

Perth and Kinross
Violence Against
WOMEN
Partnership

Partnership's Annual Report

2021 - 2022

Working together to end violence against women and girls

Chair's Remarks

I am delighted to present the Partnership's Annual Report covering the period 2021 – 2022.

This year we have experienced a further lockdown, agencies have had to adapt to these changes and circumstances. Staff have developed working practices to ensure service delivery was maintained.

It may be years until we can expect the specific harm of covid to survivors of violence against women and girls to be addressed, there are however opportunities for violence against women to be more understood across our partners as we develop recovery plans throughout Perth & Kinross.

Scottish Government published Coronavirus Covid 19 supplementary guidance – Perth & Kinross have already addressed the actions identified since this was published in June 2021. The partnership reviewed a risk register to reflect this alongside the demand on services and the range of mitigating risk factors highlighted in this guidance as we recover from this pandemic.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Supplementary National Violence Against Women Guidance (improvementservice.org.uk)

Specialist services were already operating with waiting lists prior to the pandemic and increased levels of demand from women, children and young people. The VAWP has played a key role in supporting specialist services to identify demand and where appropriate lever in additional resources to ensure they are able to respond.

This report highlights the multi-agency activity, and I am indebted to all our members who strive to maintain vital services to women and girls affected by violence.

Perth & Kinross Violence Against Women Partnership co-ordinates activity to eradicate violence against women and girls in Perth & Kinross.

It is responsible for development, distribution, implementation, and evaluation of policy and practices across the public, private and third sector.

Its members provide individual and collective leadership. It meets quarterly and reports to the Perth and Kinross Community Justice and Safety Partnership.



Membership of the VAP includes:

Perthshire Women's Aid, Barnardo's, RASAC, and PKAVS,

Police Scotland, NHS Tayside, and the Scottish Prison Service,

PKC Housing, Child Protection, CS, CJS, Adult Protection, and the Safer Communities Team

Victim Support, Perth College, Soroptimists and PACT.

Perth & Kinross Violence Against Women Partnership seeks to ensure all organisations and people are supported to work together effectively to eradicate violence against women and girls. The Partnership strives to ensure that women, young people and children affected by such forms of violence are protected, the violence is challenged, and perpetrators are held to account.

The Partnership continues to develop and support accessible training and is committed to addressing the four priorities in Equally Safe – Scotland's Strategy to Prevent and Eradicate Violence Against Women and Girls.

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

Update on Services

Services always feel stretched and waiting lists for service were already a concern pre-COVID. Lockdown saw a steady level of reporting, longer waiting lists and greater demand for services.

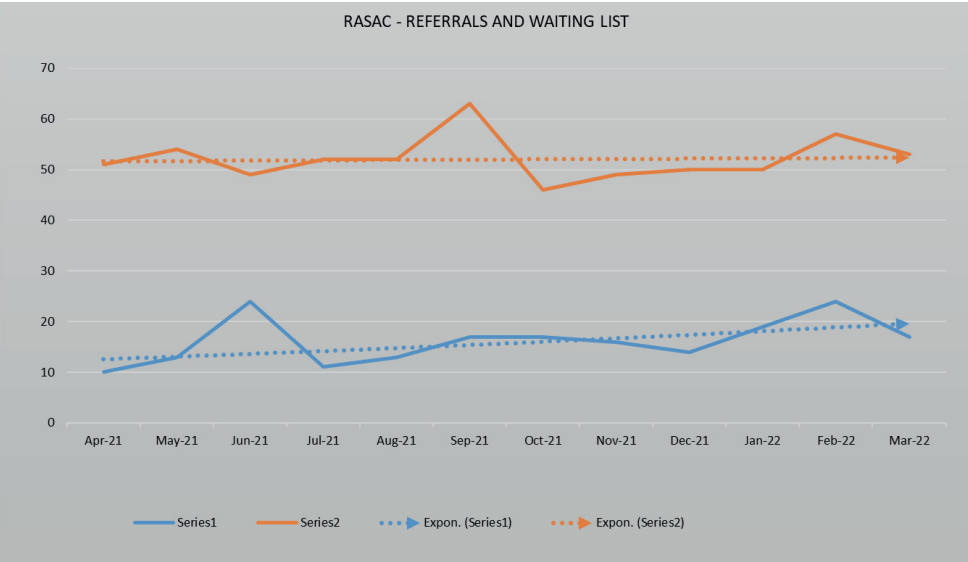
There is evidence to suggest Violence against Women and Girls is significantly under-reported and there is no doubt women feel less safe than men.

