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**Preventing Domestic Abuse**  
A National Strategy



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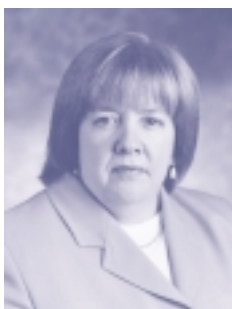
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## MINISTERIAL FOREWORD



We are now entering the second term of the Scottish Parliament. Tackling domestic abuse was a priority for the Scottish Executive in its first term and it will be no less of one in the second. In the past 4 years, the Scottish Executive has worked, with its partners, to raise awareness of the issue and to bring about improvements in the protection and in the provision of appropriate support services available to women and their children who experience abuse.

We have achieved a great deal in our first term. All local authority areas now have active multi-agency domestic abuse groups. Membership includes a "core group" of police, Women's Aid, Victim Support, Health Boards and social work, housing, education and community safety council departments. In addition some groups have members representing Procurators Fiscal, Benefits Agency, Family Mediation, Barnardos, Children First and other voluntary action groups. These are our partners and stakeholders.

I am delighted to take over the domestic abuse portfolio and I offer my personal commitment that I will work with all our partners to bring about the kind of society we want in Scotland – one where women and children can live free from the fear of abuse.

We are committed to implementing the National Strategy to Address Domestic Abuse and we are steadily working our way through the Action Plan it contains. Our most notable successes have been the £10 million Refuge Development Programme and the Domestic Abuse Service Development Fund. We also have our ground breaking awareness raising campaigns, the latest of which, "Dolls House" focuses on the effect that domestic abuse has on the children in the family.

While it is very important that women who experience domestic abuse should receive all the help and support they need, our ultimate goal must be to stop it from ever happening in the first place. The National Strategy requires us to develop a national prevention strategy rooted in primary prevention. And that is exactly what we have done. This Strategy has been produced by a Working Group set up by the National Group to Address Violence Against Women. It has been circulated for consultation and revised in the light of the comments we received. I hope that it will be a useful resource.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mary Mulligan". The signature is written in a cursive style.

**Mary Mulligan MSP**  
Deputy Minister for Communities

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The important role of Prevention Strategies in work to address domestic abuse is widely acknowledged. Although providing services to those who experience abuse is essential, tackling the root causes is the only way to eradicate it.

Prevention work can have a primary or a secondary focus – the first aiming to stop abuse before it happens by changing attitudes which excuse or condone it, the second aiming to reduce its incidence and effects. Both are important and require to be undertaken, but primary prevention is at the core of any Prevention Strategy.

All prevention work should flow from an analysis which reflects the gendered nature of domestic abuse, and the links between all forms of men's violence against women, as expressed in the **National Strategy to Address Domestic Abuse in Scotland**.<sup>1</sup>

Many partners will be required to work together to implement a Prevention Strategy, both locally and nationally. There is already a considerable body of work underway, and Prevention Strategies fit closely with that work.

Key elements of the Prevention Strategy are:

- Public awareness raising
- Education
- Training
- Services for women and children
- Work with men who use violence
- Legislation
- Workplace strategies

Evaluation and monitoring is also a key component and methods used should ensure that the views of women and children who have experienced abuse are taken into account.

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<sup>1</sup> **National Strategy to Address Domestic Abuse in Scotland**, Scottish Partnership on Domestic Abuse, Edinburgh, November 2000

## The Prevention Strategy in Context

The **National Strategy to Address Domestic Abuse in Scotland**<sup>2</sup> (hereafter referred to as the **National Strategy** for brevity) makes clear that all forms of violence in society are unacceptable. Violence must be challenged and addressed wherever it occurs, as a fundamental violation of human rights.

Any Prevention Strategy therefore, needs to be based on a commitment to the progressive reduction and eventual elimination of all forms of domestic abuse and violence. A successful strategy however, has to prioritise.

It is clear from prevalence studies that violence against women is widespread throughout the world and thus cuts across class, age, religion and ethnic group.<sup>3</sup> Domestic abuse is most commonly perpetrated by men against women.

In spite of the wealth of research evidence underlining the gendered nature of domestic abuse/violence against women, there is a small but vocal body of research and opinion which argues that women's violence against men is equivalent to, or even greater than, men's violence to women. Research commissioned by the Scottish Executive (published in July 2002), however, found that the incidence of domestic abuse against men in Scotland was at the level suggested by other sources such as the Scottish Police Forces' statistics and the Scottish Crime Survey 2000, ie little more than 6-7% of the total. The research also found that men's experiences of abuse were generally much less severe than women's and that men were less likely to be repeat victims or report feeling fearful in their own homes.

