



## Domestic Abuse Strategy

*"Today, I have different feelings about it [the yelling and threatening]. Back then I just thought it was normal. It was - there was nothing to tell me this was not right."*

*When asked, "What kind of help would you have found most helpful?" 25% of women said "Stickers, leaflets in public toilets assuring women that they could escape without fear of being discovered" and that abuse was a crime."*

*"He was so manipulating I began to feel it was 'normal' and if he was respectful to me then those were the 'good' times"*

*"At first I blamed myself - tried to think of ways to change my behaviour to avoid confrontation. Finally I realised this was impossible."*

*"Yes. I always thought it was my fault, I did something wrong. If I had of started the day out better, maybe this wouldn't have happened. ...There was still something I did wrong. I was told that. I was told I was no good. ... My husband always used to say I'd never amount to anything. And I'm no good, ... so I believed that I was no good."*

*"The nearest farm is two miles away so they can never hear you scream, and in the winter no-one could get to you anyway, not even the ambulance when I needed to go to hospital".*

*" I wouldn't leave him - he threatened to kill my mother, my father, my sister, my brother. There's no way I would have left him. I used to leave and go back because I was so afraid; a couple of times the reason I went back, was because I'd go to work and leave the kids with the baby sitter - he'd go and take the kids."*

**February 2003**

# Highland Wellbeing Alliance Domestic Abuse Strategy

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# Highland Wellbeing Alliance Domestic Abuse Strategy

## Messages of support

"I welcome the strategy on domestic abuse for the Highlands. I have been involved with Women's Aid for many years and know that the problem of domestic abuse is as intense here as in other parts of Scotland.

It is good now to see voluntary and statutory bodies working together to defeat this cancer in our society, to protect through the force of the law, to prevent through the use of education and training, and to provide refuge and other services and support to women and children affected by abuse."

Maureen Macmillan MSP

"It is all too sad a fact that around one in five women live with the threat of domestic abuse. We need to raise awareness of this harrowing problem, and to implement a Highland system of help and advice. It is so important that effort is not duplicated and that people offering support to women faced with abuse are themselves supported."

The Rt. Hon. Charles Kennedy MP

"As an MSP who took part in the march in Edinburgh against domestic abuse, I fully support the development of a strategy to deal with the problems encountered by people in the Highlands who are threatened with domestic abuse. It will give women extra protection, which I would welcome, as such abuse should be wiped out in society."

Jamie McGrigor MSP

"I congratulate the Highland Wellbeing Alliance on its Domestic Abuse Strategy. I served on the Commons Select Committee on Violence in Marriage and feel that society must do everything possible to identify cases before serious damage is done."

Dr Winifred Ewing MEP

"I know that domestic abuse is a serious problem in all parts of the country, resulting in many problems in the lives of sufferers. I therefore welcome the initiative of the Highland Domestic Abuse Forum to develop a strategy dealing with domestic abuse locally, here in the Highlands."

John Farquhar Munro MSP

"I am delighted to support the Highland Wellbeing Alliance Strategy. With one in five women in the Highlands Living in constant fear of domestic abuse, it is vital

that we put in place a multi-agency strategy to tackle what is sadly a very real problem for many women and their families."

David Stewart MP

"I strongly support the efforts of the Highland Wellbeing Alliance to develop a strategy to draw attention to domestic abuse in the Highlands and the consequences for individuals who live with the daily threat of abuse. I commend your message which highlights the long term effects on women's health and wellbeing."

Peter Peacock MSP

"I am pleased to hear that a co-ordinated strategy is to be in place to support women suffering from domestic abuse and alleviate the need to repeat and relive their experiences."

Mary Scanlon MSP

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 What this strategy is about

The primary purpose of this document is to outline a strategy to address the domestic abuse of women in the Highlands. Although this document focuses on the domestic abuse of women, the Wellbeing Alliance are mindful that it is not only women who experience domestic abuse. Domestic abuse is unacceptable no matter who the perpetrator is or the circumstances in which it takes place. However, research has consistently shown that the vast majority of domestic abuse is perpetrated by men against women, and both the national and local strategies reflect that fact. It is envisaged that the principles and actions contained within this document will be implemented in all cases of abuse, however in some cases e.g. where there are child protection policies and procedures, issues should be dealt with under these existing procedures. (see appendix I (4)).

