

# END

VIOLENCE  
AGAINST  
WOMEN  
& GIRLS

# STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK 2024-31



Northern Ireland  
Executive

[www.northernireland.gov.uk](http://www.northernireland.gov.uk)



# Our Vision

A CHANGED SOCIETY  
WHERE WOMEN AND  
GIRLS ARE FREE FROM  
ALL FORMS OF GENDER-  
BASED VIOLENCE, ABUSE  
AND HARM

---

INCLUDING THE  
ATTITUDES, SYSTEMS  
AND STRUCTURAL  
INEQUALITIES THAT  
CAUSE THEM

# Ministerial Foreword

Together we can create a future that is not only better and safer for women and girls, but more just, equal, and respectful for everyone.

Violence against women and girls must stop and we need to act now.

Prevention is key. We need everyone to understand what violence against women and girls is and know how to help prevent it.

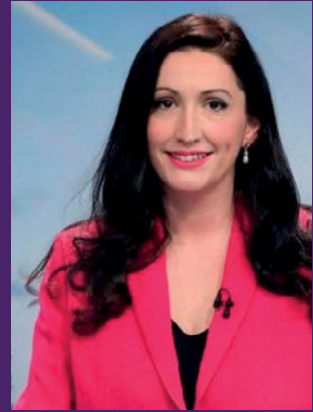
This Strategic Framework sets out a multi-pronged approach with meaningful steps towards a changed society, where women and girls are free from all forms of violence, abuse and harm.

From the outset we wanted to ensure this work would speak to the needs of women and girls and reflect their lived experience and views, it does that well; and the wider public consultation has clearly endorsed this focus and intent in the framework.

We want to acknowledge those people and organisations from across our society, representing different backgrounds and perspectives that have co-designed this Strategic Framework. This 'whole of society' approach to ending violence against women and girls reflects not only their ambition, but ours too.

This is not a women's issue, it is everyone's issue, we need our men and boys to play their part. Evidence and research tell us that we can end violence against women and girls in our society if we act together.

Together we must tackle the root causes of this deeply rooted problem. We have to change damaging attitudes, behaviours, and culture and stop the violence before it starts.



We want to help our children and young people to understand healthy and respectful relationships from early years; to know what is okay and what is not okay.

We believe that all women and girls, of all ages, including those who face additional barriers, should feel safe and be safe everywhere.

We want to support victims and survivors on their journeys to access the services they need, to build their confidence in the justice system, and ultimately prevent more harm and abuse.

This is a problem that is hidden in plain sight and every day we see how it is affecting the lives of women and girls, where they learn, live and work.

We are determined to deal with this urgent situation, working with our partners and communities we can bring about the change we all need to see.

Together we must create a better society for everyone, where violence against women and girls is never accepted, and which enables everyone to thrive and be safe. We are committed to see this happen.

First Minister  
**Michelle O'Neill**

deputy First Minister  
**Emma Little-Pengelly**



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# Executive Summary

This is a seven-year Strategic Framework to End Violence against Women and Girls mandated by the Northern Ireland Executive. It was co-designed by people from many sectors and backgrounds, with diverse perspectives, who are committed to ending violence against women and girls. The Strategic Framework is ambitious, long term, and wide reaching. It is a living document which will be reviewed and adapted along the journey according to emerging needs.

Violence against women and girls is a systemic and deep-rooted problem in our society. It is a problem that is hidden in plain sight and every day we see how it is affecting the lives of women and girls, wherever they learn, live, and work. This Strategic Framework will address the whole range of gender-based violence, abuse and harm which is disproportionately experienced by women and girls, and which is rooted in gender inequality.

Emerging evidence shows that the majority of women and girls in our society have experienced at least one form of gender-based violence, abuse and harm, ranging from everyday misogyny, sexual harassment in a public place or workspace, to more extreme physical violence. This leads to significant health and socio-economic impacts on families, communities, and our society and prevents the achievement of wellbeing for all.

By working collaboratively, we can build a society wide movement for prevention to drive the transformational change that is needed to end violence against women and girls

The Strategic Framework has a focus on tackling the root causes of violence against women and girls which include damaging attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours which are discriminatory towards women and girls, and which create a culture that enables violence, harm, and abuse to develop and be sustained.

The vision is **'a changed society where women and girls are free from all forms of gender-based violence, abuse, and harm, including the attitudes, systems, and structural inequalities that cause them'**. This will be achieved through the aim of 'working together as partners across society in public, private, and third sectors, and with the community to prevent and eradicate all forms of violence against women and girls with a focus on root causes.'

The co-design process identified four main themes which are: Prevention; Protection and Provision; The Justice System; and Working Better Together. Together, these themes make up the core foundation of this Strategic Framework. Under these themes, there are six outcomes which outline the big changes that are needed in our society to end violence against women and girls. Priority areas of focus for each outcome identify key areas where work is needed to bring about the changes.

The overall emphasis of the Strategic Framework is on prevention, tackling the root causes and stopping the violence before it starts. In order to prevent violence against women and girls effectively, there

needs to be a society wide focus on changing attitudes, behaviours and culture, equipping everyone to enjoy healthy, respectful relationships and ensuring that women and girls are safe and feel safe everywhere.

Addressing the needs of victims and survivors of all forms of violence against women and girls, and preventing further violence from taking place, are key to achieving the vision. There is a focus on providing high-quality services for women and girls who are victims and survivors of violence, harm and abuse and ensuring that the justice system has the confidence of victims, survivors, and the public in its ability to address violence against women and girls.

Central to everything will be working better together across society and government and this will be built into delivery of the Strategic Framework and key to successful outcomes.

Delivery of the Strategic Framework will take a trauma informed approach, will be evidence based and data driven. It will take a public health approach to prevention, ensuring that lived experience is a central thread. The Strategic Framework has been designed, and will be delivered, with an intersectional lens, ensuring that the needs of women and girls facing additional inequalities and barriers are embedded throughout. It will learn from and embed international good practice ensuring the achievement of the International Standards of the United Nations and the Istanbul Convention.

Violence against women and girls is a systemic and deep-rooted problem in our society. It is a problem that is hidden in plain sight and every day we see how it is affecting the lives of women and girls, wherever they learn, live, and work

This Strategic Framework outlines processes and structures for delivery that will ensure a whole of society and whole of government approach which is collaborative, respectful and challenging. It is recognised that there is much good work already being done across government and society. It is vital to build on this and work together to ensure it is sufficiently joined up, prioritised, and consistently evaluated in a way that mutually meets all the outcomes.

By working collaboratively, we can build a society wide movement for prevention to drive the transformational change that is needed to end violence against women and girls.

# Introduction

Ending all forms of violence, abuse, and harm against women and girls is one of the most pressing challenges facing our society today and is internationally recognised as a violation of the human rights of women and girls. Violence, abuse and harm against women and girls happens everywhere, every day and impacts how women and girls live, work, and socialise. Many experience violence from someone known to them, while others may experience it from a stranger in a public place or online.

This Strategic Framework addresses the whole range of gender-based violence, abuse and harm which is disproportionately experienced by women and girls and rooted in gender inequality. The interconnected continuum of violence ranges from everyday misogynistic attitudes and damaging culture to harmful, unwanted behaviours, and serious criminal offences and is overwhelmingly but not exclusively carried out by men.<sup>1</sup>

In the past, being a victim of violence against women and girls was too often hidden, ignored, or accepted but with long-term, life-changing impacts on the lives of women and girls and their families.



Despite much good work carried out across the voluntary and community sector, by public services and government, all these forms of violence, abuse, and harm against women and girls continue to be a big problem in our society.

We know that the full extent of the range of violence, abuse, and harm remains uncouned and under researched and what is reported is only the tip of the iceberg. Therefore, the data available only partly reflects the ongoing lived experience of women and girls throughout our communities.

The United Nations estimates that almost one in every three women globally will experience physical violence, sexual violence, or both in their lifetime

However, the emerging evidence and lived experience of women and girls presents a disturbing picture of this wide spectrum of violence, abuse, and harm that women and girls disproportionately experience on a daily basis. This is illustrated by the following statistics taken from various recent surveys and research carried out by Queen's University, Ulster University, the Young Life and Times Survey, the Trades Union Congress, and the PSNI:

- 75% of girls aged 16 surveyed experienced street harassment at least once in their lifetime<sup>2</sup>
- 73% of girls and young women surveyed, aged between 12 to 17 years of age, reported having experienced one or more forms of gender-based violence<sup>3</sup> and 98% of adult women surveyed said that they had experienced at least one form of gender-based violence or abuse in their lifetime<sup>4,5</sup>
- 67% of female students surveyed said that they had had at least one unwanted sexual experience during their time in higher education, including experiences of unwanted sexual contact, coercion, attempted rape, and rape<sup>6</sup>



98%

of women interviewed said that they had experienced at least one form of gender based violence or abuse in their lifetime

Every Voice Matters Report, Ulster University



**DR. JAYNE BRADY**  
Head of NI Civil Service

Comment from Co-design Reflection Day



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45% of surveyed 16-year-old girls and boys know someone who has verbally harassed a girl or a woman, for example, by cat calling, wolf whistling or shouting at her in the street

**Young Life & Times (YLT) 2022**

- 3 in 5 women polled across the UK said they have experienced harassment at work – rising to almost 2 in 3 women aged 25 to 34<sup>7</sup>
- 69% of all victims of domestic abuse crimes, recorded by PSNI in 2022/23 were female<sup>8</sup>
- 42 women across our society were murdered from January 2013 to June 2023 – that is 1 every 3 months<sup>9</sup>

According to research from the Women’s Policy Group submitted in response to the [Call for Views](#) to inform this Strategic Framework:<sup>10 11</sup>

- 82% of women surveyed first experienced men’s violence before the age of 20
- 83% of women surveyed have been impacted by men’s violence against women and girls but only 21% reported this to the police and 77% of those did not find it useful

The lives of women and girls cannot be reduced to statistics. The stories behind the statistics are stories about all of us. They are about girls and women we know in our families, and in every part of our lives and communities. Violence against women and girls cuts across all generations, all communities, and all spheres of our society.

It exists in many places. It is a problem that is often hidden in plain sight. Every day we see how it is affecting the lives of women and girls - wherever they learn, live, and work.



**ELAINE CRORY**  
Women’s Resource and Development Agency

Comment from Co-design Reflection Day



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In addition to these direct impacts, the threat of violence limits the quality of life for women and girls and reduces their participation in social, civic, political and economic life. It also has a damaging impact on children and young people who are witnesses and victims of domestic abuse and can go on to have an adverse effect on the rest of their lives.

90% of women surveyed believe our society has a problem with attitudes of sexism and misogyny and 81% believe there is stigma surrounding issues of violence against women and girls

**Women’s Policy Group Survey**

It is also important to recognise that while violence against women and girls occurs across all of society, some women and girls may face particular risks to their safety and additional barriers to justice, service provision, and support. This includes those who are deaf and disabled, minority ethnic, LGBTQIA+, older, financially dependent, homeless, those who suffer from addiction, looked after children,<sup>12</sup> as well as those with insecure immigration status and those residing in rural areas.



