

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Ref: AHC/2024

**Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on
Monday 18 November 2024 at 6.00pm in the Mourne Room,
Downshire Civic Centre**

Chairperson: Councillor C Galbraith

In attendance in Chamber: Councillor D Finn Councillor A Finnegan
Councillor R Howell Councillor J Jackson
Councillor D Lee-Surginor Councillor A Lewis
Councillor A Mathers Councillor D Murphy
Councillor H Young

**Committee Members
in attendance (via Teams):** Councillor O Magennis Councillor L McEvoy
Councillor K Murphy

**Non-Committee Members
in Chamber:** Councillor T Andrews Councillor G Sharvin

**Non-Committee Members
in attendance (via Teams):** Councillor S O'Hare Councillor J Truesdale

Officials in Chamber: Mr A Patterson, Director, Active and Healthy Communities
Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director, Community Development
Mr C Haughey, Head of Outdoor Leisure
Mrs M Flynn, Head of Engagement (Acting)
Mr G Scott, Safeguarding Co-ordinator
Mrs D Starkey, Democratic Services Officer
Mrs F Branagh, Democratic Services Officer

Also in the Chamber: Ms C Archibold, Executive Office
Ms J McCarthy, Executive Office
Ms F French, Executive Office

AHC/097/2024: APOLOGIES & CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

An apology was received from Councillor Devlin.

The Chairperson welcomed Claire Archibald, Jane McCarthy and Fionnuala French from the Executive Office who were presenting on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls.

The Chairperson extended thanks to all Council officers and Mr Gary Scott who had worked hard in making the topic of Ending Violence against Women and Girls a priority since his Motion was passed at Council in February 2024, details of which were read out as follows:

“This Council upholds its commitment to ending violence against women and girls; reaffirms that violence, abuse and harm against women and girls cuts across all

generations and communities; calls for the delivery of a fully funded strategy to end violence against women and girls and commits to instituting November 25th as Elimination of Violence Against Women and Girls Day across the district with a series of events to help educate, raise awareness and end this abhorrent humanitarian abuse.”

The Chairperson commended the hard work to deliver on this topic with support from the Executive Office. Members were informed there would be a campaign launch with a number of information sessions to provide necessary support and signposting in association with all relevant agencies.

The Chairperson pointed out the reality was that in just 4 years, 24 women had been killed in Northern Ireland, a tragic statistic and stated we absolutely must do better.

AHC/098/2024: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

AHC/099/2024: PRESENTATION – ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

The Chairperson welcomed Claire Archibold, Jane McCarthy and Fionnuala French from the Executive Office to the Committee Meeting.

Ms Archibold took Members through a presentation entitled ‘Ending Violence Against Women and Girls.’ (Copy attached to these minutes).

Members were advised hard copies of the Strategic Framework and First Delivery Plan were available to anyone who wished to avail of them.

The Chairperson thanked Ms Archibold for the presentation and invited questions and comments from Members with the following points raised:

- More could be done in terms of collaboration, there was a need for joined up action to bring perpetrators to justice and to protect those who fell victim.
- The criminal justice system continued to fall short in supporting women and girls with the Public Prosecution Service (PPS) and the Courts failing to provide the necessary support, which contradicted the protective measures established by other agencies.
- There was a need to advocate for systemic change to ensure that the voices of women and children were heard and their rights upheld.
- Prevention was key however part of prevention was deterrence. An example of a recent case was provided whereby an individual convicted of rape was able to engage in a campaign against another victim. The person had been charged with four different criminal offences, with the case in the Magistrates Court, with a maximum of a six month sentence and it was asked where was the deterrent.
- There was little confidence in the PPS or the criminal justice system to deal with these issues, and that was why they had become more prevalent.
- 24 women had died over a period of time with the vast majority mothers, murdered in their own homes, along with the many other people that were fortunate to not have been killed, but people who had the potential to kill were slipping through the system. Where were they being dealt with?
- As elected representatives it was frustrating and difficult because they spoke to a lot of the victims that do not get the opportunity to speak to those putting papers together about all that was occurring within communities.

