



**Dundee
Violence Against Women
Partnership**



If not
you?
...**who?**

**ANNUAL
REPORT
2022**

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Introduction

I am very pleased, as Chair of the Dundee Violence Against Women Partnership to present this annual report which covers 2021-2022. There has been a large volume of work undertaken by our partners during this time and the commitment to closer multi-agency working and cooperation which arose during the height of COVID continues to be demonstrated and prioritised.

This report contains a large amount of data in regards to the prevalence of Violence Against Women and Girls, the demand on services and the complex nature of women's experience and needs. Services have reported women and children requiring longer periods of support in order for them to create and sustain positive changes and address the trauma experienced. Mental health, isolation, substance use and homelessness are commonly reported. I hope that the data is useful to all those involved in public protection work in Dundee and reflects our commitment to develop a more joined up approach to all aspects of public protection.

The report describes the approach and some of the work undertaken by partners including the development of our gendered services group and project. This has been hugely successful in terms of giving a voice to those with lived experience and thereby improving service responses for women and children. One of the main objectives is to make generic statutory services more aware of the needs of those who have experienced male violence and more able to provide the support required, thereby taking some of the pressure from the specialist services.

Funding and availability of resources remains a huge challenge. The nature of funding particularly of the specialist organisations is generally time limited, project based and comes from a range of sources creating an unhelpful administrative burden and duplication. We have committed time and effort to identifying the issues and highlighting these at both city level and nationally. We are actively looking to resolve these in the medium and long term.

Despite concerns regarding the core funding of specialist services we have made significant progress in attracting funding for new and exciting services to the city. Partners made successful bids for Children Experiencing Domestic Abuse Recovery (CEDAR), an integrated Specialised Domestic Abuse Court Advocacy Service (Dundee ASSIST), a Women's hub, Deaflinks domestic abuse project and a Learning and Organisational Development post to focus on Violence Against Women and Girls. We are also grateful that the ASPEN project has been mainstreamed by the Health and Social Care Partnership, a new psychologist service has been established at Dundee Women's Aid and a one-year extension to the Gendered Services project has been secured from the Alcohol and Drug Partnership.

Tackling all forms of violence against women requires the commitment and co-operation of a wide range of partner organisations from the statutory and voluntary sector. Our partners have demonstrated their dedication to tackling these issues and I know that they will continue to work with us in addressing our key agreed strategic priorities for the coming years

- **Increasing support for women with complex needs**
- **Increasing investment in prevention activities, particularly primary prevention**
- **Ensuring we are involved and influence the national review of VAW funding**

I want to acknowledge and thank all those who strive, particularly during the times of COVID, to ensure that women and children in Dundee are safe and supported. I also want to thank everyone involved in drawing up this important, informative and useful report.

Yours,
Ann Hamilton

Independent Chair Dundee Violence Against Women Partnership



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1. Protecting People



“Dundee’s future lies with its people. They deserve the best this city can give them. We will provide the protection they need, when they need it, to keep them safe from harm.”

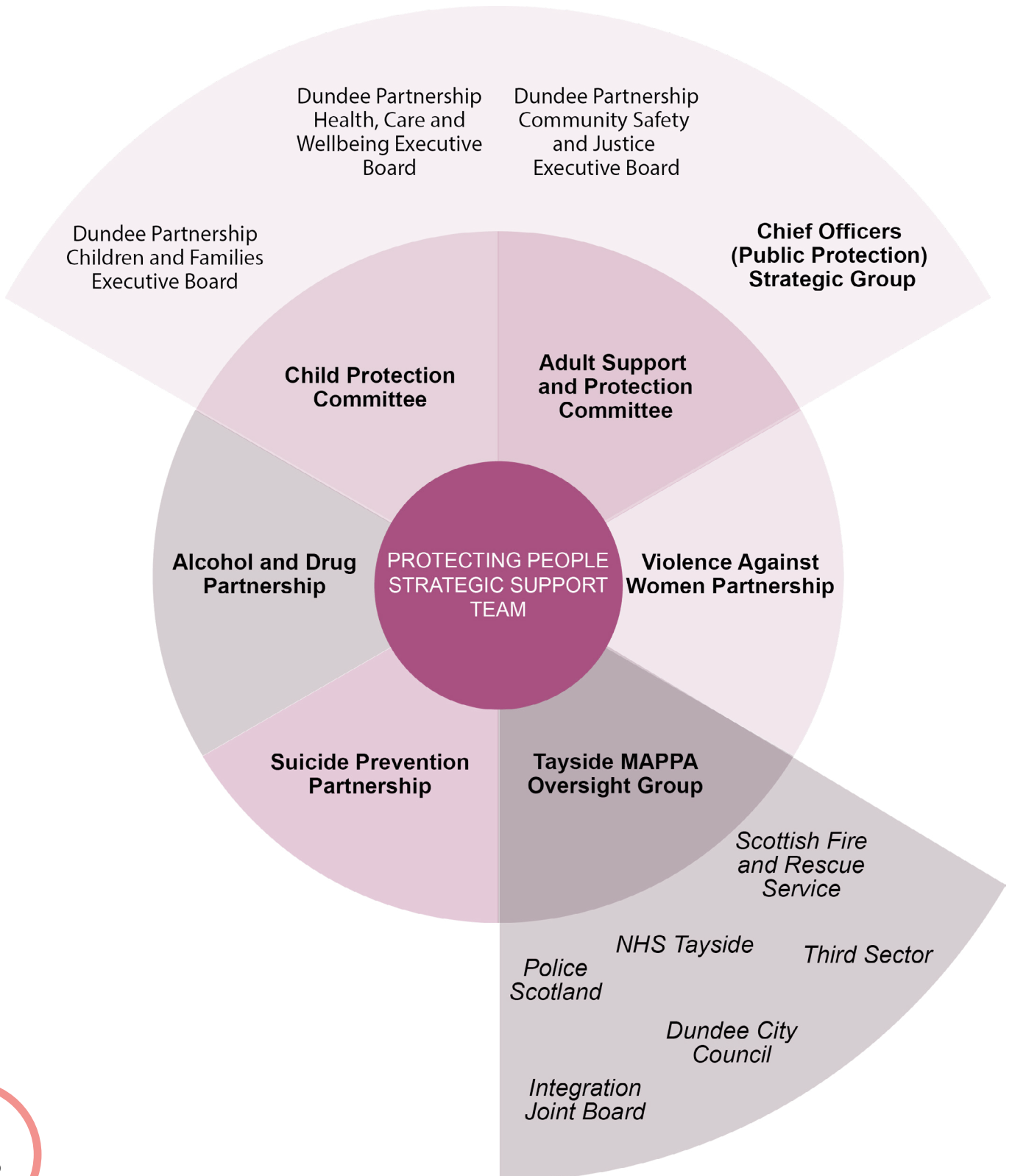
Key Principles of Protecting People

- The protection of people in Dundee is part of the overall provision of services that will deliver positive outcomes for people in Dundee.
- The people delivering those services will have the knowledge, skills and experience to deliver quality services.
- We will deliver our vision by working in partnership across the statutory (Dundee City Council, NHS Tayside, Police Scotland and Scottish Fire and Rescue Service) and voluntary sector.
- We will work with our partners in other local authority areas, both in Tayside and throughout Scotland, to improve services to protect people and work towards a consistent approach.

Governance Arrangements

The wider Protecting People strategic agenda in Dundee City is led by a number of key public protection partnerships. These include the Alcohol and Drug Partnership (ADP), the Adult Support and Protection Committee (ASP), the Child Protection Committee (CPC), the Violence Against Women Partnership (VAWP) and the Multi Agency Public Protection (MAPPA) Strategic Oversight Group. All report to the Chief Officers Group (COG).

