

Integrated Impact Assessment Form

Promoting Equality, Human Rights and Sustainability

Title of Policy/ Proposal	Developing an ambitious Midlothian Equally Safe Strategy for preventing and eradicating violence against women and girls.
Completion Date	15/11/2021
Completed by	Veronica Campanile, VAWG Coordinator, East Lothian and Midlothian Public Protection Office.
Lead officer	Veronica Campanile (as above)

Type of Initiative:

Policy/Strategy	New and proposed
Programme/Plan	New or Proposed
Project	Changing/Updated
Service	Review or existing
Function	Other
Statement of Intent	

1. Briefly describe the policy/proposal you are assessing.

Set out a clear understanding of the purpose of the policy being developed or reviewed (e.g. objectives, aims) including the context within which it will operate.

In the context of the 16 Days of Activism 2021, it is recommended that Midlothian Council makes a commitment to develop an ambitious Midlothian Equally Safe Strategy for preventing and eradicating violence against women and girls.

This strategy would deliver at local level the Scottish Government and COSLA's shared "Equally Safe: Scotland's strategy preventing and eradicating violence against women and girls".

This would include:

The strategy's vision is '*A strong and flourishing Scotland where all individuals are equally safe and respected and where women and girls live free from all forms of violence and abuse – and the attitudes that help perpetuate it.*'

The strategy's four priorities as follows:

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

What will change as a result of this policy?

The local strategy would specifically address the four priorities above across Midlothian in leadership, policy and practice. This should result in

- Coordinated response to improve gender equality in all spheres (prevention)
- Coordinated and improved response to survivors of all forms of violence against women and girls
- Coordinated and improved response to perpetrators of all forms of violence against women and girls

- In the medium to long term a reduction in violence against women and girls reducing the demand for services.

2. Do I need to undertake a Combined Impact Assessment?

High Relevance	Yes/no
The policy/ proposal has consequences for or affects people	Yes
The policy/proposal has potential to make a significant impact on equality	Yes
The policy/ proposal has the potential to make a significant impact on the economy and the delivery of economic outcomes	Yes
The policy/proposal is likely to have a significant environmental impact	No
Low Relevance	
The policy/proposal has little relevance to equality	
The policy/proposal has negligible impact on the economy	
The policy/proposal has no/ minimal impact on the environment	
<p>If you have identified low relevance please give a brief description of your reasoning here and send it to your Head of Service to record.</p> <p>If you have answered yes to high relevance above, please proceed to complete the Integrated Impact Assessment.</p>	

3. What information/data/ consultation have you used to inform the policy to date?

Evidence	Comments: what does the evidence tell you?
Data on populations in need	VAWG has been identified as a global and national concern and it is often referred to as an epidemic. Equally Safe, Scotland's strategy for preventing and eradicating VAWG presents national data and sets out the definition of VAWG and the four priorities.
Data on service	East Lothian and Midlothian Public Protection Committee carried their first Joint Strategic Needs

uptake/access	<p>Assessment in 2021 covering Violence Against Women and Girls, Adults Support and Protection and Child Protection, which identified need and made a number of recommendations including the development of a specific VAWG strategy for the Midlothian Local Authority Area. The JSNA has been discussed by the Critical Services Oversight Group and is considering the recommendations.</p> <p>In addition, the VAWG delivery group annually completed the Equally Safe Quality Standards and Performance Framework report for submission locally and nationally.</p>
Data on quality/outcomes	These will be agreed
Research/literature evidence	<p>Convention on the Elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls, 1979, United Nations</p> <p>Equally Safe Scotland's Strategy for the prevention and eradication of violence against women and girls 2014 and updated in 2016, Scottish Government and COSLA.</p> <p>Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018</p> <p>East Lothian and Midlothian Public Protection Committee Annual Report 2020/21</p>
Service user experience information	Service user views have informed the above evidence. Locally we involved service users specialist services in the development of services and processes and would involve them in the development of this first strategy.
Consultation and involvement findings	NA at present. This would be for the development of the strategy.
Good practice guidelines	We are actively involved in the National Violence Against Women Network facilitated by the Improvement Services and involving VAWG partnerships from across Scotland, national specialist organisations, the Scottish Government, Police Scotland and Public Health Scotland. In this regard, we contribute to and receive good practice guidelines in relation to all forms of violence against women and

	girls.
Other (please specify)	None
Is any further information required? How will you gather this?	None

