedicated to tackling violence against women in all its forms and coordinating services from voluntary and statutory agencies to ensure appropriate support is provided to those affected by it.
- 16.2 It is hoped that the provision of this detailed overview will afford Members a meaningful insight into the work of the partnership.
- 16.3 Public confidence and trust in the MVAWGP and its constituent members is enhanced through the cohesive and collaborative strategies set and delivered in a high risk and high profile area.

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