Scottish Partnership on Domestic Abuse
National Strategy to Address Domestic Abuse in Scotland
THE NATIONAL STRATEGY

This strategy identifies the key actions which are required to tackle domestic abuse in Scotland from 2000-2003.

The first section describes the overall strategic approach which will be adopted and the second section provides a more detailed action plan to translate these principles into practice.

THE STRATEGY IN CONTEXT

Domestic abuse is one aspect of a range of forms of violence against women, all of which must be tackled in Scotland. This document must be seen as part of an overall strategy to address all forms of violence against women, and although the work which is recommended in this document focuses upon domestic abuse (as this was the original remit of the Partnership), members of the Partnership have recognised the need to establish clear links to the wider issue and to suggest that, in the future, the issues of violence against women and domestic abuse should be considered together, as part of a coherent overall approach. Many of the initiatives recommended in the action plan have wider implications in tackling related aspects of violence against women, and the structure which develops in the future can be used to address these issues together.

It is also important to recognise that, in tackling domestic abuse, this strategy is rooted in a commitment to promote equality and to end discrimination and social exclusion. There is a need not only to address issues relating to gender inequality, but also to recognise and address, throughout the actions which develop, the specific issues facing women/children from black and minority ethnic groups, disabled women/children (including those with physical impairments, mental health problems and learning disabilities) and other groups facing particular forms of discrimination and exclusion.

It is also important to recognise that there are links across policy areas in tackling domestic abuse, and this strategy should be seen as connecting to and strengthening other objectives. There is a need for clear links to be established in the work which is undertaken by a range of policy makers and practitioners, and for consideration of the potential impact of policy and practice on violence against women to form a key part of the mainstreaming of equalities issues.
INTRODUCTION

Many women and many children in Scotland live with the constant threat of domestic abuse, affecting their physical and emotional well-being and constraining their lives. At least a quarter to a third of all women in Scotland will experience domestic abuse at some point in their lives, and the level of “repeat victimisation” is high. There is evidence that violence escalates in frequency and intensity over time, and may increase at specific points in a woman’s life (such as, for example, during pregnancy and following the birth of a child) or at particular times (such as separation or divorce).

THIS STRATEGY RECOGNISES THAT DOMESTIC ABUSE IS NEVER ACCEPTABLE AND WILL NOT BE TOLERATED

1 There is now a wide literature relating to domestic abuse. Further references are contained in the report: “The Development of the Scottish Partnership on Domestic Abuse and Recent Work in Scotland” (2000) HMSO.
Any work relating to domestic abuse is part of the promotion of human rights in society and the elimination of all forms of discrimination. There are many forms of violence in society and all forms of violence are unacceptable. Many groups, for example women, experience greater levels of some forms of violence, and this must be challenged and addressed wherever it occurs, as a fundamental violation of human rights. In tackling such violence it is also necessary to take account of the specific experiences of particular groups of women and to ensure that any provision which is made is relevant and appropriate to them. For black and minority ethnic women, for example, there may be additional difficulties of racism, language, literacy, isolation, stigma, fear of the abuser’s family, threats of deportation (from family members) and threats of separation from children.

Domestic abuse is most commonly perpetrated by men against women and takes a number of specific and identifiable forms. The existence of violence against men is not denied, nor is the existence of violence in same sex relationships, nor other forms of abuse, but domestic abuse requires a response which takes account of the gender specific elements and the broader gender inequalities which women face. In this context, the definition adopted is as follows:

**Domestic abuse (as gender-based abuse), can be perpetrated by partners or ex-partners and can include physical abuse (assault and physical attack involving a range of behaviour), sexual abuse (acts which degrade and humiliate women and are perpetrated against their will, including rape) and mental and emotional abuse (such as threats, verbal abuse, racial abuse, withholding money and other types of controlling behaviour such as isolation from family or friends).**
In accepting this definition, it must be recognised that children are witness to and subjected to much of this abuse and there is some correlation between domestic abuse and the mental, physical and sexual abuse of children. Domestic abuse is associated with broader gender inequality, and should be understood in its historical context, whereby societies have given greater status, wealth, influence, control and power to men. It is part of a range of behaviours constituting male abuse of this power, and is linked to other forms of male violence. Domestic abuse occurs in all social groups, is not caused by stress, unemployment, poverty, alcohol or mental illness, nor by the women who experience the abuse.

It must also be recognised and taken into account that, particularly among black and minority ethnic communities, other family members connected to a woman through marriage may be involved in, or may participate in the abuse of the woman. In certain cases, abuse is perpetrated by other family members, even without the knowledge of the partner. In addition, there is abuse of women by members of their own families in the context of forced, as opposed to arranged, marriages or as a result of their failed marriages or divorce.

The range of common effects of domestic abuse includes physical injury, poor health and a range of psychological difficulties. The effects on children who may witness the abuse, or who may be used in the abuse, are also recognised as including a range of forms of stress or fear, as well as the additional correlation between domestic abuse and child abuse.

THE PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGY

The Workplan of the Scottish Partnership on Domestic Abuse, which was approved on 27th October 1999, identified the areas on which the Partnership should focus during its operation. One of the key tasks identified within the Workplan was the development of a national strategy to tackle domestic abuse and to take the work forward in the future.

The purpose of the strategy is to address and prevent domestic abuse, and to identify the ways in which services should develop, as well as raising awareness of the nature of domestic abuse.

There is an urgent need for effective intervention strategies to prevent male violence against women and their children and to identify the best means of improving the responses of service providers in Scotland to women or children who experience domestic abuse. This includes recognising and addressing the specific issues facing particular groups of women/children, such as those from black and minority ethnic groups, disabled women/children, and those in rural areas. It also includes addressing the issues facing children and young people themselves. It is
also important to recognise the need to make provision which can address the needs of both women and children at a range of stages, some of whose needs may only come to light long after their experience of abuse.

THE AIMS OF THE STRATEGY

The ultimate goal of the strategy is clearly to take all practicable measures towards the elimination of domestic abuse, including a clear acknowledgement that responsibility for abuse lies firmly with the perpetrator. It is essential that action is taken against these perpetrators and that their behaviour is challenged and addressed through a range of means. The main concerns at present, however, must be with meeting the diverse needs of women or children in Scotland who experience abuse and with working towards the development of a society in which domestic abuse will not be tolerated. This includes reducing the incidence of domestic abuse, increasing the reporting and improving services.

