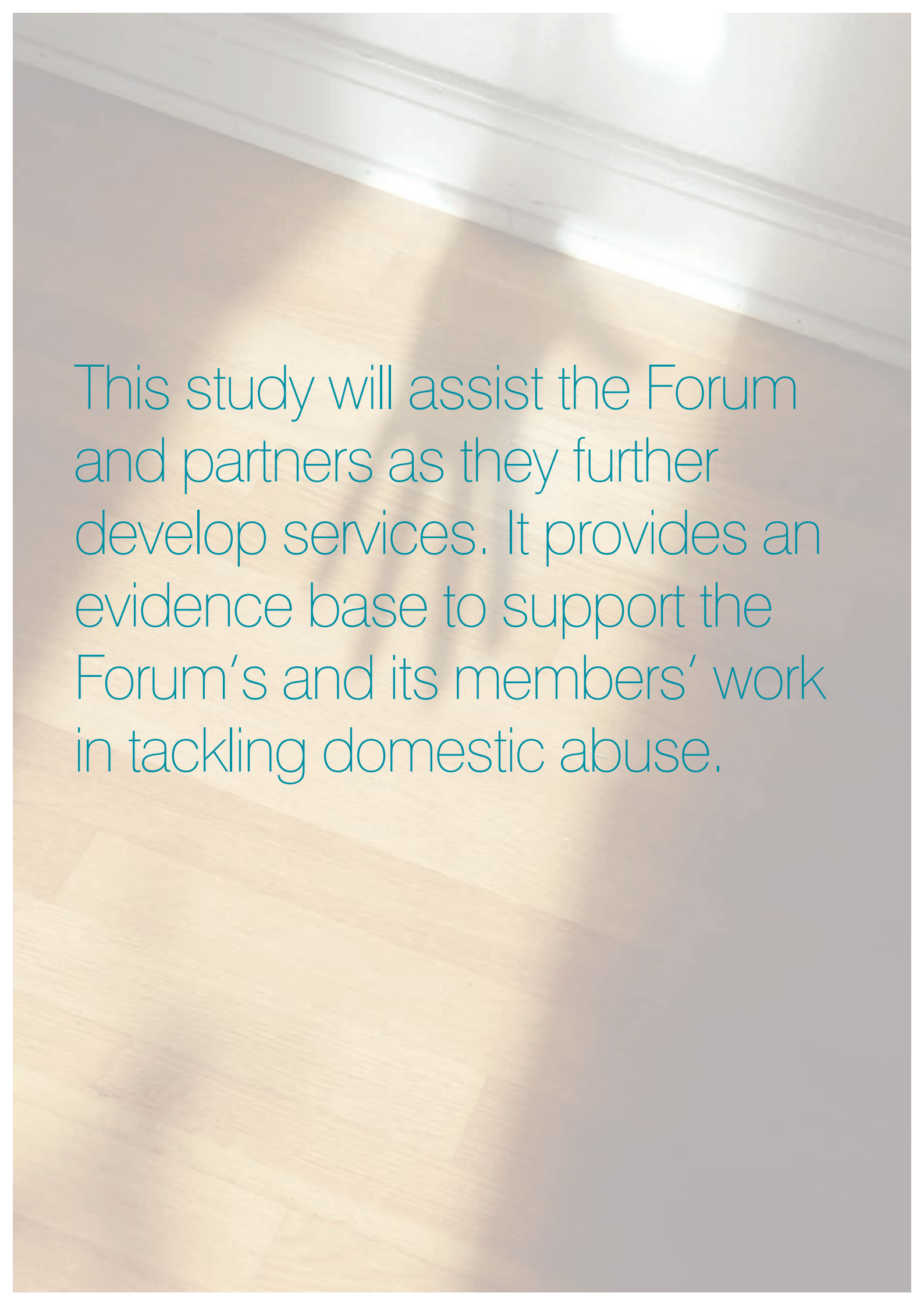


Understanding
and tackling
domestic abuse
in North Ayrshire



This study will assist the Forum and partners as they further develop services. It provides an evidence base to support the Forum's and its members' work in tackling domestic abuse.

UNDERSTANDING AND TACKLING DOMESTIC ABUSE IN NORTH AYRSHIRE

Final Report to the North Ayrshire
Violence against Women Forum

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June 2009

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We are especially grateful to the individual women who agreed to be interviewed and gave up their time to inform the research better. We hope we have done justice to their views and experiences.

Research Team

June 2009

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

This study was commissioned by the North Ayrshire Violence Against Women Forum, which having considered the priorities in its Action Plan 2007/10, wanted to obtain a better understanding of patterns of violence against women (VAW) and of how to effectively tackle domestic abuse and other aspects of violence against women in North Ayrshire.

North Ayrshire along with every other local authority in Scotland had seen a rise in domestic abuse incidents reported to the Police in the period 2002/03 to 2007/08. The VAW Forum commissioned Ann Rosengard Associates to carry out this research to help inform them about the reasons behind the increasing number of reported incidents and to enable the forum to make informed decisions about what is working well locally and what needs to change¹. This study will assist the Forum and partners as they further develop services. It provides an evidence base to support the Forum's and its members' work in tackling domestic abuse.

The research brief identified 11 specific research objectives, some of which related to wider aspects of gender based violence as reflected in The Scottish Government's policies. These objectives focused the study on key patterns, trends and contributing factors relevant to VAW in North Ayrshire, including by focusing on a range of particular and complex needs of the women and children affected by VAW and related support needs. Two objectives addressed issues of cost effectiveness and performance management and the remainder focused on potential specific improvements to services, and on wider opportunities and challenges faced in tackling domestic abuse in North Ayrshire.

Study methods

The study was conducted using a mix of methods including:

- a review of existing literature, policy documents and guidance, at both national and local level
- analysis and review of data held on domestic abuse and violence against women with a particular emphasis on local data, although this was compared, where possible, with Scottish level information
- a qualitative interview programme, which included both professionals (in excess of 25 interviews, carried out either face to face or in group discussions), and service users (15 interviews): separate focus groups were held on Addictions and Mental Health issues, and on Homelessness issues.

¹ Ann Rosengard Associates research team included: Anne Dickson, Alice Ann Jackson, Isla Laing and Ann Rosengard

All but one of the 15 women who were interviewed had experienced violence from a partner or ex-partner and 14 interviewees had either dependents or adult children. Some had experienced years of abuse, sometimes leaving for short periods before returning; two had left after the second time they had been hit by their partners, and one commented, "I saw my own mother live like that and it had an effect on me... I didn't want my daughter to go through the same". Some described how they had had a number of abusive partners over the years, and some also said they had been raped, both by partners and strangers. None of the women interviewed said that they had been involved in prostitution or trafficking.

Key findings

From statistical information

- In 2007/08, North Ayrshire Police recorded a higher rate of domestic abuse incidents than the Scottish average (1065 per 100,000 population, compared to a Scottish average of 965 per 100,000 population); only three other local authorities in Strathclyde Police area reported a higher rate (West Dunbartonshire, Glasgow and Inverclyde).
- North Ayrshire Police recorded an increase of 200 in the number of reports between 2008/09 and 2007/08 (1689 compared to 1455).²
- In contrast, the number of crimes of indecency recorded in North Ayrshire in 2007/08 was the same as the Scottish average (13 per 10,000 population).
- In 2008/09, there were 1357 children in households where there had been a domestic abuse incident recorded by the Police.
- Not all domestic abuse incidents are recorded as crimes, with 52% of reports being so recorded in 2007/08; this means that many do not progress through the criminal justice system.
- Other key patterns in reporting included:
 - a rise in young women affected – from 70 Police reports in 2005-06 (6.7% under 20) to 135 (11%) in 2007/08
 - a rise in the number & percentage of reports involving someone who had been repeatedly victimised – from 52% in 2006-07 to 58% in 2007/08.
- The increase in reporting is not only related to increased reporting by victims. In a snapshot of 16 weeks, 32% of incidents were reported by third parties, this includes witnesses, other services and police officers. Some increase in reporting is likely to represent greater use of special bail conditions and proactive policing of those bail conditions.
- Little is known about the outcome of domestic abuse cases referred to the Procurator Fiscal.
- The Police response does not provide a remedy to all who request it - not all reports result in a crime report or a prosecution. Even in cases where there is an

² Comparable figures Scottish wide were not available at the time of the study.

identified additional risk, the criminal justice system and the Police as the first response within that, cannot effectively intervene in all cases.

- There is a correlation between Police involvement in domestic abuse incidents and high levels of deprivation, but that does not translate into a causal link between deprivation and domestic abuse.
- There is also a correlation between alcohol misuse and an incident coming to the attention of the Police.
- Homelessness data illustrates that the majority of homeless applications as a consequence of a violent or abusive partner, are from women. The overall number of such applications has been increasing (from 135 in 2005/06 to 165 in 2008/09).

Increased reporting rates are influenced by a range of complex factors including greater confidence in the system, the success of pro-active policing and the use of bail conditions. However it must be noted that a significant proportion of women affected by abuse may not report this to the Police for a variety of reasons. This was indicated by the service user interviews, as only five of the 15 women interviewed had reported the abuse to the Police.

Few of those working with violence against women would interpret the steady increase in reporting across Scotland since 2000, as indicative of a parallel rise in incidence. This is seen to indicate an increase in reporting to the Police as the first response service, as well as more rigorous recording by the Police.

The latest guidance from the Scottish Government and COSLA (Safer Lives: Changed Lives, June 2009) reinforces this view. They suggest that VAW fora should encourage greater reporting and that increased reporting rates to the Police is one indicator of success.

From interviews with professionals and service users

The interviews with professionals and service users identified that considerable multi agency working and service developments have been taking place at both strategic and operational levels, although there was scope to develop this further. During the course of the study, further developments were being implemented, such as preparation by NHS Ayrshire and Arran to implement "routine enquiry" in priority health settings in line with national guidance.

Key factors identified included:

Prevention

- There is provision of training to various agencies and services through the Ayrshire Training Consortium on Domestic Abuse.
- There has been an ongoing programme of work to address the issue of domestic abuse within schools, including with input from Women's Aid.

Protection

- Many service users interviewed had not reported their abuse to the Police for a range of reasons.
- Similarly, many reported that they had not disclosed that they were being abused to professionals, such as GPs.
- There is limited use of civil remedies, such as matrimonial interdicts in North Ayrshire (as is the case across Scotland); few service users interviewed said they had received information on this or used the civil remedies available.
- The most frequent disposal of a prosecution related to a domestic abuse incident is a fine (in 46% of cases based on information collated by the Police over a short time scale).
- There are currently no domestic abuse offender programmes in North Ayrshire.
- There is no Multi Agency Risk Assessment process in North Ayrshire along the lines as exist in a few other areas (MARACs).

Provision

- Key services responding to the needs of women (and their children) affected by abuse, include the Police, NHS services, local authority services, including Homelessness, Home Security and Social Work, and voluntary sector services. North Ayrshire Women's Aid is the key specialist provider.
- Service users were by and large happy with the service(s) they had received and felt that what was generally needed was "more of the same", along with better advertising of existing services. There was clear evidence of services linking service users in with other services as required.
- Some of the professionals interviewed highlighted difficulties that women can experience in gaining access to some services, such as psychiatric services and alcohol and drugs services, particularly when women are ready to engage with services.
- Some services reported that the incidence of self harming behaviour was high; young women are regularly referred to the North Ayrshire Penumbra Self Harm Project.
- While the number of suicide attempts by women was reported as low by the services interviewed, it should be noted that over half of the service users interviewed reported having had suicidal thoughts. The staff training provided by Choose Life on how to respond effectively to those at risk was found to be useful.
- The professional interviews (supplemented by information in local strategy and policy documents), highlighted recent service developments: including addiction workers employed by Women's Aid and North Ayrshire Council's Home Security Service. Service users who had used these services spoke highly of them.

Gaps

Notwithstanding the extent to which existing services were valued, a number of gaps were identified including:

- a Rape Crisis Centre in North Ayrshire
- therapeutic support for young people
- support for both adult and younger survivors of childhood sexual abuse
- services to address the behaviour of perpetrators of violence against women.

Participation

While two service user interviewees had been consulted on the development of the North Ayrshire Violence Against Women Strategy (both long time users of Women's Aid services), there were few formal mechanisms to consult and enable service user involvement at either the strategic or individual service level.

Recommendations

Reflecting the study findings, recommendations are made to the Violence against Women Forum, related to the four Ps and the eleven research objectives. These include that the Forum should:

Prevention

- seek to further develop work within schools
- carry out further training for professionals on all forms of violence against women, ensuring that this covers the impact of violence on women from ethnic minorities and equality groups.

Protection

The VAW Forum should consider specific measures to make women aware of their rights under civil remedies. These could include:

- training for front line staff
- leaflets on their rights to exclude an abusive partner and to seek protective orders
- joint training and joint work with local solicitors to increase the availability of legal remedies
- development of a North Ayrshire website on violence against women, including information on civil remedies and other sources of help and support.

Given that specialist approaches to prosecution of abuse in the Courts have been shown to provide valued help and support for women who have experienced domestic abuse, the VAW forum should:

- consider (with their criminal justice partners) how elements of the specialist court approach could be incorporated within North Ayrshire; this should include measures to support women better through the Court process, based on the experience of the ASSIST service in Glasgow.

Other actions which may mitigate against repeat abuse could include:

- introduction of the MARAC model of risk assessment (or elements of this).
- the introduction of sentencing disposals which rely more heavily on probation as opposed to fines
- the introduction of programmes that address the behaviour of perpetrators of domestic abuse.

Provision

To address service gaps identified in the study, the VAW Forum should ensure that services in North Ayrshire take account of and address the range of violence that is perpetrated against women. This would include ensuring that dedicated services are available for:

- women who have experienced rape, both by their partners/ex partners or strangers
- children and young people who have been sexually abused
- adult survivors of sexual abuse.

Existing services for women who have experienced domestic abuse in North Ayrshire could be better advertised. Good quality information packs should be produced to cover the many aspects of women's' lives which are affected by abuse, e.g. housing, health, impact on children, rights to have violent partners excluded, what will happen if the Police are involved etc. Such information should be accessible to people from equality and diversity groups.

There is also a need for more information to be available for those who have experienced childhood sexual abuse and those who may have been trafficked or be involved in prostitution.

Participation

Given low levels of service user participation at both individual service and strategic levels, individual services should:

- consider implementing service user meetings, exit questionnaires or interviews.

At strategic level the VAW Forum should develop mechanisms for service users to feed into strategic policy making and service developments, perhaps by setting up a sub group to the Forum.

Monitoring incidence of domestic abuse

Police statistics on domestic abuse incidents have become the focus of much discussion on the incidence of domestic abuse. However many factors influence the Police's collection of domestic abuse data. Some of these include:

- the willingness of victims to engage with the criminal justice systems
- the frequency with which third parties become aware of and report incidents
- a proactive Police response to monitoring bail conditions.

Although the number of domestic abuse incidents is one stark indicator of domestic abuse, it is imperfect. The study makes a number of specific recommendations on the collection, recording and analysis of data to provide a better understanding of domestic abuse in North Ayrshire. These include:

- Looking at the number of crime reports from incidents reported to the Police. This may point to the need for an additional service response to deal with abuse which does not always meet the test of criminal activity.
- Information on disposals where the perpetrator has been charged.
- Seeking information from the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration on the number of children referred as a consequence of domestic abuse incidents and the outcomes of this.
- Reports from Women's Aid on whether or not women approaching their service have reported their abuse to the Police, to gain a better understanding of the pattern of reporting of domestic abuse locally.
- Repeating a People's Panel Survey which includes questions on domestic abuse.

Implementing the Violence against Women Strategy

The report concludes that there is a strong case for the VAW Forum to have a dedicated post or "champion" whose sole remit is to drive forward service improvement and the implementation of the Forum's strategy. The strategy should be further developed to address all forms of violence against women. The establishment of sub groups to address particular priorities would also assist in taking forward the practical work of the Forum.

A Recommended Action Plan has been produced building on the research findings to assist the next phase of strategy implementation and this is appended to the main report. The next phase will therefore be for the Violence Against Women Forum to agree and prioritise the action points and identify the lead stakeholders who will take these forward.

The Action agenda is wide-ranging and challenging and will have implications for personnel, staff time and resources, at a time when there are concerns about resource constraints across agencies and services. Many of the key actions proposed however can be moved forward through targeted and concerted joint work supported by a sustained strategic focus on the issues. The Violence Against

Women Forum will have a key role to play in supporting the agenda for improvement in Prevention, Protection, Provision and Participation throughout.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

1.1 Introduction

This study was commissioned by the North Ayrshire Violence Against Women Forum, which having considered the priorities in its Action Plan 2007/10, wanted to obtain a better understanding of patterns of violence against women and of how to effectively tackle domestic abuse and other aspects of violence against women in North Ayrshire.

The Forum has adopted the national definition that links domestic abuse to gender inequality. Domestic abuse is gender-based rather than caused by deprivation, alcohol or drug abuse, or mental health problems. Consistent with Scottish Government policy, the Forum's main aim is to address and prevent violence against women and children through:

Prevention – preventing, removing or diminishing the risk of violence

Protection - protecting women from victimisation, repeat victimisation or harassment by perpetrators, and protect children and young people affected

Provision – providing adequate services to deal with the consequences of violence against women and children to help them rebuild their lives.

Further information on Scottish Government priorities and key publications and developments to address and prevent violence against women and children is given at Appendix A1.

1.1.1 Purposes and key objectives

An underpinning aim for the study was to address key Government priorities as reflected in the Single Outcome Agreement and Community Planning priorities. The research therefore focused on the question of how to improve the twin strands of provision and protection or support for women and children so that they are free from violence and abuse. This would address the Government's strategic priority "Safer and Stronger" by increasing the safety and quality of life of women and children experiencing violence.

The study is linked to the following national outcomes:

- we live our lives safe from crime, disorder, and danger
- we have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk
- our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed.

A related aim for the research was “to achieve a better understanding of the reasons for the reporting levels in North Ayrshire and how this relates to our performance in supporting women and children experiencing domestic abuse”.

The study outcomes specific to violence against women were stated as:

- An increase in the knowledge and understanding of violence against women issues resulting in positive change in attitudes and values
- Improved mechanisms for women, children and young people to engage with issues around violence against women and inform both policy development and service delivery.

1.2 Research objectives

The Forum identified 11 objectives for the study:

1. To identify the main elements, recurring themes, and contributing factors behind the number of domestic abuse incidents in North Ayrshire;
2. To identify specific improvements to services which will reduce levels of domestic abuse;
3. To assess the cost effectiveness of current activity in tackling domestic abuse;
4. To identify the performance measures currently used by organisations to monitor progress and assess the most effective ones in measuring levels of violence against women;
5. To assess the extent of prostitution and human trafficking in North Ayrshire and appropriate action to deal with these issues;
6. To examine the therapeutic support available to children and young people who have been sexually abused and means of improving services for them;
7. To assess the existing services to support women experiencing abuse who are problem alcohol or drug users and identify service improvements needed;
8. To assess the levels of and triggers for self-harm and suicidal thoughts amongst women experiencing abuse and identify support to assist in suicide prevention;
9. To identify additional support which could be offered to women reluctant to take action against their abusers through the criminal justice system;
10. To consider the specific issues for women from ethnic minority communities and non-domiciled women, e.g. from the EU accession states, women with a disability, older women, lesbian and transgender women, and women of different religious faiths; and

11. To identify and consider the key opportunities and challenges in tackling domestic abuse in North Ayrshire.

1.3 Definitions

Two key terms require definition for the purpose of this study – violence against women (VAW) and domestic abuse. The National Strategy to Address Domestic Abuse (Scottish Executive, 2000³) recognised that gender-based violence is broader than domestic abuse and provided the following definitions:

“Domestic abuse (as gender-based abuse), can be perpetrated by partners or ex-partners and can include physical abuse (assault and physical attack involving a range of behaviour), sexual abuse (acts which degrade and humiliate women and are perpetrated against their will, including rape) and mental and emotional abuse (such as threats, verbal abuse, racial abuse, withholding money and other types of controlling behaviour such as isolation from family or friends.”

At international level, the United Nations has defined **violence against women** as:

“One of the most systematic and prevalent human rights abuses in the world. It is directed against a woman because she is a woman or affects women disproportionately. Such gender-based violence against women is a form of discrimination and deeply rooted in power imbalances and structural relationships of inequality between women and men. Violence against women is a global phenomenon, occurring in every continent, country and culture. It harms families, impoverishes communities and reinforces other forms of inequality and violence throughout societies⁴.”

Additionally the National Strategy stresses that VAW impacts on women, children and young people resulting 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”.

Regarding **child sexual abuse**, Scottish child protection guidelines state that:

“Any child may be deemed to have been sexually abused when any person(s), by design or neglect, exploits the child, directly or indirectly, in any activity intended to lead to the sexual arousal or other forms of gratification of that person or any other person(s), including organised networks. This definition holds whether or not there has been genital contact and whether or not the child is said to have initiated, or consented to, the behaviour”.⁵

³ Scottish Executive (2000) *The National Strategy to Address Domestic Abuse in Scotland*, Edinburgh: Scottish Executive.

⁴ http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/IndicatorsVAW/IndicatorsVAW_EGM_report.pdf.

⁵ Scottish Office (1998) *Protecting Children: A Shared Responsibility*. Edinburgh: HMSO.

On gender-based violence generally, the Strategy points out that men predominantly carry out such violence and women are predominantly the victims. Such violence can only be understood by appreciating the ways in which societal culture, social structure and gender roles affect women's vulnerability to violence.

Violence against women therefore includes but is not limited to the following⁶:

- physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, within the general community, or in institutions, including: domestic abuse; rape; incest and child sexual abuse
- sexual harassment and intimidation at work and in the public sphere; commercial sexual exploitation, including prostitution, pornography and trafficking
- dowry-related violence
- female genital mutilation
- forced and child marriages
- honour crimes.

It is recognised both that women may use violence, such as violence against a male partner, or violence in lesbian relationships and that where child sexual abuse is concerned, both girls and boys may be abused. This does not detract from the need to recognise gender specific issues, such as that any response to violence against women should recognise that large numbers of adult women have experienced child sexual abuse.

1.4 Research methodology – how we have carried out this project

The research involves a three-stranded approach:

- first to conduct a desk-based review of the relevant statistics and literature to identify and clarify needs and the supply of services and the key patterns and influences regarding Violence Against Women in North Ayrshire in light of national patterns
- secondly to systematically consult with relevant stakeholders on a range of relevant and agreed themes and
- thirdly to conduct a participative assessment of the issues and implications for the strategy.

The study started in November 2008 with an Inception meeting that confirmed the framework for the study and discussed the range of stakeholders and required contacts as well as access to data and reports.

⁶ Lily Greenan (2004) *Violence Against Women A literature Review*. Edinburgh. The Scottish Executive.

1.4.1 Desk based research – statistical analysis and literature

The desk-based research involved statistical analysis of local trend data and reporting and a Literature Review focused on relevant policy documents, strategies and plans. Together these methods sought to identify women's needs and related issues for services, to examine how various strands of policy address key issues in the Violence Against Women Strategy, and to assist the mapping of local services that play a role in responding to the needs of women and children. The desk-based research also helped to ground the study in wider knowledge about violence against women and about good practice in service responses.

1.4.2 Structured consultation programme to seek stakeholder views

1.4.2.1 Professionals' views

Three reviews/ structured consultation sessions were held with the Violence Against Women Forum's Research Sub Group to clarify priorities for the study, to consider an Interim Report and following submission of the Draft Final Report.

Over 25 individual semi-structured qualitative interviews were conducted with professionals from Housing/ Homelessness; Social Work; Education; the Child Protection Committee; the voluntary sector, including Women's Aid; Police; Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal service; and Health services representatives. Additionally two Focus Groups were held, one focused on Homelessness-related staff/ agencies and the other on Mental Health and Addictions. All fieldwork was carried out between December 2008 and April 2009.

1.4.2.2 Service users' views

Ten to 15 interviews were intended with women who had experienced abuse. After producing and circulating an Information note for women, the research team linked with key services for help in reaching potential interviewees. Key agency assistance enabled the target to be met and 15 interviews were carried out with women service users.

Interviews were conducted in accordance with the research team's Guidelines. The approach involved in-depth, qualitative interviewing, carried out in an open consultative style. A topic guide was used flexibly and adjusted to maximise feedback, to ensure that women had the space to 'tell their story' and express their views at their own pace.

The service user interviews were facilitated by: Women's Aid (nine), North Ayrshire Council's Homelessness Service (three): North Ayrshire Council's Home Security Service (two) and the Rape Counselling and Resource Centre (East Ayrshire) (one). All but one interview was carried out face-to-face, with one being carried out by telephone.

As the service user interview programme depended on women opting into the research, we cannot claim that their views and experiences are representative of the broader population of North Ayrshire women experiencing gender-based violence. It should also be noted that given the small numbers involved, most information from

the interview programme is presented qualitatively as numbers would not be statistically robust.

It was clear that in many cases, regardless of the service which facilitated the interview, women had used a number of different services in relation to the gender-based violence they had experienced. For example, some had presented as homeless and been in temporary accommodation provided by North Ayrshire Council before being accommodated by Women's Aid. In other instances women had been in accommodation provided by Women's Aid before being accommodated by the Council on a temporary basis. Service user interviewees facilitated by Women's Aid had used a variety of other services including: North Ayrshire Council's Home Security Service; North Ayrshire Council's Housing and Homelessness Service; Victim Support; East Ayrshire Rape Counselling and Resource Centre.

All but one of the interviewees had experienced violence from a partner or ex-partner with some describing how they had experienced years of abuse, sometimes leaving for short periods before returning. All those interviewed had left their abusive partner at the time of the interview. Two interviewees said that after the second time they had been hit by their partners, they left, and one commented, "*I saw my own mother live like that and it had an effect on me...I didn't want my daughter to go through the same*". All but one interviewee had either dependents or adult children.

Some women described how they had had a number of abusive partners over the years, while some also said they had been raped, and this included both by partners and strangers. A few of the interviewees also referred to "*things that had happened to them when they were young*" suggesting that they had also been abused as children. None of the women interviewed said that they had been involved in prostitution or trafficking.

Most of the women interviewed were local to North Ayrshire although a few had moved to North Ayrshire from the other Ayrshire Local Authorities, for reasons such as to be near college, or family. One woman had transferred from a refuge in another part of Scotland to escape harassment from her former partner.

Appendix A8 gives further information on the profile of women interviewed in relation to age, household composition, type of accommodation occupied at the time of the interview, ethnicity and income source.

1.5 What follows in this report

Chapter Two summarises key policy themes in regard to violence against women in North Ayrshire and its implications for services

Chapter Three focuses on data and data sources that are relevant to understanding the problem and tackling it

Chapter Four addresses issues for Prevention and how this is being addressed

Chapter Five focuses on aspects of Protection

Chapter Six reviews the range of services and responses to the varying and complex needs of women and children affected by abuse

Chapter Seven focuses on the agenda for improvement

Contextual and supplementary information is provided in the Appendices.

In the course of the research, we came across many examples of services providing effective assistance to women. Any lack of coverage of these should be seen to stem from the focus of the study, which is to improve services further. This should not suggest that North Ayrshire organisations are not serving women and children well. There was simply no room to reflect all the examples of good practice we encountered.

CHAPTER TWO

POLICY ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN NORTH AYRSHIRE

2.1 Introduction

To set the local context, this Chapter considers the key strategy documents and plans that seek to address the needs of women and children who have experienced abuse in North Ayrshire and the main actions taken to implement strategies and action plans. Appendices provide further details in relation to e.g. membership of key forums and strategic linkages between different planning strands, including those of partnership agencies.

As previously noted, the national strategies and policy priorities informing the development of work to address violence against women in North Ayrshire and other Scottish local authorities are summarised at Appendix A1. An overview is included here.

2.2 National policy developments

Over the course of the last 30 or so years, feminist activists have helped transform policy makers' attitudes to violence against women with the result that there have been many policy initiatives in response to violence against women and children.

Since 1997, there have been at least three main themes to the many policy initiatives which have impacted on violence against women.

The first theme has been the changing of the policy focus on domestic abuse to a wider consideration of violence against women and children. Domestic abuse encompasses patterns of behaviour that are physically violent, as well as activity which is controlling or otherwise emotionally abusive. It thus includes, but is not limited to, criminal behaviour. The focus on domestic abuse was widened (in 2003) to include all forms of gender-based violence (see below for further discussion of various forms of gender-based violence).

There has also been a further broadening of focus to identify and tackle the harm caused to children and young people by childhood sexual abuse and domestic abuse.

Secondly, policy makers have promoted a multi-agency response, at national and local level. The multi-agency response has been informed by, but is not a replica of what is known as the Duluth model, which was piloted as a co-ordinated community response to domestic violence in Duluth, Minnesota.

The multi-agency response in Scotland was initially directed solely at domestic abuse. The National Strategy on Domestic Abuse, 2000⁷ placed a requirement on local authorities to establish local partnerships to tackle domestic abuse. Partners in most local groups have established protocols and procedures to deal with domestic abuse. The broadening of partnerships' role to address violence against women, including the focus on harm to children and young people, has required an adjustment of focus.

The broadening of the agenda requires an appreciation that not all partners will approach some of the broader issues from the same perspective. For example, concerns around prostitution and services for women involved in prostitution will be of active concern to partners in the criminal justice system only when criminal activity is involved.

The third theme of policy interventions has been to promote and refine an increased criminal justice response to domestic abuse. In the recent past, women who were victims of domestic abuse had limited access to legal remedies to protect them from abuse and/or violence. Historically, the criminal justice system was tolerant of levels of violence in intimate relationships that were prosecuted when they occurred in the public sphere between non-associated adults.

As women's groups continued to lobby for more effective responses to domestic abuse the criminal justice system formulated a more aggressive response to perpetrators. First, in the wake of a Report on the "Police Response to Domestic Violence"⁸, a standard definition of a domestic abuse incident was agreed for use across all forces and standard recording practices were put in place. Statistics on domestic abuse incidents attended by the Police have been published since 2000. Secondly the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland (ACPOS) and the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) agreed a protocol to guide interventions. In effect it put in place:

- a mandatory arrest system in domestic abuse incidents where there is a sufficiency of evidence that an offence has been committed
- a presumption against no-drop prosecution, so that the default position is that prosecutions proceed, whether the victim wants to proceed or not
- a presumption that bail will be refused or that special bail conditions will apply in all domestic abuse cases
- all prosecutions involving violence will proceed in the Sheriff Court or High Court as appropriate. There will be no prosecution of crimes associated with domestic abuse in the District Courts.

A further refinement to the criminal justice response and building on the multi-agency work has been the development of Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC). MARACs have been introduced in certain areas of Britain to share information and manage high risk domestic abuse cases. A MARAC operates in

⁷ Scottish Executive (2000) *The National Strategy to Address Domestic Abuse in Scotland*, Edinburgh: Scottish Executive

⁸ The Scottish Office, *Hitting Home - A Report on the Police Response to Domestic Violence 1997*

certain divisions in Strathclyde Police, in Glasgow and North Lanarkshire. A MARAC is being introduced within the South West area in the Dumfries and Galloway Police area.

The key part of MARAC is a joint risk assessment exercise and information sharing and joint responsibility for managing the risk to victims.

Specialist responses in the prosecution and disposal of domestic abuse cases in Scottish Courts have also been trialled.

A specialist domestic abuse court was set up in Glasgow in 2004, initially on a pilot basis and covering only a single Police division, in response to recognised difficulties in dealing with domestic abuse through the traditional courts.

Key features included specialist sheriffs and the ability to deal with offenders more quickly. A specialist service to support women who have experienced domestic abuse and their children was also established to work jointly with the Court – ASSIST.

An evaluation of the pilot concluded that key elements of specialist domestic abuse courts should include:

- Commitment and support from the highest level and throughout organisations, with a shared understanding of domestic abuse, based upon a “zero tolerance” approach
- Effective multi-agency working
- Identification and adoption of appropriate processes, protocols, standards, guidance and procedures
- Specially trained and / or dedicated criminal justice staff with specific expertise in domestic abuse, including Procurator Fiscals, Sheriffs and Scottish Court service staff
- An appropriate response by all of these organisations, based upon the shared understanding, and the use of a robust and consistent approach
- The provision of good evidence and information to the PF and the court
- Fast-tracking of cases
- A victim-centred approach, with an emphasis upon their safety, supported by appropriate processes, such as risk assessment and safety planning, information, clear links to civil courts and the use of appropriate disposals
- The provision of independent support to victims and their children at all stages by an organisation with expertise in domestic abuse
- Ongoing development, information collection and review, reflecting good practice and equality.⁹

⁹ Scottish Executive (2007) *Evaluation of the Pilot Domestic Abuse Pilot*. Edinburgh. Scottish Executive.

