East Ayrshire Violence Against Women Partnership

CONSTITUTION and GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

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CONSTITUTION AND GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

"We must prioritise addressing the root causes of gender inequality, challenging outdated stereotypes and societal attitudes that allow violence against women and girls to persist."

- (*'Equally Safe: Scotland's strategy for preventing and eradicating violence against women and girls'*. Scottish Government 2023:3)

GOVERNANCE AND REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS

1.0 CONTEXT

1.1 The aim of the East Ayrshire Violence Against Women Partnership (EAVAWP) is to bring together individuals and organisations to work towards a common purpose, namely, to provide a comprehensive partnership response to violence against women and girls.

1.2 This Constitution and Governance Framework has been developed from the original Governance and Reporting Arrangements implemented by the East Ayrshire Violence against Women Partnership (EAVAWP) in 2011, which is subject to review. It sets out the overall business and governance arrangements for the East Ayrshire Violence Against Women Partnership, covering:

Context

Definition

Terms of Reference

Wider Multi-agency Partnerships and Planning Connections

Monitoring and Evaluation

Equalities

Resolution of Conflict

1.3 *Equally Safe is our country's strategy to prevent and address all forms of violence against women and girls, specifically violence, abuse, and exploitation directed at them because of their gender. This behaviour is predominantly carried out by men and stems from deep-rooted gender inequality, which is unacceptable in modern-day Scotland. It is both a cause and consequence of women's inequality. This strategy, initially published in 2014, updated in 2016, and now refreshed, was collaboratively developed by the Scottish Government, COSLA, and various national and local partners and stakeholders from the public and third sectors* (Scottish Government, 2023:3).

(insert link here)

1.4 The national strategy, Equally Safe, provides East Ayrshire with direction and focus in order to build on the successful partnership work achieved locally over previous years, whilst broadening and developing a shared understanding of our activity to a wider range of connected issues.

Vision:

A strong and flourishing Scotland where all individuals are equally safe and respected, and where women and girls live free from all forms of violence, abuse and exploitation — and the attitudes that help perpetuate it.

GOVERNANCE AND REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS

1.5 The East Ayrshire Violence Against Women Partnership embraces the vision set out in the Equally Safe Refresh (2023:5).

The vision is framed within the context of:

Upholding human rights	Reducing the prevalence of trauma and	Public service reform	Reducing poverty and inequalities

1.6 It is underpinned by six public health priorities:

A Scotland where we live in vibrant, healthy and safe places and communities;

A Scotland where we flourish in our early years;

A Scotland where we have good mental wellbeing;

A Scotland where we reduce the use of and harm from alcohol, tobacco and other drugs;

A Scotland where we have a sustainable, inclusive economy with equality of outcomes for all;

A Scotland where we eat well, have healthy weight and are physically active.

1.7 It is reinforced by current and forthcoming legislation and treaties and is supported by Scottish Government and COSLA strategies and action plans to help tackle inequalities and improve outcomes for all (Equally Safe Refresh 2023: 35/36).

1.8 The Equally Safe (2023) Key priorities are:

- prevent VAWG before it occurs;
- support early intervention;
- build a broad and shared understanding across our society and communities of what VAWG is, how it affects those who experience it, its impact on society more generally, the scale of the problem, and what causes it – so that we can reduce the harm together;
- build political, institutional, sectoral, organisational, community, and personal commitment and contribution to preventing and tackling VAWG;
- hold perpetrators of VAWG to account, supporting change where possible;
- deliver sustainable, informed and safe specialist and universal service responses for victim/survivors that are holistic and meet victim/ survivors' individual needs;

- promote an intersectional approach to preventing, recognising, and responding to the compounding inequalities and risks that some women, children, and young people may experience as a result of their ethnicity, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or immigration status.

2.0 DEFINITION

2.1 The EAVAWP shares the definition of violence against women and girls outlined in the Equally Safe Refresh 2023 and recognises that violence against women contributes towards the social inequalities which exist between men and women. It recognises that violence against women, children and young people can take many forms and that some women, children and young people may experience different and/or multiple forms of male violence over their lifetime.