- As a PCSP member concerns had been raised about for example a victim arriving at the Ardmore station in Newry having to speak in public in front of other people with no privacy.
- Reference was made to the murder of Mary Ward and recent attacks in Derry. A lot more women now felt unsafe when they were out particularly in the dark evenings. In terms of the local grant scheme that was to be delivered from April 2025, was there anything that elected members could direct people to in terms of resources now and any recommendations that could be given to people who were feeling unsafe?
- In terms of education, were there any resources that could be shared with Council to issue via social media to highlight and take steps towards prevention and to make clear that that kind of behaviour was unacceptable in society.
- There had been 22,000 reports of violence against women recorded in the last year and urgent action was needed to drive a complete change in people's attitudes.
- Recognition was given to the work of Newry, Mourne and Down PCSP.
- Can you identify who the experts would be? Working with the victims sector there had been an ability to provide funding without the building blocks in place first. What work had been done to date?
- What work was being done on the ground to progress the Strategy and urgently change the mechanisms alluded to?
- From the research and statistics available, how long were women and girls actually experiencing violence?
- Sometimes people were ashamed that they were in this scenario and therefore it was important to break down that stigma to say, do you know what you are experiencing is wrong and you need to speak up about that.
- How would the impact and success of this Strategy be measured?
- What was the level of funding and was there a goal to set a band within that funding that Council would be able to give to organisations.
- Were libraries included as they could be a safe space with the ability to connect with an older population.

The representatives from the Executive Office responded as follows:

- Work in close partnership with the justice agencies.
- The Delivery Plan contained touch points into measures to help victims and worked closely with the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy which contained measures aimed at supporting victims better, speeding up the processes and providing rehabilitation and assistance for offenders (an ambitious challenge).
- It was easy to be daunted by what was not working however there was need to examine what could be working better.
- Through the lived experience women in the Co design process, some had actually said of their case that their police liaison officer was very good or that their experience had been part of their journey to things getting better for them.
- As the team reach out to each different agency to look at their part, their role was to coordinate action across government and society sectors to focus on the root causes and identify what were the other things needed to stop more people becoming victims.
- It was not just dealing with the people for whom the problem had already happened but trying to make sure that in future generations it happened to fewer people, that it happened less often and the ambitious target of actually ending it could be met.
- Any issues that elected members would like the team to bring to the attention of other partners, let them know, as part of their job was joining up the different parts of the system.
- Acknowledgement and awareness of some of the horrific stories that had been experienced, and reference was made to two reports on the website that provided a wide range of experiences, one was the 'Voices of Women' and the other was the

'Voices of Girls'.

