

**Barnardo's Scotland response to
Consultation on a draft delivery plan for Equally Safe:
Scotland's strategy for preventing and eradicating violence against
women and girls
30 June 2017**

Questions on priority 1

1. Do you agree or disagree that the actions listed under priority 1 are the right actions to help meet the objectives of priority 1?

Neither agree nor disagree

2. Please tell us about any of the priority 1 actions that you are particularly supportive of.

See question 4.

3. Please tell us about any priority 1 actions that you don't agree with.

See question 4.

4. Are there any actions that you think are missing under priority 1?

Two objectives of this priority are about healthy and positive relationships, that people enjoy healthy and positive relationships and that children and young people develop an understanding of healthy and positive relationships from an early age. The only action however that seems specifically focussed on these objectives is the action to continue the Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) programme. While we support the inclusion of an action around MVP, we do not believe that this is enough to address the objectives of this priority relating to healthy relationships.

We believe it is crucial that all young people, boys and girls, receive high quality, age appropriate Relationship, Sexual Health and Parenthood Education (RSHPE). The recent Education and Skills Committee report into Personal and Social Education (PSE) raised specific concerns around aspects of RSHPE as a component of PSE, including that consent is not adequately covered and that teaching does not effectively reflect diverse relationships. There are opportunities for the Equally Safe Delivery Plan to develop actions to drive forward progress in this area, through the Committee's recommendation for a review of PSE and the proposals for work on PSE in the Mental Health Strategy. These additional actions should be reflected in the performance framework for the delivery plan, which does not currently appear to contain specific monitoring around young people's understanding of healthy relationships.

A particular concern in relation to provision of education around healthy relationships is that it should include messages about parenthood, and that these should be accessible to young men and young women. We note that the Young Scot survey for the Pregnancy and Parenthood in Young People strategy

found that only 51% of young people remembered receiving education about parenthood at school. Barnardo's Scotland is committed to the Safe and Together model of domestic abuse informed responses to keep children safe. As part of this model we advocate equally high standards as parents for fathers and mothers; therefore boys and girls must both have access to positive messaging about parenthood and healthy relationships. We would also draw attention to the value of work that supports children's emotional wellbeing – we work with children and families through e.g. the Five to Thrive approach or PATHS Programme around understanding and self-regulating emotions, which may be an important component to building healthy relationships. We would therefore like to see actions around the healthy relationships objectives in the delivery plan which are inclusive of girls and boys and contain emotional wellbeing and parenthood aspects of education.

It is crucial that wider systems support children receiving high quality education around relationships and wellbeing - the Education and Skills Committee drew attention to a series of reports, going back to 2008, which found that provision of PSE was patchy. We are pleased to see actions to provide support for teachers, and the idea of a holistic approach to addressing gender stereotypes in schools. We would however like to see a clear link to the National Improvement Framework and the central place of children's wellbeing in schools, as well as consideration of how healthy relationships fits into HGIOS and the monitoring of schools – these wider systems can contribute to helping all children receive quality education around wellbeing including healthy relationships. We also recognise that while education is a key stakeholder in supporting young people's understanding of healthy relationships, this is not for education alone. There does not appear to be an action relating to the role of parents and carers in supporting children to develop an understanding of healthy relationships and to challenge gender stereotypes (we also note the absence of actions relating to older people, who may also have a crucial role as grandparents in children's understanding). Parents and carers are key to children and young people developing their understanding of healthy relationships at any age, and may be particularly important in reaching children who are not engaging in school or younger children not yet at school. We would therefore like to see this priority contain actions which ensure that healthy relationships are supported across the age and stage continuum.

Do you have any suggestions for additional actions to focus on?

See question 4.

Questions on priority 2

5. Do you agree or disagree that the actions listed under priority 2 are the right actions to help meet the objectives of priority 2 ?

Neither agree nor disagree

6. Please tell us about any of the priority 2 actions that you are particularly supportive of.

No comment.

7. Please tell us about any priority 2 actions that you don't agree with.

No comment.

8. Are there any actions that you think are missing under priority 2?

We believe there would be benefit in considering whether the actions in this area address the full spectrum of the age and stage continuum. For example, we note that there is an action to address the barriers to women's participation in sport and question whether this should also include girls' participation in sport (we are unclear in general why this section is headed as referring to women's civic and social inequality and does not refer to girls). Similarly, there is no linkage in this priority with Pregnancy and Parenthood in Young People Strategy; aspects of that strategy which aim at supporting young parents to engage with school or other learning environments seem pertinent to the objectives of this priority area. Reviewing the actions in relation to age and stage would help identify if there are any gaps, such as in relation to young mothers, that would benefit from additional actions.