Following the report of the Glasgow Domestic Abuse Court Feasibility Study Group to the Scottish Government in April 2008¹⁰, the Court was expanded in November 2008 to cover the “A” division while in February 2009 courts in the City’s remaining division (“B”) were “clustered”. ASSIST was enabled to deal with referrals from all over Glasgow.

The Scottish Government has produced a Toolkit to Aid the Development of Specialist Approaches to Cases of Domestic Abuse¹¹. This is to be used in each Sheriffdom to identify local responses to incorporate some of the lessons of the pilot Domestic Abuse court.

These then are some of the key themes, which have influenced and continue to influence the local response to domestic abuse.

2.3 North Ayrshire Violence against Women Strategy and Action Plan 2007/11

The key strategy addressing violence against women in North Ayrshire is the North Ayrshire Violence against Women Forum Strategy and Action Plan 2007/11. This has been developed by the North Ayrshire Violence Against Women Forum (formerly the Domestic Abuse Forum, established in 2000). The Forum meets quarterly and has multi-agency representation. Membership of the Forum is shown at Appendix A11. The Forum also has short life sub groups on specific issues e.g. the Home Security Project.

The Forum has adopted the definition of violence against women produced by the National Group to Address Violence Against Women and the key principles contained in the associated strategic framework published by the Scottish Executive (see Chapter One for the definition).

The Strategy states that:

“Violence against women can happen regardless of age, background, race, religion, sexuality or ability. Gender-based violence arises from gender inequality, and an abuse of male power and privilege. It takes many forms, which result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women. These can include threatened actions, coercion, or depriving women of their freedom.”

The range of violence against women can include:

- physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, within the general community, or in institutions, including domestic abuse, rape, incest and child sexual abuse;

¹⁰ The Scottish Government (2008) *Glasgow Domestic Abuse Court Feasibility Study Group*. Edinburgh. The Scottish Government.

¹¹ The Scottish Government (2008) *Toolkit to Aid the Development of Specialist Approaches to Cases of Domestic Abuse*. Edinburgh. The Scottish Government

- sexual harassment and intimidation at work and in the public sphere; commercial sexual exploitation, including prostitution, pornography and trafficking;
- dowry-related violence, female genital mutilation, forced and child marriages and honour crimes.

Violence against women has a significant impact on children and young people, including those who are directly or indirectly harmed by the abuse of their mother. There are also strong links to such violence and the emotional, physical and sexual abuse of children.

2.3.1 Key principles

In addressing violence against women, the North Ayrshire VAW Strategy adopts the following principles:

- Violence against women is a violation of human rights
- Equality between women and men is an important step in eliminating violence against women
- Violence against women takes many forms, and any work to address violence against women should take account of the links between different forms of violence against women, and the fact that women may experience more than one form of violence over the course of their lives
- Perpetrators must be held accountable for their acts of violence, and appropriate interventions must take place to ensure they assume responsibility for their actions, while keeping women and children safe
- Prevention is the long-term solution to ending violence against women. The elimination of violence against women requires change in societal attitudes and values concerning gender roles and all forms of violence
- The socialisation of girls and boys from an early age must emphasize equality and respect
- Any action to address violence against women must be based on respect for persons and their differences
- Solutions are best achieved through partnerships amongst individuals, groups and governments.

The aims of The North Ayrshire Strategy are consistent with the three Ps of: **Prevention; Protection** and **Provision** as prioritised by the national strategic framework. The Action Plan, which accompanies the Strategy is thus structured around the three Ps. A copy of the Action Plan is included at Appendix A4 to this report.

2.4 Linkages with other partnerships and policies/plans

The Forum reports through the Safer North Ayrshire Partnership to the Community Planning Partnership (CPP). Other partnerships with which the Forum has strong strategic links are shown in Appendix A7.

In addition to the linkages that the Forum has with other partnerships, there are links with the issues involved in tackling violence against women in a number of strategic plans, including those of Partnership agencies. These include:

- Single Outcome Agreement 2009/12
- Homelessness Strategy 2007/10
- Local Health Plan 2004/07
- Integrated Children's Services Plan 2005/08
- Ayrshire Domestic Abuse Training Consortium Training Plan 2007/08
- Child Protection Annual Report and Business Plan 2007/08
- Joint Health Improvement Plan 2007/10
- Gender Equality Scheme 2007/10
- Community Safety Problem-Solving Plan 2005/08
- Violence Reduction Strategy
- North Ayrshire Choose Life Plan, 2003
- South West of Scotland Community Justice Authority Area Plan.

A table summarising the linkages is included at Appendix A7. It is important to note at this point that the policies and plans which appear to have the greatest linkages with violence against women are those related to child protection. This is consistent with the known impact of violence against women on children who either experience and/or witness violence and the Scottish Government's commitment to children and young people affected by domestic abuse.

For example, the North Ayrshire Vulnerable Children and Young People's Guidance states that:

In North Ayrshire the identified list of vulnerable children and young people to which this guidance applies, includes:

- children who are homeless and living in temporary accommodation or at risk of sleeping rough
- children and young people affected by substance misuse
- children & young people living with substance misuse

- children and young people who may be vulnerable as a result of disability, mental ill health or additional support needs
- young carers and children and young people affected by mental ill health in parents
- children and young people under the age of 18 and subject to a Statutory Supervision Requirement – Children (Scotland) Act 1995 and / or looked after or looked after and accommodated by the local authority
- children and young people who may be vulnerable as a result of their ethnic, cultural or minority group
- young people who are sexually active
- children dealing with issues surrounding their sexuality
- children and young people with violent, sexually harmful or abusive behaviour, including offending
- children and young people who runaway, go missing from home or from residential or foster care
- children and young people at risk of being exposed to prostitution or sexual exploitation of any kind
- children and young people affected by domestic abuse
- children and young people on the Child Protection Register
- children and young people who are trafficked in the UK

2.5 Training

The three Ayrshire Councils (East, North and South) have jointly formed a training consortium to implement the Domestic Abuse National Training Strategy (Scottish Executive, 2004). Details of the North Ayrshire training strategy (originally for 2007/08 but carried forward into 2008/09) are shown at Appendix A7, which shows linkages between the VAW Strategy and other local policies and plans.

Women's Aid has been a key provider of training and educational initiatives primarily in regard to domestic abuse and its impacts on women and their children. This training was referred to extensively by interviewees, many of whom rated the training highly.

Other relevant training includes that carried out by the North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee and the development of protocols, for example, the pan-Ayrshire Framework for screening and responding to referrals from the Police where a child is in a household where there has been a domestic abuse incident (non-offence based police referrals).

ASIST Training (Applied suicide intervention skills training) has been delivered through the North Ayrshire Choose Life Partnership to Women's Aid staff, to help staff feel more confident in responding to people with suicidal thoughts.

2.6 The Single Outcome Agreement

The Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) is part of the new Concordat between the Scottish Government and local authorities that gives local authorities greater freedom to address their own priorities and allocate resources at local level. It is based on a performance framework which has an agreed set of national priorities underpinned with local indicators and priorities.

An analysis by Women's Aid in 2008 of all local authority SOAs on whether and how they addressed domestic abuse found that, of 32 local authorities, 12 SOAs had no reference to domestic abuse or violence against women. In terms of setting local targets to measure progress, approximately half the local authorities using the indicator of the number of domestic abuse incidents per 100,000 population sought to increase the number of reported indicators, while the other half sought to reduce it.¹²

North Ayrshire Council set its targets in 2008 to increase reporting rates until confidence in reporting levels is reached. Since then, the Community Planning Partnership's draft SOA for 2009/12 has a target to reduce the levels of reporting to the Police.

Such contradiction across local authorities and partnerships highlights the problems inherent in using domestic abuse incidents attended by the Police as a means of either measuring domestic abuse or the effectiveness of service responses. This is especially so given the known under-reporting. This is further considered in Chapter Three.

Only a few local authorities included additional local indicators and targets in relation to domestic abuse or violence against women in their SOA. One such example was West Lothian Council, which included disposals as a local indicator.

"Percentage of offenders charged with domestic abuse who are repeat offenders, the percentage of domestic abuse cases prosecuted and the percentage of convictions for domestic abuse" (Source, Women's Aid Analysis).

Fife Council included;

"Number of requests for support (excluding Police) in relation to domestic abuse and sexual violence".

Such a performance monitoring indicator would necessitate common information being held across all services responding to gender-based violence and measures taken to eliminate double counting.

¹² Scottish Women's Aid (2008): *Analysis of local authority single outcome agreements*. Edinburgh

2.7 Achievements to date

The VAW Strategy 2007/11 notes a number of achievements that have followed from the initial establishment of the Domestic Abuse Multi-Agency Forum in 2000. These include:

- Development and publication of Healthy Relationship training materials for use in undertaking preventative work in primary schools.
- Production of a Healthy Relationships pack for teenagers for use by community workers, school guidance teachers and others.
- Development of an extensive training programme on domestic abuse for all public sector employees and for the voluntary sector.
- Establishment of the Moving On counselling service for adult survivors of sexual abuse, including child sexual abuse (this service has now ceased).
- Use of drama in schools and in the community to highlight issues associated with violence against women.
- Development of a Children's Outreach Support Service, for children and young people living outwith refuge accommodation, the first of its kind in Scotland.
- Promotion of an awareness raising campaign on the Isle of Arran supplemented with regular training events to improve support for women and children experiencing violence on the island.
- Establishment of a Drugs Support Project to support women who have experienced domestic abuse and are misusing drugs or alcohol, to sustain them in refuge, and in their new tenancies when moving on.
- Development of a Home Security project to enable women experiencing abuse to remain safely in their own homes.
- Promotion of a publicity campaign to challenge men's attitudes about domestic abuse through the use of beer mats and posters in local pubs and restaurants, complemented by bus adverts and by leaflets with helpline numbers.
- Provision of additional refuge places, including scatter flats and barrier free refuge accommodation for women with a disability.
- A training needs analysis and production of an annual domestic abuse training plan.

Since the publication of the Strategy services and initiatives that have been developed include;

- Maternity services monitoring whether a question is asked on domestic abuse and the response given.
- The Child Protection Committee has developed a protocol for non-offence referrals, which ensures that information is passed to those agencies working closest to the child, in line with Getting It Right for Every Child principles and involving Health, Police and Social Services.

- NHS Ayrshire and Arran have carried out a review of support for survivors of rape and childhood sexual abuse.

2.7.1 Funding

North Ayrshire Women's Aid is the main service providing support for women experiencing domestic abuse in North Ayrshire. It has received North Ayrshire Council (e.g. Addictions and Supporting People) and Central Government monies, through various funding streams to implement the National Strategy to address domestic abuse including for children's services.

2.8 Key points

This chapter highlights that a range of national and local policies and plans have significance for North Ayrshire Violence Against Women Forum's future strategy. This reflects both the complexity of the planning context and the diversity of the planning fora that have a clear stake in improving the response to violence against women and children who are affected.

The review of planning documentation also evidences that some considerable progress has been made through joint working since the initial formation of the Domestic Abuse Multi-Agency Forum in 2000.

CHAPTER THREE

DATA COLLECTION

3.1 Introduction

Reliable information that informs the Violence against Women (VAW) Forum about how well partners are responding to national and local policy initiatives and local demand should enable the Forum to make informed decisions about what is working well locally and what needs to change.

The principle data sources on VAW, which are collected, matched and processed nationally on an annual basis, for all areas in Scotland, are crime statistics. Crime statistics are produced annually on domestic abuse incidents and separately on all crime statistics.

Tracking local responses to domestic abuse by monitoring local reporting rates of domestic abuse to the Police is one means of assessing the local response to domestic abuse, but in itself this presents an incomplete picture.

- Not all women dealing with domestic abuse rely on the Police service, preferring instead to leave abusive relationships, or otherwise resolve their situation without the involvement of the criminal justice system.
- The domestic abuse data, which is available nationally, tracks the number of incidents; it does not record whether intervention is successful by any measure.
- It is not matched by data from other parts of the criminal justice system, which would indicate prosecution rates and disposals in the local court.

Other partner organisations collect data which records their involvement in domestic abuse, but it is generally not published or otherwise made available in ways which allow for comparison across different local authorities. For example, each local authority collects data on the number of homeless applications made each year, which record that the main reason for homelessness is leaving a violent or abusive relationship. That data is submitted to the Scottish Government but it is not published in a way which allows for local comparison.

Despite their lack of comprehensiveness, it is the published crime statistics and data provided by the Police representatives on the VAW Forum that have become a focus for VAW fora. In this chapter, we consider the published domestic abuse data, crime statistics and further data from Strathclyde Police to consider the main elements, recurring themes, and contributing factors behind the number of reported domestic abuse incidents in North Ayrshire.

In addition, we look at other published statistics on other VAW crimes and what they tell us about VAW in North Ayrshire. We also consider partners' data collection and its presentation, and some of the limitations of current data collection.

3.2 Domestic abuse data

3.2.1 Crime statistics

There is no specific offence of 'domestic abuse'. The perpetrators in domestic abuse reports might be convicted of offences such as breach of the peace, assault, sexual offences, attempted murder or murder. They may not be guilty of any criminal offence at all; some forms of emotional abuse, for example, will not constitute criminal activity. So Police data recording of domestic abuse incidents does not provide a comprehensive picture of domestic abuse. In the ACPOS and COPFS protocol domestic abuse is defined as,

“Any form of physical, sexual or mental and emotional abuse which might amount to criminal conduct and which takes place within the context of a close relationship. The relationship will be between partners (married, cohabiting or otherwise) or ex-partners. The abuse can be committed in the home or elsewhere.

While available evidence suggests that the most prevalent instances of domestic abuse are male violence towards women, this definition acknowledges and includes female violence towards men and violence between partners or ex-partners in close, same-sex relationships.”

A number of points are worthy of note here:

- Domestic abuse incidents are logged by the Police if they might amount to criminal conduct. Thus Police data is not a source of information about, or a service response to, those dealing with the impact of abuse which falls short of criminal activity.
- The definition of domestic abuse makes no distinction between a criminal act as part of a pattern of coercion, intimidation and violence, and either an isolated incident between partners, or indeed a criminal act by a woman intended to stop violence against her.
- Domestic abuse incidents also include any breach of bail conditions imposed in the prosecution of a previous domestic abuse incident. Therefore, to some extent, a continuing increase in prosecutions will result in an increase in the number of bail conditions, a proportion of which will be breached.
- There continues to be underreporting of criminal activity which is domestic abuse involving a pattern of coercion, intimidation and violence as is clear from our service user interviews. One woman we interviewed who did not report such abuse, said that during the ten years or so she spent with her first partner, violence was an issue for much of the relationship, but:

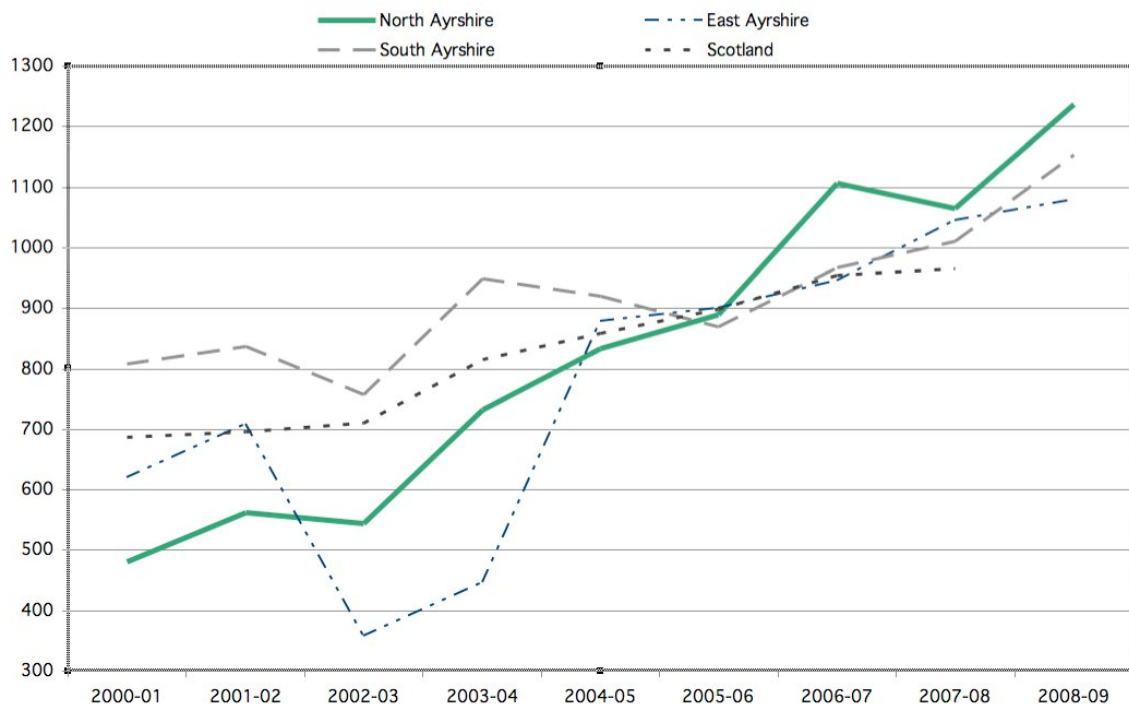
“I thought that’s just the way it is”.

Therefore, data collected by the Police, although useful, does not present a complete picture of the incidence of domestic abuse in North Ayrshire. The easy availability of this data enables comparison across time-periods and local authority areas. This has resulted in a focus on police data, sometimes to the exclusion of, or at least the marginalisation of, information from other services.

Nonetheless, the data does show an upward trend in the number of reports throughout U Division¹³, with the highest rate and the steepest increase in North Ayrshire.

Data at national level has not yet been published for 2008-09, but as at the year 2007-08, North Ayrshire did have a higher rate per 100,000 population than the prevailing Scottish rate. In 2007/08, the Scottish rate is 965 incidents per 100,000; in North Ayrshire the rate is 1065 incidents per 100,000 population. Across Strathclyde Police area, the rate of reports per 100,000 population has steadily increased across all 11 local authority areas policed by Strathclyde Police. See Table A3.4 in Appendix A3. The chart below plots the rate per 100,000 in each of the Ayrshire authorities and the Scottish rate.¹⁴

Chart 1 Rate of Domestic Abuse Incidents per 100,000 of population



¹³ Strathclyde Police U Division polices Ayrshire. There are three sub- divisions within that; each subdivision polices one of the Ayrshire local authorities. UA division has responsibility for policing North Ayrshire.

¹⁴ The data for 2008-09 has been obtained from Strathclyde Police and there is, as yet, no comparator data for Scotland.

In 2008/09, there were 1689 incidents, 922 victims, 1122 incidents with children and 1357 children in households where there had been an incident. There has been an increase in the number of incidents in the last year of over 200 (from 1455 in 2007/08 to 1689 in 2008/09).

An increased reporting rate can be viewed as an indicator of success: namely of some change in women's perception of the police towards an expectation that the police can and will intervene sensitively and successfully in domestic abuse incidents. Few of those working with violence against women would interpret the steady increase in reporting since 2000 as indicative of a parallel rise in incidence; rather this is seen to indicate an increase in reporting to the police as the first response service as well as more rigorous recording by police.

Looking at the period 2006 -2008 in more detail, the following is clear:

- There has been an increase in the number and percentage of young women who are, in the terminology of criminal statistics, the victim in domestic abuse incidents. In the calendar year 2005/6, 6.7% (70) of domestic abuse incidents involved a female victims aged under 20. This had risen to 11% (135) in 2007/08. See Chart A3.1 in Appendix A3.
- There has been a steady increase in the number and percentage of incidents which involve a repeat victim. The majority of incidents in each year involve a repeat victim – rising from 52% in 2006-07 to 58% in 2007/08. A victim is recorded as a repeat victim regardless of when the previous incident took place. A repeat incident does not necessarily denote a greater or increasing risk as compared to the risk in a first time report.
- When the data on repeat victims is disaggregated to the gender of the victim, then the increase, as a percentage, is more marked in the reporting of incidents where a male victim is recorded. A greater proportion of female victims are repeat victims as compared to male victims; however, the number of repeat female victims is greater. See Table A3.1 and Table A3.2 in Appendix A3.
- The percentage of repeat accused shows a similar pattern. Incidents involving a repeat accused have increased in each year from 52% in 2005 to 57% in 2008. The percentage of female repeat accused is increasing at a greater rate compared to repeat male accused. A greater percentage of male repeat accused have been reported more than 5 times. See Table A3.3 in Appendix 3, for the disaggregated data.
- Men are the victims in domestic abuse incidents in between 12-14% of cases. Some of these may be the consequence of mandatory arrest policies. A number of incidents result in both parties being arrested and noted as both accused and victims in the same incident. This is not quantified in the official data. One source working in the Domestic Abuse Court in Glasgow indicated that the proportion of women appearing as the accused in that Court is currently around 15% of all accused.
- Not all domestic abuse incidents result in the recording of a crime. A crime will be recorded where the circumstances amount to a crime or offence as defined by Scots Law, and there is no credible evidence to the contrary¹⁵. In Scotland for

¹⁵ *Scottish Crime Recording Standard*, ACPOS 2007

the year 2006/07, a crime was recorded in 50% of all domestic abuse incidents. In that same year in UA Division (North Ayrshire), a crime was recorded in 52% of incidents. This is a slight increase on the preceding two years.

- The types of crime likely to be recorded include Breach of the Peace, Petty Assault, Serious Assault, Vandalism and other statutory offences. The latter category includes all breaches of special bail conditions attached in the wake of previous domestic incident. More than one crime can be recorded in one incident. The percentage of all incidents which result in a crime of petty assault or serious violence, is recorded in around 28% of all incidents. This has remained steady over the three years for which we have detailed data. The only category to show an increase is in the statutory offence category which has risen slightly from six to nine percent of all incidents in three years. See Table A3.6 in Appendix A3 for the number of crimes recorded.

Strathclyde Police provided further detailed data for a 16 week period from January to April 2009 from locally collected data:

- Fifty-seven per cent of the incidents (n=434) had resulted in a crime report. This rises to a 63% crime rate for all cases where alcohol is a factor.
- Forty- nine per cent involved a repeat victim.
- Thirty-two per cent of incidents are reported by a third party and those are more likely to result in a crime report.
- In cases which were reported by a third party – 58% involved a repeat victim. This might indicate that a repeat victim incident relates, in part, to breach of bail conditions. The repeat victim rate in incidents reported by the victim is 44%.
- Fifty per cent of incidents involved alcohol (n=381; whether or not alcohol was a factor was not recorded in all cases); when looking at those incidents reported by a third party – alcohol was a factor in 56% of cases; in cases where the victim is noted as male – alcohol is factor in 52% of cases. In cases where the victim is female, alcohol was a factor in 49%.
- The standard SPECCS¹⁶ risk assessment identified additional risk in 54 cases (12%). In 19 of those cases, there was no crime. Of those 19 cases, 18 were repeat victims.

From this snapshot of 16 weeks we can state:

- that an increase in reporting is not only related to victims having higher confidence in police - 32% are reported by third parties, which includes the police, friends, neighbours, other services and may include people who become the accused in a counter claim
- that there is a correlation between alcohol and domestic abuse incidents which come to the attention of the police
- that the police response does not provide a remedy to all who request it - not all reports result in a crime report or a prosecution. Even in cases where there is an identified additional risk, the criminal justice system and the police as the first response within that, cannot effectively intervene in all cases.

¹⁶ SPECCS is a risk assessment tool used by Strathclyde Police. It is not a matrix. A copy of the SPECCS is attached at Appendix A5

On the whole those interviewed did not identify any particular local factors, which would explain the higher reporting rate in North Ayrshire; as one professional interviewee remarked:

“I can’t think that the population in North Ayrshire are more predisposed; perhaps it is due to more proactive work thus women are more likely to come forward and that the true rate is not dissimilar to comparative areas.”

Some suggested reasons from consultees for the higher recorded levels of domestic abuse include:

- successful publicity campaigns around domestic abuse have raised awareness of domestic abuse and of the police response to domestic abuse, so that expectations are raised that complaints will be dealt with
- an improved and consistent response by the police when women do make contact; *“women are getting the message that something will happen if they call the police”*
- the use of bail conditions by the courts to keep the perpetrator away has made reporting to the police a more useful option
- awareness raising and training of staff in a range of services so they are more aware of domestic abuse, its effects and available services and able to signpost appropriately
- home security has made a difference for women by building confidence, knowing there are people there to deal with problems if they arise.

All but the last two factors are national factors.

An underlying local factor, which may influence the high reporting rates of domestic abuse incidents, could be the area’s generally higher rate of recorded violent crimes than for Scotland or the other Ayrshire Districts policed by U division. See Table below.

Table 3.1 Number of crimes recorded by police per 10,000 population and by council area 2007/2008 ¹⁷

Area	Non-sexual crimes of violence
North Ayrshire	30
East Ayrshire	28
South Ayrshire	21
Scotland	25

¹⁷ Scottish Government: *Recorded Crime in Scotland, 2007/08*,

Other factors identified by professional interviewees were that:

- Some identified a high level of tolerance of violence in relationships such that domestic abuse was viewed as normal.
- Some saw a relationship between levels of deprivation and reporting. North Ayrshire does have high levels of concentrated deprivation.
- North Ayrshire has 33 data zones in the 15% most deprived data zones in Scotland.
 - Of the 33 data zones in the 15% most deprived in Scotland, nine are in the 0-5% most deprived, 14 are in the 5-10% most deprived and 10 are in the 10-15% most deprived.¹⁸
 - Ten wards with the highest average number of incidents over the period 2006-08 all have data zones in the top 15% most deprived data zones in Scotland. Table A3.5 in Appendix A3 sets out the average number of incidents per annum over the three years from 2006 to 2008.
- There is certainly a correlation between police involvement in domestic abuse incidents and high levels of deprivation, but that does not translate into a causal link between deprivation and domestic abuse. Other factors, which can influence reporting to the police, might include victim's recourse to other resources and /or less willingness to involve police.

3.2.2 Other data

3.2.2.1 North Ayrshire Council homelessness data

North Ayrshire Council has responsibilities to people who present as homeless. One of the grounds on which an applicant is accepted as homeless is if they are unable to occupy their home if,

“...it is probable that occupation of it will lead to violence from some other person residing in it or threats of violence from some other person residing in it and likely to carry out the threat”¹⁹.

In each application, the main reason for homelessness is recorded and so we can look at the data to identify patterns of applications and the service response. Like the police data it does not record the extent of domestic abuse, but rather the homeless service response.

- Not all domestic abuse leads to the break-up of a relationship and thus the need for alternative accommodation.
- Even where domestic abuse is the cause of homelessness, it may not be recorded as the main reason; someone may stay with family and friends immediately on leaving a relationship and only apply for housing later. In these circumstances the domestic abuse reason may not be recorded.

¹⁸ North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership update for November 2006 (No. 2006/08)

¹⁹ Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, section 24(3) as amended

- Although NAC is the main source of emergency accommodation, not everyone will use that service, preferring instead to access accommodation themselves, especially if they have other resources available to them.

Data on homeless applications is collected nationally, collated, and published on an annual basis (HL1 data). The national data has not been disaggregated to local level each year, so unlike the police data, the data cannot be analysed to show local differences. The latest data release did include this data at local level and in that year North Ayrshire had a higher percentage of applications based on leaving a violent or abusive partner than the Scottish average. The percentage of homeless applications based on a violent or abusive dispute within the household, per local authority is identified in Table A3.7 in Appendix A3. Table 3.2 presents the local data compared to national data.

Table 3.2 Number and percentage of applications from homeless people as a consequence of a violent or abusive dispute with partner, Scotland and North Ayrshire

	SCOTLAND		NORTH AYRSHIRE ²⁰	
	No of applications: dispute with partner violent or abusive	As a % of all homeless applications	No of applications: dispute with partner violent or abusive	As a % of all homeless applications
2005/06	5,241	9%	156	9%
2006/07	6,888	12%	137	8.4%
2007/08	5,908	10%	185	12.8%
2008/09	n/a	n/a	217	n/a

The greatest demand (over the time period) for housing on this ground comes from Irvine, Ardrossan, Kilbirnie, Kilwinning and Stevenson which somewhat mirrors the pattern of demand identified in the police statistics.

Table 3.3 Number of applications from homeless people (male and female) as a consequence of a violent or abusive dispute with partner, per Ward 21

Housing Area	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Ardrossan	28	27	40	21
Beith	5	4	4	4
Dalry	3	3	4	10
Irvine	49	45	58	100
Kilbirnie	23	15	24	15
Kilwinning	14	18	13	21
Largs	7	1	4	11
Saltcoats	18	16	21	18
Stevenston	9	8	17	17
Grand Total	156	137	185	217

²⁰ From North Ayrshire Council

²¹ The data was supplied by North Ayrshire Council. It was not possible to explain changes in numbers of applicants by area from the data supplied

The following points can be made from the HL1 data:

- The majority of applications are from women, and although the number of women has increased from 135 in 2005/06 to 165 in 2008/09, the number of applications from men is increasing at a higher rate (from 21 to 52).
- The increase in applications from women is almost entirely accounted for by an increase in applications from young women aged between (18-24). See below Table 3.4. Although there is an increase in applications from young men, this does not account for the whole increase.
- Women’s Aid accommodation has been increasingly used as a temporary accommodation option for women approaching the local authority (from 10 in 2005/06 to 32 in 2008/09).
- A local authority tenancy is the outcome in around 43%-50% of the applications.
- The number of repeat applications has increased over the period – from 26 repeat applications in 2005/06 to 55 repeat applications in 2008/09. The majority are by female applicants (22 in 2005/06 and 41 in 2008/09).

Table 3.4 Number of applications from young women (aged 18-24) experiencing violence, 2005-2009

Age of applicants	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Female 16-17	3	1	13	15
Female 18-24	29	28	38	43
All Female applicants	135	125	154	164

It is not known whether there has been an increase in short-term demand on homelessness services, which can be ascribed to bail conditions that exclude men from the matrimonial home.

3.2.3 Women’s Aid data

North Ayrshire Women’s Aid collect data on the number of contacts they have with service users. Contact can encompass telephone calls, one-to-one meetings and meetings in refuge. A single service user can have any number of contacts.

The number of contacts has decreased from the highpoint of 2007/08. This is related to a cut in funding which restricted their out-of-hours service to women already in refuge.

Over that same period, the number of women accommodated has also decreased. This coincides with a rise in the number of women who could not be accommodated due to lack of space in the refuge. Women’s Aid highlighted a number of possible reasons for this, such as that women stay longer in refuge because it is taking longer for people to be rehoused (in certain areas), and that women with increasingly complex needs are now being accommodated in refuge. Both reasons could result in a lower turnover of women staying in refuge accommodation.

Table 3.5 Women's Aid data

North Ayrshire Women's Aid	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Total Number of contacts	13028	14550	9842
Number of requests for refuge	198	155	171
Number of requests for info/support	12830	14394	9676
Women admitted to own refuge	147	114	107
Children admitted to own refuge	130	105	82
Women admitted to other Women's Aid refuge		7	3
Children admitted to other Women's Aid refuge		9	0
Women turned away due to lack of space	12	19	40
Children turned away due to lack of space	35	37	96
Women requesting refuge / refuge inappropriate	20	15	21
Children with women requesting refuge/refuge inappropriate	15	13	11

3.2.4 North Ayrshire Council Child Protection Committee Data

The Child Protection Committee reports on data collected on all child protection referrals where domestic abuse is an underlying or additional factor. Domestic abuse is the most frequently occurring additional factor in referrals.

Table 3.6 Number of adults and children affected by domestic abuse in child protection referrals²²

	2006/07		2007/08	
	Adult	Child	Adult	Child
Number	62	45	35	36

3.3 Sexual Offences data

3.3.1 Crime statistics

Other criminal statistical datasets are in the public domain and available for the VAW Forum to draw on in shaping service responses to violence against women. The reporting rate for sexual offences will not reflect the actual prevalence rate for sexual offences. However, the VAW Forum can usefully review data on the reporting of sexual offences to gauge levels of confidence in the local criminal justice system that responds to sexual offences. Data for other services, such as Victim Support is

²² North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee *Annual Report 2007/08*

useful in assessing demand for the services required to deal with the impact of sexual offences.