Throughout our communities, there is a growing awareness and sense of urgency that more needs to be done. In particular, we acknowledge the sustained advocacy, work, and determination of community and voluntary sector organisations, as well as those with lived experience. Increasing numbers of us are saying enough is enough.

This Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Women and Girls covers a seven-year period, from 2024-2031. It is recognised that the level of change envisioned in the Framework will only be achieved over the long term and will most likely need further work after the first seven years.

The responsibility for the implementation of the Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Women and Girls lies with everyone

**There is something that all of us can do**

The Strategic Framework has been co-designed by a **diverse range of people** representing different organisations from across society and government, including intersectional and lived experience representation. It sits within the context of a range of international treaties and human rights obligations. The four pillars of **the Istanbul Convention** informed the framing that was used in the process of co-design of the Framework.

There are already several other strategies, either in place or being developed, which are relevant to the issue of violence against women and girls; The stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy 2016-2023 and the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy 2024-2031 address specific forms of violence against women, men and children.

On 23 March 2021, **a motion was tabled in the Assembly** which condemned violence against women and girls and called on the Executive to take action.

The mandate from the Executive is clear and specific:

**‘a cross-sectoral task-group was needed to co-ordinate a strategic approach to tackling the root causes of violence against women and girls, that must be inter-sectional and focus on all forms of violence with a particular emphasis on behavioural and attitudinal change;’** and agreed

**‘to build this approach in the new Programme for Government with the necessary resource, and leadership from The Executive Office.’ – 25 March 2021.**

As part of this, the new Children and Young People’s Pillar will focus on preventing domestic and/or sexual abuse from happening; ensuring that children and young people who are victims are seen and heard; and that they can access services and receive support, helping them to recover, taking account of their particular needs. The proposed Gender Equality Strategy will deal with wider issues of systemic gender inequality. Each of these strategies are gender inclusive.



**CATHY GALWAY**  
Department of Justice

Comment from Co-design Reflection Day



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While violence against women and girls includes domestic and sexual abuse, there is a clear need to have a dedicated focus in tackling the wider spectrum of violence, abuse and harm against women and girls as well as the root causes which are underpinned by systematic gender inequality.

This will mean working strategically and collaboratively across government and society with those who are dealing with other parts of the problem of violence in our society - such as helping victims and survivors of domestic and sexual abuse, action on paramilitary violence, tackling modern slavery, child sexual exploitation, and child criminal exploitation. For prevention we will partner with the Department of Education in equipping and empowering children and young people to enjoy healthy respectful relationships. This collaborative working is underpinned by The Children’s Services Co-operation Act (Northern Ireland) 2015 and the Children and Young People’s Strategy 2020-2030.

Our work has mutual impacts and we need to ensure that all of our efforts are joined up, as well as highlighting the specific work needed to address the problem of violence against women and girls.



**DUANE FARRELL**  
Relate NI

Comment from Co-design Reflection Day



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## Building a better society for everyone

Wellbeing for all is at the heart of what Government aims to deliver in this jurisdiction. The ability to form and enjoy healthy relationships is central to individual wellbeing and vital to building better, more connected communities and a society where everyone can thrive.<sup>13</sup> This is something that we want for all our children, and for every individual and community here.

Violence against women and girls in all its forms is a critical obstacle to achieving this goal of wellbeing for everyone. It is damaging to women, girls, men, and boys. We can stop violence against women and girls by changing the attitudes and behaviours that enable it. We can transform attitudes, behaviours and culture that tell us that this is just the way things are and will always be. We can create a future that is not only better and safer for women and girls, but more just, equal, and respectful for everyone.

The voices of children and young people are important in shaping the work of prevention of violence against women and girls

Evidence and research tell us that we can end violence against women and girls in our society if we act together. There is something everyone can do, helping to create change where we live, learn, work and socialise. Together we need to build a society wide movement that stops violence against women and girls before it starts, that promotes a culture where healthy relationships are seen as the norm, where violence against women is never accepted, and which enables everyone to thrive and be safe.



**PAUL DEIGHAN**  
Education Authority

Comment from Co-design Reflection Day



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# What is Violence against women and girls?

**Violence against women and girls is an umbrella term used to cover a wide range of harm, abuse, and violence against women and girls because of their gender**

People sometimes think of violence as physical assault only, however violence against women and girls takes many forms and has deep roots as shown in the Pyramid of Gender-Based Violence.

The pyramid shows the interconnected continuum between the different types of violence, abuse and harm and the underlying root causes which enable the violence, abuse and harm to take place. This does not mean that there is a hierarchy of seriousness or severity based on physical force or harm but reflects the spectrum of complex and interlinked experiences of everyday misogyny, harassment, violation, and abuse for individual women and girls which is underpinned by inequality.

In the past there has been more focus on the urgent and more recognised issues at the top of the pyramid while less attention has been paid to the important work of tackling root causes which lie at the lower layers.



Pyramid of Gender Based Violence

**The United Nations define Violence Against Women and Girls as:** “any act of gender-based violence that results in or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.”<sup>14</sup>

This Declaration indicates that such violence is specifically ‘directed against a woman because she is a woman, or violence that affects women and girls disproportionately’.

A wider definition of violence against women is provided by The UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in their **General recommendation No. 35 from 2017 on gender-based violence against women**.<sup>15</sup>

## WHAT IS MISOGYNY?

Misogyny is a way of thinking that upholds the idea that men are superior to women and that it is right for women to have less power and freedom than men. This way of thinking can express itself in attitudes and behaviours which can be controlling, offensive and abusive.

Misogyny includes but is not limited to contempt for women as a group and ranges from disrespecting women and promotion of harmful stereotypes to physical and sexual violence.

# Violence against women and girls is comprised of actions and the threat of actions including:

**physical, sexual, psychological and emotional violence** occurring in the family including children and young people (Domestic Abuse), in the general community, or in institutions, including coercive control and stalking

**sexual harassment, bullying, and intimidation** in any public or private space

**workplace sexual harassment** ranging from sexual jokes or comments to unwanted sexual advances, requests for sexual favours and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature

**commercial and non-commercial sexual exploitation of women and girls, trafficking, child sexual abuse, so-called honour based violence,** including female genital mutilation, forced and child marriages, and so-called honour crimes

**harmful sexual behaviour** which is sexual behaviours expressed by children and young people that are inappropriate or abusive

**online and technology facilitated abuse** [or gender based violence] including cyberstalking, cyber flashing, sexual harassment, grooming for exploitation or abuse, image based sexual abuse and abuse through emerging technologies such as 'internet of things' devices

**financial abuse** such as controlling a woman's or girl's access to their money, taking loans or credit cards in their name, or using their money without their permission

**everyday harm** caused by everyday misogyny, sexist jokes and language, and discrimination which contributes to an atmosphere in which the threat of violence, specific or general is consistently in women's minds



**JOANNE BARNES**

Nexus

Comment from Co-design Reflection Day



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The Strategic Framework covers the whole spectrum of violence, abuse, and harm against women and girls and sets out how we can work together to end it. Targeted actions to tackle some specific harms, including, harms linked to paramilitarism and organised crime gangs are being led by other Departments and Agencies. There will be close collaboration with these initiatives to amplify, accentuate, and accelerate each other's work without duplication.

## What we know

Acknowledging the scale of violence against women and girls and the impact it is having in the lives of women and girls is an important first step in addressing the problem. Evidence of the prevalence of all forms of violence, abuse, and harm is scarce due to a lack of recorded statistics. Part of what this Strategic Framework will do is to gather and coordinate relevant data and evidence to inform how to address the issues and end violence against women and girls. Part of what we do know is shown below.



Almost **4 in 5** victims of sexual offences, recorded by PSNI in 2022/23, where the gender of the victim was known, were female

PSNI, 2023

# 71%

In UK, **71%** of women of all ages have experienced some form of sexual harassment in a public space

UN Women UK



In 2022/23, the median number of days taken to complete cases where the main offence was a sexual offence was **675 days**, the longest for any of the offence categories

Department of Justice, 2024



**75%** of girls experienced street harassment at least once in their lifetime

YLT, 2022  
Young Life and Times Survey



Almost **1 in 5** young males aged 16, believe posting jokes or nasty comments of a sexual nature on social media, or cat calling, wolf whistling and shouting at someone in the street are acceptable behaviours

YLT, 2022  
Young Life and Times Survey



**1 in 2 girls**, aged 16, have received an unwanted intimate photo/video at least once in their lifetime

YLT, 2022  
Young Life and Times Survey

We know while men and boys also suffer from many of these forms of violence, abuse and harm, the majority of victims are female and violence against women and girls is predominantly, but not exclusively, a pattern of behaviour perpetrated by men against women. Therefore, our mandate asks us to focus on violence against women and girls specifically.

77% of all victims of sexual offences recorded by PSNI were female

### Trends in Police Recorded Crime in Northern Ireland 2022/23

Of those convicted of sexual offences in 2022, at all courts combined, 99% were males

### Court prosecutions and out of court disposals statistics, 2022



## Root causes of violence against women and girls

Violence against women and girls, though common, is not inevitable. It can be prevented by tackling the root causes. It takes time to tackle this endemic problem; to achieve our long-term goal of preventing violence against women and girls, an important first step is to define and understand the root causes and the impact that they have.

It is also important to recognise that gender inequality also intersects with other forms of inequalities and discrimination which means that there are increased risks of violence, abuse, and harm for some groups of women and girls.

By tackling the root causes successfully, we can break the cycle of violence against women and girls and stop it before it starts.

### THE PROBLEM STATEMENT

**Societal culture and systemic attitudes and beliefs enable violence against women and girls**

Developed by Co-Design Group

The core problem that was identified by the co-design group is that the culture of the society that we live within, and the attitudes and beliefs that permeate our institutions and communities, enable violence against women and girls to take place.

Violence against women and girls is not caused by one single factor. It is rooted in historical inequalities, gender-based discrimination, and power imbalances between men and women. International evidence shows a strong and consistent association between gender inequality and levels of violence against women and girls.<sup>16</sup>

This violence and the threat of violence, abuse and harm has a significant impact on women's professional agency, impacting their participation in public life, limiting the number of women in leadership in key sectors which in turn can drive gender inequality.

These inequalities in our society have led to damaging attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours which are discriminatory towards women and girls, creating a culture where violence, harm, and abuse are more likely to happen, be tolerated, and even condoned. International evidence clearly shows that as the number of these factors and their degree of influence increases, the probability of violence against women and girls also increases.<sup>17</sup> Misogyny, sexist attitudes, harassment, coercive control, and physical violence are abuses of power that stem from gender inequality.

This is made worse through intergenerational trauma, particularly in the context where there is a history of violence, abuse and harm.

The main focus of the Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Women and Girls will be to address the culture of damaging attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours that can lead to violence against women and girls

## The role for men and boys

We will only end violence against women and girls if men and boys are part of the solution. Early exposure to misogynistic culture can develop attitudes and behaviours that can lead to harm, abuse and violence against women and girls.

