

Perth and Kinross  
Violence Against  
**WOMEN**  
Partnership

Partnership's Annual Report

2022 - 2023

Working together to end violence against women and girls

## Chairs Opening Remarks

**As Chair of the Perth & Kinross Violence Against Women Partnership, I am very pleased to present this annual report which covers 2022/2023.**

There has been a large volume of work undertaken by our partners during this time and the commitment to closer multi-agency working and cooperation which arose during the height of COVID continues to be demonstrated and prioritised.

This report contains data on the prevalence of Violence Against Women and Girls, the demand on services and the complex nature of women's experience and needs. Services have reported women and children requiring longer periods of support to create and sustain positive changes and to begin to address the trauma they have experienced.

I hope that the data is useful to all those involved in this work in Perth & Kinross and that it reflects our commitment to develop a more joined up approach to all aspects of public protection.

The availability of resources still remains a huge challenge. The nature of funding, particularly for the specialist organisations, is generally time limited, project based and comes from a range of sources creating an unhelpful administrative burden. We have committed time and effort to identifying these issues and highlighting this both locally and nationally through the work of the VAWP.

Tackling all forms of violence against women requires the commitment and co-operation of a wide range of partner organisations from the statutory and third sector. Our partners have demonstrated their dedication to tackling these issues and I know that they will continue to work in partnership to address key agreed strategic priorities for the coming years,

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.

**Hazel Robertson**  
Chair Violence Against Women Partnership



## Introduction and Background

The prevention and elimination of all forms of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) require, as a starting point, a shared understanding of the nature and causes of such violence.

Members of the Perth & Kinross VAW Partnership have agreed that the term violence against women should be defined as including:

- domestic abuse (including coercive control)
- rape and sexual assault
- childhood sexual abuse (including incest)
- sexual harassment and intimidation at work and in public spaces
- commercial sexual exploitation and prostitution
- pornography
- trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation • dowry related violence • harmful practices (including Female Genital Mutilation, Forced Marriage, Child Marriage and “honour” crime)

## Equally Safe

In 2014 the Scottish Government published Equally Safe: Scotland's strategy for preventing and eradicating violence against women and girls. The national strategy was updated in 2016 and a framework providing guidance for implementation was included. Equally Safe provides strategic direction to tackle all forms of gender-based violence and abusive behaviour.

The aim of Equally Safe is: To work collaboratively with key partners in the public, private and third sectors to prevent and eradicate all forms of violence against women and girls. Equally Safe has four key priorities, including:

- 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 desist from all forms of violence against women and girls, and perpetrators of such violence receive a robust and effective response.

Based on the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, Equally Safe adopted the following definition of gender-based violence:

*'Gender based violence is a function of gender inequality, and an abuse of male power and privilege. It takes the form of actions that result in physical, sexual and psychological harm or suffering to women and children, or affront to their human dignity, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life. It is men who predominantly carry out such violence, and women who are predominantly the victims of such violence. By referring to violence as 'gender based' this definition highlights the need to understand violence within the context of women's and girl's subordinate status in society. Such violence cannot be understood, therefore, in isolation from the norms, social structure and gender roles within the community, which greatly influence women's vulnerability to violence.'*

A gendered analysis does not exclude men, but rather recognises that women and girls are disproportionately affected by particular forms of violence that they experience because they are women and girls. Men, boys and non-binary individuals may also be victims of violence and abuse and Perth & Kinross VAWP is committed to ensure there are appropriate services responding to the needs of all victims of such violence.

### National Drivers

The national guidance developed in 2016 is designed to promote an effective and strategic approach to reducing violence against women and its negative impact on individuals and communities. It supports VAW Partnership chairs and supporting officers to promote this priority and integrate planning into broader multi-agency work at a local level. It also helps ensure that partnerships are working in line with the priorities set out in Equally Safe and help them to develop effective local strategies and activities to tackle violence against women and girls in all its forms.

Specifically, the guidance introduces 6 'minimum standards' that the Scottish Government and COSLA expect VAW Partnerships to work towards and identifies the core activities that all VAW Partners will be expected to undertake.

This 2022/23 Annual Report aims to highlight key activity and achievements from the last year, this also ensures that we identify challenges that we have encountered and review our priorities for the upcoming year.

The Annual Report sits within the context of the VAWP Strategic Plan – our strategic plan is due for renewal in 2023.

We hope that throughout this report we can demonstrate our progress against our overarching strategic aims. Moving forward, we aim to will commit to undertake Annual Reports every year to update key stakeholders on the work the Partnership is undertaking to reduce GBV within our local community of Perth & Kinross.