2.2

Definition

The phrase violence against women and girls is used to describe violent and abusive behaviour directed at women and girls because they are women and girls. It is behaviour which is carried out predominantly by men. It is an abuse of power and stems from systemic, deep-rooted women's inequality. VAWG limits women's and girls' freedom and potential and is a fundamental violation of human rights.

(Equally Safe 2023:10)

Violence against women and girls includes actual and threat of:

- Physical, sexual, psychological, emotional, and financial abuse occurring in the family, within the general community, and in institutions in both physical and digital spaces and places;
- domestic abuse/ coercive controlling behaviours, stalking, rape, incest, child sexual harassment, bullying and intimidation;
- Commercial sexual exploitation (CSE) including prostitution, lap dancing, stripping, pornography;
- human trafficking, including for the purposes of domestic servitude, sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation, which may include gangs and organised criminal networks;
- child abuse occurring within family settings, including domestic abuse, and sexual abuse by male family members including siblings;
- child sexual abuse and exploitation including the production and sharing of indecent images of children;
- honour-based abuse, including forced marriages, female genital mutilation (FGM), dowry abuse and 'honour based' coercive control and killings.

3.0 TERMS OF REFERENCE

3.1 The EAVAWP has been established to address prevention, provision, protection and participation which takes into account all forms of violence against women and girls. The Partnership remit is to:

- Develop a shared understanding across partner agencies about what is meant by violence against women and girls;
- Promote the issue of violence against women and girls across the multiagency sectors with the aim of reducing risk and improved protection;
- Build on the successes of previous initiatives to tackle violence against women and girls by consolidating existing multiagency plans, policies and procedures for domestic abuse and how these might apply for other aspects of violence against women and girls;
- Ensure that the wider strategic planning mechanisms assess and take account of local need and gaps including linking with local specialist services and equalities groups, and others, to find out more about the extent of violence against women and girls and how this manifests in the local area;
- Consider the best way to meet local needs by adapting existing responses to violence against women and girls to fit a broader agenda; through new specialist services; or through additional capacity and expertise in existing organisations;
- Review the balance between prevention and protection work and services for women, children and men which take account of all forms of violence against women and girls including how perpetrators are held to account and how they take responsibly for their actions;
- Ensure that service planning is informed by the experience of women and young people and that women and girls with lived experience have the opportunity to contribute to, shape and evaluate strategic plans;
- Continuous improvement through engaging in self-assessment and evaluation;
- Produce, develop, implement and monitor the Violence against Women and Girls Strategic Plan;
- Annual reporting on the work of EAVAWP;
- Providing public information, engagement and opportunities for participation.

3.2 The role of EAVAWP individual members is to:

- Promote the violence against women and girls agenda within and across partner organisations.

