

## **EQUALITIES AND HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE**

### **DRAFT BUDGET SCRUTINY 2020-21**

#### **SUBMISSION FROM WHITE RIBBON SCOTLAND**

WRS is a primary prevention campaign recognised within the Equally Safe Delivery Plan in respect of its goal to educate men in Scotland about the causes and consequences of violence against women (VAW) and the need to recruit more men to speak up and actively work to help end VAW. Examples of the work carried out and the campaign's associates and supporters are illustrated in the attached report on activity during the 2017 UN backed 'Sixteen Days of Activism to end VAW'.

The charity trains volunteers, throughout Scotland to campaign to help end VAW by acting as role models and to deliver the themes of the campaign. These being raising the awareness of VAW, gender stereotyping, gender equality, the role of men and bystander theory. In doing this volunteers seek opportunities emanating from their private as well as their working lives and other areas such as links to sport and religious groups.

WRS also works with councils and other local groups, to carry out projects to involve more men in addressing the issue of what they can do to be allies in eliminating VAW. The success of these projects is recognised by the area or body concerned being awarded White Ribbon Status. The first such was the City of Stirling and similarly Status has been awarded to Glasgow, Fife, Glasgow Kelvin College (GKC) and Dumfries and Galloway. Current interest has been expressed by Fife College and Inverclyde Council. Notably GKC Student's Association recently received an award and international recognition for their part in the campaign, which significantly involved men who would not otherwise have become involved.

WRS is an autonomous group forming part of the world's largest campaign involving men in reducing and ultimately eliminating VAW. The original campaign started in Canada in 1993 and WRS began in 2010. In straightforward terms we believe that the type of societal change required in terms of the attitudes and behaviours of men, and some women, can only be achieved if large numbers across that society, both men and women, are actively seeking to bring that change about. As the First Minister recently stated in an interview,

"This is about men's behaviour. Not all men, but largely men. The responsibility should be on men to change. Men have to be part of the solution."

This is also the opinion of many men but without WRS they often do not appreciate the role they can play. An HND student of computer engineering at Glasgow Kelvin College said,

"I think the campaign targets male attitudes to violence and unless we work against that the issues won't be addressed. The campaign has had a massive impact. It has allowed male students to have a voice in opposing violence against women."

Davy Thompson, Campaign Director and George Eckton Volunteer/Trustee

In terms of the questions posed by the Committee in their call for evidence, we have sought to answer each bullet point in turn, where appropriate:

- We feel that one of the major public policy areas where individuals and protected groups are struggling to access their rights is around gender equality and ending men's violence against women and girls in Scotland. This affects not only 51% of the population directly, but the continuing existence of misogynistic attitudes towards women and the stereotypical behaviour this conditions in men also has significant impact on their own well-being. Gender equality isn't a zero-sum game, it's achievement in Scotland will have positive benefits for all.
- The main groups likely to be impacted by the challenge of achieving gender equality is all of Scotland especially women and girls who have had to endure century after century the conditioning and denial of their human rights within a society heavily gendered towards men. Within this groups there will also be a clear intersectional impact more on certain vulnerable groups within the overall population of women and girls and clearly we need public policy to take a disaggregated and focussed approach to such societal landscape. However, there are positive outcomes for men from gender equality, gender inequality leads to unhappier and shorter life for males according to World Health Organisation (WHO) research. Breaking down stereotypes, ending men's violence against women and creating gender parity it could be suggested could actually save men's lives. The WHO research signals that living in a country with higher gender parity could benefit men's health lowering early mortality rates increasing their well-being, lowering rates of depression, less likely to die from violence. However to change these outcomes we need a strong message over generations to challenge these "traditional" ideas of masculinity so everyone benefits from greater gender equality. It's sad you need to "sell" individual human rights regardless of gender to men but sadly as continues to be shown across our society not everyone is yet a male ally for change.
- In terms of public sector funding, we have been very fortunate over the last 3 years to have received £60,000 per annum from Scottish Government Equally Safe budget and would hope this would continue in future years and if possible increase. However, we as a Charity are in a Catch 22 situation, as we would always wish further funds to be given to other VAW partners first to deal with the immediate impact of ongoing men's violence and abuse of women, however without further funding to increase our primary prevention work, we feel there will be the continuing failure demand of men's gender based violence in generations to come with the associated costs to individuals, families, society and wider economy from this human rights violation. We have worked with private sector companies to raise awareness of the campaign (insert reference to Bookmakers campaign) to seek to deliver outcomes in the most cost-effective way possible through partnership given the limits funds available to the third sector given current funding pressures on government.