THE AIMS OF THE STRATEGY ARE . . .

| Prevention | active prevention of domestic abuse of both women and children; |
| Protection  | appropriate legal protection for women or children who experience domestic abuse; |
| Provision   | adequate provision of support services for women/children. |

Women who are abused face a range of difficulties, including the problems created by the effects of the abuse upon them, worries about the effects of leaving on the children, fear of the abuser and the range of practical issues which must be addressed in order to leave permanently or even temporarily. Many women stay with their abuser, for a range of reasons.

All women or children who experience abuse must receive the support and services to enable them to identify their needs, to make choices and to have these needs addressed, as well as to participate in developing services to address their needs in the future. It should be recognised that children require services which meet their specific needs.
WHO IS THE STRATEGY AIMED AT?

The strategy does not aim to provide an exhaustive list of those who have a role in addressing domestic abuse. There is a need to recognise that a wide range of individuals and organisations have a part to play in this process, and that all have a responsibility to challenge male abuse.

There is a need for political direction to ensure that a clear and consistent message is provided, alongside a consistent approach to prevention of abuse and provision of services to both women and children. There is also a need for commitment and leadership (and continuing long term commitment) from senior decision makers across organisations involved in preventing and responding to abuse, including, for example, local authority Chief Executives, Chief Constables, Chairpersons of Health Boards, those involved in all aspects of the criminal justice process and a range of others. Members of the community at all levels also have a role in implementing the strategy.

The following service providers have been identified as those which are most likely to be involved in working to address domestic abuse or to meet the needs of women/children (although it is not intended that this list is exhaustive). These organisations may be required to undertake preventive work, to respond to women or children when they are experiencing abuse or when longer term effects become apparent subsequently, or to deal with the perpetrators of abuse:

- Women's Aid
- Benefits Agency
- Police
- Legal Professionals
- Social work services
- Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service
- Education services
- Other local authority departments
- Housing services
- Court services
- Health and medical services
- Scottish Prison Service
- Rape Crisis
- Scottish Children's Reporter Administration
- Other specialist voluntary organisations
THE FOUNDATIONS OF PROTECTION FOR WOMEN/CHILDREN

There are a number of relevant policies and legislation which impact upon the response to women or children experiencing domestic abuse, some of which are as follows:

- The United Nations General Assembly has established domestic abuse as a human rights issue;
- The fourth UN World Conference on Women in 1995 adopted a Global Platform for Action to improve the status of women world-wide, committing signatories to the development of plans to address violence against women;
- States have a duty, through the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, to take all the appropriate measures to protect a child from physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse;
- States must take measures to protect their citizens and legislation must be compatible with relevant European Human Rights Convention rights (although it has been recognised it is important to ensure that this legislation is used to protect women/children and not to enable the release of perpetrators of abuse);
- The Council of Europe is drafting a recommendation to member States for the protection of women and young girls against violence;
- Children who experience domestic abuse could be regarded as “children in need” under the Children (Scotland) Act;
- The UK government has expressed a commitment to tackling domestic abuse;
- The Scottish Executive recognises the links between violence and broader gender inequalities and a media campaign focuses on raising awareness of the issue.

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2 UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, 1993
3 The International Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 19
4 Human Rights Act 1998 s6-s8; European Convention on Human Rights 1950, Articles 2, 3, 5, 6, 8;
IT IS NOW RECOGNISED NATIONALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY THAT THERE IS A NEED TO TACKLE DOMESTIC ABUSE.

A number of service providers are involved in meeting the needs of women or children who experience domestic abuse in a range of ways, some of which are specified directly in legislation and guidelines. It is recognised that the role of these service providers is more complex than the provision which is specified in law and policy, but the following provides a brief overview of their involvement.

It is not intended to provide a full description of service provision, and this strategy does not explore the complex decisions which are required and the problems which organisations may face in translating legislation and guidance into practice. Further information in relation to the roles of each organisation and some of these issues can be obtained in the range of literature specified earlier.

Some of the ways in which organisations become involved in domestic abuse work, through the existence of statute or guidance, include the following:

- The police attend incidents, investigate alleged assaults, identify whether a crime has been committed and take action against perpetrators, as well as having a role in responding to breaches of legal orders and providing information on available services to women who experience abuse;

- Local authorities are involved in a range of ways, through the housing, social work and education services, and often corporately;

- Local authorities have certain statutory duties viz to ensure immediate accommodation is made available for occupation by people who become homeless, are not intentionally homeless and have a priority (e.g. pregnant women and those with children in their care). Where a person cannot remain in their home because it is probable that they will be subjected to violence then they are to be considered homeless. Local authorities also have power to and are being encouraged to transfer tenancies to abused women;

- Local authorities have a legal duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in need in their area, as well as to prepare and publish children’s services plans. The local authority (most usually the social work service) will be responsible for supervision where a child is placed under a supervision requirement by a children’s hearing and may also be involved where voluntary
measures are agreed with the Reporter. Social work services may also become involved in providing advice to both women and children (although they have no statutory remit for adult women who experience abuse). Some Criminal Justice teams undertake work with perpetrators of abuse (on a statutory basis where a court order is in place);

- Education staff can support children and can have a role in challenging attitudes, raising awareness of abuse and in the prevention of abuse. Women may also have contact with community-based education groups;

- Health services may be involved through a range of service providers. They may be involved in treating injuries, in the provision of emotional support and advice, in assisting women or children to gain access to other services and in providing evidence to support legal actions. Health services may also be involved in preventive work in relation to domestic abuse;

- Specialist organisations (particularly Women’s Aid, but including Rape Crisis, Victim Support, children’s and families’ organisations such as ChildLine Scotland, Children 1st, Family Mediation Scotland and a range of others) provide specialist support (such as, for example, housing, advice, information and emotional support). Family Mediation Scotland provides contact centres which may reduce the risk to children in contact with abusers (although the Partnership recognises Women’s Aid’s concern that there should not be automatic contact and that there may be a need for legislative change). The Zero Tolerance Charitable Trust undertakes a range of preventive and awareness raising work;

- Other organisations can include the Benefits Agency, legal professionals (legal actions, court orders, property settlements/issues of contact and residence), Procurators Fiscal and Crown Office (in prosecuting perpetrators), the judiciary (in civil and criminal actions, including orders for protection of children, such as the exclusion of abusers and non-harassment orders) the Scottish Children’s Reporter Administration (where there is a need for the care and protection of the children) and the Scottish Prison Service.
THE MAIN PROBLEMS IN TACKLING DOMESTIC ABUSE ARE . . .

