

DELIVERING EQUALLY SAFE

Impact Report

April - September 2023



Picture Credit: Liber8

Content Warning

This report includes content of a sensitive nature including real life descriptions of gender-based violence that readers may find challenging or distressing.

Please practice self-care whilst and after reading.



Picture Credit:
Women's Aid Orkney

Contents

- 4. **Foreword & Introduction**
- 6. **Section 1: DES fund in numbers**
- 7. 1.1 Delivery of frontline activity
 - 1.1.1 October 21 - September 23 adults, children & young people
 - 1.1.2 Analysis of frontline support
- 10. 1.2 Delivery of education & awareness sessions
 - 1.2.1 Breakdown of education & awareness sessions
- 12. **Section 2 Spotlights**
- 13. 2.1 Online & tech-enabled VAWG
- 16. 2.2 Support for people from minority ethnic backgrounds
- 21. 2.3 Impact of no recourse to public funds
- 23. 2.4 Rurality
 - 2.4.1 Access to specialist support and partnership working
 - 2.4.2 Under-reporting and approaches to maintaining engagement
- 26. 2.5 Education and awareness activity
 - 2.5.1 Prevention work with children & young people
 - 2.5.2 Workforce development
- 32. 2.6 Service pressures
- 34. **Conclusion**
- 36. **Section 3 Case Studies**
 - Shakti Women's Aid
 - Perthshire Women's Aid
 - Feniks
- 42. **Appendix 1**
 - Table showing Randall Rural Classification



We are pleased to present the fourth Impact Report on the Delivering Equally Safe fund. It continues to be a privilege to work alongside the 112 funded organisations delivering a vast array of activities to enhance the safety and wellbeing of women and girls throughout Scotland.

The rich information provided in the six-monthly progress reports has allowed us to undertake robust synthesis, and to highlight key insights and learning. This report will focus on a number of emergent themes and demonstrate the expertise and tenacity of the funded groups to respond to these issues.

The external environment within which these organisations operate still presents challenges. We remain committed to work alongside them where needed to navigate and adapt, so that the vital work supported through this fund continues to make a difference to the lives of women and girls.



Celia Tennant

Chief Executive, Inspiring Scotland

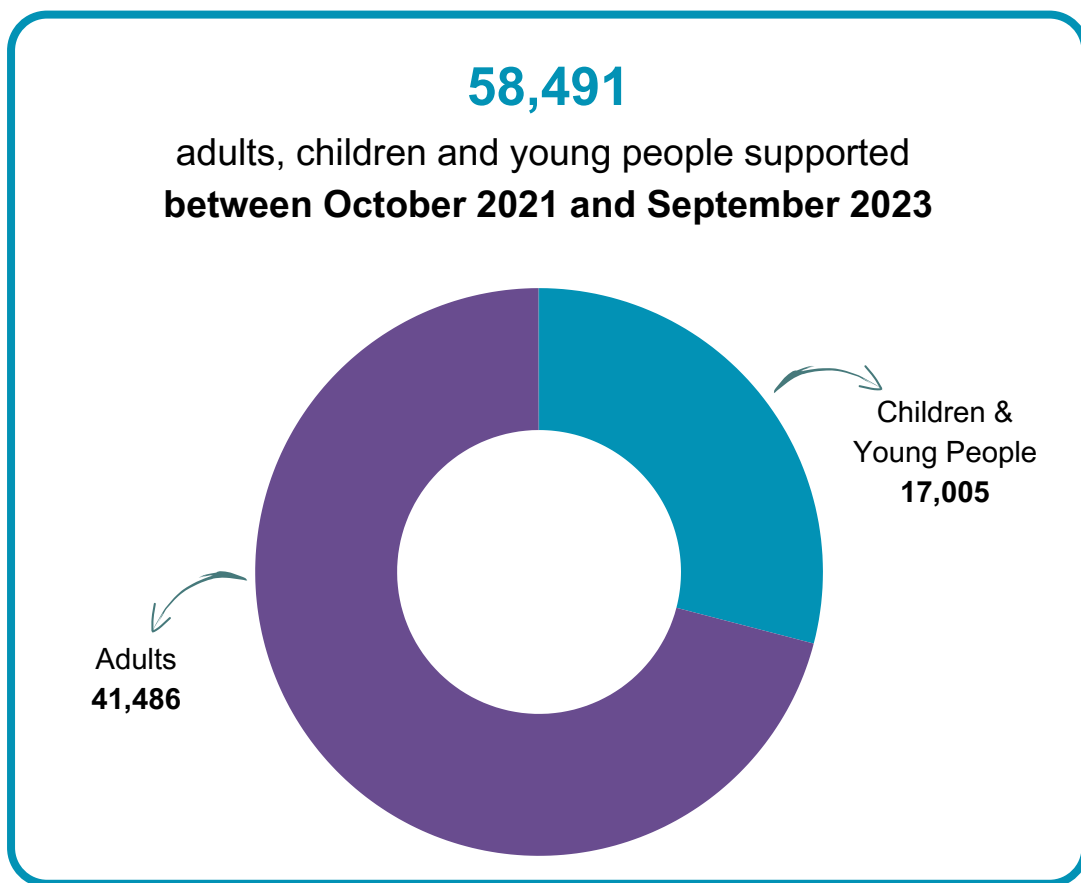
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Celia Tennant'.

Introduction

This is the fourth progress report of the Delivering Equally Safe (DES) fund, covering the period April – September 2023. During this period the 112 DES funded organisations continued to deliver work aimed at preventing and tackling violence against women and girls throughout Scotland. Project delivery during this period broadly mirrors that outlined in our previous reports with levels of frontline support remaining consistent. In total, 23,368 people were provided with frontline support. Analysis of the 121 DES progress reports has highlighted a number of ongoing and emerging themes. This report focuses on the following key topics:

- online and tech-enabled violence against women and girls (VAWG),
- support for people from ethnic minority communities,
- issues of rurality
- impact of no recourse to public funds
- education and awareness activity

In the two years since Delivering Equally Safe started in October 2021, funded projects have supported 58,491 adults, children and young people.



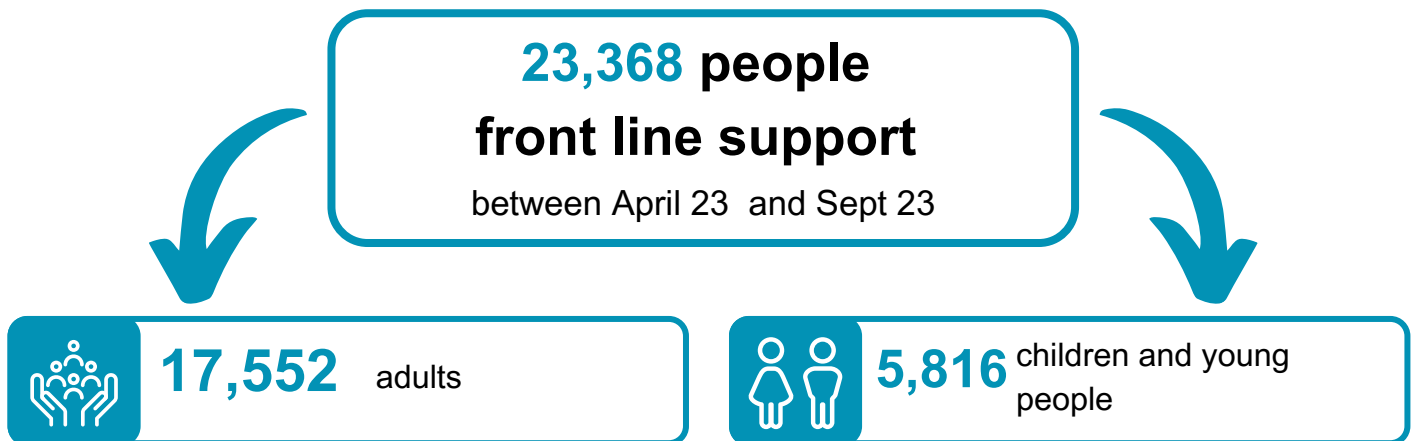


Section 1

DES fund in numbers



1.1 Delivery of frontline activity



Of these, **9,377 adults** and **3,023 children and young people** were **new** to services (or re-engaged after previously ending support) during the six-month period.