4. How does the policy meet the different needs of and impact on groups in the community?

Equality Groups	Comments – positive/ negative impact
Older people, people in the middle years	Positive impact as it will enable us to address the specific experience of women in their middle and older years who often do not come to the attention of specialist VAWG services or do not contact the police. It should enable us to improve partnership working with universal services such as primary health which they are more likely to use. It would also enable us to improve targeted communication to this population group.
Young people and children	The strategy would enable us to develop a) A coherent partnership approach for prevention through early years, education and community services encouraging healthy and respectful relationships. b) A coherent partnership approach to support services for children and young people who experience these forms of violence either in their family or directly.
Women, men and transgender people (includes issues relating to pregnancy and maternity)	Specialist services are available for people of all sexes and genders (women, men and transgender people) – this policy would enable us to strengthen support for survivors and work with perpetrators towards protection and behaviour change.
Disabled people (included	Taking account of intersectionality and the

physical disability; learning disability; sensory Impairment; long term medical conditions; mental health problem)	increased vulnerabilities of disabled people deepening on their condition, this strategy would ensure we address these appropriately.
Minority ethnic people (includes Gypsy/Travellers migrant workers non-English	This strategy would seek to strengthen existing work to support people from minority ethnic groups of all backgrounds and characteristics.
Refugees and asylum seekers	We note the specific circumstances of this group of people who often have no recourse to public funds which we would specifically address in this strategy. We already provide training in supporting this particular group and work closely with our Shakti Women's Aid colleagues
People with different religions or beliefs (included people with no religion or belief.	This may be a factor in honour based violence and will be addressed in the strategy.
Lesbian; gay bisexual and heterosexual people	The strategy refers to women whatever their identity and will acknowledge the specific experiences of women who identify as lesbian, bisexual or trans.
People who are unmarried; married or in a civil partnership	The strategy will protect all women whatever their partnership status and will address any legal considerations which may arise.
Those vulnerable to falling into poverty	
Unemployed	The strategy should improve the response to survivors of VAWG who as a result of this situation are frequently lone parents who are often unemployed or underemployed and experience financial abuse
People on Benefits	As above
Single Parents and vulnerable families	As above
Pensioners	We have recognised the under-representation of survivors who fall into this age group through

	existing services and particularly Marac; the strategy will seek to ensure joint working with universal services to address this under-representation and any specific needs.
Looked after Children	Not specifically but the strategy would involve close collaboration with Children and Families services.
Those leaving care settings ((including children and young people and those with illness)	Not specifically but the strategy would involve close collaboration with Children and Families services.
Homeless People	We already work closely with Housing and Homelessness services in the public and voluntary sector through the VAWG group and Marac. This strategy would strengthen the way we address the needs of homeless people.
Carers (including young carers)	Carers are also vulnerable to gender based violence as survivors and potential perpetrators. This strategy would enable us to involve carer support services.
Those involved in the criminal justice system	The VAWG group works closely with the Community Justice Partnership and Justice services through Marac. The Community Justice Partnership has recently assumed responsibility for developing work on Priority 4 which would sit within a future strategy.
Those living in the most deprived communities (bottom 20% SIMD areas)	VAWG is experience across all sectors but is often more prevalent in deprived communities due to the circumstances of deprivation not least because women are more likely to experience deprivation due to gender inequality in earnings and responsibilities. This strategy would strengthen a gendered understanding of deprivation.
People misusing services	Undoubtedly substance misuse is an aggravator though not a cause of VAWG. Substances are often used by perpetrators to manipulate and control survivors. This has been highlighted in the Safe & Together model

	which is being embedded across Midlothian's children's wellbeing and protection services. This strategy would enhance partnership working with MELDAP and the commissioned services.
People with low literacy/numeracy	Indirectly as this population group is likely to be vulnerable to violence against women and girls.
Others e.g. veterans, students	There has already been some liaison with the Army Welfare Service through Safe & Together and Marac; this strategy will enable us to reach out to veteran services. We already collaborate with Queen Margaret University through the VAWG group and would involve them and Edinburgh College in development of the strategy.
Geographical Communities	
Rural/ semi-rural Communities	Yes all communities – particularly in the prevention agenda and ensuring services are equally accessible
Urban Communities	Yes all communities
Coastal Communities	Yes all communities

5. Are there any other factors which will affect the way this policy impacts on the community or staff groups?

None

6. Is any part of this policy/ service to be carried out wholly or partly by contractors?

If yes, how have you included equality and human rights considerations into the contract?