- The team had heard the concerns raised by elected members through the co design space and had discussed it with PSNI, the justice system and PPS. The next step was how to address these together.
- One thing being done with the justice system was looking at the justice journey from a woman and girls perspective and what could be brought to that.
- It was important to speak with the women and girls who had been through that system and hear their journeys and what it was that they needed on the way to support them and to keep them engaged when they felt they could not go on e.g. Court space and having to face the perpetrator in front of them. There should be options available to them, places to keep them safe. They should have a good understanding of what was happening at any one time e.g. the technical language used in the court system which could throw vulnerable women and girls who pass through this system.
- That was one piece of a very big jigsaw that needed to be addressed and it was important to build confidence into the system and let women and girls feel like they were being listened to, looked after and helped through that system so that they get a better result.
- This was the start of a journey and the delegations job was to coordinate and make sure that everybody had sight of everything that was going on including education for women and girls. It was about how to be safe and feel safe, to understand safe and healthy relationships and for young men to not just be safe, but to be safe to be around.
- There was education not only for schools but also for communities, community groups and for supporting families. Council was involved in that at the very grassroots and there were opportunities for Council to work further on that.
- The importance of making sure that the one safe adult e.g. a youth worker, sports coach whoever that may be, had the knowledge, skills and ability to signpost those who confided and needed help.
- Working with Council officials to develop on what could be done. Funding was available and it was about building capacity in the community, and the opportunity to get the message out there about prevention as opposed to putting emphasis or responsibility on a woman to have to protect herself.
- It was about the root causes, why was it happening in the first place rather than having any kind of responsibility associated with the victim.
- There was an element of funding available to build the capacity about why it was happening and where safe spaces could be and how to make a safe space within in your organisation. Next year when the funding comes forward for the local change fund it was hoped community groups would be in a position to apply for funding to build on that because they understand the recourses and how to target their participants and groups.
- The best way to get the message out there was the campaign due for release in January 2025 and that was about starting the conversation, getting people to take notice and for people to deal with that.
- There had been good work with young people across the whole of the region in putting the campaign together and building a 10 point tool kit for young people to use and for circulation around different youth settings such as schools and youth clubs.
- It was also about helping people understand coercive control and how begin to even have a conversation with a GP, social worker or a friend and ways to help people to identify and articulate that as a first point and provide resources for how to take action and provide support.
- This was a whole government, whole society approach and one of the reasons to come to Councils early was that Councils know what was happening within communities.
- A day in the local Civic Centre, church or business, where people who have a domestic abuse problem could come and talk to police, housing executive, benefit

services and education all in the same place would be beneficial and was one of the proposals of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council.

- The Councils help in connecting with grassroots was essential.
- There was a co design process with over 50 people across Northern Ireland including those from the community, voluntary, academic, business and public sectors. There was also expertise by the lived experience and from service provision and study.
- There would be overarching regional support of organisations to deliver throughout Northern Ireland which would be filtered down to support in local communities with plans to work with each local Council area.
- There was funding available for Councils this year to use to best respond to the urgent and emerging issue and for community and voluntary organisations who want to do something but did not have the capacity to so at the minute.
- Provision was there to fulfil a range of age groups from preschool to older age groups, primary to secondary school, young adults and families and those who had multiple needs and barriers to getting services to bring about as broad a spread as possible.
- As a Council and elected members it was important to make sure that the information about signposting and organisations was known and that there was a connection with organisations within this area.
- The importance of elected representatives and others looking after themselves as when you hear a lived experience it can take a toll, being trauma informed was a really important part of making sure that you were continually able to give people the help that they need.
- Measure impact at a project level and society wide level.
- In the Local Change Fund each Council is being asked to operate their own schemes depending on what is needed within that area with 3 tiers of funding on offer.
 - Tier 1: funding between £1 and £5000 aimed at small organisations who want to get involved and do something, who might not have a lot of background knowledge in this area e.g. a one-off event or awareness raising events.
 - Tier 2: funding between £5000 and £15000 for planned or prolonged activities for organisations who were more knowledgeable of the issue to raise awareness and to highlight the preventative measures that were hoping to be achieved
 - Tier 3: funding between £15,000 and £25,000, similar to Tier 2 but with the added dimension of collaboration, mentoring and recognising that not everybody or every group was ready to deliver, but with the assistance of a larger organisation
- Funding was not enough but it was a start, and it was hoped that this would continue over the seven years of the strategy.
- In terms of how long women suffer, there was no official statistic however the Foyle Women's Aid research stated that it was 37 incidents, on average, before a woman left. From lived experience, sometimes it was less and sometimes it was more.
- The question to ask was how do make this better? How to change the story for all of those women and the key for each of them was going to be different.

Councillors Truesdale and Sharvin left the meeting at this point – 7.24pm

It was agreed by all to take a short recess – 7.25pm – 7.33pm.

