

ANGUS COUNCIL

**SCRUTINY AND AUDIT COMMITTEE - 23 JANUARY 2024
ANGUS COUNCIL – 21 MARCH 2024**

ANGUS VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL REPORT 2022 to 2023

**REPORT BY KATHRYN LINDSAY, CHIEF EXECUTIVE ANGUS COUNCIL AND MEMBER OF
ANGUS CHIEF OFFICERS' GROUP**

ABSTRACT

This report presents the Angus Violence Against Women Partnership (AVAWP) Annual Report for April 2022 to March 2023. AVAWP is a multi-agency strategic forum where leaders recognise that gender power dynamics are present in everyday life, with gender inequality giving rise to abuse, harassment and violence which must be acknowledged and address across the whole system in Scotland. AVAWP partners work together to challenge and address inequalities in Angus in line with Scotland's national strategy for preventing and eradicating violence against women and girls, [Equally Safe](#). This report highlights the multi-agency work that has taken place this year as part of our collaborative approach to addressing gender-based violence.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 It is recommended that the Scrutiny and Audit Committee:

- (i) Scrutinise and comment on the Angus Violence Against Women Partnership (AVAWP) Annual Report 2022 to 2023 (appended to this report); and
- (ii) Consider the key trends and areas for development emerging from the report.

1.2 It is recommended that Angus Council:

- (i) Review the content of the Angus Violence Against Women Partnership (AVAWP) Annual Report 2022 to 2023 (appended to this report); and
- (ii) Note the Council's cross departmental responsibilities in relation to Gender Based Violence (GBV).

2. ALIGNMENT TO CORPORATE PLANS

This report aligns to the following strategic priorities identified within the Council Plan:

- (i) To maximise inclusion and reduce inequalities
- (ii) Our communities to be strong, resilient, and led by citizens
- (iii) Angus Council to be efficient and effective

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The previous report for AVAWP covered the period [April 2021 to March 2022](#).

3.2 Members will be aware that the previous year's report was tabled at the Scrutiny and Audit Committee on 22 August 2023 and Angus Council Committee on 7 September 2023. Although this report follows shortly after, this now brings AVAWP reporting into a more real time reporting cycle and members should expect reporting on a similar timescale going forward.

- 3.3 This Annual Report of AVAWP for the period April 2022 to March 2023 presents the work undertaken across Angus by multi-agency partners to deliver local, Tayside and national initiatives, policies, and frameworks to improve the lives of women and children living with Gender Based Violence (GBV). AVAWP also supports work with those who commit Gender Based Violence.
- 3.4 The Annual Report was approved by AVAWP on 1 December 2023 and the Angus Chief Officer Group on 7 December 2023. Chief Officers across Angus individually and collectively have responsibility to ensure that there are clear reporting processes in place between AVAWP and the Chief Officers Group (COG). This is discharged effectively through membership of the AVAWP independent chair on COG, quarterly reporting and an escalation process to individual agencies and to COG as necessary.
- 3.5 AVAWP maintains a risk register which is reviewed at regular intervals and reported to Angus COG. There are presently no unmitigated risks noted within the risk register.

4. CURRENT POSITION

4.1 According to Equally Safe, gender based violence is a function of gender inequality, and an abuse of male power and privilege. It takes the form of actions that result in physical, sexual and psychological harm or suffering to women and children or affront to their human dignity, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life. It is men who predominantly carry out such violence, and women who are predominantly the victims of such violence. AVAWP multi-agency partners have continued to work together to improve gender based violence practice for both survivors and perpetrators in Angus throughout the reporting period.

4.2 Of note during the reporting period are:

- During the previous reporting period the four subgroups of AVAWP restructured to include Self Evaluation and Continuous Improvement, Practice Development, Prevention and Protecting People Workforce Learning and Development. The subgroups have focused on stabilising membership and attendance to allow focus on strategic priorities going forward and are in a strong position now as they deliver their respective workplans
- Angus Safe and Together Champions model was further rolled out in partnership with Angus Child Protection Committee. 81 multi-agency champions have now completed the four day CORE training and are active in identifying and responding to domestic abuse in their own work with child and adult victims and perpetrators, as well as taking a lead in raising awareness across agencies, challenging poor practice and supporting practice development. Angus are in a strong position with a large network of champions to deliver supports and services that recognise and address controlling and abusive behaviours within families and promote keeping the non-abusing parent and child/children together where it is safe to do so.
- The development of the DefiniTAY Project to support Deaf women who use BSL as their first language and have experienced or are currently experiencing any form of gender based violence.
- The Angus Council Housing Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan has been fully implemented and homeless applications resulting from people experiencing violence or abuse within the household have reduced by 37% from 105 applications in 2018/19 to 66 applications in 2022/23.
- The risk to children caused by domestic abuse is fully reported in the Child Protection Committee annual report however it is important to note the significant relationship between domestic abuse and harm to children with over 47% of children on the Angus Child Protection Register recorded as being at significant risk of harm, impacted by domestic abuse. The joint work of child protection professionals, perpetrator services and gender based violence services ensures a robust response across services.

- 4.3 Members should note that Police Scotland data was submitted to the Scottish Government (SG) within the reporting timeframe, however due to a change in SG reporting the data covering April 2022 to March 2023 will not be published until Spring 2024. As such no data from Police Scotland can be provided for this report. Police Scotland reports is one of the most significant indicators of domestic abuse in our communities and this data is important to consider in the context of data we have from agencies working with survivors to give an understanding of the experience of women and children. AVAWP have committed to working with Police Scotland to provide both years data in the next annual report with comparison analysis. The unanimous view of AVAWP members is that this year's report should proceed without consideration of Police Scotland information.
- 4.4 The [AVAWP Strategic Plan 2021-2024](#) is based around the core business functions of the Angus Violence Against Women Partnership as set out in Equally Safe. The plan remains flexible to account for any future trends arising within the Angus area.
- 4.5 Members should note that discussions have begun around the shaping of the next Strategic Plan, including strengthening links and broad priorities across other Protecting People agendas.
- 4.6 Areas for development and progression:
- AVAWP recognises that there is a greater role for data to play within the Partnership and will continue to test and refine the local dataset over the coming year, led by SECI subgroup. This will allow for identification of local priorities and support the development and prioritisation of actions in the next Strategic Plan.
 - Equally Safe will be changing the way they collect local area yearly data and analysis in 2023 – 2024. AVAWP will prioritise responding to this.
 - Further align with other Protecting People Committees to ensure that there is a whole family approach improved coordination of work to support the workforce and remove duplication of work particularly around staff guidance, policy and practice improvement.
 - Engage with boys and men to promote their role in eradicating gender based violence.
 - Plan and complete a comprehensive multi-agency self evaluation in line with the Equally Safe Quality Standards.

5. PROPOSALS

The Committee scrutinises and comments on the content of the AVAWP Annual Report April 2022 to March 2023 and considers the key trends and areas for improvement arising from the report.

The Independent Chair of the AVAWP will attend both Committees.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

An Equality Impact Assessment screening assessment has been carried out. A full EIA is not required.

REPORT AUTHOR: Laura Winter, Team Leader, Protecting People

EMAIL DETAILS: ProtectingPeopleAngus@angus.gov.uk

List of Appendices: Angus Violence Against Women Partnership Annual Report for 2022 to 2023.