

Item 2

27th August 2024



Glasgow City Council

Environment and Liveable Neighbourhoods City Policy Committee

**Report by George Gillespie, Executive Director,
Neighbourhoods, Regeneration and Sustainability**

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Glasgow Violence Against Women Partnership.

Purpose of Report:

To provide an update on the work of the city wide multiagency Glasgow Violence Against Women Partnership.

Recommendations:

To note the contents of the report.

Ward No(s):

Citywide: ✓

Local member(s) advised: Yes ☐ No ☐ consulted: Yes ☐ No ☐

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Glasgow Violence Against Women Partnership (GVAWP), established in 2000, brings together a range of statutory and voluntary agencies in Glasgow with the aim of improving multi agency responses to women, children and young people who have experienced violence against women and girls (VAW&G). The GVAWP is chaired by an elected member nominated by the Administration, Councillor Holly Bruce. The GVAWP is a strategic partnership and believes improving participation will result in better service provision, improved legal protection and help to prevent further abuse to women, children and young people. This aim is in line with the Scottish Government's and COSLA's violence against women and girls strategy, [Equally Safe](#).
- 1.2 The GVAWP understands violence against women is a cause and consequence of the social inequalities that exist between men and women. It recognises that violence against women, children and young people can take many forms and that some women, children and young people may experience different and/or multiple forms of male violence over their lifetime.
- 1.3 The GVAWP sets high-level aims and corresponding objectives that provide a framework within which the working groups operate. NRS has responsibility for convening and coordinating the work of the city wide GVAWP and all of its associated working groups.
- 1.4 NRS VAW Services has responsibility for supporting the GVAWP to devise and deliver a city-wide multi-agency strategic plan to challenge the existence of VAW in the city.

2. GVAWP Strategic Plan

2. The production of the GVAWP city wide strategic plan remains in draft format and has not yet been formally approved. A series of workshops with partners and with lived experience groups took place regarding content and this is now complete. The GVAWP are committed to undertaking further public engagement on the strategy, partners have agreed to delay this until the publication of the Equally Safe Delivery Plan, there is an intention to map the draft strategy against the delivery plan as set out by COSLA and Scottish Government. A public engagement process is planned; however, this is contingent on resources being identified to support analysis of the process. NRS VAW Services do not have the software or capacity to support this. Following this, we expect the strategy to be produced and available online, timeline to be confirmed.
- 2.2 The Scottish Government and COSLA have now produced the refresh of [Equally Safe](#). The delivery plan to accompany the strategy was published 13.08.2024. Now the Equally Safe Delivery plan is produced, a series of consultations are planned with Violence Against Women Partners to highlight the expectation set out in the plan and what this means for public and 3rd sector partners. We will now seek to realign the Glasgow Strategic Plan in line with the seven priorities. We will present the final draft to the GVAWP at the

November meeting and plan a soft launch of the strategy at the end of 16 Days of Action 2024. (*UN's annual 16 Days of Activism Against Violence Against Women & Girls Campaign, running from 25th November, International Day against Violence Against Women, to 10th December 2023 - International Human Rights Day*)

- 2.3 Scottish Government has appointed a dedicated team to consider the recommendations contained within the Scottish Government Funding Review of Funding and Commissioning of Violence Against Women and Girls services. In addition to this, a Sustainable Funding Project Board has been appointed to oversee the development of a sustainable funding model for violence against women and girls' services.

3. Current GVAWP Activity

- 3.1 A range of work was supported as a response to the pandemic and continued by the GVAWP in recognition of the impact of the cost of living crisis on those experiencing VAW. This includes:

Financially Included: a partnership project developed by GVAWP/NRS VAW Services and GEMAP to raise awareness of financial & economic abuse as a consequence of coercive control. To develop a training tool kit to allow the money and advice sectors to better identify and respond to financial/economic abuse and specialist advisors where there are complex financial challenges. The project has begun its third year of operation. The project is unique to Glasgow and seeks to tackle the impact of financial and economic abuse, often a feature in coercive control.

Funding for the project is confirmed until March 2025. There is much interest in the project from VAW&G Partnerships across Scotland and the project are exploring opportunities to reach out beyond the Glasgow local authority boundaries.

Energy poverty is a significant issue and in particular from women from BaME communities. A funding bid has been made to the Energy Trust to employ a full time Energy Advisor with a focus on women who have been granted Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) moving from Home Office accommodation to local authority housing.

Financial & economic abuse can be one of the first red flags that indicate domestic abuse and coercion within a relationship. This can take many forms including coerced debt, prevented from working, denied access to bank accounts or income, this has many impacts, for many women it has a significant impact on credit scores and ability to pay utility bills by direct debit, the only choice being prepaid meters. Many women are repaying coerced debt long after the end of the relationship has ended. Financial and economic abuse can be a lifelong risk.

To date 337 women have engaged with the project; realising over £1,000,000 financial gains for clients related to debt write offs, benefit claims and charity grants.

Women's exposure to abuse is prolonged by poverty, as victim-survivors the ability to leave an abusive partner becomes even more difficult, especially in the current cost of living realities.

Making A House A Home: supports women with children moving on from refuge or other such temporary accommodation to adequately furnish their new home, including the decoration and furnishing of children's bedrooms, ensuring that they have a safe space.

