



**Police Service**  
of Northern Ireland

# **Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls**

Action Plan - Years 3-7



**we care  
we listen  
we act**

**Definition:**

“The term **“violence against women and girls”** refers to acts of violence or abuse that we know disproportionately affect women and girls. Crimes and behaviour covered by this term include rape and other sexual offences, domestic abuse, stalking, ‘honour’ based abuse (including female genital mutilation, forced marriage, and ‘honour’ killings), as well as many others, including offences committed online”

*UK Home Office, 2021*

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# 01 Foreword



**A significant majority of violent offences committed against women and girls in Northern Ireland are perpetrated by men. Between 1st January 2019 and 31st July 2025, 36 women and girls across Northern Ireland were tragically killed by men. Many more have faced other forms of male violence, abuse and intimidation, both within their own homes and the wider community.**

As a police service, we remain collectively committed to providing a first class response to all violence, abuse and intimidation offences against women and girls in our local communities. Whilst these offences perpetrated against everyone and anyone in our society are completely unacceptable, the available evidence and lived experience of women and girls tells us that they are still disproportionately the victims at the hands of men. We want to continue to work in partnership to change this and pursue those responsible.

It is also important to still recognise that many women and girls from marginalised communities and people from LGBTQIA+ communities have and continue to face specific, unique risks to their safety and additional barriers to getting the support and care they need to report the harm they experience. This is a significant focus for us moving forward into year's three to seven of our action plan.

We know that policing only sees the tip of the iceberg and that there are women and girls out there who are still suffering in silence. My message through this action plan would be, please report to us. Have confidence in our ability to keep you and your family safe from harm. We want to help you and we want to see that justice is served to those who have hurt you in any way.

Over the last two years we have worked extremely hard at building relationships with key partners, bolstering our training and challenging our own thoughts and behaviours in this space. As a

result of targeted resourcing and relentlessly pursuing perpetrators we have seen a reduction in VAWG offences and an increase in outcome rates for victims.

There is no doubt that we have made significant progress in our efforts but there is more work to be done. We are not complacent and as a learning organisation, we still have lessons to embed and take forward.

In years one and two of our action plan we have already completed 33 of the 41 actions we set for ourselves, an ambitious feat at the time but a challenge we rose to. Looking forward, we have carried forward the remaining actions and added 13 more to complete. In year three we completed 6 of the 21 actions

The structure of our action plan will now come under the national VAWG framework of a '4P' approach of PREPARE, PROTECT, PURSUE and PREVENT. This is a tested methodology that was developed in counter-terrorism and showcases how serious we take VAWG.



Our refreshed framework for years three to seven seeks to meet the national strategic policing requirement and focus activity on what we have learned and can be evidenced to protect women and girls: based on partner insight, commentary and the learning policing has gone through since we first published our action plan back in 2022.

**Over the last two years we have worked extremely hard at building relationships with partners, bolstering training and challenging our thoughts and behaviours in this space. As a result of targeted resourcing and relentlessly pursuing perpetrators we have seen a reduction in VAWG offences and an increase in outcome rates.**

Every officer and staff member remains committed but we can't win this fight and change the narrative on our own. I look forward to the anticipated publication of the Northern Ireland Executive Office's Ending Violence against Women and Girls strategy and the Department of Justice and Health's Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy, both of which will run parallel to the lifespan of the remainder of this action plan and affirm a societal commitment.

We promised that years one and two were only the beginning of the journey. We know that women and girls want to see continued delivery through a visible, accessible and responsive Police Service that cares, listens and acts. cares, listens and acts.



Jon Boutcher QPM  
Chief Constable

## 02 Completed Actions Years 1 and 2



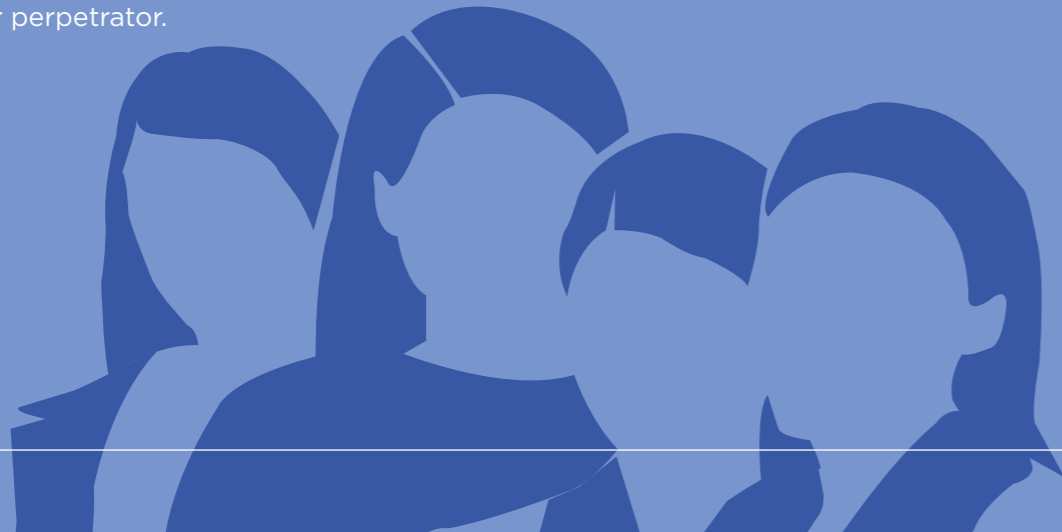
Theme 1:

# Build Trust and Confidence

We will ensure that where standards fall below those that we expect, in terms of how officers and staff treat each other and the public, we will deal with conduct which is unacceptable.

