

Perth and Kinross
Violence Against
WOMEN
Partnership

Partnership's Annual Report

2023 - 2024

Working together to end violence against women and girls

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Chairs Opening Remarks

It’s been a significant year for Violence Against Women Partnerships, the independent review of Funding and Commissioning of Violence Against Women and Girls Services led by Lesley Irving, signalled a real change in our profile, recognising VAWG as an equal under the Protecting People Partnerships. In Perth and Kinross, we have enjoyed that status for some time but seeing this recognised nationally, and the recommendations around funding, present both an opportunity and a challenge. The Perth and Kinross VAWG has engaged actively with COSLA and the National Co-Ordinators Group and has developed a plan to work towards the high priority actions. The review recommends initial implementation by December 2024: this is a challenging timescale, and significant funding will have to be made available if it is to be implemented by then.

We also welcome the induction of policy work to begin the process towards establishing Domestic Homicide Reviews in Scotland, and we have engaged with those leading the process and offered our support.

Once again, the members threw themselves into the 16 Days of Activism, serving to promote the issues and raise public and professional awareness.

I would like to express my gratitude to Hazel Robertson who was my predecessor as the Chair; Hazel was committed to the agenda, provided strong leadership and we were lucky to work with such a compassionate and dedicated chair.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all the services that are part of the partnership for all their hard work and commitment.

Roddy Ross
Interim Chair



National Context

Equally Safe is Scotland's Strategy to Eradicate Violence Against Women and Girls. The strategy was refreshed and re-published in December 2023, supported by a logic model outlining the strategic goals. The logic model and local area Quality Standards continue to support the following four priorities:

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

There were 14,484 sexual crimes in Scotland in 2023/24, almost double the number recorded ten years earlier.

Since 2008/09 sexual offences have increased in almost every reporting year in Scotland with the peak occurring in 2021/22, at 15,049 sexual offences.

Sexual crimes account for 5% of all crimes recorded in Scotland in 2023-24.

The number of Sexual crimes recorded by the police in Scotland decreased by 1% from 14,602 in 2022-23 to 14,484 in 2023-24.

Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018

Crimes recorded under the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 accounted for 3% of non-sexual crimes of violence.

There were 2,042 crimes recorded under the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 in 2023-24, the fifth year this legislation has been in place.

This was a 15% increase compared to 2022-23 (from 1,781 to 2,042).

Of those crimes, 94% (or 1,921) involved a female victim and 6% (or 121) had a male victim.

It should be noted that crimes under the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 relate to a course of conduct only and therefore do not include all crimes relating to domestic abuse.

In 2023-24, an estimated 4,300 Sexual crimes (30%) recorded by the police were cyber-crimes, compared to 3,830 in 2022-23.

The estimated volume of Sexual crimes that were cyber-crimes has gradually increased over the longer term from 1,100 in 2013-14.

The police recorded 63,867 incidents of domestic abuse in 2023-24, an increase of 3% compared to the previous year.

81 per cent of incidents had a female victim and a male perpetrator.
15 per cent were male and female victim (where known) perpetrator.

Local Context

PKVAWP's 2023-26 Action Plan outlines how we will work towards the four national priorities as set out in Equally Safe.

A self-assessment was completed to evaluate progress, identifying strengths and weaknesses and forms the basis of our 2023-26 Action Plan.

PKVAWP provides an annual data return to the Improvement Service on a range of quality standards based on these priorities, measuring investment and activity in Perth & Kinross.

This annual report is structured around these Equally Safe Priorities and focuses on key achievements. If you wish for any more information, please contact SCT@pkc.gov.uk.

National Equally Safe Standards

These are self-assessed by partners against a nationally agreed set of standards, signed off by the PKVAWP and reported to the Improvement Service who provided a report showing comparative data for P&K in 2021/22 and 2022/23 (data for 23/24 is not yet available) compared to the national average in Scotland for the same periods.

