

COSLA submission of 3 August 2022

PE1934/B: Develop an educational resource on gender-based violence for all year groups in High School

Relevant information held by COSLA on the current provision of gender-based violence lessons across local authorities in Scotland.

1. COSLA and the Scottish Government's [joint Final Report on Equally Safe](#), (November 2020). Relevant information is attached as **Appendix 1**.

The agreed priorities for next steps for COSLA and the Scottish Government (20/21) as cited in the report included: -

- Develop an age and stage appropriate resource on key messages on healthy relationships and consent aimed at professionals working with younger children.
- Continue to pursue our gender equality ambitions in education and learning via the mechanism of the Deputy First Minister's Gender Equality Taskforce in Education and Learning

COSLA has been engaged with the Scottish Government in ongoing work in both areas.

2. The Board Paper 'Equally Safe at School – Whole School Approach to the Prevention of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)' was considered in 2021 by COSLA Community Wellbeing Board (item 2.4/September 2021) and COSLA Children and Young People Board (Item 04/October 2021). Extracts from the minutes of these meetings are included in **Appendix 2A and 2B**
3. The Board Paper 'Tackling Gender Based Violence in Education' was considered by COSLA CYP Board (Item 06/April 2022). A summary description of the Paper and the position agreed at the meeting is attached as **Appendix 3**.
4. As a member of the Mentors in Violence (MVP) National Steering Group, COSLA holds relevant information on the current provision of

MVP in Scottish schools, taken from the MVP National Steering Group Minutes – 29/06/22. The relevant information is attached as **Appendix 4**.

5. In correspondence (22/07/2022) with Scottish Rape Crisis Equally Safe at School National Coordinator, update information received on current participation levels and key things to note. The relevant information is attached as **Appendix 5**.

Appendix 1

COSLA and the Scottish Government's [joint Final Report on Equally Safe](#), (November 2020). Relevant information from 'Achievements in Relation to Priority One: *Scottish society embraces equality and mutual respect and rejects all forms of violence against women and girls*'.

- Equally Safe at School is an intervention designed to support schools to take holistic measures to prevent gender based violence and respond appropriately when it occurs by promoting gender equality hand-in hand with preventing and improving responses to gender based violence. Intervention mechanisms that have been trialled have included an assessment, an action group formed of students and staff, staff training, a review of the curriculum and relevant policies and a young-person led initiative or campaign. The project has been piloted by Rape Crisis Scotland, with support from Zero Tolerance, in six secondary schools within 3 local authorities, enabling intervention materials and approaches to be refined. Evaluation has been completed and an online platform is under development for full roll out in 2021.
- Local Rape Crisis centres deliver an evidence-based intervention to young people in secondary schools across Scotland. From 2018-2020 they reached 42,900 young people in over 200 schools with programmes of up to 3 workshops. Prevention Workers deliver workshops modules that cover gender, consent, sexual violence and how it can be prevented, sexualisation and pornography, social media, the impact of sexual violence and how to access support. The programme aims to provide consistency in approaches to the prevention of sexual violence and contributes to Equally Safe in its aim to address the systematic inequality, attitudes and assumptions that give rise to violence and abusive behaviour. Feedback from young people continues to demonstrate high levels of agreement with the messages of the workshops and that young people self-assess as having gained knowledge and understanding in relation to sexual violence. One key aim of the Equally Safe delivery plan was to extend the programme into every local authority, and this has now been achieved with support through Scottish Government funding. Despite most schools having been unable to accommodate prevention workshops as a result of COVID-19 restrictions put in place earlier this year, prevention workers have adapted materials for remote delivery, as

well as engaging with young people via social media and further developing relationships with partner organisations.

- All 32 local authorities are engaged with the Mentors in Violence Prevention programme, a peer education programme that gives young people the chance to explore and challenge the attitudes, beliefs and cultural norms that underpin gender-based violence, bullying and other forms of violence. All but three of these authorities have begun a roll out to secondary schools and sixteen local authorities now have their own trainers. Approximately 190 schools have a trained staff team who have delivered mentor training to seniors who in turn have delivered the MVP programme to younger learners.

Appendix 2A:

Considered by COSLA's Community Wellbeing Board (item 2.4/September 2021)

Extract from the minute of the COSLA Community Wellbeing Board (item 2.4/September 2021)

Equally Safe at School (ESAS) - Whole School Prevention of VAWG

This paper highlighted the national launch of the new Equally Safe at School website and programme for schools. This is a deliverable agreed by co-owners and stakeholders of Equally Safe as one of the 118 actions committed to in the Equally Safe Delivery Plan (2017 – 2021). The work has been led by Rape Crisis Scotland, working together with pilot schools in local authorities and further supported by the University of Glasgow. The paper invited the Board to recognise the positive contribution being made to the prevention and eradication of violence against women and girls through this programme and its' offer in respect to Local Governments response to the gendered effects of the pandemic, outlined in the Local Government Blueprint.

Rape Crisis Scotland offered Members a short presentation on the free resources now available to all schools in Scotland to support their work to prevent and tackle gender inequality, gender stereotyping and gender based violence and harassment In a school community. The presentation included a short film created by young people highlighting the issues being tackled.

Members welcomed the development and launch of the Programme and highlighted other GBV prevention work ongoing in their own areas with young people, including Mentors in Violence Prevention (MPV). Cllr

Docherty highlighted her concerns that language used in respect to the issue of violence against women should better reflect that, whilst both men and women may experience incidents of domestic abuse and other forms of Gender-Based violence, women are considerably more likely to experience repeated and severe forms of abuse, including sexual violence, perpetrated overwhelmingly by men, and that this is a consequence of women's unequal status in society.

