



Falkirk Multi Agency Domestic Abuse Forum Strategy / Action Plan for 2009/10

The Falkirk Multi Agency Domestic Abuse forum is a multi-agency partnership. Its members come from a range of services and organisations in the local area including; Falkirk Council (Corporate & Neighbourhood services, Education, Child Protection, Social Work & Housing), Central Scotland Police, Forth Valley NHS, Falkirk & District Women's Aid, Central Scotland Rape Crisis & Sexual Abuse Centre (CSRC&SAC), Open Secret, SACRO, Victim Support and Relationships Scotland (Couple Counselling Central Scotland). Representation also comes from the Falkirk Domestic Abuse Pathfinder project and the Forth Valley CEDAR (Children Experiencing Domestic Abuse Recovery) programme.

Whilst domestic abuse remains a key focus, the forum has begun to consider the wider remit of violence against women including issues around rape and sexual assault, pornography, prostitution, human trafficking and forced marriage. In this respect some work needs to be done to identify the need for services to support victims within these areas and to raise awareness within the area.

Individuals who represent each agency of the forum accept the Scottish Government definition of domestic abuse, which is:

*Domestic abuse (as gender-based abuse) can be perpetrated by partners or ex-partners and can include **physical abuse** (assault and physical attack involving a range of behaviour), **sexual abuse** (acts which degrade and humiliate women and are perpetrated against their will, including rape) and **mental and emotional abuse** (such as threat, verbal abuse, racial abuse, withholding money and other types of controlling behaviour such as isolation from family and friends).*

Furthermore, all members support the Scottish Governments' belief that violence against women is any action which harms or causes suffering or indignity to women and children, where those carrying out the actions are mainly men and where women and children are predominantly the victims.

The vision of the Falkirk Multi Agency Domestic Abuse forum is that Falkirk can be an area where no form of violence against women is accepted or tolerated and where people who live and work in the area are able to challenge or prevent it. It is accepted however, that this is a long term goal. Our immediate objective is to increase the safety and wellbeing of women and children affected by male violence and to ensure that they know what services are available both locally and nationally to them and that they know how - and are confident enough - to access them.

This can only be done by ensuring that a shared approach is taken by relevant partners in the private, statutory and voluntary sectors. The purpose of this plan is to provide a focus on shared actions which will help agencies to work together collaboratively.

PREVENTION ... of acts of violence occurring (including repeat incidents)		
Action	Outcome	Responsibility
Continue to work with children & young people to raise their awareness of VaW issues	CYP will be more aware of the issues surrounding domestic abuse, rape, sexual assault, healthy relationships, responsible drinking attitudes	Education Services, Child Protection, Women's Aid, CSRC&SAC, SACRO Other forum members as appropriate
Continue to raise public awareness on the extent and effects of VaW	By supporting the '16 Days of Action' campaign and through attendance at networking events, posters etc make the general public more aware of VaW statistics and effects	All forum members where appropriate
Continue to promote awareness of VaW issues in our own organisations	By utilising intranet, displaying posters, attending meetings and holding briefing sessions etc ensure that awareness of VaW is raised	All forum members where appropriate
Continue to encourage our own staff and volunteers to attend training on issues around VaW	Appropriate staff/volunteers will have increased levels of understanding, knowledge & confidence	Domestic Abuse training Coordinator to publicise training. All forum members to encourage participation
Encourage medium-large sized local employers to consider the VAW agenda, including the impact on both employees and service users/customers.	Employers will be more aware of issues such as domestic abuse and how it might impact on staff & service users.	Domestic Abuse Policy Coordinator with forum members where appropriate
Forum members to report relevant statistics at each meeting	Information sharing will help to create a picture of what is happening in Falkirk area. Potential to highlight any gaps in services	All forum members as appropriate

Continue to investigate opportunities for men to address their offending behaviour (non court mandated)	Local interventions in place for men who have yet to be convicted of their actions. Increased awareness within the forum and the wider community of services available for men who perpetrate acts of VaW	Forum members as appropriate
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PROTECTION of women and children

Action	Outcome	Responsibility
Ensure information about support services is readily available to women and children	A constant supply of information is displayed in prominent areas, such as workplaces, libraries, schools, leisure centres, health centres, one stop shops, police stations	All forum members
Forum members to advise of any gaps in service or local issues that need a joined-up approach.	Information sharing and collaborative working should lead to improved service provision and support for women and children	All forum members

PROVISION of services and information

Action	Outcome	Responsibility
Continue to produce twice yearly e-newsletter	Information will be circulated to a wide variety of sources	Domestic Abuse Policy Coordinator with support from forum members

Develop website to provide information to the community and others about domestic abuse/VaW and sources of support.	A one-stop website will contain a wide variety of information about VaW issues, including how/where to access support services. The website will help raise the profile of the forum.	Domestic Abuse Policy Coordinator with support from forum members
Consider the forum's involvement in the local 'International Women's Day' event	Increased community awareness of VaW issues and an opportunity to discuss experiences/service gaps etc with the public	Domestic Abuse Policy Coordinator will liaise with Chair of Forum - other forum members to be involved as appropriate
Consider how the media might be used to inform women and children about local support services	There is a high-profile, targeted approach to raising awareness of Falkirk's commitment to eliminating domestic abuse and VAW issues	All forum members
PARTICIPATION of appropriate services/organisations/individuals		
Action	Outcome	Responsibility
Members to aim for at least 50% attendance at forum meetings throughout year. When attendance is not possible, members to provide written update on activities.	Opportunities to network and share information will be fully utilised	All forum members

<p>Continue to monitor forum membership and invite / welcome new members as appropriate.</p>	<p>MAP will be made up of appropriate members and any gaps will be addressed.</p>	<p>Chair of forum Domestic Abuse Policy Coordinator</p>
<p>Maintain links with other groups/forums and committees as appropriate to ensure a joined-up approach to VaW agenda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Forth Valley Domestic Abuse Strategy Group ◆ Forth Valley Domestic Abuse Training Consortium ◆ Falkirk Community Safety Partnership ◆ Falkirk GIRFEC pathfinder pilot ◆ CEDAR pilot programme ◆ Falkirk Child Protection Committee ◆ Falkirk Substance Forum ◆ National Network Tackling VaW 	<p>As VaW is a cross-cutting issue it is important that representation is made at other appropriate meetings/gatherings to ensure the links are maintained, contacts made and work is not duplicated.</p>	<p>Forum members as appropriate</p>
<p>Participate in and support initiatives across the wider Forth-Valley area:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ CEDAR pilot programme ◆ Falkirk GIRFEC pathfinder pilot ◆ 16 Days of Action ◆ Development of protocols for working with women involved in prostitution 	<p>Joined-up work will take place across the 3 local authority areas involving a number of partners. Work is shared and not duplicated.</p>	<p>Forum members as appropriate</p>
<p>Members to contribute to local and national consultation responses where appropriate.</p>	<p>A coordinated and joined-up approach is made to influence policy and its delivery at a local level.</p>	<p>Forum members as appropriate</p>