This information is included in our partner updates below, as well as multi-agency working.

Partner updates

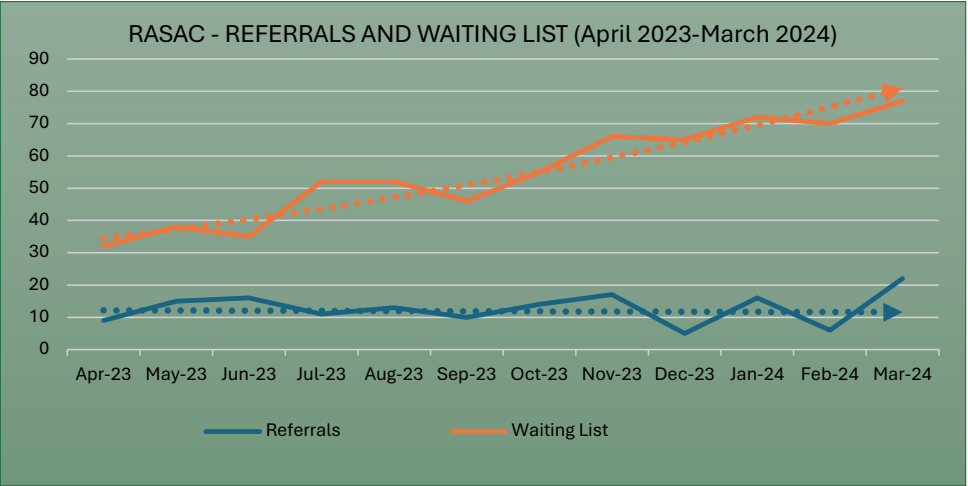
RASAC Perth & Kinross (Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre)

During 2023-24 RASAC



- Engaged with 333 survivors (128 adults and 105 young people).
- Provided 2832 hours of support to survivors. 71% of all appointments being in person.
- Provided 86 hours of crisis support, 72% with young people.
- Reported 48% of adult survivors disclosed that they were experiencing suicidal thoughts and 31% declared they had made suicide attempts.

RASAC have seen a significant impact on survivors dealing with the cost-of-living crises and unstable living accommodation and have continued to work closely with other third sector agencies to explore responses to this. RASAC have managed to access a small grant funding award and provided winter welfare packs to adult and young survivors. Despite the increased demand RASAC have been able to maintain waiting times at a reasonable level – the partnership continues to monitor waiting lists as a key performance indicator.



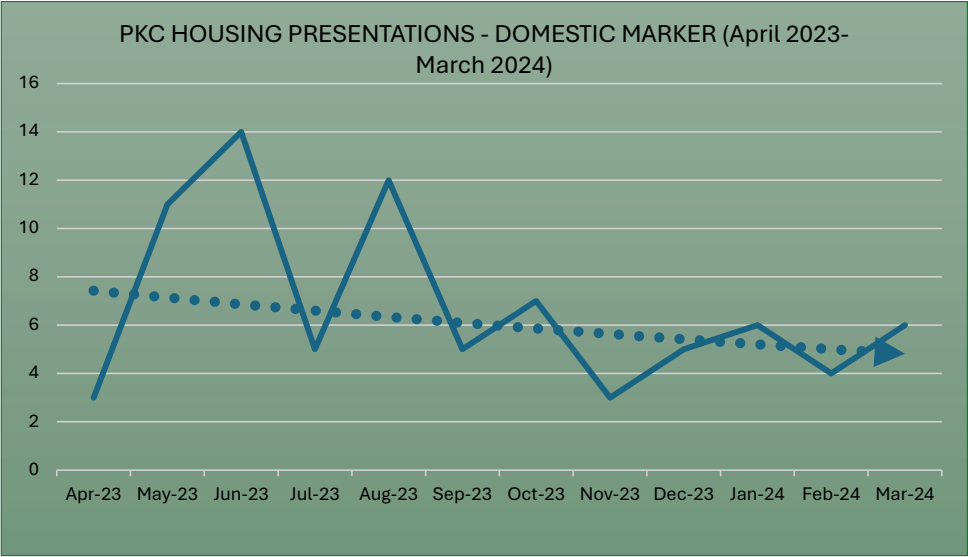
To ensure accessibility of their services to their survivors who reside in rural locality areas particularly those living in Highland Perthshire RASAC have extended their outreach support where they have appointed a worker who now delivers support sessions from a Community School in Aberfeldy and a GP practice in Dunkeld. RASAC have delivered 376 outreach appointments which represents 25% of all appointments delivered this year.

