



Fife Violence Against Women Partnership

Strategy & Action Plan 2026-27



1. Introduction and Context

Violence against women and girls, in any form, has no place in our vision for a safe, strong, successful Scotland. It damages health and wellbeing, limits freedom and potential, and is a violation of the most fundamental human rights.

Equally Safe

There is an expectation for local authorities, Police Scotland, NHS, community planning partnerships, civil and criminal justice systems, social work, housing, media, the business sector, trade unions, third sector organisations and individuals and communities to challenge violence against women and girls (VAWG). VAWG continues to cause harm and indignity to significant numbers of women and children living in Fife, and is a blight on Scottish society. It is a consequence of gender inequality and harms all of us. Everyone has a role to play in tackling it and it is important we have a shared understanding of the issue to do so - we need to understand what VAWG is and how it impacts those who experience it, its impact on society more generally, the scale of the problem, and what causes it.

Fife adopts the same **definition of Violence Against Women and Girls** used in *Equally Safe* as the actual and threat of:

- physical, sexual, psychological, emotional, and financial abuse occurring in the family, within the general community, and in institutions in both physical and digital spaces and places
- domestic abuse/coercive controlling behaviours, stalking, rape, incest, sexual harassment, bullying, and intimidation
- commercial sexual exploitation (CSE), including prostitution, lap dancing, stripping, pornography
- human trafficking, including for the purposes of domestic servitude, sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation, which may include gangs and organised criminal networks
- child abuse occurring within family settings, including domestic abuse, and sexual abuse by male family members including siblings
- child sexual abuse and exploitation including the production and sharing of indecent images of children
- honour-based abuse, including forced marriages, female genital mutilation (FGM), dowry abuse and 'honour based' coercive control and killings.

Fife Violence Against Women Partnership is the local mechanism to co-ordinate activity to contribute to ending violence against women and its detrimental impact. Our strategy is aligned to [*Equally Safe - Scotland's strategy for preventing and eradicating violence against women and girls*](#) and the [*Equally Safe Delivery Plan*](#) and focuses on the following 4 priorities within the [*logic model*](#) for the delivery plan:

1. **Scottish society embraces equality and mutual respect and rejects all forms of violence against women and girls.**
2. **Women and girls thrive as equal citizens: socially, culturally, economically and politically.**
3. **Interventions are early and effective, preventing violence and maximising safety and wellbeing of women children and young people.**
4. **Men de all forms of violence against women and girls and perpetrators of such violence receive a robust and effective response.**

Working to these four priorities helps us to achieve Equally Safe's vision of "A strong and flourishing Scotland where all individuals are equally safe and respected, and where women and girls live free from all forms of violence, abuse and exploitation – and the attitudes that help perpetuate it"

2. Our Challenge

VAWG has been described as a "national emergency" and remains deeply embedded in society. Key challenges include:

- Unsustainable funding pressures on specialist services.
- Under-reporting and repeat victimisation.
- Difficulties holding perpetrators accountable, particularly where coercive control is involved.
- Complex and long-term support needs for victims and survivors.
- Persistent gender inequalities affecting women's opportunities and economic independence.
- Increasing online harms, including misogyny, exploitation and image-based abuse.
- Cost of living pressures making it harder for women to leave abusive relationships, with 73% reporting financial pressures as a barrier to leaving.
The Cost of Living is preventing women from fleeing domestic abuse (Women's Aid) ¹

3. Gendered Analysis

VAWG is gender-based and must be understood within the context of unequal power relations and societal expectations of men and women. *Gender* refers to the range of socially constructed roles, traits, attitudes, behaviours, values, responsibilities, power, status and influence given to males and females on a differential basis.²

FVAWP recognises that:

- Men are the primary perpetrators of serious violence against women and children.
- Not all men are violent.
- Some women use violence and abuse.
- Men's and women's use of violence is not equivalent in prevalence, context or impact.
- Men have a key role in preventing and ending VAWG by challenging harmful attitudes and behaviours
- Women and girls are at increased risk of violence and abuse because they are female.