As the **National Strategy**<sup>4</sup> states: "The existence of violence against men is not denied, nor is the existence of violence in same sex relationships, nor other forms of abuse, but domestic

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<sup>2</sup> op cit pg 5

<sup>3</sup> For example: Charlesworth, H. and Chinkin, C. (1994), *Violence Against Women, A Global Issue*, in Stubbs, J. (ed.) *Women, Male Violence and the Law*, Sydney University Law School.

Cook, S. and Bessant, J (eds.), (1997), *Women's Encounters with violence: Australian experiences*, CA: Sage. 1997

Dobash, R., Dobash, R., Cavanagh, K. and Lewis, R. (2000), *Changing Violent Men*, Calif.: Sage

Haj-Yahia, M. (1996), *Wife Abuse in the Arab Society in Israel: challenges for future change*, in Edleson, J and Eisikovits, Z. (eds.) *Future Interventions with Battered Women and their Families*, CA: Sage.

Heise, L. (1996), *Violence Against Women: The Hidden Health Burden*, (World Bank Discussion Papers), Washington DC: World Bank.

Mirrlees-Black, C. (1994), *Estimating the extent of domestic violence: findings from the 1992 British Crime Survey*, (Home Office Research Bulletin No. 37) Home Office Research and Statistics Dept.

Johnston, H. (1996), *Dangerous Domains, Violence Against Women in Canada*, Toronto: Nelson.

Imam, U. F. (1999), 'South Asian Young Women's Experiences of Violence and Abuse', in Kemshall, H. and Pritchard, J. (eds.), *Good Practice in Working with Violence*, London: Jessica Kingsley.

McWilliams, M. and McKiernan, J. (1993), *Bringing it out in the Open*, Belfast: HMSO.

Mama, A. (1989), *The Hidden Struggle: Statutory and Voluntary Sector Responses to Violence Against Black Women in the Home*, London: Whiting and Birch.

Romkens, R. (1997), *Prevalence of Wife Abuse in the Netherlands: Combining quantitative and qualitative methods in a survey*, *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 12,99-125.

Smith, L. (1989), *Domestic Violence: An Overview of the Literature*, London: HMSO.

<sup>4</sup> National Strategy, op cit pg 5

abuse requires a response which takes account of the gender specific elements and the broader gender inequalities which women face.”

“Domestic abuse is associated with broader gender inequality, and should be understood in its historical context, whereby societies have given greater status, wealth, influence, control and power to men. It is part of a range of behaviours constituting male abuse of power, and is linked to other forms of male violence.”<sup>5</sup>

Accordingly, this National Prevention Strategy is focused on domestic abuse, as one form of violence against women, in keeping with the spirit of the **National Strategy**.<sup>6</sup> Violence against men is equally unacceptable. However, it is not the main focus of this strategy although it is addressed by the primary prevention measures recommended later.

In addition, the National Prevention Strategy explicitly recognises that much of the behaviour that we call domestic abuse is criminal. The relationship between the abused and the abuser should be viewed as an aggravating, rather than a mitigating, factor.

### Definition of Domestic Abuse

The **National Strategy**<sup>7</sup> definition is:

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

In accepting this definition it must be recognised that children are witness to, and may be subject to, the abuse and that there is some correlation between domestic abuse and the mental, physical and sexual abuse of children. It must also be recognised that, particularly among minority ethnic communities, other family members may be involved in, or may participate in, the abuse.

In tackling domestic abuse/violence against women, it is necessary to take account of the specific experiences of particular groups of women and to ensure that any action/provision is relevant and appropriate to them. The Strategy must also be sensitive to the particular needs of women and children who experience other forms of discrimination, for example women and children from minority ethnic groups or women with a disability.

The **National Strategy**<sup>8</sup> also recognises that children who witness, or are used in, the abuse of their mothers can experience stress and fear and may suffer a range of adverse effects, including physical injury, poor health and an array of psychological difficulties.

