Justice Committee

Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Bill

Written submission from Highland Violence Against Women Partnership

Introduction

Please find the response to the call for evidence by the Highland Violence Against Women Partnership, part of the Community Planning structure in Highland, outlined below. Statutory members in the partnership addressing Violence Against Women in Highland are NHS Highland, The Highland Council, the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service, Scottish Prison Service, and the Police. These members work in collaboration with a number of third sector organisations on this issue, including Caithness & Sutherland Women’s Aid, Lochaber Women’s Aid, Inverness Women’s Aid, Ross-shire Women’s Aid, Victim Support Highlands and Islands and RASASH.

Response

The Highland Violence Against Women Partnership welcomes the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Bill. We believe that having specific legislation which recognises the dynamics of domestic abuse and has been developed with the lived experiences of those affected in mind will ensure that perpetrators can be more readily held to account.

The Partnership believes that this legislation sends a clear message that domestic abuse is not acceptable in Scotland and that perpetrators should be held responsible for their actions. We understand that the Bill sets out provisions to ensure that perpetrators will be earlier and more easily prevented from continuing their abusive behaviours and that this reduces the levels of harm experienced by their (ex)partners and their children.

It is important that the new law specifically recognises abuse in intimate relationships and we agree with including the aggravation in relation to a child to the offence. This reinforces our understanding of the impact of domestic abuse on families and ensures that perpetrators are made more accountable for their actions and how it affects not only the adult but any children.

We look forward to working together locally to ensure that legislation is used and effective.

Gillian Gunn
Violence Against Women Development & Training Manager
Highland Violence Against Women Partnership
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