AHC/100/2024: PARTNERSHIP WITH THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE (TEO) TO HELP END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS (EVAWG)

Read: Report dated 18 November 2024 from Mr G Scott, Safeguarding Co-ordinator regarding Partnership with the Executive Office (TEO) to help End Violence against Women and Girls (EVAWG). **(Copy circulated)**

Mr Scott provided a detailed overview of the report. Members were advised the Council website had support material around safety planning for people who wanted to leave abusive relationships along with the Safeguarding Co-ordinators contact number for any Councillor that wanted advice.

He advised that with the funding as detailed within the report there was as an opportunity for change and for the Council as an organisation to increase awareness and effect change in this area.

Members were informed that as part of ongoing work regarding the Motion passed by Council that meet and greet sessions in collaboration with Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council, the relevant Trusts and key partners were taking place in Newry Leisure Centre on the Elimination of Violence Against Women and Girls Day on 25 November, Down Leisure Centre on 26 November and South Lake Leisure Centre on 27 November 2024.

In response to Councillor Finnegan who sought clarity on the funding, Mrs M Flynn advised it was an emergency response fund for Council to respond fairly quickly to the issues that were presented through the potential proposals outlined within the report. It was also to raise awareness of End of Violence against Women and Girls involving partner agencies and stakeholders including Education and other stakeholders.

Councillor Lewis asked that it be noted that the partnership with the Executive Office to help End Violence against Women and Girls was unanimously agreed by all Members.

AGREED:

It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Finnegan, seconded by Councillor Lewis to note the contents of the Officer's report and the following draft proposals:

INTERIM FUNDING (2024/25):

- **Conference (March 2025) – potentially in conjunction with the Education Authority and other partners**
 - **Publicity Campaign – bespoke publicity campaign with elements to appeal to both young people and the general public – potential to launch at the above Conference**
 - **Project focusing on local outreach and development support/awareness raising – in conjunction with the DEA Team**
 - **Training and awareness initiatives in partnership with GP federations and other stakeholders**
- CHALLENGE FUND (2025/26):**

- **TEO has provided a General Guidance Booklet for Applicants to help frame the grant scheme. Officers will work with colleagues in the Grants and Funding Unit to administer this. It is proposed calls for funding will go out early in the new year for projects to be delivered in the 2025/26 Financial Year.**

AHC/101/2024: ACTION SHEET ARISING FROM ACTIVE & HEALTHY COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 21 OCTOBER 2024

Read: Action sheet of the Active & Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on Monday 21 October 2024. **(Copy circulated)**.

AGREED: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Howell, seconded by Councillor Jackson to note the Action Sheet of the Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on Monday 21 October 2024.

AHC/102/2024: MID YEAR ASSESSMENT OF BUSINESS PLAN

Read: Report dated 18 November 2024 from Mr A Patterson, Director of Active and Healthy Communities regarding Active and Healthy Communities Directorate Business Plans. **(Copy circulated)**

Councillor Young wished to put on record her thanks to the Ethnic Minority Support Centre for its commitment and support.

AGREED: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Young, seconded by Councillor Howell, to approve the Mid-Year Assessment of the AHC Directorate Business Plan 2024-25.

ITEMS RESTRICTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH PART 1 OF SCHEDULE 6 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT (NI) 2014

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor D Murphy, seconded by Councillor Lee-Surginor, it was agreed to exclude the public and press from the meeting during discussion on items 7 to 9, which related to exempt information by virtue of para. 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 - information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor D Murphy, seconded by Councillor Howell, it was agreed the Committee come out of closed session.

The Chairperson advised the following had been agreed whilst in closed session:

AHC/103/2024: FUNDING FROM DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES (DfC) FOR FRONTLINE ADVICE SERVICES

Read: Report dated 18 November 2024 from Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director, Community Development presented by Mrs M Flynn, Head of Engagement (Acting) regarding Funding from Department for Communities (DfC) for Advice Services. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Howell, seconded by Councillor Lee-Surginor, to note the Officer's report and agree to award additional funding as outlined within the Officer's report from the Department for Communities (DfC) to Community Advice Newry, Mourne and Down, alongside funding for Generalist Advice Services for 2024/2025.