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<sup>5</sup> UN Definition see Appendix 1

<sup>6</sup> *ibid*

<sup>7</sup> *ibid*

<sup>8</sup> *National Strategy op cit pg 5*

## The Aims of the Prevention Strategy

The **National Strategy**<sup>9</sup> states, “The ultimate goal ... is clearly to take all practicable measures towards the elimination of domestic abuse...” This is necessarily a long-term ambition. Success will depend on achieving changes in individual attitudes and behaviour and in social culture.

At the same time, it should be recognised that such fundamental changes are achieved only gradually and there are problems which must be tackled here and now. The strategy must, therefore, also meet shorter-term needs. It is worth emphasising that effective action to protect and provide for women, children and young people experiencing violence can, in itself, affect culture and attitude and thus contribute towards the longer-term process of changing behaviour.

## Primary and Secondary Prevention

Prevention work is generally differentiated into primary and secondary prevention. Primary prevention refers to work which is aimed at preventing violence before it happens and targets the whole population, but particularly children and young people. It is largely focused on attitudinal and cultural changes. Secondary prevention targets women and children who have experienced abuse and men who use violence. This would include safety planning with women, children and young people and intervention programmes for abusive men.

It is recognised that action in the field of secondary prevention, while critical to protect women and children from violence or abuse in the short term, will not be effective in eliminating men’s violence against women in the long term. Many forms of secondary prevention can, however, alter attitudes: the distinction between the two categories of prevention activity is, therefore, by no means watertight.

Adopting a primary prevention approach challenges the notion that violence is inevitable and offers a vision about how things could be different. It aims to change societal attitudes, values and the structures which produce inequality. It raises fundamental questions about the way our society is currently organised, and can, as a result, be more challenging to individuals’ core beliefs. Although long term, it is in no sense a soft option.

## A National Priority

Action against domestic abuse is now a national priority, enjoying the same status as, for example, the Scottish Executive’s health or education priorities. Unlike these, however, there is no obvious “lead” Department within the Executive carrying overall responsibility and no single agency or service which can implement the Strategy. Tackling domestic abuse requires the collaboration of a number of agencies, all accepting a shared responsibility. In a sense, the extent to which the Strategy is successful will be a measure of the readiness of government, agencies, organisations and society to take on complex tasks of this kind.

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<sup>9</sup> National Strategy *op cit* pg 7

## The Prevention Strategy: Underlying Principles

An effective Prevention Strategy must rest on a secure foundation of sound principles. The Prevention Strategy should:

- Reflect a broad vision which identifies both short and long-term goals.
- Distinguish between primary and secondary prevention measures but focus purposefully on both.
- Be located within an overall commitment to human rights but recognise that domestic abuse is essentially an issue of men's violence against women.
- Accordingly be informed by a gender specific analysis of the problem.
- Recognise that violence is a misuse of power supported by social structures and cultural attitudes which are capable of being changed.
- Adhere to a broad definition of violence against women in keeping with the **National Strategy**<sup>10</sup> and Preventing Violence Against Women.<sup>11</sup>
- Recognise the harmful effect on children of witnessing the abuse of their mothers.
- Take account of specific issues relating to women and children with disabilities, women and children from black and minority ethnic communities, women with no recourse to public funds, older women, lesbians, women and children living in rural areas, gypsy travellers, refugee women and children and asylum seekers, women with mental illness or mental health issues and women with addictions.
- Ensure that men who use violence against women are held accountable for their behaviour and are expected to change.
- Make connections across policy areas, services and agencies.
- Apply across public, voluntary and private sectors.
- Be informed by women, children and young people who have experienced and witnessed violence, and by research.
- Be adequately resourced.

## Prerequisites of Success

The key prerequisite of success is commitment to a shared purpose, both nationally and at local level.

What is required is united, sustained and effective action across a wide range of agencies and professional fields in pursuit of shared common objectives. Unity of purpose is thus the first requirement of a genuinely integrated Prevention Strategy.

(a) At a senior level it is the responsibility of the **Scottish Executive** to:

- Support the lead Department (the Violence Against Women Unit) in ensuring that the national commitment to addressing domestic abuse in Scotland and the Prevention Strategy are known within all Departments of the Executive.
- Identify those Departments with a significant contribution to make.

<sup>10</sup> National Strategy *op cit* pg 5

<sup>11</sup> Preventing Violence Against Women – Action Across the Scottish Executive, Scottish Executive, Edinburgh October 2001 (see Appendix 1)

- Make a clear commitment to taking forward the Prevention Strategy on a corporate basis.
- Ensure adequate resourcing of the implementation of the Prevention Strategy.
- Ensure monitoring and feedback about progress.