## Marac – Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference



In 2022 there were 113 cases discussed at Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) and in 2023, there were 80 cases discussed which is a similar pattern.

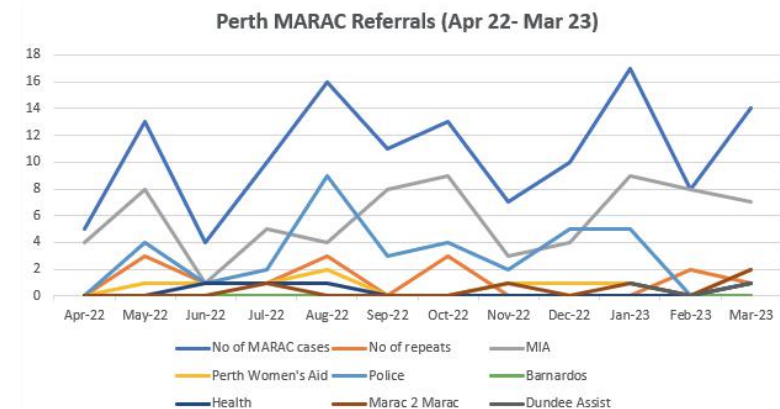
In Perth & Kinross we know our levels of domestic abuse cases with added complexity are related to alcohol and drug issues, homelessness, mental health and suicide risk.

In the past two years Tayside Division has doubled its number of Domestic Abuse Liaison Officers who assess risk and implement effective safety planning/risk mitigation for all incidents of Domestic Abuse, ensuring victims are offered and fully understand access to advocacy services.

All domestic crimes and incidents are subject to a robust quality assurance process to ensure that Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 offences are correctly identified and robustly investigated in accordance with national standards.

In Tayside, Police Scotland resource the provision of a full-time Police Officer MARAC co-ordinator, and a Police Staff MARAC administrator while a Detective Inspector chairs the MARAC Steering Group. All reports of potential Honour Based Violence result in an emergency stand-alone MARAC. Risk assessments and investigations are conducted in accordance with national Honour Based Abuse and Forced Marriage guidance.

The Tayside MARAC Steering group has carried out many improvement activities over the past year including the development of a performance framework, MARAC Chair training and MARAC representative training. A MARAC operational group has also been introduced to help assist with quality assurance and giving MARAC reps a voice to feed through to the steering group should problems not be managed at operational level. We have also introduced a MARAC debrief function at the end of the MARAC for chairs to ensure any concerns are addressed. This has seen improvements in the functioning of MARAC meetings. At a local level we have chairs being trained who already work within the public protection agenda.



## Domestic Abuse Scotland (DDAS)

The Disclosure Scheme for Domestic Abuse Scotland (DSDAS) gives people the right to ask about the background of their partner.

It also allows concerned relatives and friends, the right to ask about someone's partner. They can ask if they have been abusive in the past.

DSDAS also gives Police Scotland the power to tell people that they may be at risk. This information can be given if it is not asked for.

Where Police Scotland has information that a person may be at harm of domestic abuse by their partner, they have the power to tell.

DSDAS allows people to make the choice on whether to remain in the relationship.

**Majority of the disclosures have been as a result of "right to tell" as opposed to people requesting information.**



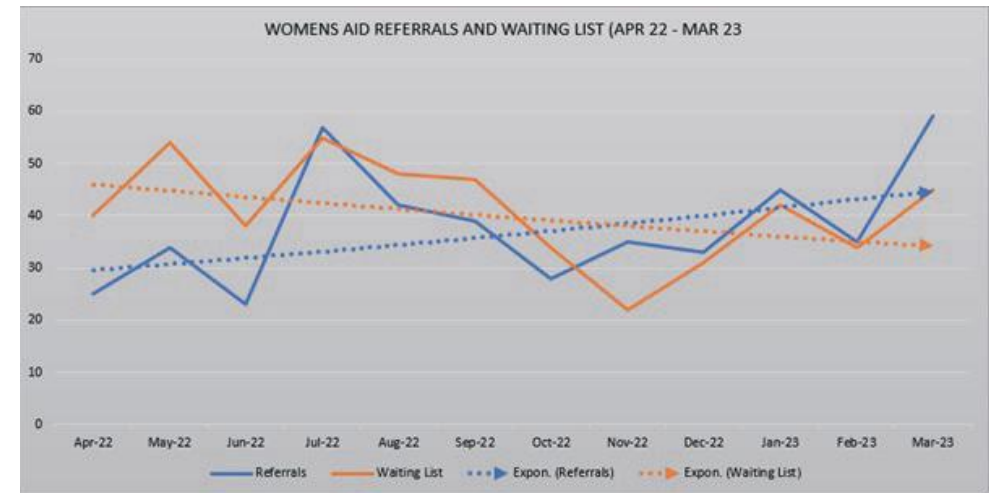
**POLICE  
SCOTLAND**  
Keeping people safe  
**POILEAS ALBA**

## Perthshire Women's Aid

Perthshire Women's Aid had another busy year with referrals into services, waiting lists have fluctuated throughout the year. It was crucial to ensure that it was managed by their domestic abuse practitioner ensuring safety needs were addressed and regular check ins for those waiting on service.

