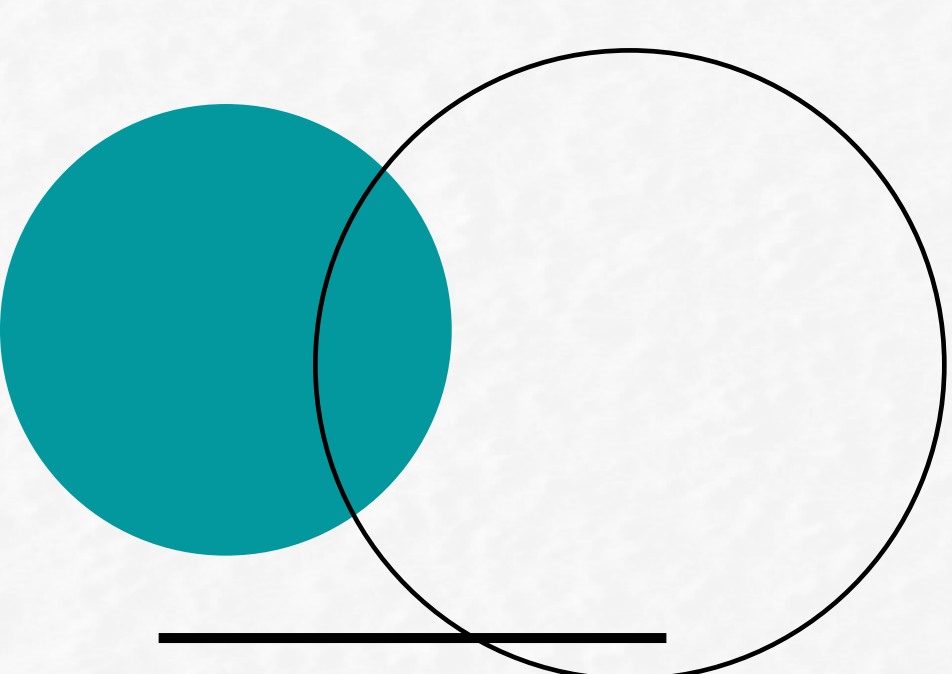




2022

PILOT EVALUATION REPORT



knowledge, skills, change



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Equally Safe in Practice Framework has been developed by the Equally Safe in Practice (ESiP) team at Scottish Women's Aid, with support from the Scottish Government. Collaboration with local and national partners from across Scotland, and the UK, has made the development of this framework possible. The framework itself is modelled on the Welsh Government Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) National Training Framework, and shared learning between nations has been invaluable.

Throughout the development of this framework, the project team have worked closely with national and local experts and stakeholders to map existing training provision and identify opportunities to strengthen current approaches to workforce development. We recognise and acknowledge the time, insight and expertise of Improvement Service, Engender, Rape Crisis Scotland, Women's Support Project, Close the Gap, Zero Tolerance, COSLA, the VAW Partnership network, members of the Rape Crisis and Women's Aid networks in Scotland - and others - in this process.

The project team would like to thank the local council staff that participated in this pilot, for their time, effort and achievements: Angus Council, Dundee Council, East Renfrewshire Council, Falkirk Council, Fife Council, South Lanarkshire Council and West Dunbartonshire Council.

This evaluation report was written with the support of Fiona Ellis of Arrivo Consulting, who led an external evaluation of implementation models, and led a series of interviews and discussions with council staff.



We envisage a Scotland
where women and girls,
in all their diversity, are
equally safe.

INTRODUCTION



Violence against women and girls, in any form, has no place in our vision. It damages health and wellbeing, limits freedom and potential, and is a violation of the most fundamental human rights.



Equally Safe Strategy, Scottish Government, 2014

We recognise that violence against women and girls (VAWG), in all its forms, is a pervasive cause and consequence of gender inequality. Tackling VAWG and addressing inequality is everyone's responsibility, we all have a role to play. Equipping the Scottish workforce with knowledge, understanding and the tools necessary to recognise and respond to violence against women and girls is key to improving and ensuring safe and positive outcomes for women, children and young people.

This report captures the key successes and learning from the initial pilot phase of the Equally Safe in Practice Framework for workforce development. This evaluation report reflects on the whole pilot phase, shares key reflections from the seven local councils who participated in the pilot, and identifies learning to inform the next steps.

CONTEXT

Violence against women occurs at extremely high levels in Scotland, and to tackle this, it is important that we see the connection to women's inequality, and make tackling that inequality a priority. Scotland has made a national commitment to increase women's safety and wellbeing. The national strategy, Equally Safe, recognises that if we hope to prevent VAWG, we can only do that by addressing women's inequality in our society.

Building capacity and strengthening the knowledge and skills of our workforce is key to ensuring that our service provision is high-quality, trauma informed and adopts a gendered analysis.

At present there are no nationally agreed requirements or guidance for the level, quality or content of VAWG training for the Scottish workforce. There are instances where training does not recognise a gendered analysis of VAWG that would support an understanding of the causal links between gender inequality and VAWG. There is a need for greater consistency to ensure safe and informed practice across the country, and to create the culture change necessary to address gender inequality.

EQUALLY SAFE IN PRACTICE

Equally Safe in Practice (ESiP) supports the implementation of Scotland's Violence against Women and Girls strategy, Equally Safe, by strengthening the everyday practice of our Scottish workforce. ESiP's vision is to see a Scottish workforce equipped to recognise, address and challenge inequalities, and respond appropriately and safely to VAWG. Knowledge and skills will be underpinned by a deep understanding of gender and the dynamics of VAWG - and of trauma informed practice.

This will be achieved through the development of a national framework with tools and resources to support local training and workforce development, and achieve long term behaviour and culture change. ESiP aims to: -

- Establish core messaging and information on gender and VAWG, that is consistent across Scotland
- Outline a targeted knowledge and skills matrix, detailing what workers need to know and do, to increase their confidence around identifying and reporting issues
- Offer a blended, tiered menu of training and development appropriate for all levels of the workforce.

