



Violence Against Women and Girls

Public Engagement

Strategy, Insight and Engagement

March 2023

Purpose and Objectives

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To examine how best Police Scotland can play its part in ending violence against women and girls through:

- Understanding the lived experience of survivors, victims and witnesses of violence;
- Identifying the barriers to reporting violence and user needs; and
- Establishing opportunities and next steps for learning, strategy development and service design.

Engagement Approach

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The way we carry out engagement is important for creating a safe, open and empowering experience for participants to share their stories. This helps to remove barriers and build trust and confidence.

Our engagement has been positively received by the organisations we collaborated with, particularly due to the methods and tone used. This was echoed by participants, who valued the opportunity to share their experiences. The engagement opportunities were shared on social media by over 60 organisations.

Participants shared how they felt our approach, and the opportunity to share their experiences, had a positive impact on their view of the police and allowed them to feel heard – ‘research as therapy’.

Engagement Overview

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Trauma-informed and survivor centred engagement co-created and piloted with subject matter experts

- LGBT Youth Scotland
- Scottish Women's Autism Network (SWAN)
- Glasgow Caledonian University
- Scottish Women's Aid
- Hemat Gryffe Women's Aid

Storytelling platform

Safe and private space for survivors and witnesses to share their lived experience in their own words. 135 people shared their stories.

95% were women, 1% were men and 1% were non-binary.

Ideas platform

32 ideas for change were shared on the [Dialogue platform](#).

Focus groups with 17 survivors and Scottish Women's Aid employees
Including BAME women

Depth interviews with 13 survivors.
Including women with Autism

Conversation Cafes with 47 men
Dundee, Edinburgh, Perth, Arbroath, Lanarkshire and Stenhousemuir



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**Using Citizen Space to create a safe environment for
survivors to share their stories**

Citizen Space: Your Stories of VAWG



Online engagement activities were conducted to understand the experiences of those who had experienced and witnessed violence.

Part One: Tell us your story

Thank you for choosing to share your story with us.

You do not have to answer any questions you don't want to and you can provide as little or as much information as you feel comfortable sharing.

Below are some prompts for you to think about when telling us your story:

- Think about a time(s) when you have experienced violence or felt uncomfortable in a private, public, online or virtual space.
- You might have experienced behaviour that was violent, misogynistic, sexual, controlling, harassment or stalking.
- Where were you and what happened?

We know that for many people there may be many times you have experienced or witnessed violence. You can choose to tell us about one time or multiple times, it's up to you.

Part Two: What happened next?

You do not have to answer any questions you don't want to and you can provide as little or as much information as you feel comfortable sharing.

Below are some prompts for you to think about when telling us your story:

- Thinking about your experience(s), did you report this to the police?
- If you did report this, how did you feel about the response you got from the police?
- If you didn't feel able to report this, could you tell us more?

Our storytelling space allowed experiences to be shared in as much or as little detail as participants felt comfortable.

Prompts were provided to guide the process, but participants made the decision to share what they felt comfortable.

The prompts used for each of the four sections are displayed.

Citizen Space: Your Stories of VAWG



135 people shared their stories with us.

These responses were rich in detail and were gathered in a way that allowed participants to decide for themselves what they shared.

We collaborated with organisations like Scottish Women's Aid to ensure the language and tone of this approach was appropriate for survivors of violence against women and girls.

The storytelling space also provided participants with the opportunity to sign up to participate in one of our depth interviews or focus groups.

Part Three: Feelings and impact

You do not have to answer any questions you don't want to and you can provide as little or as much information as you feel comfortable sharing.

Below are some prompts for you to think about when telling us your story:

- How did this make you feel?
- In what ways did this affect you and your life?

Part Four: Future solutions

You do not have to answer any questions you don't want to and you can provide as little or as much information as you feel comfortable sharing.

Below are some prompts for you to think about when telling us your story:

- In the future, what do you hope would be different?
- For example, with the police or anything else relevant to you?

Part One: Tell us your story

Thank you for choosing to share your story with us.

You do not have to answer any questions you don't want to and you can provide as little or as much information as you feel comfortable sharing.