- An overall response which has been inconsistent and largely unco-ordinated;
- Data which is not collected routinely nor in a standard format;
- A lack of shared action at a national or a local level;
- Constrained access to services for both women and children through a lack of information, confusion about service providers’ roles, inconsistent geographical provision, inconsistent funding and lack of funding, variations in application of resources, lack of consistent commitment from decision makers, the provision of responses which may be inappropriate, and a lack of overall co-ordination, training and monitoring.
THE ACTIONS NEEDED/THE ACTION PLAN

In order to address the aims set out at the start of the document, this strategy recommends an overall framework for action at both national and local levels.

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY Requires A CONTINUING COMMITMENT BY ALL OF THOSE INVOLVED IN PREVENTING AND ADDRESSING DOMESTIC ABUSE THROUGH CO-OPERATIVE WORKING AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THEIR POLICY AND PRACTICE TO MEET THE NEEDS OF BOTH WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

- POLICY AND LEGISLATION
  There has been a lack of a coherent overall approach to domestic abuse in Scotland and a growing recognition of the need to consider the nature and use of current legislation. Organisations use differing definitions of domestic abuse and many are unclear about their role in responding to domestic abuse. There is a need to develop clear policies and guidelines for all agencies involved in addressing the issue. There is also a need to ensure appropriate and effective legislation to tackle domestic abuse, to ensure the enforcement of existing legislation and to consider the need for new legislation.

- ACCESS TO SERVICES
  There is a need to ensure that all women or children who experience domestic abuse (including women/children who may face specific issues, as identified earlier, such as those facing women/children from black and minority ethnic groups, disabled women/children and women/children in rural areas, as well as other groups experiencing exclusion) are aware of, and have access to, a range of appropriate services and support to meet their needs. This should include provision in areas such as, for example, accommodation, finance, health, education, transport and emotional support.

- EDUCATION AND TRAINING
  Children and young people, adults, men and women, vary in their level of understanding of domestic abuse. The level of understanding also varies within and between agencies. There is a need to challenge and change attitudes which perpetuate domestic abuse, which cannot be tackled effectively without education and training.
• DATA COLLECTION AND INFORMATION
  There is a need to develop statistical information, undertake monitoring and consultation with women/children and draw information together, developing consistent methods of collection and systems alongside other initiatives. This should be done in conjunction with experts in the field and existing multi-agency groups, in order to develop a coherent picture of domestic abuse in Scotland to inform future work, and the information should be disseminated widely.

STRUCTURE FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND LINKS TO LOCAL WORK

Although the strategy and the details in the action plan focus particularly on the national developments which are seen to be required, it is clearly essential that developments at a local level also take place, and are consistent with this focus. These should be developed at a local level by the key organisations, working on a multi-agency basis.

It is envisaged that the structure for taking the work forward will be as follows:

• An overall national multi-agency group to consider violence against women;
• Specific issue-based working groups with co-opted experts for each issue;
• Local multi-agency groups (which already exist in many areas).

The national group will comprise a small number of experts to oversee strategic developments in relation to violence against women, including domestic abuse as a central part of the remit. It is envisaged that the group might include representatives of the voluntary sector, central government, local government, the law and the health sector, along with a member with expertise in finance. The group will meet three times a year and will have a role in considering and overseeing the overall direction and implementation of the work, as well as providing advice to officials and Ministers.

The issue-based working groups will comprise co-opted members identified for their expertise in a particular area of work. These will be time-limited groups that will take forward specific national work. The remit of these will vary and change, but might include at the start a group focusing on each of prevention, protection and provision. They will consult widely with local multi-agency groups as issues arise and will report back to the national strategic group.
The local multi agency groups will continue to be responsible for the development of local strategies and actions and for taking forward the work at a local level. Prior to each meeting of the national group, information will be gathered from each of the local multi-agency groups relating to current initiatives. This information will be summarised and circulated to all of the local groups in order to share good practice. The national group will also disseminate any other information that becomes available. Representatives of each local group will be brought together at a national seminar once a year, in order to review overall progress, highlight key issues and encourage networking. An annual report will also be provided on progress against the action plan.

This framework provides the overall context within which local areas should develop their own initiatives. Each local area should adopt this national strategy and definition of domestic abuse, as this will be essential for coherent work in the future. Local groups may also wish to consider the adoption of a remit to include the consideration of wider issues relating to violence against women, given the links between domestic abuse and other forms of violence against women which have been identified by the Partnership and the consequent broader remit which is proposed for the national group.

Local groups should also adopt and work to the good practice guidelines and service standards. Each area should develop its own local strategy and action plan which are consistent with this national approach, but which reflect the specific needs in the local area. Local policies should reflect the principles contained within the national strategy.

The detailed local work required is a matter for determination by the local groups and has not been specified within the strategy, except where it relates directly to national actions. Where actions that are specified do have implications for local areas, this has been identified in the action plan and will require further consideration as local strategies are developed.
REVIEWING THE STRATEGY

This strategy has identified key areas of work which are seen to be required to address domestic abuse in Scotland and should form the basis of work which is undertaken at a national level during the following three years, as well as helping to focus the actions in local areas upon those aspects of work which are considered to be essential to the development of services.

A number of outcome measures for reviewing the strategy have been identified and are suggested in the Action Plan.