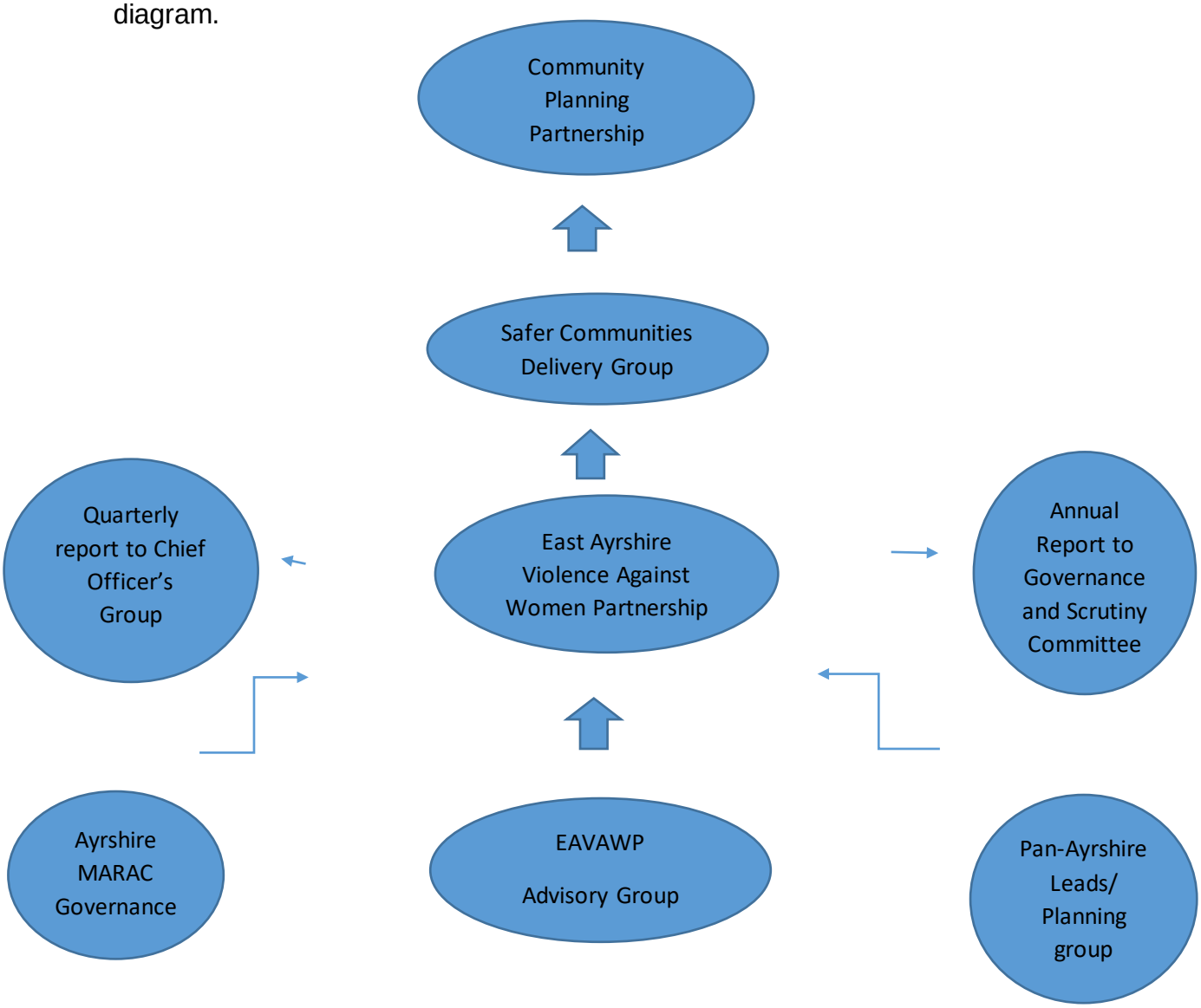
GOVERNANCE AND REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS

- Ensure strong and formal links with other local partnerships in their area so that there is a strategic fit and a collaborative approach within East Ayrshire local planning structures.
- Progress actions between meetings, independently of the Partnership or in conjunction with other member representatives.
- Participate in any short life working groups and to progress specific areas of work as identified.
- Take part in or deliver multi-agency workforce development sessions, training events and seminars.
- To respond to national partnership policy directives consultation, national legislation and ensuring that the required papers are drafted and issued timeously and implement any improvement actions.
- Provide written or verbal reports on their organisation's developments in relation to violence against women and girls.

GOVERNANCE AND REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS

4.0 REPORTING AND ACCOUNTABILITY ARRANGEMENTS

4.1 The EAVAWP Reporting and accountability arrangements are described below in the diagram.



4.2 **Overarching Principles**

4.3 In line with the Scottish Government's strategy document **Equally Safe**, the partnership will be firmly based on trust, promote shared goals and vision, equality, openness, willingness to change and good communication. This includes respecting the contribution which each partner brings; working to shared objectives; finding ways to deal with and address difference; securing active commitment from agencies; and involving senior people who can make decisions and influence policy.

4.4 The Equally Safe Refresh 2023 outlines the need for collaborative working across the public, private and third sector to tackle violence against women and girls, as no one agency or area can achieve this in isolation. Community Planning Partnerships are essential to delivering outcomes on prevention and early intervention. A public protection approach involving collaborative inter-agency working between public protection bodies can ensure an integrated and consistent approach to planning and service delivery (2023:27).

4.5 Chairperson

4.6 The Chairperson requires to be able to influence and link to the wider multiagency partnership and planning structures as referred to in sections 4.25, 4.26 and 4.27. The Chair will oversee the activities of the group and directly report to the Chief Officer Group on EAVAWP priorities, emerging issues, activity and progress. The Chairperson will be reviewed biannually.

