

Why is Violence Against Women and Girls a Community Justice Issue?



Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) is a community justice issue. To improve outcomes for women and children affected by VAWG there is a need to ensure that the community justice system takes a gendered approach to identifying and responding to people and communities affected by violence and abuse.

The Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016 places a duty on local authorities to work in partnership with other public sector agencies to deliver improved outcomes for those who have committed offences, their families, and victims of crime.

An effective approach to community justice planning will recognise the connections between VAWG and offending and ensure effective, trauma-informed interventions are in place that address the risks of women and children affected by VAWG becoming involved in the criminal justice system or being affected by other negative outcomes. It will also ensure effective systems are in place to identify and hold perpetrators of VAWG to account for their offending behaviours, and ensure they have access to high-quality, evidence-based interventions to reduce their likelihood of reoffending in the future.

What can elected members do to ensure VAWG is recognised as a community justice issue?

Elected members have an important role to play in helping to ensure that local Community Justice Partnerships and VAWG Partnerships take a joined-up approach to improving the safety and wellbeing of women and children affected by VAWG and reducing reoffending amongst people who perpetrate these harmful behaviours.

Elected members have a key role to play in helping to ensure this happens at a local level through support, scrutiny and direct involvement. You can help to ensure that members of local VAWG Partnerships and people with lived experiences of VAWG have an opportunity to shape the development and delivery of community justice plans.

Key actions for elected members to consider

- Promote a preventative approach to tackling VAWG by raising awareness of the links between gender inequality and VAWG and encouraging activities to take place to ensure women and girls in your local community are safe, respected and equal.
- Ensure there are strong strategic links between VAWG Partnerships and Community Justice Partnerships at a local level.
- Ensure your local Community Justice Outcome Improvement Plan recognises VAWG as a Community Justice issue and identifies clear actions that partners can take.
- Ensure local partners are using relevant reporting frameworks to measure the progress being made to improve outcomes for victims of VAWG and the people who perpetrate these harmful behaviours.
- Ensure early and effective interventions are available for women and children affected by VAWG within the local community.
- Ensure high quality, evidence-based interventions are in place to identify people who perpetrate VAWG at the earliest point and hold them to account for, and support them to change, their offending behaviours.