THE MAIN MEASURES OF THE SUCCESS OF THIS STRATEGY WILL BE TO REDUCE THE LEVELS OF UNMET NEED FOR SERVICES AND TO IMPROVE THE EXPERIENCES OF WOMEN OR CHILDREN SEEKING SUPPORT WHEN THEY EXPERIENCE DOMESTIC ABUSE AND, ULTIMATELY, TO REDUCE THE INCIDENCE OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

In many ways, however, the success of this strategy may be identified, in the shorter term, by an increase in the level of service use, as more women/children become aware of the support which is available and are enabled to use services.

This strategy will enable further developments in preventive work and service provision in relation to domestic abuse in the coming years.

The Partnership has established priorities for action, but has not specifically costed each, as this will require expertise outwith the membership. It is recommended that Ministers should take the costing forward with an appropriate financial advisor.

The Partnership recognises that these actions and priorities will have significant cost implications. Members believe that these costs must be considered against the current high cost of violence against women to the government, local services and other organisations and that the assessment of costs and benefits will demonstrate the value of tackling such violence.

The remainder of this document presents the Action Plan which will translate the Strategy into action through a number of key initiatives to address domestic abuse.
POLICY AND LEGISLATION

In relation to policy and legislation, there is a need for . . .

Immediate Actions

Establishment of initial structure

• The development of a national group. Scot Exec.

Adoption of strategy/approach to domestic abuse

• The development of consistent Ministerial direction, adopting the strategy and definition of domestic abuse contained within this document; Ministers; Parliament.

• The adoption by organisations of the definition of domestic abuse and policy statement contained within this document; Scot Exec/Nat orgs; Local orgs.

• The adoption by Ministers and organisations of a primary prevention approach to policy development in recognition of the need to address the root causes of violence against women. National group; Working groups; Scot Exec/Nat orgs; Local auths/orgs.

Year 1 Actions

Further development of the structure

• The development of issue-based working groups at a national level (identified by the national group) to explore particular issues, undertake consultation with local experts and report back to the national group. National group; Working groups; Local auths/orgs.
**Year 1 Actions (continued)**

**Development of networks, links and procedures**

- The development of a network of local multi-agency groups, to provide integrated services, each with a local strategy consistent with the national strategy and based on an audit of local services and needs; Local auths/orgs.

- The development of links between local groups and the national group through information sharing and dissemination of good practice. National group; Local auths/orgs.

**Specific initiatives**

- The review of all current legislative provision relating to domestic abuse; National group; Working group.

- The development and circulation of good practice guidelines and service standards and their adoption by public, private and voluntary sector organisations across the country. National group; Working group; Scot Exec/Nat orgs; Local auths/orgs.

**Ongoing and Subsequent Actions (Years 1-3)**

**Development of links to other areas of work**

- The national group to continue to provide a means of consideration of the development of further relevant policy and legislation relating to domestic abuse in the future, and the continuing involvement of the national group in making recommendations in relation to work with women who have experienced domestic abuse and work with perpetrators of abuse; National group.
**Ongoing and Subsequent Actions (Years 1-3) (continued)**

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**Ongoing and Subsequent Actions (Years 1-3) (continued)**

- The consideration of domestic abuse in relation to new central and local policies as these develop, with expert comment sought and provided in relation to other relevant service reviews (such as, for example, mental health, child protection, lifelong learning, substance use, homelessness, criminal justice services, health etc) and a commitment to the incorporation of domestic abuse to these strategies;

- The consideration of domestic abuse in service planning, ongoing Scot Exec/Nat orgs; community planning, best value and other public performance Local auths/orgs. monitoring and the development of work which is consistent with the focus of this strategy;

- The development of links to work to enable women to seek employment.

**Development of specific initiatives**

- The development and implementation of coherent policies to tackle domestic abuse which are consistent with the focus of this strategy;

- The promotion and enforcement of an effective legislative framework concerning violence against women;

- The consideration of the resource implications of new legislation and the implications for other aspects of policy/legislation;

- The provision of information in relation to the implications of legislation/policy developments to the statutory, voluntary and private sectors;

- The development and dissemination of service-specific guidance relating to domestic abuse.
## ACCESS TO SERVICES

In relation to access to services, there is a need for . . .

### Immediate Actions

**Resources**

- The identification, by key organisations, of resources to allow service developments.

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### Year 1 Actions

**Analysis of need/provision**

- Review of the COSLA recommendations for refuge spaces and how far they have been met, analysis and revision if required;

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- Review of the recommendations for Rape Crisis provision and how far they have been met, analysis and revision if required;

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- The development of a clear understanding of the needs of specific groups (children and young people, disabled women/children, women/children in black and minority ethnic groups and women/children in rural areas).

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### Priority service developments

- The development of transit accommodation for women/children who leave in an emergency and who require short term support;

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- The development of immediate and appropriate housing to women/children who are homeless because of domestic abuse or threat of violence;

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- The provision of the required level of refuge spaces to meet the needs of the population, recognising the diversity of needs and meeting the needs of disabled women/children and women/children from black and minority ethnic groups;

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### Priority service developments (continued)

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<td>• The provision of adequate outreach and children’s support services;</td>
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<td>• The provision of refuge and other services to meet the needs of women</td>
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<td>who may not currently have access to provision, including women using</td>
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<td>drugs or alcohol, lesbian women, women from travelling communities,</td>
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<td>women with learning disabilities, older women, women working as</td>
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<td>prostitutes and women with mental health problems;</td>
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<td>• The provision of mainstream housing, as required, to meet the needs of</td>
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<td>women/children experiencing domestic abuse, and the provision of a</td>
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<td>range of housing to meet the needs of women at various stages,</td>
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<td>including provision to allow them to remain in their homes;</td>
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<td>• The provision of services which enable women/children to disclose that</td>
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<td>they have experienced domestic abuse, recognising the constraints for</td>
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<td>some groups in seeking help;</td>
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<td>• The endorsement, through the Scottish Forum of Public Sector</td>
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<td>Interpreting and Translation services, of the need for development of a</td>
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<td>network of community interpreting and translation facilities at a local</td>
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<td>level throughout Scotland and the provision of resources to allow</td>
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### Development of information to service users

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<td>• The development of specific information to women/children experiencing</td>
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<td>domestic abuse in relation to the services which are available to them;</td>
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<td>• The provision of the information produced in a range of formats and</td>
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<td>languages, at a range of venues, and the availability of interpreters, as</td>
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**Development of understanding / good practice**

- The dissemination and adoption of good practice guidelines and service standards.