4.7 The Chair of EAVAWP is responsible for:

- Chairing EAVAWP meetings and ensuring that they are conducted in a manner that reflects the contribution that all agencies make;
- Leading the work of the EAVAWP to ensure it effectively fulfil its functions;
- Receiving reports from the Lead Officer (VAWG) who will be accountable to the EAVAWP;
- Receiving reports from EAVAWP members;
- Reporting and being accountable to the Chief Officers Group and reporting progress and issues regularly.

4.8 In the absence of the chair, the/a vice chair will assume all levels of authority. He/she will take responsibility and accountability as that of chair in conducting Partnership business. This extends beyond the chairing of meetings to ensuring that the business of the committee is effectively discharged.

4.9 Sub Groups

4.10 The work of EAVAWP will be supported by a sub group, the EAVAWP Advisory Group, formerly known as the Strategic Plan Monitoring Group. The group will meet four times per year prior to EAVAWP and report directly to EAVAWP (please see separate terms of reference).

4.11 The EAVAWP may also be supported by working groups / review groups to address specific issues, as and when required. All short life working groups, will have a defined

membership, aims and objectives, as well as explicit lines of communication and accountability to EAVAWP.

4.12 Appointment of Lead Officer

4.13 The EAVAWP will be supported in the implementation of its core functions by the Lead Officer (VAWG). The Lead Officer will be employed by East Ayrshire Council (EAC) through the HSCP as the host agency and is accountable to the Chair of the EAVAWP or Vice Chair. Line management arrangements will be provided by the HSCP.

4.14 Membership

4.15 Individual members require to operate both strategically and operationally in order to influence policy and change what happens on the ground. The Partnership consists of public and independent sector providers. All members are at a sufficient level within their service or organisation, or have a mandate to enable them to make decisions and progress multi-agency work. The current membership consists of:

Public Sector Organisations:

Ayrshire College; Kilmarnock Campus

East Ayrshire Council

East Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership

Kilmarnock Prison (SPS)

NHS Ayrshire and Arran

Police Scotland

Community Justice Ayrshire Partnership

Wellbeing and Recovery

Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

Third Sector Organisations:

ASSIST

Break the Silence

Barnardo's Scotland

Council of Voluntary Organisations (CVO East Ayrshire)

East Ayrshire Women's Aid

Recovery Enterprises

STAR Centre, Kilmarnock

Victim Support Ayrshire

4.16 Each member has responsibility for contributing to the business of the EAVAWP by pro-actively participating in the business of the Partnership, including Partnership meetings. Each member is also the conduit into / out of their agency / service, and is responsible for disseminating the work of the Partnership to staff and service users (as appropriate) within their area of responsibility.

4.17 New members will be offered a meeting with the Lead Officer and Chair / Vice Chair as part of their induction. A membership pack may also be provided to support members.

4.18 In order to assist with dissemination of information across Partner agencies, the Lead Officer will provide a quarterly report for wider circulation which captures the work and progress of the EAVAWP.

4.19 The core members of the Committee are under a formal obligation to ensure if they are unable to attend, that they provide a substitute with delegated authority for decision making.

4.20 Meetings Schedule

4.21 The EAVAWP will meet 4 times annually and members are expected to commit to this schedule. Members will ensure that resources are made available to progress development/training events/seminars and also support short life working groups which may be convened from time to time to take forward key work streams.

4.22 The agenda and papers for EAVAWP meetings will be made available to members one week before the date of the meeting using the secure portal.

4.23 **Quorum**

4.24 The meeting requires 3 or more partner agencies to attend.

4.25 Reporting and Accountability

4.26 The EAVAWP will formally report to the East Ayrshire Chief Officers Group (EACOG) on a quarterly basis, which retains a strategic overview of multi agency service operational and planning. The role of the EACOG is to provide high level support and leadership and to ensure:

- A collective strategic overview
- Effective planning and performance, particularly in respect of risk assessment and risk management
- Appropriate resourcing; and
- Clear and appropriate public reporting, including a robust approach to public relations.

4.27 The EAVAWP will produce an Annual Report at the end of each financial year to report on the activity of the Partnership. This report will be shared with the Governance and Security Committee which retains an overview of the work of the EAVAWP.

