



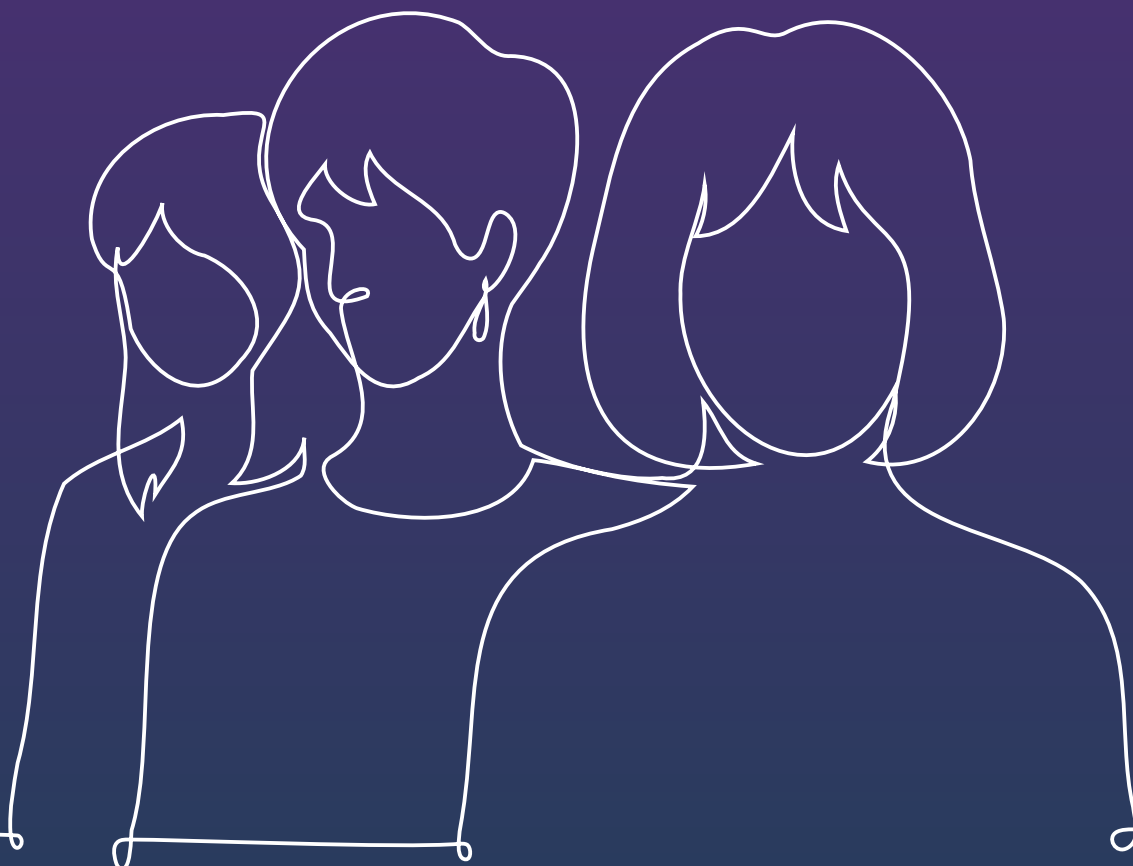
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Guidance and Resources Toolkit