We would question whether there is a difficulty with the actions under this priority in that they focus on areas traditionally male dominated, and of high status, where women have underparticipated, e.g. sport, politics; arguably this reinforces some issues around occupational and civic segregation, by not valuing those areas currently of lower status where women have traditionally participated. As noted above, Barnardo's Scotland seeks for equally high standards of parenting among fathers as mothers. We would be interested in seeing an action in this priority area which for example sought to identify arenas where women and girls currently undertake a civic role (for example are women more involved in school related civic activities) but these are perhaps less visible than traditionally male dominated arenas, and to raise awareness and esteem of these, as well as to raise participation of women and girls in areas of current high esteem.

There may be an opportunity with the performance indicators for this priority to consider overlap with other priority areas, by for example including indicators for gender equality in key professions, such as the judiciary, which may be relevant both to women's and girls' equal participation in our communities and specifically to women's and girls' participation in justice processes which are core to achieving other objectives under the Equally Safe Strategy.

Do you have any suggestions for additional actions to focus on?

See question 8.

Questions on priority 3

9. Do you agree or disagree that the actions listed under priority 3 are the right actions to help meet the objectives of priority 3 ?

Neither agree nor disagree

10. Please tell us about any of the priority 3 actions that you are particularly supportive of.

We are particularly supportive of the action to take forward the Safe and Together model in Scotland. Barnardo's Scotland, with other children's and women's organisations, is committed to the Safe and Together model. There has been growing recognition across organisations that our response to domestic abuse is not good enough, that too often women are being held responsible for stopping men's violence to women and children. The Safe and Together model provides a framework for shifting our focus to holding the perpetrator of abuse

accountable for his behaviour, including recognising that his choice to abuse is a parenting choice; instead of placing the burden on the woman to control his abuse, we seek to partner with the woman through identifying her strengths while intervening with the perpetrator to address his abuse. The Safe and Together model requires and provides tools for a systematic documentation of the perpetrator's patterns of behaviour, through which we achieve a fuller understanding of his coercive control (not only individual incidents of behaviour) and a more rigorous understanding of his risks. This enables for example better communication with children about those risks and what the plans are for working with him, as well as more effective planning around how to address his behaviour and how to keep the woman, children (and practitioners) safe. We would wish to see this action go further than the current aspiration to share lessons around Safe and Together. Where effectively implemented, the Safe and Together model offers the opportunity for broad systems change, for the system to work together to hold perpetrators to account and encourage them to change and to keep women and children safe.

We further welcome actions in this section which seek to improve the domestic abuse competence of different areas of the system. Women and children affected by domestic abuse often come into contact with housing services, and it is crucial therefore that these have an effective understanding of the dynamics of coercive control and the impact of domestic abuse on children; we are pleased therefore to see actions including embedding domestic abuse in training for housing and homelessness hubs. We would also suggest that substance misuse services are an important area to integrate domestic abuse competence; in our services for children affected by parental substance misuse we see examples where domestic abuse may be causing or exacerbating substance misuse of the non-abusing parent, and identifying the role of domestic abuse is crucial to addressing the woman and children's safety and wellbeing. In terms of the action to strengthen the social work response to domestic abuse, we would stress that an important aspect of this action is to fully incorporate Safe and Together principles into the social work response, such that this recognises that the perpetrator's domestic abuse is a parenting choice whereby he is harming the child and that he must be held accountable for stopping his abuse.

We also welcome the action to integrate understanding around trauma in a range of services, including the justice system; in our experience working with young people engaged in risk taking behaviours, including criminality, those behaviours may relate to unresolved trauma (including trauma around gender based violence such as child sexual abuse or childhood experience of domestic abuse) so a greater understanding of trauma in the justice sector is crucial. We would further note that there are gaps in the provision of trauma and abuse recovery services for children in Scotland, meaning that there are children and families affected by child sexual abuse and exploitation whose needs are not being met.

11. Please tell us about any priority 3 actions that you don't agree with.
See question 12.

12. Are there any actions that you think are missing under priority 3?
While this section contains some important actions particularly relating to domestic abuse we have some concerns that this section (and the delivery plan

as a whole) does not always cover the full range of forms of gender based violence which are covered by the Equally Safe Strategy. For example, we are unclear from the delivery plan whether actions relating to provision of forensic services for those affected by sexual assault will include consideration of particular issues for children affected by child sexual abuse and exploitation; we are similarly unclear whether these issues might be taken forward through the children specific action to consider the Barnahus model, and how therefore these areas of actions fit together. We are unclear about how far the action around the Scottish Women's Rights Centre (SWRC) would apply to e.g. Child Sexual Abuse, Child Sexual Exploitation – our understanding is that currently the SWRC is only able to provide advice to women over the age of 16, and therefore we are unsure whether the reference here to providing support to children and young people is only for children of an adult women or whether the action includes the expansion of provision to children in their own right.