This approach supports prevention, accountability and long-term cultural change. White Ribbon Scotland promotes men's active role in ending violence against women.³

Boys experience domestic abuse, sexual abuse, and exploitation in significant numbers. That is why the Equally Safe strategy covers all children and young people. This strategy recognises that women, children, and young people may experience multiple forms of VAWG simultaneously and across their lifetime. This reflects the Scottish Government's commitment to developing and implementing relevant pieces of legislation, including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (Scotland) Act 2024 and the new Human Rights Bill, in a way that meaningfully embeds the experiences and recommendations of survivors of abuse.

4. Human Rights

Human rights are fundamental rights and freedoms protected by law. Violence against women is a violation of these rights, including the rights to safety, dignity, health and freedom from degrading treatment. VAWG affects women's ability to participate fully in society and has significant personal, social and economic consequences. Violence against women is an abuse of women's fundamental human rights.⁴

"Violence against women and girls is the most pervasive human rights violation we face globally, whether in times of peace, conflict or post-conflict transition".⁵

Ms Rashida Manjoo, UN Special Rapporteur on VAW

5. Equalities

The Equality Act 2010 requires public bodies to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- Advance equality of opportunity.
- Foster good relations between groups.

The Equally Safe definition applies across all protected characteristics. Women and girls with additional protected characteristics may face heightened risks and barriers.

The Fairer Scotland Duty also requires public bodies to consider and reduce inequalities linked to socio-economic disadvantage. This is particularly relevant given the relationship between poverty, inequality and VAWG as highlighted in the Improvement Service briefing note **The Gendered Nature of Poverty**⁶

6. Impact on Children and Young People

The Equally Safe Delivery Plan recognises that tackling VAWG is essential to protecting children and young people. The Scottish Government definition includes all children, recognising both direct and indirect harm arising from domestic abuse, sexual violence, forced marriage, FGM and exploitation.

Research demonstrates that exposure to domestic abuse can lead to:

- Trauma, anxiety and depression.
- Behavioural and cognitive difficulties.
- Adverse childhood experiences affecting long-term outcomes.

Our shared understanding recognises that violence against women has a significant impact on children and young people's lives. This includes children and young people who are directly or indirectly harmed through domestic abuse of their mother, and there is evidence of links between domestic abuse and emotional, physical and sexual abuse of children. The safety of children is closely linked to the safety of the adult victim.

VAWG can also undermine parent-child relationships through perpetrator behaviour and the impact of trauma on survivors.

There is a significant body of research around the detrimental effects in relation to children living with domestic abuse¹. Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) impact on children's development and future outcomes. Children living with domestic abuse have much higher rates of depression and anxiety, trauma symptoms, and behavioural and cognitive problems.⁷

This strategy supports:

- Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC).⁸
- Child Protection frameworks.
- Curriculum for Excellence.
- Safe & Together approaches.

7. Violence Against Men

A gendered analysis acknowledges that men and boys also experience abuse, including domestic abuse, sexual violence, exploitation and abuse within same-sex relationships. However, women and girls remain disproportionately affected by men's violence.

The same gender norms that contribute to VAWG can also create barriers for men and boys in recognising abuse and seeking support. FVAWP therefore promotes inclusive support while maintaining a gendered understanding of violence and inequality.