Working towards gender equality, safety and wellbeing is a national priority and it is everyone's responsibility to make our communities safer and fairer for everyone regardless of gender, age, ethnicity or disability.



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

Equally Safe in Practice - in collaboration with organisations and individuals from across the sector - is working to develop a framework for workforce development (image below), that will strengthen the knowledge and skills of Scottish workforce, so that they can continue to contribute to creating a safer, more equal and responsive Scotland.

The framework aims to work towards:

- establishing consistent core messaging on gender and VAWG;
- creating competence frameworks that outline what workers need to know and do;
- making clear links with workers day-to-day work and individual roles;
- embedding the knowledge for a long-lasting organisational change.

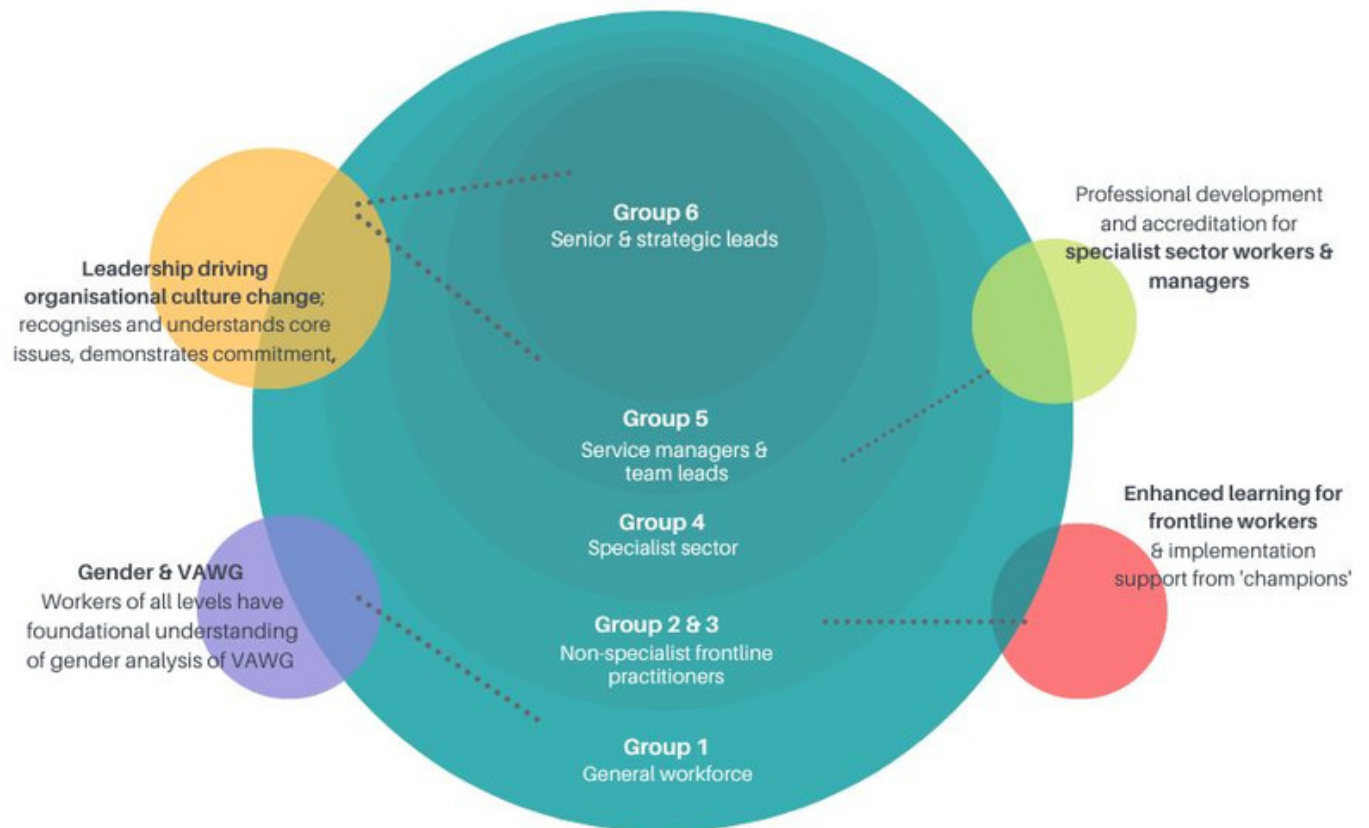
The purpose of the framework is to lever meaningful attitudinal shifts and systemic change around VAWG in Scotland. The framework is designed to support workers across all levels of the workforce, and targets different levels with specific knowledge and skills. The tiers of the framework range from basic knowledge (Group 1), to a range of enhanced workforce development and improved commitment and understanding, through to engagement with senior and strategic leaders (Group 6).

The framework is modelled on the Welsh Government Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) National Training Framework, and learning shared between nations has enabled ESiP to develop and adapt a framework suitable the Scottish context.

Throughout development it has also been crucial to work closely with national and local experts and stakeholders, and ESiP has worked collaboratively with, and received extensive input from, local and national partners.

Equally Safe in Practice Framework

Strengthening the everyday practice of our workforces



STRENGTHENING PRACTICE, CHANGING ATTITUDES

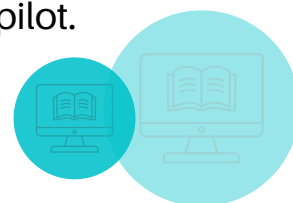
The ESiP Framework is built on the belief that a shared understanding of violence against women and girls – the impact, the scale and the causal link to gender inequality – is critical if we hope to prevent and eradicate VAWG in Scottish society. The Equally Safe strategy puts emphasis on the importance of changing attitudes and behaviours, and delivering a shift in the structural, cultural and societal contexts in which violence occurs. The framework supports the implementation these principles into the everyday practice of our workforce – for both strengthened practice, and longer-term attitudinal change.

To support learning, ESiP developed a 5-minute animation ‘Out of the Box – Together for Gender Equality’ which demonstrates concisely the linkage between gender inequality and violence against women and girls, within a Scottish context.