AHC/104/2024: **PLAY PARK REVIEW STRATEGY BUSINESS CASE**

Read: Report dated 18 November 2024 from Mr A Patterson, Director of Active and Healthy Communities presented by Mr C Haughey, Head of Outdoor Leisure regarding the new Play Park Review 2024-2029. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Magennis, seconded by Councillor D Murphy, to approve the Play Park Review Business Case 2024-2029 and its proposed programme of works.

Councillor Magennis left the meeting at this point – 7.57pm.

AHC/105/2024: **LEASING OF COUNCIL LAND**

Read: Report dated 18 November 2024 from Mr A Patterson, Director of Active and Healthy Communities presented by Mr C Haughey, Head of Outdoor Leisure regarding an Expression of Interest (EOI) for a lease of Council land at the Rope Walk pitch located at the Three-ways Community Centre, High Street, Newry. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Finn, seconded by Councillor Mathers, to approve proceeding with the EOI process for leasing as outlined within the Officer's report, in accordance with the Council's Sports and Community Facility Management and Leasing Policy (2016).

AHC/106/2024: **DISTRICT ELECTORAL AREA (DEA) FORUMS UPDATE REPORT**

Read: Report dated 18 November 2024 from Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director, Community Development presented by Mrs M Flynn, Head of Engagement (Acting) regarding an update on District Electoral Area (DEA) Forums. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Howell, seconded by Councillor Finnegan, to note the report and approve the actions in the action sheets attached for:

- Rowallane DEA Forum Private Meeting held on 29 October 2024.
- Newry DEA Forum Private Meeting held on 31 October 2024.

AHC/107/2024: NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL PARTNERSHIP UPDATE REPORT

Read: Report dated 18 November 2024 from Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director, Community Development regarding an update Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Young, seconded by Councillor Finn, to note the Minutes of Downpatrick Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership Meeting held on 4 June 2024 approved at Downpatrick Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership Meeting held on 5 November 2024.

There being no further business the meeting ended at 8.01pm.

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 2 December 2024.

Signed: Councillor Galbraith
Chairperson

Signed: Andrew Patterson
Director Active and Healthy Communities

**ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST
WOMEN & GIRLS**

**Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Strategic Framework
Update and areas for collaboration**

Newry, Mourne and Down Council Meeting
28 October 2024

Claire Archbold

Director, Ending Violence Against Women & Girls



**ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST
WOMEN & GIRLS**

ALERT

This is a sensitive subject matter, and we are aware
people in the room may be triggered by the
discussion.

There is a quiet space for you to go to! →
And we can signpost you to other services.



EVAWG Strategic Framework

ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN & GIRLS

The Strategic Framework Timeline

01
Calls for views & engagement

02
Co-Design with Stakeholders

03
Framework Development

04
Consultation on Draft Strategy

05
Publication of Strategy & Action Plan

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

N.I. 2022
Harassment Street Survey

Almost **3 in 5** young males aged 18, 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

N.I. 2022
Harassment Street Survey

1 in 2 girls, aged 18, have received an unwanted intimate photo/ video at least once in their lifetime