Table 3.7 Number of crimes recorded by police per 10,000 by council area 2007/08

	Crimes of indecency
North Ayrshire	13
East Ayrshire	8
South Ayrshire	9
Scotland	13

Looking at the actual crimes of indecency reported over the period 2005-06 to 2007-08, the number of crimes of indecency reported has fallen with a reduction in rape, assault with intent to rape, and lewd and libidinous practices. There has been one incident relating to prostitution over the course of three years - immoral traffic.

Table 3.8 Number of crimes of indecency reported in North Ayrshire, 2005/06 to 2007/08

	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Incest	1	.	.
Homosexual acts	2	3	.
Rape	31	21	25
Assault with Intent to rape or ravish	5	7	1
Indecent Assault	49	41	42
Lewd and libidinous practices	83	74	51
Indecent exposure	15	27	35
Procuration - excluding homosexual acts	.	.	.
Defilement of girl under 13	2	2	2
Defilement of girl under 16	10	11	15
Immoral traffic	.	1	.
Procuration of Homosexual Acts	.	1	.
Grooming of children for the purposes of sexual offences	.	3	1
Total	198	191	172

3.3.2 Other data

Victim Support Scotland supplied data for the year 2007-08. During that time they had contact with 102 women from North Ayrshire who had been the victim of a sexual offence, although not necessarily in that year. Twenty three of these were rapes.

Eighty four of all the sexual offences dealt with by Victim Support in North Ayrshire had been reported to the police. Only six of these service users made Criminal Injuries Compensation applications.

3.4 Limitations of current data collection

3.4.1 Criminal justice data

Police statistics on domestic abuse incidents have become the focus of much discussion on the incidence of domestic abuse. However many factors influence the collection of domestic abuse data. Some of these include;

- the willingness of victims to engage with the criminal justice systems
- the frequency with which third parties become aware of incidents and report them
- a pro-active police response to monitoring bail conditions.

The police data only records the first contact with the criminal justice system in any one incident; it does not inform the Forum about women's progress through the criminal justice system.

Although the number of domestic abuse incidents is one stark indicator of the extent of domestic abuse, it is imperfect. As a guide to what is working well locally, some focus on the recording of crimes would indicate the number of incidents where the criminal justice system may intervene but not provide a full criminal justice response. This may point to the need for an additional service response to deal with abuse, which does not always meet the test of criminal activity.

In order to make informed decisions about what is working well locally and what needs to change to improve the safety of women, the Forum should consider other partner's activities.

Specifically, in the criminal justice arena, the Forum could investigate if COPFS can set up systems to supply data on decisions to prosecute and the outcome of prosecutions. Although current data collection by COPFS is driven by their national system, some consideration could be given to local data capture. In the absence of this data, the Forum cannot assess whether a call to the police and the arrest of a perpetrator results in any further intervention to punish or change the offending behaviour.

3.5 Data and Performance measures

The Forum's objectives include the objective:

- "To identify the performance measures currently used by organisations to monitor progress and assess the most effective ones in measuring levels of violence against women" .

Data collected against performance measures in partner organisations is not ideal for measuring levels of violence against women and children and there are limitations of the applicability of such data.

The data collected by the police on the number of domestic abuse incidents attended is not, strictly speaking a performance measure. In the Scottish Policing Performance Framework 2008/09²³, applicable across Scotland, the point is made that the number of domestic abuse incidents is not a performance measurement; rather the police performance measures include:

- number of recorded crimes and offences
- detection rate for recorded crimes and offences, and
- survey-based measures such as the level of personal and household crime and the proportion reported to the police.

The domestic abuse statistics are imperfect as an indicator of levels of violence because they are only a collection of incidents reported to the police and many incidents will not come to the attention of the police. The definition of violence against women includes psychological violence which will not always be a criminal act nor responsive to police intervention. In addition, there continues to be under-reporting.

However the domestic abuse statistics are useful in tracking:

- confidence in reporting
- levels of repeat victimisation
- levels of crime connected to domestic abuse.

The crime statistics showing levels of crimes of indecency in North Ayrshire also have limited use as a measure of violence against women. Under-reporting is an issue in crimes of sexual violence. The data is not disaggregated to gender, although some crimes, such as rape are gender specific.

Performance information can indicate how well partner services are performing against their objectives and help identify what processes are working well. Performance information from partners in the VAW Forum should enable the Forum

²³ Scottish Government (2009) *Policing Performance Framework 2008/09*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government (2009)

to make informed decisions about what is working well locally and what needs to change.

Each partner's organisational objectives may not be aligned with the objectives of the VAW Forum, or collect data in ways which will assist the Forum, without changes to data collection systems. Such changes can be more easily implemented in local organisations but are difficult to achieve in national organisations. Here we consider performance measure data from some partner organisations and how the Forum may be able to use that data, to gain an overview of the response to women and children in North Ayrshire.

3.5.1 North Ayrshire Women's Aid

Women's Aid and Housing Services are currently in discussions on introducing performance measures on a model developed by North Ayrshire Council.

This model incorporates a support matrix/framework within each service user's support plan. Each service user would be 'scored' in regard to the different areas where support is required e.g. in dealing with debt. The scoring system will enable progress to be measured. Some service providers consider that, while this system works well in regard to more practical forms of support, scoring is not always sensitive in measuring more subjective or qualitative issues, where it can be difficult to weight different factors systematically and appropriately.

It is intended that this model will cover women in the refuge, the outreach service and addictions. Children have their own plan which accords with Scottish Government guidance and funding.

3.5.2 Procurator Fiscal's Office

COPFS key performance targets are targets related to the time taken to carry out key tasks in the processing and prosecution of cases. COPFS also collects and publishes data on:

- number of criminal reports
- number of Non-Court disposals
- number of Court disposals (in each forum, District, Sheriff summary, Sheriff and jury and High Court) by acceptance of a plea or by trial.

None of this data is published at local level, nor is it disaggregated to identify those prosecutions which have been coded with a domestic abuse aggravator. In its present state it provides no useful data for the Forum.

3.5.3 North Ayrshire Victim Support

Victim Support collects data on numbers of service users, crime category, whether related to a domestic incident, and whether the crime has been reported to the police.

There is no outcome information, although the number of Criminal Injuries Compensation applications is recorded. This provides some information on the service provided to victims.

3.5.4 Strathclyde Police – Local Liaison Officer and Domestic Abuse Unit

Police data is useful. Paying particular attention to the number of incidents which result in the recording of a crime is useful. In conjunction with data from COPFS, it would be more useful as a picture of the criminal justice response to domestic abuse and crimes of indecency.

3.5.5 NHS Ayrshire & Arran – Health Promotion and Midwifery Services

All health boards are implementing a Routine Enquiry programme. New data collection will be established as part of the programme. In future, NHS data locally and nationally will be available on the identification and assessment of violence against women.

3.5.6 Scottish Children’s Reporters Administration (SCRA)

SCRA performance measures of particular relevance include reporting on:

- number of Non-offence referrals received
- number of children referred on non-offence grounds
- Child Protection Orders (CPOs)
- Supervision Requirements in place.

Data is published by local authority level and grounds of referral.

It is not known whether local data could be made available on the number of children referred as a consequence of domestic abuse incidents and their subsequent outcomes.

3.5.7 North Ayrshire Council

3.5.7.1 Social Work, Educational, Housing and Chief Executive’s Services

Social Work statistics currently cannot be used to identify incidence and prevalence of violence against women, or specific trends in service use by the client group under focus, largely because abuse is seldom identified as a primary presenting issue. In the future the recording system will note secondary issues and so aspects of Social Work data may become useful to the Forum.

HL1 data is data collected on the performance of homelessness services. It is not helpful to identify incidence – but reporting of this data on a regular basis would

inform the Forum on the processing of applications for permanent housing for those leaving violent or abusive relationships.

3.6 Data and costs

Economic appraisal of services or other policy interventions involves measuring costs effectiveness and/or the cost- benefit analysis of an intervention. Research Objective three in this study was to assess the cost effectiveness of current activity in tackling domestic abuse. Cost effectiveness, as a measure of efficiency, considers the benefits (net outputs or outcomes) compared to the intervention costs.

Cost effectiveness analysis is described in the Treasury Green Book²⁴, which is the main source of guidance on the economic assessment of public spending and investment, as an analysis that compares the costs of alternative ways of producing the same or similar outputs.

It is important to distinguish this from cost-benefit analysis. Cost-benefit analysis is defined in the HM Treasury Green Book as an,

*“analysis which quantifies in monetary terms as many of the costs and benefits of a proposal or intervention as feasible, including items for which the market does not provide a satisfactory measure of economic value”.*²⁵

Two studies have been undertaken in England to identify the costs of domestic abuse²⁶ and violence against women²⁷. These attempts to quantify the costs to society, involve ascribing an economic value to the consequences for individuals and society, for example in terms of loss to income to employers and individuals; high costs to public and voluntary sector and the “untold pain” caused to individuals. The study on domestic abuse estimated that the cost to society of domestic abuse in England was £22.9 billion. The costs of violence against women were assessed at £40 billion.²⁸ These studies help establish a methodology for ascribing an economic cost to domestic abuse.

We are not concerned here with identifying the cost benefit of any or all the domestic abuse services in North Ayrshire. That would be a task beyond the scope and scale of this research, as it would require an assessment of all costs to services and the economy of domestic abuse. However, as an indication of the scale of the benefit of effective service provision, an English study²⁹ of the Supporting People programme

²⁴ HM Treasury (2003) *The Green Book, Appraisal and Evaluation in Central Government*. Page 4

²⁵ *ibid*

²⁶ Walby S (2004), *The Cost of Domestic Violence*, Department of Trade and Industry, September 2004.

²⁷ Jarvenon J, Kail A and Miller I (2008) *Hard Knock Life; Violence against women: A Guide for donors and funders*. London: New Philanthropy, Capital

²⁸ *Ibid*

²⁹ ODPM (2005) *Supporting People: Benefits Realisation of the Supporting People Programme*. London: ODPM.

ODPM. London, as referred to in Scottish Women's Aid (2009) *Changing Lives: Women's Aid in Scotland*. See also Tribal Consulting (2007) *Supporting People: Costs and Benefits – Final Report*. Scottish Government Social Research.

estimated that the provision of Supporting People services to women who left violent relationships saved public services £19,000 per woman.

Turning to cost effectiveness, data collection is an essential component of any assessment of the cost effectiveness of current activity in tackling domestic abuse.

Therefore, an assessment of cost effectiveness can involve an assessment of any one service's cost against their previous costs or, more usefully, an assessment of costs against similar services. Any assessment requires an agreed definition of outputs, outcomes and intervention costs. It should aim to ensure the ability to compare particular costs with other interventions that produce similar outputs or outcomes. Even where there are similar outputs or outcomes, a variation in the intensity of assistance offered in interventions can cause very simple cost per output ratios to vary considerably. So given that the Homelessness response is led by an individual needs assessment, an output of "number of women accommodated" in temporary accommodation, can vary from the provision of accommodation with basic tenancy support, to the provision of a more complex support package provided in partnership with other statutory and voluntary services.

Current data collection in North Ayrshire does not allow for quantifying and comparing the costs of the range of individual service responses, and it was not feasible in this study to compare service costs against benchmarks. The research team is not aware of examples of good practice in systematic assessment of cost effectiveness in responding to domestic abuse at local authority level in Scotland or elsewhere.

3.7 Key points

- In 2007/08, North Ayrshire recorded a higher rate of domestic abuse incidents than the Scottish average (1065 per 100,000 population compared to a Scottish average of 965 per 100,000 population)
- North Ayrshire Police recorded an increase of 200 in the number of reports between 2008/09 and 2007/08 (1689 compared to 1455)
- In contrast, the number of crimes of indecency recorded in North Ayrshire in 2997/08 was the same as the Scottish average (13 per 10,000 population)
- In 2008/09, there were 1357 children in households where there had been a domestic abuse incident recorded by the police
- Not all domestic abuse incidents are recorded as crimes with 52% of reports being so recorded in 2007/08; this means that many do not progress through the criminal justice system
- Discernable patterns in reporting included:
 - a rise in young women affected – from 70 police reports in 2005-06 (6.7% under 20) to 135 in 2007/08
 - a rise in the number & percentage of reports involving someone who had been repeatedly victimised – from 52% in 06-07 to 58% in 2007/08

- An increase in reporting is not only related to victims increased reporting; in a snapshot of 16 weeks - 32% of incidents were reported by third parties witnessing incidents; some increase in reporting is likely to represent greater use of special bail conditions and proactive policing of those bail conditions
- Little is known about the outcome of domestic abuse cases referred to the Procurator Fiscal
- The police response does not provide a remedy to all who request it - not all reports result in a crime report or a prosecution. Even in cases where there is an identified additional risk, the criminal justice system and the police as the first response within that, cannot effectively intervene in all cases
- Homelessness data illustrates that the majority of homeless applications as a consequence of a violent or abusive partner, are from women and that the overall number of applications has been increasing (from 135 in 2005/06 to 165 in 2008/09).

CHAPTER FOUR

PREVENTION

4.1 Introduction

This and the following two Chapters address the research objectives under the headings of the three Ps; prevention, protection and provision. It is based on the research team's analysis of agency and service user perspectives of services and includes reference to research literature, where appropriate.

The National Strategy on Preventing Domestic Abuse stresses the importance of prevention strategies to address domestic abuse and in particular the importance of primary prevention work. This aims to stop abuse before it happens by "changing attitudes which excuse or condone it", through the means of raising public awareness and providing education and training. The North Ayrshire VAW Strategy has as one of its key principles that:

- Prevention is the long-term solution to ending violence against women. The elimination of violence against women requires change in societal attitudes and values concerning gender roles and all forms of violence.

The need for a longer-term strategy on prevention was stressed by many professional interviewees who identified the priority of challenging values and attitudes, which underpin violence against women. High levels of violence against women were seen as being linked to male behaviour and attitudes to women.

Concerns emerged that patterns of gender-based violence and disrespect were displayed amongst younger people and within school settings. Studies were carried out on young peoples attitudes to gendered violence, for example, in a 1998 study focused on young people aged 14 to 21 years³⁰ and in a 2005 study on young people aged 14 to 18 years³¹. Broadly the studies found that significantly more young men compared with young women (approximately twice proportionately), thought that abuse or violence against women could be justified.

The 1998 study found that in response to whether violence against a partner was ever 'OK', one in five young men and one in ten young women said that it was. The 2005 study found that one in 20 young men consider 'regularly slapping and punching a partner' as '*just something that happens*'; also one in 14 young men consider that forcing a partner to have sex, similarly as '*just something that happens*'.

³⁰ Burton S and Kizinger J Kelly L Regan L (1998) *Young People's Attitudes towards violence, sex and relationships*: Edinburgh: Zero Tolerance Trust.

³¹ Burman M and Cartmen F (2005) *Young People's Attitudes towards Gendered Violence*. NHS Health Scotland.

Both studies set about attempting to identify if attitudes to the acceptability of violence varied with situations. In asking young people if it was ever alright to hit a woman in particular circumstance the 1998 study found, for example, that:

- almost one in four young men thought it would be acceptable to hit a woman who had slept with someone else (12% of young women thought that it was acceptable)
- one in ten young men thought it would be acceptable to hit a woman if she were his wife and 8% thought the same if she were his girlfriend
- one in five young men considered it acceptable to force a woman to have sex if she were his wife, while a further 15% were unsure.

The 2005 study stressed that young men appear to be more uncertain in many responses. Additionally, while both sexes showed a preference for more information about violence against women, this desire was stronger amongst young women (three fifths) than young men (one third).

Prevention was recognised as being critical given the emotional and behavioural impacts for children, as well as safety issues. The studies indicate that Prevention requires:

- increasing the profile of violence against women and information about services; increased publicity in regard to violence against women
- education focused on culture change in schools, recognising different gender-based attitudes to violence against women between young men and young women
- continuous training, particularly inter-agency
- positive, pro-active joint working
- programmes with offenders to prevent re-offending.

Education services have increasingly collaborated with Social Work and Women's Aid to increase young peoples' awareness of abuse-related issues through various structured inputs in the school setting. The Director of Education has stated support for such preventative work in schools and other outlets. However, it is Head Teachers that resolve whether their school participates. While overall the engagement of schools has been somewhat uneven, the work that has been carried out includes:

- Outreach work undertaken by Women's Aid. Although some (particularly secondary schools) have been keen and co-operative, there is considerable scope for further development. Some Head Teachers consider that schools provide a safe environment for children whose mothers are experiencing domestic abuse and that this should not be raised at school.
- Healthy Relationship packs are widely distributed but unevenly used; some include domestic abuse and some do not.
- Women's Aid has run gender workshops for secondary school pupils.
- Community Nurseries take referrals from Women's Aid.

- There are difficulties in reaching staff in Primary Schools including teachers and others that children will be in contact with staff, such as class room assistants, janitors and dinner staff. Recognising that primary schools have not generally participated in such initiatives, a priority is to include relevant training in the Continuing Professional Development Programme.
- The Big World' safety event aimed at sixth year pupils across Ayrshire which raises awareness of the dangers of alcohol, drugs (including date rape drugs), racial abuse, domestic abuse and knife crime.

The National Domestic Abuse Delivery Plan for Children and Young People provides an additional impetus to the preventative agenda and role of schools in challenging attitudes.

Health services are also involved in prevention activity; all Health Boards are now required to develop three year Action Plans (2008-2011) that address prevention issues. The introduction of the routine enquiry about abuse should help to promote prevention.

The four key areas covered relate to:

- implementation of Routine Enquiry of abuse in priority settings to identify and assess gender-based violence
- disseminating guidance on abuse for staff
- production of an employee policy on gender-based violence
- the need for multi-agency collaboration.

The Action Plan adopts a phased approach to implementation, focusing initially in mental health, sexual and reproductive health, A&E services, primary care, addictions and maternity services. It also recognises key overlaps between Health, Homelessness and Children's services. The Plan addresses the Health contribution to improving the response to gender-based violence and child protection issues, and prioritises the need for liaison and joint working in these areas.

4.2 Awareness, access to information and expectations

For women in crisis, awareness of services and expectations of a sympathetic response are key to enabling disclosure and accessing relevant services. Professionals believed that the profile of domestic abuse and violence against women has increased locally in recent years as a result of publicity campaigns, which may have increased women's expectations of being taken seriously by agencies in North Ayrshire.

It was commented that *"women are getting the message that something will happen if they call the police; expectations are being created that domestic abuse will be dealt with"*. Additionally it was felt that the publicity provided by Women's Aid has increased the visibility of its specialist services. Emergency services

(Homelessness, Women's Aid) found that "whereas presentation levels by women used to fluctuate, now they are continuously high".

Both the responsiveness and the substance of services and their approaches were seen by professionals to increase women's confidence. For example, the Housing Service's Home Security provision was seen to make a difference to women's confidence and feelings of safety in their homes. Additionally, Strathclyde Police were seen to be more pro-active, for example, by going to the woman's house to inform her when bail conditions are lifted and arresting the perpetrator where there is a breach.

Also important is that agencies and services are well informed about each other's roles, protocols and practices. Generally, it was felt that the volume of training on offer to Social Work, Housing, Education and voluntary services had increased, so that agencies are now more aware of domestic abuse and the services available, though it was acknowledged that further training is required. This was highlighted in relation to the NHS. Although the North Ayrshire Women's Aid's multi-agency training programme is published through the NHS Ayrshire and Arran Health Intranet, this training has in fact been accessed by few NHS staff. Specific training on dealing with disclosure was identified as being required by some interviewees who commented that many staff are unsure about how to respond. The introduction of routine enquiry within health services will have major implications for training.

Training in regard to domestic abuse has been a key and valued activity under the prevention theme. Women's Aid deliver three separate training courses – one on understanding domestic abuse; one for staff working with women; one for staff working with children (though the same staff can attend more than one course depending on the nature of their work).

The Women's Aid training programme incorporates a workshop which addresses the issues relating to women from minority and diversity groups including the BME Community, Travellers, Same Sex Relationships, Women with Addictions, Women involved in Prostitution and Older and Younger women. A full day's training specific to women from the BME community was arranged but there was insufficient demand to run the day. It was commented that the Council also provides training on equality and diversity and disability but this does not address violence against women and its implications. An expansion of training to ensure these areas are fully covered could improve the service response to equality and diversity groups.

Until very recently, education and training tended to focus on domestic abuse, but during 2009 a series of half day seminars was arranged by the Ayrshire Violence Against Women training consortium. This programme addresses the wider Violence Against Women agenda, and the links between the different forms, although it is felt that there is further scope, particularly in schools, to highlight the issues surrounding the internet and grooming.

When women were asked what they felt could be done to improve the service response in North Ayrshire, most of those who responded commented that while there are services on offer not everybody knows about these, suggesting that there is a need for further information and publicity. One woman for example, who frequently went to the library with her children, said that she couldn't recall ever seeing leaflets or posters on domestic abuse there.

In particular, it was commented that services available to women who left violent partners (e.g. Women's Aid) are generally more widely known than those that provide support to women who continue to live in abusive relationships (at least for the time being).

In terms of ensuring that women from BME groups or who have additional needs can access services Women's Aid have access to National Office leaflets in other languages; they also have information produced in large print and on tape. They can access interpreters – on one occasion someone came down from Glasgow and they use a telephone interpreting services though this is not very satisfactory. One of the problems is having access to interpreters immediately – when the women turn up. They have a qwerty/ text phone and have staff members who can sign. Victim Support also has material available in different languages and can access interpreters through language line.

Council services meet the costs of interpreting and translation services from their budgets. The main requests received are for Chinese, Eastern European and Punjabi languages. External organisations are generally not able to access these services, although those working in partnership with Housing can do so.

Some focus group participants suggested that while there has been a presence of Scottish gypsies/ travellers in North Ayrshire, transient lifestyles may mean that domestic abuse and related issues for children are more problematic to detect and remain hidden. It was also commented that a number of travelling women have accessed Women's Aid services over the years.

Information about relevant services for survivors of childhood sexual abuse was also said to be very difficult to come by and not widely available, although some professional interviewees said they provide information on national organisations and helplines. A recent development is that SAY Women are now providing a resource service for young homeless women (aged 16-25) who have experienced childhood sexual abuse and who are using Quarriers' services. This support service is now being made available to Women's Aid service users who meet its access criteria. It is also hoped that a SAY Women resource worker will soon be based at Women's Aid Pearl's Centre, one day per week initially, and will take referrals from all agencies.

4.3 Key points

The developments that have taken place in schools have been generally positive, though the coverage is not as comprehensive as it should be. The difficulty in engaging all schools in addressing violence against women's issues should now be addressed by the Forum and partners.

The Healthy Relationships pack is no longer used routinely in schools, although its messages are contained within the PSE curriculum for schools. The Violence Against Women Forum should:

- Undertake a review of PSE materials to ensure that the preventative messages about healthy relationships for young people and views about the acceptability of violence against girls and women are being fully addressed, and to identify any current gaps.
- Discuss with a selected secondary school the possibility of a pilot, which would track the experiences of young people affected by domestic abuse and the support available to them, and at the same time review the work the school is doing in addressing issues relating to domestic abuse through e.g. the PSE curriculum and the arts.
- Monitor with the Child Protection committee any feedback from their website developments, and assess how effectively this reaches vulnerable children/ young people. The current website has a page for children and young persons, with a link to the domestic abuse website, the national domestic abuse helpline number and child line's number. A new website for young people will be launched in mid 2009, which will contain relevant messages for young people about domestic abuse.

Discussions with the Education department on how best to ensure a comprehensive coverage in schools should be undertaken

Identifying actions which will enable other staff who come into contact with children to take part in training should be considered also.

Staff in a number of services/agencies have received training, in particular on domestic abuse, however the need for training remains. For example:

- training which addresses all forms of violence against women and ensures that the links between different forms are made
- training should encompass staff across organisations and sectors and including frontline staff, managers and policy staff
- training in specific areas is also required for instance:
 - to ensure they can meet the needs of women children and young people who have additional needs
 - to enable staff to deal more confidently with disclosure.
- equality and diversity training which includes violence against women issues
- training on impact monitoring to assist services' assessment of their performance as well as identification of future work and target groups.

Training should seek to be multi-agency where possible and should be on going.

CHAPTER FIVE

PROTECTION

5.1 Legal protection

In the recent past, women who were victims of domestic abuse had limited access to legal remedies to protect them from abuse and/or violence. Legal remedies can be provided by the criminal justice system by intervention of the police, prosecution system and the criminal courts, or by the civil courts, which can provide remedies on the application of individual women.

Historically, the criminal justice system was tolerant of levels of violence in intimate relationships that were otherwise prosecuted when they occurred in the public sphere between unassociated adults. In the absence of a consistent criminal justice response to domestic abuse, women's groups lobbied for changes to the civil law to protect women.

5.5.1 Civil Protection

In Scotland, the Matrimonial Homes (Family Protection Act etc) Act, was introduced in 1981. This provided women;

- with rights in the matrimonial home, regardless of whether they were not the owner or tenant
- with the right to exclude abusers (physical and/or emotional abuse) from the matrimonial home, enforced by civil warrants and interdicts with powers of arrest to prevent return
- with access to additional matrimonial interdicts intended to provide protection from harmful acts, together with powers of arrest.

The introduction of powers of arrest attached to a civil court order introduced a quasi-criminal remedy, which women can choose to enforce. Should this be breached, then the police have the power, but not the duty, to arrest. Failing police intervention, breach of the order can be enforced by civil imprisonment.

Civil protections have been supplemented by further quasi-criminal orders available in the civil courts, which can be enforced in either the civil or criminal courts; orders under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 and the extension of the availability of powers of arrest under the Protection from Abuse (Scotland) Act 2001.

The remedies provided by the Act provided women with a range of civil remedies, which they can enforce subject to the availability of funds, legal aid and solicitors able to pursue cases through the courts.

Over time, the range of civil remedies has increased, but their usage has decreased. In the past three years, there have only been three applications to the Scottish Legal Aid Board (SLAB) from North Ayrshire for civil legal aid in an action for an exclusion order. In the same period there were a further 20 applications for interdicts/no-molestation orders.³² By contrast, in the previous three year period 2002-2005, SLAB estimate that there were 64 applications relating to domestic abuse.³³

Over the same period, there have been reductions in the general availability of legal aid, but even taking that into account that reduction, applications for civil legal aid for protections relating to domestic abuse from North Ayrshire have fallen by a greater rate than the general reduction in civil legal aid applications.

Data from the police shows a similar reduction and indicates that, failing a civil legal aid application, women are paying for civil court orders. Costs quoted locally for an undefended interdict or non-molestation order range from £1000 to £2000.

Table 5.1 Powers of arrest intimated to police in North Ayrshire³⁴

	Number Powers of Arrest intimated to police
2006	43
2007	19
2008	19

Few women interviewed said that they had received information on, or used the civil provisions available to them, that would have entitled her to have an abusive partner excluded from the house and to secure their right to the tenancy or an owner occupied home.

One woman who had used this legislation some ten years ago said that it had not been her preferred option but that,

“The Council refused to give myself and my children accommodation because I was the joint tenant of a council property. I wasn’t fussed about living in the matrimonial home, but we needed a house”.

One woman who had left her partner more recently, said that Women’s Aid staff had asked her if she wanted to call in a solicitor to enforce her rights to half the owner occupied home, but she had not wanted to do this.

Another woman, who had left her husband in the last year, said that she fled and left him in the marital home. She said that her husband had subsequently given up the

³² The Scottish Legal Aid Board (SLAB) is the body charged with providing access to justice for those financially eligible for assistance and in need of it.

³³ This data was made available by SLAB for the purposes of this research project. It is not published by SLAB on a national, or annual basis.

³⁴ All powers of arrest attached to interdicts have to be intimated to the police, before they take effect

marital home, and she went to the Council to ask if it could be allocated to her. She said that:

“I was told that the house I lived in and that my husband had given up, had already been let to someone and that in any case I wouldn’t have been able to get it because it was too big for me on my own.”

She could not recollect anyone mentioning any rights she might have to the house, or how to enforce them. However, she also said that it might have been mentioned to her, but *“I didn’t take it in...you are all at sixes and sevens when you leave”*.

One woman was successful in obtaining a non-harassment order, having been advised that this was a less expensive option than an interdict with powers of arrest. There was no difficulty in getting the order, which she said took about a month. However, she was dissatisfied with the police response when her ex-partner breached the order as he was not arrested (although he had more than one conviction relating to domestic abuse).

She received conflicting information from her solicitor and the police regarding arrest on breach of the non-harassment order. Her solicitor advised that powers of arrest were not necessary for the police to arrest on breach whereas the police advised her that they were.

This confusion suggests there is a need for multi-agency training and clear information on how civil remedies/protective orders operate. Although women are informed about the existence of such orders in their various contacts with different services, few women pursue the option. This suggests that they require access to information about the practical impact of seeking civil protection.

A local solicitor commented that although there are plenty of women who could use the civil courts to obtain protective orders, very few are aware of their rights. She could not recall ever obtaining an exclusion order for a client. One reason suggested for the reduction in use of civil orders by legal professionals has been the increased response by the criminal courts. The increased use of special bail conditions in criminal proceedings to remove the accused in a domestic abuse aggravated prosecution pending final disposal, replicates some but not all of the benefits of civil protection orders.

Certainly, the use of special bail conditions, although to be welcomed, is perceived to have complicated the process of obtaining civil orders. Bail conditions and civil orders are not equivalent responses and civil orders have some advantages for women. These include:

- Protection orders can be drafted taking account of the woman’s individual circumstances and wishes; therefore, they can interdict specific harmful behaviour and yet allow contact at the choice of the woman.
- Civil orders have a longer life than bail conditions. Bail conditions are only in effect until the criminal case is concluded. Changes in the summary criminal justice system mean that some bail conditions may only be in place for four weeks. COPFS disposed of 72% of all cases (not only domestic abuse) in

Summary Courts in the period April-Dec 2008 within 26 weeks.³⁵ Therefore, bail conditions are unlikely to last more than six months and may last considerably less than that as domestic abuse related prosecutions are prioritised by COPFS.

- Civil orders can focus on behaviour that causes harm, such as controlling behaviour or restricting access to money etc, which is not a criminal offence.
- Women can choose when to enforce civil orders; unlike bail conditions the decision to enforce is her choice and not the choice of the police.

Given these advantages, access to civil protection should be recognised and promoted as an important part of protection. One local authority has funded a range of activities designed to increase use of civil protection orders. North Lanarkshire Council Domestic Abuse Working Group has funded a pack of leaflets explaining legal rights. These include a leaflet covering Your Right to Stay in Your Own Home, Your Right to Protection from Abuse, and What to Expect if You Report Domestic Abuse to the Police.

This same authority also contracted with a local solicitor (after a tendering process) to fund civil court actions for women who could not otherwise afford to go to court to enforce their rights. Women have been referred to the solicitors by partners in the Working Group and by the MARAC. The number of cases dealt with by this project provides some idea of the likely scale of unmet legal need in North Ayrshire.

Over two years at a cost of around £70,000, the working group funded:

- 48 interdicts with power of arrest
- 18 divorces
- eight exclusion orders (Matrimonial Homes Act)
- three non-harassment Orders
- six Child Contact interventions.

5.5.2 Criminal protection

As women's groups continued to lobby for more effective responses to domestic abuse, the criminal justice system formulated a more aggressive response to perpetrators. The Police and Procurator Fiscal are key partners in the prosecution of offences committed in domestic abuse incidents and in 2005 agreed a protocol between the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service and the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland. It set out in effect:

- a mandatory arrest system in domestic abuse incidents where there is sufficient evidence of a crime
- a presumption against no-drop prosecution

³⁵ <http://www.copfs.gov.uk/About/corporate-info/Targets>, accessed 7 May 2009

- a presumption that bail will be refused or that special bail conditions will apply in all domestic abuse cases
- all prosecutions involving violence will proceed in the Sheriff Court or High Court as appropriate. There will be no prosecution of crimes associated with domestic abuse in the District Courts.