(b) The relevant **Departments** within the Executive are responsible for:

- Make a positive contribution towards the prevention effort.
- Ensuring that Non Departmental Public Bodies (NDPB), other national agencies and other relevant bodies to which they relate are aware of the expectations that they should address domestic abuse as a key priority and contribute to the implementation of the Prevention Strategy.
- Ensuring that the need to address domestic abuse as a national priority is reflected in appropriate policy statements and in performance management strategies.
- Monitoring and reviewing the progress of organisations for which they are responsible towards implementation of the Prevention Strategy.

(c) **Audit Scotland** and the various **Inspectorates** dealing with public services have a responsibility to:

- Ensure that their performance management frameworks monitor progress in relation to the Prevention Strategy and/or other work in relation to domestic abuse.

(d) A unified response to domestic abuse calls for effectively coordinated **partnership** at local levels. The Local Government in Scotland Act 2003<sup>12</sup> provides a statutory basis for the Community Planning process. Community planning is essentially about effective joint working between agencies, in conjunction with communities, to improve public services. Each local authority has established a Community Planning partnership. Community Planning partnerships may wish to consider taking lead responsibility for coordinating the local response to domestic abuse, and ensure that Community Planning partners collaborate in developing local prevention strategies and plans. Within each partnership, it will be important to build on existing good local practice and ensure that the work of the community safety partnerships and multi-agency partnerships continues and is effectively integrated into the Community Planning process.

**Community Planning partnerships** therefore have a responsibility to:

- Ensure that community planning partners work effectively across organisational boundaries.
- Secure commitment from senior decision makers locally, including, for example, local authority Chief Executives, Chief Social Work Officers, Heads of Services, Chief Constables, Chairs of Health Boards, Procurators Fiscal and Sheriffs Principal.

<sup>12</sup> The Act comes into force on April 1 2003. A duty is placed on local authorities to initiate, facilitate and maintain the Community Planning process. They must engage and consult with community, and other public bodies. The Act places a duty on key bodies, including Health, Enterprise, Police, Fire and SPTA to participate in the process. <http://www.scotland-legislation.hms.gov.uk/legislation/scotland/acts2003/20030001.htm>

(e) **Local authorities** are responsible for:

- Identifying within the service plans of relevant departments the specific measures that will be taken to address this issue.
- Ensuring staff are trained, particularly key staff providing direct services to women and children, eg social workers, housing workers but also staff providing other services, eg teachers, home helps, nursery aids, community workers.
- Ensuring services are adequately and appropriately resourced.

(f) Other key public agencies such as **NHS Boards** and **Trusts, Communities Scotland** and the **Police** have a responsibility to:

- Identify the positive contributions which they can make to the implementation of this Prevention Strategy.
- Work effectively with other key partners to implement prevention measures.
- Ensure that they include targets relating to violence against women in their action plans and develop databases to enable monitoring progress and changes in demand for services.

(g) The **criminal justice system** has a responsibility to:

- Ensure that domestic abuse is dealt with as a crime wherever possible, and appropriate sanctions are applied, particularly court mandated perpetrator programmes.
- Recognise that the way in which it responds to cases of domestic abuse is a critical element of any effective Prevention Strategy.

In addition, there are a number of other organisations and individuals who have a role to play in the prevention of abuse/violence against women. While there is a more limited number who will be overtly concerned with primary prevention activities, the work of many others can involve secondary prevention. (A list of organisations which can contribute importantly to the prevention effort is contained in Appendix 3.)

## Resources

The Prevention Strategy clearly has resource implications for many partners. In some cases this will involve covering staff time to attend training, in others it may be producing publicity materials. Partners will require to cost their own roles in the Prevention Strategy and ensure that adequate resources are in place.

While it is recognised that resources are finite, a partnership approach has been developed to resourcing projects addressing domestic abuse and new sources of funding have emerged in a number of areas as a result. For example, NHS Boards in Forth Valley and Dumfries & Galloway are partners in local projects funded by the Domestic Abuse Service Development Fund. Some aspects of the work called for by the Prevention Strategy are already underway with resources in place. Sharing of resources between areas could further help to reduce costs and the National Group to Address Domestic Abuse in Scotland will strive to ensure that lack of resources is not a barrier to action.