**Ongoing and Subsequent Actions (Years 1-3)**

**Continuing service developments**

- The identification of local needs and services to meet these needs;
- The identification of the needs of specific groups and consideration of these needs in the development of strategies and services, policy, legislation and practice;
- The provision of support for the development of outreach and follow-on work and specialist services to meet the needs of particular groups;
- The provision of a range of emotional and practical services to women/children by the service providers detailed on page 4 (e.g. counselling services, crèche services, children’s workers and the organisations’ main provision);
- The provision of support to women whose partners are participating in programmes for abusive men;
- The provision of support to women who stay with abusive partners;
- The provision of support to employees experiencing domestic abuse within service providers;
- The provision of support to vulnerable witnesses, where women or children who experience abuse are involved in the justice system;
- The development of improvements to the speed of the justice process.

**Responsibility**

- National group.
- Local auths/orgs.
- Ministers/Parlt; Scot Exec/Nat orgs; Local auths/orgs.
- Scot Exec/Nat orgs; Local auths/orgs.
- Nat orgs/local auths/ local orgs.
- Nat orgs; Local auths/orgs.
- Nat orgs; Local auths/orgs.
- Scot Exec/Nat orgs; Local auths/orgs.
- Nat orgs/ local orgs.
- Nat orgs.
Provision of information to service users

- The promotion of the Domestic Abuse Helpline to all areas, with the involvement of local groups;
- The dissemination of information to women/children experiencing domestic abuse who need information on access to support services;

Responsibility
- Scot Exec; National group.
- Scot Exec; National group.

Monitoring of access to services / impact of initiatives

- The monitoring of the Domestic Abuse Service Development Fund, and assessment of the impact upon improving local provision;
- The monitoring and review of the Domestic Abuse Helpline as an initial source of information and advice for women or children experiencing domestic abuse (taking account of the fact that not all callers have English as their first language, assessing the accessibility of the helpline to disabled women/children and assessing the ability of the helpline to support children and young people).

Responsibility
- Scot Exec; Working group; National group.
- Scot Exec; Working group; National group.

Development of good practice / understanding

- The provision of support/advice to service providers to identify domestic abuse with women seeking their provision;
- The provision of support and advice to specific services to enable them to meet the needs of women or children using their provision (e.g. women in prison, Scottish Children’s Reporter Administration);
- The development of links between services with a remit for domestic abuse, other services (e.g. transport) and specialist services with particular expertise in this area;
- The provision of support and advice to local multi-agency groups and the collation and dissemination of information from, and to, these groups.

Responsibility
- National group; Scot Exec/Nat orgs; Local auths/orgs.
- National group.
- Scot Exec/Nat orgs; Local auths/orgs.
- National group.
EDUCATION AND TRAINING

In relation to education and training, there is a need for . . .

Immediate Actions

Strategic development

• The development of a national prevention strategy rooted in primary prevention and making links between different forms of violence against women/children.

Year 1 Actions

Campaigning/awareness raising

• The development of general public awareness-raising through a widespread media campaign and the recognition of the role of the media in the prevention of domestic abuse;

• The development of local awareness work consistent with the national focus.

Training initiatives

• The provision of training to policy makers and senior practitioners at a national level, recognising the need to consider and address attitudes to domestic abuse.

Work in schools/work with young people

• The encouragement and development of domestic abuse work with pre and primary school children;

• The involvement of specialist organisations in training of teachers and work with children and young people in schools;
• The development of curriculum materials relating to domestic abuse for all sectors of pre-school and formal education and of training materials for use with all staff in pre-school and school provision; Scot Exec; National group; Working group; Local auths.

• The development of teaching programmes in relation to domestic abuse as an integral part of Personal and Social Development programmes in pre-school provision and schools, linked to current teaching themes relating to personal safety programmes, gender and equality issues, Respect for others and violence is preventable programmes; Local auths/orgs.

• The development of resources for work with young people excluded from mainstream education which is deliverable in a range of settings, and the development of such work; Scot Exec/Nat orgs; Local auths/orgs.

• The development of preventive work with young men and young women. Scot Exec/Nat orgs; Local auths/orgs.

Ongoing and Subsequent Actions (Years 1-3) Responsibility

Development of training

• The provision of in-service training for staff, including multi-agency and service-specific training recognising the need to consider and address attitudes to domestic abuse; Scot Exec/Nat orgs; Local auths/orgs.

• The development of local multi agency training strategies which reflect the range of staff and their differing roles and responsibilities; Local auths/orgs.

• The involvement of specialist organisations such as Women’s Aid in training wherever possible; Scot Exec/Nat orgs; Local auths/orgs.

• The provision of advice in relation to the identification of training providers and awareness raising materials, building on previous successes through contact with organisations such as Zero Tolerance to ensure the use of appropriately designed and tested materials; Working group; National group.
- The inclusion of training relating to domestic abuse within professional qualifications and the recognition of domestic abuse in other forms of training, including equalities training;

- The provision of support and advice to service providers (including the public, private and voluntary sectors and particularly those detailed in the strategy) to develop training for staff at all levels, including frontline staff, in accordance with the good practice guidelines and including awareness of legislation, the needs of specific groups, support to women/children and the role of other agencies;

- The development of specific guidance and training for workers in the criminal justice system, including Advocates Depute, Procurators Fiscal, the judiciary and those involved with the children’s hearing system;

- The analysis of ongoing training needs and provision of continuing training.

**Work with men**

- The development of preventive work with all men;

- The development of preventive and crisis work with abusive men, reflecting the overall perspective of the strategy that domestic abuse is viewed as criminal behaviour, whether or not it is reported, and is not an illness requiring therapeutic intervention;

- The continued development of mandatory programmes dealing with men who commit violent offences against their partners, in line with best practice, recognising that by so doing the needs of both women and children are taken as paramount;

- The further development of voluntary programmes for those abusive men who are not dealt with through mandatory supervision under criminal justice processes, in line with best practice, recognising that by so doing the needs of both women and children are taken as paramount;

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• The recognition, in the development of work with abusive men, of the severity and nature of the crime and the fact that not all abuse is reported as a crime; Nat orgs; Local auths/orgs.