The animation was launched towards the end of 2021, and is now embedded into all three e-modules and used to frame reflective discussion sessions which followed on from completion of the modules during the pilot.

LEARNING MODULES



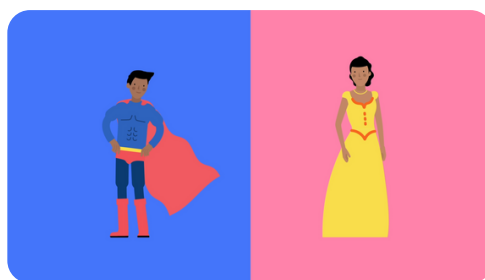
Recognising the importance of building a baseline level of knowledge, skill and competence, ESiP elected to prioritise Group 1 within the first pilot phase. Group 1 within the framework relates to the general workforce as a whole, and aims to provide a baseline level of learning to workers in any role, across all sectors. No matter what their level of responsibility, it is essential that everyone has a basic understanding of VAWG and a level of gender awareness, on which other learning can build.

Throughout 2021, ESiP worked collaboratively with partners in the violence against women and women's sector to create three Group 1 e-modules and competency frameworks to underpin them. The e-modules are: *Together for Gender Equality*, *Understanding Domestic Abuse* and *Understanding Sexual Violence*. These learning modules form the foundation level of the workforce development framework. The training for this group is particularly relevant for those who may not receive or access any learning on gender or VAWG as part of their role, as they would not have any other opportunity to learn about these issues.

As part of the pilot, the learning was divided into two parts; the e-learning module completed first, followed by a facilitated discussion session to further embed learning. The facilitated discussion session aims to encourage conversation amongst colleagues for a deeper dive into the concepts and topics, and what they mean in practice. Throughout the pilot, the session was typically delivered by internal volunteer facilitators, with support from ESiP, and the use of a facilitation toolkit.

TOGETHER FOR GENDER EQUALITY

The module *Together for Gender Equality* is the core module within all Group 1 learning, and is the foundation of the Equally Safe in Practice Framework. It is a gateway module that staff should complete before progressing to other learning. This module is intended to help unlock a deeper understanding of the causes and consequences of VAWG and abuse women and girls experience, and bridge gaps in knowledge around the gendered power imbalance in our society.



WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND GENDER?

Gender affects the way our society is structured. Power, resources and opportunities are not shared equally by all people in society – in Scotland, and across the globe. This means gender affects our lives at home, in public and in the workplace, and also has an effect on the way we work with other people.

Gender roles, stereotypes and social norms underpin the power dynamics between women and men. Gender inequality is a root cause of VAWG, which has no place in our society; it damages health and wellbeing, limits freedom and potential, and has a profound effect on the whole of society.



Building an understanding of the power imbalance in society is essential in understanding the dynamics and the impact of violence against women and girls. In Scottish society today, there continues to be an urgent need to take steps to advance gender equality, and we have a collective responsibility to both prevent and adequately respond to the violence and abuse that impacts disproportionately on the lives of women, children and young people.

It is central to the framework that all learners begin by building a comprehensive understanding of gender. The core learning on gender forms the foundation of all other modules, and aligns with Scottish Government strategy and definition by recognising the causal relationship between gender inequality and violence against women and girls.

UNDERSTANDING DOMESTIC ABUSE

Domestic abuse is far more common than many people think and statistics reflect that extremely high numbers of people are affected in Scotland, and across the UK.

The module *Understanding Domestic Abuse* was developed by a working group of specialist domestic abuse support and advocacy organisations within the Women's Aid network in Scotland. The module recognises that there may be people within families, communities and work places who have experienced domestic abuse. It is important to be aware that there are people around us who may be affected, and that we must be informed and equipped to support them.

The purpose of this course is to develop a deeper understanding and knowledge of:

- what domestic abuse is;
- how to increase your confidence in identifying controlling and abusive behaviours;
- how it impacts adult and child survivors;
- how you – as a person who may come into contact with survivors in the course of your work – can effectively respond and signpost them to the best support.

The core message within this learning, and the other modules is that no matter who you are, you can help to make your community safer and fairer for everyone – we all have a role to play in ending domestic abuse in our communities.



UNDERSTANDING SEXUAL VIOLENCE

The module *Understanding Sexual Violence* was developed by a working group of specialist sexual violence practitioners, prevention workers and advocates from across organisations in the Rape Crisis network in Scotland.

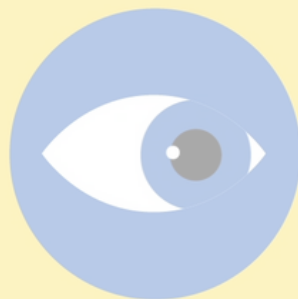
This module will enable learners to build an understanding of what sexual violence is; the impact of sexual violence and the attitudes that survivors face. The learning will increase awareness of our own values, attitudes and prejudices and how to respond safely and effectively to survivors, and signpost them to the best support.

The purpose of this course is to develop a deeper understanding and knowledge of:

- what sexual violence is;
- understanding the attitudes that survivors encounter;
- the impacts of sexual violence;
- the importance of increasing awareness of our own values, attitudes and prejudices;
- why we need to know about sexual violence;
- how to effectively and appropriately respond to survivors and offer and/or signpost them to the best support and/or services.

The module was developed in recognition of the fact that many people will encounter the effects of sexual violence in their work, and this course is to help support and prepare them if they do need to talk to someone who's been affected, or if they see or hear something they're worried about.

The learner doesn't need to be an expert, but through this learning, we hope they will become more confident, be able to recognise sexual violence, be comfortable with how to respond. And critically, that they are aware of when and how they need to share information if someone tells them they've been affected by sexual violence.



PILOTING THE FRAMEWORK

Aims & approach

Following the collaborative development of these modules, ESiP launched a pilot phase to engage with local councils to test the framework and the modules in practice. The pilot aimed to gather insights into how the training content and model could be used in different settings, whilst providing an opportunity for local councils to access a new suite of learning. The modules that have been tested were the foundation level learning within the Equally Safe in Practice Framework, and this report marks the end of the first pilot phase of the framework.