Do you have any suggestions for additional actions to focus on?

See question 12.

Questions on priority 4

13. Do you agree or disagree that the actions listed under priority 4 are the right actions to help meet the objectives of priority 4 ?

Neither agree nor disagree

14. Please tell us about any of the priority 4 actions that you are particularly supportive of.

We are pleased to see a specific action relating to perpetrator programmes under this priority. Barnardo's Scotland believes it is crucial to address the behaviour of perpetrators of gender based violence. Intervening with domestic abuse perpetrators is one of the core components to keeping children safe under the Safe and Together model; where perpetrators are left invisible we not only do not effectively support women and children, but we also do not support the perpetrator to change their behaviour. It would be useful to clarify if this action is specific to domestic abuse or covers all forms of gender based violence in the Equally Safe Strategy. We also welcome the inclusion of a specific performance indicator relating to perpetrator intervention, though this also requires some clarification (for example whether the percentage of perpetrators referred to interventions is the percentage of those for whom an appropriate intervention was available or the percentage assessed as appropriate for an intervention whether or not an intervention could be provided). We would also note the link between this action to intervene with perpetrators of gender based violence and actions under priority one to support people to understand and enjoy healthy relationships.

In terms of domestic abuse specific perpetrator interventions, we suggest that this action needs to be strengthened to include a commitment to the provision of a range of perpetrator interventions such that all domestic abuse perpetrators across Scotland have the potential to access an intervention that suits their needs. We provide a perpetrator programme in Renfrewshire specifically developed for young fathers, in order to offer the tailored approach required for these individuals. Interventions also need to be available for perpetrators in a range of circumstances – whether in prison or in the community, both long and short term. We would further note the importance of perpetrator programmes

having an accompanying support service for women and children. In accord with Scotland's overall approach to domestic abuse, perpetrator interventions should also be based in a gendered analysis of domestic abuse. The action should therefore be amended to include a commitment to provision of a range of interventions considering these criteria.

In terms of interventions with perpetrators of other forms of gender based violence, we note that children and young people can also be perpetrators of child sexual abuse, and that these children require specialist responses. Barnardo's provides services for young people displaying harmful sexual behaviour; harmful sexual behaviour is defined as "one or more children engaging in sexual discussions or acts that are inappropriate for their age or stage of development. These can range from using sexually explicit words and phrases to full penetrative sex with other children or adults" (NICE, from NSPCC). The provision of interventions to young people to address harmful sexual behaviour may therefore be an important aspect of provision of interventions with perpetrators of child sexual abuse and exploitation. An important aspect to this work is with families – who can have emotional responses such as shame, denial, fear as well as being affected by social stigma and isolation. In our 2017 report with the Centre for Youth and Criminal Justice, *Over the internet, under the radar*, we noted inconsistencies in responses to children and young people's activities with sexual images – with responses sometimes failing to robustly tackle young people who had exploited or coerced others into sending images, and conversely criminalising young people for consensual activity. If this action covers interventions with perpetrators of child sexual abuse and exploitation, then it is important that it cover the need for specialist responses where children and young people are carrying out abuse, and that those responses consider for example the role of families and can effectively work with internet behaviour.

We are pleased to see mention of child contact in one action, although we believe this action needs to be strengthened. In our experience child contact is a significant area of concern which often provides perpetrators of domestic abuse with ongoing opportunities to abuse women and children. We note the 2017 report by the Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland (CYPCS) and Scottish Women's Aid, *Power Up, Power Down*, which described children and young people's concerns at not being given opportunities to safely and effectively express their opinions, those opinions not being recognised by the courts, and not being provided with the reasons for decisions that affect them. These findings support our own experience in providing advocacy services to young people. We would like to see a specific commitment, linking the action on contact to the cross cutting action on children's views being recognised in the justice system, to ensure that children are given an effective voice in child contact cases. We would also like to see a specific commitment to ensuring that child contact considerations focus on ensuring the child's safety. One feature of the Safe and Together model is that it provides a means to fully document the perpetrator's pattern of coercive control, which also allows for greater understanding of the ways in which this is impacting on the children; Safe and Together recognises that domestic abuse is a parenting choice. Those involved in contact proceedings require an extensive level of understanding around the perpetrator's patterns of behaviour, such as may be mapped in the Safe and

Together model, in order to contribute to effective decision making around contact which acts to ensure the child's safety.