We will design and implement learning and development programmes for our officers and staff.

We will review our Dignity at Work suite of policies taking account of violence against women and girls. This will include a specific domestic abuse in the workplace policy. Public Protection Branch will lead on investigations where a police employee is either the victim or perpetrator.



	Action	Measure	Year Two Updates
1	<b>Examine vetting processes to ensure that accountable decision making incorporates suitable safeguarding for in- service vetting failures and service exit processes</b>	<b>1.1</b> Vetting processes reviewed at entry and in service as required and updated as applicable	<b>1.1</b> New revised Police Recruitment Guidance has been agreed for a new recruitment campaign that encompasses the themes and actions identified in the VAWG plan. Revised Vetting Service Instruction has been developed outlining processes for in-service vetting and for those re-joining, transferring or otherwise returning to the organisation.  <b>Action carried forward into new plan</b>
2	<b>Conduct a review of previous cases of sexual impropriety and misconduct alleged against the Police Service of Northern Ireland personnel to ensure appropriate investigative actions and safeguarding are addressed</b>	<b>2.1</b> Case reviews will be conducted and appropriate actions taken to address criminal, misconduct or safeguarding concerns raised throughout	<b>2.1</b> A total of 154 investigations involving 134 officers have been identified for review. To date the team have made 178 recommendations which are being progressed through Public Protection, Professional Standards and Service Vetting Unit. It is anticipated that the review will be complete by October 2024.  <b>Action carried forward into new plan</b>

	Action	Measure	Year Two Updates
3	<b>Review our confidential signposting and support mechanisms for reporting concerns in the workplace</b>	<p><b>3.1</b> Review conducted into existing confidential support mechanisms to ensure fitness for purpose. This will focus on all crime and incident types rather than specific training for domestic and sexual crimes</p> <p><b>3.2</b> To raise awareness of internal procedures for those who wish to report wrongdoing in the workplace</p>	<p><b>3.1</b> Professional Standards now has a Prevention First Team who focus primarily on advertising standards and common misconduct pitfalls, as well as encouraging confidential reporting and signposting through the implementation of a Prevention First Policy.</p> <p><b>3.2</b> Professional Standards has developed a new Communication and Engagement Strategy, with a particular focus on abuse of position for a sexual purpose, maintaining professional boundaries and improper conduct related to gender.</p> <p><b>Action complete</b></p>
4	<b>Publish a Statement of Intent in respect of conduct and standards expected by police employees of all ranks and grades</b>	<p><b>4.1</b> Statement of Intent of conduct and standards to be communicated to all police employees</p>	<p><b>4.1</b> This has been completed and distributed to all employees within the organisation in early 2022. This action is fully complete.</p> <p><b>Action complete</b></p>

	Action	Measure	Year Two Updates
5	<b>Deliver to all officers and staff in front line policing roles specialist trauma informed domestic abuse training developed by the Police Service of Northern Ireland in conjunction with internal and external stakeholders</b>	<p><b>5.1</b> Delivery of specialist trauma informed domestic abuse training to all officers and staff in front line policing roles</p>	<p><b>5.1</b> Trauma informed victim forward training has been developed to support investigations into domestic abuse, stalking and non-fatal strangulation with thousands of officers and staff upskilled as a result.</p> <p><b>Action complete</b></p>
6	<b>Deliver to all officers and staff in front line policing roles specialist trauma informed sexual offences training developed in conjunction with external and internal stakeholders</b>	<p><b>6.1</b> Delivery of specialist trauma informed training to support the introduction of new legislative provisions including new offences of “up skirting” and “down blousing”</p>	<p><b>6.1</b> Rape myths training has been delivered across PPB, PSD and LPC in person. In order to maximise the reach of the training this has moved to a Train The Trainer (TTT) approach. The TTT sessions have been delivered to district training representatives and will be embedded into the scheduling for training.</p> <p>A series of micro lessons were developed to cover a number of new sexual offences within the Justice Act focusing on up skirting, down blousing, grooming offences and threats to release private images.</p> <p><b>Action complete</b></p>