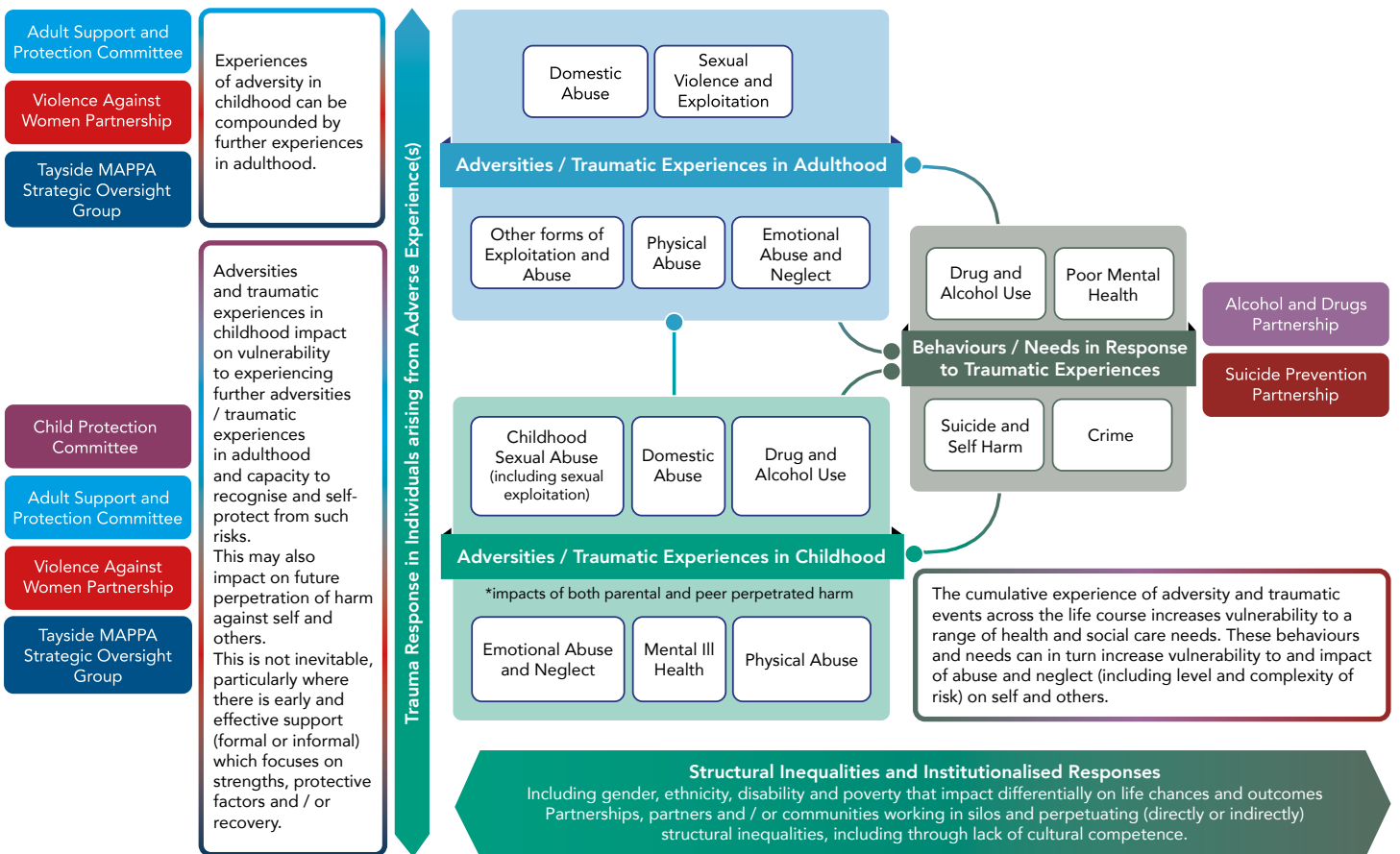
The COG is the strategic forum for public protection in Dundee with responsibility for setting the strategic direction for the improvement public protection arrangements. It is attended by all Chairs of Protecting People Committees and partnerships, along with representatives from all key services and senior officers who play a key coordinating role. The image below illustrates the relationship between the various bodies and groups to protect the people of Dundee.



Integrated Public Protection Approach

In Dundee an integrated Protecting People approach has been adopted and informs all of our work to protect people at risk of harm. Across all of the Protecting People committees / partnerships we are committed to developing approaches that improve support to people with often multiple, complex and changing needs which typically arise from experiences of trauma, instead of individually and separately addressing specific themes.

To highlight the interconnected nature of Protecting People work and how experiences of trauma can impact life experiences and outcomes, the following diagram was produced to provide a visual rationale for our integrated protecting people approach.



DUNDEE

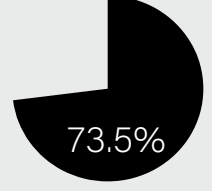
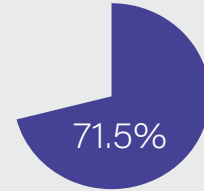
1/4
in
POVERTY
2nd highest in Scotland



is **Scotland's**
fourth largest city

Employment rate

January - December 2020
ONSS ANNUAL POPULATION SURVEY



Dundee

Scotland

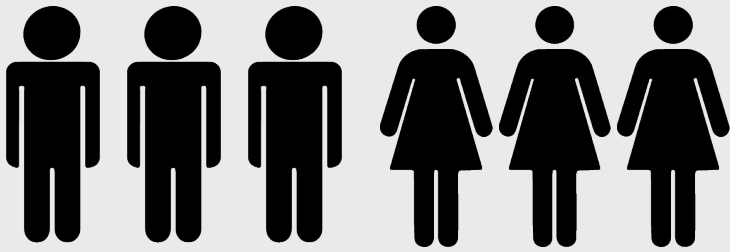
147,720

people as of June 2021*. Down from 148,820 in 2020
*NRS 2021 Mid-Year Population Estimate

ALCOHOL DEATHS

27.04 per **100,000**

5th highest in Scotland



71,220

76,500

73.8

 Male life expectancy

79.4

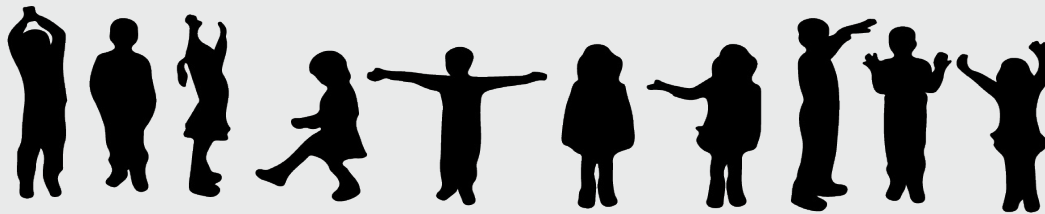
 Female life expectancy

0.23%

Imprisonment rate
1st highest in Scotland

DRUG USE Est **2,300** DEATHS **45.2/100,000**

(5 year average) 1st Highest in Scotland
Drug use: 4th highest in Scotland



CHILD PROTECTION

ORDERS **2.2** per **1000**
1st highest in Scotland

64 / 10000

16-64
living with mental health conditions
5th highest in Scotland

177 / 100000

DOMESTIC ABUSE

(5year average) 1st highest in Scotland

SUICIDE **22 PER 100,000**

1st highest in Scotland





Equally Safe

In 2014 the Scottish Government published Equally Safe: Scotland's strategy for preventing and eradicating violence against women and girls. The national strategy was updated in 2016 and a framework providing guidance for implementation was included. Equally Safe provides strategic direction to tackle all forms of gender-based violence and abusive behaviour.

The aim of Equally Safe is: To work collaboratively with key partners in the public, private and third sectors to prevent and eradicate all forms of violence against women and girls.

Equally Safe has four key priorities, including:

- **Scottish society embraces equality and mutual respect, and rejects all forms of violence against women and girls**
- **Women and girls thrive as equal citizens – socially, culturally, economically and politically**
- **Interventions are early and effective, preventing violence and maximising the safety and wellbeing of women, children and young people**
- **Men desist from all forms of violence against women and girls, and perpetrators of such violence receive a robust and effective response**

Based on the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, Equally Safe adopted the following definition of gender-based violence:

'Gender based violence is a function of gender inequality, and an abuse of male power and privilege. It takes the form of actions that result in physical, sexual and psychological harm or suffering to women and children, or affront to their human dignity, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life. It is men who predominantly carry out such violence, and women who are predominantly the victims of such violence. By referring to violence as 'gender based' this definition highlights the need to understand violence within the context of women's and girl's subordinate status in society. Such violence cannot be understood, therefore, in isolation from the norms, social structure and gender roles within the community, which greatly influence women's vulnerability to violence.'