We have taken a partnership approach, involving all those agencies, both voluntary and statutory, from which women might seek help or might come into contact with.

The strategy is aimed at politicians, policy makers, practitioners, service providers and the community in the Highlands, all of whom have a role in the elimination of domestic abuse and in supporting women or children who experience this.

The strategy is intended to:

- Raise public awareness of domestic abuse and its consequences
- Tackle attitudes towards domestic abuse and violence against women such that there is zero tolerance of this behaviour.
- Protect Women against domestic abuse
- Provide support to women who experience domestic abuse.
- Provide a co-ordinated and consistent approach by all agencies involved.

The Highland Wellbeing Alliance Strategy Group (Appendix III) has agreed its mission:

**To tackle domestic abuse in Highland by placing the issue on the political and public agenda. To make it clear that domestic abuse is never acceptable and never the woman's fault. To reach out to those experiencing abuse and let them know they are not alone and do not need to suffer. To ensure the provision of appropriate and accessible services, both statutory and voluntary, which are sensitive to the needs of women and their children.**

Part 2 of the document gives an overview of current service provision in the Highlands, notes the agencies involved, and celebrates progress so far.

Part 3 of the document describes a vision for the future, which outlines an optimum range of services and support designed to address domestic abuse. It is stressed that this is a vision. It may be amended when the strategy is revisited in the future and is so ambitious that it will require a few years to put in place. We make no apology for this: it is important to have long-term goals and aspirations.

Part 4 of the document describes the next steps to progress the strategic debates and to develop action plans.

Those individuals and agencies who have contributed to this document through discussion, provision of information, consultation and negotiation are wholeheartedly thanked for their effort and perseverance.

## **1.2 Domestic abuse definitions**

The definition of domestic abuse adopted by the Scottish Executive Scottish Partnership on Domestic Abuse and accepted in full by the Wellbeing Alliance Strategy Group in September 2001 is as follows:

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

The Zero Tolerance Trust (Ref 1) have developed a framework designed to provide a holistic approach towards tackling domestic abuse (see appendix I (3)):

- **Prevention** - active prevention of crimes of violence against women by tackling attitudes and behaviours throughout society.
- **Protection** - appropriate legal protection for women who experience domestic abuse.
- **Provision** – adequate support services for women

The above definition and the aims described imply an holistic approach which does not stop at tackling domestic abuse and supporting the victims. It recognises that a comprehensive and effective societal response is needed. This would start with education in schools, be supported by a wide ranging information and awareness raising campaign, and continue in the improvement of the provision of services and support for women who have been abused.

Please see appendix I for a much fuller account of what is meant by domestic abuse and what the implications are.

### 1.2.1 The vision for the future

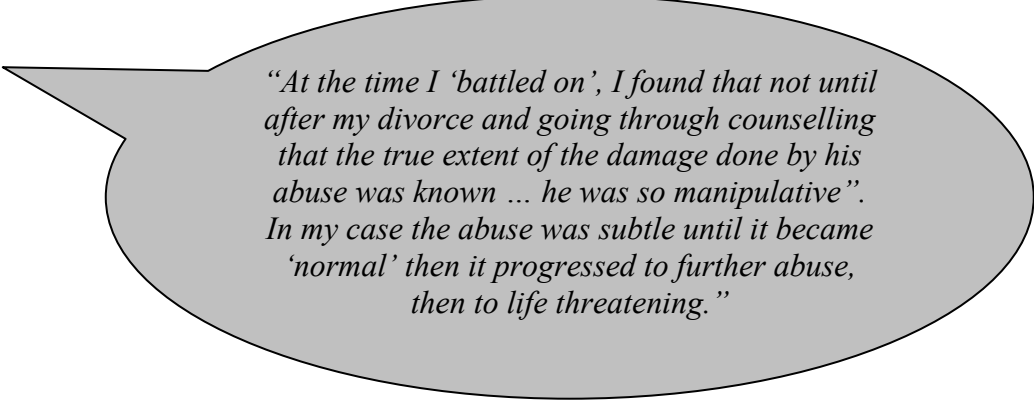
The vision for Highland women and their children is one where they are free from the threat of domestic abuse, and where domestic abuse is seen as unacceptable. Where women are experiencing domestic abuse they will receive sympathetic, confidential services and support appropriate to their needs.

