JUSTICE COMMITTEE

PRE-BUDGET SCRUTINY OF THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT’S DRAFT BUDGET 2019-20

SUBMISSION FROM SCOTTISH WOMENS’ AID

There are many justice-related matters we would like to have discussed with the Committee but it is difficult to comment extensively within the time constraints on responding. Notwithstanding, we have summarised below the areas of interest and concern to us, as follows:

Implementation of the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018

Electronic Monitoring

We have been in discussion with the Scottish Government around setting up pilot projects to examine the use of EM in domestic abuse cases. For these pilots to be meaningful, they must be situated in both rural and urban areas, be appropriately funded and resourced and subsequently evaluated.

Community Justice Disposals

There has to be an in-depth review of the use of Community Payback Orders in the context of domestic abuse

Funding to Women’s Aid

Funding to our network of local Women’s Aid groups has been consistently cut at a local level and needs to be considered in the Justice Budget.

Responses to statutory obligations under the Victims and Witnesses (Scotland) Act 2014

Outcome evaluation of the changes to police procedure brought about by the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2016

Civil Justice issues

- Implications of the recommendations in the review of the regulation and provision of legal services and also the review of legal aid
- Implications of the extensive review of family law currently underway through the Scottish Government’s consultation on proposed reforms to the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 and other reforms around court rules and procedures

Prevention

Addressing the prevention of violence against women and girls within the Justice Budget must be done in conjunction with work under the “Equally Safe” strategy, noting that primary prevention under “Equally Safe” refers to reducing women’s inequality.
As a reminder, since good policy making in Scotland requires a robust EQIA, including a Gender Impact Assessment and a Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA), these must accompany the Budget.