5.5.3 Police response

Strathclyde Police, in common with all police forces, has established processes for the investigation of domestic abuse across the force area. A new Domestic Abuse Toolkit was introduced across the Strathclyde Police area in December 2008. It sets out a thorough approach to the response, investigation, detention and arrest, and the post-incident management of all domestic abuse incidents. Key points are that:

- on receipt of any call to control centre, all domestic abuse incidents are to be treated as high priority
- once a call is received, an incident cannot be cancelled by any person other than a police officer and a police officer must attend each incident
- where there is a sufficiency of evidence that a crime has been committed and a perpetrator identified, the perpetrator will be arrested - irrespective of the opinion of the victim
- once arrested for a domestic incident, a perpetrator will be detained in custody pending appearance at court on the next lawful day
- the police are instructed never to ask the victim if they want to make a complaint. Where there is sufficient corroborative evidence, the perpetrator must be arrested
- where there is insufficient evidence to arrest, officers are instructed to provide safety advice to victims, along with comprehensive information regarding other support agencies able to provide assistance
- the attending officer will also carry out a risk assessment based on the SPECCS assessment (see Appendix A5).

Post-incident, the details of all domestic abuse incidents are passed to Domestic Abuse Unit Officers (DAUOs). The officers each work across all of U Division and are not geographically aligned to a specific local authority area. All are now based in Kilmarnock.

DAUOs prioritise incidents where there are children in the household or where the perpetrator is in custody but they are responsible for coordinating post-incident police activity in all cases whether an arrest has been made or not.

The Domestic Abuse Unit is responsible for ensuring:

- All available intelligence is gathered and recorded on the perpetrator, victim and any children in the household.

- The victim is provided with appropriate information and referral to support organisations, both statutory and voluntary. Women are advised to contact Women's Aid. With women's consent, officers will contact the Home Security Officer at North Ayrshire Council to give advice and install additional security precautions. All victims are contacted, but it is up to women how much they engage.
- Where the perpetrator is in custody, an officer will contact the woman and explain to her what will happen when he appears at court. The officers attending at the incident will already have asked about her view of bail conditions.
- If the assessment is that there is increased risk then there will be an internal police alert on TETRA radio system to keep an eye on a particular address and make a fast response to it.
- Where there are children involved, whether or not they were present during the incident then the details are forwarded to The Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA) and North Ayrshire's Social Work department.

Despite the improved response from the police to domestic abuse, only five of the 15 women interviewed had reported abuse by a partner or ex-partner to the police, while another women had reported a sexual assault. The low rate of reporting to the police in our group reflects other research findings on whether or not women have reported domestic abuse.³⁶ One concern for some women with children is that a report to the police can result in Social Work intervention.

In some cases, our service user interviewees did not involve the police because the abuse was psychological rather than physical, and women judged that the Police were unlikely to provide a response. One woman said that during the ten years or so she spent with her partner, violence was an issue for much of the relationship, but *"I thought that's just the way it is"*.

Reasons for not making charges after moving out included,

"I thought about it but my husband has depression and although I no longer have feelings for him, I don't want to make things worse."

One woman, whose husband started stalking her some years after she left said,

"I thought about going to the police but decided against it because I knew he would get great pleasure from the fact that he had got to me."

Another woman said,

"I didn't get in touch with the police because I don't have much faith in them...I think they are still a bit old fashioned and say...ok, it's a domestic...I believe this because I know people who have gone to the police. Another reason was that I didn't want to see him in court if it went through court...I just wanted it finished with".

³⁶ Hamlyn B and Brown M (BMRB) (2007) *Partner abuse in Scotland: Findings from the 2006 Scottish Crime & Victimization Survey* - Research Findings, Scottish Government Social Research

One woman whose partner was charged with her attempted rape (some three years ago) said that while the police had given her their phone number she had thought,

“Why would I be calling them? I didn’t want it at the forefront of my mind. I think I just wanted to block it out. I became a recluse and tried to saunter on with life”.

Therefore, some women interviewed thought that a police response would not resolve the abusive behaviour.

One woman, who had experienced years of abuse including rape, did not initially report that to the police after she managed to leave, because she “*was put off*”, as she thought she would have to be physically examined. When she was advised that this would not be the case, she then reported to the police. She found the police – the Family Protection Unit – “*very helpful*”, and said they had kept her informed about what they were doing.

Women from BME groups can be particularly reluctant to report to the police. As one professional interviewee remarked,

“Communities are wary of authority and women are reluctant to speak out; they may feel isolated within their own communities and they not feel able to talk about the abuse”.

After one woman had reported her abuse to the police (around the latter part of 2007), she said that she then had contact with a number of services, including the Domestic Abuse Unit and Home Security service. She said,

“I was in such a state at the time that I can’t remember what exactly happened, but some services got in touch with me and they just seemed to link up.”

This indicates that, with current protocols in place, a report of domestic abuse to the police triggers responses from other services that are valued.

Engagement with the police requires women to engage with the whole criminal justice system, appear in court and give evidence against a partner or former partner. However, some women express a desire to be free of the abusive behaviour without exposing partners to the criminal justice system.

In addition, the criminal justice system will not deal with emotional abuse and controlling behaviours.

5.5.4 Procurator Fiscal

When an incident is reported to the Procurator Fiscal, it is the Fiscal's decision whether or not to prosecute, following consideration of the sufficiency of the evidence. The Fiscal controls the criminal process with the goal of advancing the interests of the public, not the interests of the individual woman. The two interests may often coincide but not always. The Fiscal Service has a broad duty to ensure that crimes are prosecuted, where there is sufficient evidence, regardless of the views of victims. There is a robust policy in place to proceed with prosecution even where there is a reluctant complainer. The Protocol sets this in context,

Victims of domestic abuse can sometimes retract their original statements or can be reluctant to give evidence for a number of reasons, including previous experience of the accused's conduct. Where this happens, the Procurator Fiscal must consider the particular circumstances of the case carefully and may decide to meet with the victim or to instruct the police to interview the victim to explore, sensitively, the reasons for their retraction or reluctance. Importantly, it must be established whether the reason for the retraction is a result of threats or pressure from the accused or any other person.

The final decision to continue or discontinue proceedings is for the Procurator Fiscal alone. Where the alleged incident involves violence or where there is a history of violence between the parties, the presumption shall be in favour of continuing the prosecution. In all cases, the proceedings will only be discontinued if the Procurator Fiscal considers that, in all the circumstances, it would not be in the public interest to continue the prosecution. Such decisions will only be taken by a senior member of the Procurator Fiscal's legal staff.

After a decision to prosecute is made and the accused is in custody, special bail conditions are likely to be sought. Bail conditions can have the effect of removing an accused from a matrimonial/family home, a particular area and/or from being in contact with the victim. Breach of bail conditions is a separate offence, which allows for re-arrest.

The protocol's presumption of 'no-drop' prosecution is an acknowledgement that women in abusive relationships may come under sustained pressure by the perpetrator to retract statements made to the police. This may be particularly so where there are children and/or there is financial dependency.

One woman we spoke with who had reported her abuse to the police, said that although he was charged with serious assault on her, she agreed to go to court with him at the disposal of his case to tell the court that they had reconciled.

Similarly women may come under pressure to seek the relaxation of special bail conditions. Bail conditions can be enforced as a consequence of pro-active checks by the police without a complaint by the victim.

In consultation, we heard of complainers in domestic abuse cases who have tried to have prosecutions abandoned and/or bail conditions relaxed.

One woman wrote to the Fiscal asking that the prosecution be stopped. She said that the incident was out of character and that she did not want her partner prosecuted. The fiscal proceeded with the case and so when it came to court she denied the incident ever happened in her evidence. But the Fiscal was able to use her letter in evidence to her which basically confirmed the incident.

Only one woman interviewed commented about having contact with the Fiscal Service. She did not want the case against her partner to go ahead, mainly for financial reasons, and wrote to the Procurator Fiscal asking for the case not to proceed. They dropped the case.

Each request to withdraw from the system is considered on its merits. There is no shared risk assessment used by the Procurator Fiscal to guide them when dealing with such requests. There appears to be no routine referral of the woman concerned to any external support agencies that could speak to her and intervene with the prosecution process on her behalf. Once the criminal justice system is engaged, the agencies that are in contact with the victim, such as the Police, the Fiscal's office and Victim Information and Advice, act as agents of the justice system and not of the individual woman. However, Victim Support is independent of the system and it did support the service user in her request to the Fiscal Service.

One woman did report her partner to the police and he was charged with attempting to rape her. She found the process of going to court traumatic and she felt unsupported by the system,

"It might sound daft but I just assumed that somebody would come to me offering support as my world had fallen to bits. I thought they (the police) would come to me and have a wee chat etc...but I didn't know the system."

However, she did say that if there had been somebody present at the Court to talk to her on her own, she might have opened up about what was happening to her.

5.5.5 Disposal by the court

The easy availability of data from the Police is not matched by data from the rest of the criminal justice system (COPFS and the Scottish Courts Service), which would assist local Violence Against Women fora to identify whether intervention by the criminal justice system is effective.

Concerns about the approach to prosecution and disposal of domestic abuse related prosecutions led to the pilot domestic abuse court dealing with all stages of the prosecution was established in Glasgow Sheriff Court in 2004. The rationale for that was described as including:

Issues for victims of domestic abuse in the court process, difficulties of participation and lack of support.

Lack of severity in sentencing, the nature of the charges and concerns about the lack of "seriousness" with which domestic abuse has been viewed in the criminal justice system.

Involvement of a range of agencies, but fragmentation of the response to domestic abuse and a lack of co-ordination of provision.

Difficulties in prosecuting domestic abuse, along with high attrition and withdrawal rates.

Lack of impact of traditional courts upon reducing domestic abuse and preventing further victimisation.³⁷

Published data does not identify either local or national attrition rates, withdrawal rates, sentencing patterns or impact of prosecution on the reduction of domestic abuse or further victimisation.³⁸

Some data can be obtained from COPFS via Freedom of Information requests. Data on local prosecution and attrition rates and sentencing disposal was requested, but was not available during the study time-frame.

The South West Community Justice Authority organised a coordinated event with the Ayrshire VAW Fora to consider how best they can strengthen links with the Fora.

One of the actions in the South West Community Justice Area plan is to ensure that perpetrators of domestic abuse who are not subject to a custodial sentence are referred to services. This is a long-term goal and Procurators Fiscal will be expected to demonstrate how they contribute to reducing re-offending when processing cases. (Action 2.5.3).³⁹ Presumably data on this will become routinely available.

U Division has started to maintain some data on the outcome of referrals to the fiscals for prosecution for their own internal purposes. The following analysis focuses on information supplied by U Division, although more comprehensive data from the Crown Office would provide a complete picture. It should be noted that the U Division Police data has not been verified with the Procurator Fiscal's office. Additionally it covers a short period (of 16 weeks) during which only a small number of cases have completed their journey through the court system. A final outcome is noted in 48 cases and their disposal is shown below.

³⁷Reid Howie Associates (2007) *Evaluation of the Pilot Domestic Abuse Court*, Scottish Government Social Research Findings No 93, <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/03/28153507/1>

³⁸ On the latter, police data does record repeat victims and repeat accused, but that does not mean that there has been a previous prosecution and conviction.

³⁹ South West Scotland Community Justice Authority. *Area Plan 2008 – 2011 and Action Plan 2008 - 2009*

Table 5.2 Disposal of domestic abuse related prosecutions from North Ayrshire, Jan- April 2009

Crime	Admonished	Custody	Drug Treatment Order	Fined	No Prosecution ⁴⁰	PF Liberated	Not Proven	Sentence Deferred	Warning Issued
Assault		1		6		5	1	5	
Assault, BOP				1				1	
Assault, BOP, Vandalism				1					
BOP ⁴¹	2	3		13	1	2		1	1
Breach of Bail		1		1				1	
Offensive Weapon, BOP			1						
Total	2	5	1	22	1	7	1	8	1

The most frequent disposal of a prosecution related to a domestic abuse incident is the imposition of a fine by the courts. A fine was imposed in 22 (46%) cases with the fines ranging from £70 to £600.

In the evaluation of the pilot domestic abuse court, the highest level of dissatisfaction amongst victims was with the use of fines as a disposal in domestic abuse related prosecutions. The main reasons quoted were that it was an insufficient response or would “solve nothing”.⁴² Where women are still economically dependent on their abusers the imposition of a fine may also have an additional impact on victims.

One of the women interviewed told us that her ex-partner was charged with attempted rape and although found guilty, was dealt with by community service and a fine.

Another woman remarked that her husband breached his bail conditions to prevent him coming near her, and when he was charged and taken into custody, the Sheriff’s response was to tell him not to do it again.

Non-harassment orders (NHOs) are not consistently used as a sentencing disposal, as was also found to be the case in the Glasgow Domestic Abuse Court. Both Police and Fiscals are adapting procedures to increase their availability as a disposal. At the moment, NHOs can only be imposed where the crime charged falls within the definition of harassment, so the initial investigation should investigate and narrate a course of conduct, rather than simply focus on the culminating incident.

⁴⁰ Cases marked “no prosecution” cannot be prosecuted at a later stage. Cases where the PF has released an accused can be revisited at a later stage.

⁴¹ Breach of the Peace

This is likely to change with new legislation, making it easier to impose NHOs as a disposal in criminal cases.

An essential part of the Glasgow pilot has been the involvement of ASSIST. ASSIST is a voluntary sector organisation which supports victims in domestic abuse prosecutions. Their support included advice about the court process; practical support; links to other agencies; and emotional support. ASSIST also provide the court with up to date information about victims and their attitude to various disposals prior to sentencing. Therefore, although they are involved in the criminal justice system, they are not part of it.

A Report to the Scottish Government by the Glasgow Domestic Abuse Court Feasibility Study Group⁴³ identified four additional services which ASSIST provided which were seen as crucial, particularly with regard to safety planning. These services include:

- contact for victims within 24 hours, which allows early initial risk assessment and safety planning
- continuity of contact with victims, allowing the Procurator Fiscal and the court the benefit of up-to-date information about the views of the victim
- advocacy (that is advice, information and support to the victim on an ongoing basis, not only at the point of crisis)
- multi-agency risk assessment conferencing (MARAC).

The Scottish Government has produced a Toolkit to Aid the Development of Specialist Approaches to Cases of Domestic Abuse. This is to be used in each Sheriffdom to identify local responses to incorporate some of the lessons of the pilot domestic abuse court.

5.5.6 Work with offenders

Work with offenders is a key strand of prevention of repeat abuse. There are currently no domestic abuse offender programmes operating in North Ayrshire. However, Criminal Justice in North Ayrshire is keen to be involved when funding is made available. Local authorities are being asked by the Scottish Government to make bids for funding to deliver the programme. North Ayrshire Criminal Justice hopes that their track record of good structured work with community disposals will provide the foundation for a successful bid.

The Caledonian System⁴⁴ is an integrated approach to address men's domestic abuse and includes a programme for adult male offenders aged 16 and over, who have been convicted of offences involving domestic abuse, whose abuse has taken place in a heterosexual relationship, and are subject to statutory supervision.

⁴³ Glasgow Domestic Abuse Court Feasibility Study Group (2008) *Report to the Scottish Government*; Edinburgh: The Scottish Government.

⁴⁴ Annual report on the Scottish Government's *Gender Equality Scheme 2008-2011*

It also includes:

- a service to women's partners, ex-partners and children (including personal support and contact from a women's services worker)
- a training programme for criminal justice staff (case managers and group facilitators in the main)
- a training programme for staff involved in women's and children's services
- the development of inter-agency protocols.

In the absence of the Caledonian System, there is no standard for work with offenders and, as we have seen, the most common disposal is the imposition of a fine.

5.5.7 Protection of children

The key agencies in North Ayrshire are increasingly engaged in structured multi-agency initiatives to prevent harm due to VAW and also their children, building on Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) principles and related Scottish Government led programmes which aim to ensure that children receive the most appropriate response to their needs.

If the police attend at a domestic abuse incident and there are children in the household, then the incident is referred to both Social Work Services and the Scottish Children's Reporters Administration (SCRA). Such a referral to the Children's Hearing system is a 'non-offence referral', since the child has not committed any offence.

SCRA has reported a significant rise in non-offence referrals, of which a large proportion are likely to be associated with increased reporting to the police of domestic abuse. The HMIE Report⁴⁵ on services to protect children and young people noted that, "Domestic abuse referrals were not assessed and prioritised on an inter-agency basis to deliver support for children in proportion to the level of risk involved. The Children's Reporter received many inappropriate domestic abuse referrals from the police".

There have been national initiatives to set up systems to respond to the rise in non-offence referrals. In North Ayrshire a non-offence related referral process has been developed. This sets out procedures to be followed by the Police, Health, Social Services, Education and the Reporter to try to ensure that those closest to affected children are alerted and able to respond, and that referrals are appropriately screened, so that SCRA may intervene where required. The Child Protection Committee is monitoring this. The process will be evaluated and reported to Child Protection Committee and Chief Officers in September 2009.

It was commented by some professionals that assessment of the risk to children in individual cases can be problematic and at times inconsistent. Also it was suggested that it can be more straightforward to assess risk and strategies for responding to the

⁴⁵ Joint inspection of services to protect children and young people in the North Ayrshire Council area May 2008

needs of under 5s, for whom development milestones are better known and there are community resources on offer e.g. nurseries.

5.2 Key points

Civil remedies are a useful component in the range of protections available. They provide a remedy for behaviour which is not criminal and yet abusive. They can provide long-term protection. They provide women with control of some key decisions: how long they require protection, what behaviour they need protection from and when a breach of the order threatens them.

The VAW Forum should consider specific measures that could help to boost awareness of rights, availability and accessibility of civil remedies and how these might best operate in North Ayrshire. These could include targeted training for front-line staff covering: the practical information required for women about civil remedies; the production of leaflets on rights to exclude an abusive partner and protection from abuse; and joint training and work with local solicitors to increase the availability of remedies. A website that explained women's rights, described available services with contact details and provided links as necessary would also be helpful, as will the proposed development of the North Ayrshire Women's Aid website.

A criminal justice response is not always appropriate, or one that meets women's concerns. Some women do not want to engage with the whole criminal justice system, appear in court and give evidence against a partner or former partner. Some women want assistance in leaving abusive relationships without exposing themselves or partners to the criminal justice system.

On receipt of a request to withdraw from a prosecution the protocol envisages that the Police or VIA will intervene. A routine referral to external support agencies at that point, should enable women to discuss their concerns and to assist them through advocacy support during the prosecution process. If the prosecution proceeds, then the women may have the support of an additional service. We are aware that in another jurisdiction the fiscal has referred directly to a local women's aid group.

As the local courts consider implementation of the specialist approach to prosecution of domestic abuse courts, the VAW Forum should seek to influence the local response together with their criminal justice partners.

ASSIST has been crucial to the success of the Glasgow Court; there is no existing equivalent service in North Ayrshire which would support women through the criminal justice system. Changes to existing working practices and roles could be investigated to try and replicate some of the benefits of ASSIST within existing services.

CHAPTER SIX

PROVISION

6.1 Introduction

Although there are key services targeted to respond to the needs of women affected by male violence and their children, in the context of a complex local service system routes into and through services are influenced by a range of issues. These include how well informed women are about, and confident in, potential service responses. Women may also choose not to present for help at a particular stage, or not to present to particular aspects of officialdom. Pathways in and through services therefore vary.

This Chapter on Provision reviews the role of a range of key services and their responses to women and their children. The National Strategy defines the Provision agenda as being to provide adequate services to deal with the consequences of violence against women and children to help them to rebuild their lives. Additionally, the Children and Young People strategy broadens the agenda and requires wider-ranging joint work in its specific focus on the harm caused to children and young people by domestic abuse.

A range of services in North Ayrshire (and pan-Ayrshire) that respond to the needs of women and children who have experienced gender-based abuse is shown at Appendix A10, which seeks to map local provision. Some professional interviewees highlighted the particular difficulties experienced by women who have experienced abuse in more rural areas/Islands, such as Arran and Cumbrae, where there are problems in accessing services and in maintaining anonymity/ privacy.

It should be noted that Women's Aid has developed in North Ayrshire, largely with the funding and support of the Council's Homelessness service, as the only dedicated service with a remit to respond to women and children who have experienced domestic abuse. Other services may respond more or less frequently to such women and children as part of a broader remit. There are no services with a dedicated remit to respond to other forms of violence against women such as those who have been raped, or women/children/young people who have been or are being sexually abused.

The following section reports on particular services from the viewpoints of both professional and service users. As stated in Chapter one the professional interview programme was extensive and structured by a comprehensive list of contacts. Reaching the 15 service user interviewees was enabled by four agencies, with the result that interviewees had taken differing pathways into and through accommodation and support services.⁴⁶ The interviews reflected women's varied

⁴⁶ Service user interviews were facilitated by: Women's Aid (nine), North Ayrshire Council's Homelessness Service (three): North Ayrshire Council's Home Security Service (two) and the Rape Counselling and Resource Centre (East Ayrshire) (one). Quarriers was unable to assist at the time.

usage and experiences of key services: for example, three Homelessness and nine Women's Aid service users agreed to participate; this may affect the balance of views expressed across the services.

6.2 Women's Aid

As the only dedicated service in North Ayrshire for women, children and young people who experience domestic abuse, Women's Aid provides a range of services for women who have experienced domestic abuse and their children. These include:

- accommodation in communal refuges and dispersed flats (two of which have been adapted for women with disabilities)
- support services to those in refuge
- outreach support to women who do not access refuge or who have been rehoused from refuge
- specialist addiction support
- services dedicated to children and young people
- a range of advice, information and training services.

Being well linked into the network of services, Women's Aid receive referrals from various services, including Social Work services, the Homelessness service, Police, Health services, voluntary agencies and self-referrals. The professional interviews highlighted that the agency is generally viewed as being very helpful and collaborative, often by providing constructive advice and support to other agencies.

There is an out-of-hours service, but this has been restricted in the past year to being offered only to women already in refuge, due to current funding. It means that Women's Aid cannot respond to women calling outwith normal working hours, who may however use the Homelessness service's standby after-hours service to access accommodation. Professionals also commented that they had found Women's Aid training to be very helpful.

6.2.1 Accessing Women's Aid services

Of the women interviewed for this study many had self-referred, having found out about the service from a variety of sources including: their family; friends; health visitors; community psychiatric nurses (CPNs); social workers; or from written information, such as posters.

Others had been referred to Women's Aid by Homelessness/ Housing services, and some women had stayed in temporary accommodation provided by the Homelessness service and/or Women's Aid.

Only one interviewee who contacted Women's Aid had been told that they had no accommodation available for her, particularly given her son's age (he was 15). She was referred to the Council for help and Women's Aid made the appointment for her and offered her counselling, which she has not taken up but may do so in the future. They also phone her every two weeks or so to see how she is. She values this as,

“They don’t overpower me but if I find later that I want a service it’s easier if the lines of communication are open and ongoing and I am not saying I haven’t heard from them in months.”

This demonstrates the value of services that reach out to women and keep in touch.

One interviewee chose not to go into refuge, as she said she was concerned that some women “*might be drug addicts*”. She said that the different types of refuge provision had not been explained to her. Another woman who said she was aware of Women’s Aid services for a long time, similarly chose not to contact them, but for different reasons:

“They are a voluntary service... they offer refuge and counselling but I am worried about my longer term safety...e.g. what happens after you leave refuge.”

The above examples illustrate that some women or households may not access Women’s Aid for reasons of their own choice.

Some women and their children may not access the accommodation because the refuge accommodation is full (the most frequent reason) or because of their assessed unsuitability for the service at a particular time.

The latter assessment is based on consideration of the needs of existing residents, the situation within shared accommodation and issues specific to individual applicants. However, non-admission does not preclude access to Women’s Aid’s support, as outreach support may be offered to women accommodated elsewhere.

6.2.2 Practical and emotional support

Interviewees who had used Women’s Aid were generally very positive about the help and support they had received. Women spoke about both emotional and practical help received, with comments including:

“If you needed any help the staff were always there...you could speak to them at any time...they never said we are busy come back later. They were all very friendly and you could talk to them about anything...and I knew some of them have been through the same thing.”

“The best thing is knowing that you are not alone and that there are people out there.”

Practical support received from Women’s Aid included:

- help with benefits and form filling
- help with housing
- help to be put in touch with lawyers
- referral to other services.

Other service users' comments on Women's Aid included:

"They helped me a lot with form filling...benefit forms, housing forms and getting a community care grant. I didn't have a clue."

"I can always go and to talk to the staff and they will do anything for you, within reason. They take you places if you need to go, for example, the doctors. They have been great, they really have."

Having access to support when they were 'going places', was valued by women for various reasons. For some, this helped to overcome the hurdles faced in doing things for the first time and in going to places and into situations that women were unsure of. Others valued this support because they were afraid of going out alone, particularly if they knew their ex-partner was looking for them.

The fact that support from Women's Aid had not been time limited, was considered to have been of great benefit. One woman who said, *"things always come back to haunt you"*, also said:

"The support from Women's Aid has been invaluable. It has saved my life and my sanity. I have been encouraged but not bullied...pushed, but not controlled."

Another woman, not supported by Woman's Aid, talked about the long- term effect of abuse:

"I can be doing anything...watching the telly, walking down the street, and suddenly I have a flashback."

However, some other women who commented that the support provided by Women's Aid was practical rather than emotional, said also that they would have valued more emotional support. One said, *"sitting down and giving you a cup of tea isn't emotional support"*. Another woman commented that, *"they are only there to listen to you - they didn't help with advice about my ex-partner"*. It was also clear that she had not received information about civil remedies.

6.2.3 Type of Women's Aid accommodation provided – refuge or scatter flat, outreach support

Some interviewees had stayed in refuge accommodation or in a Women's Aid scatter flat, while others had not. There were varying views on the suitability of refuge accommodation, with some women saying that they definitely would have preferred to be in self-contained accommodation:

"in the refuge you are in the same room as your children all the time, and there are other women in the place. If it's your own place you can at least go through to the kitchen and leave the kids in the sitting room."

“If you were up all night in your own flat, so be it....you can just sit with a cup of coffee and not disturb anybody else.”

One woman said that the refuge accommodation (individual flats in a communal setting) did not make her feel very safe - *“there is nobody on at night, just cameras and you can get in at the back of the building”*.

Nonetheless, some of the women who said that they would have preferred their own place, also said that when they first went into refuge, they were “in such a state” that they might not have been able to cope on their own.

This suggests that, while women generally preferred the scatter flats, refuge may play a valuable role in both accommodating and supporting women in crisis, particularly in the early days of leaving a violent partner.

It should be noted that Women’s Aid’s outreach service provides support to women who are awaiting rehousing as well as to those in permanent accommodation.

6.2.4 The Women’s Aid Pearl’s Centre

The Centre, based in Saltcoats, provides drop in access, a lunch club and other activities including alternative therapies. It is managed by Women’s Aid, whose Addictions and Three Towns Outreach workers advise and support women in the Centre; the Children’s Outreach workers also work there.

Only women who have experienced, or are experiencing, domestic abuse can currently access services through Pearl’s Centre. With the aim of broadening access and the range of support on offer, Women’s Aid has been in discussions with SAY Women, with NHS Ayrshire and Arran about providing a Women’s Health clinic, and with Addictions to provide a women’s only addictions clinic (open) at the Centre. It is intended that any woman using the Centre who discloses domestic abuse would have a direct referral route into Women’s Aid services.

The Women’s Interest Collective involves a group of former service users who fundraise for the Pearl’s Centre. The Women for Justice group similarly involves former service users from Women’s Aid and operates as a campaigning group.

A number of interviewees had used the ‘drop in’ service and some for a long time. One woman, whose key worker had tried to persuade her to go along to the Centre for about a year before she finally went said:

“It makes you feel safe and secure and you meet people. Before I went I had isolated myself and it’s difficult to get back into the real world.”

Another woman said:

“Coming to the Centre means the world to me. Even if you don’t feel like it or getting ready, it gives you the push to do it and you always leave with a smile on your face...Coming lets you see that other people are having problems.”

This woman said that she had started coming to the Centre a few years ago. She had seen an alternative therapist there and said, “she unlocked the door to what happened when I was younger and made me understand why I am as I am.”

Given that some interviewees voiced a strong preference that the Centre should have longer opening hours, a recent positive development is that Women’s Aid has recently obtained the funding required for a dedicated worker. This will ensure that the Centre is now open every day of the week.

The experience of these women indicates the value of community-based, women-only, centre-based resources, to enable women to access ongoing support, opportunities for confidence building and routes to accessing the particular services that they need. The model of targeted outreach services to community resources, such as Pearl’s, is also a positive means of supporting women to address other problems and of promoting the take-up of services that address these.

6.3 Homelessness services and tenancy support

Homelessness services provide a key route of access to temporary and permanent accommodation and support for women fleeing violence, whether provided by the Council or the voluntary sector.

The Homelessness service, which is centralised, works across widely dispersed and diverse communities, with some variations in access to services for homeless people. In relation to the island of Arran for example, the Homelessness service has had to develop special arrangements to enable access to accommodation and support for women fleeing an abusive relationship from the island. A woman may be advised and have her needs assessed in Arran by the Council’s Homelessness staff, or alternatively they may be given a ferry ticket to come over to the mainland. The Council has an arrangement with local B&B’s for women who present out-of-hours on the island.

A key first stage of response involves the homelessness assessment along with information and advice on housing and support options, with these functions carried out by the Homelessness service. Every household assessed as homeless has their support needs assessed using a support matrix, which scores the level of their vulnerability. The matrix score determines both the support plan and the level of support provided throughout the duration of their homelessness.

Every homeless client has an allocated support worker and Homelessness assessment and support staff require to link and collaborate with a number of providers. The Homelessness service manages hostel accommodation (in Ardrossan) as well as temporary dispersed properties throughout the Council area. Other hostel accommodation for homeless households is managed by Cunninghame Housing Association (in Irvine). Additionally, Quarriers provides supported accommodation (in Kilwinning and Saltcoats) for young people, and one service is specifically for young women.

Different staff and services provide support to enable homeless people to access and sustain their accommodation. Within hostel accommodation (Quarriers, Victoria House (CHA) and Ardrossan Short stay, Women's Aid), support is provided by support/temporary accommodation staff. Within Furnished Accommodation, the support package is provided by an Outreach Support Officer.

In terms of resettlement support, any household rehoused from furnished accommodation receives a basic package of practical advice and support irrespective of the landlord. If the support matrix shows a high score at the point of resettlement, a support referral is offered so the household can receive tenancy support (for NAC clients) or be referred to Simon Community, Quarriers or Barnardo's services for all other households. If a homeless household receives additional support from Social Work, they will be alerted to the new tenancy address to continue support. Any other identified support needs are signposted to specialist agencies, including Women's Aid.

Overall, the interview programme highlighted that for clients who have particular needs and vulnerabilities, statutory services such as Homelessness, have worked positively to commission and resource specialist voluntary services, and have collaborated with other services to meet clients' varying needs. For example, the Simon Community (intense support needs) and Barnardo's (households with children) will continue to provide support to those who are resettled, and Quarriers which accommodates 16 to 25 year olds, will provide time-limited resettlement support.

Examples also emerged of partnership working in relation to women who have fled violence and who are accommodated in the Council's temporary accommodation. In some cases, tenancy support was received from the Council, and in others Women's Aid provided support. In the case of women moving on from refuge provision, or those for whom refuge provision is unsuitable, women (and their children) who have been assessed as homeless may be accommodated in the Council's temporary accommodation until suitable permanent accommodation is available.

6.3.1 Experiences of the homelessness route and tenancy support

Some women's experiences of accessing support through the homelessness route are outlined below. It should be noted that in drawing on their experience of services, some interviewees' comments referred to services received some years ago or to other services' responses, rather than solely to the Homelessness service as it currently operates. This reflects both the regularity of repeat incidents of abuse and repeated attempts at leaving abusive relationships. Comments are not always about current service provision. This reflects the fact that pathways to support for women who have been abused are seldom linear ones. It means there is some difficulty in linking service users' views to current services, as some re-structuring of services has occurred over time.

The role of informal support and advice, as well as the sensitivity and the quality and advice and assistance provided by front line homelessness staff, are very important to women fleeing abuse. One woman said that, after leaving her husband of over 30 years, and initially spending a couple of weeks staying with each of two family

members, a friend told her about the Homelessness service which she approached for help. Having presented as homeless, she found staff there to be, “*very friendly*”.