Their Domestic Abuse Advocacy Service seen high volumes of referrals. Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) moved from monthly to fortnightly meetings in Perth & Kinross. We were able to employ a further Advocate to support the volume and commitments of the team, building further strength to the service.

Perthshire Womens Aid identified the further isolation for women due to the cost of living crisis and they created the Cosy Café that allowed women to meet other women. This had seen 150 women attend where they could have a warm drink, a space to chat, peer support, this reducing isolation.



## RASAC (Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre)

As RASAC returned to operating full-time hours they welcomed the opportunity to be back in person across all RASAC P&K services. Whilst the organisation sought to respond as promptly as possible during the COVID-19 pandemic, it has been energising to once more be back working alongside key partners with more in-person events and opportunities to participate in collaborative working.

Emerging from the pandemic and being faced with the cost-of-living crisis has been a challenge for both the organisation, as well as for survivors accessing our services, RASAC are thankful to have received funding for warmth packs during the winter months which benefited 51 survivors and 18 children by providing warm items of clothing, soup packs and energy saving items for the home.

A snapshot of support statistics across the year:

- 156 new referrals
- 336 women and young people supported in ongoing support
- 1117 in-person appointments (either at the Centre or Outreach)
- 401 telephone appointments
- 153 online support sessions via zoom
- 718 support emails
- 80 survivors supported in Justice Advocacy
- 134 young survivors and 11 family members supported through the Young People & Families Service

RASAC's ability to increase the staffing capacity within the organisation has meant that they have continued to address waiting times throughout the year. On average across the year, adults waited an average of 19 weeks, and young people an average of 14 weeks. RASAC are continuing to address these waiting times as they know that no survivor should have to wait for vital support.

With more multi-agency working being re-establishing this year, they welcomed the ability to get out into the communities. During the funding period, the project has contributed to a number of young people's awareness raising activities including: Perth UHI Freshers Fayre, Perth Pride, Pink Saltire Community Conversations, PKAVS Young Carers Day and information stalls across a number of schools such as Breadalbane Academy, Perth Grammar School and Kinross High School. Furthermore, a weekly drop-in has been established at Perth UHI and a weekly drop-in at OWLS has continued throughout the year.



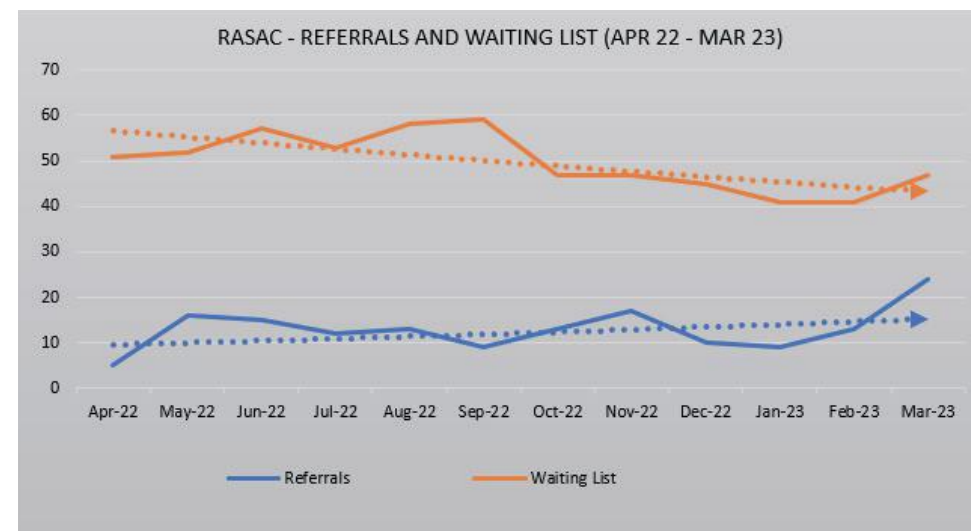
## It has been a busy year for RASAC Prevention Services and the delivery of the National Sexual Violence Prevention Programme in schools.