VAWG Needs Assessment Toolkit Set-Up Guide

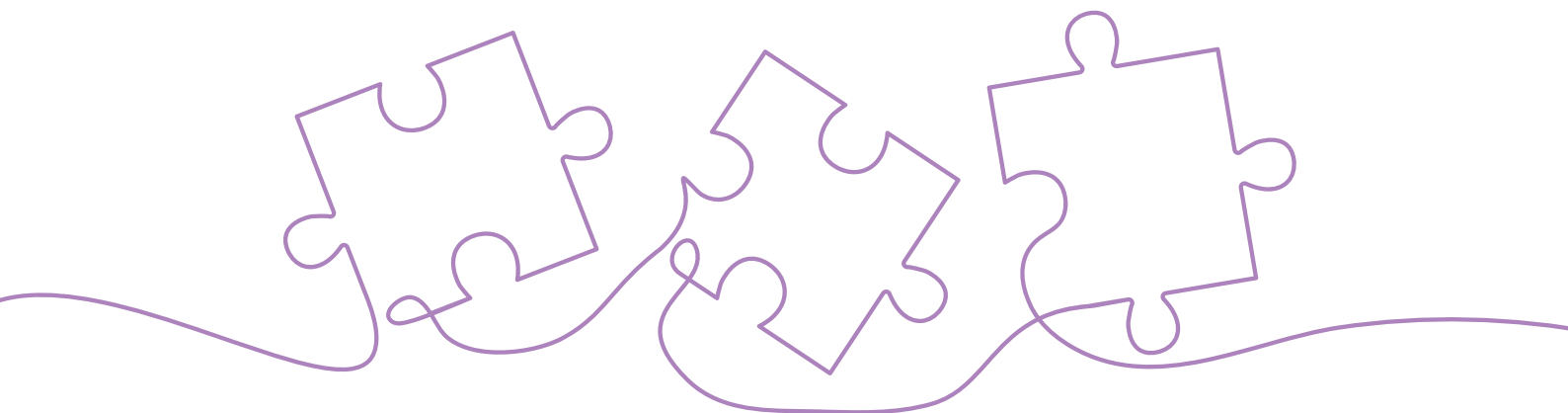
A practical guide to setting up a VAWG needs assessment, covering governance, stakeholder engagement, commissioning support and project planning



Acknowledgement

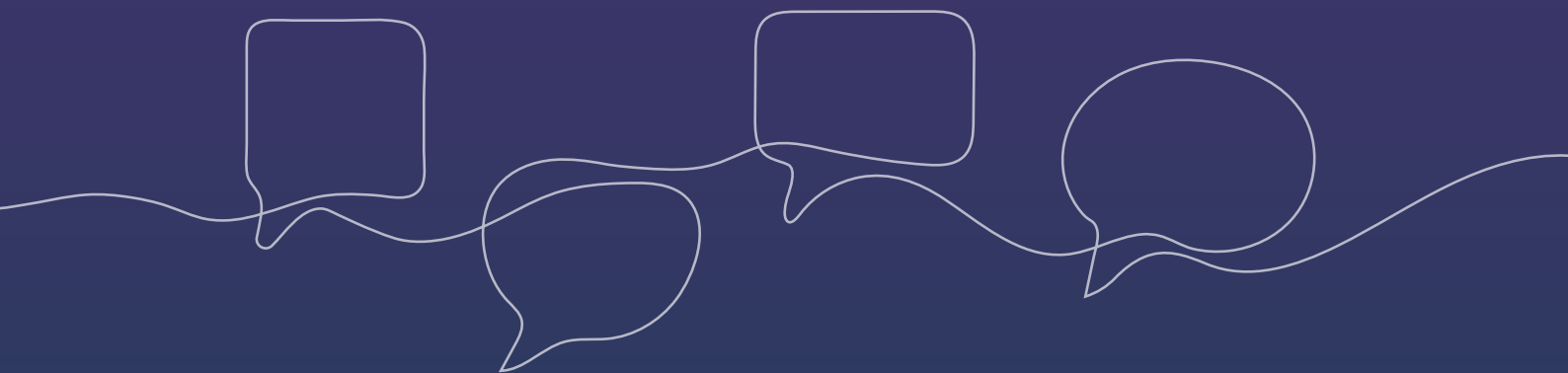
This toolkit has been developed in partnership with the initial testing areas Angus, Clackmannanshire, Dumfries and Galloway, Dundee, East Ayrshire, Fife, North Lanarkshire, Orkney, Perth and Kinross and West Dunbartonshire and integrates resources created by a range of consultants and third sector and public sector partner organisations.