This included:



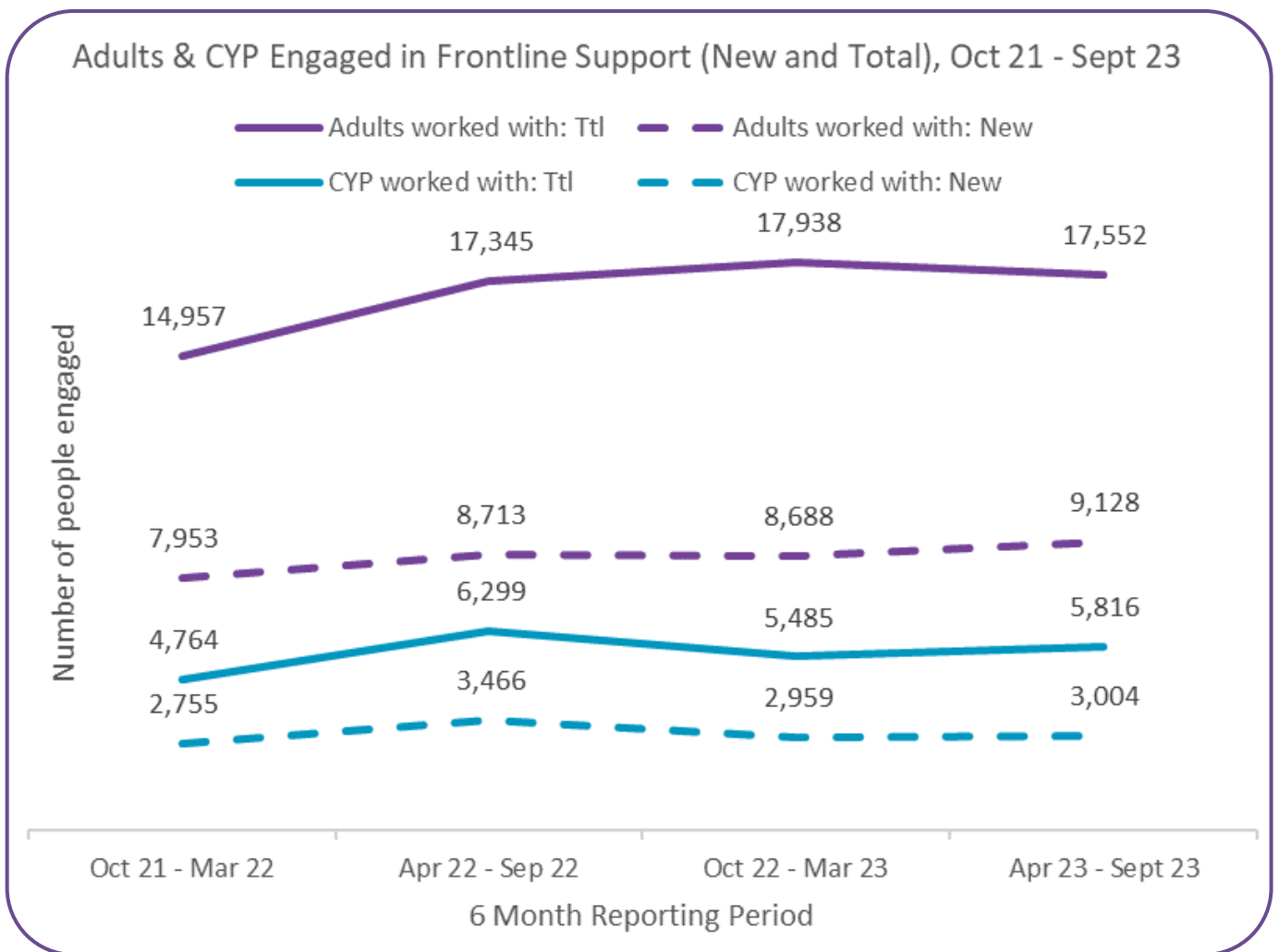
**Delivered by an accredited and registered counsellor.*

1.1.1 October 2021 - September 2023 adults, children & young people

Data is collected on the total number of adults, children and young people organisations worked with as well as a breakdown of how many people, within this total, who engaged for the first time during the six-month period. The chart below shows data for the last four reporting periods covering October 2021 to September 2023.

Since October 2021, there has been a gradual rise in the number of new adults reported. This is in contrast to the total number of adults which appears to have plateaued at just under 18,000. The numbers reported for children and young people (CYP) across both categories, total and new, show greater levels of fluctuation which may indicate a seasonal effect with greater need during the summer holiday period.

Between 48% - 58% of the total number of people supported at each six-month reporting period were new to services.

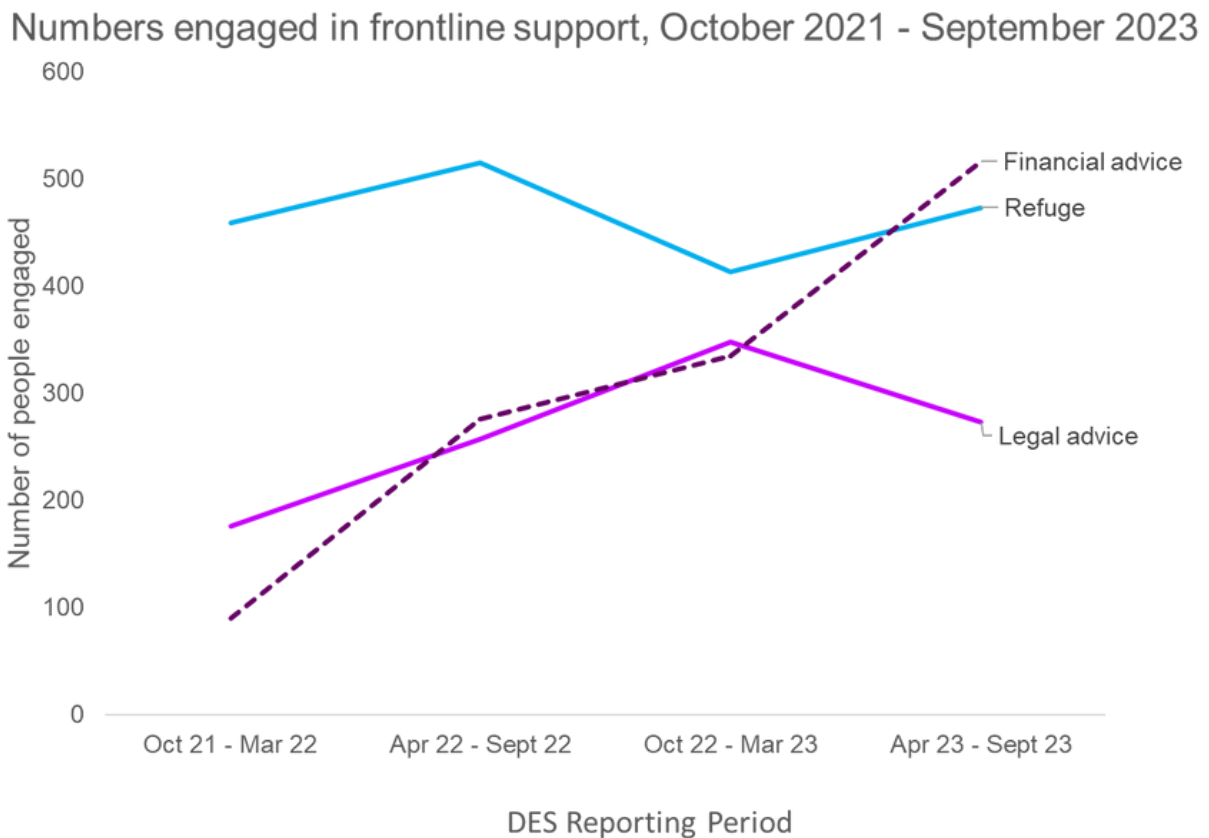


1.1.2 Analysis of frontline support

There were some notable differences when comparing frontline activity with the previous reporting period. For example, legal advice decreased by 22%, whereas refuge increased by 15% and financial advice increased by 54%. The chart below shows the fluctuations for each of these categories of support over the duration of the fund.