15. Please tell us about any priority 4 actions that you don't agree with.
See question 14.

16. Are there any actions that you think are missing under priority 4?
There are a number of actions under priority 4 which require clarification. For example, the first action is described as encouraging victims of gender based violence to report to the Police but is then described as a communications plan specifically relating to the domestic abuse offence. Consideration should be given as to how to give those affected by all forms of gender based violence covered by the Equally Safe Strategy confidence to report to the police; this may also require tailored communication strategies for different people, for example supporting children to feel confidence in reporting may require different strategies than for adults. We are pleased to see a specific action to review training for professionals within the Justice system, to include the provisions of the new coercive control offence and trauma informed practice. We would however suggest that this action should contain a commitment to act on the outcomes of the review and ensure that effective training is put in place. We would also note the importance in relation to this action of justice professionals understanding that children experience domestic abuse with the non-abusing parent and that this should be a crucial element for training for justice professionals, for those professionals who work with perpetrators as well as women and children, so that all justice professionals engaging with perpetrators have a clear understanding of domestic abuse as a parenting choice.

Do you have any suggestions for additional actions to focus on?
See question 14.

Questions on cross-cutting actions

17. Do you agree or disagree that the actions listed as cross cutting are the right actions to help meet the overall objectives of the delivery plan?

Neither agree nor disagree

18. Please tell us about any of the cross cutting actions that you are particularly supportive of.

We are pleased to see recognition of the impact of domestic abuse on children in the form of an action around an aggravator to the proposed new offence of domestic abuse. However, we have noted in our evidence to the Justice Committee that the aggravator as drafted with the introduction of the Bill does not fully recognise the ways in which children are affected by domestic abuse, and potentially damages growing understanding that children are harmed by domestic abuse regardless of whether they directly witness incidents. We have therefore argued that the aggravator should be amended to capture the true impact on children of domestic abuse. We have also argued that Non-harassment Orders must be able to protect children as well as the non-abusing parent from risk of further abuse. It is our preference that there be a parallel offence that recognises that where someone chooses to abuse their partner or ex-partner they are also choosing to abuse, and therefore committing an offence

against, any relevant children. We note that such a parallel offence is about specifically recognising children as victims in the context of domestic abuse (which is understood as abuse of a partner or ex-partner); this is therefore a separate question to that of whether psychological abuse of children as a whole is effectively captured by current legislation on child cruelty and neglect.

We are pleased to see an action around ensuring that children's voices are more effectively heard in the justice system. As noted above, this is a particular concern in relation to contact actions, where recent work by CYPCS and SWA has suggested that children are not given effective opportunities to participate or listened to. We would suggest that this action should include specific plans in relation to contact, linked to developing the action under priority 4.

We welcome the inclusion of participation of women and children in the delivery plan. However, we have concerns that these actions do not commit to participation work over the lifetime of the delivery plan nor are we clear how the participation work is to inform the individual priority areas. We would like to see actions that specifically commit to ongoing participation work over the lifetime of the delivery plan. It would be useful to develop an indicator for the performance framework to monitor how effectively participation work is carried out and used.

19. Please tell us about any cross cutting actions that you don't agree with.

See question 20.

20. Are there any cross cutting actions that you think are missing?

A key concern with how the delivery plan is structured as a whole is that the various forms of gender based violence and considerations relating to children are not integrated throughout. Even within the cross cutting actions there is a lack of integration, for example the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child does not appear in the human rights framework, despite being identified in the Equally Safe Strategy. We have commented in other answers that we are not always clear whether actions in individual priority areas apply across all forms of gender based violence and include consideration of children. This concern is sometimes exacerbated by inconsistent use of language – in places the delivery plan refers to women, in places to women and girls and in places to women and children and it is not always clear whether these differences are deliberate choices due to the focus of a particular action. While the delivery plan does state at the beginning that the definition of violence against women and girls does include children or all genders, it would still perhaps be clearer to use "women and children" as the default form throughout the delivery plan unless actions are specifically focused on a particular group within this. We note that there is no mention of Child Sexual Abuse in the delivery plan, though this is a form of gender based violence identified in the Equally Safe Strategy. We note that there is one single mention of Child Sexual Exploitation in the delivery plan, and this is a cross-reference to the existence of a national action plan. It is crucial that Child Sexual Abuse and Child Sexual Exploitation are integrated into the delivery plan for the Equally Safe Strategy to achieve its objectives. We would like to see greater clarity throughout the delivery plan about how children and the full range of forms of gender based violence are integrated into the priority areas.