A gendered analysis does not exclude men, but rather recognises that women and girls are disproportionately affected by particular forms of violence that they experience because they are women and girls. Men, boys and non-binary individuals may also be victims of violence and abuse and the Dundee VAWP is committed to ensure there are appropriate services responding to the needs of all victims of such violence.

National Drivers

The national guidance developed in 2016 is designed to promote an effective and strategic approach to reducing violence against women and its negative impact on individuals and communities. It supports VAW Partnership chairs and supporting officers to promote this priority and integrate planning into broader multi-agency work at a local level. It also helps ensure that partnerships are working in line with the priorities set out in Equally Safe and help them to develop effective local strategies and activities to tackle violence against women and girls in all its forms.

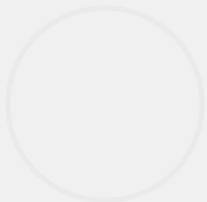
Specifically, the guidance introduces 6 'minimum standards' that the Scottish Government and COSLA expect VAW Partnerships to work towards and identifies the core activities that all VAW Partners will be expected to undertake.

Trauma Informed Implementation

Research tells us that while anyone is at risk of experiencing trauma, women are significantly more likely than men to experience trauma as a result of being a victim/ survivor of domestic abuse, rape and sexual assault, stalking and harassment, commercial sexual exploitation and other forms of gender-based violence. Women are also likely to face significant barriers to accessing support for violence and abuse as a result of experiencing feelings of stigma, blame and judgement around their traumatic experiences, not feeling believed by professionals if they disclose what has happened to them, and facing complex referral pathways to support, which can be re-traumatising. Without adequate support, women and children who have experienced VAW are at increased risk of experiencing other negative outcomes. It is therefore vital that trauma-informed systems and services are in place locally that take account of previous, current or ongoing experiences of violence, abuse and trauma, and ensure that women and children's voices are heard and their rights are respected.

Annual Report 2021/22

The 2021/22 Annual Report is the first to be published by the Violence Against Women Partnership. Through this report we aim to highlight key activity and achievements from the last year, whilst also identifying challenges we have encountered and priorities for the upcoming year. The Annual Report sits within the context of the VAWP Strategic Plan and we hope that through this report we can demonstrate our progress against our overarching strategic aims. Moving forward, we aim to undertake Annual Reports every year in order to update key stakeholders on the work the Partnership is undertaking to reduce GBV within our local community of Dundee.



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3. COVID-19: Impact, Response and Recovery



With Scotland entering lockdown on the 23rd March 2020 due to COVID-19, and the pandemic persisting throughout 2020 and 2021, this undoubtedly had an impact on VAW services and vulnerable women in Dundee. When the pandemic began, domestic abuse was identified as a high concern across the Protecting People Risk Registers. Reasons for this included:

- the reduced ability to provide face-to-face contact with service users due to social distancing;
- the closure of some support services;
- and the potential for hidden harm to escalate.

It was anticipated that the government-imposed restrictions could potentially increase the perpetrators' ability to control and restrict their partners ability to access support, especially with the victim and children unable to leave the home for respite during lockdown. With these concerns raised, data was collated by the VAWP in order to understand the true impact of COVID-19 on vulnerable women and Dundee VAW services.

The following data is for financial years (April to March)

COVID 2020/21

- In 2020/21 there were 1,437 referrals to Dundee VAW services. This was a 3% decrease compared to the previous year pre-COVID.
- Referrals to VAW services increased as Scotland entered the 'Phases' of restrictions easing following the first lockdown. Services attributed this to women no longer being confined to their homes and being able to seek support.
- Self-referrals and the Police were the most common sources of referrals to VAW services.
- Refuge requests increased dramatically compared to pre-COVID levels, following the first and second lockdown.

COVID 2021/22

- In 2021/22 there was a 33% increase in referrals to VAW services compared to the previous year.
- Referrals to VAW services were predominately through self-referrals. This was again attributed to women having the ability to now seek support. Services also believed that through high-profile cases of gender-based violence being covered by the media, this resulted in women feeling more confident to reach out to services for support.
- Refuge referrals also experienced a decrease of 31% compared to 2020/21. This was attributed to the pressures of COVID-19 reducing and life beginning to return to 'normal'.

Women's Experience's During COVID-19

Throughout 2020/21 women with increased complexities presented to VAW services. This resulted in the women requiring support for extended periods of time, ultimately increasing demand on services. All services reported the pandemic's negative impact on women's mental health and wellbeing. Other complexities women presented with during this time were substance use and homelessness.

In 2021/22, VAW specialist services continued to report the complex cases presenting and as a consequence, women also continued to require longer periods of support in order for them to create and sustain positive changes. Women continued to report poor mental health and wellbeing attributed to isolation, reduction in social support and financial impacts as a consequence of the pandemic. Other commonly cited complexities that women reported for the financial year were substance use, homelessness and alcohol use as a means of self medicating to cope with abuse. Services also highlighted that during 2021/22 some women seeking support were reporting historic domestic abuse. This may have been attributable to the nature of the pandemic and being confined to their homes, thus wishing to leave abusive partners. Due to the media coverage of high-profile cases, some women may have also felt encouraged to seek support. Services also reported that overall, there was an intensification in the level of violence and abuse experienced during the pandemic.

Support Delivery During COVID-19

During the height of the pandemic in 2020/21, face-to-face support was halted with all services delivering support remotely via telephone or video call. This was difficult due to the living circumstances of some women seeking support, especially if the woman was still residing with their perpetrator. As restrictions eased, services were able to resume in-person support. Some women, however, appreciated the flexibility remote support offered as they were able to fit appointments around their personal schedules. As a result, some women opted to continue with this form of support delivery. Many services expressed this blended model of support delivery was also much more efficient in terms of maximising staff capacity and is a model that some services plan to continue operating.

Services Experiences During COVID-19

Staffing issues persisted throughout the pandemic with huge challenges presenting for services at operational level. Initially the impact of home working, COVID restrictions and health risk to staff were the main concerns. As the pandemic endured, services continued to be impacted by staff contracting COVID, infection control measures and isolation rules. This was especially the case during the outbreak of the Omicron variant (November 2021), with services experiencing high levels of staff absences. Although they were unable to deliver face-to-face support, most were well enough to continue working from home.