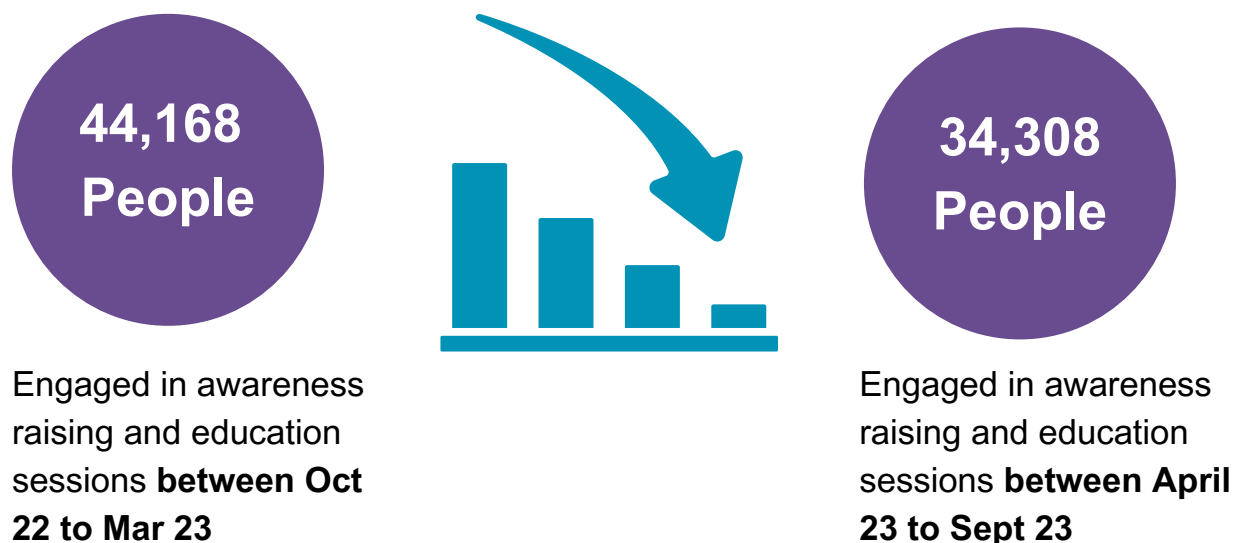
Numbers engaged in financial advice have consistently increased since the start of DES funding. This support is of course provided within the context of the cost of living crisis and it is therefore not surprising that demand is high. A total of nine organisations delivered financial advice during the period, an increase of two from the previous period.

Legal advice decreased from the previous period and support was at a similar level as the same time last year. Reports indicate there were issues with access to legal services particularly in rural areas. The number of people supported through refuge was higher than the previous reporting period but lower than the same time last year.



1.2 Delivery of education & awareness sessions

During the reporting period, April 23 - September 23, there has been a decrease in the number of people taking part in DES funded awareness raising, education and training sessions when compared with the previous six-month period.



8,798 fewer people
engaged in awareness raising,
education and training sessions.

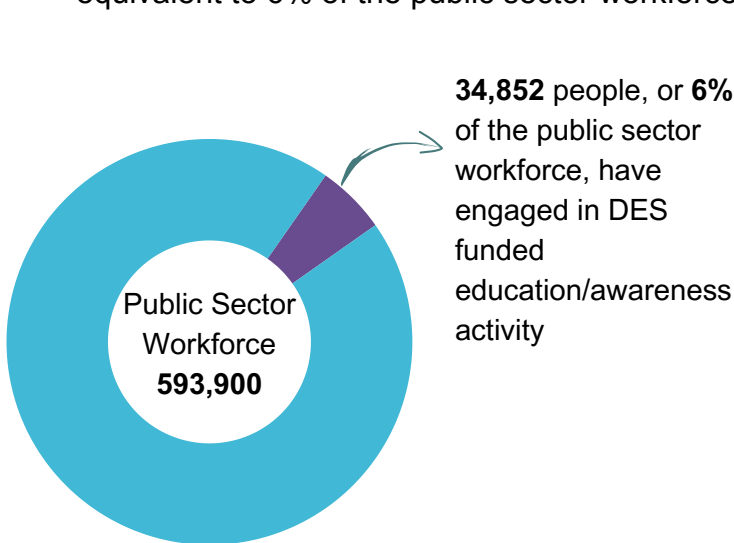
-20%

Further analysis indicates this downturn may be linked to:

- The April - September 23 reporting period covers the summer holidays when there will be fewer activities happening through school engagements.
- Organisational capacity during the period saw competing demands, particularly in the public sector.
- High staff turnover was also cited as an issue for those delivering Safe & Together Institute training.

1.2.1 Breakdown of education & awareness sessions

The chart on the bottom right shows the breakdown of education and awareness sessions by target group. Children and young people continue to be the largest audience for funded work, further detail on preventative activity is available in Section 2.5. The statutory sector made up around one quarter of engagements during the period. The chart on the top left shows that since DES started in October 2021 almost 35,000 workers in the statutory sector have engaged in DES funded education or awareness raising sessions. This is equivalent to 6% of the public sector workforce head count as at 2022.

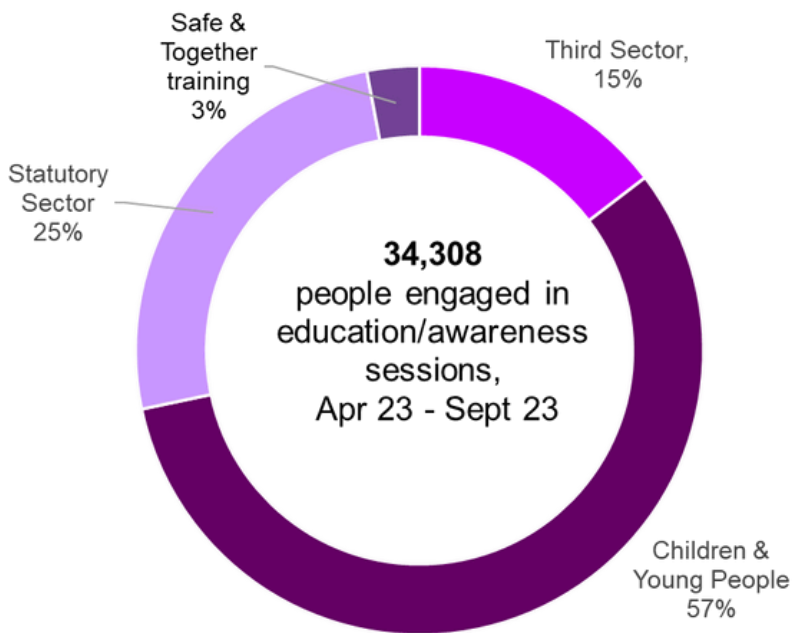


"The interviewing techniques I learned from the [Safe & Together] course are vital in aiding me to work in a trauma informed way, I am now able to use these skills day to day and am confident in doing this."

Safe & Together participant,
Dumfries and Galloway Council

"The P7 girls' focus group really had [pupils] challenging the male voice online and allowed them to identify unsafe situations. There was a sense of empowerment for them to understand when a statement is sexist or is body shaming. They spoke so positively about this after with school staff."

Cornhill Primary,
Aberdeen City Council





Section 2

Spotlights



Picture Credit: ORSAS

2.1 Online and tech-enabled VAWG



- Tech-enabled VAWG continues to be an issue for the sector.
- Calls for advice on Intimate Image Abuse and removal of images are increasing.
- Staff are working to keep abreast of changes in technology to ensure they can best support women to protect themselves.

The reports in this period continued to highlight the use of new and developing technology in perpetrating violence against women and girls (VAWG). This includes intimate image abuse, online abuse and cyber stalking as well as the use of remote technologies by perpetrators to continue to exert control over survivors.

Intimate Image Abuse (IIA) includes the criminal acts of sharing, taking or threatening to share private sexual images without consent. Projects funded to deliver frontline support to people affected by gender based violence (GBV) continue to report IIA being perpetrated throughout Scotland, and being used as a tool in coercively controlling relationships. South West Grid for Learning, who are funded by DES to deliver helpline support in Scotland, reported that August 2023 was the busiest month for calls to their Revenge Porn Helpline (UK wide) since the helpline was established in 2015. DES funded work to improve understanding of IIA and awareness of the helpline with GBV support organisations has led to an increase in Scotland based helpline calls although a reluctance from callers to provide identifying details makes it difficult to quantify this increase. Web analytics show over 2,800 users in Scotland visited the Revenge Porn Helpline website during the reporting period with 207 users accessing specific pages on Scottish laws and services.



2.1 Online and tech-enabled VAWG (cont'd)

Support through the helpline continued to meet the needs of people affected by IIA in Scotland by informing people of their legal rights, signposting them to emotional support and pursuing the removal of intimate images from the internet. During the reporting period helpline staff achieved a 'takedown rate' of 97%.

The project has continued to build on awareness raising work through the development of an online training platform, which will be piloted in 2024. The project plans to initially focus on training university and higher education staff. Projects including Emily Test and Rape Crisis Scotland have continued to work with students during this reporting period to deliver sessions focused on consent and GBV.

Reporting highlighted that IIA continues to be experienced by people throughout Scotland and that barriers to support exist for some groups including people with learning disabilities, Deaf women and those living rurally. To help improve accessibility to existing resources on IIA, South West Grid for Learning launched easy read resources on IIA alongside the Scottish Commission for Learning Disabilities and video information on IIA in BSL. The project has identified unique challenges experienced by people living rurally who have experienced IIA including difficulty in reporting IIA and accessing support. They have begun some focused research on these challenges with a view to improving rural responses to IIA going forward.

"I cannot thank the service enough for what they have done for me. The relief they have given me by assisting in the removal of the image is enormous. I will be forever grateful for this act."
Revenge Porn Helpline



In October 2023 LGBT Youth Scotland's Voices Unheard group launched the findings of their peer consultation on LGBTQ+ young people in Scotland's experiences of domestic abuse. Of 55 young people who responded to the survey on abusive behaviours experienced from a partner or ex-partner, 13 indicated their partner or ex-partner either threatened to, or did share intimate images of them.