8. Holding Perpetrators to Account

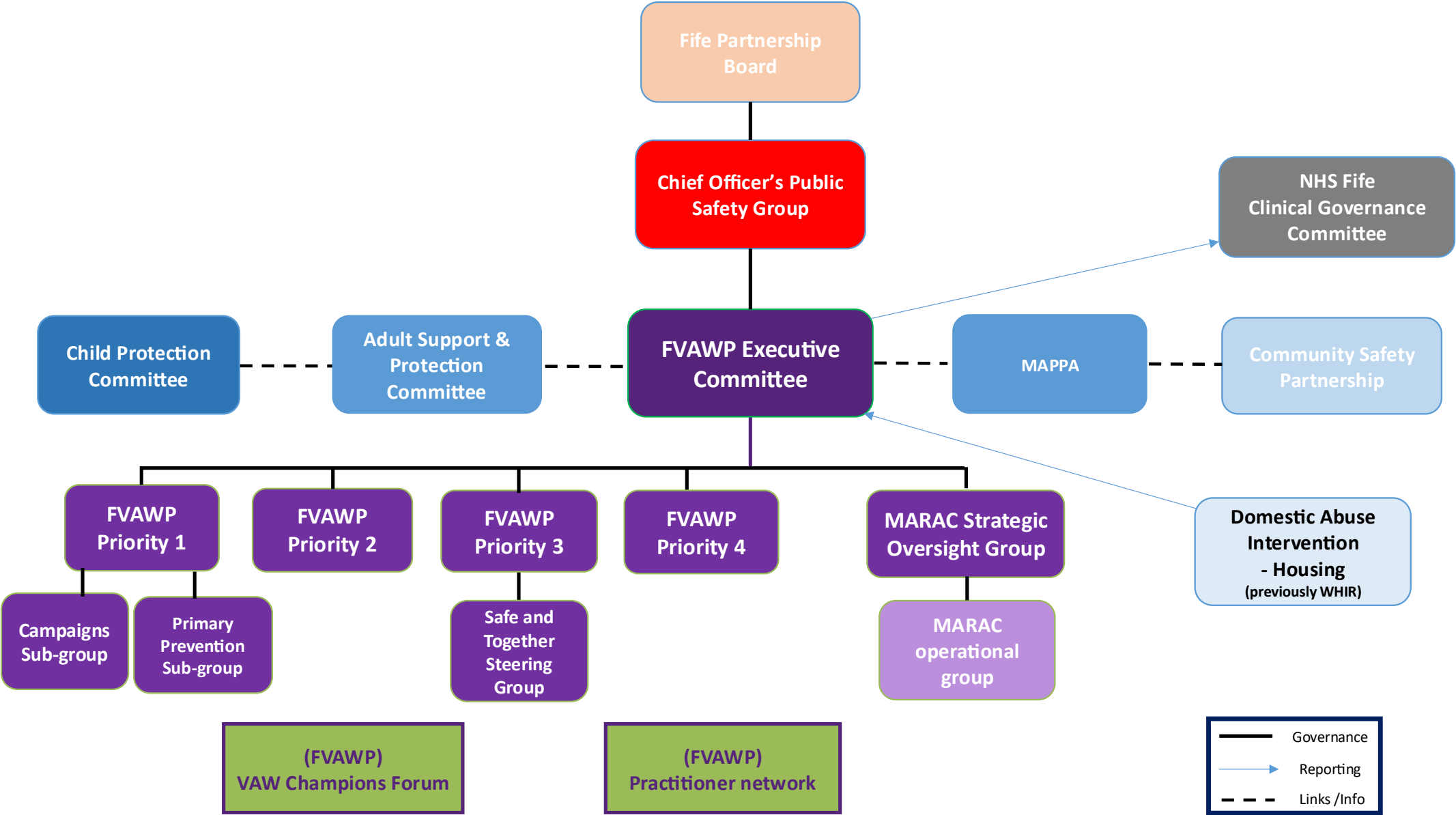
Men's violence / abuse is learned and intentional behaviour, not a consequence of individual pathology, stress, alcohol or drug use or "dysfunctional relationships". The use of violence and abuse is a choice for which each man is responsible and for which he should be held accountable. Although a man may have been socialised to believe in his right to control women and children, or even have been encouraged to use violence, he can still choose to take responsibility and learn non-violent ways of relating to others. Some men may have experienced violence themselves and use it as a justification for their abusive behaviour. Any excusing, condoning or minimising of violence on the basis of his own pain and difficulties reinforces his use of violence/abuse rather than challenging it.

Based on Respect⁹

"The Safe & Together™ Model¹⁰ is an international, perpetrator pattern-based framework for transforming how systems and practitioners respond to domestic abuse and threats to child well-being. It applies a child-centered, strengths-based, and systems-informed approach that shifts the focus from blaming protective caregivers—usually mothers—to holding perpetrators accountable as parents."