Men and boys have a very important role to play alongside women and girls to bring about a culture change in attitudes and behaviour, promoting and modelling gender equality, challenging poor behaviour by others and building healthy, respectful relationships in all aspects of their lives.



**MICHAEL LYNCH**  
Men's Action Network

Comment from Co-design Reflection Day



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## The impact of violence against women and girls

Most women and girls have become used to limiting where they go and being vigilant in the way they do things, ordering their lives in a particular way because of the fear and real risk of attracting unwanted attention or violence.

For too many, the routines of living with everyday misogyny have a cumulative impact on their wellbeing and potential. In essence, women's space to lead their lives as they would choose is curtailed by the very real fear, borne out by experience, that life in our communities can be hostile and even dangerous.

Violence against women and girls can lead to significant and lasting impacts on women and girls' physical, mental, and sexual health, as well as their life chances.

Children who grow up in violent households also suffer severe consequences and may exhibit a host of adverse behaviours and emotions, including anxiety and depression. These can be associated with an increased likelihood of perpetration and being a victim of violence in later life.<sup>18</sup> The potential positive and negative impacts of community influences, peers, and the online world on young people's attitudes and ability to form safe and healthy relationships are also increasingly coming to the fore.

Violence against women and girls also has enormous economic and social impacts which affect our society. Women may suffer isolation, inability to work, loss of wages, and lack of participation in regular activities.

In addition to the costs for the individual women and girls and their families, costs to wider society include health care, housing, police, and court services, as well as costs resulting from the loss of productivity.

We do not yet have a complete picture of the full economic cost of violence against women and girls, but we do know that conservative estimates of the costs of domestic and sexual violence and abuse range between £730 million to £1 billion per year in



this jurisdiction. This amount does not include the full impacts and costs of all forms of violence, abuse and harm against women and girls in this jurisdiction as we know that we do not have a true picture of prevalence due to underreporting. In addition, the costs do not include the impacts of everyday harassment, in real life and online.

Preventing violence against women and girls by tackling root causes can achieve improvements to the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities and have a wider positive impact on the economy. It removes a direct obstacle to economic and social progress and will help improve overall wellbeing.<sup>19</sup>

Children who grow up in violent households also suffer severe consequences and may exhibit a host of adverse behaviours and emotions, including anxiety and depression



We do not yet have a complete picture of the full economic cost of violence against women and girls, but we do know that conservative estimates of the costs of domestic and sexual violence and abuse range between £730 million to £1 billion per year in this jurisdiction

## The International Context

This Strategic Framework is underpinned by the context of the rights and duties in international treaties and human rights standards that the UK has signed up to.

These include:

**The Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence** (also known as the Istanbul Convention)

**The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)**, which sets out an agenda for action to end all forms of discrimination against women

**The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)**, which grants all children and young people aged 17 and under a comprehensive set of rights

**The International Labour Organisation Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190)** affirms that everyone has the right to a world of work free from violence and harassment

We have also taken into account our duties outlined in the **Human Rights Act 1998** which incorporates the protections set out in the **European Convention on Human Rights** into UK law. Additionally, we have considered other statements by international bodies which have been especially influential in the area of ending violence against women and girls, including:

**The Beijing Declaration and Global Platform for Action** which calls on Governments to take integrated measures to prevent and eliminate violence against women and girls

**Inquiry concerning the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland under article 8 of the Optional Protocol** to the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women of 2018 (CEDAW/C/OP.8/GBR/1)

**United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security**

**Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment**

**International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights**

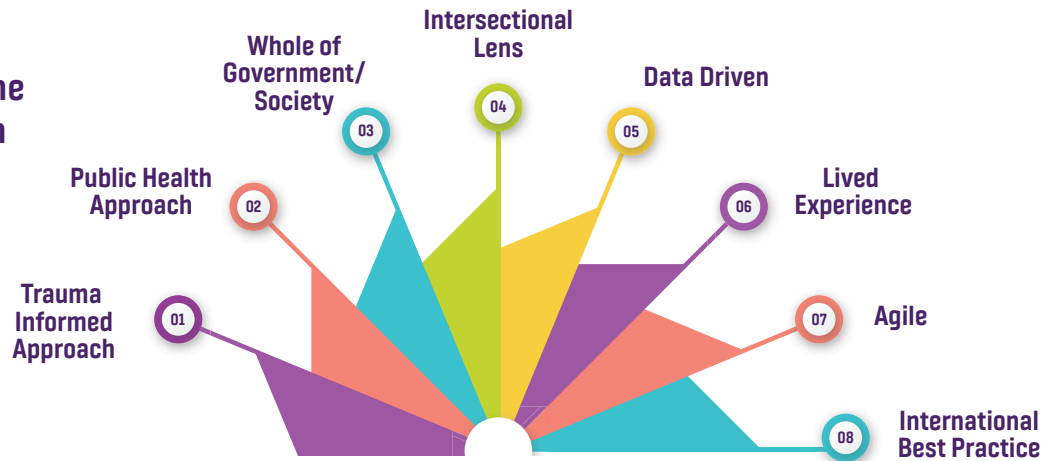
**International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination**

**Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

## The Strategic Framework Principles

The way we work together to solve this problem is just as important as the actions that we take. The co-design group established eight principles which will form the basis for the outworking of the Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Women and Girls in our society.

### Guiding Principles for the Implementation of the Strategic Framework



### 1. Trauma Informed Approach

A trauma informed approach will be infused throughout the implementation of the Strategic Framework. A trauma informed approach realises the prevalence of trauma in our society, recognises when trauma may have impacted upon a person affecting their behaviour, their coping responses and their relationships. It supports the development of trauma sensitive/trauma responsive skills, which inform service delivery and policy development at all levels, supporting positive outcomes.<sup>20</sup>

### 2. A Public Health Approach

A public health approach addresses complex health and social problems in a preventive way, using data to identify the best levers to use on a whole of population basis. It focuses on tackling the root causes and on early prevention. A public health approach will ensure that we have information about the populations which require interventions, as well as about risk and protective factors, that will allow us to shape interventions and services appropriately and measure success.

### 3. A Whole of Society and Whole of Government Approach

Tackling such a deep rooted problem requires all parts of society and government to focus on the problem together. This will mean embedding collaboration in everything we do and continuing to look at how our work can impact across society.

### 4. An Intersectional Lens

Many women and girls face multiple intersecting inequalities and barriers to justice and support which can interact to increase their vulnerability to violence. A Strategic Framework which applies an intersectional lens will be more effective in identifying and dismantling these inequalities and barriers, taking account of the power relations and systems and structures that create and maintain them.

### 5. Evidence based, data driven and joined up – measuring change, outcome based

Data is critical for building our understanding of the problem, measuring our progress toward ending it, and informing funding, service design, and delivery decisions. A deeper, wider evidence base will help us take the specific needs of everyone in our society into account, and measure change well.



## An overview of the Strategic Framework

This co-designed Strategic Framework sets the agenda for all of government and society to end violence against women and girls. It is ambitious, long term, and wide reaching. It is a living document which will be adapted along the journey according to emerging needs.

The Vision is one of a changed society where women and girls are free from all forms of gender-based violence, abuse, and harm, including the attitudes, systems, and structural inequalities that cause them. Everyone across society has a role to play, big and small, to achieve this vision.

It will require all of us to act and to be involved in change wherever we live, learn, work, and socialise. We will need to work together as partners across society, in public, private, third sector, and in the community to prevent and eradicate all forms of violence against women and girls. We must ensure that all our actions are aligned and underpinned by strong structures, processes, and accountability.

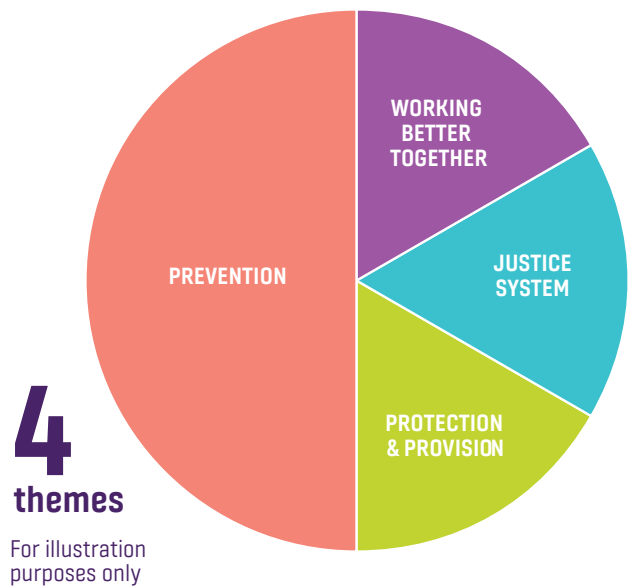


**KENDALL BOUSQUET**  
NI Migrant Centre

Comment from Co-design Reflection Day



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The overall emphasis of the Strategic Framework is on prevention, tackling the root causes, and stopping the violence before it starts

The overall emphasis of the Strategic Framework is on prevention, tackling the root causes, and stopping the violence before it starts. This work will take account of our society's unique context and history. The outworking of the Framework will be intersectional, trauma informed, take a whole of society and whole of government approach, be informed by lived experience, and focus on change at a population level.

Working collaboratively towards a common purpose, we can build a society wide movement for prevention that will drive the necessary transformation.

The Co-Design group identified six big changes that need to happen in our society. These form the six outcomes of the strategic framework which are:

**Outcome 1: Changed attitudes, behaviours, and culture** - Everyone in society understands what violence against women and girls is, including its root causes, and plays an active role in preventing it

**Outcome 2: Healthy, respectful relationships** - Everyone in society is equipped and empowered to enjoy healthy, respectful relationships

**Outcome 3: Women and girls are safe and feel safe everywhere** - Organisations and institutions across government and society embed the prevention of violence against women and girls in all that they do, so that women and girls are safe and feel safe everywhere

**Outcome 4: Quality frontline services, protection, and provision for victims and survivors of violence against women and girls** - Provision of high-quality services for women and girls who are victims and survivors of violence against women and girls

**Outcome 5: A justice system which has the confidence of victims, survivors and the public in its ability to address violence against women and girls** - In the context of violence against women and girls, a justice system that is trauma informed, considers the needs of people who come into contact with it, gives victims and survivors a voice and a place in the process, holds perpetrators to account, while challenging and supporting them to change and has the confidence of the public

**Outcome 6: All of government and society working better together to end violence against women and girls** - A whole system approach with collaboration and cooperation by default across central and local government, statutory bodies, and with, within and between the community, voluntary, trade unions, employers, business and other sectors

Long term coordinated action is needed on all of these outcomes in order for us to really see change happen and for progress to be made. We want to build a shared understanding of what we all need to do to make this happen. We hope that all of society will have ownership over this Strategic Framework and commitment to its ambitions.

It is only through a collaborative approach across society and government that we can start to build the transformative change we need

# The Strategic Framework

This Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Women and Girls has been prepared from the output of a co-design process that ran from October to December 2022. A group of over 50 stakeholders came together from across government, different sectors, and wider society, including intersectional representation and, importantly, those with lived experience.