2.1 Online and tech-enabled VAWG (cont'd)

Tech-enabled VAWG extends further than IIA. In particular, projects providing support to young people experiencing GBV reported an increasing use of social media as a tool for online stalking. Dumbarton District Women's Aid worked with one 16 year old during the period whose ex-partner, despite being subject to bail conditions relating to an assault on her, continued to stalk her online and seek information about her from friends. Before attending a music festival she was supported by a CYP worker to make a safety plan including being provided with a personal alarm and identifying marked wellbeing points on the festival map. This helped her remain calm when he was present at the music festival. They were able to support her to report any breaches of bail conditions to the police. Projects delivering awareness raising sessions to CYP throughout Scotland continued to improve understanding through dedicated sessions on online abuse.

Aberdeen City Council's Cybersafe Breakfast provided an opportunity for girls from primary seven to discuss and challenge the male voice online and help them identify unsafe situations.

Projects delivering frontline support to people experiencing GBV have previously reported difficulty keeping up-to-date with technologies used by perpetrators. Organisations continue to source relevant training and support for staff to help support them with this.

Recent reporting also highlights increasing ways technology is being used to better protect those supported. When developing safety plans many more frontline projects are providing those at risk with video doorbells or supporting them to access these through Police Scotland.

Multi-Cultural Family Base supported a woman experiencing honour based abuse by brothers. They worked with other agencies and the woman to consider her response if her brothers came to her home and explored ways to keep herself safe, including ensuring her bathroom had a lock. They were able to obtain a TECHSOS alarm and video doorbell from Police Scotland, so when her brothers broke into her apartment a few weeks later she was able to use the alarm to call the police. They could hear her brother shouting at her through the bathroom door. The video camera captured his entry and he was later arrested with footage being used to support prosecution.

2.2 Support for people from minority ethnic backgrounds



- Frontline services continue to provide culturally sensitive support.
- Demand for legal and financial support is high.
- 3,882 people supported by minority ethnic focused organisations or projects

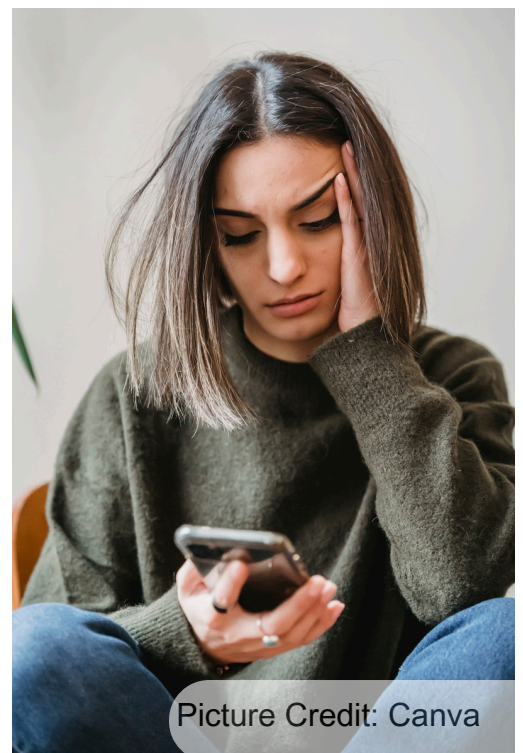
There are 14 organisations funded through DES to deliver culturally sensitive, targeted work with minority ethnic people including activity focused on prevention and awareness raising, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), Honour Based Abuse and support for the migrant community. Of this fourteen, eight deliver targeted frontline work.

Frontline service delivery continues to focus on one-to-one, group work, advocacy, counselling and wellbeing. The reports from the six-month period show the value of this targeted support in ensuring that responses to GBV for minority ethnic people are culturally sensitive and, where possible, delivered in a language of their choice. They highlight the positive impact that this targeted support continues to have on those accessing their services but also highlights some of the challenges that organisations and people face.

As we know, GBV is not a simple issue. Responding effectively requires a truly holistic approach, with a need for person-centred, culturally sensitive, bilingual support appropriate for women, children and young people from minority ethnic communities. A co-ordinated approach from a range of support agencies may be required.

Shakti Women's Aid reported that they continued to provide holistic support, and that their service provision was further strengthened by collaborations with their network partners.

Hemat Gryffe Women's Aid reported that their support has enabled women to achieve independence and increased confidence in their own abilities and to live independently.



Picture Credit: Canva

2.2 Support for people from minority ethnic backgrounds (cont'd)



Women previously at risk of harm are now safe and secure in refuge or in their own accommodation. Women were supported to move from refuge accommodation to their own homes. Women were able to set up their home and move away from a stressful and unsettled way of life. Women spoke of how they feel safe and secure in their home and have increased confidence to make informed choices. Women were able to achieve financial independence.

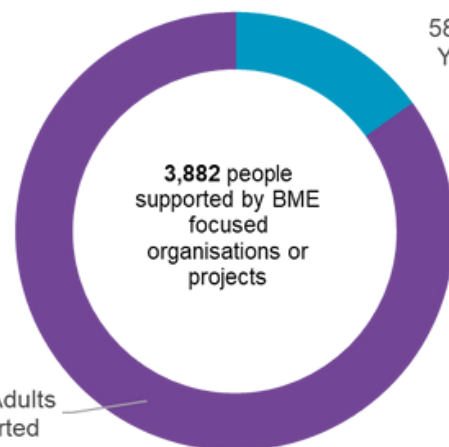
Hemat Gryffe Women's Aid

Multi-cultural Family Base (MCFB) delivered peer support and group work through their Creative Nurture Group and sessions facilitated by Advocacy Workers. Such groups offer an opportunity for women to discuss their experiences, sometimes for the first time, and challenge practices which may be rooted in misogyny.



When we talk about it, then we see other people see it's wrong, but we didn't see it before. It's easier to accept when more people agree it's wrong. Then we can teach our sons and daughters the correct thing to do.

MCFB Group session exploring the patriarchy and cultural expectations



The value of group work in providing an opportunity for open discussion was echoed in reporting from Feniks whose funded activity included group counselling sessions for Polish women affected by domestic abuse. During the period Feniks delivered two 12-week blocks of group therapy exploring domestic abuse and trauma. They found that 80% of participants reported improved mental health and 100% reported being able to cope better with everyday life after attending group counselling.

2.2 Support for people from minority ethnic backgrounds (cont'd)

GEMAP's Financially Included service continued to work closely with Saheliya during the six-month period, offering one-to-one advice to those facing economic abuse. Of the 128 adults whom they delivered direct support to for the first time during the reporting period, almost 50% were from minority ethnic communities. As well as demand for advice on economic abuse and financial wellbeing, projects supporting minority ethnic communities also report demand for legal advice in particular for those with insecure immigration status. During the reporting period, JustRight Scotland (JRS) delivered a range of information sessions for minority ethnic women supported by Saheliya including sessions focused on access to education, permission to work for asylum seekers. JRS made provision for childcare and travel expenses which allowed more women to attend.

Shakti Women's Aid's MAITRI project continued to provide gender sensitive and confidential services to minority ethnic women, children and young people. It continues to be vital in raising awareness about the intersectional barriers, issues and discrimination faced by those who identify at LGBTQ+.


Saheliya has been so helpful to me; I was referred by Asylum Health Bridging Team. The moment I met the organisation, I was hopeless and helpless, but Saheliya has brought a smile onto my face again. When I met my Caseworker, I felt that I can cry, I didn't know that it was allowed to cry in people's office, but she let me cry, she was the first person I disclosed how I was sexually abused, and I ended up being pregnant. She has connected me with LGBT, Amma Birth Companions, and my Solicitor. In fact I have been hiding in a hostel after I sought asylum without a Solicitor because I was ashamed to tell anyone my story and I was ashamed to even go to get food from the hostel's restaurant due to fear of meeting other people who live in that hostel. Since I met Saheliya staff, I feel that my life has got better. I feel confident to ask for information and I receive guidance including what I have to do to protect myself in case someone wants to take advantage of me again. I am due in few weeks now and the good thing is that I have stopped blaming myself thanks to my Caseworker in Saheliya.

Experience of a woman supported by Saheliya

2.2 Support for people from minority ethnic backgrounds (cont'd)

As well as those projects funded to deliver targeted work with black and minority ethnic people, reporting continues to demonstrate how wider GBV support services are improving accessibility and inclusivity of support. Aberdeen Cyrenians and Central Advocacy Partners (CAP) both employed minority ethnic workers during the reporting period and saw a subsequent increase in the number of referrals received from BME women.

CAP's recently recruited advocacy worker speaks Punjabi, Urdu and Hindi – this has helped the service to do targeted work with communities speaking these languages. Being able to access advocacy support in their own language has been invaluable to those supported.