## Key Elements of the Strategy

The ultimate objective of this Prevention Strategy is to change attitudes, behaviour and culture in such a way as to secure the progressive elimination of violence against women. Primary prevention measures, therefore, lie at the heart of the Strategy. These can be conveniently grouped under two headings; **Public Awareness Raising** and **Education**. In addition however, the Strategy must embrace shorter-term objectives. These are summarised under five headings: **Training Strategies**, **Work with Men who use Violence**, **Legislation**, **Workplace Strategies** and **Services for Women, Children and Young People**. Finally, the Strategy has to make provision for evaluation and monitoring.

## Longer-Term Goals

### 1 Public Awareness Raising

It is only through a sustained campaign of public awareness raising that a direct attempt can be made to influence attitudes in contemporary society. To be effective, public awareness campaigns should:

- Identify the problem clearly and unambiguously.
- Reflect a clear analysis of why abuse occurs.
- Challenge myths, cultural beliefs and stereotypes which help to sustain a toleration of violence.
- Address the whole population.
- Resist demonising men who use violence. But challenge abusing men to accept responsibility for their behaviour.
- Be evaluated in particular by women, children and young people who have experienced abuse.
- Use the experience of men who have used violence to inform the future direction of the campaign.

Campaigns should use a range of resources, for example:

- A display of posters on buses, adshels, billboards, community centres, libraries, doctors' surgeries, public conveniences, etc. including information in community languages.
- Television and cinema advertisements.
- Newspaper and magazine features and advertisements.
- Leafleting and campaigning merchandise. Some awareness campaigns may be directed at specific audiences using appropriate techniques.

Awareness raising campaigns, in that they generate responses, need to form a coherent part of the Prevention Strategy and be properly supported by other measures for example:

- Adequate and appropriate resourcing of support and intervention services to deal with the likely upsurge in calls for assistance from women, children, young people and men.
- Individuals and organisations should be allowed opportunities for further exploration of the issues.

Further campaigns should also highlight the effects of domestic abuse on all those involved, including children and young people who should be involved in consultation aimed at enabling their voices to be heard. This should link with the lead taken by the Education, Culture and Sport Committee of the Scottish Parliament in developing an approach of empowering young people, encouraging peer challenging and finding ways of including young people in decision making.

## 2 Education

Education, mainly in schools but also through community and informal education, represents the principal mechanism by which society is able to influence future generations. It offers the most effective route through which attitudes can be influenced albeit over a long time scale. Any Strategy for preventing domestic abuse will interact with the newly-adopted national priorities for education at a number of key points:

- It is a stated objective of the national priorities for education to “promote respect for self and others” as part of a wider strategy for promoting positive values among young people.
- The national priorities for education also seek to promote “equality and inclusion”, an objective which is clearly incompatible with toleration of violence.
- An inclusive approach to “raising achievement and attainment” also implies action to ensure that the readiness of individual children to learn is not inhibited by adverse personal circumstances such as experience of domestic abuse.

Pursuing these objectives implies that schools will offer a mainstream curriculum which consciously promotes positive values and at appropriate points directly addresses domestic abuse. At the same time, however, both schools and informal education settings need to model the kind of society that they aim to promote and take effective action where there is reason to believe that abuse is taking place.

Achieving the curricular objectives referred to above requires concerted action by a number of agencies:

- The Scottish Executive Education Department needs to demonstrate commitment to the effective implementation of the full range of the existing national priorities for education.
- Learning and Teaching Scotland and other agencies concerned with curricular development should ensure that necessary development work is undertaken to assist schools in implementing the priorities and, in particular, those which do not fit conveniently within the constraints of the existing, largely academic curriculum.
- Local authorities have important responsibilities in ensuring that school development plans and their own improvement plans reflect the full range of national priorities and give appropriate emphasis to those concerned with promoting positive values.
- Schools have, of course, the responsibility of ensuring that national priorities are translated into powerful educational experiences at the point of contact with young people.
- Work with children and young people excluded from mainstream education should also be undertaken.

If the mainstream learning experience of young people is to take proper account both of the educational objective of promoting respect for self and others, and of the national priority to address domestic abuse, it is important that there should be a coherent and sustained programme of values education which should:

- Commence at the pre-school stages and be sustained through primary and secondary school.
- Be firmly rooted in respect for human rights.
- Progressively develop in young people a capacity and a predisposition to deal with ethical and moral issues.
- At appropriate stages, deal specifically with domestic abuse through the use of appropriate materials.