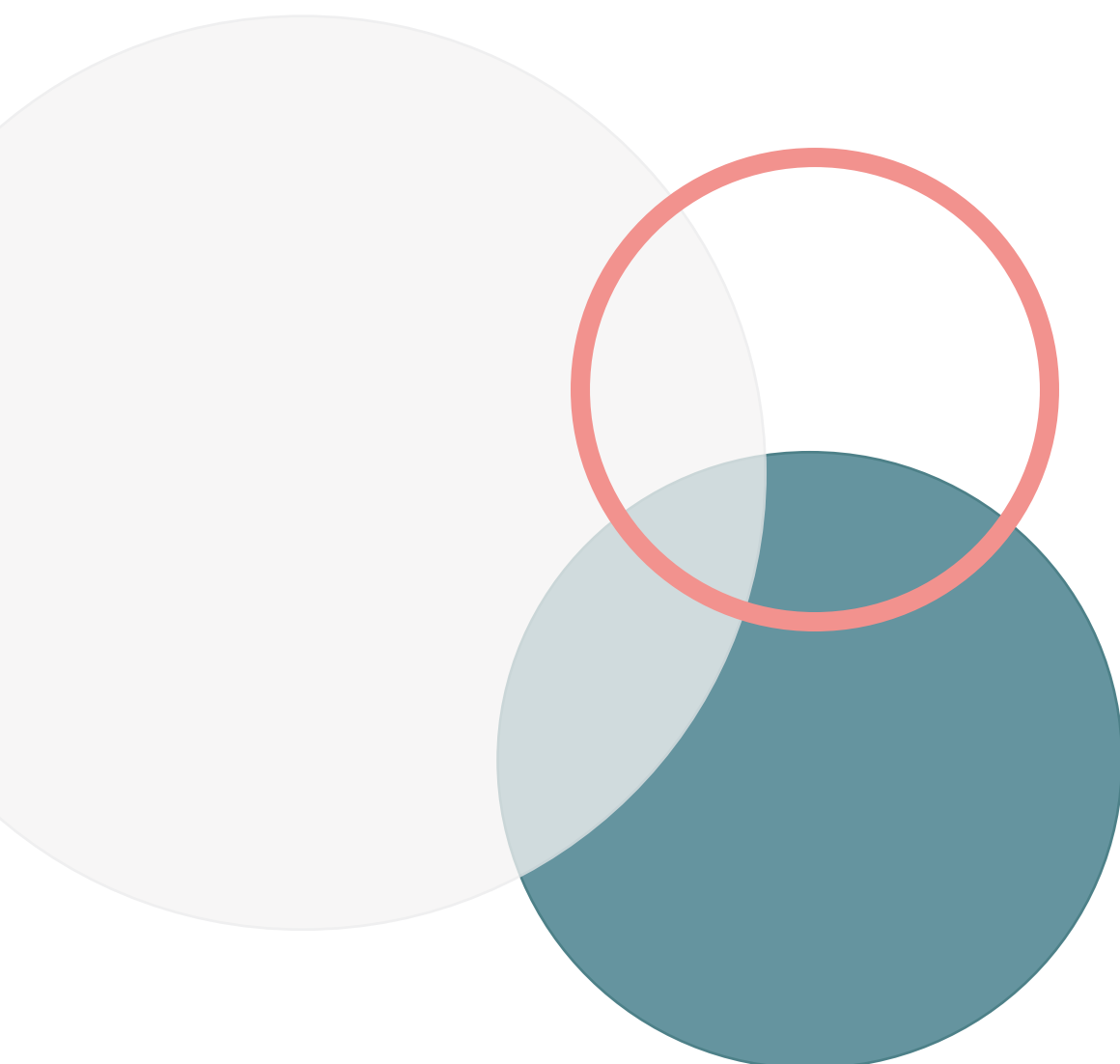
Most services throughout the pandemic, voiced concerns surrounding the negative impact on staff's wellbeing due to increased workload, complex cases and continued client safety risk. This was further compounded with recruitment problems due to the pandemic which further impacted service delivery and capacity of workers.

Positive Outcomes of COVID-19

One of the positive impacts of the pandemic was the increased focus on VAW both locally and nationally. There seemed to be a better recognition of issues and more cross-sector working e.g. child protection, housing etc and the use of the integrated risk register increased this recognition. Our 16 Days activities in 2021 saw engagement from varying sectors of the community and workforce on a previously unseen scale. We attribute this partly to the pandemic increasing the focus but also on high profile VAW cases which were reported in the mainstream media.

Lasting Impact of COVID-19

As a Partnership, we still do not know the long-term impact of COVID-19 will be in terms of VAW but we predict trauma related issues will become prevalent for both staff and service users. Some of the data we have seen around increase in levels of violence, complexity, coping strategies like alcohol consolidates this prediction.



4. Data



Prevalence figures 2021-22 (Police)

- 2,436 incidents of domestic abuse, rate of incident = 164 per 10,000 population putting Dundee with the highest rate in Scotland
- 568 sexual crimes, rate of incident = 38 per 10,000 population
- There was a 27% increase on the number of sexual crimes in Dundee in 2021/22 compared to the previous year. Factors which may have contributed to this increase were:
 - Public alcohol consumption increasing following the second lockdown
 - Increase in media and social media coverage of gender-based violence
 - High-profile cases occurring (Sarah Everard, March 2021)
 - New local campaigns (Reclaim the Streets Instagram)
 - Reclaim the Night March (16 Days of Action)
- Through this increased focus on gender-based violence locally and nationally, many survivors may have felt more comfortable and encouraged to report sexual crimes, contributing to the increase in incidents recorded.

Our local specialist services

- During 2021/22 our specialist services in Dundee supported 260 children and young people and 1,647 women.
- Referrals were predominantly made to services through self-referrals (41%)
- Women who presented to service were predominantly 26 years or older.
- In 2021/22 there were 111 refuge requests, which was a decrease of 31% from the previous year. This reduction in demand was attributed to the restrictions of the pandemic decreasing and life returning to 'normal'.

MARAC

- In 2021/22 there were 202 cases discussed at Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC).
- In Dundee we know we have a high level of domestic abuse cases with added complexity relating to alcohol and drug issues, homelessness, mental health and suicide risk.

In the past year Tayside Division has doubled its cadre of Domestic Abuse Liaison Officers who assess risk and implement effective safety planning/risk mitigation for all incidents of Domestic Abuse, ensuring victims are offered and fully understand access to advocacy services. All domestic crimes and incidents are subject to a robust quality assurance process to ensure that Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 offences are correctly identified and robustly investigated in accordance with national standards.

In Tayside, Police Scotland resource the provision of a full-time Police Officer MARAC co-ordinator, and a Police Staff MARAC administrator while a Detective Inspector chairs the MARAC Steering Group.

All reports of potential Honour Based Violence result in an emergency stand-alone MARAC. Risk assessments and investigations are conducted in accordance with national Honour Based Abuse and Forced Marriage guidance.

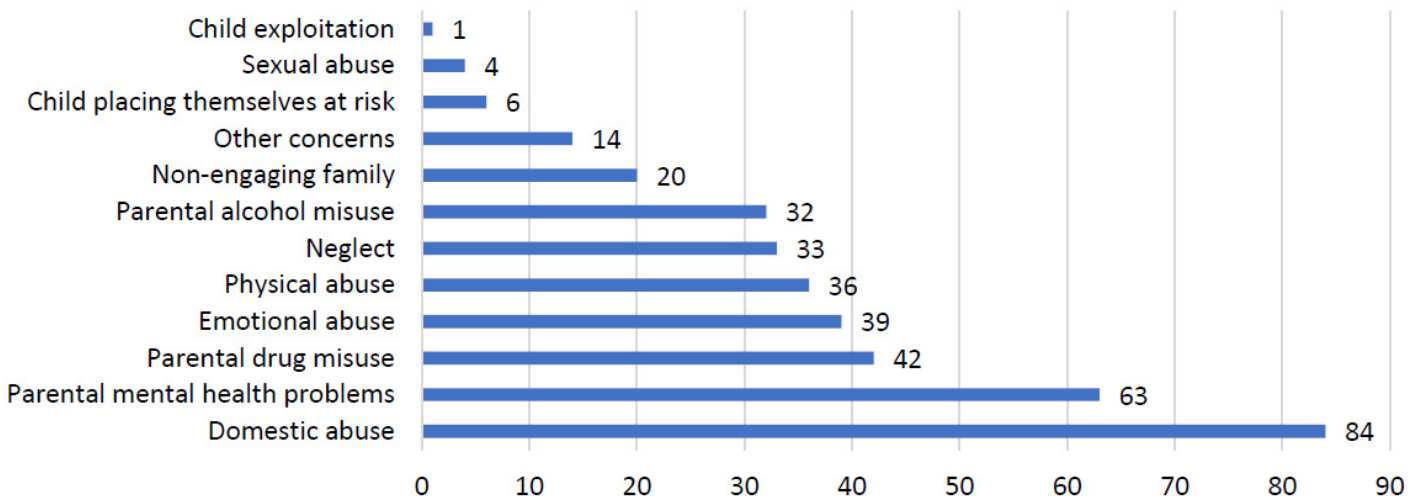
The Tayside MARAC Steering group has carried out many improvement activities over the past year including the development of a performance framework, MARAC Chair training and MARAC representative training. This has seen improvements in the functioning of MARAC meetings.



Dundee Child Protection Committee

The Dundee Child Protection Committee annual data also shows that domestic abuse has remained the most common concern with 56% of children registered under this heading during 2021-22 (financial year used).

Initial Harm category for children placed on the Child Protection Register in 2021/22 out of 149 Children





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5. Approach to Harm and Risk



Hidden Harm approach

The VAW Partnership formed a small group of key operational managers during the week lockdown began. This was due to the fact that empirical evidence from other jurisdictions and evidence-based practice in Scotland suggested violence against women and girls would increase in frequency and severity during the period of social isolation. This group met every week from March 2020 to February 2021.