The strategy does not involve commissioning services.

However, our EMPPC VAWG partnership involves services from the public and specialist third sector.

7. Have you considered how you will communicate information about this policy or policy change to those affected e.g. to those with hearing loss, speech impairment or English as a second language?

The strategy will comply with the Council's accessibility policy and the Equality Act, as is already the practice of existing specialist services.

8. Please consider how your policy will impact on each of the following?

Objectives Equality and Human Rights	Comments
Promotes / advances equality of opportunity e.g. improves access to and quality of services, status	The strategy would enhance equality of opportunity between the sexes and across all protected characteristics. Two of the four priorities address improving sex/gender equality as a pre-requisite for eradicating VAWG.
Promotes good relations within and between people with protected characteristics and tackles harassment	Sex/gender inequality and VAWG is experienced across all groups of people within the nine protected characteristics based on an understanding of intersectionality. This strategy will identify and address the specific and overlapping experiences of people from each group. In addition, sexual harassment as one of the forms of violence against women and would be specifically addressed.
Promotes participation, inclusion, dignity and self-control over decisions	Our specialist services are based on a person-centred, trauma-informed approach, supporting each person to improve their safety and wellbeing at their pace and based on their wishes. Empowerment and agency will be a characteristic of the overall approach to preventing and eradicating violence against women and girls.
Builds family support networks, resilience and community capacity	The strategy would contribute to strengthening safe and healthy family and community networks based on an enhanced understanding of relationships based on equality of rights and respect for all. Tackling gender inequality and transforming a culture to discourage male violence will undoubtedly improve these goals.
Reduces crime and fear of crime	VAWG is often under the radar but is prevalent in local and national crime statistics (20% of

	police time is spent on domestic abuse alone). This strategy would strengthen the public's understanding and rejection of VAWG and aim to reduce its incidence in the medium to long term.
Promotes healthier lifestyles including Diet and nutrition Sexual Health Substance Misuse Exercise and physical activity Life Skills	Specialist support services work with survivors and their children and indeed perpetrators on all of these factors which are central to wellbeing. Undoubtedly, a strategy would help further strengthen healthier lifestyles, particularly in relation to mental health and self-confidence.
Environmental	
Reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in Midlothian (including carbon management)	Not directly
Plan for future climate change	Not directly
Pollution: air/ water/ soil/ noise	Not directly
Protect coastal and inland waters	Not directly
Enhance biodiversity	Not directly
Public Safety: Minimise waste generation/ infection control/ accidental injury /fire risk	Not directly
Reduce need to travel / promote sustainable forms of transport	Not directly
Improves the physical environment e.g. housing quality, public and green space	Not directly
Economic	
Maximises income and /or reduces income inequality	Support for survivors includes income maximisation and at the right time employability
Helps young people into positive destinations	Indirectly as young people experiencing violence against women and girls are rarely able to perform well at school or college. Support work will enhance their ability to make healthy life choices.
Supports local business	Supports local third sector businesses who provide most specialist support services.

Helps people to access jobs (both paid and unpaid)	Not directly
Improving literacy and numeracy	Not directly
Improves working conditions, including equal pay	Not directly, though existing specialist services are equal pay and living wage employers.
Improves local employment opportunities	Local specialist services habitually recruit locally and are expanding to meet demand so this strategy is likely to enhance local employment opportunities

9. Is the policy a qualifying Policy, Programme or Strategy as defined by The Environmental Impact Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005?

NO

10. Action Plan - NONE IDENTIFIED

Identified negative impact	Mitigating circumstances	Mitigating actions	Timeline	Responsible person

11. Sign off by Head of Service/ NHS Project Lead

Name

Date