Service provision will be based on believing women's stories, ensuring women are in control of decisions taken and plans made. The vision encompasses all women and their children, regardless of their circumstances.

## 1.3 Why domestic abuse is of concern

**1.3.1 Because around one in five women live with the threat of domestic abuse (Scottish Crime Survey 2000). This can damage their long-term physical and mental health and wellbeing and affect their ability to contribute to society. In addition, it is recognised that domestic abuse can happen to anyone - to women of all ages, from all walks of life and ethnicity.**

For many women and children the effects of domestic abuse will be catastrophic, and the impact on their physical and mental health and well being deeply damaging, and sometimes fatal, often increasing in severity as time goes on. However it has been estimated that only 36% of women ever tell anybody about the abuse they experience and only between 2% and 18% of domestic incidents ever come to the notice of the police.



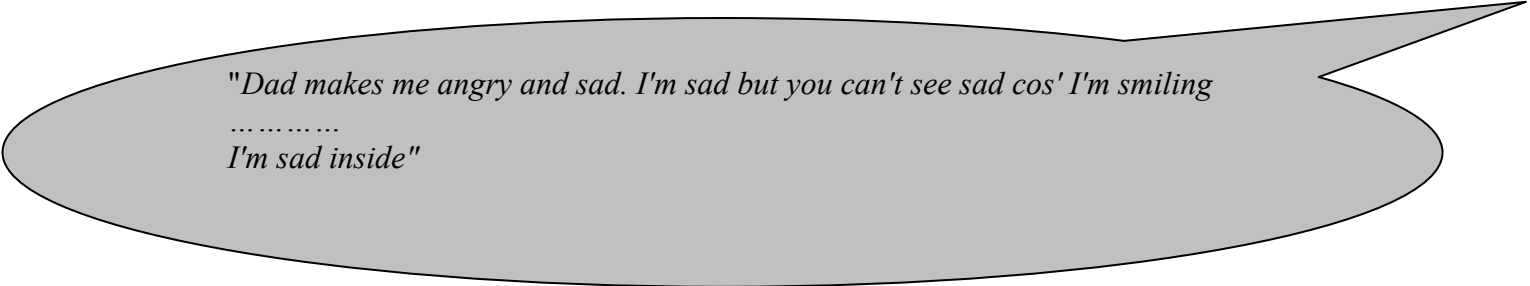
*“At the time I ‘battled on’, I found that not until after my divorce and going through counselling that the true extent of the damage done by his abuse was known ... he was so manipulative”. In my case the abuse was subtle until it became ‘normal’ then it progressed to further abuse, then to life threatening.”*

Women experiencing domestic abuse can also experience social and financial exclusion. Abuse can lead to poverty, ill health and lack of opportunity. The very nature of abuse can exclude women from public life. It has a significant impact on confidence, sense of self worth and physical and mental ability. It diminishes social and economic opportunities to participate fully both in the local community and in society generally. For women from black and minority ethnic groups,

disabled women and lesbian women who are already excluded from the dominant group, the additional barriers caused by abuse are even harder to surmount.

### **1.3.2 Because of the impact on children**

Children in households where domestic abuse is taking place can suffer emotional difficulties, which can isolate them from their friends and affect their education. They are also at risk of impaired physical health and social exclusion. The disruptions caused by moves to escape abuse can also disrupt education and relationships. The effects of this can be life long, unless appropriate support is available when needed.



*"Dad makes me angry and sad. I'm sad but you can't see sad cos' I'm smiling  
.....  
I'm sad inside"*

### **1.3.3 Because of the costs of services to women and children**

The estimated cost to health services of providing care to women experiencing domestic abuse in Highland is likely to be £5 million each year, with a possible range of between £3.5 million and £6 million (these figures are an extrapolation of data produced in Glasgow).

