

Criminal Justice Committee
Wednesday 7 January 2026
1st Meeting, 2026 (Session 6)

Prevention of Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Bill

Note by the Clerk

Introduction

1. The [Prevention of Domestic Abuse \(Scotland\) Bill](#) was introduced on 7 May 2025.
2. The Bill seeks to reduce domestic abuse by making changes in four areas:
 - The Bill introduces notification requirements for domestic abuse offenders, requiring them to provide the police with details such as all names used by them, their date of birth, address and passport details, and enabling them to be assessed and managed under multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA).
 - The Bill requires consideration of whether someone convicted of a domestic abuse offence is a suitable candidate to take part in a rehabilitation programme or services with the aim of reducing reoffending.
 - The Bill places a requirement on Police Scotland, the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service and charities to ask for specific information from victims of domestic abuse. This information would be provided on a voluntary basis and the Scottish Government would need to publish an annual report on the data gathered.
 - Lastly, the Bill requires the Scottish Government and education authorities to promote, facilitate and support domestic abuse education in schools.
3. On [25 June 2025](#), the Committee held an initial evidence session with the Member in Charge of the Bill, Pam Gosal MSP. On [3 December 2025](#), the Committee held an evidence session with Committed to Ending Abuse, Scottish Women's Aid, Scottish Women's Convention and Shakti Women's Aid. On 10 December 2025, the Committee held an evidence session with the Law Society of Scotland, the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service, Police Scotland and Social Work Scotland.
4. On 17 December 2025, the Committee held an evidence session with Siobhan Brown MSP, Minister for Victims and Community Safety, supported by Jeff Gibbons, Head of Violence Against Women and Girls Unit and Graham Robertson, Public Protection Unit, Scottish Government.

Today's evidence on the Bill

5. At today's meeting, the Committee will hear from—

Pam Gosal MSP, Member in Charge of the Bill

Roz Thomson, Principal Clerk, Non-Government Bills Unit (NGBU),
Scottish Parliament

Charlie Pound, Head of Policy and Research, Scottish Conservative MSP
Group

Ailidh Callander, Senior Solicitor, Legal Services Office, Scottish
Parliament

6. The Committee have received correspondence from the Finance and Public Administration Committee outlining their scrutiny on the Financial Memorandum of the Bill. This is reproduced at Annexe A.

Further reading

7. A [SPICe briefing on the Bill is available online](#).
8. [Responses to the Committee's Call for Views on the Bill](#) can be found online.
9. Both the [SPICe analysis of submissions to the Call for Views by individuals](#) and the [SPICe analysis of submissions to the Call for Views by organisations](#) can be read online.

Clerks to the Committee
January 2026

Annexe A

Correspondence from the Finance and Public Administration Committee

Audrey Nicoll MSP
Convener
Criminal Justice Committee

17 December 2025

Dear Audrey

Prevention of Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Bill

As you are aware, the Finance and Public Administration Committee (the Committee) is responsible for scrutinising Financial Memorandums for Bills. As part of its scrutiny, the Committee ran a Call for Views on the Financial Memorandum (FM) for the Prevention of Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Bill. We received 8 responses to the call for views and they have been published on [Citizen Space](#).

The main points raised by the respondents are summarised below. The key message was that the FM underestimates some of the costs necessary to implement the Bill.

Part 1 – costs related to the implementation of notification requirements for domestic abuse offenders

Several submissions noted that the staff costs have been underestimated. The FM assumes that each caseworker dealing with MAAPA notification requirements has a case allocation of between 50 to 60. COSLA notes that the figure in the FM is in “direct conflict with the Social Work Scotland Setting the Bar report, which advised that 20 -25 cases per worker was manageable and safe”.

East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership, South Lanarkshire Council, and Police Scotland agreed with COSLA’s view that the FM sets an unrealistic caseload target.

COSLA further explained that there are additional costs for staff working on MAAPA, such as enhanced vetting.

South Lanarkshire Council indicated that “the assumption that no further costs will arise beyond staffing under MAPPA in year one does not reflect the full scope of operational requirements”.

The Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) expressed concern that “a statutory monitoring scheme would divert crucial police resource from a currently effective, non-statutory partnership and multi-agency response to risk management, safety planning and offender management”.