"I'm glad I have a BAME worker as I have struggled with my learning disabilities you explain it in Urdu and I can understand it."

Central Advocacy Partners

Saheliya's report also draws attention to the importance of providing support in community languages highlighting that it has been crucial that the caseworkers provide emotional and practical support to women in crisis and distress. They have liaised with external agencies/organisations as clients were unable to do so themselves due to the language barriers, lack of confidence and/or mental health problems causing difficulty in communicating. Their caseworkers have made 836 contacts and made 121 referrals to a number of external professional/organisations in order to make the mainstream service more accessible for the clients, however they also highlight that they continue to find making referrals challenging due to the lack of interpreter/language support services available. As a result of their support, Saheliya report that women are more confident in raising issues, sharing personal experiences and the barriers they face. The women report that they feel good that they have gained new information and are now not embarrassed to say that they did not know the information previously. Furthermore, their group work has enabled professionals to work with women from communities with language barriers that they were previously unable to reach and did not have resources to fund interpreting costs.

2.2 Support for people from minority ethnic backgrounds (cont'd)

Whilst much is improving and impact is far reaching, minority ethnic communities and those working to support them continue to face challenges. Shakti Women's Aid report that 'systemic, institutional reluctance and lack of understanding of domestic abuse issues for BME women and children continue to create barriers for support. Safeguarding survivors of Honour Based Abuse (HBA) from a legal protection point is still lacking. Scottish Government's definition of domestic does not include HBA and individuals are not protected under Domestic Abuse Scotland Act (2018). This makes it difficult for us to refer such cases to Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) as responses vary from authority to authority and where only legally recognised definitions will be accepted, leaving BME women and children unprotected. This situation is worse for LGBTQ+ individuals from the BME communities.'

They also report that access to safe accommodation that can cater to minority ethnic peoples' specific needs is not enough. The current mainstream women's aid refuges and temporary accommodation is not always suitable for young women fleeing forced marriage for various reasons such as the location, age group, and refuge rules/policies not fitting with the young women's needs or their circumstances.

'To make services inclusive, the differences in BME women's experience of abuse and GBV should be acknowledged and understood.'



Picture Credit:
Amina and EmilyTest

2.3 Impact of No Recourse to Public Funds



- No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) is a significant challenge for minority ethnic focused support organisations.
- Organisations are advocating to ensure local authorities understand their duties.

People seeking asylum, refugees and migrants (ASRM) are supported through mainstream and targeted projects. British Red Cross and JustRight Scotland receive DES funding to deliver work targeted support to ASRM women and children. Frontline projects throughout Scotland improve understanding, accessibility and better meet the needs of ASRM. However organisations report that No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) remains an obstacle ‘for us to support some very vulnerable women.’

As well as addressing safety and emotional support needed, ASRM women were also supported to access legal and financial advice. In many cases funded workers advocated on behalf of ASRM women and their children to ensure they were able to get appropriate access to housing. JustRight Scotland continued to deliver their second tier advice line for professionals supporting victims-survivors. They provide training to support organisations on changes to immigration law.

Targeted work with ASRM women has helped keep them informed of their rights in Scotland, access education, work and improved awareness of support services. JustRight Scotland delivered a series of sessions for women supported by Saheliya during the reporting period. These were well received having been designed closely with participants and Saheliya staff. The provision of travel expenses and childcare at the time of these sessions was an important factor in participation.

Projects throughout Scotland consistently provide support to people who have NRPF. Shakti Women’s Aid report that ‘There is varying service provision from third sector and statutory organisations in offering help and guidance to BME women and children with NRPF visa status. NRPF visa status remains to be one of top challenges when supporting BME women and children. Local authorities are largely reluctant in helping these individuals on a long-term basis as they find these cases complex and lengthy.’

2.3 Impact of No Recourse to Public Funds (cont'd)

Hemat Gryffe Women's Aid report that their staff have supported seven women with No Recourse to Public Funds to apply for Destitution Domestic Violence (DDV) concession and were successfully granted Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) in the UK. This allowed women to be granted a temporary Visa for three months called Leave Outside the Rules (LOTR). This cancelled the original spouse visa that allowed them entry to the country and access to public funds whilst they applied for ILR as a victim of domestic abuse.

Aberdeen Cyrennians delivered frontline support to 75 adults during the six-month period, 14% had NRPF. They report, *'We observed an increase of individuals requesting support with NRPF. Currently there is minimal local information around NRPF and housing rights within domestic violence situations. We requested clarity to be added to the Aberdeen City Council Policy to ensure a human rights-based homelessness prevention approach.'*

They worked with one woman and her young daughter who had been declined support from other services in the local areas due to their NRPF status. They had limited funds and were living with a family member. The woman was supported to meet with a solicitor to discuss her immigration status. Aberdeen Cyrennians were able to provide ongoing advocacy to support her to understand and engage with the Home Office and to secure a permanent home.

In partnership with Glasgow Women's Aid and JustRight Scotland, British Red Cross continue to pilot the Women, Destitution and NRPF project and report supporting 10 women during this funding period. Project staff report that a significant amount of support time is taken with ensuring local authorities understand the duties that exist even where a person has NRPF. They have experienced high staff turnover in recent times due to burnout.



Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre Perth & Kinross (RASAC P&K) has developed easy read leaflets for survivors in Russian, Ukrainian, Romanian and Polish and met with the Scottish Refugee Council to develop the relationship and help them to provide the best support for survivors.

2.4 Rurality



- Organisations are stepping in to fill gaps in access to specialist support services.
- Evidence that under-reporting is an issue in rural local authorities.

Over 5.46 million people live in Scotland, with over 930,000 of them living in rural areas. Rural Scotland accounts for 17% of the total population in Scotland (6% in remote rural and 11% in accessible rural) and has consistently done so since 2011. In contrast to the population distribution, rural Scotland accounts for 98% of the land mass in Scotland (70% in remote rural and 28% in accessible rural). This reflects the dispersed nature of the population in rural areas.

The Randall Definition rebased - 2017 (1) categorises 14 Local Authority areas as 'rural', the remaining local authorities were categorised as 'non-rural' (see [Appendix 1](#)).

This section of the report seeks to highlight activity undertaken by organisations to address challenges posed by rurality.

The key areas covered are as follows:

- access to specialist support and partnership working
- under-reporting in "rural" areas
- approaches to maintaining engagement



Picture Credit:
Women's Aid Orkney

(1) <https://www.gov.scot/publications/understanding-scottish-rural-economy/pages/13/>

2.4.1 Access to specialised support and partnership working

In rural communities other support agencies and services may not be as accessible as they would be in non-rural settings. When looking at the distribution of DES funded legal and financial advice services we found that four out of 14 (28%) rural and six out of 18 (33%) non-rural local authorities have organisations delivering one or both of these services.

Organisations often step in to fill gaps which may otherwise be provided by external organisations. For example, Orkney Rape and Sexual Assault Service (ORSAS) have engaged with Citizens Advice and Scottish Women’s Rights Centre to assist in housing transfer requests.

As well as there being gaps in options for onward referrals, where referral pathways exist, high staff turnover can make it difficult to build and sustain professional partnership working. This issue is not specific to rural areas but can be exacerbated by a lack of available housing.



Picture Credit:
DES Team

2.4.2 Under-reporting and approaches to maintaining engagement

Organisations operating in rural areas told us there is a persistent problem of under-reporting to statutory agencies. For example, Orkney Rape and Sexual Assault Service (ORSAS) reported that 45% of their survivors have reported abuse to police which is less than the National rate of 52% recorded across Rape Crisis Scotland Centres. ORSAS believes this lower reporting number is due to community scrutiny of survivors and issues relating to press and court process exacerbated by rural and remote living.

Under-reporting can negatively impact a survivor's access to housing. For example, ORSAS uncovered that housing providers may only review the points a tenant has if they can show they have reported an assault or harassment to police. To address this ORSAS intend to raise awareness of the statistics on under-reporting and will engage with housing providers on alternative means of evidencing need such as a supporting letter from ORSAS/Women's Aid.

Organisations operating in rural areas commented on a culture of surveillance and have reported some of the ways they sensitively engaged survivors. Western Isles Rape Crisis Centre (WIRCC) has worked with their VAWP to develop the Safer Outer Hebrides website. The website helped women to connect to low pressure safe spaces and



Picture Credit: WA Orkney

groupwork meetings with no pressure to disclose any abuse or previous experiences. WIRCC provided yoga classes in these safe spaces and have found that once women have built up trust and realise what support the service can offer, they are more likely to disclose. WIRCC can use the name Safer Outer Hebrides when they are attending public events. Wigtownshire Women's Aid recognised that women were apprehensive and anxious when arriving at the office so now they proactively offer women appointments in their own home or at a partner agency. Some of these adjustments, such as visiting survivors in their homes or more locally, help mitigate burdensome travel costs which is even more relevant given the cost of living crisis.