A second woman said that when she presented as homeless: “*They were absolutely fantastic and told me not to worry...that things would be sorted out and that I would get support*”. A third, described the Homelessness team as being, “*absolutely fine*”, by contrast with her experience of a member of staff in a *different (area team)* housing office - “*she looks down her nose at you and that could stop people asking for help*”.

Regarding experience in hostel accommodation, the first interviewee above was placed in a hostel for about a month and although she felt quite safe there because of the position of her room, she had, “*kept to myself because there were lots of drunks and drug addicts*”. The second said,

“We spent the first night in a hostel, and while I don’t want to label people, there were a lot of drugs about outside...but the staff were great and kept asking if there was anything we needed. Next day we went into a flat.”

Another woman, who described her previous attempt to leave her abusive husband, illustrated how a suitable and timely response may prevent repeat abuse.

“The first time, they put me in a hostel with my children and I didn’t feel safe there. I only stayed one night, then went back (home). I now wish that I had stuck to my guns and stayed away but I felt as if housing had just said we will shove you into the hostel.”

The above comments about residence in hostels/ shared temporary accommodation reflect some of the findings of wider research: that the mix of needs in mainstream hostels can be challenging for vulnerable women who, even if they feel safe, may become isolated. Where staff are supportive to vulnerable hostel residents, this is valued immensely. Clearly also, some women who have fled abuse feel most comfortable in ‘women only’ hostel provision.⁴⁷

6.3.1.1 Women’s experience of advice, referral and joint work

The pathway to support for some women accessing a homelessness assessment route may involve referral by the Homelessness service, for example to Women’s Aid, Quarriers or the Simon Community.

One woman who had been placed in a hostel for around a month after presenting as homeless, said she had learnt about Women’s Aid having seen posters and asking a hostel worker about it. After staff enquired whether she would like to go there and contacted Women’s Aid, she found she was able to move into refuge where she stayed for about eight months.

⁴⁷Rosengard et al and Scottish Health Feedback (2000) *The Future of Hostels*. Edinburgh: Scottish Executive.

Another woman indicated that the homelessness response and inter-service collaboration may have improved over recent years. One woman who went to the Council's Homelessness service (summer 2008), said she was informed by a worker about Women's Aid and their services. After the worker had contacted Women's Aid on her behalf, she went into refuge a couple of days later, having first gone away for a bit to "clear my head". This woman said that refuge accommodation would have been available on the night she presented as homeless had she wanted it. This contrasted with her experience of seeking help from the Council some two years previously. Then, she said, Women's Aid was not mentioned to her as a possible source of either accommodation or support. She felt:

"They weren't very nice or understanding the first time, but the second time they were very good, very nice and very understanding."

Quicker referral to Women's Aid may reflect improved training and collaboration between services, both of which are important in Prevention. The Homelessness service has recognised the importance of such training and has participated in an ongoing training programme jointly run between the Council and Women's Aid. This training programme was valued by the Homelessness staff interviewed, and is clearly relevant to ensuring a sensitive homelessness response. The training has also been provided to Social Work and Education staff, and professional interviewees considered it to have been productive in promoting effective joint working.

Regardless of whether our interviewees had accessed Women's Aid or Council temporary accommodation (or both), most women had put their name down on the waiting list for a permanent social rented tenancy. One woman described how helpful the Council had been when interviewing her in connection with her application. As it was known that her husband was trying to find out her location and to reach her, special arrangements were made to interview her out with the main office.

Another woman who did not present as homeless and was housed through the waiting list, said she had understood that Housing had consulted her lawyer and the police prior to making the housing offer. The offer was withdrawn after those consulted had confirmed to Housing that she would not be safe in that accommodation. She was happy with the next offer she received.

6.3.2 Outreach/tenancy support

Most interviewees who had stayed in, or were staying in, Council accommodation (temporary and/or permanent) had outreach support while in temporary accommodation until moving into permanent accommodation, at which point they received tenancy support. Virtually all interviewees spoke positively about outreach and tenancy support services.

One interviewee was not comfortable being visited by male support workers, suggesting that some women may prefer a women only service after the trauma they had experienced.

“I have always been visited by two workers and one has always been a male. When I moved flats, there was only one worker there and that was a male. No disrespect to them, but it makes me feel uncomfortable.”

Another woman, who had moved into permanent accommodation provided by a housing association, while delighted with the property, was sorry to find that this meant the end of contact with the outreach support worker from North Ayrshire Council, whom she had while in a temporary council flat. She said that the housing association doesn't provide such a service.

“I was really sad about it. She (the outreach support worker) was absolutely brilliant...she got me a community care grant that I didn't even know I was entitled to. We just used to talk and she would make sure I was okay.”

As she had been in refuge before moving to the Council temporary flat, she knew about the Women's Aid outreach service, which she said she might look at getting in the future. This woman's comments suggest that service users may find some difficulty in appreciating the different staff titles and roles. Also as this and other research indicates⁴⁸, service users value positive communication, shared understanding and trusting relationships with a support worker. Termination of a supportive relationship can therefore *feel* disrupting and create insecurity.

Overall, the interviews stressed that the housing support provided was valued for a variety of reasons. Moreover, the experience of one woman who had been in a number of violent relationships, shows that a positive experience of housing support can make a real difference to women who have experienced serial violence. She said: “I have had more help in the last month since I presented as homeless than I have had in the last seven years.”

This woman's experience indicated that although housing support has a practical emphasis, a personalised, sensitive and holistic approach is important. She was particularly grateful that her support worker had arranged for her to see a bereavement counsellor, as she felt she had never really come to terms with the death of one of her ex-partners. She valued the fact that the worker was willing to accompany her to the initial interview, as she found it difficult to go places and meet with professionals for the first time.

While most women were happy with the support received, interviewees' experiences indicate the need for services to regularly review how they can maximise continuity and integration of support. Some women find discontinuity and change in support provision unsettling, as was recognised by some professional interviewees. Additionally, the interview programme overall highlighted the value of outreach support, which it is clear that the Council has addressed in its approach to service development.

⁴⁸ Rosengard et al (2002) *Routes out of Homelessness*. Edinburgh: Scottish Executive; Rosengard et al (2006) *Intentionally Homeless Household in Scotland – accommodation and support needs*. Edinburgh: Scottish Executive

Overall, there were indications of the benefits of having a specialised, targeted Homelessness service, which has a partnership approach to providing assessment, advice and housing support for homeless people generally, and for women who have experienced abuse specifically. NAC's Homelessness service is well placed through its commissioning/ contracting functions to influence provision for women who have experienced abuse, in monitoring performance and in data collection to inform wider needs assessment and planning. Additionally there are clear benefits to be gained from collaborative working.

6.4 Home Security

NAC's Home Security Project (HSP) was set up in 2005 to provide practical support to people who have suffered serious and persistent antisocial behaviour or who experience domestic abuse. In 2007/08 there were 121 referrals (a decrease of 17 from the previous year) for women who experienced domestic abuse, compared with 182 due to anti-social behaviour. It should be noted that the balance changed in the year 2008/09, when the HSP received 396 referrals, of which 182 related to women who had experienced domestic abuse and 214 related to anti-social behaviour.

Part of the rationale for the development of this service was to provide women who experience domestic abuse with the option of remaining in their own accommodation rather than having to present as homeless. Referrals are sourced from a range of agencies/services including the Domestic Abuse Unit, Victim Support, the Council's housing and tenancy support officers' Women's Aid, Simon Community and RSLs. Individuals cannot self-refer. Home Security measures are provided irrelevant of housing tenure. The service has received and accepted referrals from women who have been raped and have put alarms in their accommodation to increase their safety and wellbeing. They also gives women the Scottish Government's information pack for those who have been raped or sexually assaulted.

The service uses a referral form to obtain details about e.g. household composition; if other Council departments or any external agencies are involved; the nature of the referral; details of drug/alcohol/mental health/violence or other known risk factors, and offender-related information.

Home Security discusses what the woman's security/safety concerns are and what she would like Home Security to do. They provide for example, security chains; slip bolts; security lights; personal attack alarms and monitored panic alarms. They also signpost women to relevant support services. If a monitored panic alarm is installed regular tests and reviews are carried out. There is no set time for how long an alarm is installed for.

This service provides important longer-term safety measures for women who wish to remain in their home, or who are being rehoused after leaving an abusive relationship. Home Security was widely viewed as a very positive protective and preventative addition for women who have experienced domestic abuse/ violence.

Several of the women interviewed had been referred to the Home Security scheme and they found this helped to make them feel safe. One woman who was referred to the service by Women's Aid after her ex-husband started harassing her (some years after she left the abusive relationship) said,

“They got me security lights for outside which let you see who is at the door, door bolts and deadlocks. They also offered me a panic button but I didn’t want my grandchildren setting it off. It was all installed in less than ten days after the Women’s Aid worker contacted the Council and the woman who came out from the Council to see me about it was very nice. I wouldn’t have known anything about the service.”

One woman had Home Security measures installed, initially when she was staying “care of”, and then after she moved into her own house. She accidentally set off the alarm on one occasion and said she was comforted by the speed of the response. She also appreciated the regular testing of the alarm by Home Security. Another woman described the importance of the Home Security measures, which she said were the most vital service for her:

“Its practical help but it’s emotional too because if you don’t feel safe....Its vital that you can have a safe place to come home to charge your batteries.”

Women who had not been in touch with home security also spoke of the need to feel safe with some commenting of their ex-partners that they would live in fear of them for the rest of their lives. One said, *“My permanent flat is great. It has security buzzers. It’s very important for me to feel safe.”*

6.5 Social Work services

Women had varying experiences of Social Work involvement. One woman said that a social worker had come to visit her daughter, after a domestic abuse report to the Police. She thought that this was because the Police had contacted them, knowing that there was a child in the house. However, the social worker had simply said that as her daughter seemed to be coping okay and because she was not an alcoholic or a drug addict, they could not help.

Another woman whose child had witnessed her being assaulted, was visited by a social worker who told her that Social Work would contest any application by her ex-partner for access, but she was not asked if she needed other support. In contrast, one woman said that her son’s social worker had been the person who had given her most help after she had left her abusive relationship. When this woman called to tell the social worker that they had moved house, she was given Women’s Aid’s contact number, and the social worker then helped her to get food, money, towels, and had even given her some of her own clothes. This woman said she had no idea how to get such help otherwise - *“I didn’t know where to go...I would probably have stayed with friends and family until I had the deposit to get a flat”*.

6.6 Victim Support

Victim Support North Ayrshire is a charitable organisation, affiliated to Victim Support Scotland and it provides emotional support and practical information to victims of both reported and unreported crime. Support is provided face-to-face (including at the person’s home), by telephone and at times by email, and the service also refers

clients to other organisations, such as Women's Aid, Home Security and (formerly) Moving On. In 2007/08, 102 women who had experienced male violence had sought their assistance.

Services for witnesses and victims in the Criminal Court in North Ayrshire are provided by Victim Information and Advice (VIA) and Victim Support's Witness Service. VIA is part of the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service and in 2007/08, 52% of its cases throughout Scotland related to domestic abuse⁴⁹. VIA provides:

- information and advice about the criminal justice system and what a victim/witness can expect, and arrange court visits to familiarise people with the surroundings before a trial
- updates on the progress of cases to victims/witnesses
- signposting to services and organisations specific to their needs and requirements.

The Witness Service is based in the court where witnesses attending may access the service directly. It provides information on court procedures; accompanies witnesses to visit the court before the trial, and supports the witness in court and afterwards. People can self-refer or may be referred by agencies such as VIA.

Women's Aid also accompany women who are attending court and link with the Witness Service, for example to arrange separate waiting rooms. The Witness Service may keep them informed about the progress of the case.

One interviewee who used the Victim Support service after Women's Aid had approached it on her behalf, said they had given her a personal alarm which made her feel safer. Another was told that when she accessed permanent accommodation, Victim Support could do a safety audit and assist with things like window locks. Women received useful advice from these services: one learnt about non-harassment orders which she followed up with a solicitor, while another was advised on making a claim for criminal injuries compensation.

6.7 Rape and sexual assault

Police and Victim Support's statistics for 2007/08 indicate the number of rapes and sexual assaults reported. In that year, 25 rapes were reported to the Police, and some of the women affected may also have used Victim Support services. In that same year, Victim Support assisted women dealing with the aftermath of rape in relation to: 23 rapes; three attempted rapes and 76 other sexual offences. Overall, there was a broad consensus amongst professional interviewees that women who have been raped or sexually assaulted face a stark gap in specialist services in North Ayrshire.

North Ayrshire services regularly refer women who have been raped/ sexually assaulted to the Rape Counselling and Resource Centre (RCRC), based in

⁴⁹ VIA Statistics 2007/08: Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service website

Kilmarnock. Some women in North Ayrshire have received a limited service from the RCRC, which in addition to its funding by the Scottish Government and East Ayrshire Council, receives a tranche of non-geographically restricted funding from NHS Ayrshire and Arran.

The Centre has had 79 enquiries from women in North Ayrshire over the last 18 months. Currently they assist five women via telephone and sometimes face-to-face support, although the latter requires women to travel to Kilmarnock.

The RCRC is aware of the lack of services in the area and is considering what might be provided to best meet women's needs.

Two interviewees had received support and counselling from the RCRC in Kilmarnock, having been referred by Women's Aid. One woman said that she had been in touch with Victim Support after she had been raped by a stranger. When the other woman was asked if it had been easy enough to get into this service, they commented, *"I think it was all down to Women's Aid...they have a voice to get you into services"*.

Both women were very positive about the help and support they received from RCRC. One woman commented:

"When I first went in there I was distraught and thought that I wouldn't be able to talk about it, but I was told that I could talk about anything I liked...I probably didn't talk about what had happened for about seven or eight weeks. I needed to build up confidence and trust...then I realised that it wasn't so much about what happened but how it was affecting me."

This woman said that she had found books and other reading material very helpful, including some that she got from the RCRC. The RCRC also referred her to a psychologist whom she saw once, but who said she could get back in touch if she stopped the counselling. She had been given written material on post traumatic stress and on low moods, and said, *"it was great to have things in writing"*.

Both women experienced difficulties with the travel distances involved. One woman had attended weekly for counselling sessions in Kilmarnock and was taken there by staff while she was in refuge. However, she had been unable to attend for some time after she moved into a permanent tenancy, both because of the distance involved and the fact that she could not afford the bus fare. The other woman who had used the service found the travel by bus difficult at times; it sometimes made her anxious (her bus fares were reimbursed by RCRC). She said it would make a difference if there was a local service.

The problems these women experienced in accessing a service provided some distance away, highlights the need for more locally based services.

6.8 Health services

The spectrum of Health services and responses that are relevant to women who have experienced violence in North Ayrshire range across front-line screening and

interventions by GPs, hospital A&E departments and specialist services, such as gynaecology. All work with women whose experiences of abuse may not have been disclosed and thus remain hidden, in North Ayrshire as elsewhere, and whose health needs may have been unaddressed.⁵⁰

Those consulted in this study recognised the broad spectrum of Health services that need to be aware of and focused on addressing the needs of women (and their children) who have been affected by violence.

6.8.1 Issues of routine enquiry and accessing services

Routine enquiry is being introduced in North Ayrshire and across Scotland; it aims to maximise women's opportunity to disclose abuse and improve the health service response. NHS Ayrshire and Arran are commissioning training prior to implementation of the Routine Enquiry approach. To date the only service that has adopted this approach is the Maternity Service, which was reported to have developed a "good referral pathway".

Some women interviewed said they would have welcomed such enquiries, which they thought might have made a difference to preventing future abuse. Others said that, had they been asked how things were at home, they would simply have said that "*they were okay*". One woman who was prescribed medication, "*to help calm my nerves and help me sleep*", also said "*my doctor didn't ask why I needed them and I didn't explain*". None of the women interviewed said that they would mind being asked, just as has been commented in wider debates on routine enquiry.⁵¹

Some interviewees gave examples of enquiry and intervention by the health service which they said had been, at least in part, instrumental in them leaving abusive relationships. One woman, who had left her partner a number of years ago, said:

"The health visitor came to visit when my daughter was small and recognised an abusive relationship. The next time she came, she told me about help and support available and gave me a leaflet. At first I was ashamed about being handed leaflets and was worried about how to face her again but later I knew I had to get help."

Another woman who had attended a CPN for confidence-building, said that after the abuse had been discussed, the CPN told her about Women's Aid's services.

"She also said that she had been down this road herself and I think that partly influenced my decision to get in touch with Women's Aid again."

⁵⁰ Coy M, Kelly L and Foord J (2009) *Map of Gaps 2: The Postcode Lottery of Violence against women support services in Britain*. Equality and Human Rights Commission. P17

⁵¹ Online Public Library of Science (PLOS) Medicine Debate: *Should Health Professionals Screen All Women for Domestic Violence?* (Taket A, Wathen N and MacMillan H) (Public Library of Science) <http://www.plosmedicine.org/article/info:doi/10.1371/journal.pmed.0010004>. Taket states "once women have experienced being asked, they are usually in favour of being asked. This is true both for those who have experienced or are experiencing abuse, and those who have not have been asked".

One woman who was assaulted so violently that she needed an emergency hospital admission, said that while she thought the doctors suspected she had been attacked by her partner and asked if there was anything she wanted to tell them, her ex-partner controlled the situation to the extent that she was not able to say anything.

“He would only take me to the hospital after I had promised that I wouldn’t say anything to the doctors. He was very fly and gave me two sleeping tablets, hoping I would be asleep before I saw them. He refused to leave my side but the doctors insisted that he go out of the room. They asked me if there was anything I wanted to tell them, but I knew that he was just on the other side of the door, so I said no. I made up a story about my injuries. He was then at my side as much as possible so that I had as little time as possible with the nurses.”

Another woman said that, although she knew about patient confidentiality, both she and her ex-partner had the same GP, so she did not want to say anything.

Few women had spoken to their GPs about the abuse they had experienced. However one who had, said that she had been tremendous. She commented, *“Well, you can’t just walk out and leave with nothing”*.

The relatively low level of disclosure to GPs indicated in the interviews, reflects the findings of the People’s Panel survey carried out in 2007. This found that only around 20% said they would seek help from their GP if they experienced domestic abuse, compared with 59% from the Police and 25% from Women’s Aid.⁵²

6.9 Mental health

Research has found that mental health problems are often a consequence of abuse, whether this occurred in childhood or in later life. Consequences identified have included: depression; post-traumatic stress disorder; self-harming behaviour; misuse of alcohol or other drugs and suicide, or suicidal thoughts (see for example, Barron, 2005⁵³; Humphreys et al 2005⁵⁴; Greenan, 2004⁵⁵ and The Scottish Government, 2008b⁵⁶).

Some services that participated in the interview programme indicated that there can be real difficulties faced in attempting to access and sustain NHS psychiatric services for women who experience abuse in North Ayrshire. A professional

⁵² Lowland Market Research (2007) *North Ayrshire Community planning Partnership Peoples Panel. Summary Report*

⁵³ Barron J (2005) ‘Multiple Challenges in services for women experiencing domestic violence’. *Housing, care and support*. 8.1. February 2005 Pavilion Publishing (Brighton) Ltd

⁵⁴ Humphreys C, Regan L, River D & Thiara K (2005), ‘Domestic Violence and Substance Use: Tackling Complexity’, in *British Journal of Social Work*, Vol 35 No 8, pp 1303-20.

⁵⁵ Greenan (2004) *Gender-based Violence: children and young people: A Literature Review*.

Glasgow City Council. <http://www.glasgow.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/0DEF2C0C-20C4-4C06-80F7-1EF6671A0E63/0/TellSomeoneliteratureReview.pdf>

⁵⁶ Joanne McLean et al for the Scottish Government (2008b) *Risk And Protective Factors For Suicide and Suicidal Behaviour: A Literature Review*. Edinburgh. The Scottish Government

interviewee commented, “it can be difficult to access mental health services and to get a diagnosis, as this would mean having to commit resources”.

Issues identified were:

- that a woman can have to wait up to six months to access psychiatric services
- by the time women are called for assessment, if they have stabilised they may not take up the offer, as they feel that the problem is resolved
- where they do gain access and take up the services on offer, these services are often highly structured (e.g. Community Psychiatric Nurses (CPNs); women may not keep appointments or they may give up on the service.

Women were given a ‘show card’ in 13 of the 15 interviews in this study and were asked to indicate whether they had experienced any of the feelings identified on the card, ranging from low self-esteem to suicidal feelings. The show card is listed at Appendix A9. Table 6.1 below presents the interviewees’ responses. This clearly indicates that mental health issues were experienced by interviewees, with the most frequently mentioned issues being anxiety and low self-esteem.

Table 6.1 Types of mental distress experienced by service user interviewees

Type of mental distress experienced	Yes	No	Yes but with no intention to act	Total
Anxiety	12	1		13
Panic attacks	8	5		13
Low self-esteem	13	0		13
Depression	11	2		13
Eating disorders	9	4		13
Flashbacks	9	4		13
Self harming	3	10		13
Suicidal thoughts	7	4	2	13

In summary, most of the women interviewed identified that they had personal experience of a combination of mental health issues.

In terms of service interventions and responses, a number of interviewees reported using anti-depressants prescribed by their GPs. A few had been referred, or had the offer of referral for counselling, however women had both positive and negative experiences of this and some had experienced a lengthy wait to access counselling. This was illustrated by the woman described above who was encouraged by her CPN to contact Women’s Aid; she was subsequently referred for cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) and she had to go on a waiting list for six months for this.

A different interviewee reported that she had received counselling while in refuge because of an eating disorder, and that she found this very helpful. This was arranged through her GP, and she saw the counsellor based at the surgery within around two weeks, whom she, “continued to see about once a week over four months or so”. She said the counsellor had enquired about underlying problems

contributing to her eating disorder and phoned her regularly between visits to check she was okay.

However another woman's experience was less positive. She had been referred to a CPN for counselling by their GP a few years ago and said that she was told, "*Life isn't perfect you know even if everybody has their '4 by 4s' and 2.4 children*". She said about her experience:

"I was horrified and feel it has put me off counselling for life. I had just lost my best friend and my grandma had just died, and she always made me feel safe and secure. I had just taken an overdose to try to end it all. So now, I would only use Women's Aid."

Overall, this woman felt that her medication had helped alleviate some of the health and emotional impacts of the abuse she experienced. However, she pointed out that changing GPs because of house moves can also add to the stress.

Another woman said that the anti-depressants are helping her to cope at the moment. She said she knows that, "*what has happened will come back to bite me on the backside and I will look to talk about it in the future but not just now*". Another interviewee said she had been on anti-depressants for years, that she saw her GP monthly and that the GP asks how she is and gives her the prescription.

6.9.1 Self-harm and suicidal thoughts

It was not possible to assess the extent of self-harm or suicide attempts by women and young people who experienced abuse, as their incidence was not recorded systematically by the services consulted. However responses to the show card indicated that more than half of those consulted had experienced suicidal feelings, compared with less than a quarter who acknowledged self-harm. In contrast, Women's Aid reported that a small number of women over recent years had attempted suicide, while a higher proportion of women have engaged in self-harm. Additionally, the Homelessness service has found that self-harming behaviour is more likely to occur with younger women, who they normally refer to the Penumbra's North Ayrshire Self-Harm Project.

Other services also reported that there is a high incidence of self-harm, although they were uncertain about the factors that may trigger this, apart from when someone hits a significant stress point.

Other services also regularly refer young people to Penumbra, which was seen as being able to respond quickly. Some professionals commented that some staff find self-harming behaviour frightening and consider it, "*tied up with suicide*". Penumbra's self-harm project delivers training and awareness raising sessions for professionals on self-harming behaviour (including to staff in residential units, teachers and advocacy workers); it also provides workshops for young people to increase awareness of self-harm and it directly supports young people referred to them due to self harming behaviour. In 2007/08, 34 young people aged between 16 and 25 years were referred to Penumbra's service in North Ayrshire, the majority (68%) being young women. Ten young people identified abuse as the area they were most worried about.

Overall, professionals in a number of services have received training and awareness-raising sessions on self-harming. These have enabled staff to deal with the issue more confidently. However, it was pointed out by one manager that this may depend on the intensity and type of self-harming behaviour.

As already identified, the incidence of suicide attempts was reported as being low. Some professional interviewees commented however, that while women have expressed suicidal feelings at times to staff in their services, many staff do not feel confident about responding appropriately to those who have suicidal thoughts, or who have attempted suicide. Training was considered to be essential in this area.

Those staff who had attended Choose Life ASIST training, which aims to promote the knowledge and skills required to respond to people at risk effectively, have found this useful. Such training is mandatory for the staff in the Council's hostel, and following Homelessness service managers' discussions with Choose Life, it is planned to roll this training out to other staff in the Homelessness service. Choose Life also provides Skills-based Training On Risk Management (known as STORM), with the full programme intended for support staff working with clients longer-term. Overall the need for a consistent tool to measure risk factors in relation to suicide, was recognised by several professional interviewees.

Some concerns were voiced in regard to service responses to suicide attempts, such as overdoses. In relation to A&E Departments, one professional commented, *"sometimes they are sent out without seeing anyone"*, and another said, *"they are in and out very quickly"*. There were also concerns stated about the extent of risk assessment undertaken with those being discharged.

As noted above most of the women interviewed said they had felt suicidal at some point and three reported taking an overdose. One woman, who had been admitted to an A&E ward, said this was a mixed ward with a drunk man next to her, so she discharged herself. Other women who reported that they had felt suicidal or "very low", said at that time they had contacted family members or friends, who in some cases would contact the GP. One woman who told her GP how she was feeling, said the only option offered to her was a referral to Crosshouse hospital. She said: *"I didn't think that lying in bed would help me, so he just upped my medication"*.

Some women spoke about feeling much better since they had left their violent partners, and of how much their confidence and self-esteem had improved. One woman who had recently left a violent partner after 33 years said:

"I have no suicidal thoughts. I just want to get on with my life. I am on anti-depressants but I have lost over four stones since leaving my husband and I have done it just for me through healthier eating, swimming and walking. It makes you feel much better about yourself."

6.10 Drug and alcohol services and issues

Several studies have documented a complex relationship between alcohol and drug problems and forms of abuse (Baron, 2005 Humphreys et al 2005; the Scottish

Government, 2008b, see paragraph 6.9), and this is recognised by services working with women in North Ayrshire.

Women's Aid report that a high and increasing proportion of women who use their services are coping with alcohol/ drug problems, including prescribed drugs. Women with alcohol problems predominate and some are affected by both drug and alcohol use. Women's Aid have two dedicated addictions posts, one initially funded via Scottish Executive VAW funding and the other funded by North Ayrshire Council. Since a vacant post has been filled recently, both workers currently support service users of Women's Aid, either in their accommodation or on an outreach basis. The addictions worker worked with 31 women in 2008/09, 21 of whom were admitted to refuge and 10 were supported in Outreach.

When women have alcohol or drug problems this may act as a barrier to accessing the refuge space. A risk assessment is carried out before deciding to admit a woman into refuge, which takes account both of how stable the woman is given her substance misuse, and of the mix of people in the refuge. Women whose substance misuse is less stable may be allocated individual flats. However, scatter flats are considered less suitable as women may face isolation and/or be easier to target by drug dealers. Women's Aid finds that many women are supplied substances by their partner, who may try to continue contact once the woman has left, and at times women are tempted to return to their partner in order to access substances.

A key problem raised by professional interviewees was that women with addictions have experienced difficulties in gaining access to addiction services, and particularly at a time when they are ready to engage. One homelessness service commented that it can take up to three weeks to access an initial Social Work assessment, following which they may have to wait further to receive any support. Some services refer those with alcohol or drugs problems to the Health and Homelessness Coordinator; this is the most common reason for referral to that post.

Also stressed by professional interviewees were the problems encountered in accessing substitute prescriptions to stabilise drug use, and the existence of a local "cap on methadone" that appears to have implications for lengthy waits. Additionally, it emerged that there is a low involvement of GPs in relation to specialist addiction-related work; one specialist GP provides a methadone prescribing service and psychiatric consultants do the remainder. However, some clients who had previously accessed a prescription in another area before using a North Ayrshire service e.g. Women's Aid, appear to face less difficulty in accessing methadone. On one hand it could be the case that if GPs were to be more widely engaged in brief interventions and substitute prescribing, women who have experienced abuse might gain speedier access to the services that they need; on the other, the local cap on prescribing might mitigate against this.

It is not possible to identify the proportion of women who use addiction services who have experienced prior abuse, as this has not been captured to date in the data recorded by addictions services. As one professional commented, it may be that addictions workers are hesitant to ask women if they have experienced abuse; or it may reflect their awareness of domestic abuse. Furthermore, many women may not disclose problems with alcohol or drugs because they fear they will not get help, or that it could affect their children. Professional interviewees further stressed that staff

working with women require to have a high level of awareness and sensitivity in relation to abuse-related issues and impacts, across all relevant services.

Women's Aid appears to have received few direct referrals from local authority and health drug and alcohol services in the last two years and stated that there are no formal referral procedures in place. While training materials and guidance have been produced for addictions staff, there has not yet been any direct training provided for addictions staff to date. Women's Aid are engaged in joint work with Loudoun House (NHS Ayrshire and Arran Dual diagnosis in-patient facility); they are keen to promote awareness and understanding around domestic abuse through training with addictions services.

The introduction of routine enquires for domestic abuse across priority health services includes addiction services, and routine enquiry will also be applied to sexual abuse. A key question relates to how these services can be aided to respond sensitively when women disclose abuse - information and training will therefore be critical in regard to domestic abuse and sexual abuse.

A recent Public Health project proposal to the Alcohol and Drugs Action Team (ADAT - which is undergoing reorganisation into three different partnerships) seeks to employ family workers based in the Addiction services to work with women and, where appropriate, young people who are misusing alcohol. This could benefit women with alcohol problems who have experienced domestic abuse. The bid has recently been agreed by the NHS for funding via the Community Planning Partnership.

One positive development is that the Addictions service has embarked on a programme to generate improvements in assessment and early intervention in regard to drug and alcohol problems. This has included: a pilot scheme involving two GPs in brief interventions and a training programme on brief interventions for Addictions, Social Work, Hostels and Housing Support staff.

In this study, some differences emerged between professionals and service users' perceptions of the significance of the links between alcohol / drug use and experience of abuse. Although alcohol use was frequently mentioned in the professional interviews as being strongly linked to abuse, several of the women interviewed said that they did not drink, or that they only drank occasionally and socially. Many also said the same of their ex-partners with comments such as: *"My ex wasn't a drinker, he was just very controlling"* and *"My husband didn't drink. He was just a Jekyll and Hyde character"*.

One woman, describing the attack after which she managed to leave her now ex-partner, said that at the time of a previous incident of abuse her ex-partner had been very drunk and she found this easier to understand and forgive; but on the last occasion he had been *"stone cold sober"*. However, another woman said:

"My ex-husband liked his alcohol. I used to go to my gran's at the week end because if he came home and tried to get money and I didn't have any, he used to really lash out."

Very few service users interviewed said that they had (or had had) problems with alcohol or drugs. Of those who said they did, two were getting help from a Women's

Aid's addiction worker while the other was on a methadone script supplied through her psychiatrist at the Bentinck Centre in Kilmarnock.

Service users who were supported by the Women's Aid addictions worker were very positive about the help they received. One described how the worker, whom she already knew, had reached out to her, asking her in casual conversation if she would like to come to see her. By then she felt she could, largely because she had developed trust and confidence in the worker. Otherwise she did not think she would have sought out the service at that stage, so highlighting the importance of services that "reach out" to women. This same woman had talked to her GP about her addiction problem, but said he just "*pumped me full of valium*". She had also talked to her GP about an eating disorder and was simply told to eat less.

The other woman receiving support from a Woman's Aid addictions worker recounted how she had almost been thrown out of refuge because of her drinking, but her addiction worker had advocated for her to be allowed to stay. She said it almost felt as though this worker and the refuge workers were on different sides and fighting each other, and she felt "like a leper" while in refuge. Of her addictions worker she said - "*She is a life-line. When I have no one else she will help*". This woman said that she had learnt that Women's Aid now have less rigid rules on the use of alcohol in refuge. Such difficulties faced, in accessing and sustaining residence in a refuge for women who have addictions, have been highlighted elsewhere.⁵⁷

One woman who had recently been referred to the Bentinck Centre in Kilmarnock (an NHS Ayrshire and Arran service) was very keen to access this service. She had been referred there by the North Ayrshire Council Addiction service at the Vernon Centre in Saltcoats, where she attends weekly stress management sessions. Another woman said she was about "*to go to the Townhead Centre in Irvine to try to get a drugs counsellor*" (which is also part of the Council's Addiction service). The second woman had lost her initial drugs counsellor when she moved from East Ayrshire to North Ayrshire. She was experiencing some anxiety about this, as she finds it difficult to see new workers when she has known and trusted previous ones.