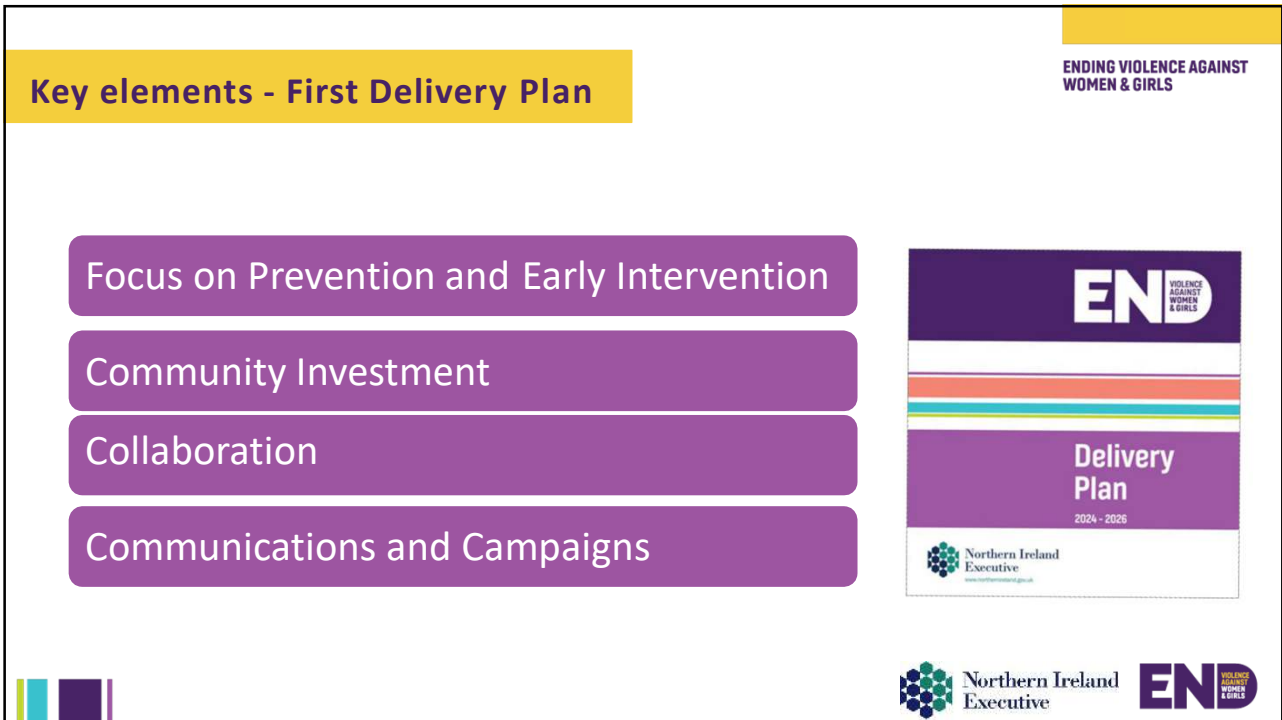
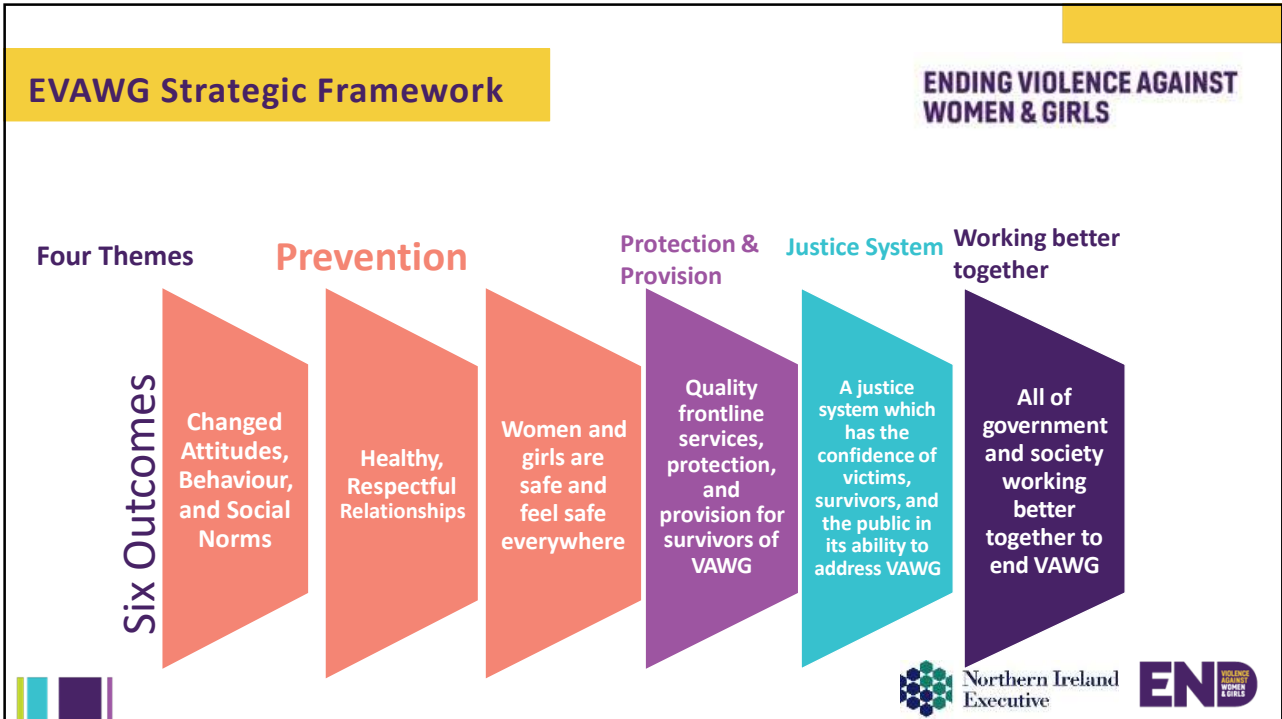
N.I. 2022
Harassment Street Survey