The diversion of resources was said to “ultimately limit effective investigation and reporting of domestic abuse charges to COPFS, and thus curtail COPFS’s ability to prosecute those perpetrating domestic abuse”.

Part 2 – costs related to the assessment of offenders for rehabilitation services

Several submissions indicated that the costs of the Caledonian programme have been underestimated. Social Work Scotland explained that the FM incorrectly assumes that the Scottish Government fully covers the costs of the Caledonian programme.

COSLA provided data from one local council which suggests that the programme cost per person amounts to approximately £3,460 per person. This is materially higher than the cost of £2,325 per person outlined in the FM.

Part 3 – costs related to the requirement to collect data from the victims of domestic abuse

Social Work Scotland stated that although the FM “assumes minimal costs for local authorities”, additional data collection duties will have costs related to system upgrades, staff training and quality assurance. This view was shared by COSLA.

COPFS also added that “given the range of data to be collected [...] implementation is likely to require significant system updates with corresponding resource implications”.

Part 4 – costs of domestic abuse education in schools

COSLA argued that the FM does not “reflect the resource implications for schools, particularly in rural and under-resourced areas” given that no direct implementation costs are identified for the schools themselves.

Other issues raised in evidence

Police Scotland estimates that the Bill will have, for the police, an opportunity cost of approximately £2 million in the first year of operation. The submission explains that the opportunity cost includes “officer extraction for training and project related resource costs”.

COSLA noted that the FM fails to account for the “cumulative pressures and the unaccounted for/hidden financial burdens already facing and being carried by councils across Scotland”.

We invite the Criminal Justice Committee to consider, as part of your wider scrutiny of the Bill, the evidence received by this Committee on the FM.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kenneth J Gibson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'K'.

Kenneth Gibson MSP
Convener

Reducing intimate partner abuse in the context of substance use:

The ADVANCE-D Programme



The ADVANCE-D Programme

ADVANCE-D was developed (funded by the UK National Institute for Health Research) over 6 years to address the complex interplay between substance use and intimate partner abuse perpetration identified in our research and neglected in other perpetrator programmes. Our research identified a **complex interplay between substance use and intimate partner abuse perpetration in the context of intoxication, withdrawal, craving and acquiring substances**. However, these were rarely the only explanation, as intimate partner abuse perpetration was linked with sexual jealousy, and with men's perceptions of their partners' behaving improperly and opposing male authority. ADVANCE-D targets individual risks for intimate partner abuse, including substance use, poor emotional regulation, and poor stress-coping, and teaches men how to reduce these risks by promoting self-regulation (ability to alter a response or override a thought, feeling, or impulse) and personal goal setting. The programme relies on positive therapeutic alliance, well facilitated group processes and strengths-based change.

Why do we need a targeted perpetrator programme for men with substance use problems?

Substance dependent men are seven times more likely to be arrested for intimate partner abuse, and to abuse multiple victims. Our research found 4 in 10 men in substance use treatment had abused a female current or ex-partner in the past year, a figure around four times higher than in men in the general population, yet few had ever received support to address their abusive behaviour.

Lack of referral pathways for perpetrators who use substances

Despite being among the most high-risk and highly resistant groups, perpetrators with substance use problems are often considered unsuitable for existing perpetrator programmes and appropriate referral pathways are lacking. Men who use substances are also most likely to drop out of perpetrator programmes and existing "one size fits all" approaches to perpetrator programmes ignore individual differences that have been strongly linked with intimate partner abuse, including substance use. Our ADVANCE-D Programme is a tailored perpetrator programme that targets the risks and needs of this population.

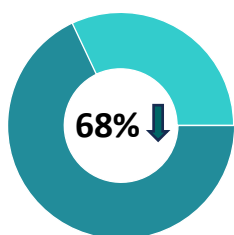
We offer comprehensive training on all elements of ADVANCE-D to enable local delivery of the programme

ADVANCE-D comprises 32 sessions, which can be delivered remotely, in-person or hybrid by two trained facilitators over 14 weeks. Blended delivery provides flexibility and opportunity for men to attend groups across geographical areas and languages. ADVANCE-D includes an individual session to set goals, develop a personal safety plan and increase motivation; a preparatory group to prepare participants for taking part; six fortnightly groups, 12 self-completed website sessions guided by a digital coach to recap and practice skills learned in the online group sessions; and 12 coaching calls to account for best practice in terms of monitoring and managing risk and safety and increasing skills and knowledge.