There are direct costs in terms of service provision - emergency services, alternative housing, counseling, medical support for physical and mental health problems - with implications for both short and long-term expenditure.

From police and other recorded statistics there is every reason to believe that the prevalence of domestic abuse is as high in Highland as it is elsewhere in the country. However the problems for women in Highland are compounded by the rural nature of the area, the geography and the unequal distribution of underpinning services.

### **1.3.4 Because there are also costs to society which have not been fully assessed but are likely to be considerable**

Women may take time off work to recover from injuries sustained during episodes of domestic abuse. There are therefore implications for employers. Extrapolating figures from research carried out in London and Glasgow (Ref 2) it is estimated that as many 1800 work-days may be lost to NHS Highland each

year from women taking time off to recover from injuries sustained as a result of domestic abuse.

There are cost implications for all employers but particularly for the health service as a major employer of women. The NHS in Scotland employs 106,646 women, which accounts for 77% of the total of its workforce. Based on Mooney (Ref 3) it is estimated that as many as 8,532 of these women may have experienced physical violence in the last twelve months.

The fact that such a large percentage of women experience the fear, pain, and other emotions which come with abuse, and are prevented from participating fully in society, must be a concern to society generally.

Ref 1) Established in 1995, the Zero Tolerance Charitable Trust was the first initiative in Britain to use public education via the mass media to directly challenge male violence against women and children. It has since pioneered preventive public education throughout the UK and beyond, and has been recognised as a model of good practice by the European Parliament, the Council of Europe and the Home Office.

Ref 2) Scottish Needs Assessment Programme "Domestic Violence" 1997

Ref 3) Mooney, J. "The Hidden Figure of Domestic Violence in North London" Islington Council 1993

## 2. Current service provision and the partnership approach

***"A multi agency approach to the issue is an essential prerequisite for the provision of appropriate assistance". Home Office 1995 Inter-agency Co-ordination to Tackle Domestic Violence Circular.***

Many women experiencing domestic abuse will approach a number of voluntary and statutory services to seek help, but sadly, they have often found the absence of a consistent approach between agencies in addressing their needs. Women typically have to approach between 7 and 10 agencies before they can access the help they need. Further, women have indicated that they find it demeaning having to repeat their stories to several agencies and that this may discourage them from seeking help. A strategic multi-agency approach can help agencies to develop systems which ensure that a woman can expect quality support and service with the least negative impact on her seeking help.

Given the size of the Highlands and the diversity of population density across the area, it is even more important that good partnership working takes place to overcome the difficulties presented by distance and lack of appropriate transport. It is hoped that this Strategy will be enhanced by other complementary strategies and plans, for example the Local Transport Strategy.

The roles of service providers in meeting the needs of women and children who experience domestic abuse are various but some examples are given below.

- Women's Aid (WA) is recognised as the leading expert in the "field" of domestic abuse. Scottish Women's Aid (SWA) is a network of 39 affiliated WA groups across Scotland. Here in the Highlands there are two groups, in Ross and Cromarty and in Inverness, with another two in Lochaber and in Caithness and Sutherland due to affiliate to SWA in 2003. Historically, Women's Aid worked alone in the struggle to fight for the rights of abused women and as an organisation gained vast knowledge and experience. Much of the work undertaken has been brought about as a result of trust invested in Women's Aid by the women and children who use the service, and in enhanced consultation with them about the types of services they would gain most benefit from.

Women's Aid provides refuge accommodation, emotional support and information on such issues as legal rights, housing and entitlement to benefits with the service being available to women and children outwith refuge who are experiencing domestic abuse and for whom refuge is not a current option. As part of the overall service, there is a dedicated children's service, as children can be profoundly affected by domestic abuse and need support in their own right. As well, there is a service to women and children after they leave the security of refuge and an outreach service to provide a support and

information network throughout the Highlands. For over 20 years, Women's Aid in the Highlands has been, and continues to be, involved in awareness raising, training of statutory /voluntary bodies, preventative work in schools, and political lobbying. Women's Aid works proactively in seeking to change public attitudes to domestic abuse, including those of service providers and decision-makers.