2.5 Education and awareness activity



- 19,585 CYP engaged in education and awareness activity.
- 14,766 people from statutory and third sector organisations engaged in education and awareness activity.
- Ongoing investment in workforce development.

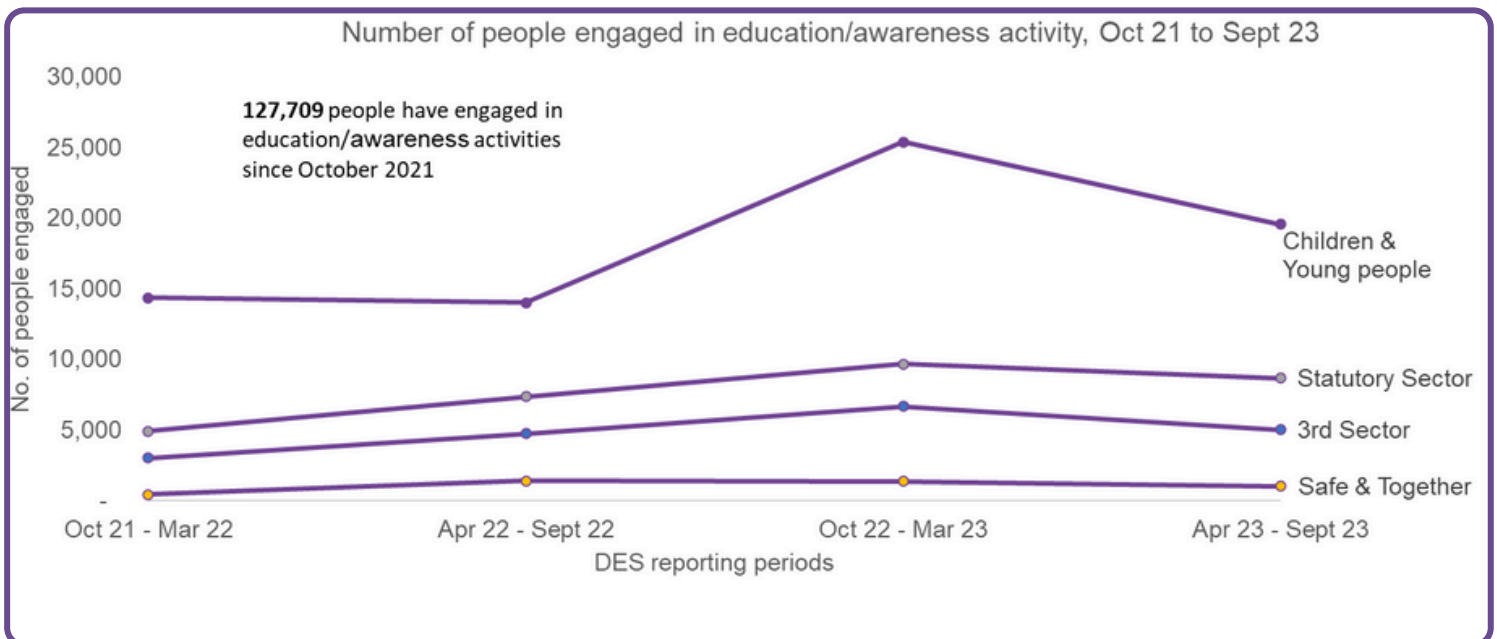
Education and awareness remains a key part of DES funded activity. Diverse initiatives collectively contribute to a comprehensive approach aimed at raising awareness, building capacity and fostering cultural change to address VAWG.

In this reporting period, over **34,000** people were reached through DES funded education and awareness raising sessions – equivalent to the population of the town of Dumfries in this six-month period.



Picture Credit: Canva

This section will explore primary prevention work delivered to children and young people; engagement with statutory and third sector organisations; and workforce development.



2.5.1 Prevention work with CYP

Prioritising primary prevention challenges the notion that VAWG is inevitable or acceptable. Young people are a key target audience for this work and during the reporting period **19,585** children and young people (CYP) were engaged in education or awareness activities. Some examples of education and awareness session with CYP include group work on forms of abuse, healthy relationships and online safety.

Organisations raised the need to work with Primary School age children and there are a number of projects funded through DES that are active in this area. For example, the PATCH (Preventing Abuse and Teaching Children Healthy relationships) project is part of Argyll and Bute Rape Crisis and works with Primary School across the region. They report that staff working in the some of the rural schools report having big concerns about the misogynistic behaviours displayed by some of the children, who are as young as eight or nine. During this period they were able to run 20 sessions in eight schools of varying size (from a school roll of just 20 pupils up 285 pupils).



Picture Credit: Shetland WA



“Through these workshops, I noticed in staff training in the much more rural schools that teachers have big concerns about misogynistic behaviour displayed by some of the children in their schools (some of these children as young as eight or nine). They spoke about the challenges they face in a rural community where traditional gender roles are often still adhered to and the violence that this can bring with it. They also spoke with me about their concern for the children seeing this violence at home, and suggested that this is why these children are bringing misogynistic views and behaviour into the school. There was significant concern for the safety of the staff within the school due to the language one specific young person was using and they acknowledged that they felt really isolated, with a real lack of services available in their area. We spoke about how my role could further support them and their school, and they confirmed that the PATCH project was really important to them.”

Argyll and Bute Rape Crisis Centre – PATCH project

2.5.1 Prevention work with CYP (cont'd)

In the course of their prevention work in secondary schools staff at ORSAS (Orkney Rape and Sexual Assault Service) identified an increase in young men repeating "incel" concepts and quoting misogynist influencers such as Andrew Tait and others. This trend and increase in repeating misogynist language has been noted by others working with children and young people across the sector.

Renfrewshire Council's Young and Equally Safe project ran a series of leadership training days to prepare young people for their Summer Roadshow. Some of the young people attending were already trained in Mentors in Violence Prevention and this gave them the opportunity to lead on the activities within the workshops and facilitate conversations around violence against women and girls. Young people and Youth Workers worked together to create workshops covering consent, gaslighting and healthy relationships which were designed to engage with S2 pupils recognising the earlier intervention that is being required.



"Tea and consent."
Picture Credit:
Renfrewshire Council

"84% of S3 pupils who gave feedback said that they have an improved understanding of domestic abuse."

Shetland Women's Aid

2.5.2 Workforce Development

Work to raise awareness and understanding of VAWG among other sectors is another aspect of funded activity. It is important to ensure professionals working in services that may be accessed by survivors have the knowledge and skills to allow them to effectively respond to and understand the needs of survivors. In this reporting period the DES funded organisations engaged with 14,766 people from third and statutory sector organisations to deliver VAWG education and awareness activities.

For example, Argyll and Bute VAWP delivered Routine Enquiry training to multi-agency staff to aid understanding of domestic abuse and how to ask routine enquiry question with the aim of earlier intervention and better service provision for victims-survivors.

Barnardo's Equally Safe Falkirk works in partnership with other external agencies, working collectively to deliver an early intervention and efficient service for those impacted by Domestic Abuse. External services including Caledonian Service, Forth Valley Domestic Abuse Unit, Central Advocacy Partners, Social Work, NHS, Education and Housing. They involve their participation group to help shape, co-design and offer valuable insights to partners this wide variety of partners. This involvement can help to influence a more positive outcome for families and survivors.



“The interviewing techniques I learned from the course are vital in aiding me to work in a trauma informed way, I am now able to use these skills day to day and am confident in doing this.”

Safe & Together participant, Dumfries and Galloway Council.

Rape Crisis organisations delivered GBV First Responder Training, Glasgow and Clyde Rape Crisis provided this for staff at the University of Strathclyde and The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland as well as staff from Glasgow HSCP and Carr Gomm (social care charity).

2.5.2 Workforce development (cont'd)

As the demand and pressure on frontline services to respond to increasingly complex issues that survivors experience, the range and scale of workforce development within the DES funded portfolio continues. There is significant time invested in staff development helping to create a confident, knowledgeable and skilled workforce who are able to respond to a range of issues effectively.

DES funding contributes to workforce training and development initiatives such as Independent Domestic Abuse Advocate training (Safe Lives), Scottish Trauma-Informed Leaders Training, Own My Life Facilitator Training as well as Scottish Women's Aid and Rape Crisis Scotland specific training.

“The harmful effects of GBV experienced by women and children continues to be reduced by the emotional support provided by staff and volunteers who are trained in Rape Crisis Scotland’s bespoke training relating to sexual violence. In addition, support staff are trained to be trauma-informed, led by a person centred, therapeutic approach.” Rape Crisis Grampian



The Safe and Together (S&T) model is the largest workforce development programme funded through DES and in the last reporting period funding contributed to training of 1,023 workers across a range of sectors. The S&T model aims to change how practitioners work with families impacted by domestic abuse. It is an internationally recognised suite of tools and interventions designed to help professionals in child and family service systems become domestic abuse informed. As a systems change framework, the S&T model offers language, thinking and practices that help increase accountability for perpetrators as parents, reduce victim blaming and improve outcomes for children and families. The model aims to address domestic abuse-destructive practices by providing a set of principles and components that can guide domestic abuse informed practice.