We want to thank all those who supported the test phase and shared resources, expertise and insight in the creation of this toolkit.



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1. Setting up

Since local governance structures for VAWG vary across different local authorities in Scotland, the specific partnership and oversight arrangements in place will naturally shape and influence the approach taken to the needs assessment.

Prior test areas have adopted a range of governance models to suit their specific needs:

1. Lead Officer Model	2. Working Group Model
Work led by the VAWP Lead Officer, supported by public and third sector partners.	A working group convened, with external consultants or academic partners commissioned for elements of the work.
Benefit: Integrates the lead officer's specialist local knowledge, relationships and strategic insight.	Benefit: Enhances objectivity and allows partnerships to benefit from untapped sector knowledge.

These models are not mutually exclusive, and several areas have blended elements of both, for example, retaining lead officer oversight while bringing in a consultant for specific phases such as data analysis or stakeholder engagement. The right balance will depend on local capacity and the scale of the needs assessment.

It is worth thinking early about who any subgroup or working group should report into, and how findings will be fed back as the work progresses. Beyond the VAWP itself, it can be helpful to consider wider local structures that may have a stake in or influence over the work, such as Community Planning Partnerships, Chief Officer Groups, or other relevant local accountability structures.

Mapping these out early and developing a short communications plan for how and when each will be engaged can help ensure the needs assessment is well sighted across the system and that its findings reach the people who can act on them.

2. Subgroups & Steering groups

Irrespective of the approach taken, steering groups and subgroups played a key role in overseeing delivery by meeting regularly to coordinate activity, monitor progress/risks and provide strategic direction.

If you are unsure about the membership of the group, it may be helpful to engage in some brief stakeholder mapping within the partnership to identify the people and organisations that should be represented on the subgroup or steering group or included within the needs assessment process. Below are some guiding questions:

?	?	?
Who is responsible for the necessary information, data or strategic direction to make the assessment's findings actionable at the local level?	Which partners and specialist third-sector groups are trusted by diverse and marginalised women and girls in the area?	What specific expertise, skills, or operational perspectives are currently missing from the group to ensure a balanced, system-wide approach?

An editable **Stakeholder Engagement Planner Template**, based on Hart's ladder of participation, is provided to support this process. Partnerships can use the template to identify key stakeholders and inform engagement planning.

An example **Terms of Reference** is also provided to support partnerships in establishing governance arrangements, clarifying roles and responsibilities, and agreeing on how groups will work together throughout the needs assessment process.

3. Engaging Consultants

For some local areas, engaging a consultant may be identified as the best way to secure sufficient dedicated resources to complete a needs assessment process. This is particularly relevant for those local authorities that do not have a full-time VAWG lead officer.

In the past, test areas have worked with universities, independent contractors with sector or local expertise, third-sector organisations, and social enterprises. It is important to consult internally and use approved local procurement processes for the selection and onboarding of consultants. These processes may include the creation of tenders or requests for proposals. Below are some things to consider when requesting and considering proposals:

- ☑ Demonstrated experience of conducting needs assessments, research or evaluation in the VAWG sector or related fields
- ☑ Understanding of the local context, including relevant services, communities and stakeholders
- ☑ Proposed methodology and approach to collecting, analysing and reporting evidence
- ☑ Arrangements for ethical practice, data protection and safeguarding participants
- ☑ Plans for stakeholder engagement, including meaningful involvement of victims, survivors and marginalised groups
- ☑ Capacity to deliver the work within agreed timescales and budget
- ☑ Expected outputs, including reports, presentations, datasets or other resources