Having key partners in weekly communication allowed us to closely monitor the local situation and respond collaboratively. Examples include services with more capacity offering to support others who have been impacted more seriously by staff absences. This allowed us to ensure service provision remained at an adequate level and that victims of domestic abuse receive the best service possible. It also assisted us to respond quickly to emerging situations and monitor trends as they develop. This helped us to spot signs of hidden harm and share intelligence that we have gathered locally.

Individual agency activities such as the Red, Amber and Green (RAG) rating system and cross referencing carried out by social work was also key in addressing hidden harm relating to violence against women. This work included examining cases which are no longer open to social work but

where there was a history of concerns relating to domestic abuse or those which did not open to social work but were dealt with at Team Around the Child (TATC) level. This provided some assurance that potentially risky family circumstances were being monitored by professionals and the opportunities for hidden harm were reduced.

Key activity to try and address concerns around hidden harm were also focused around public communications both nationally and locally. The Protecting People team took a lead, with Dundee City Council communications team (alongside NHS and Police Scotland communications teams) to ensure key messages were reaching the public. National domestic abuse campaigns were shared widely and dedicated leaflets on a range of protection issues (including domestic abuse) were shared on social media and 1600 were distributed directly to families through 'lunch drops'.

Scrutiny Group

Following the establishment of the Hidden Harm approach described above, the VAWP in Dundee continued to gather and analyse data on a very regular basis and this has continued into the recovery phase.

The Scrutiny Group is in place to contribute to the delivery of continuous improvement of key processes and practice as outlined in the Dundee VAW Partnership Strategic Plan.

The group ensures the VAWP is able to monitor trends, characteristics and profiles of women, children and young people involved in VAW services and processes. Through this, the VAW Partnership is assured of the effective delivery of key processes. Its main activities are to:

- **Ensure sufficient representation on VAW Partnership from key partners –monitoring process for this action.**
- **Develop scrutiny and Quality Assurance processes for the following areas:**
 - **Collection and scrutiny of data**
 - **Map QA processes which are currently in place (single agency and multi-agency)**
 - **Consider case review opportunities (including Initial Case Reviews/Serious Case Reviews)**
 - **Assist with completion of annual return and Quality Standards Framework**
 - **Self -Assessments**

The data gathered and analysed by the group has played a key part in some of successful funding work we have done through the VAW Partnership and Chief Officer's Group. It has allowed us to target our approach and identify priorities. One direct action that has come from Scrutiny Group discussions has been addressing the lack of young women accessing services for support with domestic abuse within their own relationships. This was clear from few referrals being for women under 26. Through this the VAW Partnership now operates a Young People and VAW Intel Group to gather information on issues facing young people and how to appropriately address and support such concerns.

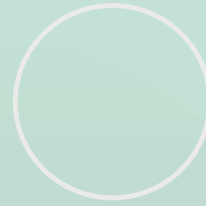
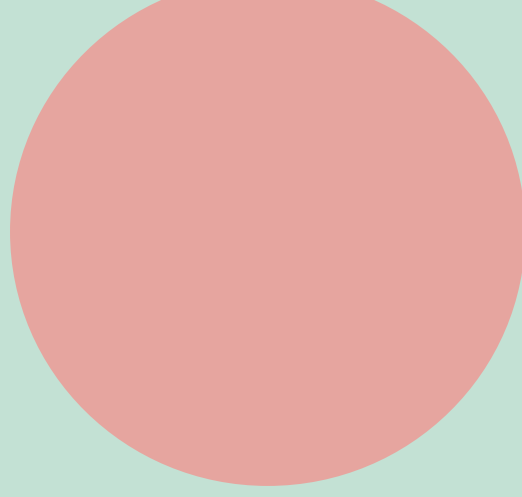
Protecting People Risk Register

During the pandemic, all Protecting People committees and partnerships developed a COVID-19 Strategic Risk Register and this will develop into a broader integrated strategic risk register to support business as usual activity across the protecting people structure.

This integrated risk register ensures we are focused on the key risks relating to VAW in Dundee and forms the basis for our VAW Partnership meeting agendas as well as our reporting into the Chief Officers Group.

Key risks identified currently are:

- **Operational capacity**
 - **MARAC Capacity**
 - **Funding for specialist services**
 - **Court delays/backlog**
 - **Equalities infrastructure**
 - **Staff wellbeing**
-



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6. Outcomes, Achievements and Service Improvements



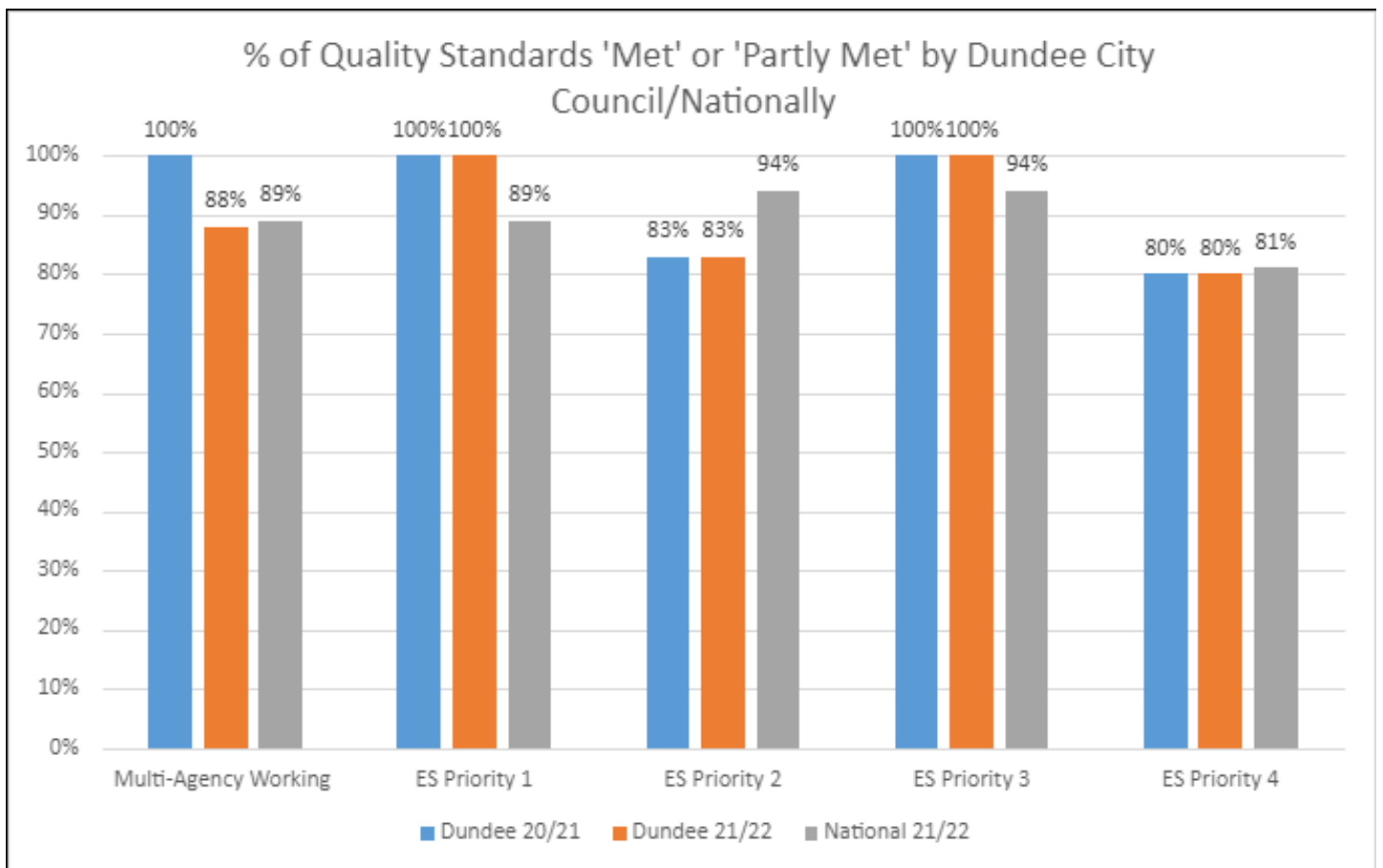
For the last 10 years in Dundee, we have been pursuing an integrated Protecting People approach that responds to the lived experience of people at risk of harm. Dundee were one of the first partnerships in Scotland to formally adopt this approach and only in recent years has this become a more common feature across Scotland. We believe this approach reflects the lived experience of children, young people and adults, responds to complexity of need and focuses on underpinning root causes rather than presenting issues alone. We take a whole systems response and that allows us to focus on smaller number of strategically important issues and make greater gains in these areas. This approach has allowed us to develop a collective leadership and shared responsibility for tackling the issues of VAWG. Several of our initiatives in Dundee have been identified as being shareable/transferable and we are regularly asked to present on the following key areas in different local authority areas and at national level:

Functioning of the Dundee VAW Partnership

The Equally Safe Quality Standards and Performance Framework respond to the expectations set out in Equally Safe and in the Violence Against Women Partnership Guidance, in relation to effective performance management.