The issue of getting to know workers, and feeling able to trust them before being able to talk about difficult issues such as abuse, was a recurring theme throughout the service user interviews.

Given the findings presented above on substance misuse problems amongst women who have experienced abuse, it may be that women without such experiences either: did not choose to volunteer for the service user interview programme; chose not to talk about addictions; or were not in touch with the services that identified and facilitated the service user interviews.

6.11 Multiple and complex needs

Research has increasingly addressed the fact that many service users are not appropriately described in terms of a single need, and this is clearly relevant to women and their children who have experienced abuse (Barron 2005 op cit). For

example, a Scottish study identified that 65% of women drug users reported having experienced physical abuse and 50% reported having experienced sexual abuse⁵⁸. Greenan (2004 op cit) references a large-scale study of the health impact of a range of experiences, including physical and sexual abuse (The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study). This she says

“...gives a very clear, if depressing, picture of the degree to which adverse childhood experiences - including sexual abuse, physical abuse, and witnessing violence towards mothers – are related to some of the leading causes of death in adults – including alcoholism, drug abuse, depression and suicide attempts, ischemic heart disease, cancer, chronic lung disease, skeletal fractures and liver disease (Felitti et al, 1998 quoted in Greenan, 2004 p27).⁵⁹

Similarly “Yes you Can” (2008), states that:

“Evidence indicates that people who have experienced childhood sexual abuse are at greater risk of social, physical, emotional and mental health problems in adult life; for example, such individuals are more at risk of self-harm and suicide than the general population”. p iii

In addition to health difficulties, it is accepted that women who experience abuse often also experience socio and economic disadvantage as a consequence of the abuse.⁶⁰

Professional interviewees, who work with people with multiple and complex needs, have found that waiting times and formally structured services are not always constructive as these inhibit or deter engagement. This reflects the findings of research into services for people with multiple and complex needs. Additionally, it was reported that a recent review of Mental Health services had identified areas for improvement, although there is now a Strategy in place to address gaps as well as improvements in process.

6.12 Services for children and young people

One of the action points in the Violence Against Women Action Plan is to “investigate the development of support services for children and young people who have been sexually abused” and this is one of the objectives for this research. It is now accepted that there are strong links between the abuse of mothers and abuse of children, including sexual abuse.

There are no data which relate to the prevalence of childhood sexual abuse, apart from those recorded by the Child Protection Committee in relation to those children/young people who are referred to a case conference and are subsequently put on the child protection register. While the number of children on the Child Protection Register overall has increased in recent years, by contrast the number of

⁵⁸Glasgow City Council (2005) *The Annual Report of Glasgow City Council's Addictions Services* (2004/05)

⁵⁹Greenan (2004) op cit

⁶⁰Greenan (2004) op cit; *Mind the Gaps Report 2* (2009) op cit

children subject to a case conference and registered on the Child Protection Register because of sexual abuse, has fallen over the last two years compared with the previous two years.⁶¹

In 2006/07, 3% (two) registered because of sexual abuse and 4% (two) in 2007/08. This compares to 16% (12) in 2005/06 and 19% (6) in 2004/05. The figures for Scotland also saw a drop in numbers of those registered due to sexual abuse. No explanation is given for the decrease in actual numbers and as a proportion of those children registered on the Child Protection Register. In contrast, Childline reported their highest ever level of counselling children and young people for sexual abuse in the UK in 2007/08, an increase of 53% over the last three years. This low figure is acknowledged by Child Protection and that childhood sexual abuse “remains a hidden issue”.

There are few therapeutic services specifically targeted at children and young people who have been sexually abused – a service gap also identified in the HMIE report. It found that while children with complex emotional problems were assisted by the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, there were limited services for children recovering from abuse, which were not always available when needed. Women’s Aid refer children using the official child protection routes - through social services.

While Children 1st offer services to children and families who have been affected by physical, emotional or sexual abuse, it appears that financial constraints limit the use of Children 1st’s services and decisions to refer are made on a case-by-case basis. Children 1st provide an advocacy service for children and young people who are involved with the child protection system in North Ayrshire.

The need for much more “joined up thinking” regarding children who have been sexually abused was highlighted by one senior official interviewed who referred to the need for further strategic and operational development on this front, including in regard to improving access to appropriate psychological and support services.

One woman said that her child has been attending Children and Adult Mental Health Services since she left her abusive partner, having been referred by Social Work. The service seems to be helping; they did not have to wait long to get their first appointment and they are happy to attend there. The child has also been receiving help through the school nurse for some time.

A few women interviewed said that their children had been allocated Children’s workers and that this had been helpful. One said:

“The children got a lot of support, in refuge in particular. They enjoyed the worker’s company and had their behaviour addressed.”

⁶¹ North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee (2008) *Annual Report 2007/08*

6.13 Services for adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse

The services we consulted said that they do not generally enquire directly about childhood sexual abuse (CSA), during assessments for example. Also, when information about CSA is known, this may not be recorded, apart from in individual case files.

However, interviewees reported that a number of women using their services are survivors of childhood sexual abuse - "the numbers are quite high". One service for homeless young people for example, had a high number of service users who were survivors of childhood sexual abuse and sexual assault. It was recognised that disclosure of childhood sexual abuse may only happen once women are engaging with services and have built up a relationship with staff. In addition, the impact of sexual abuse can emerge in the form of additional problems, such as alcohol or drug misuse and self-harming behaviour.

Break The Silence is a voluntary organisation based in East Ayrshire which provides services to male and female survivors of childhood sexual abuse who are aged 16 and over, and their services include group work and one-to-one support. They do not provide services to survivors in North Ayrshire unless they have an address in East Ayrshire. Between March 2008 and February 2009 they had 15 referrals from North Ayrshire and, of those, 10 were from statutory services. Break The Silence manages the In Care Survivors service⁶², which supports people who have been abused in care, and this will operate across the three Ayrshire authorities. As this is a recent development the development worker was just starting to make contact with services; therefore it was not possible to assess the level of demand for the service.

As noted above the only dedicated service for adult survivors was closed without any alternatives put in place, and many professional interviewees commented on the lack of access to trauma services. For example, Homelessness services refer survivors to the Health and Homelessness Co-ordinator who does crisis intervention work, but it was commented that there is now nowhere to refer on to. There may be occasions where a young woman survivor is referred to Quarriers supported accommodation. Quarriers have an arrangement with SAY Women whereby they can refer young survivors to their Resource Service.

6.14 Prostitution and trafficking

One of the objectives of this research was to assess the extent of prostitution and trafficking in North Ayrshire. Broadly, little has been known about the extent of prostitution in North Ayrshire, although a research project commissioned in partnership by NHS Ayrshire & Arran has just been completed by the Terrence

⁶² The In care Survivors Service Scotland was developed to highlight and address the long-term effects, as well as current and future needs of those survivors subjected to neglect, physical, emotional and sexual abuse whilst in care. (from their website)

Higgins Trust (THT), and this has looked at male and female prostitution across Ayrshire. Their report was not available at the time of writing.

6.14.1 Prostitution

As noted in Chapter three, there has been only one offence relating to prostitution in the North Ayrshire Police division in the last three years, and comments on prostitution in this study were mainly anecdotal. A number of professional interviewees said that some women are picked up by car to be taken to Glasgow, or they go there by train. Other indications included:

- A homelessness service provider said that around six young women a year might be involved to some degree in prostitution.
- Another service found that an individual was targeting young people (both genders) and taking them to Glasgow and bringing them back. This was of great concern to the Child Protection Committee.
- Addiction Services reported that many young women drug users are at risk of prostitution and abuse and some are highly vulnerable – *“Where there is an abusive context, this can be very difficult to break. If things get ‘too hot they often move out of their area’*. In addition, it was said that some young women are coerced sexually, while others use sex to pay debts or to sustain their accommodation.
- The Anti-Social Investigation Team has only had one complaint which may have resulted from prostitution.
- There is some web-based activity emanating from North Ayrshire where women advertise on specific sites.

The Expert Committee on Prostitution identified a number of risk factors that might result in women becoming involved in prostitution.⁶³ These included:

- misuse of drugs and sometimes alcohol
- debt and low income
- history of family breakdown often associated with sexual and/or physical abuse and consequently being looked after by local authority Social Work services
- continuing physical and sexual abuse into adulthood
- poor educational achievement, poor employment history and lack of skills useful to employment
- mental illness or learning disability
- homelessness or lack of secure accommodation.

There is no specific training on commercial sexual exploitation in North Ayrshire, although there is a slot on this in the training carried out by Women’s Aid. The Ayrshire and Arran Violence Against Women Training Consortium is hosting a series

⁶³ Scottish Executive (2004) *Report of the Expert Group on Prostitution Being Outside: Constructing a Response to Street Prostitution*, Edinburgh: Scottish Executive.

of practitioner seminars, including one seminar on commercial sexual exploitation of women and girls.

While no specific work or interventions appears to be undertaken with women who may prostitute, Women's Aid said that they do raise the issue of prostitution with women in the context of health and safety concerns. An information pack had been produced for staff working with men and women involved in prostitution in North Ayrshire,⁶⁴ and this provides helpline telephone numbers and other advice; however our professional interviewees did not mention this. For staff who may be providing support to women who prostitute there is also good practice guidance available, produced by the Women's Support Project, as well as an accessible leaflet – 'Facts on Prostitution'.⁶⁵

6.14.2 Trafficking

No information was obtained through this study on trafficking, apart from the recording of one offence (immoral traffic) in 2006/07; there was also little anecdotal evidence.

Trafficking is commonly a 'hidden issue'. While trafficked women have not shown through in presentations to the Homelessness service for example, the Police have alerted the service to young women arriving at Prestwick Airport. More significantly, in the course of an anti-trafficking operation over six months (Pentameter 2), carried out by the police nationally, the Scottish Police visited over 50 premises including 43 residences and 11 massage parlours.⁶⁶ Fifty-nine potential victims were uncovered and 15 of them were believed to have been trafficked for sexual exploitation⁶⁷.

Trafficking is a cause for concern to the Child Protection Committee (CPC) in North Ayrshire. The CPC has produced a leaflet, which identifies possible indicators of child trafficking, and the recently published Scottish Government Guidance on child trafficking is available on the CPC website. Additionally, they have developed a child trafficking and sexual exploitation training course. Also the Ayrshire Domestic Abuse Training Consortium's seminar programme includes a session by the Women's Support Project on human trafficking in Scotland. Finally, an investigation of sexual exploitation, including prostitution, is being carried out in Ayrshire, and the report on this research is due later this year.

To ensure that Scotland complies with the Council of Europe Convention on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings the Scottish Government has, amongst other initiatives, provided TARA (the Trafficking Awareness Raising Alliance, based in Glasgow) with funding to provide support and accommodation for female adult victims who have been trafficked for sexual exploitation. They are negotiating with TARA to continue this Scottish wide service.

⁶⁴ The Information pack was referred to in the Violence Against Women Forum "Progress Update on Violence Against Women Action Plan". March 2009.

⁶⁵ Women's Support Project (2002) *A Good Practice Guide for Organisation Working with Women in Prostitution*; Women's Support Project, Glasgow 2002

⁶⁶ Pentameter 2 was a joint ACPOS/ACPO-led, multi-agency national campaign of activity to tackle human trafficking for sexual exploitation throughout the UK.

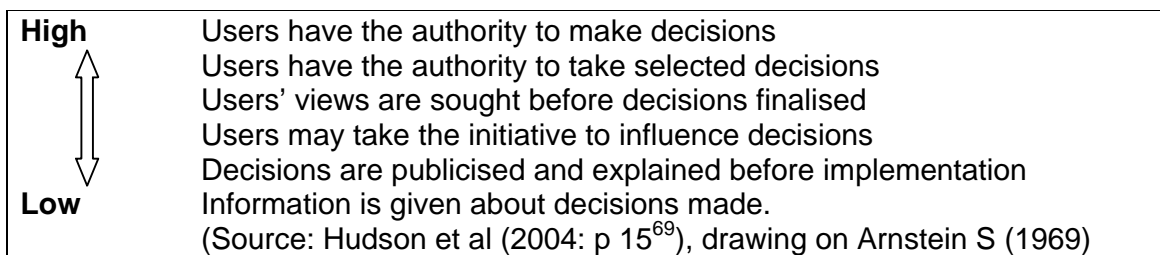
⁶⁷ Annual report on the *Scottish Government's Gender Equality Scheme 2008-2011*

The Criminal Justice and Licensing Bill currently before the Scottish Parliament has specific provisions that will allow the police to close premises associated with human trafficking or child sexual exploitation.

6.15 Participation

6.15.1 Service user participation

Increasing user involvement is an important element of the Government's approach to public service reform, as one of a number of ways of making public services more responsive to the people who use them⁶⁸. Service user involvement can range across: informing people, consulting them on their views, as well as more active forms of involvement, such as in planning and delivering services. A frequently quoted model is the ladder of participation shown below.



With regard to domestic abuse, consultation with children formed an integral part of the development of The National Domestic Abuse Delivery Plan for Children and Young People⁷⁰, with a key priority of the Plan (Priority Area 13) being to:

- Ensure the ongoing participation of children and young people affected by domestic abuse in developing policy and practice to address domestic abuse.

6.15.1.1 Extent to which service users reported having been consulted

The service user interview schedule included a question covering whether: women had ever been consulted about the services they had received; whether they believed that consulting service users was a good thing, and their preferred method of consultation.

⁶⁸ Social Exclusion Unit (2005), *Improving Services, Improving Lives Evidence and Key Themes*, Social Exclusion Unit Interim Report. London: The Social Exclusion Unit.

⁶⁹ Hudson B, Dearey M & Glendinning C (2004), *A New Vision for Adult Social Care: Scoping Service Users' Views*, University of York: Social Policy Research Unit. Available at <http://www.york.ac.uk/inst/spru/pubs.htm>

⁷⁰ Scottish Government (2008) *National Domestic Abuse Delivery Plan for Children and Young People*. Edinburgh. The Scottish Government

All service users said that consulting them as to how well a particular service or services had met their needs was a good thing. However, few reported that they had actually been consulted.

Two service users said that they had been part of the consultative process carried out by the North Ayrshire Violence Against Women Forum, as part of its Strategy and Action Plan development⁷¹:

“We took part in the consultation but we never found out if our views were taken on board/acted on I was keen for housing workers to get proper training and another women wanted out-of-hours cover given that refuge workers finish at 4 pm.”

Another woman said that *“the ones who were heard were those that spoke loudest”*. This young woman had gone to the Scottish Parliament, where she said she had presented her views on the effect of domestic abuse on children, as part of the consultation on children and young people.

Only two other women reported that they had been asked about their views on services, and this was in regard to Women’s Aid. One woman said that she had been asked to fill in a feedback form when she left Women’s Aid accommodation; another said that Women’s Aid had asked her what she thought about the service.

6.15.1.2 Preferred consultation methods

While some women said that there was a need for varied consultation methods such as questionnaires, suggestion boxes and group discussions, the preferred method was one-to-one discussions. A number of women made the point that many women are not comfortable about speaking in group settings and that some women are *“very private”*. Some women commented that a one-to-one discussion, *“just like today”* (i.e. the research interview) is useful, and some said that this was the first time they had spoken about what had happened to them, or aspects of it. One woman said, *“I thought that today would be a good time to come and talk about my journey”*. To an extent then, some women viewed the study interview as an opportunity to *“get things off my chest”*, as much as an opportunity to express their views on the services they had received. This may suggest that there is a need for more opportunities for therapeutic work with women who have experienced abuse.

The service user interviews indicate that there is considerable scope for more service user consultation and involvement in North Ayrshire⁷². This applied both to the individual service level – for example, regular service user meetings within services such as Women’s Aid; systematic service exit interviews or feedback forms - and to the strategic policy development level. In this regard Women’s Aid in

⁷¹ In 2007 a meeting was facilitated by Women’s Aid with Women’s Aid workers the Council’s Policy Officer and 10 who experienced domestic abuse together with three Women’s Aid workers and a Policy Officer to consult on the development of the Violence Against Women Strategy and Action Plan and detailed discussions concentrated on the proposed actions within the draft Action Plan for 2007/10.

⁷² It should be noted that previous studies have found that although there has been general advancement in service user participation at the individual client level, as has been promoted through good practice guidance, service user participation is notably under-developed at strategic and policy development levels. See Rosengard et al (2006) *Literature Review on Multiple and Complex Needs*.

England have produced a “Guide to service user participation and consultation for domestic violence services”, which provides advice on how to consult with and involve women who have experienced domestic violence and makes suggestions for increasing the participation of domestic violence survivors in service and policy development.⁷³

6.17 Pathways to effective support

Much of the literature on service responses to multiple and complex needs emphasises that the fragmentation of service provision results in “a pervasive ‘silo’ mentality”, whereby agencies and professionals are trapped within discrete frames of reference that inhibits individuals’ needs being met⁷⁴. In conclusion, we consider the key pointers for improved, integrated pathways to support for women and their children who have been harmed by abuse and who this research stresses may have complex and multiple needs.,

A key finding is that the referral system is multi-dimensional, both in terms of enabling access to a crisis response and in the medium and longer-term. This is how it should be, given that women’s circumstances differ across the client group and women’s needs vary over time. In addition, it has been clearly established that many women have complex and/ or multiple needs. Therefore, there can be no singular best route into and through support for women and their children. Friends and relatives as well as Health, Housing, Social Work, Education, Police and a range of voluntary agencies all may play a referral role. It is worth noting that the role of Health services in referring women and children affected by VAW and abuse may increase in the future in response to CEL 41 (Routine Enquiry).⁷⁵

The following Table highlights some of the key issues faced in developing effective pathways to support.

⁷³ Hague G, Mullender A and Aris R (2002) “*Professionals by experience: Guide to service user participation and consultation for domestic violence services*” Women’s Aid. Available to order at http://www.womensaid.org.uk/landing_page.asp?section=0001000100140008

⁷⁴ Humphreys et al (2005) op cit; Rankin J and Regan S (2004) “*Meeting Complex Needs: The Future of Social Care*”. London: Turning Points IPPR

⁷⁵ http://www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/mels/CEL2008_41.pdf.

Issues	Support needed	Enabling conditions/ resources
Need for information re rights and options for support and justice	Maximum relevant information provision	Information/ Leaflets; Advice and advocacy; Staff knowledge and sensitivity
Need for receptive and sensitive first stage problem identification	High awareness of staff Routine Enquiry	Training in methodology of routine enquiry by all providers Training re varied aspects of VAW to all relevant providers
Assessment and support planning that takes accounts of women's particular and sometimes intensive and multiple needs	Sensitive, participatory and holistic needs assessment and support planning for women and children	High staff awareness of service network and of resources Staff are encouraged and supported to engage in active joint working, including in assessment and support planning processes Joint protocols
Access to appropriate range of transitional and longer-term accommodation	Sensitive and effective homelessness assessment Refuge accommodation Temporary accommodation Permanent accommodation	Homelessness staff training and support Referral system with Women's Aid Housing availability Section 5 nominations
Access to particular support needed	Access to range of support and counselling – practical and emotional – to meet particular needs	Adequate supply of specialist counselling resources as well as of Housing Support, Social Work and voluntary agencies' assistance
Accessing Health care	Quick access to advice and support for physical and mental health needs	Ease of access to Addictions, Mental Health services, with GPs/ primary care services playing a positive routing role
Accessing Participation and Control	Women and their children are encouraged and enabled to express their views, in the review and planning of support and its outcomes Access to advocacy as appropriate.	Provision of structured consultation and involvement mechanisms for service users individually and collectively and at strategic and operational levels

6.18 Key points

- Service users were generally happy with the services received, and this included services introduced relatively recently such as the addictions worker (through Women's Aid) and the Home Security Service; however some concerns were expressed about required changes in their support worker.
- Women could find it difficult to "take in" information in the period immediately after leaving an abusive relationship, suggesting a need for written information on options to be provided for subsequent consultation.
- Service users frequently needed services over a lengthy period, although some needed only short-term accommodation and/or support.
- Evidence of good operational joint work emerged, with for example, women who access Women's Aid being linked into a range of other services, as necessary.
- While Women's Aid offer a range of refuge provision some women, at particular times, are not able to access this for specific reasons as described, or others prefer other forms of temporary accommodation.
- There was evidence that reports to the Police trigger referrals to other services such as Home Security and Victim Support, if required by the victim; all are given the option of a referral.
- A key requirement was for women to feel safe, both in the immediate and longer term, after leaving an abusive relationship and Home Security was felt to be important in this regard.
- There was consensus amongst many professional interviewees that women who experience abuse and who have substance misuse problems or mental health problems at times face difficulties in accessing the particular services they need, particularly when they are ready to engage. The interviews overall indicated that women may be ready to engage with continuing (rather than crisis or acute) addictions or mental health services at varying times after presenting for help following their abuse.
- Women who have been raped/ sexually assaulted can only access specialist (crisis and continuing) support services outside North Ayrshire, and these services can only deal with a limited number of women from North Ayrshire.
- The services available to children who experienced abuse are limited and not always available when required.
- Since Moving On's services ceased in North Ayrshire there have been no dedicated services for adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse.
- While there has been limited knowledge of the level and extent of prostitution and trafficking in North Ayrshire, the THT Report on commercial sexual exploitation completed in 2008 will be published in 2009.

6.18.1 Service gaps

Service gaps identified included:

- the lack of a rape crisis centre/services in North Ayrshire
- the lack of therapeutic services for children who have experienced abuse
- lack of services for adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse
- difficulties or delays in accessing statutory addiction services and mental health services, recognising that women who have experienced abuse may be affected by historic as well as recent trauma and may be disconnected from community supports
- appropriate mechanisms for consulting and involving women and children
- while women found it easy to access services when they had found out about them, there was a need for more publicity about available services, particularly those available locally
- service users felt there was a need for more of the same e.g. more Women's Aid workers and longer opening hours /cover e.g. for the Women's Aid Pearl's Centre in Saltcoats
- There is little in the way of training on the commercial sexual exploitation of women and girls, and guidance on working with women involved in prostitution.

CHAPTER SEVEN

ISSUES, RECOMMENDATIONS AND THE WAY FORWARD

7.1 Introduction

The research overall was designed to address the 11 wide-ranging objectives outlined in the research brief, as specified in Chapter One, and this concluding chapter considers key findings in light of the research objectives and makes recommendations to the Violence against Women (VAW) Forum and key partners. An Action Plan is also presented.

The chapter largely addresses the gaps and ways forward in meeting these. It is important to do so as the report has already recognised some of the key strengths detected by the study. Overall, the research found a strong foundation of inter-agency awareness, commitment and joint work - both strategic and operational – within the network of services responding to domestic abuse/ violence against women in North Ayrshire. It will be critical for this to be sustained and developed in the next phase to build further on the connections with related areas of policy and practice, such as responding to the needs of children and young people and addressing multiple and complex needs. There were also clear indications that strategic partners have recognised the complex needs of women and children affected by abuse, and have addressed these in various ways, including by enabling Women's Aid to provide targeted support services. There clearly are some highly valued services, ranging across the protection, support and critical joint working provided through the Council's Homelessness services, the Council's Home Security service, Women's Aid's services, alongside the clear indications of a positive and sensitive response by the Police to the issues facing women who have experienced abuse.

7.2 Domestic abuse incidents: the main elements

The data from the Police indicates that there is a high level of domestic abuse reported to the Police in North Ayrshire, compared with the Scottish average, and other Ayrshire authorities.

High reported levels of domestic abuse could indicate a higher and increasing incidence in North Ayrshire. Equally, increased levels of reporting to the Police may be interpreted as an indicator of increased use of the criminal justice system and increased confidence in the system. Some increase is likely to represent greater use of special bail conditions and proactive policing of those bail conditions. The data for 2006-08 indicates:

- There is a rise in young women reporting – from 70 reports involving young women under 20 in 2005/06 to 135 reports in 2007/08.
- There has been a steady increase in the number and percentage of incidents which involve a repeat victim. The majority of incidents in each year involve a repeat victim – rising from 52% in 2006-07 to 58% in 2007/08.
- There is an increase in men recorded as victims from 12-14%. Some of these may be the consequence of mandatory arrest policies. A number of incidents result in both parties being arrested and noted as both accused and victims in the same incident. This is not quantified in the official data.
- Not all domestic abuse incidents are recorded as crimes – approximately 52% in 2007/08 and thus not all incidents result in cases being referred to the Procurator Fiscal to consider prosecution.
- There is a correlation between police involvement in domestic abuse incidents and high levels of deprivation, but that does not translate into a causal link between deprivation and domestic abuse.
- There is also a correlation between alcohol misuse and an incident coming to the attention of the police.

7.3 Improvements to services

Services that play a role in the reduction of levels of abuse are services that prevent abusive and violent behaviour generally; increase protection offered to individual women and children; and provide women with the means and opportunities to leave abusive relationships and resettle positively.

7.3.1 Prevention

The developments that have taken place in schools have been generally positive, though the coverage is not as comprehensive as it should be. The VAW Forum could usefully focus on:

- Discussions with the Education department on how best to ensure a comprehensive coverage in schools.
- Identifying other actions that will enable other staff who come into contact with children, to take part in training.

As the Healthy Relationships pack is no longer routinely used in Schools, and given that these messages are to be contained within the Primary and Secondary Education (PSE) curriculum, the VAW Forum should:

- Undertake a review of PSE materials to ensure that preventative messages about healthy relationships for young people and views about the unacceptability of violence against girls and women, are being addressed fully and clearly, and identify any current gaps.

- Discuss with a selected secondary school the possibility of a pilot, which would track the experiences of young people affected by domestic abuse and the support available to them, and at the same time review the work the school is doing in addressing issues relating to domestic abuse through e.g. the PSE curriculum and the arts.
- Discuss with the Child Protection committee if there is scope to increase messages about domestic abuse on their web-site developments for young people.

Staff in a number of services/ agencies, have received training focused mainly on domestic abuse. However the need for ongoing training persists. For example:

- Training which addresses all forms of violence against women and the links between these.
- Training should encompass staff across organisations and sectors and including frontline staff, managers and policy staff.
- Training in specific areas is also required for instance:
 - to ensure they can meet the needs of women, children and young people who have additional needs
 - to enable staff to deal more confidently with disclosure.
- Equality and diversity training that addresses violence against women issues.

Training should seek to be multi-agency where possible and should be on an on-going basis.

7.3.2 Protection

7.3.2.1 Civil protection

Civil remedies are a useful aspect of protective measures that are not widely used in North Ayrshire or in Scotland generally. These were more frequently used before the Police and COPFS strengthened the criminal justice response to domestic abuse.

Civil protective orders can continue to play a useful part in protecting women and children; they can provide long-term protection and they provide women with control of some key decisions: how long they require protection, what behaviour they need protection from and when a breach of the order threatens them.

The VAW Forum should consider specific measures that could help to boost awareness of rights and the availability and accessibility of civil remedies in North Ayrshire. These could range from North Ayrshire VAW training to front line staff, including Homelessness staff; the production of leaflets on rights to exclude an abusive partner and protection from abuse; to joint training and work with local solicitors to increase the availability of remedies.

In improving access to civil protection orders, it will be important to maximise existing resources. Although other local authorities have been able to intervene in the private sector legal market to encourage the use of services, by paying for services to women, other means of developing the local market could be pursued. This could involve increasing awareness of legal aid. Legal aid financial limits have recently been increased – so more women are likely to be eligible. The Scottish Legal Aid Board (SLAB) includes a reckoner, which Women's Aid or other services could use with women, so that they know their financial position before going to a lawyer.

SLAB are empowered to employ solicitors directly to tackle identified areas of unmet legal need. The VAW Forum should consider making some links with SLAB so that they are involved if any future opportunities become available.

7.3.2.2 Criminal protection

The Police provide the emergency service response, and in some cases, they are the only service with which women may engage. Increasing amounts of police time are engaged in responding domestic abuse incidents. In the context of an increasing number of incidents in North Ayrshire and the other Ayrshire authorities, the work of the police is extensive. The VAW Forum may want to consider what role they can play in seeking an increase in that resource.

The police carry out risk assessments in each domestic abuse incident using SPECCS. Dumfries and Galloway, who are within the same Community Justice Area as North Ayrshire, are going to be implementing a MARAC to extend the risk assessment process to include partner organisations.

Until such time as a MARAC or similar is established some thought ought to be given to a case referral conference system meeting on a regular basis to discuss particular cases meeting certain agreed criteria to ensure joined up working for vulnerable individuals.

In the medium-term, the VAW Forum, working with the South West Community Justice Area, should assess the feasibility of the MARAC approach. Additionally, in light of the significant resource implications of a comprehensive MARAC model, the Forum should aim to build on good practice identified from the Dumfries and Galloway experience, and seek to replicate some of the benefits within existing structures. This could draw on the experience of Joint Vulnerability Panels in community care and homelessness as well as on the MARAC model.

The Police are the front line in criminal protection and the next stage involves COPFS. There is little information available on local prosecutions and outcomes. In conjunction with COPFS, the Forum could investigate if COPFS can set up systems to supply data on local decisions to prosecute and the outcome of prosecutions. In the absence of this data, the Forum cannot assess whether a call to the police, and the arrest of a perpetrator, results in any further intervention to punish or change the offending behaviour.

The VAW Forum could consider if other sentencing alternatives to fines could be used more effectively, pending the launch of the Caledonian System - for instance,

could probation orders be used more systematically?; would Social Work have the resources to facilitate this?

As the local courts consider implementation of the specialist approach to prosecution of domestic abuse courts, the VAW Forum should seek to influence the local response together with their criminal justice partners.

7.3.2.3 Child protection

The Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA), nationally, has reported a significant rise in non-offence referrals and a large proportion of those are likely to be associated with increased reporting to the Police of domestic abuse. There were 1357 children involved in domestic abuse incidents in North Ayrshire last year.

There appears to be a low level of referrals of children who have been sexually abused which is likely to reflect the hidden nature of child sexual abuse. High consciousness amongst professionals across agencies about CSA and its prevalence, along with receptive and supportive relationships with children and access to specialist support services, are therefore critical.

While there is no doubt that North Ayrshire has made considerable inroads in increasing the awareness of professionals across agencies in regard to child protection issues, it is recognised that better measures need to be in place in regard to protecting children affected by domestic abuse (HMIE 2008).

There is strategic level awareness that there is no room for complacency, and a new Standard Circular has issued guidance in regard to the non-offence referral process to Education Services. It stresses that domestic abuse incidents must prompt speedy and joint responses where children are involved or affected. Education is committed to engaging all relevant partners, including relevant Social Work services, and Housing have more recently been included.

The Child Protection Committee delivers a comprehensive inter-agency child protection training programme, which many key agencies have accessed and evaluated well. Additionally, it would be beneficial to increase the reach of training promoted by Social Work and Education in partnership with Women's Aid. There may also be scope for Education to work in partnership with Strathclyde Police, which has seven Campus Officers who could provide outreach input to schools, although there may be some targeted training required.

7.3.3 Provision

Women's Aid: Women's Aid is a key provider of support to women who have been abused, in refuge, and on an outreach basis. Although historically, Women's Aid was supported to expand its provision, largely by the local authority, to meet outstanding need, it has recently had some reduction in funding. Its out-of-hours service is now only available to women already in refuge. Although access to emergency accommodation can be made via the Council's Homelessness standby

out-of-hours service, whose staff refer women to Women's Aid on the following day, there is no out-of-hours support service.

Women's Aid managers commented that the current level of funding has impacted on the level of service in the refuge in the evening and overnight. It was considered that this can deter women from accessing refuge accommodation, as some women may not feel secure being accommodated in refuge without staff cover.

Women's Aid's accommodation would appear to be increasingly accessed by women who have approached the Homelessness service for assistance, and service users we consulted recognised this. While the increase in use by the homelessness services indicates improved joint working, this has coincided with a reduction in the numbers of women accommodated.