- The police attend domestic incidents, where all allegations of abuse will be investigated as a crime and action taken against the perpetrators. The decision as to whether or not to charge the perpetrator is taken by the Police, not the victim. A report would then be submitted to the Procurator Fiscal who would ultimately decide what action should be taken against the perpetrator. The Police also have a role in responding to breaches of legal order and providing information on available services to women who experience abuse.
- Local authorities have certain statutory duties regarding homeless people. Depending on a person's circumstances this can vary from a requirement to provide temporary accommodation until permanent accommodation is available, to a requirement to provide information and advice, and/or short-term emergency accommodation. If someone cannot return to their home because they are likely to be subjected to domestic abuse then they will be regarded as being homeless and will always be regarded as being in priority need. However, in some cases women may want to exert their rights under the Matrimonial Homes Act.
- Local authorities have a legal duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in need in their area, as well as to prepare and publish children's service plans. The Local Authority (usually the Social Work Service) will be responsible for supervision where a child is made the subject of a supervision requirement by a children's hearing and may also be involved where voluntary measures are agreed with the Reporter. Social work services may also become involved in providing advice to both women and children (see Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 and Children (Scotland) Act 1995). Criminal Justice teams undertake work with perpetrators of abuse (on a statutory basis where a court order is in place) and have a remit to support victims of abuse.
- Education staff can support children and can have a role in challenging attitudes, raising awareness of abuse and in the prevention of abuse. Women may also have contact with community-based education groups. Education may be approached for change of school for children who have had to move home as a result of domestic abuse. Issues of transportation may also arise where this is the case.
- A range of Health Services may be involved in supporting women experiencing domestic abuse, from primary care to Accident and Emergency Services, inpatient and outpatient services. Primary health care providers are

often the first people women approach in relation to abuse. They may be involved in treating injuries, in the provision of emotional support and advice, in assisting women or children to gain access to other services and in providing evidence to support legal actions. Health Services may also be involved in preventive work in relation to domestic abuse.

- Specialist organisations including Rape Crisis, the Rape and Abuse Line, , Victim Support, children's and families organisations such as Childline Scotland, Children 1st, Family Mediation Scotland, Couple Counselling, Counselling Highland and a range of others provide specialist support (such as, for example, housing advice, information and emotional support).
- The Highland Domestic Abuse Forum (HDAF) was established in 1997, formally constituted in July 2000, and has charitable status. It has over 50 members (Appendix 1) from all the principal statutory and voluntary agencies within Highland. Its role is to promote awareness of domestic abuse and appropriate responses through information, training and promotional activities. The HDAF works to a wide definition of domestic abuse, which includes abuse within same sex relationships, elder abuse, and male victims of abuse perpetrated by women. The Forum was awarded Scottish Executive monies to employ staff to support the development of this strategy and action plans.
- Other organisations involved in meeting the needs of women and children experiencing abuse can include legal professionals (legal actions, court orders, property settlements / issues of contact and residence), The Procurator Fiscal (in prosecuting perpetrators and balancing policy and evidential considerations in relation to prosecution in individual cases, taking into account options other than prosecution (although there will be a presumption in favour of prosecution) and taking account also of the perceived needs of women and children of parties who can be reluctant to give evidence (see 3.4)), the judiciary (in civil and criminal actions, including interdicts and non-harassment orders), the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (where there is a need for the care and protection of children, including orders such as the exclusion of abusers), the Scottish Prison Service and the Citizen's Advice Bureau. The Highland Advice and Information Network (HAIN) is the umbrella organisation for the nine independent agencies in Highland. They have a significant role in the provision and distribution of information and in the development and implementation of a Highland wide referral scheme. Other important agencies are the Benefits Agency,

Whilst it is clear that there are many services that can be accessed by women and children experiencing domestic abuse, there is a need for an increase, streamlining and integration to ensure that these services meet the needs already identified in the Highlands, and to ensure that they are able to meet the

potential increase in service demand that will arise from the awareness raising campaign. The implementation of this Strategy and its resultant action plans requires a continuing commitment by all of those involved in preventing and addressing domestic abuse. This is ideally done through co-operative working and the development of the policy and practice of the individual agencies to meet the needs of both women and children. The current willingness to take part in this partnership approach, and the support of all the agencies involved is greatly appreciated.