Working in collaboration with key audiences to test and further develop the initial learning modules is a crucial step in the process, and will help to ensure learning outcomes and delivery approaches are reflective of individual and organisational training needs, and workers roles and responsibilities.

ESiP put out an open call to all 32 local authorities, and engaged with the Violence Against Women Partnership (VAWP) network to invite interested councils to submit an expression of interest. The pilot began with eight participating councils, which due to competing demands on time and resource, reduced to seven.

The pilot process was coordinated internally by a self-established council steering group with membership typically from HR, management, learning and development, organisational development and equalities. The steering group oversaw and supported roll out of the e-learning modules to targeted staff groups, and shaped their own process. Throughout the pilot, ESiP has been working with council steering groups to design an approach to testing that adds value to existing workforce development strategies, whilst also exploring options to embed the learning beyond the pilot for longer term, sustained impact.

In five of the seven councils, volunteer facilitators were recruited from across a range of teams, or from within the steering group, to facilitate reflective discussion sessions with teams. These were coordinated through a webinar or focus group setting, on MS Teams. The facilitators were supported by ESiP and the Scottish Women's Aid training team to prepare and facilitate the sessions, and a facilitation toolkit provided extra tools and tips.

What was piloted?

The three newly developed e-learning modules - *Together for Gender Equality*, *Understanding Domestic Abuse* and *Understanding Sexual Violence* – were piloted across council staff teams.

The gender module, *Together for Gender Equality*, was the initial module to be completed, followed by a reflective discussion session. These sessions were delivered differently across councils, depending on the approach. In some areas this was held as a webinar discussion with a wider audience, in other areas weekly or monthly team meeting spaces were used for focused discussion about using the learning in practice, as appropriate to their role. The other two e-modules were then completed, with some councils opting to coordinate follow-on facilitated discussions beyond the end of the pilot.

Participating councils

The councils that participated in the pilot and testing were:

Angus Council

Dundee Council

East Renfrewshire Council

Falkirk Council

Fife Council

South Lanarkshire Council

West Dunbartonshire Council

The staff identified to participate in the testing included senior managers and leaders across departments; elected members; housing; people & technology, HR, safer communities; employability among numerous others. Below we have spotlighted some of the councils who have completed the pilot and testing of the gender module to date, and detail their approach.

Council case studies

Fife Council & Angus Council were two of the councils to participate in an external evaluation. Their pilot experiences are spotlighted below.

Fife Council

Housing & Safer Communities

Fife Council is one of the largest councils to be participating in the pilot. Fife Council took a 'whole department approach' which aimed to deliver the Group 1 modules to all staff in the Housing and Safer Communities Department, approximately 600 staff with a wide variety of job roles and functions.

Approach

- A senior member of staff in the Housing and Safer Communities Department (Service Manager) led the steering group, and championed the pilot within the council. The steering group brought together representatives from teams across the Housing and Safer Communities Department – both managers who could engage their teams in the training as well as those responsible for implementation into systems such as corporate HR and VAWP learning and development staff.
- The steering group decided to make both the e-module and the facilitated session mandatory.

Key successes

The pilot has been successful in engaging staff across all teams and staff roles (including front-line workers)

Approximately 90% of staff in the department have participated in the training in some way



The pilot involved the recruitment of 15 volunteer facilitators, who delivered over 20 facilitated discussion sessions

Facilitators brought a passion and interest in the content but could also draw out examples which were related to staff roles/practice which made the content more relevant

Enabling factors

- The senior manager was a champion for the pilot, and able to make key decisions. Commitment to the pilot at senior level was a critical success factor.
- The steering group was made up of individuals who held key positions within the department who had the authority to commit resources and therefore the capacity to implement the pilot.
- Managers were asked to do the e-learning and facilitated sessions first (in advance of roll-out to all staff). This would demonstrate 'commitment from the top' but also ensured that managers understood the purpose and content of the training, could promote the training more effectively and answer questions from their team.
- Facilitated sessions were delivered within existing team meetings so staff were able to participate in a familiar environment.
- Facilitators were recruited from the department and had in-depth knowledge of the department/service areas so were particularly skilled at drawing out relevant examples and highlighting how the information was relevant to practice. This encouraged people to think 'what does this mean for me/my role.'
- The steering group took a 'project management approach' to the delivery of the pilot. There was a clear, time limited project plan which set out the actions and responsibilities, which members took ownership of.
- The local context for the delivery of the pilot has also been critical to the success; there is a policy commitment within the department to address gender-based violence and work had gone before to raise awareness of the issue among staff, to change the culture and practices of the department.



Challenges

- The delivery of facilitated sessions at scale required a significant level of time and resources, in terms of the number of facilitators required, and in administration and coordination.
- Steering group members reported that there were different levels of engagement with the training in different teams, with a greater engagement from those teams who were 'closer' to the issue in their day-to-day work. This highlights the importance of ensuring the relevance of the training is clear.
- A key barrier to roll-out of the Group 1 modules to the entire council could be the level of resource required to deliver reflective discussions at scale, alternative models would help.

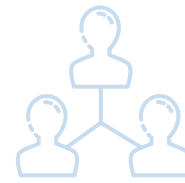


Opportunities for the future

- The steering group are looking at delivering follow-up discussion groups for the two modules *Understanding Domestic Abuse & Understanding Sexual Violence*
- Following the success of the pilot within this department, the group are exploring options for the learning to reach other departments and teams in the council, and looking at how the modules can fit within Fife VAWP training programme.
- There is a commitment to trauma informed working within the council, as well as to engage with the Equally Safe at Work accreditation programme, so there are opportunities to make the links to embed these skills and development opportunities further.

Angus Council

Senior and strategic leadership



Angus Council targeted senior and strategic leads to secure commitment, and to further their journey towards organisational culture change. The module was then extended to all elected members.