Women's Aid managers considered that this reduction might reflect issues affecting move on and throughput: that more women in the accommodation services are waiting to access suitable rehousing; and that at times there are more women in refuge who have complex needs.

Overall, this can mean that less refuge accommodation is available for women who need respite from an abusive setting, or who need access to accommodation whilst they consider their options. As Women's Aid's accommodation is a scarce specialist resource in the wider system of provision, the issues of move on and the response to multiple/ complex needs, require ongoing monitoring.

In terms of women's accommodation needs, although many prefer the option of scatter flats (independent accommodation with outreach support), there is a need for access to a spectrum of provision. Refuge is likely to continue to play a valuable role in both accommodating and supporting women in crisis, particularly in the early days of leaving a violent partner.

Consideration should be given to how to support the expansion of community-based women-only centre-based resources, such as the Pearl's Centre, to enable more women to access ongoing support, opportunities for confidence-building and routes to accessing the particular services that they need. The model of targeting inter-agency outreach services to community resources, such as the Pearl's Centre, is also a positive means to supporting women to address other problems and to promoting take-up of services that address these.

While women have access to Women's Aid for advocacy, the Forum should assess how far other advice and advocacy services in North Ayrshire are aware of and well informed about the issues and networks relevant to domestic abuse, particularly as some women may not want to approach or be referred to Women's Aid.

Housing services: Tenancy support for women is provided by local authority and voluntary services and is strongly valued by those receiving this. However, the system of transferring support provision from the Council's Outreach support to its Tenancy support team, at the point of resettlement into permanent accommodation, can be emotionally disruptive where a trusting relationship has developed between

the client and the support provider. How the transition between the two services is managed is therefore very important.

New draft Guidance to Homeless⁷⁶ services will require homelessness services to take better account of the needs of children whose carer has experienced domestic abuse. This will include adopting a multi-agency approach to enable women and children to remain in their home safely, or if moving on to other accommodation, to ensure that they do not face additional economic and social disadvantage. The work of Barnardos, which is specifically contracted to address the needs of homeless children, should make an important contribution to this, working in partnership with all relevant agencies.

Rape counselling: There is a need for a local resource as North Ayrshire women currently have to travel to receive this support to the Rape Counselling and Resource Centre in Kilmarnock.

Continuous Service improvement by participation: The Forum should seek to increase the participation of women in the services they receive at the individual service level (e.g. regular service user meetings within services such as Women's Aid) and systematic service exit interviews or feedback forms, as well as at the strategic policy development level.

In this regard Women's Aid have produced a "Guide to service user participation and consultation for domestic abuse services", which provides advice on how to consult with and involve women who have experienced domestic abuse and makes suggestions for increasing the participation of domestic abuse survivors in service and policy development.

The Forum may wish to consider setting up a shadow forum of past and present service users. The shadow forum could be consulted on proposed changes to services, to comment on impact. It could also play a role in regard to performance measurement to ensure that service users' views are taken on board.

7.4 Cost effectiveness

Cost effectiveness, as a measure of efficiency, considers the benefits (net outputs or outcomes) compared to the intervention costs. Therefore any assessment requires an agreed definition of outputs, outcomes and intervention costs. There should also be an ability to compare the costs with other interventions, which produce similar outputs or outcomes. Even where there are similar outputs or outcomes, a variation in the intensity of assistance offered can cause very simple cost per output ratios to vary considerably. So an output of "number of women accommodated" in temporary accommodation can vary from meaning simple provision of accommodation to provision of accommodation and associated intensive support.

⁷⁶ Meeting the Best Interests of Children Facing Homelessness Scottish Government 2009

Current data collection in North Ayrshire does not allow for quantifying and comparing the costs of the range of individual service responses, and it was not feasible in this study to compare service costs against benchmarks. The research team is not aware of examples of good practice in systematic assessment of cost effectiveness in responding to domestic abuse at local authority level in Scotland or elsewhere.

The VAW Forum should consider appropriate performance and monitoring measures to be reported on to enable cost effectiveness of current activity in tackling domestic abuse. This should be implemented by key services individually, rather than across services, applying agreed definitions and recording data over time to allow for comparisons. This would be a selective and complex task, and not without cost to services. Future work on performance measures could be integrated with the focus on cost effectiveness, to maximise the use of the agreed data collection.

7.5 Performance measures

Data collected against performance measures in partner organisations is not ideal for measuring levels of violence against women and children and does not measure incidence. It is important that the VAW Forum is able to track local responses to violence against women and the impact of those services. The impacts to be assessed include the impact on individual women and the impact on incidence and reporting locally.

As a starting point, the VAW Forum should aim to obtain an overview of the data collected by the partner organisations. Regular reports on data recorded by partners should be provided to the Forum. Any commonality in data recorded should be identified and consideration given to developing a common monitoring system within similar service groupings.

In particular, the VAW Forum should have regard to:

- Domestic abuse incidents, in particular:
 - levels of repeat victimisation
 - levels of crime connected to domestic abuse.
- North Ayrshire Women's Aid data
 - In the future this will allow for tracking of progress and outcomes for individual women
 - The number of women refused accommodation due to lack of space is an important indicator of demand and should be monitored and reviewed by the Forum.
- Working with the Procurator Fiscal's office to access local data on prosecution rates and sentencing outcomes.

- New data collected as part of the Routine Enquiry approach in health services will be available on the identification and assessment of violence against women.
- Identify with Scottish Children's Reporters Administration (SCRA) whether data can be made available at local level on the number of children referred as a consequence of domestic abuse incidents and their subsequent outcomes.
- North Ayrshire Council:
 - Social Work data will record secondary issues and so aspects of this data may be useful to the Forum.
 - HL1 data basis would inform the Forum on the processing of applications for permanent housing for those leaving violent or abusive relationships.

In monitoring outcomes, the service user perspective can be obtained through application of a 'distance travelled' approach. The Forum should assess data monitoring systems utilised in other local authority areas such as Edinburgh Council where an outcome matrix is used. This is being developed by some organisations in Glasgow for use on a pilot basis⁷⁷, where data collected will include: age; gender; referrer; physical and mental health issues; which other services are engaged; outcomes (including 'soft outcomes')/distance travelled⁷⁸.

7.6 Commercial sexual exploitation

While limited knowledge about the extent of prostitution or trafficking in North Ayrshire emerged in this research, there was some evidence of some women using the web to advertise. It was also reported that some women travel to Glasgow to prostitute. The THT report on prostitution and trafficking in Ayrshire, which will be published this year, should help to quantify aspects of commercial sexual exploitation.

There is little specific work undertaken by North Ayrshire services with women who may prostitute. Women's Aid do raise the issue with women in the context of health and safety. The VAW Forum's Progress Update (March 2009) refers to an information pack produced locally for staff working with men and women involved in prostitution to provide helpline telephone numbers and other advice; this was not mentioned by any of the professional interviewees.

The Forum could review the Women's Support Project Guidelines for 'Working with Women who Prostitute', to consider the relevance of these to services in North Ayrshire.

The Forum should consider implementing training on issues related to commercial sexual exploitation and prostitution and trafficking to relevant services to maximise awareness i.e. prostitution does not just happen on street corners.

⁷⁷ Glasgow Homelessness Network is co-ordinating this.

⁷⁸ See for guidance (though focused on employment support services): Welsh European Funding Office (2003) *A Practical Guide to Measuring Soft Outcomes and Distance Travelled*. Guidance Document June 2003. DWP, European Union Social Fund.

7.7 Therapeutic support for sexual abuse

There is little in the way of therapeutic services for children and young people who have been sexually abused. This gap in services was also identified in the HMIE report, which found that, while children with complex emotional problems were assisted by the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, there were limited services for children recovering from abuse and these were not always available as needed.

Children 1st offer services to children and families who have been affected by physical emotional or sexual abuse. It appears that financial constraints may limit the use of the services and decisions to refer are made on a case-by-case basis.

The In Care Survivors Service network based in East Ayrshire will provide services to North Ayrshire to those who have experienced abuse whilst in care.

Overall, the service response seems piecemeal and inadequate; improvements would include increased access to existing services as well as new targeted service developments.

With regard to adult survivors, the closure of the Moving On counselling service for adult survivors of sexual abuse, including child sexual abuse, has left a dearth of services for the client group.

The Forum should consider what specialist training inputs would make a difference to local services and improve the response to the impacts of abuse and which specialist agencies might provide this.

7.8 Problem alcohol or drug users

Particularly emphasised by professional interviewees, rather than evidenced in the service user interviews, were the delays noted in regard to accessing statutory addiction services, particularly at stages when women are ready to engage. It appeared that it could take three weeks for an initial assessment, followed by a further delay until women receive the support that they need. Accessing methadone can be difficult, partly because of a 'local cap' on prescribing.

Social Work and NHS Ayrshire and Arran should both address the delays in access to their Addiction services, as soon as resources enable this.

Addictions and training – Women's Aid have developed but not yet delivered training on addictions. They should be supported to deliver the training, in partnership where appropriate, and to continue providing the support to addictions' staff in Women's Aid. Again, the outputs and outcomes of this work on addictions should be monitored.

A targeted and joint strategy is required to address the links between addictions and abuse and their impacts, as well as to minimise delays in access to assessments and services for women who are affected.

7.9 Self-harm and suicidal thoughts

Given the Forum's concern about self-harm and suicide attempts, it is important that information is recorded on self-harming or suicide attempts by women and young people in contact with their services to improve prevention, response and joint working. While agencies/ services would use this for their own planning/ service development, the Forum should consider whether such information should be collated for action planning and network training purposes, and if so, which agency/ service should co-ordinate this.

More than half the service users interviewed had experienced suicidal feelings, compared with less than a quarter who acknowledged self-harm. In contrast, Women's Aid reported that a small number of women over recent years had attempted suicide, while a higher proportion of women have engaged in self harm. The Homelessness Service has found that self-harming behaviour is more likely to occur with younger women, who they normally refer to Penumbra.

Professional interviewees identified Penumbra as the key support service for young women who self harm, which also provides training to other services. Choose Life also provides Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (known as ASIST Training) to promote the knowledge and skills required to respond to people at risk effectively.

Training has taken place in some of the partner organisations' services, e.g. homelessness services. The VAW Forum could identify key services that would benefit from training.

7.10 Support in the criminal justice system

Various support mechanisms already exist, including VIA and the Witness Service. However, the evaluation of the specialist court in Glasgow has indicated that women appreciate the information, advice and support provided by an ASSIST-type organisation, which although working in partnership with the criminal justice system, is not part of it.

Access to such independent advice and supportive advocacy is clearly helpful to women who have experienced abuse, and particularly so at key stress points. It is known that one stress point for women is when they come under pressure to review, or they review themselves, whether they want their partner to be prosecuted.

On receipt of a request to withdraw from a prosecution the protocol envisages that the Police or VIA intervene. A routine referral should be made at that point to external support agencies that could speak to the woman concerned and intervene with the prosecution process on her behalf. If the prosecution proceeds then the women would have the support of an additional service. We are aware that in another jurisdiction the fiscal has referred women directly to a local women's aid group.

ASSIST, a specialist voluntary agency, has been crucial to the success of the Glasgow Domestic Abuse Court; there is no existing equivalent service in North Ayrshire that would support women through the criminal justice system. The Forum should assess if changes to existing working practices and roles could replicate some of the benefits of ASSIST within existing services.

So, for example, Victim Support and Women's Aid could receive an active referral (rather than simply informing the woman of the existence of services) at key points in the criminal justice process.

7.11 Equalities issues

Women's Aid's training programme addresses the needs of women from BME groups. Women's Aid has access to National Office leaflets in other languages; they also have information produced in large print and on tape. They can access interpreters – but there is a problem having access to interpreters immediately.

Although North Ayrshire Council provides training on equality and diversity and disability, this does not address violence against women and its implications. An expansion of training to ensure these areas are fully covered could improve the service response to equality and diversity groups.

Victim Support also has material available in different languages and can access interpreters through Language Line.

The Forum should focus on ensuring access to services for women in BME groups. Women in some BME groups may face particular barriers in regard to reporting to the Police, whether connected to cultural issues, their immigration status or their abuser's status. Although women can be encouraged to report abuse, support to leave abusers without police intervention, must also be available and accessible.

There is a need to assess the communication needs of women from ethnic minorities and those with a sensory impairment, and to develop appropriate strategies for improving the service response.

- Training should be targeted to address the impact of violence on women from ethnic minorities and equality groups.

7.12 Key opportunities and challenges

North Ayrshire VAW faces a number of challenges. This research has identified a shopping list of services or additions to services; the challenge will be in identifying ways in which service improvements can be achieved by working together, without significant increases in budgets.

The Forum should review and update its Domestic Abuse Training Plan and ensure that this has a wider focus on Violence against Women and wider aspects of abuse.

Given that effectiveness in response requires continuous and positive operational joint working the Forum should seek regular opportunities for members to learn about each other's roles, protocols and practices.

The VAW Forum should develop sub groups to take forward key priorities identified; these could focus on the topics of: performance management and monitoring data; therapeutic services for children; services for women who have been raped and for survivors of childhood sexual assault; programmes for perpetrators of abuse, and multi-agency risk assessment. These should co-opt relevant members as necessary. For example, a local solicitor may be able to input on civil protection issues.

Some additional external relationships may also prove useful. SLAB are not active partners in any VAW Forum, but some relationship-building to ensure flow of information and to keep them aware of the unmet legal need, may prove useful.

There is a considerable amount of work to do and the VAW Forum should have a champion who is responsible for ensuring that the Forum drives through service improvement and holds partners to account.

Consideration should be given to a designated post where the sole remit is driving forward the work of the Forum.

An action plan is presented for the VAW Forum to discuss, refine and act on. This is intended to provide a systematic starting point for the Forum's Action Planning, recognising that issues are being addressed and developments are ongoing at the time of writing, and that local partners may wish to add to or modify the Plan, or format it differently, possibly with a focus on outcomes.

Finally, the Scottish Government's recent publication, "Safer Lives: Changed Lives" (2009)⁷⁹, emphasises the progress made in terms of Protection and Provision and stresses priorities including Prevention and addressing public attitudes, systematic and Participation (the "fourth 'P'). Partnership working is considered critical in achieving objectives. Success indicators for the period to 2011 are identified in general terms as including:

- progress addressing public attitudes to violence against women through education
- Increased public confidence in service providers' response to violence against women (measured by reporting trends to the Police and support providers)
- increased understanding of women's specific needs from equality groups
- comprehensive collection of national and local data on the range of violence against women.

⁷⁹ Scottish Government (2009) *Safer Lives: Changed Lives: A Shared approach to tackling violence against women in Scotland*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government. COSLA and Safer Scotland, June 2009.

Medium-term priorities are identified as:

- to sustain effective approaches to tackling violence against women
- a skilled and confident workforce across the range of practitioners
- That individuals, families and communities empowered to take action against violence against women as it affects themselves and others.

Longer-term outcomes are to achieve gender equality and to eliminate all forms of violence against women.

The Violence Against Women Forum could usefully agree and confirm key local priorities and outcomes that underpin its Action Plan in light of this recent national policy statement and consider how far the Action Plan based on the findings of this study reflects these.

In conclusion, it must be acknowledged that many of the needs and gaps identified in this report are recognised by key agencies and service providers in North Ayrshire, and that the Forum faces some key challenges in its next phase, particularly in securing the resources required to meet the gaps. There is therefore a clear need for prioritisation.

7.13 Recommended Action Plan

Priority being addressed 3Ps	Research objectives	Specific Action required
Across the 3 Ps		Consideration should be given to a designated post where the sole remit is to co-ordinate and drive forward the work of the Forum
Across the 3 Ps		The VAW Forum should develop sub groups to take forward key priorities. These could include groups to consider: performance management and monitoring data; therapeutic services for children; services for women who have been raped and for survivors of childhood sexual assault; development of programmes for perpetrators of abuse and multi-agency risk assessment. These should co opt relevant members as necessary.
Prevention	R01+3+4+5	Develop appropriate performance and monitoring measures to be reported on to increase knowledge of domestic abuse and other forms of violence against women locally and to enable cost effectiveness of current activity in tackling domestic abuse
Prevention	RO1	Specific data reporting that should be considered include disposals where perpetrators of domestic abuse have been charged and of information to the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration on the number of children referred as a consequence of domestic abuse incidents and their subsequent outcomes.
Prevention	RO1	Review and if necessary improve inter-agency sharing of information on violence against women
Prevention	RO 1+4	Further analysis of incidents of reporting to the Police, including repeat presentations and first time reporting. North Ayrshire Council should consider repeating the People's Panel Survey of 2007, which asked some questions on domestic abuse, and expand the range of information sought.
Prevention	RO 1	Women's Aid to begin collecting information as to whether women referred to them have reported domestic abuse to the Police to enable assessment of non-reporting
Prevention	RO2	Continuation and development of actions to change cultural attitudes e.g. general public awareness and work in schools

Prevention	RO2	Training provided on equality and diversity specifically in relation to domestic abuse and other forms of VAW
Protection	RO 2	Training to be widened out to NHS professionals re routine enquiry of abuse and implementation of CEL 41 (see Appendix A6)
Prevention	RO2	Develop strategy for offender management aiming to prevent repeat incidents, building on Caledonian framework
Protection	RO2+5+8	Implement specific enquiry as per SG letter (CEL 41) of September 2008 in priority settings including A&E
Protection	RO2	Consider relevance of routine enquiry training to other services
Protection	RO2	Investigate whether greater use could be made locally of civil legal remedies such as under the Matrimonial Homes Act, etc. Discuss constraints and barriers with local solicitors and consider ways to overcome them
Protection	RO2	Audit any training needs in relation to women being informed of civil protection remedies and rights to the matrimonial home
Protection	RO2	Develop programmes to address the behaviour of perpetrators of violence against women
Protection	RO5	Implement training on issues related to prostitution and trafficking to relevant services to ensure awareness and provide guidance on working with women involved in prostitution
Protection	RO2	Produce information pack for women on rights and options and key routes to accessing a range of information and support
Provision	RO2+ 10	Ensure wider availability of information to meet the needs of people from equality and diversity groups and equality of access to existing services
Protection and provision	R02	Ensure adequate publicity about available services (currently only available at national level) for women experiencing/have experienced male violence including childhood sexual abuse and prostitution/trafficking
Protection and provision	RO 2+11	Develop a quality website for North Ayrshire which gives information for women experiencing domestic abuse and other forms of violence against women with appropriate contacts and links. North Ayrshire Women's Aid should also develop its website
Protection	RO 2	Consider implementation of MARAC model of risk assessment
Provision + protection	RO9	Implement aspects of good practice from Domestic Abuse Court and related ASSIST support service model

Provision	RO9	Investigate funding options for a Rape Crisis Centre in North Ayrshire or widely accessible service to women from the local authority area. Also, discuss potential for a service in North Ayrshire with Rape Crisis Scotland
Provision	RO9	Consider the need to develop dedicated services for children and young people who have experienced abuse within North Ayrshire with relevant agencies. Also consider how best to meet the gap in services for women survivors of child sexual abuse
Provision	RO 3	Develop appropriate service agreements with services contracted to provide services
Provision	RO 2	Consider whether homelessness/ tenancy support services could provide continuity when women move on from temporary accommodation
Provision	RO 7	Women's Aid and homelessness services should keep statistics on referrals of women who have been abused and have alcohol or drug problems and the support accessed/ including any difficulties in accessing support and report these to the VAW Forum/sub group
Participation	RO 2 +3	Develop improved service user feedback at individual service level by the use of e.g. resident meetings, exit questionnaires or interviews
Participation	RO 2 +3	Develop mechanisms for enabling service users to feed into strategic policy making and service developments – could include a sub group of the VAW Forum to allow women and children to have their views heard

APPENDIX A1 NATIONAL POLICY

Key publications and developments (many related to addressing domestic abuse) include:

- The National Strategy to Address Domestic Abuse published in 2000⁸⁰
- the establishment of a National Group to Address Domestic Abuse to oversee the implementation of the Strategy (June 2001) with associated sub groups addressing specific strands (subsequently renamed the National Group to Address Violence Against Women)
- the establishment of the Cross Party Working Group for survivors of childhood sexual abuse (2001)
- Domestic Abuse: A National Training Strategy published in 2004⁸¹
- National Strategy for Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse (2005⁸²)
- The National Domestic Abuse Delivery Plan for Children and Young People published in 2008
- Yes You Can! - Working with Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse: Second Edition (2008⁸³)
- Guidance on Safeguarding Children in Scotland who may have been Trafficked 2009⁸⁴).

Additionally, telephone advice lines and web-based information resources have been developed, for example:

- The Scottish Domestic Abuse Helpline set up in 2000
- Survivor Scotland, a web based resource set up by the Scottish Government to provide resources to survivors of childhood sexual abuse⁸⁵.

Developments at policy level have been backed up by dedicated funding streams to improve service responses to women and children who experience domestic and other forms of gender-based violence, which have helped to e.g. develop and

⁸⁰ Scottish Executive (2000) *The National Strategy to Address Domestic Abuse in Scotland*, Edinburgh: Scottish Executive

⁸¹ Scottish Executive (2004) *Domestic Abuse: A National Training Strategy*, Edinburgh: Scottish Executive

⁸² *Survivor Scotland a survivor-centred strategic approach for survivors of childhood sexual abuse* (2005), Edinburgh. The Scottish Executive. <http://www.survivorscotland.org.uk/national-strategy/strategy-document.html> <http://www.survivorscotland.org.uk/national-strategy/strategy-document.html>

⁸³ Yes You Can! - Working with Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse: Second Edition (2008) Edinburgh. The Scottish Government

⁸⁴ Scottish Government (2009) *Guidance on Safeguarding Children in Scotland who may have been Trafficked Edinburgh*. The Scottish Government

⁸⁵ <http://www.survivorscotland.org.uk/national-strategy/strategy-document.html>

improve refuge provision and provide dedicated support for children who have experience of domestic abuse. These funds were the:

- Domestic Abuse Service Development Fund which was initially set up in 1999 and subsequently incorporated along with the Violence Against Women Service Development Fund to the Violence Against Women Fund in 2006 with continued funding to 2008-11
- Children's Services - Women's Aid Fund (CSWAF) initially established in 2006 and subsequently continued for a three year period covering 2008-11

Reflecting policy developments and an emphasis on broader definitions of gender-based violence, the Rape Crisis Specific Fund was established in 2005 to provide core funding for local rape crisis centres which support women who have been raped and sexually assaulted. The funding stream was subsequently extended for the years 2008-11.

In 2007 the Scottish Executive established a Sexual Abuse Service Development Fund to take forward the National Strategy for Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse.

Policy priorities in addressing domestic abuse

The National Strategy to Address Domestic Abuse (Scottish Executive, 2000) identifies three priorities in addressing violence against women (and the needs of children affected):

- **Prevention** - active prevention of domestic abuse of both women and children
- **Protection** - appropriate legal protection for women or children who experience domestic abuse
- **Provision** - adequate provision of support services for women/children.

The National Domestic Abuse Delivery Plan for Children and Young People (Scottish Government, 2008) draws on the aims of the National Strategy, and the framework of Getting it Right for every child (Scottish Executive, 2005)⁸⁶. Priority objectives are:

Protection

- Improve the National Health Service (NHS Scotland) identification of and response to the needs of women and children affected by domestic abuse.
- Develop a universal, systematic approach to information gathering and decision making that will place children's needs and wishes at the heart of agencies' response to domestic abuse.

⁸⁶ Scottish Executive (2005) *Getting it Right for Every Child. Proposals for Action*, Edinburgh, Scottish Executive

- Develop interventions targeted at perpetrators of domestic abuse, which are integrated with appropriate support services for women and children.
- Further develop specialist approaches to the handling of domestic abuse cases within the criminal justice system.
- Ensure children and young people affected by domestic abuse do not experience additional physical, emotional or psychological harm as a consequence of contact arrangements (both court and privately arranged) with the abusive parent.

Provision

- Ensure all children and young people affected by domestic abuse have access to specialist services that meet their needs.
- Develop and pilot a community-based model of groupwork intervention for children and their mothers affected by domestic abuse.
- Reduce the risk to women and children of becoming homeless as a consequence of domestic abuse and ensure, whenever necessary, they are supported to make the move into safe and suitable accommodation without facing additional emotional, economic or social disadvantages.
- Ensure a consistent, holistic approach to children and young people affected by domestic abuse through the development of skilled workforces and robust inter-agency working.

Prevention through education

- Improve the way that schools and school staff respond to domestic abuse and to the additional support needs of children and young people affected by domestic abuse.
- Support individuals, organisations and communities across Scotland to engage in local action aimed at preventing and reducing the harm caused by domestic abuse to children, young people, their families and communities.
- Ensure the general public understands the impact of domestic abuse on children and young people from the perspective of children and young people, and ensure children and young people themselves know what to do and where to get help if they are affected by domestic abuse.

Participation

- Ensure the ongoing participation of children and young people affected by domestic abuse in developing policy and practice to address domestic abuse.

The Delivery Plan stresses the need for holistic, multi-agency responses to the needs of children and young people affected by domestic abuse and makes links with a number of agendas including the Curriculum for Excellence, Additional

Support for Learning Act and forthcoming strategies including the Early Years Strategy and the Violence against Women Strategic Framework.

Routine enquiry

More recently, the Scottish Government's Healthcare Policy and Strategy Directorate has issued guidance on Gender-Based Violence Action Plans.⁸⁷ This requires all Health Boards in Scotland to develop and deliver three year action plans addressing:

- implementation of Routine Enquiry of abuse within priority settings (Notes on Routine Enquiry of Abuse as per the Guidance are given at Appendix A6)
- dissemination of revised guidance on abuse for staff
- production of an employee policy on gender-based violence
- multi-agency collaboration.

The Guidance suggests a staged approach to implementation of routine enquiry:

- Year 1: The focus will be primarily on planning to prepare for its implementation; including assessment and audit of services and staff training and development needs.
- Year 2: The focus will be on the introduction, or strengthening of routine enquiry in maternity, addictions and mental health services.
- Year 3: Routine enquiry will be introduced, or strengthened, in A&E, primary care and sexual & reproductive health services.

Training

A working Group was set up under the auspices of The National Group to Address Violence Against Women, in August 2002, tasked to develop a training strategy on domestic abuse. The Training Strategy was published in 2004⁸⁸, backed up by funding of £700,000 a year for 3 years to build the capacity to deliver training locally, by establishing local Training Consortia. North Ayrshire Council is part of a consortia covering the three Ayrshire Councils.

Innovative approaches to court proceedings

A specialist Domestic Abuse Court was set up in Glasgow in 2004, initially on a pilot basis and covering only a single Police division, in response to recognised difficulties in dealing with domestic abuse through the traditional courts.

Key features included specialist sheriffs and the ability to deal with offenders more quickly. A specialist service to support women who have experienced domestic abuse and their children was established to work jointly with the Court – ASSIST.

⁸⁷ Scottish Government (2008) Gender-based Violence Action Plans – Guidance for Health Boards.

⁸⁸ Scottish Executive (2004) *Domestic Abuse A National Training Strategy*. Edinburgh. The Scottish Executive .

An evaluation of the pilot concluded that key elements of specialist domestic abuse courts should include:

- Commitment and support from the highest level and throughout organisations, with a shared understanding of domestic abuse, based upon a “zero tolerance” approach.
- Effective multi-agency working.
- Identification and adoption of appropriate processes, protocols, standards, guidance and procedures.
- Specially trained and / or dedicated criminal justice staff with specific expertise in domestic abuse, including PFs, Sheriffs and SCS staff.
- An appropriate response by all of these organisations, based upon the shared understanding, and the use of a robust and consistent approach.
- The provision of good evidence and information to the PF and the court.
- Fast-tracking of cases.
- A victim-centred approach, with an emphasis upon their safety, supported by appropriate processes, such as risk assessment and safety planning, information, clear links to civil courts and the use of appropriate disposals.
- The provision of independent support to victims and their children at all stages by an organisation with expertise in domestic abuse.
- Ongoing development, information collection and review, reflecting good practice and equality.⁸⁹

Following the report of the Glasgow Domestic Abuse Court Feasibility Study Group to the Scottish Government in April 2008⁹⁰, the Court was expanded in November 2008 to cover the “A” division, while in February 2009, courts in the City’s remaining division (“B”) were “clustered” to allow sheriffs to develop specialisms. ASSIST was enabled to deal with referrals from all over Glasgow. It has been reported that since the expansion of the court in November, the number of cases going through the court has risen by 132%.⁹¹

⁸⁹ Scottish Executive (2007) *Evaluation of the Pilot Domestic Abuse Pilot*. Edinburgh. Scottish Executive

⁹⁰ The Scottish Government (2008) *Glasgow Domestic Abuse Court Feasibility Study Group*. Edinburgh. The Scottish Government.

⁹¹ Scotland on Sunday, 3rd May 2009. Accessed on line at <http://scotlandonsunday.scotsman.com/latestnews/Success-of-specialist-abuse-court.5230241.jp> on 12th May 2009

Action to address the behaviour of perpetrators of abuse

Following on from previous programme which addressed the behaviour of perpetrators and provided support to those who had been abused and their children, e.g. the CHANGE Programme, **The Caledonian System** was accredited at the Scottish Accreditation Panel for Offender's Programmes in February 2009. The Scottish Government is taking forward the national roll-out of this court-mandated perpetrator programme and of integrated services for the (ex)partners and children of men who take part in the programme⁹².

⁹² The Scottish Government (2009) Gender Equality Scheme Annual Report 2009. Edinburgh. The Scottish Government

APPENDIX A2 KEY PRINCIPLES OF NORTH AYRSHIRE VAW STRATEGY

In addressing violence against women the North Ayrshire VAW Strategy adopts the following principles:

- Violence against women is a violation of human rights.
- Equality between women and men is an important step in eliminating violence against women.
- Violence against women takes many forms, and any work to address violence against women should take account of the links between different forms of violence against women, and the fact that women may experience more than one form of violence over the course of their lives.
- Perpetrators must be held accountable for their acts of violence, and appropriate interventions must take place to ensure they assume responsibility for their actions, while keeping women and children safe.
- Prevention is the long-term solution to ending violence against women. The elimination of violence against women requires change in societal attitudes and values concerning gender roles and all forms of violence.
- The socialization of girls and boys from an early age must emphasise equality and respect.
- Any action to address violence against women must be based on respect for persons and their differences.
- Solutions are best achieved through partnerships amongst individuals, groups and governments.