Below are some prompts for you to think about when telling us your story:

- Think about a time(s) when you have experienced violence or felt uncomfortable in a private, public, online or virtual space.
- You might have experienced behaviour that was violent, misogynistic, sexual, controlling, harassment or stalking.
- Where were you and what happened?

We know that for many people there may be many times you have experienced or witnessed violence. You can choose to tell us about one time or multiple times, it's up to you.



► [Support Information](#)

In your own words, please describe your answer below.

Inclusive Design

- Co-created approach Scottish Women's Aid, their 'Survivor Reference Group', grassroots leaders representing Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities and the Scottish Women's Autism Network to ensure engagement was accessible, trauma-informed and non-stigmatising.
- All engagement activities were available in British Sign Language (BSL) and Easy Read.



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Using Dialogue to share ideas for change

Dialogue: Ideas for Change

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Violence Against Women & Girls: Your Ideas for Change

See All Ideas

+ Add an Idea

What is this Challenge all about?

Police Scotland is committed to keeping everyone in Scotland's diverse communities safe. We are developing a strategy setting out what we will do, and how we will do it, to respond to violence against women and girls. The strategy will contribute to our mission, keeping people safe.

We want to work with the people of Scotland to identify what will make a difference and play our part in wider societal efforts to make Scotland a safe place for everyone. We are not seeking to exclude men, but we recognise that women and girls are disproportionately affected by [particular forms of violence](#) that they experience because they are women and girls.

Police Scotland [develops strategies](#) to guide our work to improve the safety and wellbeing of people, places and communities.

Watch the video

In this video, Assistant Chief Constable Bex Smith introduces this work and why it is important for us hear your ideas.



We utilised the Dialogue platform to allow participants to submit an **idea** or **rate** and **comment** on existing ones relating to how we tackle violence against women and girls.

This ensured we could seek views from everyone to understand what individuals and communities think is important for us to consider.

Some ideas were “**seeded**” based on discussions from stakeholder seminars hosted by Police Scotland and key partners.

- The engagement was accessible in British Sign Language (BSL) translation formats.
- Due to the sensitive nature of the topic, users were signposted to a support service they could contact if they needed emotional support.
- It was made clear that the platform was not for reporting crime, providing information about an incident, or asking for help.

Dialogue: Ideas for Change

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How can we make
Scotland a safe
place for women
and girls?

Share your ideas and
stories to help shape
our strategy.



We wanted to gather 'ideas for change' as part of the public engagement process, inviting wider discussion and a space for everyone to take a creative approach to problem solving.

We wanted to hear from our communities and to give people a voice. This was about helping us understand people's experiences and to capture their ideas for a Scotland where everyone in our diverse communities is safe and protected.

We invited members of the public to anonymously share thoughts about what Police Scotland can do within and with Scotland's communities to end violence against women and girls.

The activity was open to everyone, survivors, witnesses and people speaking as a member of any community. The following questions were used to help prompt ideas:

- How can Police Scotland make a difference?
- How can you and your community work together to make a difference?
- What is needed for a society and culture where women and girls live free from all forms of violence, abuse, exploitation and harassment?



**Building on what we heard and informing strategy
development**

All of our engagement activities were trauma-informed and survivor-centred, including our face-to-face engagement. The topic guides and approaches for this were co-created and piloted with subject matter experts.

Interviews and Focus Groups:

- Focus groups with 17 survivors and Scottish Women's Aid employees, including women from ethnic minority backgrounds;
- Depth interviews with 13 survivors, including women with Autism.

Conversation Cafes:

- In partnership with Women's Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre Dundee and Angus (WRASAC), 9 Conversation Cafes with 47 men took place in several locations across Scotland.
- This engagement enabled open discussions about issues relating to violence against women and girls to take place in a safe space, exploring men's views on their role in preventing VAWG.

Informing the Development of our VAWG Strategy



- Analysis of our insights from across activities enabled us to identify key themes and areas of importance to victim-survivors and communities.
- Working closely with our Strategy team to ensure the experiences of survivors, witnesses and our diverse communities were implemented throughout the strategy.
- Contributing to a strategy that seeks to drive change, support survivors, prevent harm and build trust and confidence in policing.
- Strategy is launching soon.

Thank you!
Any questions?

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