Approach

- The pilot in Angus Council was led by a small steering group consisting of, the Equalities Officer, VAWP Co-ordinator, Organisational Development Manager from within HR.
- The steering group decided that the most effective way to get buy-in to the training and to achieve culture change was to target the leadership of the council; senior leaders were engaged, as well as elected members and a wider pool of staff via Employee Voice.

Key successes

13 of 28 councillors attended a facilitated discussion session jointly facilitated by Angus Council facilitators and ESiP

Some senior leaders were unsure of the need for this training, but after the session were keen for more

Seven facilitators were trained, who delivered reflective discussions within existing leadership forum spaces - the facilitated sessions were felt to be successful in stimulating meaningful conversations and were 'where the learning took place'

Enabling factors

- The steering group identified the opportunity to engage the leadership staff in the council through the leadership training programme.
- Delivery of the facilitated sessions was coordinated to coincide with existing leadership training sessions. The facilitated sessions were delivered as part of the existing training programme, (on dates which were already programmed into diaries) so did not require additional time from staff.
- There was visible commitment to the training from the most senior staff – the Chief Executive participated in the training and expected other senior staff to do so.
- Local context - there is already a strong policy commitment to addressing gender-based violence in Angus Council.
- The steering group had a strong sense of ownership of the pilot but also had the capacity and authority to implement their plan. The HR Department also had the organisational capacity and authority to support the implementation of the pilot.

Challenges

- Although the facilitated sessions were highly valued the steering group has identified that the number of facilitators required, and the resource implication for the council to deliver facilitated sessions for a 'whole council approach' is a barrier to roll-out, other approaches would be needed.
- Engagement with the modules was on a voluntary basis, so despite good take up, not all staff in this target group completed the e-module or attended discussion sessions.

Opportunities for the future

- To date, 160 staff have completed *Together for Gender Equality*, and the other modules will continue to be rolled out
- The steering group in Angus is considering whether a further facilitated session could be carried out at the end of all three modules
- Group 1 modules could be incorporated into CPD training for a range of staff groups in this and other local authorities/other public bodies
- Plans are in motion to roll out all three modules to new cohort of elected members around 16 Days of Activism this year.

Falkirk Council - 5th & 6th tier managers

Falkirk Council steering group identified fifth and sixth tier managers as a key audience to participate in the pilot and testing of the modules; the steering group were keen to see how engaging this group could raise important and interesting conversations around equality and VAWG among those with junior to middle management responsibilities. This was part of a wider cultural change programme within the council. The senior HR advisor and senior Organisational Development led the pilot within the council, with communications around the module being delivered by heads of service.

At the end of the pilot over 140 managers have been enrolled to complete the modules; almost all have completed *Together for Gender Equality*, and half of the total of enrolled learners have completed *Understanding Domestic Abuse* and *Understanding Sexual Violence* to date (September 2022). A number of reflective discussion workshops have been facilitated by Falkirk's volunteer facilitators.

There has been an encouraging level of engagement, and despite small numbers attending facilitated discussions the team felt they were positive spaces for good insights and conversations on the topics. Falkirk Council are now looking at how the modules might be incorporated into their learning and development pathways and exploring options to provide support to managers and teams.

Dundee Council - Social workers



Dundee Council targeted their social work team as a key group to participate in the module. The senior social work manager, along with the VAWP lead, VAWG Training Advisor, and Organisational Development made up the steering group to lead on the roll out. The aim was for the modules to be rolled out to the whole social work service, following a briefing to social work team managers who felt that this group would benefit from the learning, and bring consistency across what workers know.

Due to competing pressures within the council, the social work teams were unable to participate in the pilot in high numbers - 54 staff completed the module *Together for Gender Equality*. From this point onwards Dundee decided to pause their participation in the pilot until there was more capacity to drive this forward.

East Renfrewshire Council - Multiagency

East Renfrewshire Council targeted a wide pool of workers from across the council, and promoted the modules as a learning opportunity through HR channels and with support from corporate communications.

VAWG was already recognised as a priority focus within East Renfrewshire Council, which meant that participation in the pilot was part of a broader piece of work. The learning was linked into a number of channels within the council; reported through quarterly updates to VAWP, and to the Chief Officer for Public Protection - senior buy-in has been critical.

A cross-section of teams completed the learning *Together for Gender Equality* - 116 to date - and facilitated session was co-delivered with SWA. Going forward the learning will be promoted through public protection training calendar - 'the gender module will provide a strong lens for other VAWG learning'. The steering group have been keen to consider how this learning fits with and alongside what is already in place, and the other training that staff are being asked to do (including equalities level 1&2)

South Lanarkshire Council - L&D Board



South Lanarkshire Council signed up in March 2021, at a time when their equalities learning was being reviewed, and the gender module in particular was seen to be a good fit. The steering group was established with members from learning & development boards across each resource in the council. The aim was for 25% of staff to be targeted to complete the modules (in line with ESiP guidance of 'up to 25%'), and with intention to reach people who don't usually access any training on VAWG.

Some momentum was lost in waiting for the modules to come available, which was not until summer 2021. This was compounded by the impact of Covid-19 as well as struggles identifying a sufficiently large group of staff to participate. By summer, the equalities training was completed and made mandatory, and the ESIP module no longer aligned. In light of these challenges, the best way to proceed was to reduce the number who would be targeted to include the L&D board, which would enable the board and steering group to make decisions around future roll out. To date a total of 42 learners have completed *Together for Gender Equality* and two discussions have been facilitated. The group are now considering how *Understanding Sexual Violence* could become part of their core suite of VAWG training.

West Dunbartonshire Council - Multiagency

The steering group was made up of the training sub-group team, a multiagency group including housing, education, social work, health, leisure, criminal justice, community justice and third sector. This meant a lead trainer from each service was represented and around the table to make decisions. Initially, West Dunbartonshire intended to target this to leisure trust staff, criminal justice and green staff – but there were issues with role, remit, time and space to complete, and access to IT.