APPENDIX A3 DATA

Chart A3.1 Age range of female victims, expressed as percentage of all female victims, 2006-2008

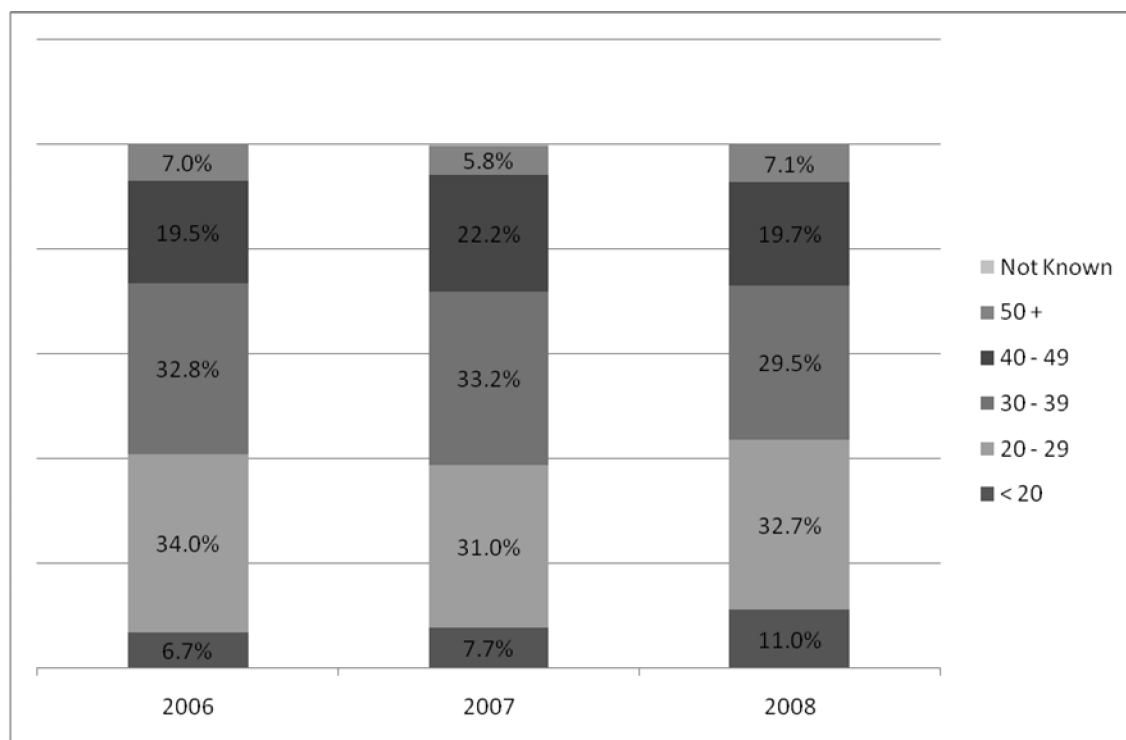


Table A3.1 Repeat victimisation female, number of incidents involving repeat victims

	No repeat	Repeat 1-5	Repeat 6-10	Repeat 11 or more	Total repeat as % of all female victims
2005/06	448	448	81	65	57.0%
2006/07	502	654	75	57	61.0%
2007/08	465	602	96	68	62.2%

Table A3.2 Repeat victimisation male, number of incidents involving repeat victims

	No repeat	Repeat 1-5	Repeat 6-10	Repeat 11 or more	Total repeat as % of all male victims
2005/06	106	31	0	0	22.6%

2006/07	139	50	3	0	27.6%
2007/08	127	74	2	0	37.4%

Table A3.3 Repeat accused expressed as a percentage (male and female)

	No repeat	1 to 5	6 to 10	11 or more	Not known	Total Repeat
2005/06	46%	41%	6%	5%	2%	52%
2006/07	44%	46%	5%	3%	2%	54%
2007/08	43%	45%	7%	4%	0%	57%

Table A3.4 Rate of reports of Domestic Abuse per 100,000 population across Strathclyde Police area

	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
Argyll & Bute	354	367	571	469	479	514	491	519
East Ayrshire	620	708	357	447	878	900	946	1,045
East Dunbartonshire	349	343	234	391	364	450	513	560
East Renfrewshire	190	219	283	345	369	450	454	439
Glasgow City	1,033	1,106	1,097	1,284	1,316	1,446	1,558	1,518
Inverclyde	626	543	666	926	924	1,001	1,030	1,126
North Ayrshire	480	562	544	732	833	889	1,106	1,065
North Lanarkshire	420	527	652	793	895	992	1,010	965
South Ayrshire	808	837	758	949	920	869	968	1,011
South Lanarkshire	418	405	418	622	699	718	729	766
West Dunbartonshire	838	852	883	1,305	1,382	1,292	1,518	1,800

Table A3.5 Average number of incidents per Ward over three years 2005-06-2007/08

WARD	Average	SIMD ⁹³ ranking
Irvine West	86.7	1
Stevenston North	76.3	3
Stevenston South	72.3	1
Saltcoats East	70.3	1
Irvine North	63.3	1
Irvine Vineburgh and Woodlands South	57.7	1
South Beach	56.7	1

Kilwinning South	54.7	1
Ardrossan South	53.3	3
Bourtreehill	52.3	3
Saltcoats North	50.0	6
Irvine Landward	46.7	4
Ardrossan North	46.3	4
Dalry	45.0	6
Dreghorn	44.3	4
Kilbirnie North	39.0	7
Woodlands North and Girdle Toll	38.7	4
Beith	38.3	4
Eglington and Lawthorn	37.7	3
Kilwinning East	32.0	3
Largs West and Cumbrae	31.7	3
Largs East	30.3	6
Garnock East	30.3	9
West Kilbride	29.3	3
Kilbirnie South	29.3	4
Irvine Townhead	29.0	2
Kilwinning West	15.3	14
Arran	14.0	10
Largs South and Fairlie	7.7	15
Largs North and Skelmorlie	7.3	8

Table A3.6 Type and number of crimes recorded in domestic abuse incidents in North Ayrshire, 2005-06- 2007/08

	Breach Of The Peace	Other Crimes/Offences	Petty Assault	Serious Violence/ Sex Crimes	Vandalism
2005/06	333	73	306	23	56
2006/07	401	101	382	29	50
2007/08	406	134	387	28	58

Table A3.7 Percentage of homeless applications based on a violent or abusive dispute within the household, per Local Authority, 2007/08

	2007/08
	% of applications Dispute within household: violent or abusive
Scotland	10
Aberdeen City	8
Aberdeenshire	10
Angus	8
Argyll & Bute	6
Clackmannanshire	7
Dumfries & Galloway	12
Dundee City	0
East Ayrshire	7
East Dunbartonshire	16
East Lothian	10
East Renfrewshire	10
Edinburgh, City of	11
Eilean Siar	10
Falkirk	23
Fife	10
Glasgow City	7
Highland	9
Inverclyde	11
Midlothian	18
Moray	10
North Ayrshire	12
North Lanarkshire	12
Orkney	15
Perth & Kinross	9
Renfrewshire	14
Scottish Borders, The	9
Shetland	8
South Ayrshire	11
South Lanarkshire	10
Stirling	18
West Dunbartonshire	18
West Lothian	8

APPENDIX A4 NORTH AYRSHIRE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACTION PLAN 2007/10

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMESCALE	OUTCOME
1. PREVENTION – To prevent, remove or diminish the risk of violence against women and its impacts on children and young people			
1.1 Develop policy and procedures to support employees experiencing violence	Chief Executive's Women's Aid Trade Unions	2007	Clear guidance and support available for Council employees
1.2 Promote awareness raising publicity campaigns	All	Ongoing	Heightened awareness of impact of violence against women within local communities, particularly on Cumbernae, through Women's Aid training in local communities, and through the Reclaim the Night Annual March during Domestic Abuse Awareness Week
1.3 Support Ayrshire Domestic Abuse Training Consortium and contribute to development of integrated Training Plans	Ayrshire Training Consortium Members	2007/10	All training delivered Ayrshire-wide is consistent with the national training strategy and meets local training needs
1.4 Improve support for homeless young people in meeting their educational and other needs	Housing Educational Services Women's Aid	2007	Co-ordinated service available to ensure minimum disruption to children's educational, recreational and leisure opportunities
1.5 Update and promote use of Healthy Relationships packs developed for North Ayrshire schools	Women's Aid Educational Services	2007	Packs available in CD ROM and more extensive use made of materials in schools to challenge young people's attitudes about the acceptability of violence against women

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMESCALE	OUTCOME
1.7 Update the Healthy Relationships for Teens materials and identify means of extending its use within Community Learning & Development and other Educational Services settings	Women's Aid Educational Services	2009	Resources available for workers involved with young people to challenge attitudes about violence against women
1.8 Promote use of the arts in reinforcing the message that domestic abuse is a crime	Educational Services	2007/10	Drama productions in schools challenging attitudes about domestic abuse
1.9 Promote events for young people which includes a challenge to attitudes regarding domestic abuse	Police	2007/10	Attitudes regarding violence are challenged at the Big World Event and elsewhere
1.10 Publish integrated calendars of training events on domestic abuse, child protection and other related training on websites and in leaflets	Child Protection Women's Aid Social Services Educational Services	2007	Improved awareness of violence against women training and better uptake of training opportunities
1.11 Identify all sources of relevant monitoring information and performance measurement and seek to improve the collection of statistical information	All	2008	Improved understanding of the extent of domestic abuse in North Ayrshire and its different impacts on women and children
ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMESCALE	OUTCOME
1.12 Consult separately with women and with children affected by domestic abuse on their experience of services to obtain a better understanding of the high	Chief Executive's Women's Aid	2009	Research project identifies reasons behind higher levels of reporting and Action plan can be developed to address needs

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMESCALE	OUTCOME
levels of reporting in North Ayrshire and service improvements needed			
1.13 Develop protocols and guidance to assist Council staff in supporting women and children experiencing domestic abuse	Social Services Housing Services Educational Services	2009	Protocols and advice formalised to assist employees when responding to women and children experiencing domestic abuse and clear guidance given that women should have an opportunity to speak privately in the absence of their partner as necessary
1.14 Develop links between the Violence against Women Strategy, the Violence Reduction Strategy and Gender Equality Schemes	Chief Executive's Police	2007	More integrated working and wider awareness of gender-based violence
1.15 Provide equal access to services for everyone including disabled women, women from ethnic minorities, older women and lesbian women	All	2007/10	Measures in place to provide information and access to services for all women
ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMESCALE	OUTCOME
2. PROTECTION – To protect women from victimisation, repeat victimisation or harassment by perpetrators and protect the children and young people affected			
2.1 Develop Children's Outreach services to children and young people affected by domestic abuse	Women's Aid	2007/10	Better protection and support provided to children and young people affected by abuse
2.2 Promote support for women and young people affected by drug misuse experiencing domestic	Women's Aid NHS Ayrshire & Arran Social Services	2010	Domestic Abuse and Drug Support Project outcomes are achieved to provide wider access to accommodation, engage

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMESCALE	OUTCOME
abuse	Housing Services		women more effectively with public services, ensure women remain in refuge with support and avoid recurring homelessness, children are accommodated in a safe environment, improved connections are made to local addiction services and appropriate support and assistance to delivered to women and children
2.3 Promote Moving On service to provide counselling to survivors of sexual abuse, including childhood sexual abuse (NOTE: This service is provided to men and women survivors)	Three Towns Healthy Living Safer Communities Thematic Group	2007/10	Therapeutic support available to survivors of sexual abuse
2.4 Identify support for women experiencing violence who are involved in prostitution	NHS Ayrshire & Arran Women's Aid Police Social Services Housing	2009	Improved awareness of support services and where to refer women for help
ACTION RESPONSIBILITY TIMESCALE OUTCOME			
2.5 Improve inter-agency sharing of information on violence against women	Police Criminal Justice Social Services Housing Child Protection	2007/10	Arrangements in place for better information sharing between services
2.6 Improve co-ordination between Family Support Workers and	Women's Aid Housing Services	2008	Research findings on family support mapping used to ensure better co-

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMESCALE	OUTCOME
Children's Outreach Workers with others supporting families and young people	Social Services Child Protection		ordination and reduction in overlap and duplication
2.7 Monitor developments in the referral processes for children affected by domestic abuse through national pilots and locally through the Child Protection Committee	Child Protection SCRA Police Social Services Educational Services	2008	Improved processing of child protection concerns
2.8 Develop means of addressing behaviour of male perpetrators	Criminal Justice Social Services Women's Aid Police Procurator Fiscal	2009	Programme in place to work with male perpetrators with a view to affecting change in their violent behaviour towards women and children
2.9 Identify measures in place to protect all women, including women from ethnic minority communities, older women, disabled women and lesbian women	Chief Executive's	2008	Better information available on assistance for disabled women, women from ethnic minorities, older women and lesbian women
ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMESCALE	OUTCOME
3. PROVISION – To provide adequate services to deal with the consequences of violence against women and children to help them rebuild their lives			
3.1 Support Home Security Project to improve safety of women and children experiencing violence	Housing Services Police Women's Aid	2007/10	Home Security Project offers direct support to women and children experiencing violence to help them feel safer in their home
3.2 Investigate development of support services for children and young people who have been sexually	Social Services Women's Aid NHS Ayrshire & Arran	2009	Improved support for children and young people who have been sexually abused

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMESCALE	OUTCOME
3.3	All	2007/10	Services and information can be accessed and used by everyone and are adapted when necessary to ensure that they meet everyone's needs
3.4	All	2008	Assistance available for survivors immediately following a sexual assault
3.5	All	2007/10	Appropriate funding in place to support this work
3.6	Women's Aid Housing	2009	More accommodation available to meet demand for refuge accommodation in an individual way
3.7	Police Housing	2007/10	Services are more user-friendly and can be accessed more easily

APPENDIX A5 SPECCSS RISK ASSESSMENT

The SPECCSS risk assessment model was added to the Vulnerable Persons Database (VPD) in 2006. This identifies the factors that must be considered by officers attending a domestic incident and will assist in identifying high-risk victims. Officers must highlight a domestic abuse victim as being of special risk on the VPD where one or more of the following factors exist:-

- **Separation** - There is increased vulnerability in domestic abuse shortly after separating from a partner, or when a relationship is coming to an end.
- **Pregnancy** - Abuse and violence often commence or intensify during pregnancy or shortly after the birth of a child.
- **Escalation** - Increases in either frequency or severity of abuse e.g. verbal abuse escalating to physical assault.
- **Child Custody** - Child custody disputes can often be associated with increased risk. Consideration must also be given to child protection concerns when these matters arise.
- **Cultural Issues** - Victims within black and minority ethnic communities may be at risk of culturally condoned violence.
- **Stalking** - Stalking can be associated with obsessive behaviour and serious violence and often manifests itself after a relationship separates.
- **Sexual Assault** - Sexual assault can often occur within the confines of a relationship and victims are particularly at risk of increased physical violence.
- **Other Factors** - There may be other factors identified which highlight a significant increased risk to the victim, such as threats to kill, threats of suicide by the perpetrator, abuse of pets by perpetrator, use of weapons. When these matters are highlighted they too must be included on the VPD report.

APPENDIX A6 ROUTINE ENQUIRY OF ABUSE

Given the prevalence of abuse, its adverse health impact and the reluctance of survivors to disclose without direct questioning because of the stigma surrounding abuse, the NHS must be proactive in seeking to identify and address this issue. The implementation of routine enquiry has been advocated at a UK level by the Home Office and the Department of Health. Professional bodies, such as the Royal College of Midwives and the Royal College of Psychiatry also endorse this approach. Increased detection will afford survivors the opportunity to access support and services, allowing for earlier intervention and improved health outcomes.

Definition of Routine Enquiry

- It is important to distinguish what is meant by the various terms used to describe the process of asking about abuse.
- In public health terms, routine screening has a focus on early identification and the capacity to reach patients whether or not symptoms are immediately apparent. It also refers to the application of a standardised test according to a procedure that does not vary from place to place. The rigidity of this model is not appropriate for domestic and other forms of abuse.
- **Routine Enquiry** - Involves asking all people presenting to a service direct questions in relation to abuse. This can be at a particular point in their use of a service, or on all occasions at which they present
- **Selective Enquiry** - refers to direct/indirect questions to some people with whom there may be some suspicion of abuse, or who meet certain criteria indicating additional vulnerability to such abuse e.g. homeless women, or women with mental health problems.

A staged approach to implementation of Routine Enquiry will be undertaken, reflecting the need for careful planning around the introduction of routine enquiry, and the need to tailor it to serve the nature and requirements of different services and settings. Over the three years of the plan, clear systems for implementing routine enquiry of domestic and other forms of abuse will be established.

In relation to domestic abuse, this will be introduced in all the priority settings. Given the evidence on prevalence, dynamics and impact of abuse, this will apply to all women who present. This can be at a particular point in their use of a service, or on more than one occasion. In relation to mental health, addictions and sexual and reproductive health services, routine enquiry of sexual abuse will also be incorporated for all service users, both female and male.

Source: Scottish Government (2008) Gender-based Violence Action Plans – Guidance for Health Boards.

APPENDIX A7 LINKAGES BETWEEN VAW STRATEGY AND OTHER LOCAL POLICIES/PLANS

Key North Ayrshire planning and policy documents with cross overs with domestic/gender based violence

Name of plan and period covered	References to gender-based violence	Strategic linkages	Key progress noted	Key actions/outcomes
North Ayrshire Community Plan 2006/16	Refers to success of home security scheme in its 1st year of operation. Safe and secure objective includes domestic abuse	Safety	Home security scheme	
North Ayrshire Local Housing Strategy 2005-10	Notes that a significant minority of homeless households are households fleeing domestic and non-domestic abuse.	Providing accommodation for women and children affected by domestic abuse		
Homelessness Strategy 2007/10	As above. States that in 2006/07 8.98% of homeless applicants were homeless because of a violent dispute with a spouse. In total this applied to 137 households comprising 140 adults and 132 children. Only 90 of these households (5.9% of all applicants) were assessed as in priority need.	Providing accommodation and support for women and children affected by domestic abuse		Staff training in domestic abuse

<p>Integrated Children's Services Plan 2005/08</p>	<p>The Plan has as an objective to raise public awareness of child protection and domestic abuse. The Plan specifically identifies children who are affected by domestic abuse and children abused through prostitution and sexual exploitation as "children in need". The plan also mentions the need to provide services for children affected by domestic abuse.</p>	<p>Child protection/keeping children safe, and linkages with gender-based violence</p>	<p>Additional refuge space built for families affected by domestic abuse. North Ayrshire Women's Aid provide multi-agency and service specific training, particularly on children's experiences of domestic abuse.</p>	
<p>Ayrshire Domestic Abuse Consortium Training plan 2007/08</p>	<p>Deliver multi-agency training on Understanding Domestic Abuse, Moving Forward: Improving Practice and Children's Experiences of Domestic Abuse</p>			<p>270 service providers trained by April 2008 to respond more effectively to women and children experiencing domestic abuse and to develop their skills in discussing domestic abuse with women and children</p>

	Talks to all school cluster groups throughout North Ayrshire and to young people themselves through Personal and Social Education classes and assemblies			All head teachers in North Ayrshire have growing awareness of packs and their use in schools. Raise awareness of services and issues to 500 young people 8 employees trained to respond appropriately
	Deliver awareness training to all new employees involved in the home security initiative including building services workers			Training materials and guidance produced.
Child Protection Annual Report and Business Plan 2007/08	Develop awareness raising training and guidance for workers supporting women with addictions In 2005-06, 12 children were placed on the register because of sexual abuse (representing 12% of all such cases) compared to 2 in 2003-04.	Child protection	A NA CPC good practice event was held to raise awareness around child sexual abuse. A representative from North Ayrshire's Women's Aid is part of the NA CPC Training sub group to ensure domestic abuse is included in the work of the NA CPC. A section on domestic abuse and the impact of domestic abuse on	Practice guidance for responding to domestic abuse within the context of child protection to be produced by January 2007.

		Health	<p>children and young people are included in the NA CPC interagency training day.</p> <p><u>Achievements:</u> NA CPC Lead Officer is a member of the NA VAW Forum, which allows issues relevant to both child protection and domestic abuse to be discussed. NA CPC Lead Officer is also a member of the Ayrshire Wide Domestic Abuse Training Consortium, which addresses domestic abuse training</p>	<p>In the report's section on safer communities the actions proposed are:</p> <p>Provide training on domestic abuse and sexual abuse;</p> <p>Promotional campaign;</p> <p>Refuge provision;</p> <p>Children's Outreach Service.</p>
<p>Joint Health Improvement Plan 2007/10</p>	<p>In referring to its role as a health improvement organisation, the Council in the foreword to the report mentions its remit in tackling domestic abuse.</p>			

Community Safety Problem-Solving Plan 2005/08	Refers to funding for "Moving On Project for survivors of childhood rape and sexual assault"	Safety		3 year funding granted to 07/08 (£20,000 07/08)
Violence Reduction Strategy –a Scottish wide Strategy developed by Strathclyde Police	No specific references	General reduction of violence in society and improved support to victims		
North Ayrshire Gender Equality Scheme 2007-2010	<p>A key objective identified through consultation related to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Housing - homelessness, community safety and domestic abuse <p>The paper also reports on a survey carried out for The People's Panel in Spring 2007 that included a question asking respondents if they had experience of domestic abuse personally, or of domestic abuse affecting a member of their family or a friend. This found that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •11% of female respondents said they had such experience compared to 4% of the male respondents •in regeneration areas the total percentage of respondents who 	Gender equality		

	had personal experience of domestic abuse rose to 11% and in the rest of North Ayrshire it fell to 6%.			
ADAT Draft Alcohol and Drug Strategies 2008/11	No reference to gender-based violence	Addictions	ADAT has now been dissolved. New Alcohol and Drug Partnerships will be in place by 1 October and these will each develop local strategies.	
North Ayrshire Single Outcome Agreement	Mentions domestic abuse only in relation to year on year reporting, with a target to increase reporting.	Local Government priorities as per Concordat		Target - to increase reporting due to increased confidence ⁹⁴ .
North Ayrshire Vulnerable Children and Young People's Guidance	<p>Gives examples of circumstances where guidance would apply and these include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •children and young people at risk of being exposed to prostitution or sexual exploitation of any kind. •children and young people affected by domestic abuse. •children and young people on the Child Protection Register. •children and young people who are trafficked in the UK. 	Links with VAWs		

⁹⁴ It is worth noting that an analysis of local authority single outcome agreements 2008 found that, of 32 local authorities, 12 SOA had no reference to domestic abuse or violence against women. In terms of setting local targets to measure progress, approximately half the local authorities using the indicator of the number of domestic abuse incidents per 1000,000 population sought to increase the number of reported indicators, while the other half sought to reduce it. Source: Scottish Women's Aid: Analysis of local authority single outcome agreements 2008. Edinburgh

<p>North Ayrshire Choose Life Action Plan</p>		<p>Links between gender-based violence and depression/self harm and suicides</p>		<p>ASIST training (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) to be delivered in Partnership by North Ayrshire Council and Women's Aid</p>
<p>North Ayrshire Choose Life Annual Report 2006 (Called report to national team 2)</p>	<p>Survivors of sexual abuse a priority group. Also those who self harm</p>	<p>As above</p>		
<p>North Ayrshire Council Plan 2008/2011 Building a better North Ayrshire</p>		<p>Safety</p>		
<p>South West Scotland Community Justice Authority. Area Plan 2008 - 2011 Action Plan 2008 - 2009</p>	<p>Refers to levels of abuse; high levels of repeat incidents and the fact that children are present in 43% of cases</p>	<p>Offenders</p>		<p>The Programmes Team will deliver the following specific programmes as an additional condition of community supervision, post custody licence or as part of an agreed risk management plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constructs, Positive Steps to Stop Offending; (offence

				<p>specific programme for men)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community Sex Offender Groupwork Programme• Domestic Abuse (Caledonian Programme). <p>These programmes will be delivered across the CJA area.</p>
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APPENDIX A8 PROFILE OF SERVICE USERS INTERVIEWED

Age

The Table below shows that the majority of service users interviewed were thirty five years or older (ten of the fifteen interviewees or 67%).

Table A8.1 Age of service user interviewees

Age	Nos
18-24	3
25-34	2
35-44	6
45-59	4
Total	15

Details of current household composition

The majority of service user interviewees were living either with dependent children (five of the fifteen) or with grown up children (again, five of the fifteen). The Table below shows the household composition by age of the woman interviewee.

Table A8.2 Household composition of service users

Living situation	Age	Total
Lives with mother	18-24	1
Living alone	35-44	2
	45-59	2
	18-24	2
Living alone with dependent child/children	25-34	2
	35-44	1
	35-44	3
Living with grown up child/children	45-59	2
		15
Grand Total		

Ethnicity

Thirteen service user interviewees described their ethnic origin as White Scottish, while two interviewees were Polish.

Current accommodation

Temporary accommodation

Seven service users were accommodated in temporary accommodation at the time of the interview and this included: North Ayrshire Council's temporary accommodation; Refuge and scatter flats managed by Women's Aid and one service user who lived in a private rented flat (on a six month lease). Further details are shown in the Table below.

Table A8.3 Temporary accommodation currently occupied by service users

Current temporary accommodation	Total
Council temp	2
Private rented	1
Refuge accommodation	2
Women's Aid scatter flat	2
Total	7

Permanent accommodation

Eight of the service user interviewees were in permanent accommodation with the majority being in North Ayrshire Council tenancies. An additional woman, accommodated in a Woman's Aid refuge at the time of interview had also been allocated a Council tenancy and was preparing to move in. Further information is shown in the Table below.

Table A8.4 Permanent accommodation currently occupied by service users

Type of permanent accommodation	Totals
Council	5
Owner occupied	1
RSL	2
Total	8

Income source

Interviewees gave the following sources of income, as reported in the Table below.

Table A8.5 Income source(s) reported by service users

Income sources	Totals
Bursary, Child benefit, Child tax credit	1
Incapacity Benefit (IB)	2
IB but has just been assessed as fit for work	1
Income support (IS) + Disability Living Allowance (DLA)	1
IS + IB	2

IS + waiting for tax credits	1
Job Seeker Allowance (JSA) or IS	3
Sick pay	1
Working	1
Working part time	1
Working part time plus IS	1
Total	15

APPENDIX A9 SHOW CARD

Do you/have you experienced any of the following? (Tick all that apply)

- Anxiety
- Panic attacks
- Low self-esteem
- Depression
- Eating disorders
- Flashbacks
- Self harming
- Suicidal thoughts

APPENDIX A10 MAPPING LOCAL SERVICES

AGENCY/ SERVICE	ROLE IN RELATION TO DA/ VAW
NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL	
Chief Executive's	Strategic role and co-ordination of multi-agency work via VAW Forum.
Housing	
Housing Strategy	Strategic/ policy and commissioning framework Commissioning and funding of Women's Aid and voluntary services.
Homelessness Service	Assessment, accommodation and support planning; referrals to Women's Aid and other voluntary organisations; engagement with VAW Sub Group.
Temporary accommodation	Access to Hostels and other Temporary Accommodation and support; may become aware of impact on women and children.
Housing Support	Provision of Housing/ tenancy support
Area Housing Offices	Enabling access to move on accommodation; Responding to issues of abuse and impact on tenants and children.
ASB Team	May develop awareness of violence/ abuse as underlying factors in problem behaviours.
Home Security Service	Enables practical assistance and adaptations to maximise safety in community.
Designated staff member working on Health and Homelessness	Co-ordinating and reviewing strategy development and implementation.
Education	
Education Service and Schools	Children may experience problems due to emotional or behavioural impacts of DV or abuse. Police will refer children to Social Work and alert Education if there is a significant incident involving children. Women's Aid has worked with Education to develop training and information for teachers to improve prevention, which is a departmental priority.
Social Work	
Community Care Division Two key sub-divisions – Older People and Adult Community	Violence against women may surface as issue for adult community care clients. Service users with mental health needs, disabilities or other needs

Care services. One Operational Manager has a joint Social Work-Health post.	may additionally be affected by abuse which may increase their vulnerability.
Children, Families and Criminal Justice Division	<p>Violence against women can arise as issue across both adult and children's services. Domestic abuse is a significant factor in many child protection referrals and is a factor in many of the families with whom Social Services are involved. When Police attend a domestic abuse incident they will automatically refer any children of the household to Scottish Children's Reporter Administration. This information is shared with other agencies.</p> <p>Criminal Justice undertake work with adults convicted of offences of domestic abuse and work with the Programme Development Team across the Community Justice Authority in relation to sex offenders.</p>
Non-offence Referral Interim Process (pilot 2008/09) Multi-agency)	Following GIRFEC principles, this process addresses referrals to Scottish Children's Reporter Administration following police attending domestic abuse incidents where children are part of the household.
Other Criminal Justice	
South West Scotland Community Justice Authority (multi-agency)	The CJA organised a day event highlighting domestic abuse.
Police	<p>Although incidents may not be reported to the Police, the Police play a key role in responding to crimes and linking with relevant services. The police response includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Operational Response (Control room/Contact Centre staff receiving and actioning the call) - Police officers attending and dealing; time of investigation; post incident management - Police Domestic Abuse Unit monitoring, management and liaison.

Procurator Fiscal	Prosecution of crimes or other disposal.
Victim Information and Advice (VIA)	VIA is part of the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service. It provides information to vulnerable victims (which includes all complainers in prosecutions arising from Domestic Abuse incidents) about the criminal justice process, updates on their case and can link with other services.
Addictions	
The Ayrshire and Arran ADAT was formed in 1995. <i>Note the ADAT has now been dissolved and new Alcohol and Drug Partnerships will be in place by 1 October. These will develop local strategies.</i>	ADAT is a multi-agency and multi-disciplinary committee of key players who take a lead role in alcohol and drug issues in their organisation. Representation on Ayrshire and Arran ADAT comes from NHS Ayrshire and Arran, South Ayrshire Council, North Ayrshire Council, East Ayrshire Council, Strathclyde Police, Prison Service, Procurator's Fiscal Office, and Scottish Drugs Forum. ADAT sets a strategic direction on alcohol and drugs across Ayrshire and Arran.
NAC Addiction Service	The service covers all aspects of Addictions – alcohol, drugs and gambling and is based in Saltcoats. It was originally 2 separate Urban Programme projects, one covering Irvine and the other the 3 towns and North. The service can be accessed by self or agency referrals
Ayrshire Council on Alcohol (voluntary sector)	This provides a range of alcohol-related advice and counselling services to those referred by GPs or other services.
Addaction (voluntary sector)	Recovery focused, community-based approach and community support services; provides both outreach and continuing support to promote positive change. Addaction runs Smart Recovery support programme for people with drug problems and a Community Alcohol Rehabilitation Service for people with alcohol problems. Services may be accessed by self-referrals.
Princes Trust (voluntary sector)	Activity programmes at Townhead

NHS Services	
Addiction services includes Community Health Addiction Team, Substitute Prescribing, Lister Street, Crosshouse Hospital	Key resource used by network of services for women with addictions, includes a range of services some are GP/Service referral.
Addictions service – Home Detox Team, Westmount, Prestwick	Home detox service requires GP/service referral.
Dual Diagnosis team	This specialist service addresses the needs of those referred by a GP or other services who have both drug / alcohol problems and mental health problems.
Community Health Addiction Team	This community service provides counselling, support and information for people with drug problems at the Bentinck Centre in Kilmarnock. People can self-refer.
General Practitioners and Community health	Key role in regard to Child protection and responding to impact of VAW, but restricted input in regard to Addictions was indicated. The GP is employed by NHS Community Health Addiction Team and prescribes as part of this team and not as part of a general practice.
A&E Departments e.g. Crosshouse Hospital	Likely to be a first port of call in relation to serious incidents and threatened suicide.
Mental Health services	Identified as problematic to access psychiatric services.
Psychological services at Saltcoats	
CPNs linked to Homelessness service	
Other Specialist Mental Health	
Community Mental Health Teams	Advice, assessment and community psychiatric nurse (CPN) services.
Choose Life	Works to bring people together to raise awareness of suicide and set up activities to support those at risk and those affected by suicide.
Penumbra's service for 16-25 year olds	Support and training with regard to self harm
SAMH	Runs a Women's Support group.

Other voluntary sector Services	
Women's Aid	Core service providing Refuge, Advice and Support, staff include addictions workers and Children's workers who do outreach in schools; also has 2 adapted flats.
Domestic Abuse Help Line	National service - 24 Hour telephone response
Barnardo's Families service	Works with families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. This plays a preventative as well as responsive role. May provide support in partnership with Council's Housing Support services. Plans to establish peer support groups in temporary accommodation in 2009.
Quarriers	Supported accommodation for homeless young people aged 16-25, some of whom may have been abused. One service is for young women only; the other is mixed.
Simon Community	Intensive, pro-active and flexible support for homeless people, some who have been abused and who have multiple and complex needs.

APPENDIX A 11 VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN FORUM MEMBERSHIP

The North Ayrshire Violence Against Women Forum's members are representatives from:

- North Ayrshire Women's Aid
- Procurator Fiscal's Office
- North Ayrshire Victim Support
- Strathclyde Police – Local Liaison Officer and Domestic Abuse Unit
- NHS Ayrshire & Arran – Health Promotion and Midwifery Services
- Scottish Children's Reporters Administration
- Three Town's Healthy Living Centre Moving On Project
- Child Protection Committee
- North Ayrshire Council
 - Social, Educational, Housing and Chief Executive's Services
 - Home Security Project
 - Criminal Justice Partnership

The Violence Against Women Forum will have a key role to play in supporting this agenda for improvement in Prevention, Protection, Provision and Participation.

Copies of this report are available in hard copy from the Community Planning team, or available to download from our website. These documents can also be made available in other formats and community languages.

Please contact the Community Planning team for more information.

本文件也可應要求，製作成其他語文或特大字體版本，也可製作成錄音帶。

ਇਹ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ, ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਅਤੇ ਆਡੀਓ ਟੇਪ 'ਤੇ ਰਿਕਾਰਡ ਹੋਇਆ ਵੀ ਮੰਗ ਕੇ ਲਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ।

درخواست پر یہ دستاویز دیگر زبانوں میں، بڑے حروف کی چھپائی اور سننے والے ذرائع پر بھی میسر ہے۔

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