Co-design is about designing with, not for; it is designed to ensure everyone was able to participate on an equal footing and to bring their creativity to solving the problem. Therefore, the content of this Strategic Framework has been shaped by people from many sectors and perspectives; people who are committed to making a change across the whole of society and to end violence against women and girls.

This is a seven-year Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Women and Girls. It is recognised that ending violence against women and girls will require a long-term sustained effort beyond seven years.

## THE AIM

### HOW WE PLAN TO DO IT:

**The aim of the Strategic Framework is to work together as partners across every sector of society to prevent and eradicate all forms of violence against women and girls with a focus on root causes.**

## VISION

### PREVENTION

**CHANGED  
ATTITUDES,  
BEHAVIOURS  
& CULTURE**

Everyone in society understands what violence against women and girls is, including its root causes, and plays an active role in preventing it

OUTCOME

1

**HEALTHY,  
RESPECTFUL  
RELATIONSHIPS**

Everyone in society is equipped and empowered to enjoy healthy, respectful relationships

OUTCOME

2

6

OUTCOME

**ALL OF GOVERNMENT  
AND SOCIETY  
WORKING BETTER  
TOGETHER TO END  
VIOLENCE AGAINST  
WOMEN AND GIRLS**



**TAHNEE McCORRY**  
White Ribbon NI

Comment from Co-design Reflection Day



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**A changed society where women and girls are free from all forms of gender-based violence, abuse and harm including the attitudes, systems and structural inequalities that cause them**

**PROTECTION & PROVISION**

**JUSTICE SYSTEM**

**WOMEN AND GIRLS ARE SAFE AND FEEL SAFE EVERYWHERE**

Organisations and institutions across government and society embed the prevention of violence against women and girls in all that they do, so that women and girls are safe and feel safe everywhere

**OUTCOME**

**3**

**QUALITY FRONTLINE SERVICES, PROTECTION AND PROVISION FOR VICTIMS & SURVIVORS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS**

Provision of high-quality services for women and girls who are victims and survivors of violence against women and girls

**OUTCOME**

**4**

**A JUSTICE SYSTEM WHICH HAS THE CONFIDENCE OF VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS & THE PUBLIC IN ITS ABILITY TO ADDRESS VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS**

In the context of violence against women and girls, a justice system that is trauma informed, considers the needs of people who come into contact with it, gives victims and survivors a voice and a place in the process, holds perpetrators to account, while challenging and supporting them to change and has the confidence of the public

**OUTCOME**

**5**

A whole system approach with collaboration and cooperation by default across central and local government, statutory bodies, and with, within and between the community, voluntary, trade unions, employers, business and other sectors

- Long term collaborative resourcing for effective delivery
- Robustly evidence based and data informed policy development with measurable outcomes
- Strong and proactive leadership at all levels of government and society to drive transformative change to end violence against women and girls
- Prevention of violence against women and girls mainstreamed in public policy
- Joined up decision making and governance



# The Strategic Framework at a glance

This Strategic Framework has been developed by the co-design group and is for all of us as a society. It describes the changes which are needed and the work that needs to be done to bring about an end to violence against women and girls.

This Strategic Framework is made up of: 4 themes; 6 outcomes; and 19 priority areas, which inform a series of actions that will take place over the next seven years.

## The changes that are needed - Outcomes

### Outcome 1

#### Changed Attitudes, Behaviours & Culture

Everyone in society understands what violence against women and girls is, including its root causes, and plays an active role in preventing it

### Outcome 2

#### Healthy, Respectful Relationships

Everyone in society is equipped and empowered to enjoy healthy, respectful relationships

### Outcome 3

#### Women and girls are safe and feel safe everywhere

Organisations and institutions across government and society embed the prevention of violence against women and girls in all that they do so that women and girls are safe and feel safe everywhere

## The work that needs to be done to bring about these changes - Priority Areas

- 1.1 Integrated long-term campaigns to change attitudes, behaviours, and culture, including online
- 1.2 Individual sectors promote positive attitudes and behaviours to prevent violence against women and girls at all ages

- 2.1 Parents, carers, and early years providers support children to develop healthy, respectful relationships during their early years
- 2.2 Schools, Further, and Higher Education support children and young people to develop healthy, respectful relationships
- 2.3 Youth and community sectors support children and young people to develop healthy, respectful relationships
- 2.4 Supporting people and organisations who work with those at risk of using violence or those at higher risk of becoming victims of violence against women and girls

- 3.1 Individual sectors develop and embed ending violence against women and girls in the design of policies, strategies, services and procedures that prevent violence against women and girls, and create safe environments for women and girls
- 3.2 Supporting development of policies, procedures, tools and training that help women and girls be safe and feel safe online



## The changes that are needed - Outcomes

### Outcome 4

#### Quality frontline services, protection, and provision for victims and survivors of violence against women and girls

Provision of high quality services for women and girls who are victims and survivors of violence against women and girls (funded, available, accessible, responsive)

### Outcome 5

#### A justice system which has the confidence of victims, survivors and the public in its ability to address violence against women and girls

In the context of violence against women and girls, a justice system that is trauma informed, considers the needs of people who come into contact with it, gives victims and survivors a voice and a place in the process, holds perpetrators to account, while challenging and supporting them to change and has the confidence of the public

### Outcome 6

#### All of government and society working better together to end violence against women and girls

A whole system approach with collaboration and cooperation by default across central and local government, statutory bodies, and with, within and between the community, voluntary, trade unions, employers, business and other sectors

## The work that needs to be done to bring about these changes - Priority Areas

- 4.1 General frontline services are effective in identifying violence against women and girls, provide responsive services, and make appropriate referrals
- 4.2 Specialist services for victims and survivors of violence against women and girls are available, effective, sustainable, and accessible

- 5.1 Victims and survivors needs are fully taken into account at each stage of the justice process
- 5.2 Reduce delays in the justice system for cases involving violence against women and girls
- 5.3 Joined up processes for cases involving violence against women and girls in the justice system
- 5.4 Effective systems and programmes for perpetrator prevention and management

- 6.1 Long term collaborative resourcing for effective delivery
- 6.2 Robustly evidence based and data informed policy development with measurable benefits/ outcomes
- 6.3 Strong and proactive leadership at all levels of government and society to drive transformative change to end violence against women and girls
- 6.4 Prevention of violence against women and girls mainstreamed in law and public policy
- 6.5 Joined up decision making and governance

# Prevention

The emphasis of the Strategic Framework is on prevention. Effective prevention can both prevent violence from occurring in the first place and reinforce the response system to interrupt the cycle of violence.

Prevention cannot be a short-term effort, but rather an undertaking that requires ongoing commitment from government, collaboration across society, increased research to inform and monitor progress, and sustained action that addresses violence against women and girls at its source.

In order to prevent violence against women and girls, our main focus will be on:

- changing attitudes, behaviours, and culture;
- building knowledge and skills of individuals to form healthy relationships;
- ensuring that women and girls are and feel safe everywhere.

## Outcome 1 – changed attitudes, behaviours, and culture

**Everyone in society understands what violence against women and girls is, including its root causes, and plays an active role in preventing it**

Violence against women and girls does not happen in a vacuum. It has its roots in damaging, attitudes, behaviours and culture that are embedded in our society and which need to be addressed. These attitudes, behaviours and culture contribute to an environment where negative behaviours are accepted and unchallenged, leading to violence against women and girls impacting across our society, ranging from street and workplace harassment to online abuse, sexual violence, and femicide.<sup>22</sup>

**Prevention is about addressing the underlying causes of violence against women and girls, to stop it before it occurs.**

(UN Women, 2012)



**ANTOINETTE McKEOWN**  
Sport NI

Comment from Co-design Reflection Day



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In order to achieve the vision of a changed society, it is vital that everyone has a shared understanding of what violence against women and girls is, including its root causes and impact in all its forms. However, understanding on its own doesn't lead to change.

It is equally vital that everyone is empowered to take an active role in preventing violence against women and girls, and equipped with the knowledge, motivation, and skills to play their part.

Effective prevention will change the beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours that condone violence against women and girls.

**Under this outcome the priority areas of focus are:**

### **1.1 Integrated long-term campaigns to change attitudes, behaviours, and culture, including online**

The development of joint campaigns on a whole of society basis is an ongoing and central part of the Strategic Framework and a key tool in prevention work. These campaigns will be informed by stakeholders and lived experience and will be aimed at increasing understanding on all forms of violence against women and girls and their root causes and changing the attitudes, behaviours, and culture that enable them.

Particular areas of focus will include:

- partnering across government and with stakeholders in wider society to develop joint messaging to address the root causes, drivers, and the impact of violence against women and girls, and on the role that everybody has to prevent it
- co-creating campaigns with young people and children, and those with lived experience of abuse, harm, and violence
- delivery of campaigns in partnership with different sectors and aimed at all kinds of people across all stages of life
- using innovative ways to spread awareness on key messages to all parts of our society, including collaborative work in sports, arts, leisure, and social media

**We need to change attitudes, behaviours and culture**

### **1.2 Individual sectors promote positive attitudes and behaviours to prevent violence against women and girls at all ages**

In order to drive changes across our society, it is vital that every sector and every community has access to resources that allow them to explore and better understand the importance of their role in preventing violence against women and girls and take action.

Particular areas of focus will include:

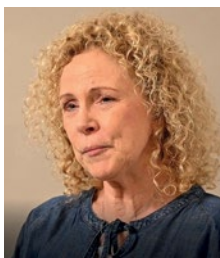
- building connections in partnership with all sectors, sharing resources and good practice, and co-creating new materials to help more people achieve greater impact in tackling the root causes of violence against women and girls in their organisations and communities
- implementation of interventions supported by evidence as effective in changing attitudes and behaviours including the active bystander approach. Partners could include employers, sports, education, faith, and community sectors among others
- identification of bespoke interventions with specific sectors, such as the media, to improve the standards of reporting on violence against women and girls
- identifying influencers to support this work within different sectors
- embedding evaluation in the design of programmes from the beginning to identify what works and provide information to partners in the design and selection of effective interventions

## Outcome 2 – Healthy, Respectful Relationships

### Everyone in society is equipped and empowered to enjoy healthy, respectful relationships

We know that healthy and respectful relationships are key in promoting an individual's physical, mental, and social wellbeing and protecting against a range of serious negative outcomes. They are also a significant component of wellbeing.<sup>23</sup>

Violence against women and girls in all its forms is an all too prevalent obstacle to achieving this goal of wellbeing for everyone. In order to tackle this challenge, there is an urgent need to focus on our children and young people. This means supporting parents and carers from the very start of a child's life including through pregnancy, and throughout their earliest years; and working with both formal education and the community, to support our young people throughout their educational career, to post primary and third level education. We want all children and young people to know that any type of violence, abuse, and harm in relationships is never acceptable. Our ambition is for our children and young people to have the right knowledge and skills to have fulfilling and safe relationships throughout their lives.



