Item 7

25th August 2022

Glasgow Community Planning Partnership
Safe Glasgow Partnership

Report by George Gillespie, Executive Director Neighbourhoods, Regeneration & Sustainability
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Glasgow Violence Against Women Partnership Report to Safe Glasgow Partnership

Purpose of Report:
To report on the work of the city wide strategic multi-agency Violence Against Women Partnership

Recommendations:
The Safe Glasgow Partnership are asked to:

- To consider the information provided, and
- To support the identification of a secure funding model for Glasgow MARAC, and
- To present the MARAC concern to CPP, and
- Approve the GVAWP report to the Safe Glasgow Partnership of GCPP.

Glasgow Community Planning Partnership priorities:
Specify which priorities this report is in relation to and which underlying principles support the development activity.

SOA | Alcohol	Yes / No ☒ / ☐	SOA | Principle *Early Intervention*	Yes / No ☒ / ☐
SOA | Vulnerable People; Preventing Homelessness	Yes / No ☒ / ☐	SOA | Principle *Equality*	Yes / No ☒ / ☐
SOA | Vulnerable People; In-Work Poverty	Yes / No ☐ / ☐	SOA | Principle *Sustainable Change*	Yes / No ☐ / ☐
SOA | Youth Employment	Yes / No ☐ / ☐	**If other priority, please provide details here:** Safe Glasgow Partnership	
SOA | *Thriving Places*	Yes / No ☐ / ☐		
Other Priority	Yes / No ☒ / ☐		

1 Introduction and Background

1.1 The purpose of this briefing is to update the Safe Glasgow Partnership on ongoing work undertaken by Glasgow Violence Against Women Partnership (GVAWP).

1.2 The Glasgow Violence Against Women Partnership was established to bring together key multi-agency partners in order that they take forward actions at a local level as agreed in Scottish Government Equally Safe Strategy to prevent and eradicate all forms of violence against women and girls

1.3 The GVAWP has continued to convene in 2022 on an 8-weekly basis in order that collective responses to all forms of violence against women and girls are timeously identified and any appropriate multi-agency responses are developed and actioned. Despite the easing of public health restrictions across the course of 2022, this has not been without challenge. All multi-agency partners, statutory and 3rd sector, continue beyond their capacity to ensure that that vital support services are available to vulnerable women, children and young people. We are acutely aware of the fragility of VAW services which like many are under resourced.

2 GVAWP Review

2.1 In May of this year the GVAWP agreed to undertake a review of its role, function, membership, reporting, accountability and multi-agency strategic plan, this was facilitated by the Improvement Service.

2..2 A detailed set of recommendations were agreed and a report produced (*copy available*). Of interest to the Safe Glasgow Partnership are the reporting and accountability arrangements. GVAWP members collectively agreed that reporting arrangements required to be robust and an approach has been made to the Leaders Office and Senior Officers Group (SOG) to report directly to the SOG, additionally they agreed that we should seek to report to WECCE or its equivalent within the current administration.

2.3 The GVAWP has benefited from Chairing and leadership from an elected member. Unlike the Hate Crime Working Group this has come directly from the Administration and this is being pursued with the Leaders Office. Group Manager Ann Fehilly has assumed Chairing in the absence of an elected member. The GVAWP expect to have a Chair appointed soon.

2.4 The Scottish Government Equally Safe Strategy came to its end in September 2021 and an interim national strategic plan is currently in place. The GVAWP specific city-wide multi-agency strategic plan is also under review, the demands on the GVAWP support officer has meant that the draft of the plan is delayed.

3 WAIR Group

3.1 This working group was established to develop specific actions to respond to the needs of women who are subject to immigration barriers. Over and above women asylum seekers, women on spousal visa's, student visas or other immigration status, it includes women from European Union, who have arrived in UK from 31st December, 2020.

3.2 The WAIR Group has been active this year and have been involved in a number of initiatives working in partnership with Scottish Women's Rights Centre (SWRC); Just Right Scotland; British Red Cross; Glasgow Women's Aid; COSLA and Improvement Service.

3.3 The GVAWP funded SWRC to develop and produce a series of webinars and information specifically directed at women from EU on applying for pre and settled status in UK.

3.4 Through GCC COVID Recovery Funds in partnership with Glasgow Women's Aid and British Red Cross the Women, Destitution and No Recourse To Public Funds (NRPF) service was developed. This project targets women subject to NRPF, offering crisis accommodation, cash-based living allowance, access to legal support and outreach support., for a limited period of time.

3.5 The WAIR Group highlighted with both COSLA & Improvement Service our concerns on UK Nationality and Borders Act 2022. We participated in a joint national event to raise awareness of the harms which directly impact on women who experience gender based abuse and whose lives are affected by the implementation of the Act. It significantly limits any responses statutory services can offer vulnerable women, giving grave concerns for the safety and wellbeing of women and girls, increasing their vulnerability to trafficking, prostitution, sexual and other exploitation.

3.6 The war in Ukraine has been a focus for the WAIR Group. The Group highlighted to COSLA & Improvement Service our concerns for women and children fleeing the conflict. This included their vulnerability to trafficking, sexual violence and abuse while fleeing to safety and in transit to destination countries. In partnership we took part in a national round table discussion to highlight this along with our concerns over the sponsorship arrangements that had been made here in UK and Scotland for women and girls fleeing the conflict. The WAIR group produced a position statement calling for a Gendered Response to the Ukraine Crisis (copy available). This is further exacerbated now that Scotland has had to pause its super sponsorship scheme.