Experiences & Perceptions of Community Safety - YouTube



This report highlights the range of activity of partners work, against a background of increasing demand, and in difficult circumstances.

RASAC PK



RASAC PK reports, increased demand for services by women and young people affected by sexual violence, suggesting the need for specialist support services has never been greater.

“I know now that my opinions matter and that my feelings matter, and that they aren’t something to be afraid of”.

“I feel so much calmer and these techniques will help me get through this”.

In 2020-21 RASAC reported lengthy waiting times, in 2021-22 RASAC worked hard to build capacity and generate increased funding. These steps have reduced waiting times but ever-increasing referrals make this an ongoing challenge.

RASAC Prevention services have continued to engage with young people and the wider community delivering a range of sexual violence prevention sessions and multi-agency training. COVID-19 restricted direct delivery in schools.

“The trainers were engaging, informative, dynamic and well versed and knowledgeable. They made the session comfortable which is incredible regarding the subject matter”.

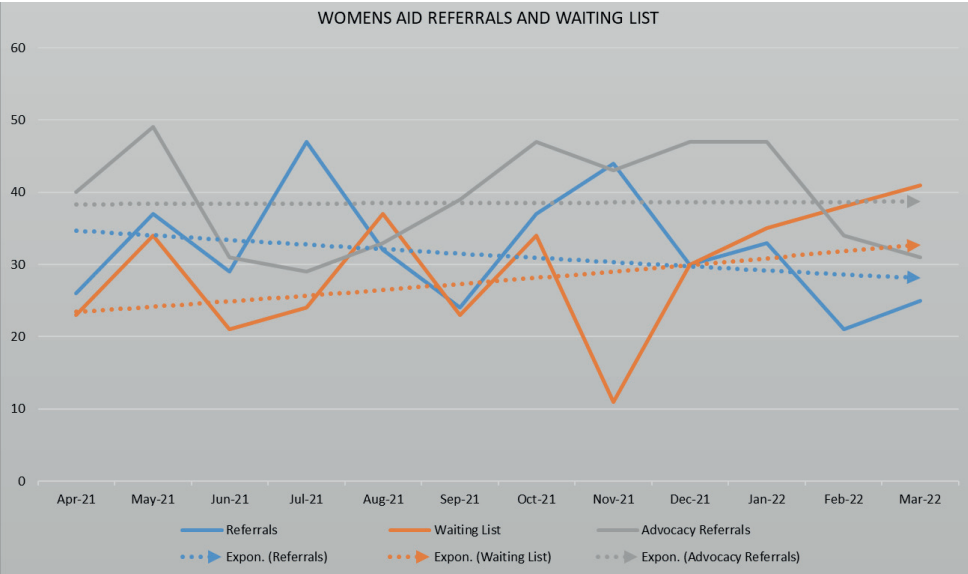
“I hope to share this training with staff in my school. Being a Child Protection Officer, it’s been really good to have the opportunity to familiarise myself with RASAC”.