These include:

- Keeping the child safe and together with the non-offending parent;
- Partnering with the non-offending parent as the default position;
- Intervening with the perpetrator to reduce risk and harm to the child.

[Click here to read Improvement Service’s Year Two report on Implementing Safe & Together](#)



2.5.2 Workforce development (cont'd)

“

“There has been a reduction of children on the child protection register over the period as we have embedded our Safe & Together approach within services for Children and Families. Through recognising the protective actions of the non-abusive parent and partnering with them more effectively, we have been able to reduce risks and work with families with less need for CP Registration. This has been due to a cultural shift which recognises that CP registration and its associated processes can be experienced as punitive for parents who are doing their best to reduce and manage the risk posed by their partner. Workers feel more able to work with children and young people on the basis of a Child or Young Person's Planning Meeting instead.” Perth and Kinross Council

”

Organisation feedback continues to highlight that service pressures constrain the ability of senior managers to free up staff to attend workforce development. With the current level of investment, DES funded education and awareness activities have reached approximately 6% of the public sector workforce. Those organisations working to implement the S&T model have been consistent in calling for national co-ordination of delivery.



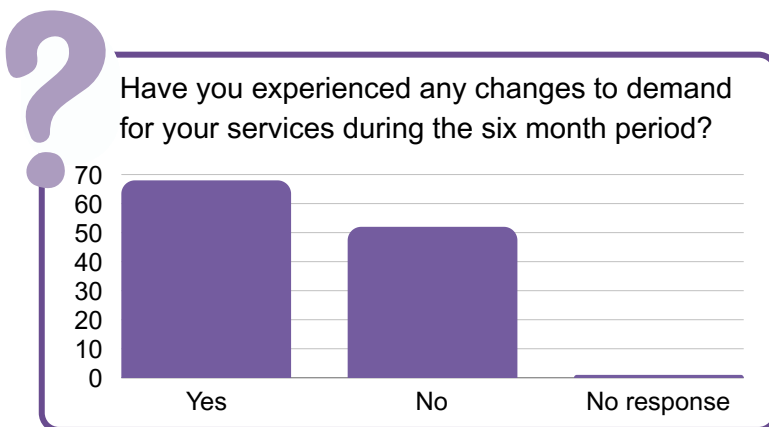
Picture Credit: Amina

2.6 Service pressures



- Organisations are reporting that they have experienced changes to demand for service.
- Survivors are presenting with increasingly complex issues.

We asked projects to tell us if they have experienced any change to demand for services during the six-month reporting period. 68 projects reported that they had experienced a change to demand for services while 52 reported no change. Those projects reporting a change to demand cited a range of areas experiencing service pressure.



Service pressures include:

- Court advocacy
- Financial advice
- Legal advice
- Mental health support
- Support for CYP
- Refuge

The comment below from Assist provides an example of pressure on those providing court advocacy:

“The impact of COVID on the criminal justice system continues to be felt. Pre-pandemic, we would have expected to be carrying around 700 open cases at any one time. This figure currently stands at over 1,200, representing an increase of around 71%”

Organisations paint the picture of a cascade between public sector services and the third sector leading to increasing referrals. This point is highlighted by Central Advocacy Partners:

“Agencies we work with have faced their own challenges post pandemic and in turn this impacts on our delivery, and on the health and wellbeing of our partners. Social services have changed their eligibility criteria as a result and so access to assessment for a social worker is taking much longer, access to a mental health assessment is the same, and housing support.”

2.6 Service pressures (cont'd)

Resource was raised as an issue and has clearly been exacerbated by the cost of living crisis, the effect of which has been felt by public and third sector organisations delivering DES funded work. Resource issues include:

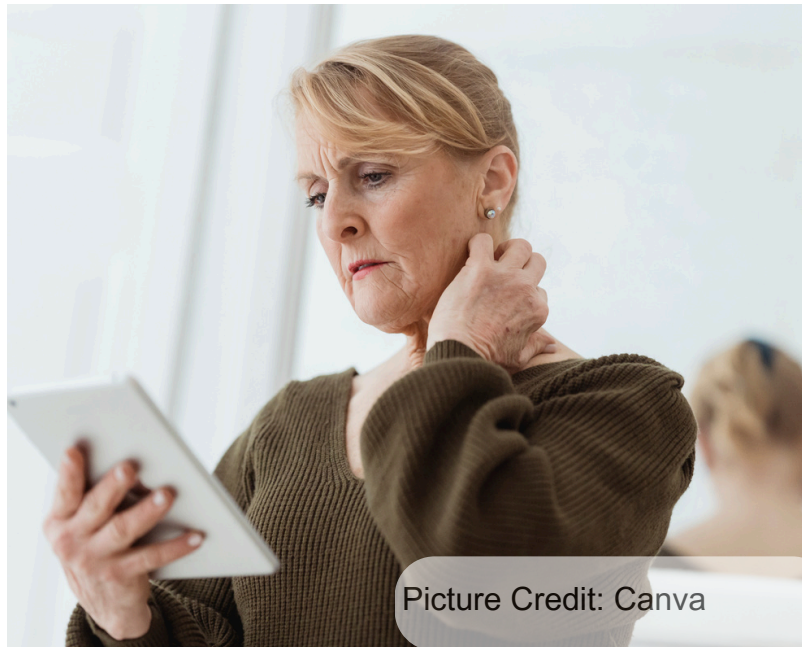
- Security and/or level of funding
- Staff: recruitment, retention and absence
- Availability and cost of language interpretation
- Travel costs

On the positive side some organisations pointed to greater awareness of services as the reason for increased referrals and service pressure.

Services are responding by triaging those at highest risk and offering alternative interventions or lighter touch support for those on the waiting list. Organisations are re-doubling efforts to ensure all available funding opportunities have been explored. To illustrate these points, South Ayrshire Women's Aid commented on their success in securing funding from the Robertson Trust for a specialist worker to engage women with mild to moderate mental health support needs until NHS professionals can assess their needs. Even for this support there is a waiting list.

The effect on victims/survivors is often spoken about using terms such as “complex cases” and “crisis” due to support being inaccessible when need is identified. Delay in receiving support jeopardises the safety of victims/survivors and places them at increased risk of further abuse. Trauma can worsen making it challenging to engage with services and victims/survivors can fall further into poverty.

One organisation also commented on a cycle of dependency forming.



Conclusion

The Scottish Government's Delivering Equally Safe funding continues to enable quality and timely support to vulnerable people affected by gender based violence (GBV). During the reporting period, over 23,000 people were provided with essential front line services. This includes a steadily increasing level of financial advice which likely reflects ongoing challenge with the cost of living crisis.

Analysis of the 121 DES progress reports has highlighted a number of ongoing and emerging themes. Key among these is online and tech-enabled violence against women and girls (VAWG), support for people from ethnic minority communities, issues of rurality, support to New Scots, and prevention.

Organisations report that Intimate Image Abuse (IIA) continues to be an issue throughout Scotland. DES funded activity has increased understanding and awareness of people's legal rights and other practical support. Recent reporting also highlights increasing ways technology is being used to support victims of GBV.

14 organisations deliver targeted work with minority ethnic communities. Organisations' reports highlighted the positive impact holistic, culturally sensitive and bilingual approach to GBV in these communities. However, delivery agencies also highlight challenges in accessing language support, and continued lack of understanding among services of the complexities of Domestic Abuse (DA) Minority Ethnic victims, and particularly Honour Based Violence.

DES funded organisations continue to address the two key challenges of delivering DA services in rural areas. Under-reporting is a persistent problem, which can impact on other services such as access to housing. Many groups have found ways work round the 'culture of surveillance' to engage women through other activities such as yoga classes.

During the reporting period, projects delivering frontline support across Scotland continued to meet the needs of women and children with insecure immigration status. This includes support to access legal and financial advice, including people with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF).



Picture Credit: Dundee International Women's Centre

Conclusion (cont'd)

Young people are the key target audience for DES funded primary prevention work, and during the period over 19,000 children and young people were engaged in education and awareness activities. Groups reported a need to engage younger children including primary school age, because of easier access to online misogynistic or sexual content.

Organisations reported a number of challenges affecting service delivery. Key among these include growing waiting lists due to insufficient resources to meet demand, staff recruitment and retention, funding and the impact of the cost of living crisis. However, as this report highlights, the DES funded projects continue to provide vital services to some of Scotland's most vulnerable and marginalised communities.