4 Impact of COVID 19, Public Health Restrictions on VAW Services

4.1 There is much documented information of the impact that the public health restrictions had on women experiencing any form of gender based abuse. Necessary public health restrictions are not the root cause of domestic abuse or any other form of violence against women and girls, but it did intensify them. Most front line women's services have resumed face to face work and this is to be welcomed, however there are significant capacity issues on all our front line services and their ability to respond timeously to women

4.2 Front line women services report long waiting lists of up to 6 months for face-to-face support, despite being able to access additional funds.

4.3 Barriers still exist to reporting, seeking help and economic difficulties are exacerbated.

5 Access to Justice

5.1 The human rights concerns the GVAWP previously reported still remain. Courts are now operational in the city however, they are still subject to significant backlogs, delays and postponements. This presents support organisations such as ASSIST with a number of challenges including, increasing caseloads with no opportunity to close cases until they have concluded.

5.2 It is not unusual for ASSIST to report that it can take almost 2 years from the initial assault taking place, to a criminal justice conclusion. Meanwhile accused, despite being subject to bail or other such conditions to manage their abusive behaviour, consistently breach conditions, often without sanction or revocation of orders. This has directly increased risk of further abuse for women and any children they may have. ASSIST also inform us that women are of the view that they have been failed by the criminal justice system, are reluctant to report further incidents of aggression, citing that there are no consequences for the accused and increasingly ASSIST are deeply concerned that women will disengage completely from any supports, meaning that unless they report there is no way of responding to any increased risk.

6 Delivering Equally Safe (DES)

6.1 DES is a Scottish Government funding programme and awards were made in September 2021, initially for 2 years, now extended until 2025. The following services in the city made successful bids:

6.2 ASSIST; Aberlour Trust; Glasgow East Money Advice Project; Glasgow Women's Aid; Glasgow East Women's Aid; Hemat Gryffe Women's Aid; SAY Women.

7 Scottish Government Funding Review

7.1 The Scottish Government are currently consulting on the future funding and commissioning arrangements of violence against women and girls services. A response has been submitted by GVAWP (*copy available*).

8 Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)

8.1 Funding received from Glasgow HSCP allowed NRS VAW Services to appoint 2 dedicated MARAC Coordinators in August & September 2021. This funding was for 12 months and has now come to an end. To date no secure funding model is identified, this is despite raising concerns for the future of MARAC in the city**.**

8.2 There is currently a shortfall of £44k from August 2022 to March 23. The GVAWP has agreed to contribute funds from its very limited budget of £53k to ensure its continuation until the end of the financial year. A Working Group has been established to secure a longer term funding model. Partners in GCC, Glasgow HSCP, GCC Education Services, Police Scotland, Wheatly Group and NHS GG&C have been approached for funding support to assist

with the funding shortfall for the current financial year. Going forward it is vital that a longer term funding model is identified and agreed. The small funds the GVAWP receive is insufficient to sustain MARAC, nor is it guaranteed longer term.

8.3 In 2021 MARAC in Glasgow discussed **1,146** high risk victims of domestic abuse, the vast majority of those discussed were women, there are **57** male victims included within the overall number. At the same time the MARAC discussed **1,302** children and young people.

8.4 The multi-agency discussion that takes place seeks to share relevant and proportionate information relating to risk posed by the perpetrator towards the victim and any children they may have and invites the representatives to undertake actions that reduce risk and increase safety. MARAC will discuss high risk victims whether the domestic abuse they have experienced is subject to criminal justice proceedings.

8.5 Should we fail to identify a secure funding model for MARAC this service will cease to exist in the city. Glasgow currently records the 3rd highest reports of domestic abuse to Police Scotland nationally. This will mean that the largest local authority in Scotland will be without a response to high risk victims of domestic abuse, this is the only multi-agency arrangement that has a focus on adult victim safety.

9 Family Support Project: Making A House A Home

9.1 Established in 2021 in partnership with GCC Financial Services Child Poverty and VAW Sector, additional funds of £200k has been made available to continue this project for women experiencing any form of VAW. Women can apply to when moving to a home of their own from temporary accommodation or other form of accommodation. This fund works in conjunction with Social Fund allocations and allows women to buy furniture and goods for their home that they would otherwise not be able to afford.

10 Licensing of Sexual Entertainment Venues (SEV)

10.1 Glasgow Licensing and Regulatory Committee agreed a policy on the licensing of sexual entertainment venues. The policy agreed to license ‘nil’ venues but has granted ‘grandfather rights’ to the 3 existing SEVs operational in the city. The policy states that the GVAWP should be consulted on SEV license applications. GVAWP has responded to the license applications made by the existing venues, objecting to the applications.

10.2 Of interest to the Safe Glasgow Partnership is the recent decision by the equivalent body in Edinburgh to adopt a ‘nil policy’ on any new or existing venue. This has the potential to afford Glasgow the sex entertainment capital of Scotland, a city for stags, sex tourism and sex entertainment. The presence of sexual entertainment venues is wholly incompatible with the changing face of the city centre away from an economic hub of hospitality and retail to the mixture of hospitality, retail, culture and residential.

11 Standing Group on Violence Against Women and Girls (VAW&G

11.1 The Standing Group on VAW&G brings together the 8 front line 3rd sector services concerned with tackling violence against women and girls. The GVAWP funded the group to produce a report on the economic and other benefits the Standing Group members services bring to the city. This report is due to be launched on 26th August and the report will be circulated to Safe Glasgow Partnership.

12 Recommendations

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Glasgow Violence Against Women Partnership August, 2022