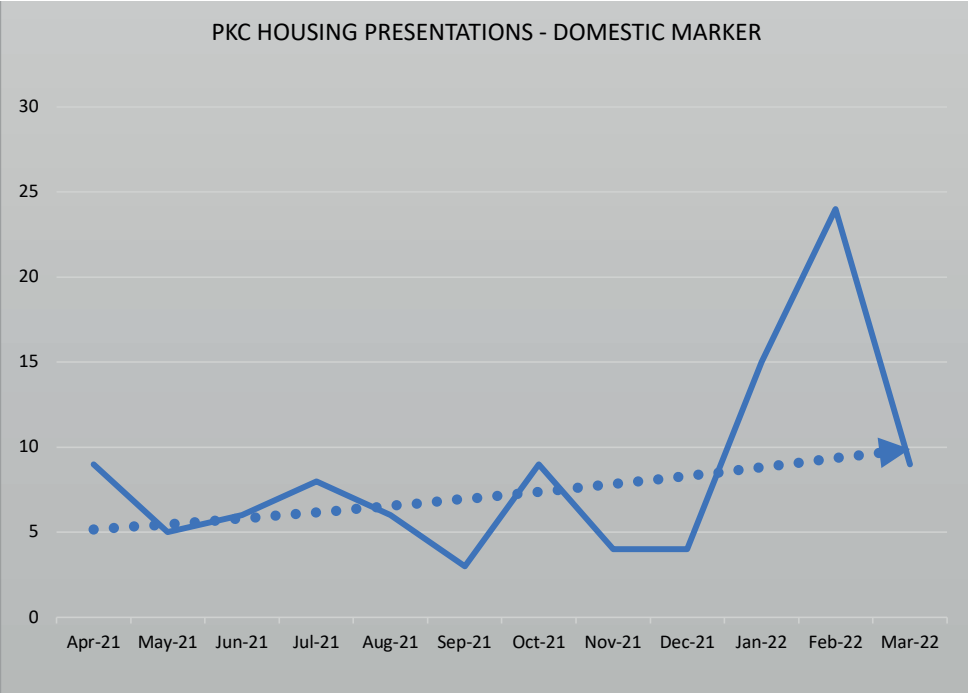
Perthshire Women’s Aid (PWA)

PWA reports regular and ongoing funding challenges, with staff continuing to provide service in the face of increased waiting times, attributable to COVID.

The Coronavirus Pandemic produced an enduring impact on PWA bringing out creative and innovative ways of working a to support Women and Children impacted by Domestic Abuse.

The budgetary impact of of COVID has been mitigated by support from a variety of sources, including additional funding from Perth and Kinross Council, but the organisation remains concerned about the long-term impact on the charity and the people it serves.

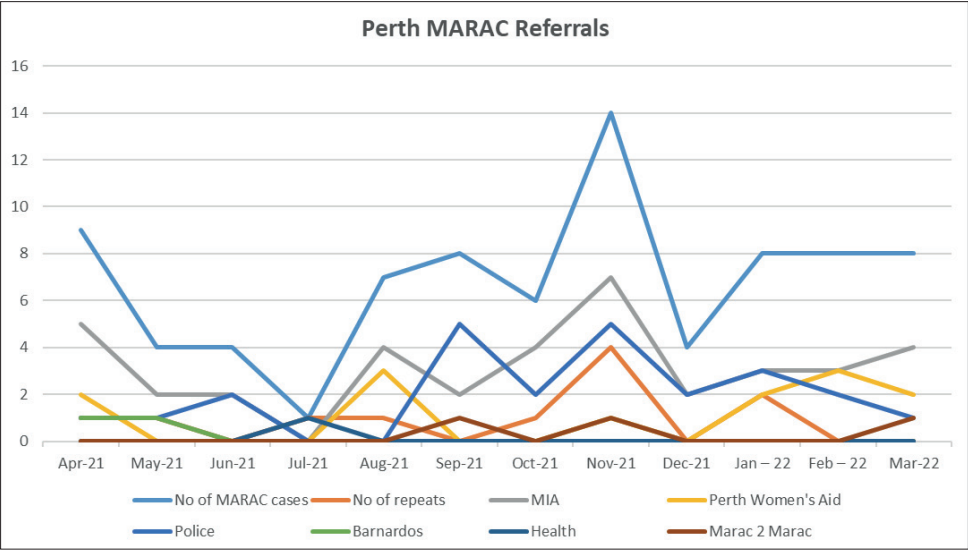




Perth & Kinross Council Housing Service operates a dispersed refuge approach known as “rolling refuge” this allows women and families to remain within in refuge accommodation as secure tenants if they have established a life there Housing would then make a new property available to Woman’s Aid.