- Therefore, our view that at present given the incorporation of UN Sustainable Development Goals, especially No5 on Gender Equality, into the national performance framework, the current funding of primary prevention work such as White Ribbon Scotland isn't enough and that we would welcome further annual funding from Government but also wider society to fund additional officer resource and funding for a nationwide awareness campaign calling men to take action, change attitudes and get involved in our campaign. This would greatly develop the ability to build up regional capacity and resilience of staff to deliver/manage increased numbers of projects and volunteer groups across Scotland supporting men to undertake primary prevention and challenge attitudes and behaviours which condone violence against women and girls and overtime achieve significant aversion of negative outcomes in terms of human rights and positively outcomes in terms of a reduction in demand for services. The increased officer resource would also be advocates for change across a wider geography working with and across other sectors, including alignment with Community Planning across multiple LAs and partner agencies in the third sector. WRS are proposing an opportunity for further funding on a regional basis to develop wider White Ribbon activities regionally across Scotland. The proposal would build WRS's existing track record of effective partnership working with Councils, local communities, Higher and Further Education campuses, Health Boards, the National VAW Network and other public and private sector stakeholders, by providing additional enabling capacity and development funding for a wider network of volunteer Speakers, Coordinators, Champions and Ambassadors of the White Ribbon message. We believe this type of strategic and enabling funding would provide a greater focus on equally safe outcomes of prevention of male behaviour and long-term attitudinal change needed if we are to ensure and cement a sustainable culture of gender equality within Scotland. The proposed associated marketing campaign would be in line with the statement of the First Minister and other Cabinet members that men need to step up and take action and provide awareness of the WRS campaign to take action, whilst providing an undifferentiated campaign message to all audiences; that gender inequalities and violence against women and children is culturally unacceptable. Further investment in this type of regional resource would be an effective and efficient way of addressing gaps in knowledge and enhancing skills and capacity required to deliver #EVAW messages and measures across Scotland to non-perpetrating males. Our current 1 FTE staff resource and real reliance on volunteers and trustees time, does hinder the ability to organise and support WRS groups across Scotland. The proposed funding would assist us to comprehensively monitor success and provide support to ensure the retention of volunteers and supporters in all aspects of the truly national campaign. Further funding would enable development and retention of key skills and expertise across a more comprehensive geographical area and enable the delivery of coherent integrated regional programmes to promote #EVAW, including supporting areas which have struggled to take advantage of previous initiatives due to lack of capacity and expertise.

- We recognise that there are public funding challenges for the third sector from increasing pressures on government budgets, but unless further funds are found there will be implications for delivering human rights and equalities outcomes such as ending gender based violence as soon as possible
- We currently have to submit a monitoring return to Scottish Government to monitor understandably the impact of their funds on the delivery of outcomes. This is also very helpful to trustees in terms monitoring and governance of the charity.
- In terms of changes to improve accountability, there might be a clear opportunity for a specific third sector/charity report or publication annually in partnership with SCVO to clearly demonstrate the role of the third sector in working with public sector to deliver national priorities. For example, White Ribbon Scotland's work with local government or colleges in seeking to end gender based violence in Scotland. This could have the clear benefit of increasing the transparency of delivery but also showcase good practice example and striving for excellence, which may lead other public sector organisations to work sustainably with the third sector to deliver similar outcomes.

We need to increase the capacity of men who don't promote the types of toxic masculinities prevalent in society to have their voices and views heard. That means we need to engage all men and boys in a conversation about change. This could help shift cultural norms of men away from tradition views of men as breadwinners and show that greater gender equality could improve their well-being as individuals their families and society in general. Whilst most men don't do actions associated with toxic masculinities, most men will stay silent if a friend does it, because they believe it's the view of society. We need to break down these barriers that allow these views to continue with their clear negative impact on women and girls through a continuation of violence and abuse, but also on men by the generational reinforcement of stereotypical views of what it is to be a men, which are normally so one dimensional and restrictive. At White ribbon Scotland in our aim of stating the vital role of non-perpetrating men in challenging and stopping violence against women, we have run a campaign previously asking men/boys to not be a lad and challenge sexism. We need to celebrate strength of manhood but clear outline how it's weak to using that strength for harm. We need a society where we can bring up children that are free to express their emotions regardless of gender. We need a long term commitment to gender parity and equality. Behaviour change is generational and for that very reason it's difficult as it takes time and in that time continued harm is done to all of the population because of the restrictions placed on all by stereotypes. It takes every dad talking to his sons about respect for women and being ok to be different and express emotion, every parent talking to and demonstrating to their children about what are positive and respectful and supportive relationships, mates talking to each other about acceptable behaviours and holding each other to account and teachers educating kids at school about stereotypes and encouraging all regardless of gender to achieve their dreams.

Sadly, in enabling the human rights aspect of ending men's violence against women, these actions required a significant amount of resource especially in terms of volunteer time and effort. The administration of those voluntary efforts of Scotland's White Ribbon campaigners could be greatly helped with further funding but also greater recognition and accountability of Charities like WRS and others, who seek to deliver public outcomes without necessarily the same recourse to public funds in terms of budget but also guarantee continuity of funds.