The decision was then made that the steering group would disseminate the link to their service areas. The modules were well received and the learning was felt to be valuable - 91 learners have completed the modules to date (September 2022). Going forward, the modules will be embedded within VAWG training portfolio, *Together for Gender Equality* and *Understanding Domestic Abuse* will be mandatory, *Understanding Sexual Violence* will be available but not mandatory due to some concerns about a need for a support and supervision plan to be in place around completion of this module. Existing, regular spaces in the VAWG training calendar could be where learners attend a follow-on, a deeper dive or bespoke session that builds on e-learning and links to practice.

The steering group are now looking at how all services can be targeted, and how this can be integrated across all policies, procedures and service areas. The Equally Safe at Work working group, led by a Chief Officer, with multiagency membership, will be best placed to support this work into the future. Support from senior leadership is much stronger now, and modules have been given go-ahead to be rolled out and made mandatory.

EVALUATION

Methodology

At the end of each module, learners were requested to complete an online questionnaire to capture any self-reported change in knowledge or understanding, and to reflect on key takeaways from the learning. Data captured here also informed content and functionality changes and edits made to the e-modules ahead of wider roll out.

To provide a platform for steering groups and facilitators to share their experiences and give feedback, ESiP coordinated a Council Knowledge Share event mid-way through the pilot, to allow for learning to be shared across councils. This space was an opportunity to look at key learning from across the pilot sites, and to bring together ideas and opportunities for embedding the learning going forward. The feedback shared at this event has been incorporated into the key findings and has informed our next steps.

Summary of key findings

The following findings are based on the qualitative survey data, externally facilitated interviews held with council steering groups and group feedback sessions. Not all learners responded to the survey, but the following findings reflect trends visible across all councils, from the percentage of learners who did respond the surveys.

Across all three modules, the vast majority of learners who responded to the survey reflected that the learning had improved their understanding of gender, domestic abuse and sexual violence; most respondents felt they had a clearer understanding of what gender is, and the differing forms of both domestic abuse and sexual violence. The majority of respondents reported a better understanding of the impact of gender stereotypes, and the impact of domestic abuse on women, children and young people. A number of the respondents commented that they now understood the importance of taking a trauma informed approach to interacting with and supporting victim survivors of sexual violence.

Many learners reported that this learning would support them in either improving their practice and how they interact with the public, or gave them a heightened awareness of how they communicate and interact with colleagues.

There were a number of comments relating to a desire to know more about best practice, and how employers and employees can make the workplace more gender equal. There were a number of comments relating to the use of audio, video and lived experience stories, which learners felt helped to demonstrate the true lived experience and personal impact of the subjects that were discussed.

It was reflected that the length of the learning modules was often longer than expected, which is dependant on the time taken to engage with the downloadable reflection portfolio. While this was presented as an issue or a barrier, many learners reflected that they would want managers to allow dedicated time to meaningfully engage in the learning.

Together for Gender Equality

These comments reflect the common themes across qualitative responses captured at the end of the e-module *Together for Gender Equality*.

Personal outlook, perceptions, opinions

My attitudes and actions contribute

Self-reflection is uncomfortable but necessary to see how deeply embedded it is in our culture

The relationship between unconscious stereotyping and behaviour

Made me question my own outlook on the subject

Higher number of people are affected than I realised

Understanding gender and inequalities

According to the survey, learners have improved their knowledge and understanding of the meaning, complexities and overall impact of gender equality, including the gender pay gap in Scotland, the importance of early years education, and using an intersectional lens.

The actual meaning of the gender pay gap

The importance of breaking down and explaining the difference between sex, gender and gender identity

Early years education - important to let children explore what they want regardless of what's thought to be right

Importance of intersectionality - layers of inequality (how race and social background can increase gender inequality)

Inequality is not always obvious - it can be subtle, but just as impactful

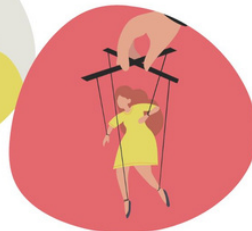
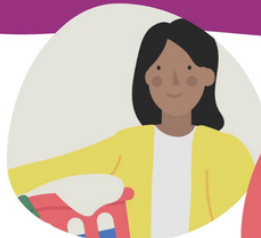
Gained confidence in defining key terms, including VAWG, gender, sex, gender identity, gender expression and gender-based violence

Your role in the workplace – how can you make a difference?

In their feedback learners reflected on what they think organisations and individuals need to change in order to make a positive difference in the workplace, and wider society. Examples related to greater focus on inclusion in the workplace and in recruitment processes, tackling occupational segregation and increased awareness of the impact inequalities have on women in the workplace. It was also cited that workplaces must reflect on how they can actually reinforce these inequalities.

The majority of respondents stated they learned more about what they and each individual can do to tackle issues on a bigger scale.

"Gender inequality cannot be separated from other types of inequality - all types must be addressed to achieve real change."



*Need to continue to promote awareness of gender equality issues generally
continue to profile with elected members*

It's better to speak out than turn away and ignore

Everyone should be aware of this, everyone can help

Learning to challenge inappropriate behaviour as it affects everyone

How will you use this learning in your work?

Respondents cited that they have an increased awareness of their own behaviour and that of those around them, they will be more considerate and inclusive towards others. Some mentioned that they now have better understanding of inequalities, and will be more tolerant and respectful of people's views/identities and mindful about use of language. Some commented that they would speak up, report, tackle or challenge behaviour if necessary, in their work.

I will talk to colleagues and recommend, and cascade the training to colleagues

*I will be more alert to situations of possible gender inequality, and thus be able to
intervene confidently if required to help someone out if necessary*

*Thinking about scenarios and settings and proactively identifying possible
inequality to improve inclusion*

Give extra consideration when recruiting

*Having this awareness now will enrich the conversations already happening
around being trauma informed*



Understanding Sexual Violence

These comments reflect the common themes across qualitative responses captured at the end of the e-module *Understanding Sexual Violence*.