Prevention work with young people in schools and youth groups is not just about changing attitudes and influencing behaviour, although that is its main focus. In raising the issues, it also produces a need for support to be provided to young people who may have been abused themselves or witnessed the abuse of their mother. There are a number of examples of ways in which this support is being currently provided. The Better Integration of Children's Service Approach called for in the "For Scotland's Children" report<sup>13</sup> aims to ensure that support and other relevant services are provided alongside education services.

### **Shorter-Term Goals**

In the long term a strategy to affect public attitudes and cultural norms is absolutely necessary. It is not, however, in itself, sufficient. Prevention requires to be an intrinsic element within strategies designed to tackle the violence which is taking place today. While protecting the women and children who experience this violence and making provision to meet their immediate needs may be the prime concerns, the measures taken should also contribute towards prevention. While most of these measures would normally be categorised as "secondary", there is an important aspect in which protection and provision can have a significant role in primary prevention. The child who witnesses violence against his/her mother learns important lessons from society's reaction. If the various agents of society – police, social workers and others – take resolute, united and effective action, demonstrating that they believe the woman and that she and her children have a right to live in safety, society's condemnation of violence will be evident. Where action is irresolute or non-existent, a very different lesson will be learned. Likewise, where a child sees her/his father attending a men's programme, and addressing his violence, they witness a man taking responsibility for his actions.

The secondary elements in the Prevention Strategy include the development of an effective training strategy (particularly for various professionals in public services), the provision of a range of services for women, children and young people, work with men who use violence, enforcement of prevention strategies through legislation, and the development of implementation strategies in work places. It is also important that the Prevention Strategy should be monitored and, where necessary, updated on a regular basis.

<sup>13</sup> For Scotland's Children report – The report of the action team on Better Integrated Children's Services, Scottish Executive, Edinburgh, October 2001.

## 3 Training Strategies

If they are to play an effective part in addressing domestic abuse, a wide range of staff requires appropriate training, to consider and address attitudes as well as provide information about appropriate responses and the roles of all agencies. This need is particularly apparent in the case of professional workers in public services such as GPs, other health service professionals, teachers, social workers, police officers and other “front line” workers, including the voluntary sector. There is also a need for training for policy makers, senior practitioners and all levels of managers. Clearly, it is for each professional group to establish its own training needs and develop an appropriate strategy. However, a prior requirement (as indicated above) is that all public services should be aware of the status of addressing domestic abuse as a national priority and their responsibilities in taking forward a united strategy.

In most cases, it is likely that a comprehensive training strategy will include:

- Staff development programmes relating issues of domestic abuse/violence against women to the immediate concerns of the particular service.
- Multi-disciplinary training extending across groups of services.
- Higher-level training and education, specific to the field of domestic abuse and designed to provide leading practitioners with appropriate expertise.

There is a need for pre-qualification core modules, post-qualification modules, in-service core training in health, social work, all education sectors, housing, legal professions, specialist training (eg long-term effects of child sexual abuse, self-harm, needs of minority ethnic, disabled, older, gypsy traveller, refugee, asylum seeker, rural women and children, lesbians and those with mental illness or mental health issues, etc.), training to implement policy and protocols, training for managers to support workplace policies.

Specialist organisations such as Women’s Aid should be involved in the development and delivery of training wherever possible, as stated in the **National Strategy**.<sup>14</sup>

As with educational interventions, the Prevention Working Group is aware that there is already a considerable amount of training on domestic abuse/violence against women underway. However, this is at present mainly ad hoc and not always strategically related to other areas of work. A Working Group will shortly be established by the National Group to Address Domestic Abuse in Scotland to develop a National Training Strategy. This is likely to lead to a register of, and ultimately accreditation for, training providers, involving the development of agreed standards.

## 4 Services for Women, Children and Young People

Access to Services is an important strand of the **National Strategy**, and a substantial section of its Action Plan. Partner agencies are already working towards ensuring that appropriate services are available throughout Scotland for all women and children who need them. The third Working Group set up by the National Group to Address Domestic Abuse in Scotland is currently reviewing the recommendations about refuge places.

<sup>14</sup> National Strategy

Although the Prevention Strategy is not about provision, aspects of prevention have consequences for provision.