We note the first action under the children section refers to the role of the Child Protection Improvement Programme in ensuring that children affected by domestic abuse have access to help. Domestic abuse is not currently a specific workstream under the Child Protection Improvement Programme (CPIP); we would welcome explicit focus on domestic abuse in CPIP, for example to include consideration of Safe and Together in that context. We would therefore welcome clarification on this action and how specifically domestic abuse is to be considered in CPIP.

The cross cutting actions on all forms of gender based violence include a specific action to hold one event to look at tackling online hate and misogyny. While we welcome recognition of the importance of online arenas to tackling gender based violence, the current commitment to an event is not enough to tackle this issue. Our 2017 joint report with CYCJ, *Over the internet, under the radar*, suggested a lack of confidence among professionals in dealing with online behaviour, and a lack of consistency in responses. We would suggest that throughout the delivery plan there may need to be greater consideration of whether actions effectively address online forms of and context for gender based violence.

Do you have any suggestions for additional actions to focus on?

See question 20.

Questions on the draft performance framework

21. Do you agree or disagree that the draft performance framework is right to help ensure that we understand the progress we are making?

Neither agree nor disagree

22. Please tell us about any sections of the draft performance framework that you are supportive of.

No comment.

23. Is there anything you think is missing?

A key concern about the draft performance framework is whether it will effectively allow us to consider our progress around all forms of gender based violence covered by the Equally Safe Strategy. The current framework does not contain any specific indicators relating to prevalence of Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation, in contrast to specific indicators around other forms of gender based violence such as trafficking. It is not clear whether broader indicators, such as the first indicator on prevalence of VAWG, will include these forms of gender based violence as there is no description as to how indicators will be broken down (e.g. will the indicator about perpetrator interventions be reported with regard to all forms of gender based violence; will the indicator about total funding invested at a local level be disaggregated by different forms of gender based violence; will indicators such as proportion of women who had experienced partner abuse/rape be broken down by age to include and identify children and young people affected by these forms of gender based violence). We note that one of the outcomes in the performance framework is that people have increased understanding of all forms of VAWG; it is important that the delivery plan and the performance framework themselves cover all forms of gender based violence in order to contribute to this outcome.

Another missing aspect to the performance framework is identification of areas where we aspire to specific indicators but do not currently collect information. The performance framework should identify where there are gaps in what it is currently possible to monitor, with specific commitments in the delivery plan as to when and how these gaps will be addressed.

It would also be useful to identify how the draft indicators link to the different priority areas and cross cutting actions in the delivery plan; this would help ensure that the performance framework effectively considers the objectives of all the priority areas. We have identified some specific omissions in our previous answers, such as the need to include an indicator relating to the objective of children and young people understanding healthy and positive relationships.

24. Do you have any suggestions for additions to the draft performance framework?

See question 23.

Questions for organisations

25. What role could your organisation have in contributing to this delivery plan?

Barnardo's Scotland is committed to developing our own competence in relation to domestic abuse, through implementation of the Safe and Together model among our own practitioners, including practitioners across the range of our services, not only domestic abuse specialist services, to ensure that we are effectively identifying children affected by domestic abuse regardless of what issue brings them to our services. We would welcome the opportunity to play a lead role in taking forward any actions relating to the implementation of Safe and Together in Scotland.

Barnardo's Scotland provides services to children and families affected by gender based violence, including specialist services such as those for children affected by Child Sexual Exploitation; we also provide interventions with perpetrators of gender based violence, including for young fathers perpetrating domestic abuse and for young people displaying harmful sexual behaviour. We will continue to draw on our experience of providing these services to inform our contribution to policy development around Equally Safe.

Barnardo's Scotland is one of the organisations currently engaged in participation work around this delivery plan. We will continue to support the effective contribution of children's voices to the Equally Safe strategy over the lifetime of the delivery plan.

26. In responding to this consultation, how are you drawing on the experiences and views of the women, children and young people who access your organisation?

Barnardo's Scotland consults directly with its services in responding to consultations. This response draws on the views of practitioners who have day-to-day contact with women, children and young people (and young fathers as perpetrators of domestic abuse). In addition, we are a key participant in the current participation work on the Equally Safe Strategy.

27. Do you have any further comments on the delivery plan?

We have some concerns that the delivery plan contains relatively few actions identified for later years (e.g. 2020, 2021), and therefore we are not clear how progress on the Equally Safe Strategy is to be maintained across the lifetime of the delivery plan. This is exacerbated by actions that do not appear sustainable, for example that participation work is only included as a pilot project, and few actions that pertain to evidence gathering to inform consideration of future action planning, for example that the performance framework does not include identification of indicators we would wish to monitor and are not currently able to do so and commitments to filling those gaps.