The model and approach reframes domestic abuse practice so that the perpetrator's pattern of behaviour—not the survivor's responses—becomes the central organising factor in assessment, intervention, and multi-agency work and is the foundational source of risk to children and families. The model recognises that the child is more likely to thrive when they are kept "safe and together" with the non-offending parent where safe to do so (it is not about keeping the perpetrator with the family). It also recognises that removal of perpetrator does not equate to safety.

9. Governance Reporting Structure



10. Membership

Organisations are able to get involved in the partnership in various ways supporting the collective action plan (13) and participating in the FVAWP partnership groups above. Current membership includes:

- Crown Office Prosecution Service
- Fife Alcohol and Drug Partnership
- Fife Centre for Equalities
- Fife College
- Fife Council
 - Children and Families Social Work
 - Justice Social Work
 - Adults Social Work
 - MARAC
 - Housing Service
 - Community Safety
 - Equalities
 - Education
 - Community Services
 - Human Resources
 - Commissioning
- Fife Gingerbread
- Fife Rape and Sexual Assault Centre (FRASAC)
- Fife Women's Aid
- Kingdom Abuse Survivor's Project (KASP)
- Ministry of Defence
- NHS Fife
- Police Scotland (Fife Division)
- Sacro
- Safe Space
- Scottish Prison Service
- St Andrews University
- Third Sector Substance Use Agencies
- Victim Support
- Zero Tolerance

11. Role and Responsibilities of Partners

All partners are expected:

- To work to the definition of violence against women outlined above.
- To monitor, co-ordinate and review the development and delivery of Equally Safe: Scotland's Strategy to Prevent and Eradicate Violence Against Women within Fife in line with Equally Safe Quality Standards and Performance Framework
- To take responsibility for the delivery of their agency's actions and contribute collectively to the delivery of FVAWP bridging action plan 2026-2027
- To hold their agencies local delivery mechanisms to account for delivery of FVAWP priorities.

This will require partners to attend and report to FVAWP including working groups to progress specific pieces of work and contribute to performance management processes.

12. Action Plan

The Fife Violence Against Women Partnership (FVAWP), supported by the Improvement Service, has developed a 2026-27 Action Plan aligned to the four priorities of **Equally Safe**. The plan was informed by partner engagement through priority group discussions, Executive Committee workshops, ongoing feedback, the Equally Safe self-assessment, and locally identified priorities. In light of Scotland's policy and funding uncertainty ahead of the 2026 elections, the Partnership agreed a **Bridging Action Plan for 2026-27** to maintain momentum, deliver improvement actions, and respond to emerging priorities while ensuring continuity with previous plans.

Cross-Cutting Themes

The following themes underpin delivery across all four priorities:

Involvement

- Involve women and children with lived experience in shaping services and policy.
- Consider the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on women and girls.
- Support leaders as VAWG champions.
- Strengthen communication and engagement, including social media and accessible formats.
- Recognise online environments as both risks and engagement opportunities.

Understanding

- Promote understanding of VAWG as both a cause and consequence of gender inequality.
- Challenge stereotypes and strengthen gendered analysis.
- Support sustainable funding for VAWG services.
- Promote engagement with the FVAWP training programme.

Working Together

- Improve multi-agency data sharing and partnership working.
- Strengthen links across local and national partnerships.
- Develop and evaluate new approaches and models of practice.
- Embed the No Wrong Door approach and public protection principles.
- Improve communication, resource sharing, and collaboration across Priority Groups.
- Strengthen links between prevention and perpetrator-focused work.

