

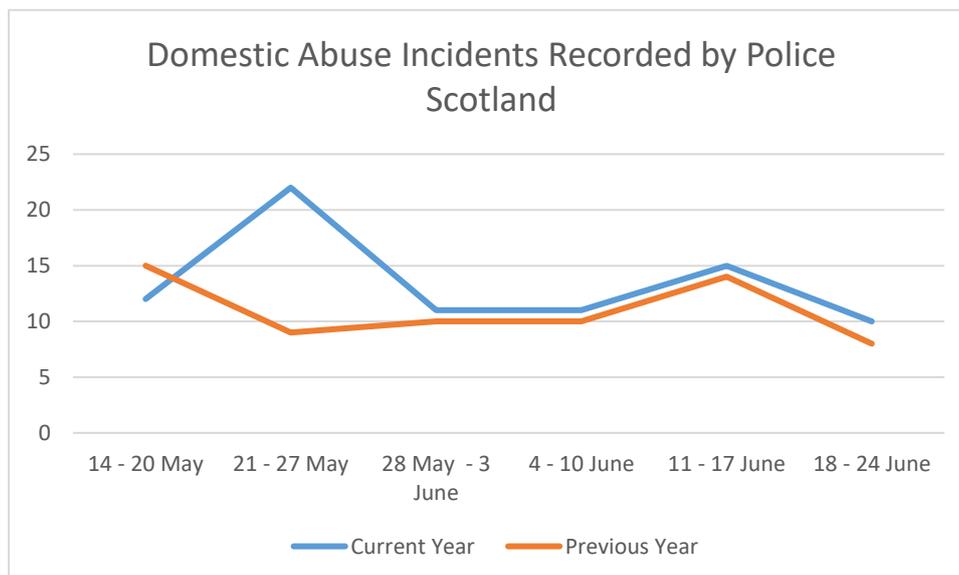
Violence Against Women Partnership (VAWP) COVID19 Response

1. Work of Violence Against Women Partnership

- 1.1. The Moray Violence Against Women Partnership generally meets on a quarterly basis and is currently Chaired by Detective Chief Inspector Alan Armit.
- 1.2. The activities and governance of the group are promoted by a Co-ordinator, identified from within the partnership, with members focussed on delivering upon a local strategy, developed to contribute towards the Moray Local Outcomes Improvement Plan and the national Equally Safe strategy.
- 1.3. The Chair further strengthened the governance of the group with the appointment of leads to progress partnership training, data collection and quality assurance.
- 1.4. In 16 April 2020, in response to COVID19, the Partnership moved to meet virtually and on a more frequent monthly basis. The focus for the group currently centres on using the data available to identify trends, particular risks and the consequent work required in response to the pandemic.
- 1.5. In order to translate the potential impact, the Moray VAWP have incorporated the national guidance issued by the Scottish Government, COSLA and the Improvement Service to ensure as a partnership we remain relevant and responsive during this period.

2. Domestic Abuse Activity During COVID19

- 2.1. Whilst it is assessed as too early to accurately assess the impact of both the moving into and the subsequent easing of lockdown restrictions, over the past couple of months, following a spike in late May, reported incidents have generally followed the same pattern as last year, with 2020 figures slightly higher throughout Scotland. There is variation throughout Local Authority areas, with Moray actually showing a slight decrease in reporting, compared with the same period last year.



- 2.2. Although National Helpline data indicates an increase in demand during the lockdown period, in Moray there is a reduction in calls to Moray Women's Aid. There is no evidence of increase in A&E attendance related to domestic abuse and no increase in housing demand as a result of domestic reporting. This may partially be explained by difficulties in reporting experienced due to the lockdown.
- 2.3. It is anticipated that we may see an increase in reporting to police and/or other statutory/non-statutory partners as lockdown restrictions continue to be relaxed and victims are permitted to meet others outside of their own household.
- 2.4. Domestic abuse crime recording figures in Moray, over the past few weeks of lockdown are very similar to the figures recorded in 2019. Detection rates for the crimes reported are almost identical within these same periods in 2019 and 2020. This may reflect the continued awareness raising efforts and focus on domestic abuse within the partnership who continue to co-ordinate and drive the delivery of national and local domestic abuse campaigns to ensure awareness continues to be raised of key issues. In addition, these figures reflect the continued priority afforded to dealing with domestic abuse reports, by services in Moray.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1. The governance arrangements in place within the Violence Against Women partnership in Moray have ensured a robust but agile response to the current challenges faced and indeed those moving forward and I trust this report provides Chief Officers with an assurance of the collective effort to tackle violence against women and girls, in all its forms.
- 3.2. As Chair I am confident that the partnership is growing into one which will continue to work effectively to the challenges of improving the response to violence against women and girls in Moray.

Author of Report: Detective Chief Inspector Alan Armit