	Action	Measure	Year Two Updates
7	<b>Deliver to all officers and staff in front line policing roles specialist training on online and physical stalking and harassment in line with</b>	<b>7.1</b> Delivery of specialist stalking training to all officers and staff	<b>7.1</b> Stalking training has successfully been delivered to front line staff and the new legislation fully operationalised.  <b>Action complete</b>
8	<b>Review student officer training to ensure that it is reflective of legislative requirements in relation to domestic abuse, sexual offences and VAWG. This will include a review in response to reports of female genital mutilation, sexual abuse and violence, forced marriage and honour based abuse</b>	<b>8.1</b> The Police College will work with internal and external stakeholders to ensure material updated in line with legislative and policy changes.  <b>8.2</b> Training is regularly reviewed and updated as required.  <b>8.2</b> Undertake rape myth training across the Police Service of Northern Ireland to remove false beliefs and prejudice	<b>8.1</b> All student officer training has been reviewed to ensure this is reflective of any legislative changes, and is supported by online training modules where required.  <b>8.2</b> A newly developed College of Policing Course has also been created for specialist investigators.  <b>8.2</b> Rape myths training has been delivered across PPB, PSD and LPC in person.  <b>Action complete</b>

	Action	Measure	Year Two Updates
9	<b>Develop and design a bespoke learning and development programme for all officers and staff to recognise behaviours linked to violence against women and girls, from all backgrounds. This will cut across all crime and incident types</b>	<b>9.1</b> Specific violence against women and girls learning and development programme delivered to all officers and staff which will focus on backgrounds, relationships and the different offending behaviours and triggers for violence against women and girls	<b>9.1</b> A bespoke programme of work is being developed with an external provider who specialises in this area with a focus on police responses. This will be delivered in a number of different ways including webinars with senior officers and a train the trainer element for the opportunity to have discussions with colleagues around VAWG related matters that cut across all crime and incident types. This is scheduled for November 24.  <b>Action carried forward into new plan</b>
10	<b>Review our Dignity at Work suite of policies to address the causal factors that give rise to bullying, harassment and grievances</b>	<b>10.1</b> Refreshed Dignity at Work policies will be complete, and related communications plan launched to support awareness raising	<b>10.1</b> Dignity at work policies reviewed, published and now in operational use.  <b>Action complete</b>
11	<b>Publish a new specific domestic abuse in the workplace policy outlining roles and responsibilities of how to both report and investigate domestic abuse where either the victim or suspect is a Police Service employee</b>	<b>11.1</b> Domestic abuse in the workplace policy introduced across the service  <b>11.1</b> Domestic Abuse Champions identified to support the implementation of the new policy	<b>11.1</b> The domestic abuse in the workplace service instruction was published in June 2024. This has been further supported by a joint action plan between PPS and the Police Service of Northern Ireland investigating and prosecuting domestic abuse cases, this outlines the required actions for both organisations  <b>11.1</b> Domestic abuse champions remain in place and will be reviewed annually.  <b>Action complete</b>

Theme 2:

# Relentless Perpetrator Pursuit

We will ensure investigations are of the highest standard and seek to increase prosecution and outcome rates. We will prioritise actions associated with those persons wanted for VAWG. We will ensure effective and ethical crime recording of all offences, including VAWG. We will seek to identify those who are repeat victims of offences. We will introduce Protective Orders in order to enhance available protection measures. We will use the Domestic Homicide Review process to better understand and take all steps possible to prevent the murder of women and girls.



	Action	Measure	Year Two Updates
1	<b>Develop a seven year strategy, in consultation with the Public Prosecution Service in relation to serious sexual offences</b>	<p><b>1.1</b> Serious sexual offence strategy developed alongside the Public Prosecution Service</p> <p><b>1.2</b> Launch the revised Service Level Agreement with Public Prosecution Service to highlight the agreed investigative standards and improve the quality of domestic abuse files</p>	<p><b>1.1</b> 7 Year strategy remains in development with PPS - there are a series of recommendations identified for both organisations and a prioritisation of the same. A timeline for publication is being discussed</p> <p><b>1.2</b> Domestic abuse joint strategy was published in June 2024 by both organisations. This strives to create a consistent approach to the standards that victims can expect when they report domestic abuse crimes.</p> <p><b>Action carried forward into new plan</b></p>
2	<b>Develop a process for improved and standardised of VAWG offending behaviours</b>	<p><b>2.1</b> Quarterly analysis of use of criminal justice outcomes completed to include arrests, charges, file submission timeliness, victim attrition rates and use of body worn video, including quality of recordings and evidential difficulties that have been present in the investigation</p>	<p><b>2.1</b> Baseline for recording VAWG offences is now being captured on VAWG Pulse (operational recording platform) pages. A number of PULSE workshops have been delivered to allow more confidence in being able to access operational data within the VAWG pages.</p> <p><b>Action carried forward into new plan</b></p>

	Action	Measure	Year Two Updates
3	<b>Adapt the Police Service of Northern Ireland Wanted Persons Risk Assessment Matrix (WPRAM) to ensure those persons wanted for violence against women and girls offences are a prioritisation</b>	<b>3.1</b> Risk assessment matrix adapted to include violence against women and girls categories within the Police Service of Northern Ireland	<b>3.2</b> A wanted person's process has been embedded across the Police Service of Northern Ireland. A review of this process and the prioritisation of VAWG within same will be completed in year 3.  <b>Action carried forward into new plan</b>
4	<b>Scope out the options and practicalities of how the Police Service of Northern Ireland record incidents that occur as a result of misogynistic attitudes, with a view to proposing subsequent interventions including potentially enhanced sentencing</b>	<b>4.1</b> Scoping exercise will be undertaken and review completed	<b>4.1</b> This is still providing challenge across the UK and not something that there is a cohesive national view on, therefore work remains ongoing as to how this data would be effectively captured. However, it has been reviewed to ensure that this remains part of business as usual for relentless/ wanted persons.  <b>Action complete</b>
5	<b>Service Crime Registrar to conduct annual audits to ensure accurate crime recording</b>	<b>5.1</b> Results from annual audits to meet key performance indicators	<b>5.1</b> Audits are now part of Business as usual. Any findings and recommendations from these audits are governed through the Service Performance Board  <b>Action complete</b>