Specialist services for women, children and young people who have experienced domestic abuse/violence have ensured that the voices of survivors help to shape services. The Women's Aid and Rape Crisis networks, which are pre-eminent in the field, have pioneered this method of working, which recognises that those who have experienced abuse/violence have an insight into the issues which can be helpful in informing service developments. The Prevention Working Group endorses this approach and has adopted it for the monitoring and evaluation of the Prevention Strategy.

Women's Aid Children's Support workers have developed an approach which views children and young people as having human rights as service users in their own right, and allows them to identify their own needs for specific support.

As noted above, the response of agencies to women, children and young people seeking help as a result of domestic abuse/violence can have a powerful primary prevention effect, in addition to the obvious secondary prevention outcome. An unequivocal message that abuse/violence is never acceptable, that no-one other than the person who chose to use violence is responsible and that everyone has a right to live free from abuse will convey important information about society's views to those children and young people.

In addition, there is the vital role that services for women, children and young people fulfil in providing places of safety, information about options and support through the process of survivors of abuse determining their own future. There are many messages conveyed by direct support services, which can cumulatively have a prevention effect, both primary and secondary. For example, services keeping their doors open to women, after numerous attempts to leave abusive partners, are giving the message that "It is not your fault." Services which seek and respect women and children's views are similarly giving the message to them that they are valued individuals, not blamed for what has been done to them.

Good practice in service provision, as included in the **National Strategy**,<sup>15</sup> provides a backdrop to prevention initiatives, magnifies the prevention effort and is, as a result, an important aspect of any Prevention Strategy. There are obviously connections between service provision and training (see **3** above).

## 5 Work with Men who use Violence

It is men who are responsible for domestic abuse and individual men who use violence should be expected to accept responsibility for their behaviour and the need for change. This should be central to any prevention strategy. Primary prevention would be achieved as children observe this in action.

The accountability of men who use violence is also a crucial component of the Prevention Strategy. It has been commonplace for women who have been abused, raped, assaulted to

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<sup>15</sup> National Strategy *op cit* pg 5

be blamed or held partly responsible by many in society for what has been done to them as well as for how the abuse has impacted on the lives of their children. This is no longer acceptable and it is the strong view of the Prevention Working Group that the perpetrator is the only person responsible for his abuse/violence. Work with men who use violence is one of the major strands of the Prevention Strategy, as the Working Group recognises that such men can change and learn to stop abusing power by exercising control. Due to the potential dangers to women and children, it is imperative that work with men is only undertaken according to well established good practice principles. An awareness of, and readiness to challenge, the use of religious and cultural beliefs to excuse their violence is also an important aspect of this work.

Work with men who are violent should be based on the principle that all forms of violence in society are unacceptable. Violence must be challenged and addressed wherever it occurs, as a fundamental violation of human rights. The Prevention Working Group endorses the Statement of Principles and Minimum Standards of Good Practice by Respect, the National Association of Perpetrator Workers and Associated Services. In particular, that work with partners is an essential element of any work with men who abuse, and that children and young people living with domestic abuse should have access to support in their own right.

Priorities for early action would include:

- Research into the effectiveness of strategies currently being employed.
- Dissemination by the Scottish Executive of examples of good practice emerging from the research.
- An extension of opportunities which are available to men for voluntary referral to programmes addressing their use of violence, in addition to court mandated programmes.
- A statistical study of the number of Scottish men using violence against women partners.
- The development of an integrated multi-agency approach to work with abusing men.

## 6 Legislation

Legislation is clear in its condemnation of violence. Many aspects of domestic abuse are crimes as are other forms of violence against women. Social attitudes can, however, mean that these crimes are not always treated with the seriousness which they deserve. This is a critical prevention issue. Unless the action taken demonstrates the commitment of society to tackle violence against women, an important opportunity for preventive action is lost.

The second Working Group established by the National Group to Address Domestic Abuse in Scotland has reviewed the current legislation relating to domestic abuse/violence against women and has made recommendations for improvements in its report to the National Group.

## 7 Workplace Strategies

There are numerous good examples of public and voluntary sector agencies introducing prevention strategies within their own fields. Many of these aim to change attitudes and promote early interventions to protect women and children from further violence. It is important that such approaches are adopted as widely as possible. Clearly, this will be more easily achieved in public services where it can reasonably be expected that national policy priorities will influence practice. It is, however, no less important that the assistance of private sector concerns should be engaged. Any employer with significant numbers of women in their workforce will have women who are experiencing abuse on the payroll.