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

Gender Based Violence Pyramid

The problem statement Societal culture and systemic attitudes and beliefs enable violence against women and girls



Community Investment EVAWG Change Fund

ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST
WOMEN & GIRLS

The Change Fund is a fundamental part of delivering the EVAWG Strategic Framework and focuses on **PREVENTION**

- challenging attitudes, behaviors and culture,
- education on healthy and respectful relationships and
- ensuring women and girls feel safe and are safe everywhere.

LOCAL GRANT SCHEME - will support grassroots community groups to build capacity, to develop EVAWG approaches they know will work, to provide people and communities with the support they need to achieve change.

REGIONAL GRANT SCHEME - will support regional CVS EVAWG Experts to deliver tried and tested prevention-based training and/or activities.

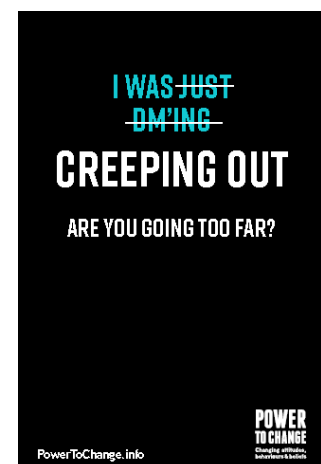


Campaigns and collaboration

ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST
WOMEN & GIRLS

We need to change attitudes, behaviours and culture

- 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



EVAWG & PfG

- Priority & Visibility
- Leadership
- Accountability
- Focus on EVAWG throughout government



ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN & GIRLS



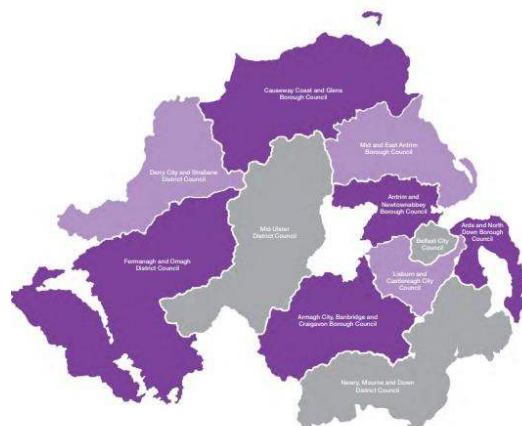
Local government supporting EVAWG

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

ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN & GIRLS



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

**ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST
WOMEN & GIRLS**

Thank you

EVAWG@executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk



Northern Ireland
Executive

