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Our Ref: 79.25



By Email:
SJSS.committee@Parliament.Scot

Steve Johnson
Assistant Chief Constable
Police Scotland Headquarters
Tulliallan Castle
Kincardine
FK10 4BE

Dear Collette,

Inquiry Into Financial Considerations When Leaving an Abusive Relationship

Thank you for inviting Police Scotland to respond to the conclusions and recommendations within the above report. My previous letter of 8th May 2025 provides broad detail of our approach in tackling domestic abuse and was available to the inquiry so I will not replicate it in this letter.

We note the conclusion that there appears to be a gap between our stated trauma-informed approach and some of the specific experiences of the victim/survivors engaged with as part of the inquiry. We are disappointed to hear this and are committed to making an assessment and reviewing such instances when they are brought to our attention. Our close working relationship with agencies such as Scottish Women's Aid, Assist and Action Against Stalking allows for them to flag such cases to us so that we can reassess the initial police response and remedy any shortfalls.

In respect of the direct questions posed I will address them individually.

We ask Police Scotland to assess whether its approach to supporting victim/survivors who report financial abuse is trauma-informed.

In terms of our trauma-informed approach Police Scotland do not differentiate specifically between our response to financial abuse, coercive control or other forms of domestic abuse. My previous letter detailed the breadth of work undertaken in recent years to refine our approach to domestic abuse, particularly coercive control and application of the Domestic

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Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018.

In addition to the content of that letter I would add that we have published online Continuous Professional Development (CPD) modules which address some key areas of our response to domestic abuse. Two of these modules in particular are of relevance:

- Domestic Abuse and the Effects Of Trauma
- DASA – Understanding and Applying the Legislation

These modules were developed with SafeLives and are available to every officer in the organisation. They are currently undergoing a quality assurance process which will allow us to monitor compliance with their completion, anticipated to be in place in early 2026.

I would also like to highlight the ongoing work of our Policing Together team who are leading Police Scotland's journey towards becoming a trauma-informed organisation, in line with the recently passed Victims, Witnesses and Justice Reform (Scotland) Bill. The team have established an internal Trauma-Informed Strategic Oversight Board and Trauma-Informed Working Group, membership of which includes a representative from our Domestic Abuse Coordination Unit.

In line with the overarching plan of the Victims' Taskforce and the National Trauma Transformation Programme, work is ongoing to develop an organisational implementation plan to coordinate and drive work to further embed trauma-informed practice across Police Scotland. The plan will involve a focus on several key areas, including culture, training, understanding and learning from lived experience, officer and staff wellbeing, and policy and processes.

Specifically in relation to financial abuse, I am pleased to report that since my previous letter we have consulted with Dr Jen Glinski of Scottish Women's Aid, the leading academic in the field of economic abuse in Scotland. Over the current financial year, the ambition is to develop CPD on identifying and understanding economic abuse which can be cascade to Tier 1 and Tier 2 officers. We have also identified opportunities to collaborate with 'Financially Included' a SG and LA funded service whose remit is to support victims/survivors and tackle economic abuse in Scotland. Police Scotland will continue to seek out other opportunities to learn and develop within this space of economic abuse and look to embed advice and guidance from partners into our Domestic Abuse Toolkit and further training to officers.

We also ask Police Scotland for information on any lived experience engagement it carries out with victim/survivors who have reported financial abuse, and how this information is used to improve its service.

We have not previously carried out lived experience engagement specifically with victim/survivors who have made reports in relation to financial abuse. However, we have several mechanisms to understand and respond to the experiences of people who have contacted the police for advice or assistance. Our online Victim/Survivor feedback form has been developed specifically for those who have reported domestic abuse, rape or sexual crime to advise us on how we handled their report and what we could do better. The results of this are analysed quarterly, with any prevailing themes being identified and addressed.

We recognise that people may not wish to re-engage with the police, particularly if the

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process of making a report has been unsatisfactory in the past. In this respect our partner agencies act as a valued advocate and voice for victim/survivors. As I mentioned previously, the relationships with organisations such as Scottish Women's Aid (SWA) allow for specific issues to be raised at our regular meetings and addressed. This type of working relationship is reflected across Scotland between local partners and our Tier 2 divisional domestic abuse teams. However, SWA also collate and analyse information relevant to the policing response from their national helpline and kindly share it with us so that broader themes can be identified and addressed in addition to those specific instances where the police response has not met the expected standard.

The sharing of power with people with lived experience of trauma is a key aspect of embedding a trauma-informed approach. This involves collaboratively developing routine, safe and meaningful processes and spaces so that those affected by trauma can share their experiences and help to shape services and systems to better meet their needs, should they wish to do so. Policing Together division's Trauma-Informed Team are exploring existing forums and considering new opportunities for creating safe spaces in which individuals can share their experiences to support the development of our trauma-informed approach and embed meaningful change.

I hope that these additional points provide reassurance that we are committed to a continuous refining our trauma informed approach in respect of financial abuse and the wider context of domestic abuse.

Yours sincerely

Steve Johnson
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Major Crime, Public Protection and Local Crime

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