Supporting and signposting

Learners commented that they had an increased knowledge and understanding of where and how to support and signpost. These are a sample of the things they report having learned:

Be a good listener, believer and supporter

Never judge anyone or expect them to report straight away

[I have] a better understanding of how to help survivors

Confidence in how to respond if someone was to tell me they have experienced sexual violence

The importance of kindness, empathy and compassion

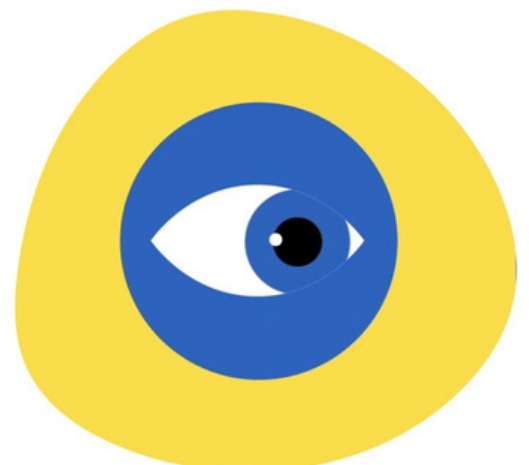
Listen *to anyone who wants to discuss sexual violence with you, support them, remain non-judgemental*

How to recognise some of the effects of being a victim of sexual violence

Greater awareness of services available to victims

The impact of sexual violence

Respondents cited that they have a greater awareness of the forms of sexual violence, the prevalence and impact. For some, this extends to an increased awareness of consent, the importance of language and the legal context.



The prevalence of sexual violence in today's society

Insight into what sexual violence is, it takes many forms

Sexual violence includes non-contact as well as contact

A range of actions come under this definition

*An increased understanding about the impact sexual violence has on the victim
and the role we play in supporting them*

The importance of everyone being trauma informed

It doesn't have to be physical

Bearing in mind how certain comments or questions could be perceived

Service responses

Learners reflect on what they key takeaways were for them, and what they will consider or do differently in their practice - a number of respondents commented on the importance of trauma informed practice.

*I will think more about the allocation of cases to staff;
think about 1:1 appointments in a clinic setting - from both staff's point of view and
for the people who use our services*

*I now have a better understanding of how it can be difficult for survivors to engage
with services that are designed to help them*

*Reminds me that you just never know what people have experienced and that any
interactions should always be mindful of this*

*Have a better understanding of what is meant by trauma informed practice & how
to implement in work/service*

Challenge anything inappropriate inside/outside of work

*I want to think more about the allocation of cases to staff - to think more about
trauma informed practice.*

Understanding Domestic Abuse

These comments reflect the common themes across qualitative responses captured at the end of the e-module *Understanding Domestic Abuse*.



The scale and impact of domestic abuse

The impact and affect of domestic abuse on women

Everyone in household affected

That children are victims too

The prevalence, characteristics and reasons of domestic violence reported

Its not just a case of get up and leave

That there is a bigger number of the population affected than I realised

Leaving is most dangerous time, it begins very small so hard to tell it's happening before it's too late

How domestic abuse is gender-based violence

What is domestic abuse?

Respondents reflect that they learned about different forms of domestic abuse, and were not aware of the dynamics of coercive control, or technology-facilitated abuse.

Definition of domestic abuse and types of abuse

The role society still plays

Tech abuse

What coercive control is

There are so many different forms of abuse and control

Domestic abuse is gender-based violence

It takes many different forms, many of which are 'hidden'

Safe responses, support & signposting

How to react to someone who confides

The case studies help to put what you have learned in real life situations with guidance on how best to help

The ask, validate, signpost model will be useful

Don't encourage person to leave as this could put them in more danger.

Trauma informed approach - listen and validate

The right questions to ask

There can be a lack of understanding can effect women looking for help

Listen don't judge; ask, validate, signpost

The different services now available to help victims

How we can help survivors

Be considerate and empathetic, ask open questions

How will you use this training in your work?

A number of respondents reflected that the training made them think differently about their interactions with those affected by domestic abuse. They acknowledged that the core principles of ask, validate and signpost would support them in asking the right questions and demonstrating compassion, empathy and understanding.

"If everyone just makes small changes and take time to reflect on what others are going through then we will all be the better for it"

I will revisit in staff training sessions

I'll use this learning in my everyday life, in conversations with friends/family/colleagues

I am more aware of the signs to look out for

It will be helpful when working with families

Appropriate questioning to support potential victims

I will be able to support young people and their families more confidently

Legal context

Know more about Coercive Control legislation, 2018

The progress on law change is slow

I have a better understanding of the changes in legislation

That although the laws have changed throughout the timeline, and we have new legislation - women's organisations are still stretched

I learned how to apply online to the Disclosure Scheme for Domestic Abuse Scotland (DSDAS) that gives women the right to ask about the background of their partner.



Key reflections from council steering groups

E-modules

Feedback from the modules reflects that an overwhelming majority of learners who responded felt that the modules had improved their level of knowledge and awareness, and supported them in thinking differently about the topics. Learners self-reported that they feel more aware of how to respond safely and appropriately to someone who may be affected by domestic abuse or sexual violence, and recognise the importance of demonstrating inclusive and respectful attitudes and behaviours in the workplace. Some feedback related to the length of the modules, as they felt they were longer to complete than expected. Modules can take between 1 - 2 hours to complete, depending on the time taken to use the reflective portfolio tools.

In councils that assigned mandatory status to the completion of the e-modules and attendance at one of the discussion sessions, a much higher level of engagement was evident, and has raised questions and thoughts around the importance of both mandatory status and the need for protected learning time, not only to complete the training, but to allow for reflection or discussion as a team, department or cohort of staff.

Reflective practice

Despite some scepticism or hesitation around engaging in the facilitated discussion sessions, the reactions and response was positive; interesting and in some instances unexpected conversations have been had, and staff reflect that their knowledge has increased. Volunteer facilitators reflected that it was good to see an increase in knowledge among the group from the beginning to the end of a session, as they became more comfortable and familiar with concepts.