The Common Allocations Policy includes provision to award ‘Strategic Need’ priority in certain circumstances. One of the scenarios where this can be used is to prioritise perpetrators of domestic abuse for rehousing where it would be appropriate and beneficial for women and families to remain within their home and in their communities. In the right circumstances, this can prevent disruption for women and families and enable pre-existing support networks to be maintained.

MARAC
MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference)



MARAC is a local meeting where representatives from statutory and non-statutory agencies meet to discuss individuals at high risk of serious harm or murder as a result of domestic abuse. The meeting provides a safe environment for agencies to share relevant and proportionate information about current risk, after which the Chair will summarise and ask agencies to volunteer actions to reduce risk and increase safety.

Marac is led by Police Scotland where they facilitate a Marac Co-ordinator.

Marac in Perth and Kinross is functioning well and continues to be facilitated on TEAMS. We continue to discuss the highest risk cases where the meetings are well represented by core agencies throughout Perth and Kinross.

Marac in Perth has made several positive improvements over the past year following recommendations made by Safelives, which included equality, action planning, information sharing and referral pathway.

Jodi Gunn, the newly appointed NHST VAW Advisor has recently began attending Marac Perth, assisting existing health representatives. The positive difference in support and relevant health information being shared for each case has already been acknowledge by the Marac Co-ordinator and fellow agencies. Jodi’s assistance at Marac will most definitely be productive moving forward.



MATAC (Multi Agency Tasking and Co-ordinating)

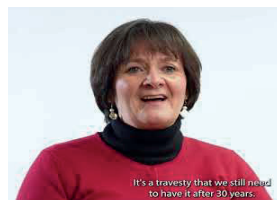
MATAC is led by the Police Scotland Domestic Abuse Task Force and takes an investigative approach to targeting serious and serial domestic offenders. Agencies work with the Police to identify high-tariff offenders who often move from partner to partner, offending against each. The Safer Communities Team represent the Local Authority and the Violence Against Women Partnership at these multi agency meetings and ensures the effective sharing of information and helps develop safety plans for current partners. These investigations are complex and lengthy and often uncover a long history of very serious offending.

In 2021-22 MATAC dealt with 8 offenders in Perth and Kinross for crimes against 26 women. These investigations resulted in 67 charges involving rape, serious assault and abduction. 2 offenders have received significant prison sentences so far.

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM

In November 2021, the Partnership seized the opportunity to get people together for the first time in nearly two years. We were delighted with the levels of attendance and engagement.

16 Days of Activism in Perth and Kinross - 2021



Look out for notifications about the events planned in 2022 which will be based around a theme about Cross Cutting Themes in Public Protection.

Deliverables and Outcomes

- 194 new RASAC referrals (34% increase c.f. 20/21)
- 360 women and young people supported by RASAC in ongoing support
- 300 online support sessions via zoom
- 74 survivors supported in Justice Advocacy
- 140 young survivors and 13 family members supported through the Young People & Families Service
- Delivering 248 sexual violence workshops to **4602** young people
- 206 new PWA referrals
- Refuges were full throughout the year with no gaps in occupancy

Our Key priorities for 2022/23

- Continue, to Embed Safe and Together
- Continue to review and strengthen MARAC
- Update our strategic plan
- Deliver an ambitious programme for the 16 Days of Activism
- Continue to support charity partners to improve their financial sustainability.

For more information visit our website
www.pkvawp.org.uk