



<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Policing Performance Committee</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>16 September 2025</b>
<b>Location</b>	<b>Video Conference</b>
<b>Title of Paper</b>	<b>VAWG Strategy &amp; Strategic Engagement Forum</b>
<b>Presented By</b>	<b>ACC Steve Johnson, Major Crime, Public Protection and Local Crime</b>
<b>Recommendation to Members</b>	<b>For Discussion</b>
<b>Appendix Attached</b>	<b>No</b>

## PURPOSE

The objective of this paper is to inform members of the Policing Performance Committee regarding the progress being made with the Violence Against Women & Girls (VAWG) Strategy and the Strategic Engagement Forum (SEF).

Members are invited to discuss this paper.

## **1. CHANGES TO THE VAWG STRATEGY**

- 1.1 Since 2023, Police Scotland's response to tackling VAWG has been driven by the VAWG Strategy and captured within the VAWG Implementation Plan (IP). The IP reported quarterly to the Strategic Engagement Forum (SEF) on the R/A/G status of 86 actions which were based upon 18 commitments laid out in the Strategy.

Due to the volume of actions, this created challenges in terms of a lack of focus and flexibility required to adapt and respond to evolving VAWG priorities. A new approach was required to allow a more flexible and collegiate approach to tackle emerging threats whilst simplifying our performance to clearly encapsulate the progress being made.

## **2. NEW APPROACH BEING ADOPTED**

- 2.1 The new VAWG plan is aligned to the Scottish Government's Equally Safe Strategy. It has been streamlined from the previous 86 actions to a much smaller manageable amount which will provide a clearer picture of current work ongoing and assisting officers to have a stronger focus on the key issues that affect violence against women and children.

The new plan will allow Police Scotland to be flexible whilst having increased focus on 4 to 6 key emerging threats allowing them to tackle these effectively whilst monitoring progress until they are either resolved or implemented as BAU.

- 2.2 Public Protection VAWG leads from across the country outlined their current strategic priorities and emerging risks for inclusion in the new streamlined plan. These threats were then presented for consideration to ACC Major Crime and Public Protection and DCS Public Protection for onward progression to the VAWG SEF.

Strategic partners' views were sought to understand if they agree that these threats were also priorities from their perspective or if there were others that we should be focused on. The results of the SEF will produce the framework that Police Scotland will use to target high-risk areas of VAWG and will clearly show what they need to deliver on. Police Scotland have based their approach upon the NPCC adopted principles of Prevent, Prepare, Pursue and Protect. By adopting this, it will assist in highlighting any gaps in the collective response to the priorities and present an opportunity to re-evaluate.

It is acknowledged that some of the priorities highlighted during this refresh relate to previous Actions which are in the process of becoming BAU and, whilst they are being progressed by Police Scotland, they will not be taken forward to the SEF unless there is a requirement for significant innovation or partnership working which should be agreed by the SEF. Alternatively, some Actions have been consolidated into the 5 recommended priorities.

Each of the governance groups will be key in driving the VAWG plan across national and local policing areas where results will be fully documented and reported ensuring our collective response is dynamic.

- 2.3 A closure report from the previous VAWG plan has been produced which shows the work that is now implemented as BAU, or which has been carried over to the new plan.
- 2.4 The following Priorities were identified as part of the national scoping exercise with Police VAWG leads (it should be noted that the assessment took place prior to the Casey Report findings being published, the discussion will be revisited for consideration of any additional priorities to be included to reflect this). All agreed priorities will be captured under the 4 x P's approach and reported upon each quarter.

**Recommended Priority 1**

Supporting women to exit prostitution and encourage engagement with Criminal Justice partners to pursue men who purchase sex illegally.

**Recommended Priority 2**

Effectively pursue perpetrators of rape and sexual crime and work with partners to support women in a trauma informed and victim centred way to engage with the criminal justice process.

**Recommended priority 3**

Develop a greater understanding of the drivers for Vietnamese women and children's migration to Scotland with the intention to effectively pursue and deter those involved in their trafficking and exploitation.

**Recommended priority 4**

Tackle the culture of online child sexual abuse and exploitation, prevent girls falling victim to perpetrators, more effectively identify girls at risk of exploitation and pursue perpetrators.

**Recommended Priority 5**

Identify technology facilitated VAWG drivers and enablers, tackle those enablers, develop a strategy to develop resilience among women and girls to more effectively identify those drivers and enablers and engage with police and partners to reduce the harm they pose.

**3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

3.1 There are no financial implications in this report.

**4. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There are no personnel implications in this report.

**5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no legal implications in this report.

**6. REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 There are no reputational implications in this report.

**7. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 There are no social implications in this report.

**8. COMMUNITY IMPACT**

8.1 There are no community implications in this report.

**9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are no equality implications in this report.

**10. ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 There are no environmental implications in this report.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Members are invited to discuss this paper.