	Action	Measure	Year Two Updates
6	<b>Service Crime Registrar to provide clear advice and training to crime recorders across the organisation to promote consistent application of Home Office counting rules</b>	<b>6.1</b> Internal guidance and training to be published to support practical and operational application	<b>6.1</b> This has been undertaken by the Service Crime Registrar and remains ongoing in respect of compliance. Where an issue is identified, guidance is re-shared and interactions with relevant teams follow. This is now embedded as business as usual.  <b>Action complete</b>
7	<b>Revise our current repeat victim process to ensure it identifies those repeat victims of violence against women and girls offences</b>	<b>7.1</b> Review the repeat victim strategy	<b>7.1</b> The repeat victim data is now available for all policing districts including the repeat victimisation rate, this allows for local policing response where there are increasing concerns reported.  <b>Action complete</b>
8	<b>Develop a problem solving toolkit for officers and staff involved in supporting those who are repeat victims of violence against women and girls offences</b>	<b>8.1</b> Toolkit developed to include criminal justice outcomes, protective, and supportive measures available for victims of violence against women and girls offences	<b>8.1</b> An app has been created for front line officers / staff members that captures all available legislation, civil procedures and other information required for VAWG related investigations. A series of toolkits for internal and external usage are also available for bespoke offences where this would be relevant or required.  <b>Action complete</b>
9	<b>Baseline the number of repeat violence against women and girls victims in year one</b>	<b>9.1</b> Year one to be identified as the baseline for victims of violence against women and girls offences within the rolling 365 days	<b>9.1</b> All VAWG offences are now captured on the the Police Service of Northern Ireland PULSE system. This has over 12 month's data available for interrogation and assists identify patterns including repeat offenders, victims and locations.  <b>Action complete</b>

	Action	Measure	Year Two Updates
10	<b>Baseline overall violence against women and girls offences in year one</b>	<b>10.1</b> Year one to be identified as the baseline for victims of violence against women and girls offences within the rolling 365 days	<b>10.1</b> As per action 3 above. <b>Action complete</b>
11	<b>We will operationalise the introduction of Stalking Protection Orders in Northern Ireland and monitor the usage of interim and full SPOs to protect those who are at risk of online or offline stalking</b>	<b>11.1</b> SPOs will be introduced within Northern Ireland and relevant training and awareness will be undertaken to support officers and staff	<b>11.2</b> Stalking Protection Orders have been live in NI since October 2023 and a programme of training delivered <b>Action complete</b>
12	<b>We will operationalise the introduction of Domestic Abuse Protection Orders / Notices in Northern Ireland, following the introduction of the Domestic Abuse &amp; Civil Proceedings Act (NI) 2021</b>	<b>12.1</b> Domestic Abuse Protection Orders and Notices will be introduced within Northern Ireland and relevant training and awareness will be undertaken to support officers and staff	<b>12.1</b> There remains engagement with the Department of Justice in respect of the operationalisation of DAPO/ Ns - a dip sample has been undertaken to highlight the potential demand. This will be a considerable financial and resource cost to the organisation and a business case is currently being developed to identify the best delivery model for supporting this legislation. <b>Action carried forward into new plan</b>

	Action	Measure	Year Two Updates
13	<b>Police will embed the effective use of the Domestic Abuse Protection Orders</b>	<b>3.1</b> Domestic Abuse Protection Orders and Notices will be introduced within Northern Ireland and relevant training and awareness will be undertaken to support officers and staff	<b>3.1</b> There remains engagement with the Department of Justice in respect of the operationalisation of DAPO/ Ns - a dip sample has been undertaken to highlight the potential demand. This will be a considerable financial and resource cost to the organisation and a business case is currently being developed to identify the best delivery model for supporting this legislation. <b>Action carried forward into new plan</b>
14	<b>Police will embed the effective use of the Domestic Homicide Review process across Northern Ireland to inform our prevention first approach to tackling domestic abuse in all its forms through effective internal learning reviews</b>	<b>3.1</b> All learning from Domestic Homicide Reviews will be embedded in our prevention strategy for domestic abuse	<b>3.1</b> The DHR process is fully embedded across the Police Service of Northern Ireland and is overseen by the Public Protection Branch. The PPB Head of Branch is also a key member of the DHR Oversight Forum to ensure learning across agencies <b>Action complete</b>

## Theme 3:

# Safer Spaces

We will seek to improve safety in public spaces for women and girls by developing an enhanced process to identify the locations and times where crime disproportionately affects them. We will work with partners to design safer public spaces for the future. We will work with a range of stakeholders to develop and promote media campaigns for policing that challenge offender behaviour in all spaces. We will develop a bespoke engagement programme in each policing district. We will develop a multi-disciplinary Independent Advisory Group (IAG) to build trust and confidence by ensuring the voices of women and girls are heard.