Public sector organisations should be expected to draw up policy statements on domestic abuse with an emphasis upon preventive measures. Such policy statements should include the following:

- A clear commitment by the organisation to protect women who are experiencing or are under threat of abuse/violence and to contribute towards raising awareness of, and changing attitudes towards, domestic abuse.
- An indication of positive measures which will be taken to create a supportive and non-threatening culture within the organisation.
- An indication of how staff (and, where appropriate, service users) can access relevant information and obtain support.
- A link to equal opportunities policies.
- A link to an intervention service for male employees to address their violence.
- A formal training strategy aimed both at general awareness raising and at more specific training for those with key roles in implementing the strategy.
- An indication of how the policy will be monitored and, where necessary, updated.

It is also essential to try to promote good workplace practices in the private sector. This is likely to involve:

- Dissemination of good practice.
- The provision of information packs for employers.
- Making available good quality, affordable training.
- Assistance in monitoring the effectiveness of policies.

## 8 Evaluation and Monitoring

Any strategy or action plan requires evaluation, monitoring and the ability to change. Key sources of information for monitoring and evaluation are the views of women and children who have experienced domestic abuse/violence. However, this is not the only source of relevant information, and a variety of means will be required to evaluate the success of prevention work and monitor its progress.

For examples of evaluation methods, see Appendix 3.

## Conclusion

It is clear that violence against women is an appropriate arena for active involvement by local and national government and other partners. We have moved a long way in Scotland from the position prior to 1999, with scattered examples of good practice, no overall national strategy and little central government funding.

The publication of the **National Strategy**<sup>16</sup> in November 2000 led to the National Group to Address Domestic Abuse in Scotland, which, in turn, set up the Prevention Working Group and led to this Prevention Strategy.

The **National Strategy**<sup>17</sup> calls for effort to be directed to stopping abuse, not just on an individual basis, but across society. This requires a radical change in attitudes which are deep-rooted and which may be resistant to change. Work is therefore required on a broad range of fronts, involving many partners, and over a considerable period.

This Prevention Strategy is a development of the National Strategy,<sup>18</sup> providing greater detail of the actions required and the philosophical framework which underpins the work. Implementation of this Prevention Strategy will take forward the work on domestic abuse, and start the long journey required to bring us to our ultimate goal of a violence-free Scotland.

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<sup>16</sup> National Strategy *op cit* pg 5

<sup>17</sup> *ibid*

<sup>18</sup> *ibid*

## Appendix 1

The UN General Assembly uses a definition of violence against women which includes any act of violence by men which results in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.

Included in this definition is physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including where such violence is inflicted upon children and young people in the household, culturally-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, and violence related to exploitation. It also includes physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the general community, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at work and elsewhere, trafficking in women and forced prostitution.

The UN definition as adapted above is used in “Preventing Violence Against Women – Action Across the Scottish Executive”.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Preventing Violence Against Women – Action Across the Scottish Executive, Scottish Executive, Edinburgh October 2001

## Appendix 2

Those who may be viewed as contributing to the prevention effort include:

Women's Aid  
Police  
Legal professionals  
Social Work Services  
Intervention work with abusing men  
Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service  
Education services  
Housing services  
Other local authority departments  
Benefits Agency  
Court services  
Health and medical services  
Scottish Prison Service  
Rape Crisis Scotland  
Scottish Children's Reporter Administration  
Religious organisations  
Other specialist voluntary organisations

## Appendix 3

Examples of evaluation and monitoring methods are:

### ***Public Awareness Raising***

- Campaigns should be evaluated for effectiveness (eg by survey of the public/survey of women and children who have experienced abuse/violence).

### ***Education***

- Educational interventions should be evaluated by both those participating and those delivering the materials. Again, realistic goals should be set. In the initial stages, evidence that awareness of the issues had been raised could be regarded as success, rather than expecting to see radical changes in attitudes.

### ***Training Strategies***

- Evaluation by participants and trainers. Followed up by examination of effects on practice.

### ***Working with Men who use Violence***

- Evidence of reduction/elimination of use of all forms of abuse/control.

### ***Legislation***

- Use of legislation/views of those who use (women, solicitors/criminal/civil justice personnel).  
Number of orders applied for/granted.

### ***Workplace Strategies***

- Views of workers who have used policies/human resources personnel.

### ***Services for Women and Children***

- Views of service users and providers.
- Regular needs assessments with women and children from ranges of communities.

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