### **3. Aim and objectives of the plan**

#### **3.1 The Ultimate Goal**

The ultimate goal of the strategy is to eliminate domestic abuse.

The challenges that face us are:

- People's attitudes
- The position of women in society
- Services for women and children are insufficient to meet demand and do not meet their full range of needs
- The geography, distance and sparsity of population in Highland
- The need for a wide range of agencies to work together more effectively
- The need for agencies to develop the knowledge, skills and tools to support women and enable them to choose
- The potential increase in service demand as a result of the awareness raising campaign.

We recognise that at best it will take a long time to achieve our goal. Our aim for the next three years is therefore to significantly improve the range and appropriateness of services in Highland; to meet the diverse needs of women and children affected by abuse; increase awareness that domestic abuse is unacceptable; to challenge the behaviour of perpetrators and to take action against them.

The organisations involved in the partnership are already addressing some of the challenges (see section 4.2). The purpose of this strategy and the action plan which will follow at the end of year one is to take this work further and strive towards the vision.

#### **3.2 The aim**

The overall aim of the strategy is to promote a co-ordinated, flexible and multi-agency approach to the elimination of domestic abuse in Highland and to the provision of support and services for those women and their children who are experiencing domestic abuse. Further, that this approach and resultant services and support are monitored and evaluated, accessible and visible to all.

This aim encompasses all women, whether they:

- Are living in remote rural or urban areas.
- Have dependent children and / or elders.
- Are themselves dependant on care and support.
- Are from minority ethnic communities.

- Live with same sex partners.
- Work in the sex industry.
- Have pets and / or livestock.
- Live in rented, owner occupied or mobile accommodation.
- Are in paid or unpaid work.
- Are older women.

Service provision will be based on believing women's stories, ensuring women are in control of decisions taken and plans made, and will take account of:

- Women and children who need emotional support, counselling or just someone to listen.
- Women who need help with finances.
- Women and children who need spiritual support.
- The need to provide services during unsocial hours, at weekends and on public holidays.
- Women and children who do not wish to tell their story or who do not want to repeat this to different agencies.
- The protection and safety of women and children, both immediate and longer term.
- Support of women and children through criminal and civil proceedings.
- Support in challenging domestic abuse.
- A choice of housing for women and their children who wish to leave home wherever possible.
- The need for a referral system that supports women in getting the help they need easily.
- The need to ensure that those dealing with women who have been abused have appropriate training.
- Meeting all health care needs of women and children.
- Support for women with learning disabilities.
- Help with alcohol or drug dependency.

### 3.3 Objectives

More specifically, and in keeping with the National Strategy there are three objectives to this overall aim:

- To work toward the **prevention** of domestic abuse of women and their dependants
- To ensure the **protection** of women and their dependents.
- To develop the **provision** of services for women and their dependents.

Each of the above objectives is expanded below, and the actions which will promote the objective are outlined.

### **3.3.1 Prevention**

a) To launch an awareness raising campaign that:

- Raises abuse as an issue for Highland both in terms of prevalence and incidence.
- Draws attention to the fact that abuse affects all groups and ages in society.
- Points out the effects of abuse and the costs to society.
- Outlines agencies' responsibilities as service providers (for clients).
- Outlines agencies' responsibilities as employers (for employees and voluntary workers).
- Highlights the need for respect in relationships and makes it clear that abuse is never the woman's fault and that there is no excuse for it.
- Ensures that society does not 'turn a blind eye'. This is the responsibility of society as a whole.
- Makes clear the availability of support groups and advice lines.
- Gives information on where women and children can receive assistance.
- Makes clear that statistically it must affect someone you know including your colleagues in your organisation.
- Places the responsibility for abuse firmly with the abusing person.
- Ensures that abuse does not remain hidden but becomes 'seen'.

b) To work with children, young people and people who work with young people to:

- Raise awareness about domestic abuse and its unacceptability.
- Promote an ethos of respect within all settings providing services for children.
- Within the existing curriculum ensure that schools consciously promote positive values, respect and citizenship, and at appropriate points directly address all forms of abuse.
- In raising domestic abuse issues, provide support for young people who may have been abused themselves or experienced domestic and other abuse of any kind.

c) To prevent re-occurrence of domestic abuse by ensuring those women and their children who have been subjected to domestic abuse can seek protection. This includes both physical protection and support for women to empower them to make choices.

d) Work with perpetrators to prevent re-occurrence and to challenge attitudes and focus on the need to change behaviour.