The Quality Standards aim to raise awareness of the types of services, policies and processes that are most effective in tackling VAWG and capture data on the extent to which they are currently being delivered across Scotland. The Performance Framework aims to measure the impact that these services, policies and processes are having on the lives of people and communities affected by VAWG. Collectively, the two resources aim to support VAW Partnerships to capture key performance data and facilitate a consistent approach to measuring and reporting on the progress being made to achieve the ambitions set out in Equally Safe at a local level.

The graph below details how Dundee has performed against its own reported figures from 2021-22 and the national average. The figures show that Dundee meets or partly meets 100% in two of the Priority areas, and reports meeting or partly meeting at least 80% of Quality Standards in the other three Priority areas. Multi-Agency Working standard experienced a percentage decrease from the previous year due to the latest self-assessment now being over three old.



Gendered Services Group and Project

This area of development has been both deliberate and organic in its evolution. It was and still is a journey which is far from complete but hopefully demonstrates how collective leadership using a gendered approach can bring about huge benefits and positive change.

In 2018, Dundee Violence Against Women Partnership began to review pathways for women affected by violence and multiple disadvantage in the city from a 'whole systems perspective'. This focused on women affected by VAWG but also a wider focus on any woman who was vulnerable or disadvantaged in the city. The group undertook a review and redesign of existing pathways and a diagram which had been developed in 2011 to reflect the evolution of services and responses over that time period. Some of the key issues we identified were:

- a lack of resources to provide consultation for wider non-specialist services;
- difficulty meeting the needs of women with multiple and complex needs;
- lack of structured VAW training and workforce development opportunities;
- and all of these leading to increased pressure on specialist services and strain on their resources.

After lengthy discussions it was agreed that consultancy and capacity building in mainstream, statutory services were the areas of work which could bring about the most lasting and impactful change as well as reducing the pressure on specialist services.

At the same time as the review process was happening a number of other transformation activities were ongoing in Dundee (including substance use and homeless services) and a separate working group was set up under the ADP and the homelessness strategic planning groups to look at the needs of vulnerable women more broadly. Simultaneously, at the end of 2019 the Dundee Drug Commission was published. The Commission report gave a clear message and recommendations about the importance of gendered approaches.

Recommendation 15: Ensure that the needs of women who experience problems with drugs are assessed and addressed via adoption of gender-mainstreaming and gender-sensitive approaches to service planning.

The action plan for change, Dundee's response to the commission contained clear actions and priorities in relation to this recommendation and these were then discussed with and delegated to a violence against women partnership sub group. Also, at this time, research was commissioned to look at the needs of women in Dundee. It was funded by the Scottish Government Challenge Fund, with the funding secured by Dundee Women's Aid.

Clear recommendations were made around services and responses to women and changes that needed to happen in order to meet their needs more effectively.

So, what we had at this point was the VAW Partnership pathways group identifying the need to upskill and build capacity in universal, mainstream, statutory and non-specialist services, the Alcohol and Drug Partnership and homelessness sector recognising the need to improve their response to women and the Commission and the research also making the same recommendations.

This all came together in the creation of the gendered services group which reports directly to the VAW Partnership and the ADP.

The collective leadership flowing from the VAWP and the ADP expanded our ability to tackle the issues faced by the most vulnerable women in our city and opened up huge possibilities for collaborative working at a strategic and operational level.

The main aim of the group is:

- 1. To Lead the strategic and operational planning for gender sensitive and trauma informed services in Dundee (e.g. for women experiencing VAW, substance use, homelessness and a range of other complex issues) and this involves a strong focus on women with lived experience directing our work.**

Some key achievements of the GSG to date:

- **Development of Women's Services directory (currently in review) – following a mapping of services - this includes all specialist services for women and also those which are not VAW specialist but have an element of women only service and who represent the gendered approach we hope to achieve**
- **Development of VAW Overview Training by a multi- agency consortium**
- **Successful funding bid to secure a 2-year post to develop a gendered approach across mainstream services in Dundee (see more info below)**
- **Gendered services communications for the workforce**
- **Inclusion of gendered approach in ADP Strategic Plan and Adult Support and Protection delivery Plan**
- **Strategic oversight of key gendered services in Dundee – Gendered Service Project, PAUSE, New Beginnings**
- **Successful funding bid for women's hub**
- **Collaborative approach to CORRA funding opportunities with a clear gendered approach**
- **Observations of the success of this group are around the bringing together of VAWG specialist agencies and those who have a broader remit or a different focus – for example substance use services. As we have worked together we have built a sense of team work and a shared vision. At times it could be that the VAWG world can feel like something of a scary and very specialised club which other services may not feel they have a place within. This group has seen that change and there is a strong motivation, commitment and drive to work together to improve the lives of the most vulnerable women in our city.**

The Gendered services project is aiming to improve services responses to women who experience gender-based violence (GBV), homelessness, substance use and other multiple complex needs that require support from a wide range of services. We aim for services to become more gendered in the design, delivery and ethos.

In Dundee there was an identified lack of understanding around gender and the specific needs that women may have that can prevent them from accessing appropriate care and support or where they do engage with services, engagement being successful. Consequently Dundee Women's Aid applied for funding from CORRA to research this and capture what training and support agencies require and what changes to services women would find useful. The research carried out in 2019 obtained the views of women who are service users in Dundee and the ideas of staff working in this sector about improving future service delivery.

Based on the research and the drugs commission an application was submitted to CORRA for the Gendered Services Project. The post has been in place since late 2020. The ADP has also funded the post for another year for 2023.

The project currently delivers training and support for services to embedded gendered approaches across Dundee. 7 key elements of gendered approach. Part of the project is also about engaging women with lived experience to ensure we are getting it right and they able to influence design and delivery.

Approach to Funding

The long standing VAW picture we operated within in Dundee included very high rates of domestic abuse and sexual crimes alongside many complexities such as:

- **substance use and deprivation;**
- **significant capacity versus demand issues for specialist services;**
- **over reliance on third sector specialist agencies and lack of capacity to upskill and provide consultancy to non-specialist services;**
- **a lack of learning and development opportunities relating to VAWG and;**
- **challenges meeting the needs of women with multiple and complex issues.**

The approach we have taken in recent years has tried to balance these issues by increasing the capacity of non-specialist services and addressing the needs of women with complex issues alongside a focus on capacity versus demand issues for specialist services. We took our focus away from just trying to sticking plaster on the gaps in specialist services (although always continuing to try and strengthen their capacity and funding arrangements) and focused instead on all services and how they could better share the load. This approach included the development of learning and development opportunities (see training section below) as well as an expanded focus on our response to women with complex issues.

The establishment of the Gendered Services Group and Project (described below) was one way we looked to increasing capacity of mainstream services and addressing the needs of women with complex needs.

In terms of capacity and demand issues, in mid-2021, for a woman to access outreach support at the main domestic abuse support service in Dundee they had to wait an average of 6 months. For a woman who had been raped or sexually assaulted either recently or historically the average wait to access specialist support was 2 months. We had several key funding streams coming to an end, clear gaps such as domestic abuse court advocacy and services for CYP and disjointed domestic abuse services. In light of these challenges The VAWP took a paper to the Chief Officers Group (COG) late 2020 which resulted in them making the commitment to the actions shown below:

- **Reallocating capacity within mainstream services and making a real and tangible commitment to upskilling mainstream services to effectively tackle VAW**
- **Progressing work through local strategic commissioning and procurement routes to enhance efficiency and sustainability within the third sector specialist services.**

A COG VAWG champions group was established with representatives nominated from within the council, Police, Health & Social Care Partnership (HSCP) and NHS and a real and tangible commitment to improving the situation around VAWG and the funding around it. We also took a partnership approach to DES bids and CORRA bids in recent applications and focused on capacity building as well as service provision.