	Action	Measure	Year Two Updates
1	<b>Develop a process that directs officers to the identified violence against women and girls locations at key times</b>	<b>1.1</b> Vetting processes reviewed at entry and in service as required and updated as applicable	<b>1.1</b> An operational policing Geoportal and briefing app has been developed to help identify specific locations of concern in respect of a range of crime types including VAWG. This ensures officers have quick and easy information to aid the deployment of resources.  <b>Action complete</b>
2	<b>Baseline the overall violence against women and girls offences in year one</b>	<b>2.1</b> Baseline established	<b>2.1</b> There is now the opportunity to capture the baseline of VAWG offences and compare against the relevant reporting periods. This has over 12 months of data available for interrogation.  <b>Action complete</b>
3	<b>Develop internal Police Service of Northern Ireland guidance on how to investigate spiking offences</b>	<b>3.1</b> Internal guidance completed and issued. To be reviewed and refreshed on an ongoing basis	<b>3.1</b> Specific guidance and supporting awareness material has been developed, enabling a focused and consistent approach to responding to reported spiking incidents. While occasional incidents are reported, the initial increase which prompted this action point have reduced.  <b>Action complete</b>
4	<b>Policing districts to ensure spiking is a key focus within their night-time economy working groups</b>	<b>4.1</b> Night time economy working groups established with spiking as a key focus. Working groups to be dip sampled to ensure compliance and quality	<b>4.1</b> As above.  <b>Action complete</b>

	Action	Measure	Year Two Updates
5	<b>Develop a media campaign to raise awareness of spiking and deter perpetrator behaviour</b>	<b>5.1</b> Media campaign developed and launched	<b>5.1</b> Spiking awareness has been included to date in the Operation Seasons Greetings campaign in 2022/2023. It was also included the initial launch of the Ask for Angela Campaign and student safety material.  <b>Action complete</b>
6	<b>Baseline the number of reports of spiking offences in year one</b>	<b>6.1</b> Baseline established	<b>6.1</b> It remains a challenge for the police to routinely provide verified statistics on 'spiking' as there is no specific offence of 'spiking' by law in NI. There are other associated offences (administering a poison with intent to injure), but these don't solely relate to 'spiking'.  <b>Action complete</b>
7	<b>Use the "Secured by Design Gold Standard" model where the Police Service of Northern Ireland is involved in any design process</b>	<b>7.1</b> Crime prevention officers within the Police Service of Northern Ireland consider violence against women and girls as a key consideration as part of their role in the Secured by Design process (to be measured by qualitative dip sample)	<b>7.1</b> The Design Out Crime team provide design solutions and assessment on security to minimise crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour. Since 1 September 2022 - August 2024, the team have provided VAWG specific support to over 220 projects, developments and events. This process is now embedded as Business as usual.  <b>Action complete</b>

	Action	Measure	Year Two Updates
8	<b>Continue to promote the number of ONUS Safe Places in Northern Ireland and will review how the existing Safe Places are working to keep women and girls safe</b>	<b>8.1</b> Continued promotion of ONUS safe spaces and review completed, including awareness events hosted by the Police Service of Northern Ireland officers or staff members	<b>8.1</b> ONUS Safe Places schemes has been reinvigorated with information provided to all Districts, promoting and encouraging the support of the scheme.  <b>Action complete</b>
9	<b>Develop a standardised process to ensure safety of women and girls is embedded where policing has a role within event planning</b>	<b>9.1</b> Safety of women and girls is a standing agenda item on all event planning agendas (dip sample to assess quality of considerations)	<b>9.1</b> The Police College have reviewed best practice and developed bespoke specific guidance and supporting material for all Public Order, Public Safety Commanders to ensure VAWG is a central element in the planning stage of events. This is now embedded in business as usual.  <b>Action complete</b>
10	<b>Awareness around violence against women and girls will be embedded as part of the police Public Order and Public Safety Training</b>	<b>10.1</b> Violence against women and girls awareness is embedded in Public Order and Public Safety training	<b>10.1</b> As above.  <b>Action complete</b>

	Action	Measure	Year Two Updates
11	<b>Work in partnership to develop campaigns relevant to challenging attitudes and behaviours relating to offences against women and girls</b>	<b>11.1</b> Campaigns delivered in conjunction with corporate communications	<b>11.1</b> Spiking awareness has been included to date in the Operation Seasons Greetings campaign in 2022/2023.  It was also included the initial launch of the Ask for Angela Campaign and student safety material.  <b>Action complete</b>
12	<b>Development of local stakeholder maps as part of local engagement pillars</b>	<b>12.1</b> Local stakeholders have a local dedicated point of contact  <b>2.2</b> Each District will have produced and delivered a local engagement plan to support the aims of this action plan, including a local stakeholder map and activity plan	<b>12.1</b> Dedicated points of contact are in place within each Local Policing Command area.  <b>12.2</b> Annual events delivered and planned across District Policing areas in collaboration with partners.  <b>Action complete</b>
13	<b>Identify cohort of points of contact within the Police Service of Northern Ireland who will support local action and engagement plans</b>	<b>13.1</b> Violence against women and girls points of contact appointed and contact details shared with local stakeholders	<b>13.1</b> As above.  <b>Action complete</b>