**JACQUI MONTGOMERY DEVLIN**  
Faith Forum

Comment from Co-design Reflection Day



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Our young people are exposed to messages online which undervalue, demean and humiliate women and girls, as well as increased access to pornography from a young age. In addition, there has been a recent rise of online influencers who have a toxic influence on men and boys in our society, and negatively impact their views on women and girls. These new influences are layered on top of a context and history of societal violence, gender inequality, and resulting trauma. This is the environment in which our young people are growing up and, without significant action, it can lead to a lack of understanding about what a good relationship looks like and what consent is.

All of this together constitutes a crisis with serious consequences for current and future generations.

**Under this outcome the priority areas of focus are:**

### 2.1 Parents, carers, and early years providers help children to develop healthy, respectful relationships during their early years

Parents and carers of young children and early years providers have a very important role in helping to prevent violence against women and girls by modelling respect and equality in relationships and addressing rigid and harmful gender stereotypes from a child's early years.

Particular areas of focus will include:

- partnering with government and community to co-design and deliver holistic whole family programmes that embed respectful and equal, positive relationship education and support across all early years' support programmes
- partnering with parenting, carer organisations, and early years providers to ensure that families and carers have access to the tools, knowledge, and support that they need to promote healthy relationships from a young age

**Parents and carers of young children and early years providers have a very important role in modelling respect and equality in their relationships**

84% young people, aged 16, have never heard of the term coercive control or are unsure of what it means - Young Life and Times 2020/21

## 2.2 Schools, Further, and Higher Education support children and young people to develop healthy, respectful relationships



### Schools

Schools are very well placed to lead the way in attitudinal and behavioural change, with a whole school environment which equips and supports the empowerment of future generations to develop healthy, respectful relationships and gender equality. Addressing the root causes of violence against women and girls will be a central part of achieving this outcome.

**A whole school environment which equips and supports the empowerment of future generations to develop healthy, respectful relationships and gender equality**

Particular areas of focus will include:

- research including mapping and evaluating what is presently being done within the education sector that is relevant to violence against women and girls, and scoping emerging issues and promising responses
- introducing whole school approaches to developing healthy and respectful relationships, within a wider safeguarding framework and culture, including policies and interventions that equip and support young people to address harmful attitudes and behaviours

- working together with young people and the education sector to strengthen and mainstream education on strong and healthy relationships throughout the curriculum for all ages and learning needs
- further developing, in collaboration with young people, the design of relationship and sex education which is accessible, inclusive, and age and developmentally appropriate, in the context of changes to mandatory content
- equipping teachers at all stages of their careers to respond to the challenges of violence against women and girls and the related attitudes and behaviours within schools
- equipping school leaders, governors, and parents to understand the issues and act on them appropriately including working with the Department of Education and the Education Authority on the development of guidance and resources for schools on how to monitor and respond to incidences of harmful sexual behaviour

### University and Further Education

Within University and Further Education settings there is already lots of coordinated good practice taking place to respond to the high levels of unwanted sexual experiences. This will be built on and scaled up.

Particular areas of focus will include:

- expansion of interventions that equip and support students to understand all forms of violence against women and girls and address harmful attitudes and behaviours. This would include the evidence based active bystander approach
- working together with other external services as part of a holistic University and Further Education wide approach to ensure safety on and off campus
- equipping university and college staff at all stages of their careers to respond to the challenges of violence against women and girls and the related attitudes and behaviours

# 67%

67% of female students surveyed said that they had had at least one unwanted sexual experience during their time in higher education, including experiences of unwanted sexual contact, coercion, attempted rape and rape

Unseen at Uni Report

**Within University and Further Education settings there is already lots of coordinated good practice taking place to respond to the high levels of unwanted sexual experiences**

## 2.3 Youth and community sectors support children and young people to develop healthy, respectful relationships

Children and young people spend much of their time outside of formal education involved in community, sport, faith and youth organisations; these can play a pivotal role in the promotion of healthy, respectful, equal, and safe relationships.

Particular areas of focus will include:

- reinforcing work already being done in this sector and scaling it up for increased impact, including promotion of the active bystander approach, relationship education in community settings, and building on the mentoring and role modelling done by youth workers
- integration of young people's voices on what is needed within the education and community sectors to prevent violence against women and girls
- creation of a community fund to support interventions across society that are equipping children and young people in the development of healthy and respectful relationships
- programmes with youth, faith, and sport sector that support the empowerment of women and girls to understand their rights and how to form healthy, safe relationships
- programmes with youth, faith, and sport sectors that support and engage men and boys to equip them to be part of the common goal of ending violence against women and girls

**We want all children and young people to know that any type of violence, abuse, and harm in relationships is never acceptable**



- equipping professionals who work with children and young people, at all stages of their careers, to respond to the challenges of violence against women and girls and the related attitudes and behaviours in the settings in which they work
- research, including mapping and evaluating what is presently being done within the community and youth sector that is relevant to violence against women and girls, as well as scoping emerging issues and promising responses in collaboration with young people
- creation of a unified platform for sharing effective evidence-based materials and development of new materials to fill gaps

Working together to connect and share learning will be important in this area.



**MICHELLE HARRIS**  
Barnardo's

Comment from Co-design Reflection Day



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**Our ambition is for our children and young people to have the right knowledge and skills to have fulfilling and safe relationships throughout their lives**

## 2.4 Supporting people and organisations who work with those at risk of using violence or those at higher risk of becoming victims of violence against women and girls

Those at risk of using violence or those at higher risk of becoming victims of violence against women and girls require particular help, especially those who have not yet come in contact with the agencies where help is available. Early intervention for these two very different groups can prevent the issue escalating.

Particular areas of focus will include:

- further research to better understand the individual risk factors that make someone more likely to become a perpetrator of violence against women and girls
- creation of partnerships across government and the voluntary and community sector to embed awareness of violence against women and girls in programmes that are dealing with reinforcing factors of violence against women and girls, such as exposure to violence during childhood, alcohol abuse, and mental health issues
- campaigns and information sharing to raise awareness of the links between risk factors and violence against women and girls
- review of referral mechanisms between specialist services of violence against women and girls and services dealing with reinforcing factors of violence to ensure that people are getting the right help when they need it
- scope the need for evidence based non-adjudicated perpetrator programmes
- map general services to ensure that risks to potential victims are understood and identified and that referral gateways to support operate effectively
- promotion of referral gateways for everyone who wants relevant counselling and relationship support, including for older people and families

## Outcome 3 – Women and Girls are safe and feel safe everywhere

### Organisations and institutions across government and society embed the prevention of violence against women and girls in all that they do so that women and girls are safe and feel safe everywhere

Sexual harassment and other forms of gender-based violence abuse and harm in public and private spaces, both rural and urban, are a frequent occurrence for many women and girls. This ranges from street harassment, unwelcome sexual gestures and remarks, right up to serious criminal offences against both women and girls.

It can happen to any woman or girl anywhere; including in the workplace, public parks, sports facilities, social spaces and events, public transportation, streets, schools, online, and at home. It includes abuse of women with a public profile, such as political representatives.

This reality affects the ability of women and girls to participate fully and to thrive within school, work, sport, public life and online, as well as negatively impacting on their health and wellbeing. There are specific issues for groups who face additional risks and barriers which may not be recognised by all service providers.



**TRASA CANAVAN**  
Barnardo's

Comment from Co-design Reflection Day



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**Women and girls should be safe and feel safe everywhere**

Under this outcome the priority areas of focus are:

### 3.1 Individual sectors develop and embed ending violence against women and girls in the design of policies, strategies, services and procedures that prevent violence against women and girls, and create safe environments for women and girls

Organisations, businesses and institutions across all sectors can take many different kinds of actions to make their environment safe for women and girls.

Particular areas of focus will include:

- identifying best practice in creating safe environments for women and girls and promoting evidence-based interventions including at home, noting the work that is included under the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy
- working collaboratively to identify innovative solutions to improve safety in public spaces, for example risk mapping/reporting apps
- promoting the requirements of the [International Labour Organisation Convention C190 \(the Violence and Harassment Convention\)](#) to ensure that workplaces are aware and compliant
- sector specific actions to maximise safety in areas like sport, arts, and faith
- adopting a cross-sectoral approach to ensuring safety of women and girls in the University and Further Education sector
- adopting a cross-sectoral approach to ensuring safety of women and girls in the night-time economy. This will include the implementation of the Hospitality Ulster/White Ribbon led Women's Night-Time Safety Charter<sup>24</sup> and training for workers in the identification and reporting of violence against women and girls
- cross-sectoral review of workplace policies, procedures, reporting pathways and toolkits, and development of common best practice models to ensure safety of women and girls in the workplace
- scoping of the use of conditions in entertainment and premises licensing to enhance safety of women and girls



It will be important to link new work on violence against women and girls in all of these areas to existing safeguarding practices, referral mechanisms and relevant policy across Government such as the Domestic Abuse (Safe Leave) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022. This will promote, protect and develop women and girls' wellbeing in all aspects of their lives.



**CLARE MOORE**  
The Irish Congress of Trade Unions  
Co-design participant



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### 3.2 Supporting development of policies, procedures, and tools that help women and girls be safe online

The online space is becoming increasingly unsafe for women and girls. Online abuse normalizes unacceptable behaviour, inhibits women and girls from expressing themselves in online spaces, and can have long lasting impacts. It is especially important to ensure that the online space is safe for children and young people. Abusers can use online platforms as well as emerging technologies such as 'smart', [internet of things] devices to further harass victims and survivors.

Particular areas of focus will include:

- awareness raising on actions to take, including campaigns and development of supports to guard against online harm
- development of a technology challenge fund to stimulate innovative approaches to addressing this issue
- development of specific interventions to address harassment of women in public life
- promoting media literacy skills and providing information to help users to keep themselves safe online and develop critical skills in regard to online material.
- inputting to UK wide legislation to deal with degrading or abusive material online
- working with partners to ensure that there are clear public health information and resources that signpost children, parents and carers to appropriate support including working with the Department of Health Keeping Children and Young People Safe Online Strategy

# 59%

Almost 3 in 5 girls (59%), aged 16, have been sent unwanted sexually explicit pictures, photos, or videos online at least once in their lifetime.

Young Life & Times 2022

**Sexual harassment and other forms of gender-based violence abuse and harm in public and private spaces, both rural and urban, are an everyday occurrence for women and girls**

**This reality affects the ability of women and girls to participate fully and to thrive within school, work, sport, public life and online, as well as negatively impacting on their health and wellbeing**

# Protection and Provision

## Outcome 4 – Quality frontline services, protection, and provision for victims and survivors of violence against women and girls

### Provision of high-quality services for women and girls who are victims and survivors of violence against women and girls – funded, available, accessible, responsive



**LINDSAY FISHER**  
PSNI

Comment from Co-design Reflection Day



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Everyone in our community should be able to access help and support, such as that provided by doctors, social services, lawyers, social housing providers, and social security offices. In this section, we call this ‘general frontline support’.

Victims and survivors of violence against women and girls should also be able to access specialist services to protect and support them and their families and ensure they have access to what they need. In this section, we call these ‘specialist services.’