Members agreed the recommendations in the paper including that Equally Safe at School (ESAS) should be highlighted as an important resource in preventing and tackling Gender-Based violence in a whole school setting and that the views from COSLA's Children and Young People's Board on the challenges facing or opportunities for Local Government to embed prevention of VAWG in schools and youth/ place based approaches should be sought to inform the upcoming Equally Safe Funding Review.

Appendix 2B:

Considered by COSLA's Children and Young People's Board (Item 04/October 2021)

Extract from the minute of the COSLA Children and Young People Board (Item 04/October 2021)

1. Equally Safe at School – Whole School Approach to the Prevention of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)

This paper highlighted the recent national launch of the Equally Safe at School (ESAS) website and programme for schools, which focusses on early intervention in schools. A short animation, commissioned by the University of Glasgow and produced by Media Co-op, was also shared. Members were invited to recognise the positive contribution being made to the prevention and eradication of violence against women and girls through this programme, and discuss the offer in respect of Local Government's response to the gendered effects of the pandemic.

Members noted the animation and shared experiences of similar work being carried out in their respective local authorities.

Members:

- i. Confirmed their recognition of the positive contribution being made to the prevention and eradication of violence against women and girls through Equally Safe at School (ESAS);
- ii. Agreed to raise awareness of the ESAS whole schools approach in their own authorities along with other available programmes and approaches as helpful and free resources available to local authorities in their response to the prevalence of violence against women and girls and the gendered impacts of the pandemic
- iii. Highlighted and discussed any challenges facing Local Government in the embedding of schools-based or youth/place-based prevention of VAWG
- iv. Offered further views on the challenges facing or opportunities for Local Government to embed prevention of VAWG in schools and youth/ place based approaches in recovery and renewal planning; and
- v. Instructed that officers should reflect Members' views in the upcoming refreshment of the Equally Safe Delivery Plan and the Equally Safe Funding Review.

Appendix 3

Considered by COSLA Children and Young People Board (Item 06/April2022)

6. Tackling Gender Based Violence in Education

This paper updated the Board on the current status of relevant, gender related work and seeks their support on the direction of travel outlined.

As co-signatories of Scotland's Equally Safe Strategy, COSLA is committed to the prevention and eradication of all forms of violence against women and girls (VAWG), also referred to as gender-based violence. This includes VAWG experienced or perpetrated by children and young people.

COSLA contributes to a number of national forums intended to consider and address gender-based violence in education. Whilst some of these workstreams have progressed and violence against women has been a growing concern, some workstreams focused on addressing gender-based violence in education paused during Covid-19.

The Board:

- i. Agreed that this area of work be considered within the interim Equally Safe Delivery Plan (to September 2023) and in the design of the refreshed Equally Safe Strategy and Delivery Plan for roll out thereafter.
- ii. Agreed the position outlined at paragraphs 7 and 8. (see below)

Para 7: Officers will work with Scottish Government and relevant colleagues to develop and agree the National Framework and resources on preventing gender based violence in schools.

Para 8: COSLA will support coherence with ongoing development of the interim Equally Safe Delivery Plan and the design of Equally Safe's next substantive phase of activity from October 2023.

Appendix 4

From MVP National Steering Group Minutes – 29/06/22.

- Schools delivering MVP
Number of schools delivering the programme has returned to pre-pandemic levels with a slight increase overall.
- Breakdown of reach of MVP in different regional collaborative areas
MVP reaching most areas across Scotland with majority of areas either trained in or delivering the programme.
- Practitioner professional learning
669 practitioners have been trained and 22 new trainers have been brought in across various local authorities.

Appendix 5

From correspondence (22/07/2022) with Scottish Rape Crisis Equally Safe at School National Coordinator, update information received on **current participation levels** and **key things to note**.

- Aberdeen - 1 school
- Aberdeenshire – 1 school
- Angus – 1 school
- Argyll and Bute – 1 school
- Edinburgh City – 13 schools
- Dumfries and Galloway – 1 school
- Dundee - 1 school
- East Ayrshire – 1 school
- East Dunbartonshire – 1 school
- East Renfrewshire – 2 schools
- Glasgow City – 4 schools
- Highlands – 6 schools
- Midlothian – 2 schools
- Moray – 1 school
- North Ayrshire – 2 schools
- Orkney – 2 schools
- Perth and Kinross – 2 schools
- Renfrewshire – 4 schools
- Scottish Borders – 3 schools
- South Ayrshire – 1 school
- South Lanarkshire – 4 schools
- Stirling – 3 schools
- West Lothian – 2 schools

Key things to note:

- Of these, 11 are independent schools
- While there are around 60 schools registered with an ESAS account, only about 10% of these schools have been implementing ESAS activities (as far as our reporting mechanism identifies anyway)
- Conversations with schools and local authorities imply that many schools have been looking at the resources since signing up and have built ESAS into their School Improvement Plans, so we expect to see more schools implementing in the new school year

(Rape Crisis Scotland) has informed COSLA that it has been working closely with some very committed local authorities to create a local authority approach whereby local authority Education, Health and Wellbeing Leads are taking the approach of asking 1-3 schools to implement ESAS initially, then bringing a few more schools on board each year to ensure a slow and steady approach to roll out whereby the local authority Education Leads can offer extra support to a few schools at a time. These local authorities have been supporting their schools to build ESAS into school planning and strategy, have organised information sessions for school staff and have been part of meetings with an individual school (and the national co-ordinator) to discuss getting started with ESAS.