



Equally Safe: VSS Position on the Equally Safe - Draft Delivery Plan.

1. Victim Support Scotland (VSS) is the lead voluntary organisation in Scotland helping people affected by crime. We provide practical help, emotional support, and essential information to victims and witnesses.
2. VSS welcomes the Equally Safe Consultation on a Draft Delivery Plan for preventing and eradicating violence against women and girls and the mechanisms for support in the aftermath of such violence.
3. We are encouraged that the plan also aims to improve the lives of all children affected by violence – irrespective of gender.
4. Acknowledgement in the strategy of the societal context by which women are often the victims of domestic abuse, rape, sexual assault and harassment, and other forms of exploitation, and that perpetrators of such violence should receive a robust, proportionate, and effective response is welcomed.
5. We support measures included to prevent violence from re-occurring and the need to for violence against women and girls to end and we pleased that the themes around Primary Prevention, Capability, Justice and Accountability have been used to inform the draft delivery plan.
6. We are however disappointed VSS has not been included as a Key Partner in the delivery plan. As Scotland's lead voluntary organisation for victims and as a group who specialise in assisting young victims of crime – we believe we should be included formally in the list alongside: Police Scotland, Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service, Scottish Courts and Tribunal Service, Scottish Women's Aid, Rape Crisis Scotland, Engender, Zero Tolerance, Scottish Prison Service, Children and Young Person's Commissioner for Scotland, Bernardos, Social Work Scotland, Education Scotland, ASSIST (Glasgow Community Safety Centre), Violence against Women Partnership

National Network, NHS Scotland, Children's Reporter (SCRA), Scottish Legal Aid Board, and Community Justice Scotland.

7. We are currently involved in the passage of the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Bill and will be contributing to other relevant consultations where the eradication of violence against women and girls will be to the fore.
8. Through our community and court-based services, VSS provides a coordinated service to women who have experienced violence, from when the offence has been committed, and through the whole criminal justice process, and so, we support the aim to foster collaborative working among the key partners.
9. The National protocol between VSS, the Crown Office and COPFS and the Scottish Government enables us to provide that support in a collaborative manner.
10. We are satisfied that there will be a focus on intervention and in particular, on the negative impact felt by women and children who have been affected by violence.
11. However, as part of the draft performance framework for "*Long –term outcomes*" we would like to see a commitment to the timely provision of information on decisions made by criminal justice agencies (e.g. in relation to bail decision and trial outcomes). This will assist women and girls in planning their safety and will reduce the mental trauma of what is generally an extremely fraught and arduous process.
12. We are broadly supportive of the plan to deliver an integrated, specialist service to help coordinate and provide support across a wide range of needs.

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