Recognise Limitations and Celebrate Successes

- Make VAWG work accessible through clear, practical resources and communications.
- Acknowledge capacity pressures across services.
- Recognise progress, reflect on achievements, and celebrate success across all priority areas

Priority 1 – Scottish society embraces equality and mutual respect, and rejects all forms of violence against women and girls

Outcome	Measure	KPI	Reporting Timescale
1.1 Communities across Fife have increased awareness and understanding of VAWG, gender equality, healthy relationships, and the role individuals and communities can play in preventing and challenging abuse.	Delivery of prevention campaigns, community engagement activity and partnership communications. Develop and deliver on a FVAWP Communication strategy and ensure FVAWP Webpages are updated regularly to reflect relevant information	• Minimum 4 prevention campaigns delivered annually • Monthly campaigns sub-group meetings • No. of local & national campaigns supported (posts and engagements) • 2,000+ people engaged through events, campaigns and community activities annually • 10% increase in social media reach and engagement from baseline • Information displayed in at least 30 community venues annually • 80% of participants report increased understanding of VAWG and healthy relationships. • Ensure strategy is up-to-date to ensure effective communication and debrief reports include key points. • Webpages to be monitored and updated • Explore reach of website	Quarterly progress reports Annual outcome report
1.2 Children and young people are equipped with the knowledge, skills and confidence to build healthy, respectful relationships and recognise abusive behaviours.	Delivery of the Fife Children and Young People's GBV Primary Prevention Strategy.	• Strategy launched and implemented by September 2026 (linking to CfE, RSHP, GBV Early Intervention, and MVP) • Primary Prevention Sub-group established and meeting quarterly. • 75% of schools/settings engaged in delivery of GBV materials • Year-on-year increase in children and young people receiving prevention inputs • 80% of participants report increased knowledge and confidence • Minimum 1 parent/carers engagement sessions delivered annually • Minimum 30 practitioners complete relevant learning annually	Quarterly progress reports Annual outcome report
1.3 Partners and VAW Champions have the knowledge, skills and confidence to promote gender equality, challenge harmful attitudes and behaviours, and contribute to the prevention of VAWG	Development and support of VAW Champions and prevention-focused partnership activity.	• Minimum 20 active VAW Champions across partner organisations • Minimum 4 Champion development/network events/meetings annually • Minimum 2 prevention events/activities supported by Champions annually • Representation from at least 5 partner organisations • 85% of Champions report increased confidence and capability	Quarterly progress reports Annual outcome report

Outcome	Measure	KPI	Reporting Timescale
1.4 Increased focus on social media, digital and online activity, addressing online misogyny, harm, and exploitation risks.	Delivery of coordinated digital communications and online engagement activity.	• Number of local and national digital campaigns delivered • Social media reach and engagement across FVAWP and partner platforms • Number of partner organisations actively sharing campaign content • Resources, guidance or briefing materials developed in response to identified online harms • Increase in use of creative content developed by YP, including MVP volunteers and Fife College students • % of participants reporting increased awareness of online harms through evaluation or feedback	Quarterly and Annual reporting
1.5 Men and boys are engaged in promoting positive masculinity, challenging sexism and misogyny, and supporting behaviour and culture change that prevents VAWG	Delivery of White Ribbon, Zero Tolerance and targeted engagement initiatives. Promote and apply the Zero Tolerance <i>Addressing Men's Violence Against Women and Girls</i> report and toolkit through local awareness events	• White Ribbon Steering Group established and meeting quarterly, with engagement from key partners • Minimum 10 trained White Ribbon speakers available • Minimum 4 White Ribbon events/stalls per year • Minimum 4 WR awareness or training sessions delivered annually • 100+ men and boys engaged through events, training and outreach annually • 5% increase in White Ribbon pledges year-on-year • At least 2 organisations engaged annually in targeted partnership activity • Attendance and feedback from toolkit awareness event(s). • Link with priority 4 Action 4.5	Quarterly progress reports Annual outcome report

Priority 2: Women and girls thrive as equal citizens – socially, culturally, economically and politically