	Action	Measure	Year Two Updates
14	<b>Establish a Northern Ireland based IAG, to meet quarterly or on an ad hoc basis when required</b>	<b>14.1</b> Key independent accountability measures IAG established to oversee delivery	<b>14.1</b> An IAG has now been in place for over one year with feedback provided directly to police on key issues and for police to consult on key matters such as new policies, policy changes etc.  <b>Action complete</b>
15	<b>Establish a Northern Ireland based IAG, to meet quarterly or on an ad hoc basis when required</b>	<b>14.1</b> Key independent accountability measures IAG established to oversee delivery	<b>14.1</b> An IAG has now been in place for over one year with feedback provided directly to police on key issues and for police to consult on key matters such as new policies, policy changes etc.  <b>Action complete</b>
16	<b>Develop of local activity plans to deliver the aims of this action plan, including a local programme of events participation to disseminate key crime prevention messages through presentations and stand</b>	<b>16.1</b> Violence against women and girls awareness is embedded in Public Order and Public Safety training	<b>16.1</b> As above.  <b>Action complete</b>
17	<b>Deliver a programme of visits for senior officers to service providers to hear directly about the experiences of victims through the lifetime of the action plan</b>	<b>17.1</b> Programme of visits delivered to a variety of key stakeholders	<b>17.1</b> The Police Service of Northern Ireland have undertaken direct engagement with students in Northern Ireland, alongside other relevant partners including the University and colleague institutions, local councils and hospitality industry, to listen to their experiences first-hand. This is now embedded as business as usual.  <b>Action complete</b>

# 03 Our Action Plan Years 3 to 7

In developing this action plan there are two strategic outcomes we are seeking to achieve, namely;

## Outcome 1:

Contribute to having a society in which violence and abuse against women and girls in any form, anywhere, is not acceptable and will not be tolerated.



In order to deliver these strategic outcomes our action plan focuses upon four revised priority themes following the GB framework, namely;

	<p><b>Theme 1:</b> <b>Prepare</b> policing in the fight against VAWG</p>
	<p><b>Theme 1:</b> <b>Protect</b> communities from VAWG</p>
	<p><b>Theme 1:</b> <b>Pursue</b> VAWG perpetrators</p>
	<p><b>Theme 1:</b> <b>Prevent</b> people from committing VAWG</p>

Theme 1:

# Prepare

PREPARE policing to effectively respond to and reduce VAWG This P is the foundation to ensure readiness to tackle VAWG. We are fit to serve thanks to the right culture, skills and resources.



Action	Measure	Year Three Updates
1. Examine vetting processes to ensure that appropriate vetting guidelines, enquiries and assessments are conducted for all potential new recruits and officers and staff in designated posts.	To continuously review the recruitment guidelines for new officers and staff. To have a robust vetting and aftercare process in place to identify, risk manage or dismiss officers and staff who fail the vetting process.	<b>COMPLETED</b> VAWG information has been included in the revised Police Recruitment Guidance for the new recruitment campaign. The PSNI Service Instruction will also reflect same and is currently with Corporate Policy and has been Section 75 screened.
2. Conduct a review of previous cases of sexual impropriety and misconduct alleged against the PSNI personnel to ensure appropriate investigative actions and safeguarding are addressed.	Case reviews will continue to be conducted and appropriate actions taken to address criminal, misconduct or safeguarding concerns raised throughout. Case reviews to be completed by end of October 2024 with further consideration on how this information is shared.	<b>ONGOING</b> Case reviews are continuing with actions identified from those completed thus far. It is anticipated that it all reviews will be completed by the end of 2025.
3. Review our Dignity at Work suite of policies to address the causal factors that give rise to bullying, harassment and grievances.	Refreshed Dignity at Work policies will be complete, and related communications plan launched to support awareness raising	<b>ONGOING</b> A review of policies is currently underway with an operational lead appointed.
4. Refresh our organisational statement of intent to embed learning from years one and two.	Refreshed statement of intent shared with and embedded across the organisation.	<b>COMPLETED</b> Statement of intent refreshed and circulated amongst the organisation with ongoing plans for continued promotion.
5. Design and deliver Continuous Professional Development (CPD) events to ensure understanding of professional standards processes are consistent across ranks and roles.	A CPD schedule is drafted, delivered and feedback from participants sought to ensure learning.	<b>COMPLETED</b> A bespoke mandatory internal training package linked to the successful Power to Change campaign has been developed and launched on 19/08/2025. To date 722 officers/staff have completed the training. Professional Standards Department engagement continues as business as usual with the Statement of Intent and VAWG highlighted throughout each training session.
6. Develop and introduce a sexual abuse in the work place strategy in support of the newly introduced police perpetrated domestic abuse strategy.	Strategy completed and introduced with associated communications plan, working in partnership internally and externally.	<b>ONGOING</b> An initial scoping exercise has begun to consider current policies already in place and how these can be further enhanced.
7. Develop an engagement strategy that creates a tailored network of diverse groups with representation from women and girls, including black and minority women and girls who are willing to share views with the police.	Strategy drafted and implemented across the Police Service of Northern Ireland. The strategy will reflect how we engage across women and girls sector independently and collectively across NI and the voluntary groups that support them. A network will be created across key partners who represent women and girls to share their experiences as policy, training and awareness is developed.	<b>ONGOING</b> Work is underway and continuing across all neighbourhood districts to engage with and seek feedback from minority groups.