The development of an integrated protecting people risk register enabled us to understand the shared risks across the protecting people committees and also work collectively on our responses to these risks. COVID-19 brought the risks around VAWG and particularly domestic abuse to the fore and this is reflected in the risk register with highlighted risks around DA in the CPC, VAWP, ADP and ASP sections of the document. This has assisted us greatly in how we approach VAWG and funding related to it.

The result of this approach, the work of the COG VAW group and the approach to DES funds we have been able to achieve the following:

- **We were able to secure COVID recovery funding for DWA and Women's Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre (WRASAC). Both services used the additional funds to address waiting times. The waiting time for DWA outreach is now 2 weeks. WRASAC saw a 70% reduction in waiting times and secured match funding for a further 12 months.**
- **The Assessing and Supporting Psychological and Emotional Needs of Women (ASPEN) project (Clinical Psychologist for VAW Services) has been mainstreamed – HSCP**
- **The Dundee Women's Aid Children and Young People Psychology Service was established through community mental health and wellbeing fund**
- **The ADP extended the lifespan of Gendered Services project by another year**
- **Social Work Children & Families have established a temporary Domestic Abuse Manager post through COVID-recovery funds**
- **The Victim Centred Approach fund has enabled us to develop Dundee ASSIST (domestic abuse court advocacy)**
- **Through Delivering Equally Safe fund we were successful with 3 partnership bids - bringing CEDAR to Dundee, establishing a GBV Learning and Organisational Development advisor post and the Deaflinks domestic abuse project.**
- **Recently we secured funding from CORRA to develop a Women's hub in Dundee for women with substance use and complex needs.**

Despite these successes the landscape of VAW funding is challenging and feeding into the National Strategic Review of VAWG funding is a priority action for the Dundee VAWP over the coming 2 years.

Lived Experience

The majority of the VAWP Lived Experience engagement activity comes through the Gendered Services Project. Lived experience has been a core element of the project from the very beginning and the coordinator regularly meets and engages with women in various services across Dundee. This has been successful due to a dynamic and flexible approach, dedicated funding/budget and constant feedback. Some of ways women have been involved are as follows:

- **Identifying Barriers to Access**
- **Visualise components of perfect service (which we use in the gendered services training)**
- **Self-Assessment Form**
- **Empathy Map**
- **Animation**
- **HIS Pathfinder lived experience**
- **Illustrate the experience of women in Dundee**
- **Chartermark Development**
- **VAW Summit**
- **Neuro Diversity Conference –walk through to ensure it was accessible.**
- **Women’s Hub**
- **Gendered Walkthrough**
- **Safe Space Cartoon**
- **Project feedback**
- **Champion Group**

A key element of our local trauma implementation plan is that as both a cause and consequence of culture change, professionals within the workforce with lived experience of trauma are able to contribute and co-produce services and strategy.

From the start of our work around trauma we included a focus on lived experience and more specifically, professionals with lived experience. We know that the safe and effective use of lived experience expertise is a powerful tool for strategy, service design and service delivery and evidence has shown that lived experience workers can bridge the gaps between strategy, services and communities, influencing the culture and practices of their organisations. Traditionally we think of those with ‘lived experience’ or ‘experts by experience’ as being separate from us as professionals. By thinking in this way, we are missing the opportunity to utilise the knowledge and experience that exists within our own workforce and to validate this.

According to statistics we know that within a team of 10 staff at least 2 are highly likely to be professionals with lived experience. Within a staff group of 100 at least 20 will be professionals with lived experience. When we think about the broad range of experiences which can contribute to an individual experiencing trauma those figures are likely to be much higher. By becoming a trauma informed culture with trauma informed leaders, we were more likely to create a culture where this untapped professional resource is valued and can be utilised effectively. One area of interest with this strand of our work is that of post traumatic growth (PTG) - positive psychological change experienced as the result of the struggle with highly challenging life circumstances.

What we have done:

- **Secured leadership and manager buy-in**
- **Exploring safety – clinical psychology input, discussions with HR and Trade Unions**
- **Developed a process – initial interest, more detailed information, screening discussion and consent**
- **Launch event and manager briefings**

Trauma Implementation

In Dundee the Steering Group for Trauma Informed Practice Implementation has been firmly located alongside the VAWP. It is chaired by the VAWP lead officer and the links between VAW and Trauma are explicit. VAW specialist agencies have provided input around their trauma informed journey as it is recognised that they are at a more advanced stage and the gendered services project, model and training has trauma informed practice as a key element of a gendered service. The Steering Group is progressing a multi-agency approach to addressing trauma and held a launch event for our Implementation Plan on 30th March 2022 with 88 people in attendance. Feedback has been good and there have been notes of interest for all the ways to get involved. The event was recorded as a webinar, with 200+ people viewing this so far.

Since the launch we have run 4 Manager Briefings with a total of 141 attendees and positive feedback. Three new sessions are set for coming months.

In Dundee we have also pulled together and expanded several of the national resources developed by NHS Education Scotland into local toolkits. Within these toolkits we have tried to make it clear what resources are available to implement level 1 and 2 training.

We have designed a menu of ways that individuals or teams/services could get involved in the implementation of this approach to complement the training. This includes:

- **Becoming an ambassador**
- **Trying out a test of change and joining the trauma collaborative programme**
- **Getting involved with our workforce lived experience group**

7. Training, Learning and Development



The level of demand for training and information around VAW has increased dramatically since the beginning of the pandemic. The VAWP has a training consortium established and a VAW Overview training day which was rolled out online during 2020-2022.

A coordinated multi-level VAW training programme is a priority for the future.

GBV Advisor post

The project is a partnership with Dundee & Angus WRASAC, and Dundee City Council (DCC). The worker is employed by WRASAC with much of the work coming from DCC – namely Protecting People and L&OD.

The benefits of the partnership are that the worker has expert knowledge around GBV, and access to frontline knowledge through WRASAC colleagues, data and survivor testimony. It is vitally important that the worker of the project has in depth knowledge of the needs of survivors, as well as theoretical understanding of gender and GBV. Due to the nature of this work, passion for improving understanding and services for survivors is important. GBV is complex and intersects with all other social issues.

Overall aim of the project is to ensure a co-ordinated approach to GBV learning, training and development across Dundee City Council and their partners, and the multi-agency workforce in Dundee. By improving the understanding of GBV and practical application of trauma-informed, survivor focused, gendered approaches, we hope that survivors in Dundee will have consistently positive interactions with all services.

GBV is still misunderstood amongst many workforces and services, we aim to have long lasting cultural change whereby survivors (both employees and service users) feel heard, believed and supported. There are many misconceptions surrounding GBV due to millennia of misogyny and gender inequality. This project aims to support agencies and staff in learning and unlearning around these ingrained views surrounding GBV.

There are many exciting pieces of work going on in Dundee, and in general the workforce is keen to learn and improve their practice around GBV. However, a key issue has been the lack of co-ordination and capacity surrounding the VAWP Training Framework, and the individual pieces of GBV work going on in the city. This project will be a dedicated co-ordinating link for the VAWP and GBV work, allowing for oversight where previously there was none. In the past, good work has fallen away due to lack of co-ordination – this was a key reason for the funding bid.

Another key element of the role is capacity building, this is to increase longevity of the project and create a sustainable model of development.

To build capacity, without diluting the quality of delivery, the project hopes to build into the VAWP Training Framework a network of trainers that can deliver input to a high quality. A network of experts from different agencies, alongside a train the trainer model would help build capacity. GBV training benefits from in person delivery (rather than e-learning) due to the complexities surrounding it. Whilst e-learning modules have its place, the reality of engagement and retainment of information is low. It is essential that any GBV learning is not a tick-box exercise, as this does not improve services for survivors.