5. WIDER MULTI AGENCY PARTNERSHIPS AND PLANNING STRUCTURES

5.1 There are a range of associate strategic and operational planning partnerships which are inextricably linked to violence against women issues. In order that the EAVAWP operates effectively and is responsive to the policy landscape and local people's needs it is vital that members are able to influence and have the necessary links to different planning groups.

5.2 Local planning structures in which the violence against women agenda will feature in East Ayrshire include;

- Child Protection Committee and Adult Protection Committee
- Alcohol and Drug Partnership
- Community Planning Partners Strategic Partnerships
- Community Justice Ayrshire Partnership
- Health and Social Care Partnership

5.3 On a broader context the work of the EAVAWP is informed by the guiding values and principles of the East Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership and the Single Outcome Agreement and a range of strategic Partnerships and Planning documents. Our over-arching Community Plan has a lifespan of 15 years, effective from 1 April 2015 until 31 March 2030.

5.4 Action plans are in place covering the themes of: Economy and Skills, Safer Communities and Wellbeing. Public Protection matters are reported through the community planning structure within the Safer Communities and Wellbeing themes.

- East Ayrshire Adult Protection Committee Improvement and Delivery Plan East Ayrshire Child Protection Committee Improvement Plan
- East Ayrshire Children and Young People's Service Plan East Ayrshire Community Plan Safer Communities Delivery Plan
- East Ayrshire Community Plan Wellbeing Delivery Plan
- East Ayrshire Gender Based Violence Policy
- East Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership's Strategic Plan
- East Ayrshire Multi-Agency Public Protection Learning and Development Framework
- Community Justice Ayrshire Partnership Plan

- East Ayrshire Alcohol and Drugs Partnership Strategic Improvement Plan East Ayrshire Local Housing Strategy
- NHS Ayrshire and Arran Gender Based Violence Action Plan
- Suicide Prevention Strategy (Scottish Government)

5.5 All of these plans are interconnecting and inform important strands of the EAVAWP planning and performance work. This will encourage participation and commitment and ensure that violence against women will feature highly on the agenda of relevant partnership forums. This also provides innovative opportunities to plan better, to monitor the effectiveness of local service delivery, helps prevent duplication of effort and streamlines integrated approaches with wider planning partners.

6.0 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

6.1 Monitoring and evaluating progress towards outcomes is an important part of the planning process. The EAVAWP and its associated activities will be undertaken on four main levels to:

- The Chief Officer Group will receive regular, quarterly updates on progress with the partnership.
- Ensure the work of the group is reflected in the performance and outcome measures targets set within the local plans and strategies within the wider multi agency partnerships and structures.
- Consider the use of self evaluation tools to measure the effectiveness and impact of violence against women and girls partnership working has on the community as well as in their own experiences of working within it.
- Produce, develop, implement and monitor the East Ayrshire Violence against Women and Girls Strategic Plan.
- Produce an Annual report which will be shared with the Governance and Scrutiny Committee as part of the oversight and evaluation of the work of the Partnership.

7.0 EQUALITIES

7.1 The needs of women, children and young people from all sections of the community who experience gender based violence will be considered and incorporated within relevant Partnership plans including: Lesbian; Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex; Disability, HIV Status, Race, Faith groups and Age. The EAVAWP will ensure that the views of women and girls who have survived domestic abuse; rape and sexual assault; adult survivors of child sexual abuse; so called ‘honour’ based violence; Female Genital Mutilation (FGM); dowry related violence; forced and child marriage; child sexual

exploitation, prostitution and other forms of commercial sexual exploitation are included within these plans.

8.0 RESOLUTION OF CONFLICT OR DISPUTES

8.1 It is anticipated that sound professional relationships, effective partnership working and negotiation skills will negate the need for external measures to be taken to resolve any disputes or complaints from within the Partnership membership.

8.2 Partnership decisions will be reached by consensus, although individual members can have their dissent recorded. Where there are differing views on an option or approach, the Chair will decide.

8.3 Should significant conflict or disputes arise between member agencies / partner agencies which significantly affect the work of the Partnership, it is the responsibility of the Chair of the EAVAW Partnership to notify the EACOG, who will arbitrate on the matter.