• The recognition, in the development of work with abusive men, of the cultural and religious needs of men of black and minority ethnic origin, whilst holding to the principle that domestic abuse is never acceptable; Nat orgs; Local auths/orgs.

• The provision of support and advice to local areas in relation to the development of work with perpetrators of abuse at all stages, and the dissemination of good practice information in relation to work with abusive men which recognises that responsibility for violence against women rests with the perpetrators who have the capacity to change. National group.
DATA COLLECTION AND INFORMATION

In relation to data collection and information, there is a need for . . .

**Immediate Actions**

*Establishment of structure*

- The identification of an appropriate structure for data collection; National group.
- The adoption, at a local level, of the national definition of domestic abuse. Local auths/orgs.

*Year 1 Actions*

*Identification of mechanisms*

- The development of an overall national framework and national guidance for the collection, analysis and dissemination of meaningful data, which ensures maximum relevance to the users; National group; Working group; Local auths/orgs.
- The development of mechanisms for feedback of information from local areas in relation to the development of new initiatives; National group; Working group; Local auths/orgs.
- The development of a means of feedback from, and participation of, women/children in Scotland at a national level. National group; Working group.

*Development of good practice*

- The inclusion, where possible, of the views of both women and children in data collection; National group; Working group; Local auths/orgs.
- The provision of support and advice to local areas in terms of the development of consultation with, and participation of, women/children; National group.
- The dissemination of guidance to local areas in relation to the statistical information which should be gathered in relation to domestic abuse and the development of appropriate data collection tools. National group; Working group.
### Ongoing and Subsequent Actions (Years 1-3)

#### Development of data collection practice

- The identification of feedback from, and participation of, women/children at a local level, and the development of consultation with specific groups; **Responsibility:** Local auths/orgs.

- The collection and collation of information from local areas by gender, ethnic group and disability; **Responsibility:** Local auths/orgs.

- The collection of data which is consistent with other data collection relating to violence against women; **Responsibility:** Scot Exec/Nat orgs; Local auths/orgs.

- The provision of suggestions to others involved in other forms of data collection, in relation to types of data which may inform domestic abuse work (e.g. child protection data; education data relating to abuse such as the gender of known/suspected abusers and whether domestic abuse featured in “category of abuse”). **Responsibility:** National group; Working group.

#### Research/evaluation

- Evaluation of the means of service provision and the quality of services provided to those experiencing domestic abuse; **Responsibility:** Working group; National group; Scot Exec/Nat orgs; Local auths/orgs.

- The evaluation of domestic abuse training which has been undertaken; **Responsibility:** Scot Exec/Nat orgs; Local auths/orgs.

- The provision of advice and collection of information required for the review of the strategy; **Responsibility:** Working group; Scot Exec/Nat orgs; Local auths/orgs.

- The identification of further research priorities and the dissemination of the findings; **Responsibility:** National group.
• The completion of research initiatives and national surveys.  

National group; Scot Exec.

**Analysis and dissemination of information**

• The collection and collation of information from local areas in relation to the level of use of services as a requirement of service provision;  

Local auths/orgs.

• The dissemination of statistical information/data relating to the use of services, which is freely available to national and local organisations and those with an interest in this area;  

National group.

• The consideration of the findings from all of the data sources, and the use of these to inform the development of further services/recommendations.  

National group.
The Strategy will be reviewed at the end of a three-year period (2003). Local strategies should also be reviewed to provide some of the supporting evidence from their own areas, and to feed this into the national process. In addition to assessing work undertaken in relation to the actions identified, a number of outcome measures will be used at this stage, where available, for the national strategy, including both quantitative and qualitative measures.

Quantitative measures

- the reported incidence of domestic abuse (using civil and criminal statistics);
- the levels of prosecution and conviction of perpetrators and re-offending rates;
- the number of homelessness applications from women fleeing violence;
- the level of use of the helpline;
- the level of service use in relation to domestic abuse;
- the level of service provision in local areas;
- the number of fully accessible refuges;
- the number of requests for translated information and information in other formats;
- the number of schools developing work;
- the level of funding provided to new and existing domestic abuse projects and the development of new initiatives across Scotland;
- the overall level of resource provision and sources of provision to domestic abuse work;
- the existence of local multi-agency working, local strategies and action plans.

Qualitative measures

- perceptions of both women and children in relation to the services available;
- users’ experiences of services used and the process of service use;
- perceptions of both women and children of the strategy;
- perceptions of unmet need;
- service providers’ perceptions of domestic abuse;
- public awareness of, and attitudes to domestic abuse;
- the findings of evaluation of funded projects;
- the findings of local strategy reviews;
- evidence of mainstreaming of domestic abuse work, where developments in other policy/services include consideration of this issue;
- evidence relating to progress on work to address other forms of violence against women;
- the development of change in relation to each of the actions identified in the strategy as required.
GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES

THE PURPOSE OF THE GUIDELINES

A range of services throughout Scotland have a role in the prevention of domestic abuse and are likely to have contact with women or children who experience domestic abuse. These guidelines are aimed at service providers, to assist in developing a consistent approach to domestic abuse in Scotland.

It is essential to ensure that the actions taken by service providers are appropriate and relevant to the needs of both women and children, and the aim of these guidelines, prepared by the Scottish Partnership on Domestic Abuse, is to try to ensure consistency in the work carried out and the quality of the service provision which is made. The information within the guidelines should assist in addressing some of the existing variation.

The provision of appropriate services is only one element of our strategy to tackle domestic abuse in Scotland, and the range of actions seen to be required are detailed in the National Strategy and Action Plan produced by the Partnership, in which it is made clear that there is a need for prevention, protection and provision in the response which develops. Many of these guidelines reflect the Action Plan, and should be considered in conjunction with the work identified in the plan.

The principles which are contained within the guidelines have been prepared to be generally applicable to all services which may be involved in playing a part in the prevention of abuse and responding to women or children who experience abuse. They cover good practice in a range of work, from the formulation of policy to tackle domestic abuse to the actual delivery of services.