The ADVANCE-D Programme and its evaluation are described in more detail in this short film: <https://app.box.com/s/gjks22jpgt31zjyr47ul496kUSD1wfl>

Evaluation of the ADVANCE-D Programme



Staff were trained in 7 substance use treatment services in the UK to deliver ADVANCE-D to 40 men. At the end of the programme 17/25 men followed-up had reduced their abusive behaviour.

"It's given me the tools I need to do things a bit different, and stop things getting worse"

"I realised that you can be abusive in tons of different ways and some of my behaviour was abusive... it's definitely improved the relationship and the communication"

We are currently undertaking a cluster RCT of ADVANCE-D compared to usual criminal justice offender management with men with substance use problems serving a community sentence or on license for domestic abuse partners. <https://fundingawards.nihr.ac.uk/award/NIHR154546>

Integrated partner support alongside regular case management meetings with the facilitators and clear respectful and information sharing protocols, are essential components of the ADVANCE-D Programme.



← Back
Women's Safety Messages

Welcome to the ADVANCE programme. We work with men who are in substance treatment and who use abusive behaviours in their relationships. We aim to reduce their abusive behaviours and substance use.

Your current/ex-partner is signed up to the programme. The programme is for him to complete on his own and you should never have to help him with this.

Your current/ex-partner's participation in the programme does not necessarily mean that he will change his behaviour and that risk will be reduced.

In order not to privilege group participants over their (ex)partners, we developed an (ex)-partner version of the perpetrators' website containing safety messages for (ex)-partners who can view but not interact with the website content. **In our evaluation study, 8/11 (ex)-partners reported reductions in abusive behaviours**

by the end of ADVANCE-D. Men's current or ex-partners also reported reductions in experiencing controlling behaviours, their partner using their or her children against her and stalking behaviours.

"He'd normally hold everything... then throw it in my face in an argument, but now we're having conversations about it"

ADVANCE-D delivery training and certification

We have developed **self-directed online training** to enable facilitators (30 hours) and partner support workers (20 hours) to be certified to deliver the ADVANCE-D Programme. Prior to delivering ADVANCE-D, facilitators will receive comprehensive training with self-assessment in all elements on the theories informing the ADVANCE-D Programme, the theory of change, and the how and why of the elements of the programme.



We provide comprehensive training on all elements of ADVANCE-D and provide **transferrable skills in risk assessment, working with substance use and intimate partner abuse and delivering supportive interventions.** The training consists of 5 Modules:

- **Module 1: Introduction to the main theories and empirical evidence in this area;**
- **Module 2: Risk assessment and ADVANCE-D Programme eligibility;**
- **Module 3: Overview of the elements of the ADVANCE-D Programme;**
- **Module 4: Core content (Groupwork content, website sessions, coaching calls, partner support calls);**
- **Module 5: Certification.**

Certification for facilitators includes submission of a written risk assessment on a provided case study, delivery of a group session and a coaching call. Certification for partner support workers includes submission of a written risk assessment on a provided case study and delivery of introductory and follow-up calls.

Ongoing support post-training

Following training, fortnightly delivery management support is offered to facilitators and partner support workers during their first ADVANCE-D Programme delivery cycle to ensure programme integrity.

Bespoke training

In addition to training on the delivery of ADVANCE-D, we offer bespoke in-person or online training in risk assessment and management, the role of substance use in intimate partner abuse perpetration, etc.

About the ADVANCE-D Team



Gail Gilchrist (Ph.D.) is Professor in Addictions Healthcare Research at King's College London and the ADVANCE-D research lead.
gail.gilchrist@kcl.ac.uk



Liz Gilchrist (M.A.; M.Phil; Ph.D; HCPC Registered Forensic Psychologist; AF BPS) is a Forensic Psychologist and clinical lead for ADVANCE-D. She is a Professor of Psychological Therapies at the University of Edinburgh. liz.gilchrist@ed.ac.uk

For more information, please contact us. Download our research findings www.reduceipv.co.uk