Most specialist services are available to everyone in society in the same way. Some groups facing additional inequalities, such as members of minority ethnic communities, LGBTQIA+ or deaf and disabled women and girls among other groups, who suffer violence against women and girls may need to receive

specialist services in a tailored way which addresses the needs of these groups and removes or mitigates the barriers to justice and support facing them.

When there is a risk of violence, general frontline services need to provide relevant support to women and girls and signpost to other relevant services; while specialist services are needed to protect and support victims and survivors and their families, ensuring that they have access to what they need, whilst taking account of the needs of groups facing additional inequalities and barriers.

There is a need to ensure services for victims of violence against women and girls provide early intervention, deliver a coherent and consistent trauma informed response across a diverse range of needs, are informed by lived experience, and have long term funding.

Violence against women and girls will impact different people in different ways. Lived experience and better data will help us understand the needs of groups facing additional inequalities and barriers who may be at higher risk and aid us in ensuring that they can access quality services when they need it.

**Women and girls who are victims of violence should be well looked after by support systems**

**Under this outcome the priority areas of focus are:**

#### **4.1 Support for general frontline services so they are effective in identifying violence against women and girls, provide responsive services, and make appropriate referrals**

Particular areas of focus will include:

- ensuring that general frontline services move towards an integrated response towards violence against women and girls that is easy to navigate from the first point of contact, with information shared across services in an appropriate and sensitive way
- mapping provision by general frontline services of support for women and girls at risk of violence, including referral gateways
- undertaking a gap analysis in general frontline service provision including for those with complex needs facing additional barriers to support
- developing and delivering, in partnership with professional training bodies, a training framework targeted at professionals in general frontline services who come into contact with the at-risk population of women and girls in their work
- research to identify prevalence of violence against women and girls among those at risk who do not access services and to use it to develop appropriate interventions and support pathways

#### **4.2 Support for specialist services for victims and survivors of violence against women and girls so they are available, effective, sustainable, and accessible**

Particular areas of focus will include:

- mapping provision by specialist services of support for victims and survivors of violence against women and girls, including referral gateways
- undertaking a gap analysis in specialist service provision including for those facing additional barriers to support
- capacity building for existing specialist services based on identified need for groups facing additional inequalities and barriers
- targeted and agile work to allow a short period of intense focus on areas which may need particular attention
- scoping an accessible single site online communication platform linked to campaign and education material to provide signposting and advice for all services relating to violence against women and girls
- consideration of a Barnahus-type model in support of the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy

# The Justice System

## Outcome 5 – A justice system which has the confidence of victims, survivors, and the public in its ability to address violence against women and girls

**In the context of violence against women and girls, a justice system that is trauma informed, considers the needs of people who come into contact with it, gives victims and survivors a voice and a place in the process, holds perpetrators to account, while challenging and supporting them to change and has the confidence of the public**

The role of the criminal justice system is significant in that it must hold perpetrators to account and discourage violence, whilst ensuring appropriate care for victims and survivors. The civil and family justice systems, also have an important role in dealing with dispute resolution and protection orders for those who may have experienced violence against women and girls.

Similarly, many victims and survivors of violence against women and girls may be involved in other forms of proceedings, such as tribunal proceedings. These proceedings should also take into account the context of trauma for the victim. There is also a need to prevent and reduce reoffending through working with perpetrators to challenge them and support them to change.

We know that victims and survivors have diverse lived experiences and will be affected by violence and trauma differently, which means they may have different needs in terms of their journey through the justice system.

**Everyone should be able to have confidence in the justice system to address violence against women and girls**

Evidence from the Call for Views highlighted that there are potential barriers to accessing justice which can occur at all stages.

Some women and girls are generally hesitant to report violence. This can be due to a variety of factors, including concerns about stigma, social pressure, fear of retribution from perpetrators or others, unwillingness to refer family members to the criminal justice system, concerns about the investigative process, the cross-examination process, length of time it takes for cases to conclude, and/or low conviction rates and sentencing.

Some victims and survivors who have engaged with the justice system have found their interactions to be traumatic, causing additional harm to that inflicted by the perpetrator. Victims have said that their experience, including giving evidence in adversarial proceedings and traditional cross-examination, can be daunting and they have found a lack of access to support services before, during and after proceedings. Factors like these can influence victims to abandon their case.



The fact that many victims and survivors choose not to engage with the criminal justice system, decide to discontinue their cases, or proceed only through the civil courts, means that the true scope of violence against women and girls is concealed.

As well as ensuring that the needs of victims and survivors are effectively addressed, it is important to focus on the offender to ensure that they are held accountable, supported and challenged to change their behaviour including for abuse carried out online and through devices.

**The fact that many victims and survivors choose not to engage with the criminal justice system, decide to discontinue their cases, or proceed only through the civil courts, means that the true scope of violence against women and girls is concealed**

**As well as ensuring that the needs of victims and survivors are effectively addressed, it is important to focus on the offender to ensure that they are held accountable, supported, and challenged to change their behaviour including for abuse carried out online and through devices**

Many of these issues have already been recognised and are being addressed by other strategies and through work being led by various statutory bodies and community and voluntary sector organisations. It will be important to ensure that all our efforts are joined up, utilising performance indicators that are meaningful across the board so that we can see what is working and what may need some more attention. The role of the Strategic Framework under this outcome will mainly be to support existing initiatives in partnership with those leading other strategies, with a clear focus on avoiding unnecessary duplication, and to identify areas where further development would be helpful.

# The Justice System

**Under this outcome the priority areas of focus are:**

## 5.1 Victims and survivors' needs are fully taken into account at each stage of the justice process

Particular areas of focus will include:

- identifying and increasing awareness of the needs of women and girls involved in proceedings who are victims and survivors of violence against women and girls. A focus will be required on identifying and tackling additional inequalities and barriers to support faced by some groups of women and girls
- ensuring victims and survivors have access to appropriate support services with good signposting and are kept informed about the process
- trauma informed training for professionals who come into contact with victims and survivors
- considering specific measures in the field of criminal legislation and sentencing to enhance the confidence of victims, survivors, and the general public in the justice system
- introducing and supporting champions who will take the lead in promoting good practice within their profession
- introduce training, resourcing and monitoring frameworks with every piece of new legislation as appropriate

Particular concern was expressed in the Call for Views and during the co-design process about the barriers in accessing justice for victims and survivors with no recourse to public funds because they are subject to immigration control. This has been identified as a suitable topic for an early Problem-Solving Task Group.

## 5.2 Reducing delays in the justice system for cases involving violence against women and girls

Particular areas of focus will include:

- identifying options to reduce delay and improve efficiency of the justice system in cases involving violence against women and girls. Avoidable delays are known to add to the trauma inflicted on victims and survivors and it is vital that women and girls have the confidence to use the justice system

## 5.3 Joined up processes for cases involving violence against women and girls

Particular areas of focus will include:

- improved consistent data capture across the systems to ensure better understanding of cases involving violence against women and girls
- enhanced sharing of information across the system for effective management of cases involving violence against women and girls
- practical arrangements which can improve victims and survivors feeling of safety within the court environment
- identifying options for streamlining the key interfaces between different courts (criminal/civil/family) that deal with cases involving violence against women and girls
- identifying arrangements which optimise the expertise of courts dealing with cases involving violence against women and girls

## 5.4 Effective systems and programmes for perpetrator prevention and management

Particular areas of focus will include:

- ensuring appropriate adjudicated and non-adjudicated perpetrator behavioural programmes are available
- research to further understand the reinforcing factors for offending which can include adverse childhood experience (ACE's), substance misuse, and mental ill health
- identifying support pathways for those at risk of offending to address risk factors commonly found alongside offending related to violence against women and girls, including mental health, substance use, accommodation and employability
- exploring the development of a multi-agency approach to the management of high risk and repeat offenders with an agreed common framework such as the Multi Agency Tasking and Coordination (MATAC) model in Scotland

**We know that victims and survivors have diverse lived experiences and will be affected by violence and trauma differently, which means they may have different needs in terms of their journey through the justice system**

# Working Better Together

## Outcome 6 – All of government and society working better together to end violence against women and girls

**A whole system approach with collaboration and cooperation by default across central and local government, statutory bodies, and with, within and between the community, voluntary, trade unions, employers, business and other sectors**

In order to effectively tackle violence against women and girls, it is essential that we work in a more strategic and joined up way, embedding good practice. The following priority areas are strategic enablers, the threads of good practice that will drive forward implementation of the Strategic Framework. Each of them relates to all of the other 5 outcomes and are critical to effective delivery:

**Joined up/  
governance**

**Mainstream in  
public policy**

**Proactive  
leadership**

**Evidence  
based**

**Collaborative  
resourcing**

Components of Good Practice informing implementation of the Strategic Framework

In addition, agile work groups, bringing together lived experience and other subject matter experts, will be set up to allow for short periods of focused work to investigate particular challenges and co-create potential solutions (Problem-Solving Task Groups).

### 6.1 Long term collaborative resourcing for effective delivery

Particular areas of focus will include:

- ambitious but realistic costing of all our initiatives and achievement of adequate funding to tackle this systemic and ingrained problem
- exploring innovative resourcing models that promote collaborative working and joined up thinking will optimise the impact of our resources
- developing a training and knowledge transfer approach to ensure expertise, skills, and new thinking is shared across the wider public sector and civic society

### 6.2 Robustly evidence based and data informed policy development with measurable benefits/outcomes

Data is essential for understanding the problem of violence against women and girls, measuring our progress toward ending it, and informing funding, service design, and delivery decisions. Data capture and data-sharing mechanisms need to be comprehensive, disaggregated, regular and comparable, gathering consistent and high quality data to use across the system and which is up to date.

Particular areas of focus will include:

- **Data (evidence base)**

To understand the landscape fully, it is necessary to develop the evidence base and strengthen data collection across all sectors and age cohorts of society. Data mapping will be crucial to identify data already available and explore the gaps, including a requirement for disaggregated data within existing data collection methods.





**CHRIS GARDNER**  
The Executive Office  
Comment from Co-design Reflection Day



[CLICK HERE](#)

• **Measurement and evaluation**

In order to ensure that our actions are working we need to monitor and evaluate. To do this we need high quality data which is not constrained by silos.

• **Lived experience**

In addition to the quantitative data, we want the voices of lived experience (qualitative data) to be part of designing a system that works for all. A mechanism is required to allow these voices to be heard in a manner which will respect the rights of those involved.

• **Share information and embed good practice**

We want to give all partners access to the best international and local research, data, communication resources, and good practice and make appropriate links with other local violence prevention and reduction programmes and initiatives.

**6.3 Strong and proactive leadership at all levels of government and society to drive transformative change to end violence against women and girls**

Collaborative and proactive leadership, both political and civic, is of vital importance in the creation of a society wide movement and to drive change in all sectors and across our community to end violence against women and girls.

