

Cross Party Group on Men's Violence against Women and Children

13th September 2023, 18.00-19.30 via Zoom

Minute

1 Present

MSPs

Rona Mackay (RMack), MSP
Audrey Nicoll (AN), MSP
Rhoda Grant (RG), MSP

Invited guests

Lesley Irving (LI), VAWG Strategic Funding Review

Non-MSP Group Members

Gillian Baker (GB)
Hannah Brisbane (HB), Engender
Rebekah Cheung (RC), White Ribbon Scotland
Neil Clark (NC), White Ribbon Scotland
Amber Cully (AC), GEMAP
Nicola Gilbert (NG), Scottish Women's Aid
Angela Graham (AG), Central Advocacy Partners Falkirk
Lily Greenan (LG)
Gill McKinna (GMck), Community Justice Scotland, Caledonian System
Heidi McLean (HMcl), The Young Women's Movement
Jan MacLeod (JMacL), Women's Support Project
Laura Nacyte (LN), Women's Support Project
Catriona Scott (CS), RASAC, Perth & Kinross
Marsha Scott (MS), Scottish Women's Aid
Linda Thompson (LTh), Women's Support Project
Claire Thomson (CT), Rape Crisis Scotland
Jenny Wartnaby (JW), Zero Tolerance
Teah Zdanowicz (TZ), UN House Scotland

Apologies

Beatrice Wishart (BW), MSP

Daisy Slate (DS), NUS

Alice Jackson (AJ)

Melanie McCarry (McC)

Davy Thompson (DT), White Ribbon Scotland

Collette Wormleighton (CW), City of Edinburgh Council, Community Justice,
Domestic Abuse Services

Richard Whitecross (RW)

Linda Rodgers (LR), Edinburgh Women's Aid

2 Theme: The VAWG Strategic Funding Review

A. Speaker: Lesley Irving, VAWG Strategic Funding Review.

- MS welcomed LI, who presented findings and recommendations from the VAWG Strategic Funding Review:
 - The Review had taken a strong human rights framing approach in its recommendations, drawing on instruments including the Istanbul Convention, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.
 - There had been over 100 engagements and the wide range of responses had been analysed.
 - One recommendation was that VAWG is put on a statutory footing.
 - The review sought to re-establish a connection with local funding, though it was recognised that there were issues to be aware of in moving to this approach. A range of services would be more appropriate to national funding – e.g. helplines and national offices.
 - The importance of investment in prevention work was highlighted, as was resourcing participation work.
 - The establishment of minimum core services was mentioned, and was viewed as a floor, not a ceiling to service provision.
 - A move away from competitive and towards collaborative tendering was discussed, as competitive tendering tends not to favour service-led organisations.
 - The benefits of longer periods of funding (up to five years) were emphasised in terms of increased stability in service provision and organisations delivering services.

- The issue of no recourse to public funds had been stressed as a significant barrier to women accessing services.
 - The review identified that attention needs to be paid to training on advocacy for sheriffs, and on disability, especially learning disability.
 - It was felt there was also a need for a standing committee for minority ethnic women and girls to inform matters relating to VAWG.
 - Scottish Government and COSLA would work together on a plan for implementation, with an action plan due by December 2023.
- The presentation was followed by a Q&A session:
 - Rurality
 - In response to a question from RG, LI confirmed that issues related to rurality had been considered in producing the Review, that consultations had taken place in rural areas, and that UHI Highlands & Islands had been called on for their expertise and experience in this respect.
 - Issues emerging regarding rurality highlighted the impact of transportation to reach face-to-face services and stable broadband to access online services.
 - The possibility of a regional approach might be considered to enable cost-effective service delivery.
 - MS commented that there was a need for service delivery design that was not just based on a Central Belt model, with some adjustments made for rural areas.
 - Helplines
 - In answer to a question from CT of Rape Crisis Scotland, LI emphasised the recommendation was that the Istanbul convention recommendation for minimum core services was followed to maintain a consistent service and ease of access.
 - LI confirmed that a review would be needed as to what that would mean in practice, and that there was no intention to reduce provision.
 - It was also recognised that Rape Crisis Scotland also provides a service to male survivors.
 - Children's Recovery Programmes
 - It was recognised that children's recovery programmes needed to be core.
 - There were some challenges in provision of CEDAR services in rural and island areas.
 - Which might be the most difficult Recommendation to agree?

- LI said that ongoing discussion would confirm which recommendations might be most difficult to agree, or longest to achieve.
- The backdrop to all recommendations would be very challenging financial constraints in current circumstances.
- However, there was recognition in Government of the need for a significant response to the Review.
- Reflections
 - LG provided some context for the Istanbul Convention recommendation (2002) regarding single helpline provision, while an approach had been taken in Scotland to have separate helplines.
 - LG acknowledged challenges posed by geography in delivery of CEDAR.
 - LG mentioned the potential for a postcode lottery in moving to a local model of funding and the importance of embedding standards across the country.
- MS thanked LI for a thought-provoking presentation and for taking part in the Q&A session that followed.