Delivering 404 sexual violence workshops to 6884 pupils across 10 Perth & Kinross secondary schools and specialist provisions. Sessions included; Gender, Social Media, Sexualisation and the Effects of pornography, Child Sexual Exploitation, Consent, What is Sexual Violence, Preventing Sexual Violence, Impacts and Supports.

- Supporting 22 RASAC Youth Ambassadors (up to age 18) active within our Youth Ambassador programme
- Supporting 5 older Student Volunteers (age 18+) active within our Student Ambassador programme
- Delivered 20 Training Sessions through RASAC's Multi-Agency Training Programme to 304 professionals working in Perth & Kinross
- Delivered a further 10 Trauma Informed Practice training sessions for 206 staff members working across Perth & Kinross

As RASAC move forward to the coming year, priorities they have identified are:

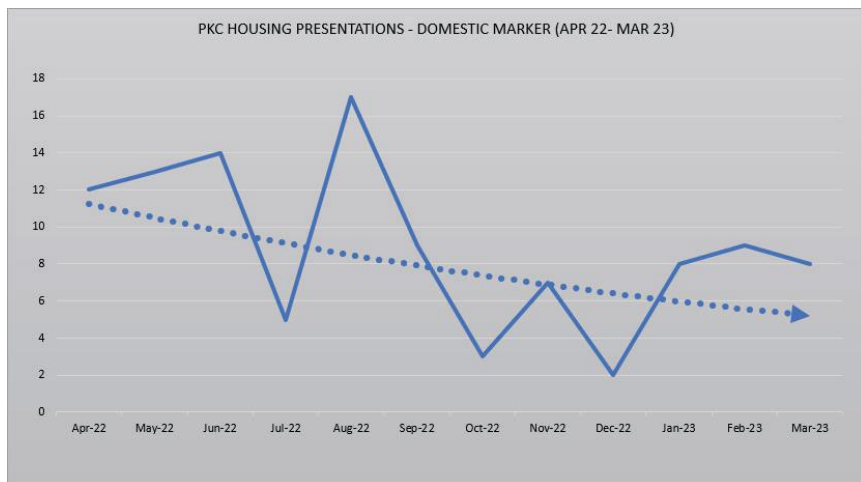
- Implement learning from the one-year Sustainability and Income Generation consultancy project carried out across 22/23.
- Continue to promote and support the implementation of ESAS (Equally Safe at School).
- Carry out an internal review of RASAC P&K's survivor participation and engagement opportunities, consulting with other Rape Crisis Centres to inform this area of development.



## Protecting People Risk Register

During the previous reporting period and in particular throughout the pandemic, all Protecting People partnerships developed a COVID-19 Strategic Risk Register, and this is now being developed into a broader integrated strategic risk register to support business as usual activity across the protecting people structure.

This integrated risk register ensures we are focused on the key risks relating to VAW in Perth & Kinross and forms the basis for our VAW Partnership meeting agendas as well as our reporting into the Chief Officers Group.



## HOUSING

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 EQUALLY SAFE QUALITY STANDARDS

The Equally Safe Quality Standards and Performance Framework respond to the expectations set out in Equally Safe and in the Violence Against Women Partnership Guidance, in relation to effective performance management. The Quality Standards aim to raise awareness of the types of services, policies and processes that are most effective in tackling VAWG and capture data on the extent to which they are currently being delivered across Scotland. The Performance Framework aims to measure the impact that these services, policies and processes are having on the lives of people and communities affected by VAWG. Collectively, the two resources aim to support VAW Partnerships to capture key performance data and facilitate a consistent approach to measuring and reporting on the progress being made to achieve the ambitions set out in Equally Safe at a local level. The graph below details how Perth & Kinross has performed against its own reported figures from 2021-22 and the national average.

The figures show that Perth & Kinross meets or partly meets 100% in two of the Priority areas, and reports meeting or partly meeting at least 80% of Quality Standards in the other three Priority areas. Multi-Agency Working standard experienced a percentage decrease from the previous year.



## 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM 2022

16 Days of Activism 2022, was widely recognised as a success and we will continue to support this.

This is a link to the video record of this year’s event.

[16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence 2022](#) - You Tube

## OUR KEY PRIORITIES FOR 2023/24

An Improvement Plan has been agreed which will inform activity in 2023-24 under the following broad themes:

- Raising awareness in schools and through youth organisations
- Review of workplace policies
- Increased training provision
- Raising awareness of services and better provision for groups that are hard to reach
- Improved services for perpetrators
- Improved collaboration with other Public Protection specialism
- Undertake a Partnership Self-Assessment with the support of the Improvement Service



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For more information visit our website  
[www.pkvawp.org.uk](http://www.pkvawp.org.uk)