Particular areas of focus will include:

- identifying change agents across civic society and co-creating opportunities to champion the issue, such as a civil society pledge
- working with political champions and developing opportunities to provide leadership on the issue such as an all-party agreement or working group to encourage collaborative working across party lines

- embedding ending violence against women and girls into the Programme for Government to ensure a focus on ending violence against women and girls throughout government
- exploring options to drive collaboration and accountability in this area such as creating legislative powers and duties

**6.4 Prevention of violence against women and girls mainstreamed in public policy**

Particular areas of focus will include:

- encouraging partners within government to think proactively about violence against women when developing and delivering policies and services
- maximise the potential of existing government mechanisms, such as procurement or licensing, to mainstream ending violence against women and girls good practice

**6.5 Joined up decision making and governance**

Particular areas of focus will include:

- establishment of appropriate governance structures for the Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Women and Girls
- establishment of mechanisms which allow for cooperation and coordination with other intersecting strategies, especially where there are interdependencies
- establishment of arrangements to facilitate working with other jurisdictions
- consideration of the potential of gender budgeting as a mechanism to assist in this area

# Our Approach to Delivery

## Transformative Change

In order to end violence against women and girls, it is essential that we work in a more strategic, collaborative, and joined up way, embedding good practice and bringing about change. This ethos helped to shape the process of co-design, which was foundational to the development of the Strategic Framework and will inform our approach to delivery and supporting arrangements.

### Focus

The vision, principles and outcomes of this Strategic Framework underpin our approach to delivery. They guide everything we will do, for they represent everything we want to achieve. We will plan, deliver and evaluate on this basis.

### Partnerships

Through working together in co-design to get to the heart of this challenging issue, a strong and connected network of key stakeholders has been formed. New relationships have been forged and there is a clear commitment from all to the ambition of ending violence against women and girls. We will build on this and continue to engage and work with key stakeholders across society and government, and we will explore other partnership opportunities to help bring about change.

### Ways of working

We must work better together as partners across every sector of society to prevent and eradicate all forms of violence against women and girls, and with a focus on root causes.

**Connection and Coordination** of work across Government and with other sectors will drive strategic focus and operational impact. This can involve different approaches, reflecting different

contexts. The Strategic Framework ensures that where relevant work is already ongoing, it will not be duplicated. Instead, we will work to amplify, accelerate, and augment. Where new work is required, discussions will be held on where best to locate it and how best we can support it, whether by leading, investing, collaborating or joining up.

**Expertise and Advice** will be sourced through comprehensive engagement and agile arrangements which harness expertise by lived experience, local service providers, and international and local academic research. In developing these arrangements, we will ensure appropriate alignment including with those supporting the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy, and links with other violence prevention and reduction programmes and initiatives.

**The Executive Office** will lead support for a society wide approach and growing coalition. It will connect the work and expertise of a wide range of stakeholders, including Community and Voluntary Sector services and lived experience, while improving data, sharing local and international research, promoting good practice, and delivering and supporting campaigns. Together with an Insight and Reference Network, this will embed and sustain a focus on partnerships and ways of working needed to deliver change.

## Oversight and Accountability

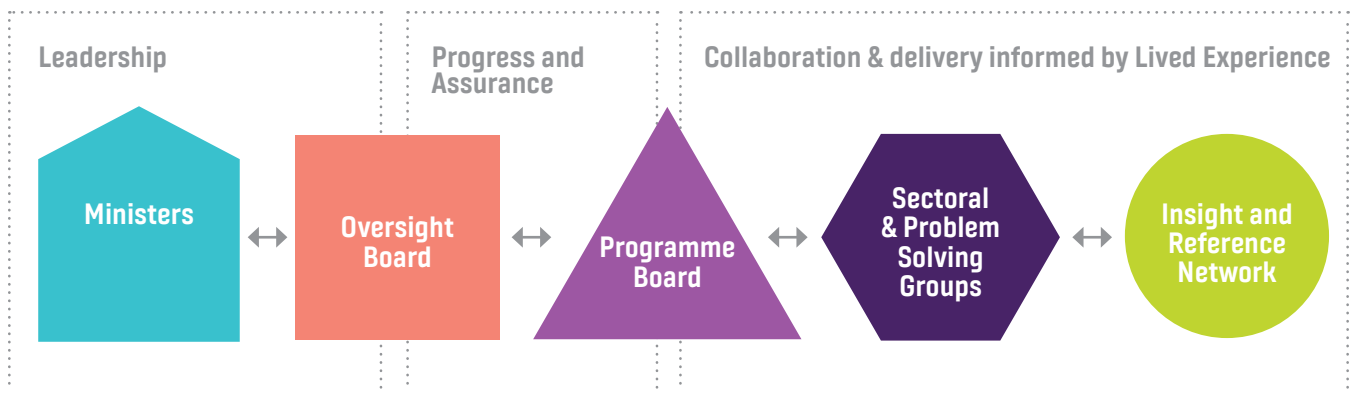
This is a whole of society and whole of government approach and it is vital that transformative change is realised.

**Leadership** is needed to drive this change and ways of working across government departments and in partnership with other sectors. We must be able to measure impact and oversee **progress** and provide **assurance** on delivery of all outcomes and in all areas.

Staying true to our strategic focus, we must embed **collaboration** and **delivery informed by Lived Experience** and do so in more innovative and meaningful ways.

Governance structures providing oversight and accountability must remain agile to promote collaborative, connected delivery. Each element of the arrangements will support a wider coalition and contribute in different ways to ensuring effective delivery of the Strategic Framework and Delivery Plans.

### Ending Violence Against Women and Girls – PROGRAMME STRUCTURE



**Ministers** will spearhead the type of change needed across government, and encourage the civic leadership required across society that ensures there is something everyone can do to end violence against women and girls. They will oversee the Strategic Framework and hold those responsible for delivery of key actions to account and be focused on assurances that delivery is informed by and connected to local communities and the voices of lived experience.

Supporting Ministerial leadership, the **Oversight Board** is chaired by Junior Ministers and includes the Permanent Secretaries of key delivery Departments, and representation from other key agencies and local government and the Community and Voluntary Sector. This Board will review and monitor the implementation of the Strategic Framework taking account of the wider strategic context, including how priorities and actions span Departments and public sector organisations, and linkages to other relevant strategies.

**Programme Board** – this is chaired by the Programme’s Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) in the Executive Office. It will monitor progress against Delivery Plan targets and enable updates on the wider EVAWG work of departments, their supported bodies and organisations, and impact of other relevant strategies and activities. Membership will reflect that of the Oversight Board.

An **Insight and Reference Network** will evolve from and continue the collaborative focus of the co-design process which shaped the Strategic Framework. It will give strong connection to and support collaboration with the Community and Voluntary sector, and other partners. It will promote the work and impact of these organisations, share learning, forge new connections, and provide a mechanism to inject service provision expertise and lived experience into delivery of programme Delivery Plans.

Regular and inclusive engagement with the Network will ensure that other governance structures are informed by the views of the Network, and that its entire membership is kept up to date on progress and developments.

**Sectoral Groups** and **Problem-Solving Groups** will facilitate focused, short-term projects on identified issues, bringing together relevant insights and expertise. Participation (including by those with lived experience) will be drawn from our Insight and Reference Network, and can include others from across departments, statutory agencies, other parts of the community and voluntary sector, and other sectors as necessary.

**Delivery plans and a supporting monitoring framework** will be developed to deliver the Strategic Framework. The monitoring framework will be developed using ‘Outcomes Based Accountability’ and will be informed by an outcomes focused data driven approach, while enabling measurement of high-level change towards the outcomes. Where appropriate, we will seek to align actions, indicators and the way we measure progress towards our outcomes, with those being used in other related strategies including the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy.

An independent mid-term review will be conducted to examine progress to date against the outcomes and priority areas, to assess the impact of the strategy, and review governance arrangements.

Delivery of the Strategic Framework and Delivery Plans will also be subject to established accountability arrangements (to Ministers and the Executive), to scrutiny by the Assembly and its Committees and to any relevant International Treaty monitoring mechanisms, such as those for the Istanbul Convention.

# Concluding Remarks

**Violence against women is a serious deep rooted societal problem. Ending it is a significant task, a generational challenge which requires a strong society wide vision for transformational change. This co-designed Strategic Framework sets out a journey to achieve this change.**

**Violence against women and girls is preventable. It must be stopped before it starts. Prevention can help create a future that is not only safer for women and girls, but is more respectful, just and equal for everyone in our society.**

**To achieve the societal transformation necessary to prevent violence against women and girls, we need systematic and coordinated investment and effort at the widest possible scale, at all levels of government and society.**

**There is something everyone can do. Let's get started.**

# Annexes

## Annex A - The Strategic Landscape

This Strategic Framework forms part of a web of support for everyone in our society. Ensuring it is joined up and protects everyone is part of our challenge. There are many other strategies and programmes of work across government which are relevant to ending violence against women and girls and we will be coordinating with them as necessary. It will also be important to work with local government and other partner agencies with this same goal in mind.

**Some of the most relevant strategies and programmes of work are set out below.**

The **Domestic and Sexual Abuse (DSA) Strategy 2024-2031**, led by the Department of Justice and Department of Health, will build on the first **Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in NI Strategy (2016-2023)**. It sets out a renewed focus on tackling domestic and sexual abuse regardless of gender or gender identity. In addition, the **major review, conducted by Sir John Gillen** into the law and procedures applied in serious sexual offences in NI made recommendations for systemic reform and is currently in implementation phase.



Recognising the cross-cutting nature of violence against women and girls, and the emphasis on early intervention in this Strategic Framework, we are working closely with the **Department of Education** in order to ensure that ending violence against women and girls is mainstreamed into policy development, service delivery and the curriculum.



The proposed suite of four **Executive Social Inclusion Strategies (Anti-Poverty, Disability, Gender Equality, and Sexual Orientation)** development of which is being led by the Department for Communities, focuses on identifying and addressing the issues, barriers, and disadvantages that undermine equality of opportunity in our community. Close co-operation and the sharing of information will ensure that we complement each other's work and collaborate where possible. **The Executive Programme on Paramilitary Organised Crime (EPPOC)** is an Executive wide public health-based strategy to end paramilitary violence and organised crime. We intend to share with them a cross-departmental structure and a foundation in data-driven public health approaches to violence prevention.



**The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI)** have also developed an **Action Plan: Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls** which will contribute to a society in which violence and abuse against women and girls in any form, anywhere, is not acceptable and will not be tolerated. It will also aid in building trust and confidence in policing.



**The Public Prosecution Service (PPS)** published their policy on Prosecuting Cases of Domestic Abuse in February 2024 and have recently updated their joint Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the PSNI for the Investigation, Management and Prosecution of cases involving Domestic Abuse. This updated SLA aims to strengthen the prosecution team approach in tackling domestic abuse. PPS and PSNI also co-chair a Domestic Abuse Working Group which meets to discuss joint actions in relation to tackling domestic abuse and recommendations coming from Criminal Justice Inspection reports and internal quality assurance exercises. There is regular consultation via the PPS Stakeholder Engagement Forum. The PPS have also published a revised Sexual Offences Policy in November 2023. The PPS are working closely with the PSNI to develop a joint strategy on cases involving serious sexual offences and to promote a prosecution team approach in tackling sexual and domestic abuse. The proposed joint serious sexual offences strategy will seek to inform and reassure the public in relation to the principles and standards employed in this area and how they work together to achieve their Strategic Objectives.