Safety & Wellbeing Project: funded by GVAWP, offers women access to digital equipment, safety devices or therapeutic interventions to increase safety and wellbeing. We are supported in this initiative by Glasgow Women's Aid and Daisy Project.

4. GVAWP Working Groups

- 4.1 The WAIR Group** (Women, Asylum Immigration & Refugees) working group is concerned with responding to the needs of women who are subject to immigration barriers. This includes women asylum seekers, women on spousal visa's, student visas or other immigration status, women from European Union, who have arrived in UK from 31st December 2020. The WAIR Group is the only working group of its kind in the UK.

The WAIR Group is Chaired by British Red Cross and is currently reviewing and refreshing their action plan and this activity will inform the city wide strategic plan to tackle violence against women and girls. Informing the development of the Action Plan will be the [Labyrinth Report](#) and recommendations from [SEREDA](#) Report.

- 4.2 Women, Destitution & No Recourse to Public Funds :** in partnership with Glasgow Women's Aid and British Red Cross, this project supports women without dependents access to safe accommodation for a limited period of time (2 to 4 weeks), to urgent immigration advocacy and access to a cash based living allowance to avert destitution and for informed decisions can be made on the correct immigration routes to pursue to ensure longer term safety and wellbeing and prevent any further risk to harm and exploitation. The Women, Destitution and No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) Project has gathered interest across the UK. A cross party working group of the Welsh Senedd invited Chair of WAIR Group to present evidence to the group of the work of the project. The project to date has supported 6 women either in hotel or refuge accommodation. Fast track immigration advice and advocacy is provided by Just Right Scotland. It also offers access to emergency accommodation, a cash based living allowance and assertive outreach support. The support service is available for women aged 18+, without dependents.

More recently the UK Parliament passed the Safe Passage Rwanda Bill. This now fully introduces the objectives as set out in the [Illegal Migration Act 2023](#). The duty to remove is now in force, all people who arrive in the UK by irregular means including vulnerable women and families will have their claim for asylum marked as inadmissible. For some asylum seekers arriving after the implementation dates this will mean detention, removal to England in preparation for deportation to Rwanda. This will include victims of trafficking, which is of concern for all organisations represented in the WAIR Group.

Victims of trafficking are no longer protected if their route to the UK is identified as irregular, their asylum applications will be treated as inadmissible and this will place them at significant risk of further harm, exploitation, including re-trafficking. There is a risk of vulnerable women 'disappearing' for fear of being deported. Increasing their vulnerability to sexual exploitation, sexual harm and trafficking. Motivations to present to services for support will be negatively impacted for fear of being removed increasing vulnerability.

There are no mitigations in place and this is likely to be of concern to local authority public services in their duty to safeguard vulnerable people.

4.3 Glasgow Multiagency Risk Assessment Conferencing (MARAC) Steering Group

Glasgow MARAC: NRS VAW Services has 3 dedicated MARAC Coordinators to support the delivery of MARAC across Glasgow to domestic abuse victims who are at highest risk of being seriously hurt harmed or murdered. Glasgow MARAC continues to receive a high volume of referrals. In 2023 1,252 referrals were made. This includes 1,168 females, 1,995 children and 71 males. The introduction of the Pre-MARAC referral meeting to consider referrals where counter allegations were made, identified 13 males as primary perpetrators of domestic abuse. This included 750 unique and 484 repeat referrals. Of the 484 on repeat, 312 of these involved a breach of bail or other protective order offence, where the perpetrator has had some form of contact with the victim that they have been ordered by the court not to contact or communicate with.

The Glasgow MARAC had to reduce its operational capacity in February, March and April. Funding which supported Glasgow HSCP Criminal Justice services to attend the multi-locality MARAC meetings ended, resulting in an inability to support these additional meetings. The MARAC continued to process referrals, this created a significant waiting list for high risk victims of domestic abuse.

Following discussions an interim arrangement was agreed with Glasgow HSCP Criminal Justice Services and we are now in a position to reinstate the multi-locality meetings alongside the 3 dedicated locality ones.

To support next steps forward Glasgow HSCP, Social Work Governance Board have directed a practice audit to be undertaken. This practice audit will consider if there are means to safely and robustly reduce the volume of referrals to Glasgow MARAC.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 Glasgow Violence Against Women Partnership is committed to delivering on strategic activity which tackles all forms of violence against women and girls in the city. This will not be without challenge; we will continue to work towards contributing to challenging the existence of violence against women and girls in our city and welcome the opportunity to provide the committee with an annual update.

6. Policy and Resource Implications

Resource Implications:

Financial: NO

Legal: NO

Personnel: NO

Procurement: NO

Council Strategic Plan: [Reduce Poverty and inequality in our communities.](#)

Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts: NO

Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2021-25? Please specify. [Outcome No. 4](#)

What is the potential equality impacts as a result of this report? no significant impact

Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio-economic disadvantage. NO

Climate Impacts:

Does the proposal support any Climate Plan actions? Please specify: NO

What are the potential climate impacts as a result of this proposal?	NO
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Will the proposal contribute to Glasgow's net zero carbon target?	NO
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Privacy and Data
Protection Impacts:

Are there any potential data protection impacts as a result of this report Y/N	NO
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If yes, please confirm that a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) has been carried out.

7. Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note the contents of the report.