



Scottish Government
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Guidance and Resources Toolkit

VAWG Needs Assessment Toolkit Data Planning Template

Data Planning Template

Use this template to plan each data request. You can adapt or draw from this template for each dataset or data request.

1. The question you are trying to answer

Start with a clear question. A good question is specific, focused on something you genuinely do not already know, and answerable with data you can reasonably access. Data requests can be time and resource intensive, so planning is an essential part of creating a successful request.

Driving question	
Needs assessment question(s) it supports	
What you already know What existing data, research or intelligence already tell you about this area	
What the gap is What can't you answer with the information you have, and why is this data needed to fill it	

2. The data you need

Be specific about what you are asking for, so the partner can respond accurately and you can compare returns across organisations. Think about the smallest set of data that would answer your question.

Data items requested List the specific measures, indicators or fields. Try to be precise about what counts and what does not	
Geographic area e.g. the local authority area; note if boundaries will not align and why	
Time period e.g. financial years 2022/23–2024/25; note if trend data or a single point in time	
Breakdowns needed e.g. age, sex, ethnicity, disability, locality. It may be helpful to note which are essential and which are desirable	
Format and confidentiality How will the data be aggregated and anonymised? In what format would the information be returned?	

3. Who holds the data and how to request it

Identify the right organisation and the right person within it before sending the request. A preliminary conversation is often the most efficient way to scope the request and avoid asking for something the partner cannot provide.

Organisation / team Who holds this data?	
Key contact Name, role and contact details of the person best placed to respond	
Information-sharing basis The lawful basis or information-sharing agreement that covers this request. If required consult with local data protection team	
Known definitions or limitations How are key terms defined? Is anything likely to be undercounted, or are there significant gaps that may affect interpretation?	
Return deadline A realistic date, agreed with the partner where possible	

4. How you will analyse this data

Plan the analysis before you receive the data. If you cannot describe how you will use it, you may not need it. Match the method of analysis to the question and to the skills and time available.

Type of analysis planned e.g. descriptive (counts, proportions, rates); temporal (trends over time); comparative (against national or similar areas); equality (by demographic characteristic)	
Who will carry out the analysis Named analyst or team, note if analytical support needs to be commissioned	
Limitations to flag What are the limitations of this analysis? Are there any known data-quality issues or concerns around suppression or small numbers?	

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