## Annex B – Reference List

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## Annex C – Co-Design Partners

- Age NI
- Allstate NI
- Barnardo's
- Department for Communities
- Department of Education
- Department of Health
- Department of Justice
- Disability Action
- Diversity Mark
- Education Authority
- Faith Forum
- Labour Relations Agency
- Men's Action Network
- Migrant Centre NI
- National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC)
- Nexus NI
- NI Sports Forum
- Northern Ireland Committee – Irish Congress of Trade Unions (NI-ICTU)
- Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE)
- Northern Ireland Rural Women's Network (NIRWN)
- Ofcom Northern Ireland
- Police Service Northern Ireland (PSNI)
- Probation Board for Northern Ireland
- Public Health Agency
- Public Prosecution Service
- Queen's University Belfast Students Union
- Queen's University Belfast Teachers Training
- Relate NI
- Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI)
- Society of Local Authority Chief Executives SOLACE NI
- Sport NI
- The Executive Office
- The Rainbow Project
- Ulster University
- Victim Support NI
- Voice of Young People In Care (VOYPIC)
- White Ribbon NI
- Women with Lived Experience
- Women's Aid Federation NI (WAFNI)
- Women's Resource and Development Agency (WRDA)
- Youth Action NI



## Co-Design Partners

**Vox Pop Recordings from Co-design members:** The Strategic Framework was co-designed by people from many sectors and backgrounds, with diverse perspectives, who are committed to ending violence against women and girls. On the final Co-design Reflection Day, Monday 27th March 2023, a number of participants came together to comment on the process.

These voices and others that participated in co-design all reflected the level of involvement, the passion and the commitment in creating a Strategic Framework that will bring about the big changes needed to end violence against women and girls.



**DR. JAYNE BRADY**  
Head of NI Civil Service

Comment: [CLICK HERE](#) 



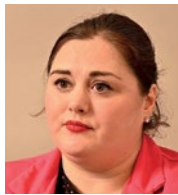
**SONYA MCMULLAN**  
Women's Aid

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**ELAINE CRORY**  
Women's Resource and Development Agency

Comment: [CLICK HERE](#) 



**AISLING PLAYFORD**  
The Rainbow Project

Comment: [CLICK HERE](#) 



**DUANE FARRELL**  
Relate NI

Comment: [CLICK HERE](#) 



**CATHY GALWAY**  
Department of Justice

Comment: [CLICK HERE](#) 



**PAUL DEIGHAN**  
Education Authority

Comment: [CLICK HERE](#) 



**JOANNE BARNES**  
Nexus

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**MICHAEL LYNCH**  
Men's Action Network

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**GRETA GURKLYTE**  
Disability Action

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**BARBARA PORTER**  
Public Health Agency

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**KENDALL BOUSQUET**  
NI Migrant Centre

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**TAHNEE MCCORRY**  
White Ribbon NI

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**ANTOINETTE MCKEDOWN**  
Sport NI

Comment: [CLICK HERE](#) 



**JACQUI MONTGOMERY DEVLIN**  
Faith Forum

Comment: [CLICK HERE](#) 



**LINSEY FARRELL**  
Department of Education

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**MICHELLE HARRIS**  
Barnardo's

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**TRASA CANAVAN**  
Barnardo's

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**LINDSAY FISHER**  
PSNI

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**CIARAN MCQUILLAN**  
Public Prosecution Service

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**CHRIS GARDNER**  
The Executive Office

Comment: [CLICK HERE](#) 



**CLARE MOORE**  
The Irish Congress of Trade Unions

Comment: [CLICK HERE](#) 

## Annex D - Help and Support



### Nexus NI

provide a specialised professional counselling service primarily focused on enabling positive change for those impacted by sexual abuse and abusive relationships.

Web: [About | Nexus NI](#)

Email: [info@nexusni.org](mailto:info@nexusni.org)

Tel: 028 90326803

24 hour Domestic and Sexual Abuse Helpline:

Freephone: 0808 8021414 Email: [help@dsahelpline.org](mailto:help@dsahelpline.org)



### Women's Aid NI

work to provide trauma informed support services to women, children, and young people who have experienced domestic abuse.

Web: [Get help - Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland](#)

Email: [info@womensaidni.org](mailto:info@womensaidni.org) Tel: 028 90249041



### Victim Support NI

helps people affected by crime, including hate crime, eCrime, and sexual and domestic violence crime.

Web: [Victim Support Northern Ireland](#)

Email: [info@victimsupportni.org.uk](mailto:info@victimsupportni.org.uk)

Tel: 028 90243133



### NSPCC

provides therapeutic services to help children move on from abuse, as well as supporting parents and families in caring for their children.

Web: [NSPCC](#) Email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

Tel: 08088005000

24/7 Childline Helpline Web: [Childline](#) | Childline Tel: 08001111



### The Rainbow Project

is a health organisation that works to improve the physical, mental, and emotional health and well-being of LGBTQIA+ people and their families.

Web: [Rainbow Project](#) Email: [info@rainbow-project.org](mailto:info@rainbow-project.org)

Tel: 028 90319030



### Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI)

are taking specific actions to tackle violence against women and girls.

Website: [What we are doing to tackle violence against women and girls?](#)

Report an emergency: Call 999

Report a non-emergency:

Call 101 or online: [Online Incident Reporting](#)



### Men's Advisory Project NI

offers services of support to any man who has faced, or who is facing, domestic abuse across all of Northern Ireland.

Web: [MapNI](#) Email: [info@mapni.co.uk](mailto:info@mapni.co.uk)

Tel: Belfast: 028 90241929 / Foyle: 028 71160001

## Annex E - Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Kelly, Liz. 1988. *Surviving Sexual Violence*. Cambridge: Polity.

<sup>2</sup> Northern Ireland Statistics and research Agency, (2023) *Ending Violence Against Women and Girls: Experiences and Attitudes of 16 year olds in Northern Ireland*, accessed April 14. [Ending Violence Against Women and Girls: Results from the Young Life and Times Survey 2022](#)

<sup>3</sup> Based on a sample size of 179 young women who responded to this survey question. McAlister, S, Neill, Gail, Schubotz, D, Templeton, M. (2023). 'Its just what happens': Girls and Young Women's Views and Experiences of Violence. Queens University – Centre for Children's Rights and Ulster University.

<sup>4</sup> Based on a sample size of 542 women who completed the survey. Lagdon, S. et al. (2022) *Every Voice Matters! Violence Against Women in Northern Ireland*. Ulster University.

<sup>5</sup> These research findings mirror the results of UK wide research on sexual harassment of women and girls in the UN Women UK YouGov survey. Available here: [UN Women Sexual Harassment in Public Spaces](#) and the ONS survey on the Nature of sexual assault by rape or penetration, England and Wales: Year ending March 2020. Available here: [Nature of sexual assault - Office for National Statistics](#)

<sup>6</sup> This survey used a non-random sample of 1,033 students. 830 of these were women. Taken from: Ngozi Anyadike-Danes et al., 2022. 'Unwanted and Non-Consensual Sexual Experiences Reported by University Students in Northern Ireland,' Ulster University. Available here: [Unseen at Uni - Ulster University](#)

<sup>7</sup> Based on a sample size of 1010 working women in the UK aged over 18. The poll was carried out for the TUC by Opinium. Available here: [TUC Poll on sexual harassment, bullying or verbal abuse at work](#)

<sup>8</sup> PSNI Domestic Abuse Trends. Available here: [Domestic Abuse Statistics | PSNI](#)

<sup>9</sup> Police Service of Northern Ireland [PSNI Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Action Plan](#)

<sup>10</sup> The Women's Policy Group Northern Ireland is a platform for women working in policy and advocacy roles in different organisations to share their work and speak with a collective voice on key issues. Website: [Women's Policy Group](#)

<sup>11</sup> This survey was based on a non-random sample of 1,065 responses. Taken from: Women's Policy Group NI. 2022. *Just a Fact*

of Life: being a woman in Northern Ireland. *Violence Against Women and Girls in Northern Ireland: NI Women's Policy Group Research Findings*.

<sup>12</sup> A child who has been in the care of their local authority for more than 24 hours is known as a looked after child.

<sup>13</sup> Robert Waldinger and Mark Schulz. 2023. *The Good Life: Lessons from the world's longest scientific study of happiness*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

<sup>14</sup> United Nations General Assembly, *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (1993)*, accessed April 14, 2023. Available here: [UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women](#)

<sup>15</sup> General recommendation No 35 on gender-based violence against women updating general recommendation No. 19 (1992). Available here: [General recommendation No. 35 \(2017\)](#)

<sup>16</sup> Heise, L., & Kotsadam, A. 2015. Cross national and multi-level correlates of partner violence: An analysis of data from population-based surveys. *Lancet Global Health*, 3, 332– 40; United Nations. 2006. *Ending violence against women: From words to action (Study of the Secretary-General)*; UNDP. 2020. *Tackling social norms: A game changer for gender inequalities*. United Nations Development Programme; World Health Organization and London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. 2010. *Preventing intimate partner and sexual violence against women: Taking action and generating evidence*. World Health Organization; Heise. 2011. *What works to prevent partner violence – An evidence overview*. STRIVE; Ellsberg, M., Arango, D. J., Morton, M., Gennari, F., Kiplesund, S., Contreras, M., & Watts, C. 2014. *Prevention of violence against women and girls: What does the evidence say?* *Lancet*; Michau, L., Horn, J., Bank, A., Dutt, M., & Zimmerman, C. 2014. *Prevention of violence against women and girls: Lessons from practice*. *Lancet*, 385(9978), 1672–84

<sup>17</sup> Same as previous

<sup>18</sup> Mark A. Bellis et al., 'Adverse Childhood Experience: Retrospective Study to Determine their Impact on Adult Health Behaviours and Health Outcomes in a UK Population,' *Journal of Public Health* 36, no. 1 (2013): 81–91

<sup>19</sup> Wellbeing is the focus of the NI Civil Service Missions.

<sup>20</sup> Text provided by the Safeguarding Board of Northern Ireland. Available here: [SBNi Safeguarding is everyone's business](#)

<sup>21</sup> Joint Call for Views initiated by The Executive Office and the Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Directorate, along with the Department of Health and the Department of Justice renewed Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy.

<sup>22</sup> Mary Ellsberg et al. 2015. 'Prevention of violence against women and girls: what does the evidence say?' *Violence Against Women and Girls* 1, no. 385 (2015): 1555 – 1566.

<sup>23</sup> Waldinger and Schulz, *The Good Life*, 2023.

<sup>24</sup> Hospitality Ulster/White Ribbon UK, *Women's Night Time Safety Charter NI*. Accessed April 14 2023, Available here: [Women's Night Safety Charter NI | Hospitality Ulster](#).



**END** VIOLENCE  
AGAINST  
WOMEN  
& GIRLS

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