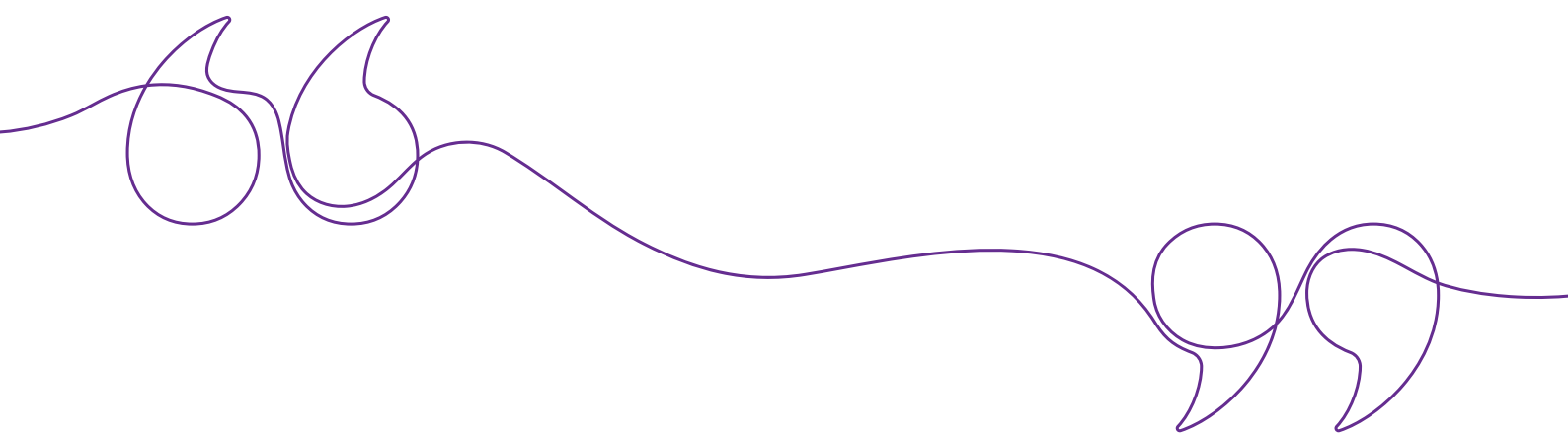
An example Invitation to Tender plate is provided as a supporting resource. Partnerships may wish to adapt this template to reflect local procurement requirements, priorities and timescales if commissioning external support for a needs assessment.

Budget Considerations

The costs associated with conducting a needs assessment will vary based on the local area but there are a few things you may wish to consider when developing a budget.

- Consultancy fees or staff costs
- Travel & subsistence
- Event venues or materials

- Printing or publication
- Lived experience remuneration
- Interview or focus group transcription



4. Project Planning

Creating a project plan is a helpful way to map out timelines, assign clear responsibilities across partners and manage dependencies between parts of the work. Using a Red, Amber, Green status marker can ensure the plan is a live document. Below is an example of a project plan for a needs assessment that was completed over 6 months,

A Project Planning Template is also provided to be adapted for your local context.

Area	Action	Lead	Timescale	RAG
Project Planning	Meeting to clarify project planning/timeline and design Confirm contracts to with consultant/third sector Schedule 2 weekly catch-up meeting	VAWG Lead	Month 1	
Q1 - Who are we?	Gather existing data, identify any data gaps. Compile and collate data	VAWG Lead	Month 2/3	
Q2 - What are the key issues/challenges being experienced by women, children and young people who have and/or are currently experiencing VAWG in our local authority area?	Draft Participant recruitment documentation: project communication plan; Participant recruitment poster; participant information sheet/inclusion criteria; participant consent form; Participant self-care guide; VAWG service info; Privacy Notice (if applicable)	Consultant	Month 2	
	Finalise participant recruitment plan	All	Month 3	
	Implement participant recruitment plan	All	Month 3	
	Interviews and data analysis	Consultant	Month 4/5	
Q3 - What systems and services are currently in place locally to prevent and eradicate VAWG and respond to the needs of women, children and young people experiencing VAWG?	Gather and collate all relevant existing data and information and identify gaps	VAWG Lead	Month 4/5	
	All data passed to Consultant for incorporation into final report	Consultant	Month 5	
	Write final report	Consultant	Month 6	

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