Individual service providers are also encouraged to develop these guidelines to reflect the specific provision which they make.

The overall aims of service providers should be to work to prevent domestic abuse and to meet the needs of women or children who experience domestic abuse, by challenging the structures and attitudes which perpetuate and support abuse and empowering women/children to take control of their lives. There are a number of ways in which services can ensure that their work is consistent with these aims.

The following guidelines should be followed by all service providers:
STRUCTURE AND ORGANISATION

The development of links between service providers in planning their provision and in responding to the needs of women or children who experience domestic abuse is vital. Services should:

- Develop a multi-agency group in each local area to oversee the identification of local needs and the development of an area approach, to facilitate collaboration and co-ordination and to take a proactive role in the development of new initiatives, based upon the COSLA guidelines in relation to this;

- Ensure that participants are clear about the co-ordination of the group and the structure of multi-agency working in the area;

- Participate in networking and information sharing through the group at a local level, as well as at a national level;

- Encourage commitment to and attendance at the group, with the adoption of clear aims, objectives and policies for the group;

- Ensure that all relevant organisations are included in the group, with the active involvement of policy makers and practitioners, and the provision of support at a senior level. A core group should include the local authority, police, housing, NHS trust/primary care, social work, legal organisations and key groups working with women or children (particularly Women’s Aid, which should have a central role in the process, but also other voluntary and community organisations);

- Identify resources for the group and ensure the provision of administrative or development support if possible;

- Undertake initiatives through the group and evaluate the work which is carried out on a regular basis, ensuring that there is regular contact with both women and children who have experienced domestic abuse;

- Identify the appropriate organisations for specific issues which arise and work co-operatively with these organisations;

- Develop links to other corporate planning structures and encourage their consideration of domestic abuse;

- Develop links with the national group through which expertise and information can be shared.
POLICY/SERVICE PLANNING

It is important that the services, which are provided, are within an overall policy framework that states clearly the nature of the issue and provides a means of identifying and addressing needs. Services should:

- Adopt the national definition of domestic abuse prepared by the Scottish Partnership on Domestic Abuse;
- Develop a statement of policy in relation to domestic abuse which is consistent with the National Strategy but reflects the local circumstances;
- Display the policy statement;
- Address the actions identified in detail in the National Strategy and Action Plan;
- Recognise the importance of a primary prevention approach to tackling domestic abuse;
- Carry out an audit of needs of women/children experiencing domestic abuse in the local area;
- Identify gaps in local services and priorities for local service delivery in relation to domestic abuse and identify means of meeting any outstanding needs;
- Recognise and address the specific needs of particular groups of women/children, such as women/children in rural areas, disabled women/children and women/children from black and minority ethnic groups;
- Recognise and address the specific needs of children and young people;
- Recognise and define the links between domestic abuse work and other areas of work, such as women’s safety, community planning, community safety, health, criminal justice and other areas;
- Prepare a local strategy and action plan which are consistent with the National Strategy.
TRAINING

The level of understanding of domestic abuse amongst staff can have a key role in the prevention of abuse. The response of individual staff to women or children who experience domestic abuse and their level of understanding of the issue can affect not only the quality of the service, but also the subsequent experiences of the women/children. Services should:

- Ensure that a programme of staff training is developed in relation to domestic abuse which includes the need for practitioners to challenge their own attitudes;
- Provide basic awareness raising to all staff in relation to domestic abuse;
- Provide in-depth training to those staff who are most likely to have contact with women or children experiencing domestic abuse, covering factual awareness of the nature and scope of domestic abuse, attitudinal awareness and knowledge of other agencies;
- Participate in multi-agency training, but provide service specific training to complement this;
- Ensure that the training is provided on an ongoing basis and is updated regularly to address practice;
- Consider the use of specialist organisations (for example, Women’s Aid, Zero Tolerance, Rape Crisis, Women’s Support Project, Shakti, Open Secret) for the provision of training (in conjunction, where appropriate, with in-house training providers);
- Consider the use of materials which are recommended by specialist organisations;
- Evaluate the quality and impact of training.

EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

Those involved in addressing domestic abuse should also recognise that staff within the organisation may perpetrate or experience domestic abuse. Services should:

- Develop a domestic abuse policy as part of the human resources function of the organisation;
- Undertake preventive work with employees and participate in primary prevention initiatives;
• Recognise that employees may experience domestic abuse and provide appropriate support to them;

• Ensure that working practices allow those experiencing domestic abuse access to the support which they require (confidentiality, provision of time to attend appointments, flexible arrangements etc);

• Recognise the inclusion of this provision as part of the promotion of equality in the workplace;

• Publicise the availability of support;

• Recognise that the workforce will include perpetrators of domestic abuse;

• Undertake awareness raising with staff in relation to the actions which they can take and publicise the domestic abuse policy;

• Participate in wider initiatives to prevent and address domestic abuse.

SERVICE DELIVERY

The actual means of delivery of services to women and children who experience domestic abuse is a key aspect of the response which is provided.

In terms of information and awareness, services should:

• Ensure that service providers are clear in relation to their own roles in responding to domestic abuse;

• Develop an understanding of the roles of other organisations in meeting needs;

• Undertake proactive publicity to inform women/children who experience domestic abuse, and other members of the community, about the roles of service providers;

• Develop an understanding of the diverse needs which women or children may have;

• Recognise and understand child protection issues.
In terms of their approach, services should:

- Recognise the difficulties which women or children may face in disclosing domestic abuse and the specific difficulties in disclosure faced by some groups (such as disabled women/children and women/children from black and minority ethnic groups) and develop ways of encouraging disclosure;

- Ask questions which will allow women or children to disclose domestic abuse and never avoid the issue if domestic abuse is suspected;

- Make it clear to both women and children that domestic abuse is taken seriously, that they are not responsible for the abuse, that they are not alone in being abused and that they will be believed;

- Provide reassurance and make it clear that the service will help;

- Focus on allowing women/children to identify their needs, recognise that some women will stay, some will wish to exclude the perpetrator and some may leave, and avoid making assumptions or judgements about what they should do;

- Provide a means of identifying the specific needs of children.

