

# Police Scotland submission of 14 December 2022

## PE1909/L: Remove the "gender-based crime" domestic abuse narrative and make it gender neutral and equal

In respect of points one and two

1. What Police Scotland's current approach to gender-informed domestic abuse training is and how support for male victims is highlighted as part of this; and
2. What resources are used to help Police Officers identify, understand and support male victims of abuse specifically

I would offer comment that all of the work of Police Scotland is underpinned by our commitment to clear equality and diversity values. This is evident in our continued engagement and interactions with our partners and the public.

Effectively tackling domestic abuse is an organisational priority for Police Scotland and we are committed to working with all partners to reduce the harm it causes and ultimately eradicate it.

Domestic abuse is a despicable and debilitating crime which affects all of our communities and has no respect for ability, age, ethnicity, gender, race, religion or sexual orientation.

The Joint Protocol between Police Scotland and Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) defines domestic abuse as:

*"Any form of physical, verbal, sexual, psychological or financial abuse which might amount to criminal conduct and which takes place within the context of a relationship. The relationship will be between partners (married, co-habiting, civil partnership or otherwise) or ex-partners. The abuse can be committed in the home or elsewhere including online."*

The definition of domestic abuse does not distinguish roles according to a person's sex or gender and encompasses the entire spectrum of behaviour by perpetrators.

Police Scotland are working with partner agencies to improve reporting via various methods.

It is acknowledged through statistical analysis of domestic incidents recorded by Police Scotland that domestic abuse, as a form of gender based violence, is predominately perpetrated by men against women. In 2021-2022, 81% of all record domestic incidents featured a male perpetrator and a female victim. It is acknowledged that domestic abuse is still underreported across all of society.

This definition also acknowledges and includes abuse of male victims by female perpetrators and includes abuse of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people within relationships.

While it is acknowledged that domestic abuse is a form of gender based violence, there is no variance in the level of service a victim will receive regardless of their sex or gender.

The gender identification of individuals who come into contact with the police will be based on how they present unless an alternative gender is disclosed. This is the case for all offences. In the context of operational duties, officers do not routinely ask the sex or gender of people they interact with.

*“The Joint Protocol between Police Scotland and the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) acknowledges that as a form of gender based violence, domestic abuse is perpetrated by men against women, however officers are reminded that the definition of domestic abuse encompasses and entire spectrum of abuse which includes the abuse of male victims by female perpetrators.*

There is no variance in the current training provided to officers on how to support victims of domestic abuse based on the victims' specific gender. When responding to incidents of domestic abuse officers will ensure that all possible lines of enquiry are rigorously pursued, making every effort to establish the nature of the relationship including history and relevant background information in order to identify the victim, and thereafter direct them to the most relevant support agency to meet their needs.

Effectively tackling domestic abuse is an organisational priority for Police Scotland and we are committed to working with all partners to reduce the harm it causes and ultimately eradicate it.

Police Scotland work closely with our key partners, including AMIS (Abused Men in Scotland) to provide support to male victims of domestic abuse. Abused Men in Scotland is a national organisation providing support to any man affected by domestic abuse. They will work with any man over 16 years of age who is affected by domestic abuse, regardless of sexuality, transgender status or history, age, religion, race, nationality or ethnic origin.

AMIS are a member of and participate in Police Scotland's Domestic Abuse Forum (DAF). The purpose of the Domestic Abuse Forum is to discuss and inform Police Scotland's strategic direction in relation to Domestic Abuse and it is attended by a number of internal and external partners.

Our Domestic Abuse Investigators Course (DAIC) is underpinned by Lived Experience accounts, a number of case studies feature lived experience which shapes the learning. AMIS provide input on this course to understand and support male victims of abuse