B. CPGMVAWC Actions

- Actions to be revisited once the Scottish Government responds to the Review in December 2023.

3 Cross Party Business

A. Approval of 14th June 2023 Meeting Minute

The minutes of the meeting held on 14th June 2023 were approved as true record.

Approved by Audrey Nicoll, MSP

Seconded by Hannah Brisbane of Engender

B. New Member Applications

- Anne Robertson Brown
- Evangelical Alliance

The member applications of Anne Robertson Brown and the Evangelical Alliance were approved.

4. Member Updates

- Zero Tolerance (JW)
 - Zero Tolerance would like make a presentation, previously scheduled for the last meeting, at a later meeting of the Group.
 - An update from Zero Tolerance highlighted their work on the Human Rights Consultation and work on participation regarding women with disabilities, as well as work in the area of prevention.
- Women's Support Project (LTh and JMacL)
 - LTh highlighted the difficulty of women getting out to access face-to-face training.
 - The Women's Support Project have developed a webinar and animated resources.
 - The Women's Support Project is also working on a response to the Human Rights Consultation.
 - JMacL highlighted that it was the 40th anniversary of the Project and celebrations would include a seminar, a party on International Women's Day and a fundraiser comedy night.
 - JMacL happy to share links to further details.
- Engender (HB)
 - It had been a busy summer with work around Delivering Equally Safe, the Challenge Poverty webinar, the Human Rights Consultation response and work ahead of '16 Days'.
- Central Advocacy Partners (AG)
 - AG introduced her organisation and drew attention to the evaluation report for a pilot for a project with survivors that ran over three years.
 - The evaluation report will be circulated to Group members.
- White Ribbon (RC)
 - RC highlighted new projects, including prevention work with men and boys and work being carried out with Ben MacPherson MSP during '16 Days'.
- Scottish Women's Aid (MS)
 - MS confirmed that a contract confirming Scottish Government Access to Justice had funded extension of Edinburgh Women's Aid Legal Service for 3 years of legal services.
 - A funding application was also being worked on to provide services across rural and island communities and to look to scaling it up.
 - Work continued in the Istanbul Convention.
- Rape Crisis Scotland (CT)
 - Work continued on the Victims, Witnesses and Justice Reform (Scotland) Bill).
 - Rape Crisis Scotland were also contributing to the Scottish Covid Enquiry.
 - Work continued on plans for '16 Days'.
- GEMAP (AC)
 - AC introduced GEMAP, with a particular focus on economic abuse.

- AC would be very happy to provide further insights on the work being carried out.
- Young Women’s Movement (HMcL)
 - The organisation had gone through a restructure, with a new strategic plan, a new way of working and a new website would soon be available.
 - There was a focus on work with women in the 16-30 age bracket.
 - Work was taking place on activities for ‘16 Days’.
- Caledonian (GMcK)
 - GMcK spoke to activity currently being carried out by the Caledonian project.
- Audrey Nicoll (AN)
 - AN followed on from the update from CT of Rape Crisis Scotland, to confirm that evidence had been taken since last September for the Victims, Witnesses and Justice Reform (Scotland) Bill).
 - Third Sector and victim organisations were the first organisations to be called.
 - Because of the size of the Bill, SG may come back to organisations for further input.
 - The bill had seen the biggest response in terms of the call for views. It was clear that people were engaging with the Bill.

5. Any other Business

A. The Istanbul Shadow Report

- The UK baseline evaluation has been published.
- The SHRC will prepare a grid for a shadow report, which Scottish Women’s Aid is co-ordinating, and to which organisations can contribute.
- Scottish Women’s Aid will send out invitations to civil society organisations, to confirm if and how they might like to contribute.
- There was emphasis on:
 - The importance of wide-ranging representation, including beyond DA – CSE, for example. Rape Crisis will co-ordinate items on sexual violence.
 - Organisations being able to prepare their own responses in addition to the consolidated report.
- The issue of no recourse to public funds and leave to remain indefinitely for women on spousal visas was mentioned.
- The finalised report is to be submitted by 1st December. Therefore, a deadline of the 3rd or 4th week of November is likely, to allow for the process of finalising the report for submission.
- MS also highlighted preparations for ‘16 Days’ and invited organisations to forward links to their own events, which could be circulated to Group members.

6. Date and Time of next Meeting

- Wednesday 8th November, 12.30-14.00 via Zoom.