The facilitators felt that staff benefited from the follow-up conversations that focussed on equality and gender-based violence, and recognise that there would be value in spending more time collectively answering the 'so what' or 'what next' questions, so that learners are taking clear actions away with them. Some staff characterised the module as 'eye opening' and the conversations have continued beyond the timeframe of sessions and into different formal and informal settings. The steering groups had seen these conversations as an opportunity to start exploring options on how to keep the momentum going.

Within the facilitated discussion sessions, councils reported the value in having a wide pool of volunteer facilitators who became more engaged in the topics, and acted as 'champions' who were committed to bringing other staff on the journey of learning, discussing, reflecting. A gender mix was reported to be helpful in these discussions, to support conversations around men's role in what can often be seen as 'women's issues', and helped to emphasise that we all have a role to play as gender inequality negatively impacts on all of us.

Local examples were brought in where possible, which was reported to be really impactful and supported people to make the link with their own workplace/department/communities. This was used to illustrate some of the key points - particularly around the sexist images in advertising. Some councils adapted the content, and then used breakout rooms and found that this helped with the conversation flow and offered a more focused discussion.

Communicating the importance - why does this matter to me?

A common challenge across all councils was communicating the importance and the value of the training to staff across different roles or teams. This was particularly true where teams had not received training of this type, or could not see the immediate relevance to their role. Some councils reported seeing a shift in attitudes once staff were in the discussion session, and had the opportunity to hear from colleagues, ask questions and hear relevant practice based examples. Where leaders and managers have been engaged in the process, and there is demonstrable commitment towards ending VAWG and advancing gender equality, this communication is easier and overall engagement is higher.

Time and capacity

During what has been a particularly challenging year for council teams, there have been difficulties around engaging staff and communicating the importance of the topics. For larger councils, the logistics and administration around engaging high numbers of staff to complete the module and attend discussion sessions has been quite significant. Whilst in others, high staff turnover has led to capacity issues around supporting the pilot as well as releasing staff to complete the learning.

KEY LEARNING FOR ESIP

Evaluation feedback, and external interviews conducted with council steering groups, have shaped the ESIP key findings.

Feedback suggests that engagement with the modules has increased the knowledge and understanding among a number of staff across the participating councils, and in many areas has kick started a conversation around gender equality and VAWG.

Learners reflected that the e-module and discussion workshop has helped them to see what small changes they could make in their everyday practice to promote equality, respect and inclusion, and has encouraged them to speak out against inequality where and when they see it. It has been positive to see many learners comment that they understand more about the core topics, and the current context in Scotland – and some feel that the learning has changed their way of thinking or seeing.

Reflective discussions

The reflective discussions were a space for a deeper dive into the topics, and a chance for learners to hear each other's views and perspectives – often sparking debate or opening new ways of seeing things. Despite positive feedback around the reflective discussion sessions, many council staff involved in the pilot reflected on the significant resources and time required to coordinate and administrate the sessions.

In some councils, this was simply not possible due to time restraints. The value of these sessions as a space to look at individual and collective behaviours and practice was clear, but due to the realities of everyday workloads, it could be difficult for staff to take time away to engage in an additional 90 minute training session.

"Tackling gender inequality in the workplace can have a positive effect to the community as a whole"

"Huge inequalities still exist in Scotland"

"I could connect and relate to the experiences from other women. It made me realise I have been right to challenge unequal attitudes when men have been sexist or ignorant"



This suggests the need to explore other formats for these reflective discussions to take place in, and so ESiP will develop a flexible range of models for this, to be included into the Module Toolkit.

In pilot settings where senior leaders, and elected members, were actively engaged in the pilot, council teams have reflected a sense of momentum building to engage in these topics, and do more to bring these conversations into the mainstream. These key leadership groups are essential to lead the necessary culture change within the organisation, and to make decisions that could shape outcomes for women, children and young people.



Leadership

In a number of councils, the steering group opted to see managers complete the training first, to be better equipped to promote the training to teams, and to respond to queries or concerns. This approach was a way of ensuring messaging around the training could be filtered to all employees, with the support of management. Senior management participation in the pilot steering groups was supportive in enabling key decisions to be made, and creating a direct link with management boards to give the pilot the necessary support and steer. This points to the real value in engaging leaders in these discussions, and the value in taking a 'whole council approach' to workforce development.

In response to this, ESiP are planning a follow-on pilot phase, focusing on engaging with the Group 6 cohort of the framework, and will be reaching out to possible organisations to participate.



Mandatory/ optional

Fife Council was one example where mandatory status for the training had a huge impact on the number of learners who completed the modules, and attended the discussion sessions. Mandatory status may not be possible everywhere, but it does remove the possibility that only those interested in the topic will participate. Making the training mandatory ensures that even those who would not usually express an interest, or who cannot see the relevance, take part. If that decision is made, there is an additional question around protected learning time, to ensure that workers can take the time to complete the e-learning, and have time and space for reflection

Access & Opportunity

In a number of the councils, we discussed the issue around engaging staff who do not have access to IT and are not desk-based. These groups who either move between sites or the manual aspect of their job does not necessitate IT equipment, are a difficult group to reach. ESiP plans to do some more focused development and testing, with these groups in mind, through 2023.



NEXT STEPS

This pilot phase concluded at the end of summer 2022. Scotland's local councils make up just one key aspect of the wider workforce development programme, which aims to support learning and skill development for the whole workforce. Looking forward, ESiP will continue to roll out tested learning modules across partnerships and sectors, and pilot additional reflective approaches and other tiered learning. Over coming months ESiP will be developing additional e-learning modules on other forms of VAWG and intersecting inequalities.

The learning modules will be available from autumn this year, and will be accompanied by a comprehensive Module Toolkit that details the learning outcomes for each module and supportive resources for embedding learning into practice, and creating reflective spaces for discussion. Following the launch of these modules ESiP will hold a series of information sessions so that potential learners and leaders can find out more about accessing the modules, why building gender competence is key, and how this learning can support best practice.

Throughout 2023, ESiP will be focusing on developing a leadership series, as well as piloting and launching other elements of the Equally Safe in Practice Framework.



To find out more, or to enquire about accessing the learning modules, **contact our team:**

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knowledge, skills, change