Outcome	Measure	KPIs	Reporting Timescale
2.1 Leadership and decision-makers across Fife actively champion gender equality and prioritise action to prevent and respond to VAWG	Influence strategic planning, leadership forums and community planning structures.	• Number of reports presented to strategic boards and leadership groups • Evidence of VAWG and gender equality included in key partnership plans and reports • Number of leadership engagement opportunities delivered (briefings, meetings, presentations) • Evidence of actions taken following leadership engagements	6-monthly
2.2 Gender equality and women's safety are embedded within local planning, policy development and community decision-making across Fife.	Integration of gender equality and VAWG considerations into local plans, impact assessments and community planning processes.	• Number of local plans incorporating VAWG and gender equality considerations • Number of Integrated Impact Assessments evidencing a gendered approach • Evidence of women's safety considerations within community planning processes • Number of partnerships established with local planning structures	Annually
2.3 Women and girls feel safe, respected and included in their communities, with local services and partners working together to address risks and improve safety.	Improve understanding of women's safety, identify local concerns and inform place-based responses.	• Women's safety data is collated, analysed, and reported • Number of community safety initiatives informed by VAWG data • Number of community partnerships addressing women's safety concerns • Evidence of improvements made in response to identified concerns	Quarterly and Annually
2.4 Employers and public services promote gender equality and prevent violence against women and girls through inclusive policies, workplace culture and practice.	Support Equally Safe at Work and wider organisational development activity.	• Number of organisations engaged in Equally Safe at Work activity • Accreditation milestones achieved (e.g. Bronze award) • Number of staff completing equality and VAWG-related learning • Number of workplace policies reviewed or implemented to support gender equality and address VAWG • Evidence of policy or practice improvements implemented	Quarterly and Annually
2.5 Priority 2 to develop new actions relating to Equally Safe strategy	New specific actions to be reviewed and developed for plan for 2028 onwards	• Key actions to be identified relating to how women thrive as equal citizens: socially, culturally, economically and politically	Action Plan for 2028

Priority 3 - Interventions are early and effective, preventing violence and maximising the safety and wellbeing of women, children and young people

Outcome	Measure	KPIs	Reporting Timescale
3.1 Staff across Fife have the knowledge, skills and confidence to identify, respond to and support those affected by violence against women and girls	Delivery of multi-agency training, practice development and workforce support. Trauma-informed practice development. Practitioner Network meetings increase knowledge and confidence NHS Routine Enquiry training to be delivered to priority areas. Identifying training gaps Guidance development and sharing good practice.	• Number and range of FVAWP training sessions delivered • Number and range of staff trained • Number of organisations represented • 80% of participants report increased knowledge and confidence • Number of Safe & Together and specialist training courses delivered • Reach and evaluation of S&T courses • Number of Practitioner network meetings and reach • Number of sessions delivered and reach, utilised with evaluations • Reporting on evaluations and surveys. • Details of guidance development and distribution reach.	Quarterly and Annually
3.2 Victims and survivors have equitable access to accessible trauma-informed, inclusive services with consideration of VAWG, additional complexities and intersectionalities	Accessibility, responsiveness and development of specialist support services.	• Number of minority ethnic, refugee, disabled or other marginalised women accessing support • Number of partnership initiatives addressing emerging needs • 85% positive service-user satisfaction rating	Quarterly and annually

Outcome	Measure	KPIs	Reporting Timescale
3.3 Women receive coordinated and effective multi-agency interventions that improve safety, wellbeing, and recovery.	Delivery and monitoring of specialist support services, MARAC, and multi-agency pathways (including public protection).	• Number of MARAC referrals/repeats and cases reviewed • Percentage of MARAC actions completed within agreed timescales • Number of referrals to specialist VAWG services • Number of people accessing specialist VAWG services • Number of women and children accessing refuge, housing, or home safety-related support • Waiting times monitored and reported for specialist services • Number of victims/survivors supported through coordinated interventions • 85% Positive service-user outcome measures and feedback • Links/statistics of VAWG and ASPC/CPC/ADP/Suicide Prevention	Quarterly and Annually
3.4 Children and young people affected by violence against women and girls receive effective, trauma-informed support that promotes safety, recovery and wellbeing.	Delivery of specialist interventions and support pathways for children and young people.	• Number of referrals to specialist CYP services • Number of children and young people receiving support • Number of CYPs participating in one-to-one interventions • Number of CYPs participating in groupwork programmes • Improvement in agreed wellbeing or outcome measures • 85% Positive feedback from CYP and families	Quarterly and annually
3.5 Services are informed by data, evaluation and lived experience to continually improve responses and outcomes for those affected by violence against women and girls.	Collection and use of evidence to inform planning, service development and improvement.	• Quarterly performance reports produced and reviewed • Number of lived experience engagement activities completed • Number of service improvements implemented as a result of feedback, evaluation or needs assessment findings • Completion of identified improvement actions • Evidence of needs assessment, evaluation and service-user feedback informing planning decisions.	6-monthly