Housing



Perth and Kinross Council's Housing Service works closely with partners to support the Safe Accommodation Strategy, the PKVAGW made a policy decision in 2011 not to pursue a permanent refuge and rather adopted the principle of 'Rolling Refuge' where Women's Aid manage accommodation provided by the Council. Once occupied, women and families are encouraged to settle there and, in time, if they do settle, they will be given the tenancy. At that stage PK Housing will allocate another property to Women's Aid. This approach reduces disruption for families and prevents the Refuge accommodation being identified.

In 2023-24 the number of presentations to Housing with a domestic marker reduced, as can be seen from the following chart. The partnership monitors this information carefully as a key performance indicator.



MARAC

In 2023/24 there were a total of 168 referrals to Police Scotland for MARAC.

Most referrals come from the Police and specialist domestic abuse services.

Escalation in frequency / severity and victim's perception of risk are identified in most cases referred to MARAC.

Substance misuse / mental health / suicide ideation is often present.

Attendance at MARAC's by core agencies is consistently high.

The performance framework is being further developed and risk factors are now being recorded and populated to easily indicate the breakdown of risk factors identified.

A Tayside development day was held in March 2023, the findings of this report are still to be concluded, an improvement plan is being developed for the MARAC steering group.

Two local MARAC development sessions are to be held within 2023/24.



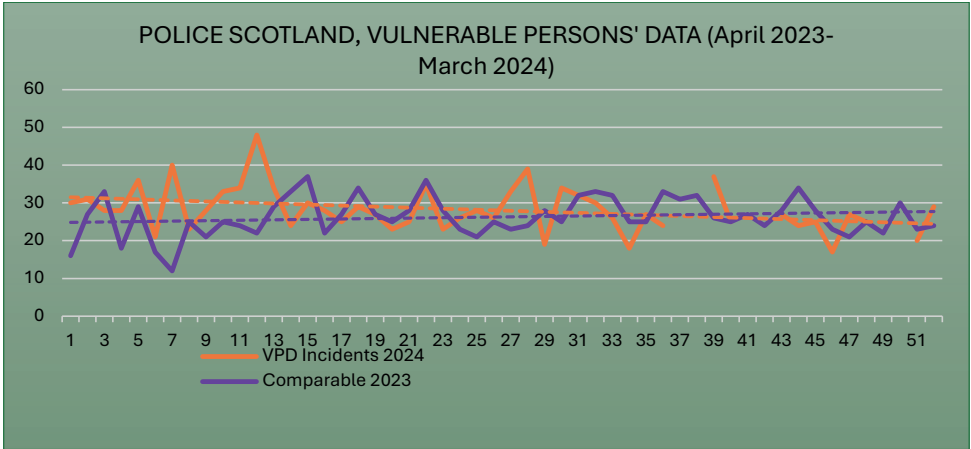
Police Scotland Vulnerable Persons Data

Police Scotland's Vulnerable persons database is a key national policing system that supports Police Service of Scotland's policing priority in protecting people considered vulnerable and working with partners to reduce harm.

Police Scotland considers this the best indicator of prevalence in relation to Domestic Abuse.

The database is incident-based with a bespoke weeding and retention policy. The database records information about individuals who are, or are perceived to be, experiencing some form of adversity and/or situational vulnerability which may impact on their current or future wellbeing.