In terms of access, services should:

- Make it clear that it is possible to see a female member of staff;

- Make available culturally diverse staff and staff who have participated in domestic abuse training;

- Provide a quiet and private space for discussion with the women or children;

- Provide facilities for childcare to allow discussion with women alone;

- Provide the service in a building which is physically accessible to women/children with a range of needs, including wheelchair users;

- Make sign language and other interpreters available as required and never use a member of the family to provide interpreting support.
In terms of confidentiality, services should:

- Clarify how confidentiality will be maintained, explain fully (prior to the discussion) if any information requires to be shared, and ensure that women/children understand the parameters of confidentiality;

- See women or children alone to allow the opportunity for disclosure (except where the assistance of an independent interpreter is required);

- Recognise the difficulties in bringing women or children together with the perpetrator and recognise that contact may not always be appropriate or desirable;

- Never divulge the address or other information about the women or children to the perpetrator, and recognise the need to protect a refuge address.

In terms of their own provision, services should:

- Meet any short term needs for safety/emergency provision or identify another organisation which can do this;

- Recognise that some women may wish to have access to records to support a court action, and document, accurately and with as much detail as possible, the contact with women or children experiencing domestic abuse including details of any injuries observed;

- Provide access to the services required and inform women/children about other services which can help, including specialist provision for specific groups;

- Recognise that women may not always leave a perpetrator and provide information about how to contact the service again;

- Provide a named contact;

- Undertake follow up work as identified and required;

- Recognise and respect that some will wish no further contact with the service, and always check before making contact by letter or telephone;

- Develop service-specific guidelines.
INFORMATION AND AWARENESS RAISING

As well as providing appropriate services, it is important that women/children in the area are aware of the services which can provide support and the ways in which they can make contact. Services should:

• Develop information about the service which can be provided and make this available to women and children in the local community;

• Make it clear that the service can support women or children experiencing domestic abuse and encourage women/children to use the provision;

• Display information relating to domestic abuse, including contact telephone numbers;

• Provide the information in a range of formats and languages to meet the needs of all women/children;

• Participate in local initiatives to develop awareness raising in relation to domestic abuse and to develop awareness raising of the involvement of that service;

• Develop information to men as perpetrators to continually reinforce their role and responsibility in relation to domestic abuse.

PREVENTIVE WORK

The development of preventive work is a key aspect of addressing domestic abuse and violence against women, and it is important that providers of services (along with other organisations and individuals in Scotland) focus not only upon responding to the needs of women/children who seek support, but in preventing violence against women or children. Services should:

• Undertake primary prevention work which is consistent with the National Strategy and national prevention strategy as this develops;

• Recognise and define male violence as a social problem, rooted in broader gender inequality and linked to male abuse of power and undertake general awareness raising work with children, young people and adults which challenges attitudes which support and perpetuate male violence;
• Examine the structure of the service and seek means of service provision which do not support male violence by perpetrating inequality;
• Consider and address the implications of new policy developments on tackling existing inequality and challenging domestic abuse;
• Address the cultural attitudes amongst staff which support male violence;
• Recognise the links between male violence and other policy areas and recognise the need to work with other services to address the issue.

EVALUATION AND MONITORING
The collection of information and feedback in relation to service needs and provision is also a key aspect of good practice in responding to women or children who experience domestic abuse. Services should:

• Develop a means of consultation with and feedback from both women and children who use the services provided;
• Develop a means of benchmarking provision against service standards;
• Collect statistical information relating to the use of services by women/children experiencing domestic abuse, including their use by women/children in specific groups;
• Collate and analyse the information gathered and use this to inform the development of services in the future;
• Provide summary information to allow comparison at a national level in the context of a national framework and national advice;
• Regularly review the service provided against the service standards and guidelines developed by the Scottish Partnership on Domestic Abuse.
SERVICE STANDARDS

These service standards have been prepared in order to identify the basic aspects of services which should be provided, through services working together, which should be available to women or children who experience domestic abuse. It is envisaged that these are the standards which areas should work towards and which should be displayed publicly when they can be met.

SERVICE STANDARDS FOR WOMEN/CHILDREN EXPERIENCING DOMESTIC ABUSE

Women or children in this area who experience domestic abuse have a right to expect that . . .

- Services will be provided in accordance with recognised good practice;
- Services will be provided to meet the specific needs of particular groups of women or children, including women/children in rural areas, disabled women/children and women/children from black and minority ethnic groups;
- Specific support will be provided to meet children’s needs;
- Refuge places will be made available to all of those who require these;
- Specific outreach support will be available to all of those who require this;
- Access to specific support will be available on a 24 hour basis;
- Information will be provided relating to services which are available in this area, and will be provided in a range of formats;
- Women/children will have access to staff who understand domestic abuse, who have received training and who can provide an appropriate response;
- Domestic abuse will always be taken seriously and, in providing services to women or children who allege that they have experienced domestic abuse, it will be presumed that they have experienced domestic abuse;
• Emergency needs for safety will be met immediately or assistance provided in identifying a service which can meet these needs;

• Appropriate support will be provided by the service in a sensitive and understanding manner;

• Women/children will be seen alone, without the perpetrator;

• Where a service cannot be provided, women or children will be referred to another service, or will be provided with the information to allow them to make contact with another service;

• Services will be provided on a confidential basis, the need for privacy respected and women/children will always be informed where information will be shared;

• Women or children can request a female member of staff and to be seen in a quiet and private space;

• Facilities will be provided for childcare to allow discussion with women alone;

• Services will be provided in buildings which are physically accessible to women and children with a range of needs, including wheelchair users, and where buildings are not currently accessible, arrangements will be made for other forms of provision;

• Sign language and other interpreters will be made available, as required;

• A named contact will be provided within the service;

• Information will be provided in terms of actions taken and outcomes;

• Appropriate records will be kept relating to the contact with women/children which they can use where there is a need for evidence;

• The views of women/children who have experienced domestic abuse will be sought in the development of services to address domestic abuse.
Further copies of this Strategy can be obtained from:

The Scottish Executive
Crime Prevention Unit
CB 2-4, Saughton House
Broomhouse Drive, Edinburgh EH11 3XD

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