Priority 4: Men reject all forms of violence against women and girls, and perpetrators of such violence receive a robust and effective response

Outcome	Measure	Sample KPI	Reporting Timescale
4.1 Workforce confidence responding to perpetrators increases	Courses delivered and Staff trained	Minimum of 10 courses relating to perpetrating behaviour and 140 staff trained annually	Quarterly
	Confidence Levels Evaluation Scores Safe and Together delivery Pass rates	85% reported increased confidence 90% Positive evaluations 2 accredited cohorts annually 80% pass rate	6-monthly
4.2 High risk perpetrators are identified and managed	MARAC Referrals	Quarterly Monitoring completed	Quarterly
	DSDAS Activity	Quarterly Monitoring and Increase from 2025/26 baseline	Quarterly/Annually
	MATAC Oversight	High risk cases reviewed regularly and managed	Quarterly
	Risk Management Actions	90% completed within timescale	
4.3 Coordinated perpetrator interventions support behaviour change	Men assessed for perpetrator programmes	Maintain/increase from previous year	6-monthly
	Men commencing programmes Men actively engaged in programmes Programme completion rate Women/children indirectly supported through programme engagement	Maintain increase from previous year 50% or more 100% offered support / 75% uptake	
4.4 Effective partnership working supports victims and survivors through the justice system	Multi-agency engagement, information sharing and coordination	Representation from all key partners at P4 meetings, with 80% attendance. Agreed actions progressed within timescales.	Quarterly
	Victim and survivor feedback informs improvement	Evidence of improved experiences through consultation and feedback mechanisms.	6-monthly
	Joint improvement activity	Minimum 2 joint improvement initiatives completed annually	Annually
4.5 Men and boys are engaged in reducing offending/preventing harm	Awareness Activities and joint campaigns	6 activities annually- Working with Priority 1	Quarterly
	Men and boys engaged	100 participants annually – Working with Priority 1	Quarterly

Governance Reporting Cycle

Report	Audience	Frequency
KPI Dashboard/Progress Reports	Priority Groups & Executive Committee	Quarterly
Performance Exception Report (Amber/Red KPIs)	Executive Committee	Quarterly
Service Performance & Risk Report	Executive Committee & Chief Officers Public Safety Group	Quarterly
Annual Performance Report	FVAWP, Public Protection Chief Officers, Fife Partnership Board	Annually
Full Strategy Review	Executive Committee	Prior to end of 2026-27 Plan Period (starting June 2027)

References

¹ The Cost of Living is preventing women from fleeing domestic abuse [The cost of living - Women's Aid \(womensaid.org.uk\)](https://www.womensaid.org.uk)

² The Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (2011) <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1772191>

³ White Ribbon Scotland Campaign www.whiteribbonScotland.org.uk

⁴ Scottish Human Rights Commission <http://scottishhumanrights.com/>

⁵ House of Lords / House of Commons Joint Committee on Human Rights, Violence against women and girls Sixth Report of Session 2014–15 <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/jt201415/jtselect/jtrights/106/106.pdf>

⁶ *The Gendered Nature of Poverty*, Improvement Service (2019)

⁷ *Literature review: better outcomes for children and young people experiencing domestic abuse –directions for good practice*, Cathy Humphreys, Claire Houghton and Jane Ellis, Scottish Government, 2008

⁸ Getting it Right for Every Child, Scottish Government website <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/People/Young-People/gettingitright>

⁹ Respect is the UK membership organisation for work with domestic violence perpetrators, male victims and young people <http://respect.uk.net/>

¹⁰ *The Safe & Together Model — Safe & Together Institute*