8 Challenges and Areas for Improvement



Opportunities

- There is an abundance of good work taking place in Dundee in relation to VAWG, however, this needs to be sustained in order for continued progression. A focus on embedding current practices across all policy areas and maintaining the current momentum is viewed as important.
- A focus on prevention work is necessary to ensure the VAWP continues to advance towards the ultimate goal of eradicating VAWG.
- With the Equally Safe funding stream potentially becoming more strategic and long-term, the Partnership will be able to utilise this to further current projects.
- With the development of a new action plan for Dundee, it can be ensured that intersectionality is explicitly incorporated throughout in order to better represent specific groups affected by VAWG.
- The additional funding that has been provided offers potential for increased work to tackle VAWG, however, this could create additional work for the VAWP where capacity is already limited. This needs to be considered when discussing what these additional resources will be used for.

Priority Areas for Improvement

1. Increase Support for Women with Complex Needs

The VAW Partnership has made much progress in this area but recognise the need to continue being more responsive to the support required for survivors with multiple and/or complex needs. It was noted that this approach could be incorporated throughout work across all areas of Dundee's Protecting People agenda in order to ensure that the needs of these women are considered in all relevant systems and services. Additionally, the need to promote an intersectional approach, that recognises the additional barriers that women with protected characteristics may face, was highlighted as an approach that needs to be explicitly referred to throughout the VAW Delivery Plan to ensure this is addressed.

2. Increase Investment in Prevention Activities

Early intervention/prevention activities need to be scaled up in order to assist the VAWG agenda. It was specified that this approach should be promoted in a variety of different settings, including schools, colleges, universities, and the wider community. To achieve this, it was noted that the Partnership needs to build a compelling case for increased investment in order to broaden the audience that participates in these activities. In addition, it was noted that the links between adopting a preventative approach and achieving other strategic priorities across Dundee should be highlighted to wider partners.

3. Ensure Dundee VAWP is Involved in the National Review of VAWG Funding

A priority is to ensure that future national funding streams to support the delivery of Equally Safe are fit for purpose and respond to the needs and priorities identified by Dundee VAW Partnership. It was noted that short-term, competitive funding cycles are not conducive to supporting a strategic, joined-up approach to be embedded to tackling VAWG in Dundee and there is an opportunity for Dundee VAW Partnership to use its learning about "what works" to help inform and improve future approaches to funding.

Other Potential Areas for Improvement

In addition to the above priority areas, the following areas of work have been identified and are in progress:

Protecting People Lived Experience Review

There have been a lot of different types of engagement across the PP partnerships with genuine effort. There is also pressure and a focus on the value of lived experience nationally. This is important but it needs the time and resource to make sure it's meaningful, which in the current systems can be difficult. There is a risk that the pressure on strategic forums to include lived experience lends itself to tokenism, only a single voice having a say, individuals feeling used or let down, people being retraumatized, and or an environment of 'us and them' if it is not done in a meaningful and trauma informed way.

We have recognised previous efforts within our partnerships that have not had the desired results to engage people with lived experience in the design and delivery of services on more strategic level. There can be a disconnect between good engagement and the voices reaching/having an influence on strategic decisions. This is why we are looking at addressing these barriers through working with leadership and developing a shared understanding of meaningful involvement and have established this review process.

Whole systems look at lived experience engagement, and their inclusion in the strategic decision-making processes and linked strategic planning, improvement and development programmes and activities.

- **Break down barriers / challenges to connecting lived experience voices with strategic planning and development**
- **Develop a shared understanding of meaningful involvement in a safe and trauma informed way.**

Social Media

Following the discussions on the development day, it was agreed that the VAW Partnership would launch a collective social media presence on Instagram. The aim of this account is to educate the public on aspects of gender-based violence (GBV) and to aid prevention of GBV. Through key themes being highlighted through the Scrutiny Group's data interrogation, the social media will also be reactive to issues impacting Dundee on a local level.

Engagement data can be collated from the social media account which will further inform the VAW Partnership on the ages and gender of individuals engaging with the account. Although this account is for everyone, we particularly hope to reach young women as they are currently underrepresented in referrals presenting to local VAW services.

This social media presence will not act as a support account, however information on local services will be clearly signposted.

Challenges: Cost of living

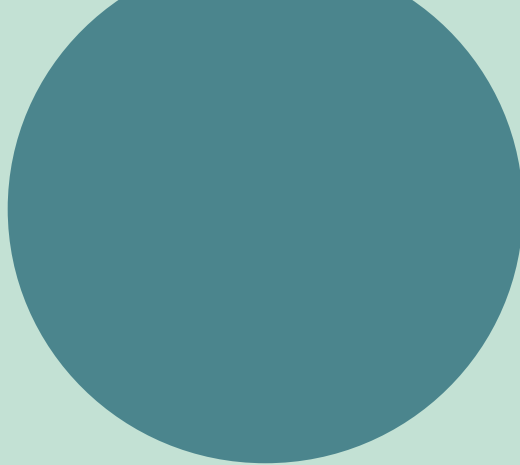
One of the key challenges and concerns for the VAWP looking forward, alongside all the PP committees, is the impact of the cost of living crisis. We know that poverty and gender-based violence are intrinsically linked, and in complex, far reaching ways and that poverty impacts both perpetration and victimhood, as well as barriers to leaving violent situations.

Whilst gender-based violence can impact all people in society, women in poverty are a group at much greater risk, and will experience specific risks and challenges related to GBV and accessing services.

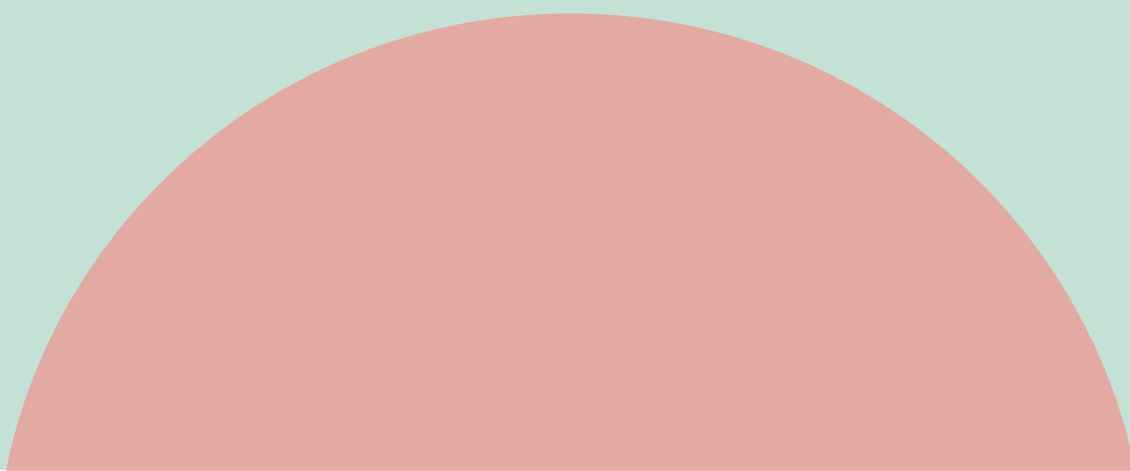
In Scotland, women are already more likely than men to be in poverty, to experience in-work poverty and to experience persistent poverty and more likely to be reliant on social security system. Women are more likely to be in low paid, insecure work – 62% of those earning less than the real living wage are women, more affected by household debt and have fewer savings.

The impact of this picture being exacerbated by the cost of living crisis is concerning. We have seen a growing number of women being pushed into selling sex as a result of the economic impact of COVID-19. Whilst the pandemic itself is coming to an end, the long-term economic impact is here to stay. In addition, from the extensive literature around domestic abuse we know that methods of coercive control often centre around money. We are likely to see the fuel crisis as a trend in experiences of domestic abuse. For example, women not being allowed access to the car with cost of petrol used as reasoning, women being blamed for increase in utility bills, women having to cut their personal spending (eating, toiletries etc) in order to pay for household. We also know that one of the biggest barriers to leave an abusive relationship is financial dependency on the perpetrator.

Alongside the other PP Committees, we have identified this as a high risk in our risk register and will be monitoring closely and developing mitigations to address issues wherever possible.



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you?
...who!





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