Picture Credit:
Glasgow Women's Aid



Section 3

Case Studies



Picture Credit: Liber8



Case Study 1

Shakti Women's Aid



This case study from Shakti Women's Aid highlights the importance of advocacy to support women to understand and navigate the legal system especially when English is not their first language.

PK reached out for support from Shakti in November 2022. She was enduring physical, emotional and financial mistreatment from her spouse. The key worker from Shakti was introduced to PK because they shared a common language, allowing them to communicate directly without requiring an interpreter.

The Shakti key worker conducted an initial assessment to gather information about PK's support needs. In the course of the initial intake and the risk assessment, additional details about her circumstances were uncovered. It became apparent that there were instances when her husband had physically assaulted her (she sent photos of the bruises on her arm as proof) and on one occasion, he had thrown her and her son from their residence for several hours.



Picture Credit: Canva

Her spousal visa had lapsed and they had applied for an extension. However, he frequently used the threat of cancelling the extension as a means to intimidate her, suggesting that she might be compelled to return to her home country. The cumulative stress from these circumstances induced a great deal of anxiety in her, leading to frequent panic attacks to the point where she experienced episodes of memory lapses and disorientation. She desired to leave the marital home and secure her own residence believing that this change would bring her the peace of mind she sought. At that point, an immediate support plan was prepared to explore options for her accommodation once she made the decision to leave her spouse.

Case Study 1 - continued

Shakti Women's Aid

The Shakti key worker served as an advocate for PK, ensuring her rights and needs were met. One of the primary objectives was to connect PK with an immigration solicitor since she was residing in the UK on a spousal visa. Meanwhile, the key worker applied for Destitution Domestic Violence Concession (DDVC) on her behalf, allowing her to seek assistance through universal credit and social funding.

This pivotal step enabled her to secure accommodation separate from her husband. The immigration lawyer applied for legal aid on PK's behalf and upon receiving approval proceeded to apply for Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR). The Shakti Key Worker successfully secured a privately rented house for her, facilitating her relocation from the marital home along with her son. In the midst of these developments, PK expressed a desire to explore her options for divorce. Key Worker arranged an appointment with a family lawyer to provide her with more detailed information in this regard.

After confirming her eligibility for Universal Credit and the commencement of payments, initiated an application for social housing, subsequently placing her on the housing waiting list. Remarkably, after just two months of waiting, she received an offer for permanent housing.

PK has successfully obtained Indefinite Leave to Remain. She now resides in a permanent house with her son provided by the local council, with support from Universal Credit to help cover the rent. Her son is currently attending nursery and she is actively seeking employment. Her family solicitor is currently in the process of initiating divorce proceedings.



Picture Credit: Canva



Case Study 2

Perthshire Women's Aid



The case study from Perthshire Women's Aid demonstrates the impact of domestic abuse on children and young people and importance of practical support. (Names have been changed for Case Study)

Connor's mum approached us looking for support as Connor (8) had been showing signs of real distress which was increasing. There had been domestic abuse when Connor and his mum left the father a few years ago. Since that time there have been sporadic periods of contact. Connor had initially been happy to go and see his dad but then became increasingly frightened to do so and this resulted in an incident with Connor locking himself in the bathroom as he thought his dad was not going to let him go home. Following this incident his father appeared at the house and put a brick through the window and Connor was terrified of seeing his dad again. The worker met with both mum and Connor as part of the assessment. Connor generally managed school but it was at home that his distress was apparent. Mum described that she used to have a happy boy who was angry and tearful a lot of the time.

Mum wanted Connor to have the confidential space to work through some of the distressing feelings that he had about what had happened with his dad. Connor felt frightened by what had happened and wanted not to feel scared anymore and to feel safer.

At the first session Connor came in with his toy dog and was shy. However, he was open to meeting with the worker who he had previously met, to discuss support and he had consented to this. Connor opened up in the first session saying that he felt confused why his dad was behaving like that, but he missed him. He clearly was conflicted by his feelings for his dad.



Picture Credit: Canva

Case Study 2 - Perthshire Women's Aid (cont'd)

The worker built up trust with Connor and over the period of 12 weeks the worker continued to meet Connor for one-to-one support in school. They used a range of creative approaches that enabled Connor to explore about his feelings and experiences in relation to Domestic Abuse. They discussed Inside Hurting – Emotional Abuse/ Outside Hurting – Physical Abuse using pictures and the story – Floss the Boss. They watched the Mikey and Jools film to discuss safety and used a variety of other creative approaches in relation to his overall wellbeing.

While the activities opened up discussion and gave him some insight and understanding it also gave Connor the chance to share his confused and conflicted feelings about his dad. Some of the focus related to the losses and changes that had happened to him. He missed seeing his dad and doing things with him – he also was scared and angry about dad's behaviour and what he had done to his mum and his home. A theme throughout the work was Connor feeling that he had to protect his mum, his Gran and their home in case his dad came back. While some of the activities opened discussion about particular themes, there was also the opportunity for free play as part of the session. Connor would play with the playdough repetitively to re-enact him being strong, combating evil, and protecting himself.

Connor was clearly struggling with the aspect of feeling responsible for protecting the adults in his home and he was still worried about his dad breaking into his home. The worker asked Connor if it would be okay to discuss this with mum as it was important for her to know this. Connor agreed and as a result of this the worker facilitated a family session around safety. Connor and mum used a large flip chart to write down all Connor's worries around his home and to draw solutions and actions that they could take to put things in place that would keep them all safe. As part of this Connor drew a map of his home. Mum also spent some time having a conversation with Connor to let him know that it was her job as an adult to keep them safe and not the other way round.

Connor had more understanding and the chance to talk through his feelings about what had happened in his family.

- Mum felt more confident of being able to respond to Connor's needs to be reassured about safety.
- Connor's emotional outbursts at home decreased and he was more settled at home.
- Connor felt safer and knew where to go for support if he needed it in the future.

"You have been amazing support and helped him massively. We cannot thank you enough and we are incredibly lucky that we have had this support. Not the best situation but as they say there's always rainbows after rain. Thank you so much for his blanket, it will give him comfort in more ways than one."

Text sent by mum the week after support had concluded





Case Study 3

Feniks



This case study from Feniks demonstrates the multiple barriers faced by both the mother and child and is a powerful example of intersectionality

Through 20 sessions of talking therapy, a survivor of coercive control and emotional and psychological violence, was able to sustain herself through very complicated court hearings regarding child care where she wasn't believed that her partner was abusive due to his ability to contain his behaviours to the family setting.

As she described it, "Therapy was the only place where I was believed. After the 20 sessions the survivor attended the Group facilitated by our colleague. I've understood what domestic abuse is. I've heard other women and realised I'm not alone. I realised I have the right to take care of myself."

She is now returning for another 20 sessions due to the lasting effect of domestic abuse but also adverse childhood experiences *"Therapy is also a space to continue the healing process and to discover herself I lived for others until now and today I've heard 'It's enough that you are' and almost started crying."*

The survivor is the main carer of her child. Mum wishes to continue the therapeutic work on herself to be able to be better care for a child with complex needs.

She now finally feels like she is being heard by the system and believed by the people in positions of power and is able to ask for the support she needs, which was not possible beforehand, due to language barriers, mental health issues and the impact of an abusive relationship.

This is an example of how joint effort of support offered at Feniks can be a life line needed for an individual but also a breaking of an intergenerational trauma cycle and proof of how long term therapeutic support, psycho-education and support of a group, can allow hope and healing even from a lifetime of abuse and impact of domestic violence.

Appendix 1 - Table showing Randall Rural Classification

Rural	Non-rural
Aberdeenshire	Aberdeen City
Angus	Clackmannanshire
Argyll and Bute	Dundee City
Dumfries and Galloway	East Dunbartonshire
East Ayrshire	East Lothian
Highland	East Renfrewshire
Moray	Edinburgh City
Na h-Eileanan Siar	Falkirk
Orkney Islands	Fife
Perth and Kinross	Glasgow City
Scottish Borders	Inverclyde
Shetland Islands	Midlothian
South Ayrshire	North Ayrshire
Stirling	North Lanarkshire
	Renfrewshire
	South Lanarkshire
	West Dunbartonshire
	West Lothian

About Inspiring Scotland

Inspiring Scotland is a registered Scottish charity with a mission is to inspire people, communities, organisations and government to work together to drive social change and transform lives. Our vision is that every person in Scotland can enjoy a happy, healthy life free from poverty or disadvantage.

We do this by raising funding from private individuals, trusts and foundations, Scottish Government and local authorities and investing in social funds addressing our strategic themes. These include improving the life chances for children and young people and supporting people who face barriers to inclusion because of discrimination and disadvantage to live flourishing lives.

Our aim is to amplify and strengthen the impact of organisations across civic society by helping them build their strength, resilience and reach.

INSPIRING SCOTLAND

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