Theme 2:

# Protect

PROTECT individuals and communities from VAWG. This P focuses on victims and their needs. We will keep victims, witnesses and communities safe, and their needs will direct and balance the police response. We consider individuals over incidents.



Action	Measure	Year Three Updates
<p><b>8. Develop and design a bespoke learning and development programme for all officers and staff to recognise behaviours linked to violence against women and girls, from all backgrounds. This will cut across all crime and incident types.</b></p>	<p><b>8.1</b> Specific violence against women and girls learning and development programme delivered to all officers and staff which will focus on backgrounds, relationships and the different offending behaviours and triggers for violence against women and girls 5.2 Evaluation following this training will take place by way of a survey as to how violence against women and girls issues had been addressed through this training, and if required used to develop any further continuous professional development.</p> <p><b>8.2</b> Evaluation following this training will take place by way of a survey as to how violence against women and girls issues had been addressed through this training, and if required used to develop any further continuous professional development.</p>	<p><b>8.1 COMPLETED</b></p> <p><b>8.2 ONGOING</b></p> <p><b>An online learning module has been developed following extensive interaction with officers and staff members about their experiences within policing. The links to Power to change have been embedded within the online training platform. Active bystander training has also been designed and commenced delivery across the organisation supported by Graham Goulden.</b></p>
<p><b>9. We will operationalise the introduction of Domestic Abuse Protection Orders / Notices in Northern Ireland, following the introduction of the Domestic Abuse &amp; Civil Proceedings Act (NI) 2021.</b></p>	<p>Domestic Abuse Protection Orders and Notices will be introduced within Northern Ireland and relevant training and awareness will be undertaken to support officers and staff.</p>	<p><b>ONGOING Work is ongoing to map demand, discussions are ongoing with the Department of Justice in relation to the regulations to be used.</b></p>
<p><b>10. Develop rape victim survey to understand the views of victims and seek to continuously improve the standards of our investigations.</b></p>	<p>Survey developed in consultation with partners and introduced for rape investigations across the PSNI.</p>	<p><b>ONGOING A draft victim experience survey has been developed in partnership and is currently under review.</b></p>
<p><b>11. Review the effectiveness of our PULSE system in effectively recording details of victims, offenders and locations. .</b></p>	<p>Review completed and update provided with associated recommendations as required.</p>	<p><b>ONGOING There are a number of ongoing PULSE areas under development/consideration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to be able to track the level of domestic abuse offending (standard, medium and high risk)</li> <li>• Referral information to operation encompass - number of referrals across each of the 11 districts</li> <li>• Disaggregated data on rape and serious sexual offences including victim engagement, drugs and alcohol included in the offending, additional location information.</li> </ul>

Theme 3:

# Pursue

PREPARE policing to effectively respond to and reduce VAWG This P is the foundation to ensure readiness to tackle VAWG. We are fit to serve thanks to the right culture, skills and resources.



Action	Measure	Year Three Updates
12. Develop a seven year strategy, in consultation with the Public Prosecution Service in relation to serious sexual offences.	<p>12.1 Serious sexual offence strategy developed alongside the Public Prosecution Service 1.2 Launch the revised Service Level Agreement with Public Prosecution Service to highlight the agreed investigative standards and improve the quality of domestic abuse files.</p> <p>12.2 Launch the revised Service Level Agreement with Public Prosecution Service to highlight the agreed investigative standards and improve the quality of domestic abuse files.</p>	<b>ONGOING</b> A draft Serious Sexual Offences Strategy has been developed, this is being reviewed to consider introduction of an offender pillar into the strategy.
13. Develop a process for improved and standardised investigations of VAWG offences.	Quarterly analysis of use of criminal justice outcomes completed to include arrests, charges, file submission timeliness, victim attrition rates and use of body worn video, including quality of recordings, and evidential difficulties that have been present in the investigations.	<b>ONGOING</b> Analysis of this kind has begun and will continue throughout the lifespan of this action plan.
14. Adapt the Police Service of Northern Ireland Wanted Persons Risk Assessment Matrix (WPRAM) to ensure those persons wanted for violence against women and girls offences are a prioritisation category.	Risk assessment matrix adapted to include violence against women and girls categories within the Police Service of Northern Ireland.	<b>ONGOING</b> A pilot is currently ongoing in South Belfast with daily and weekly priority offenders being identified and relentlessly pursued. Clear positive impact.
15. Develop scrutiny panels for rape “no prosecution” outcomes.	An independent scrutiny panel process will be implemented across Northern Ireland to focus on decision making in rape offences.	<b>ONGOING</b>
16. We will review our Death Investigation Service Instruction to ensure no potential lines of enquiry in any sudden death are missed and that all attending officers are clear on the correct procedures.	Death Investigation Service Instruction reviewed and internally promoted for widespread understanding and compliance.	<b>COMPLETED</b> Death Investigation Service Instruction reviewed and internally promoted.