In 2023 there were a total number of 1301 incidents with a Domestic marker reported through VPD on average 28 incidents per week.



Perthshire Women's Aid

During 2023-24 Perthshire Women's Aid



- Received 111 referrals
- Received 847 people support into Perthshire Women's Aid services
- Provided service to 683 women and 164 children and young people
- Ended the year with a waiting list at 133 for both the counselling services and Women's Support Service combined.

The year saw a growth in the counselling service, providing the additional capacity to improve the services in in rural Perthshire.

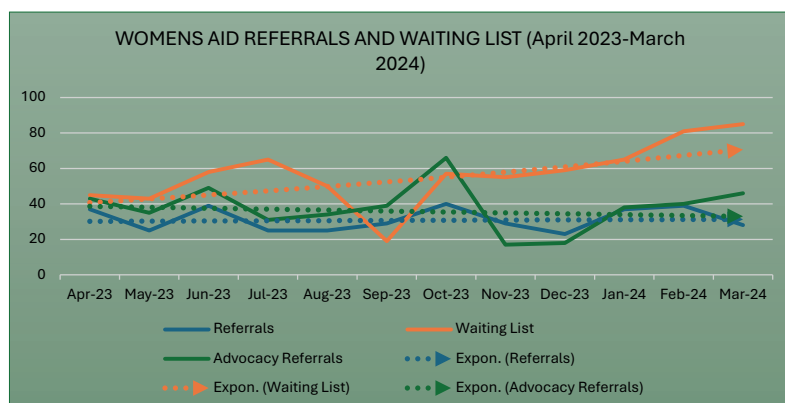
Perthshire Women's Aid vision is of a society in which women, children and young people are full and equal participants and live free of the threat of domestic abuse and other forms of violence. Ending violence against women, children and young people means changing the society we live in. We are committed to upholding and promoting the rights of women, children and young people who have experienced domestic abuse through the following means:

Prevention: Raising awareness about the effects of domestic abuse with the public and with young people in particular.

Provision: Managing safe refuge accommodation; providing support and information on access to other services; providing structured opportunities for women, children and young people affected by domestic abuse to express themselves and their experiences and, where appropriate, make choices for their futures.

Protection: Liaising with other services, including the police and advocating for women, children and young people affected by domestic abuse within legal and other protection services.

Participation: Providing opportunities to shape the development of services, policy and practice at strategic level.



16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM

In November and December 2023 Perth & Kinross embarked on another busy programme to promote the 16 Days of Activism it included :



- Launch at Perth Concert Hall hosted by Jim Fairlie MSP and featuring a performance by the Rock Choir, the event generated significant media coverage and raised the issue of Violence Against Women and Girls.
- Brunch at Midday.
- "The Universal Story" A Safe and welcoming space for Women - Hosted by Lubna Kerr.
- "An invitation to lunch with performances of poetry, spoken word, true life stories and comedy".
- The launch of the Ask for Angela Campaign at various bars in Perth.
- An evening of female comedy headlined by JO JO Sutherland.
- Our annual Reclaim the Night march.
- Seminar on Domestic Homicide featuring Luke Hart.

LOOKING FORWARD - GOALS FOR 2024/2025

- Continue with campaigns and Awareness raising.
- Link in with equality groups to promote gender equality and raise awareness of VAWG so that women and girls can thrive as equal citizens.
- Progress and implement our social media and communications action plan.
- Develop new training courses creating new opportunities for all.
- Deliver on the Gender Based Violence Strategy in Education .
- Plan a programme of events for 16 days.
- Development work focusing on the Independent Strategic Review of Funding and Commissioning of VAWG Services.
- Develop a non-court mandated perpetrator programme.
- Work with Community Justice Partnership to identify how to best support victims and survivors through the Justice System.
- Continue to strengthen links with the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Services in Perth & Kinross.
- Consider our response to 'What if Women Designed the City'.