## Theme 4:

## Prevent

PREPARE policing to effectively respond to and reduce VAWG. This P is the foundation to ensure readiness to tackle VAWG. We are fit to serve thanks to the right culture, skills and resources.

Action	Measure	Year Three Updates
<b>17. Support The Executive Office with the development of a perpetrator strategy for domestic abuse in Northern Ireland.</b>	The PSNI will assist in a review of repeat domestic abuse strategies in other jurisdictions to better inform the best model for Northern Ireland supported by, and providing support to partners, recognising that policing only plays one part in addressing perpetrator behaviours. This would see a domestic abuse repeat perpetrator strategy for Northern Ireland developed with clearly defined roles and responsibilities for each partner.	<b>ONGOING</b> This remains a key strand for discussions within the MARAC review and within the operationalisation of domestic abuse protection notices and orders. Discussions have included interim steps that could be taken to reduce the burden on policing and allow resources to be dedicated/directed to those who are causing the most harm – for example increased technology to monitor offenders.
<b>18. Develop and embed the use of Op Vigilant across the PSNI.</b>	Record the number of deployments of Op Vigilant across NI and any learning from the same.	<b>ONGOING</b> Thames Valley Police have completed a ‘train the trainer’ session with PSNI officers. Suitable resources have been identified internally to support this operation and initial deployment is imminent.
<b>19. Support the safer night time economy strategy that is being developed for Northern Ireland. .</b>	The PSNI will actively participate in the newly established safer socialising steering group to develop a safer night time economy strategy.	<b>COMPLETED</b> PSNI continue to be a key stakeholder on this group.
<b>20. Review the MARAC arrangements in Northern Ireland post the “Leonard Consultancy” review.</b>	As the current lead agency for the MARAC Operational Board, the PSNI will provide support to the Department of Justice and Department of Health as required to address the recommendations within the Leonard Consultancy review and operationalise.	<b>ONGOING</b> The working group has met with a number of key stakeholders throughout the last six months including statutory and voluntary partners to understand the scope and scale of the change, and the best mechanism of better protecting victims. Work ongoing.
<b>21. We will work to support the implementation of dedicated Domestic Abuse Courts in Northern Ireland to better support victims of domestic abuse and reduce attrition rates.</b>	Police will work collaboratively with Criminal Justice partners to introduce a pilot Domestic Abuse Court which will focus on providing a more effective and efficient journey through the Criminal Justice process and courts. This will seek to reduce victim attrition and the time between report and court outcomes. An initial pilot court will be operational within Belfast Laganside and will focus on violent offences within a domestic setting and the new Domestic abuse offence.	<b>ONGOING</b> A domestic abuse court will be one of the key discussion topics in respect of the introduction of domestic abuse protection orders and notices to ensure that there is a consistent response when applications are heard and in the provisions applied.

## 04 Governance and Accountability

**The Police Service of Northern Ireland Violence Against Women and Girls Co-ordination Group will continue to meet frequently to drive progress against the objectives and actions in this plan. The group will have representation from varying ranks, grades and roles across our organisation and will include staff associations.**

Progress will be reported to and overseen by the Service Performance Board to ensure achievement of the outcomes of this action plan. Updates will be provided on progress of the action plan to the Northern Ireland Policing Board at intervals agreed with them. We will regularly review our action plan and incorporate new actions as required.

## 05 Our Strategic Outcomes

**To deliver our two strategic outcomes there are a number of indicators we will monitor.**

### Outcome 1

To have a society in which violence, abuse and intimidation against women and girls, in any form, and anywhere, is not acceptable and will not be tolerated.

#### Indicator

**Fewer repeat victims of violence against women and girls offences**

*(Policing Plan 1.1)*

**Fewer repeat perpetrators of violence against women and girls offences**

*(Policing Plan 1.2)*

**Fewer repeat locations of violence against women and girls offences**

*(Policing Plan 1.3)*

**Reduction in VAWG offences of violence against women and girls offences**

**(not to be measured in Y1 or Y2)**

*(Policing Plan 1.4)*

## Outcome 2

Build trust and confidence in women and girls in policing.

### Indicator

**Increasing reporting of incidents of violence against women and girls offences**

**(measure to be used in Y1 and Y2)**

*(Policing Plan 1.4)*

**Improved criminal justice outcomes for violence against women and girls offences**

*(Policing Plan 2.4)*

**Level of confidence in policing from women and girls**

*(Policing Plan 2.1)*

**Level of satisfaction with the service women and girls receive**

*(Policing Plan 2.2)*

**Find out more:**  
[psni.police.uk/VAWG](https://psni.police.uk/VAWG)



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