### **3.3.2 Protection**

To ensure the protection of women and their dependants by providing:

- Improved inter-agency response, including planning and information exchange about what services can and cannot offer.
- Appropriate NHS accident and emergency response where space and privacy are provided.
- Appropriate Police and other agency intervention.
- Better access to legal protection.
- Safe housing where required.
- Practical and other support to women to enable them to protect themselves.
- The development of an effective training strategy for those who provide services for women and children who have experienced domestic abuse.
- The promotion of workplace strategies aimed at changing attitudes and promoting early interventions to protect women, men and their children from further abuse. This should cover public, private and voluntary sector organisations.

### **3.3.3 Provision**

To develop services for women and their dependants which:

- Work together at a local level giving a shared and integrated response and raise awareness
- Provides affordable places of safety including improved access to refuge where required, alternative housing or legal remedies to exclude the abuser
- Considers the need for consistency in educational provision to minimise disruption for children in families affected by abuse
- Makes available counselling and support for women and children affected by domestic abuse
- Provides social work services which empower women as the most effective form of child protection where children are living in families where domestic abuse is happening, and provides an appropriate response to women in need
- Enables Health Services to respond to women and children appropriately and with confidence, and provides an appropriate range of health services
- Provides legal services which are appropriate to women's needs
- Improves on the collection and sharing of management information relating to domestic abuse across agencies
- Reaches agreement on protocols within the confines of confidentiality and data sharing between agencies where this will improve the experience of women affected by domestic abuse.

### **3.4 Current debates which will influence future strategy**

The following are issues which require further debate. The consensus position, when agreed, will influence the implementation of the strategy and the development of action plans in the future.

- Should women be compelled to give evidence against the perpetrator of the abuse? Does this increase the danger of further abuse, or in the long term will it increase prosecution and have a deterrent effect? This debate could influence national policy. Recognising that issues remain about compelling reluctant witnesses, the debate needs to be broader to look at the barriers to women being able to tell their stories.
- Providing programmes for men on probation who have been convicted of domestic abuse
- Providing programmes for men in custody and as an alternative to custody (post conviction)
- Is diversion from prosecution appropriate in domestic abuse cases, or should programmes always be offered after the perpetrator has been prosecuted?
- The power of the abuser may be a factor in deciding how to proceed and requires further debate
- Should the law be changed to ensure that the perpetrator is removed from the household rather than the women and children?
- Should voluntary counselling be available for perpetrators?
- Will encouraging the public to report domestic abuse increase the risk to women? What will happen if you report (agency response), and what is the likely reaction of abuser?

The strategy group and the Highland Domestic Abuse Forum have a key role in progressing these debates over the course of the first year of the strategy. The action plans to be developed by then will reflect the agreed approach to these areas of current debate.

## **4. Looking Forward**

### **4.1 In the short term**

Over the course of the coming year (2003/04), we will work towards the development of an ambitious but realistic action plan for the implementation of this strategy. We will look at what comes out of action plans, identify any gaps in service provision, identify resources required and explore funding opportunities to meet these needs.

In particular we will:

- (a) Consult on this strategy, using the opportunity to raise awareness and progress the key outstanding areas for debate.
- (b) Aim for short-term quick wins where agencies can progress with action plans. (For example the production of a directory of agencies)
- (c) Will meet every two months to share progress and discuss problems.

### **4.2 In the longer term - monitoring and review**

This will be carried out through the Multi-agency Domestic Abuse Strategy group and associated groups See Appendix II.

## 5. Bibliography and Further Reading

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Some useful websites:

[www.scottishwomensaid.co.uk](http://www.scottishwomensaid.co.uk)

[www.scotland.gov.uk](http://www.scotland.gov.uk)

[www.womens-unit.gov.uk](http://www.womens-unit.gov.uk)

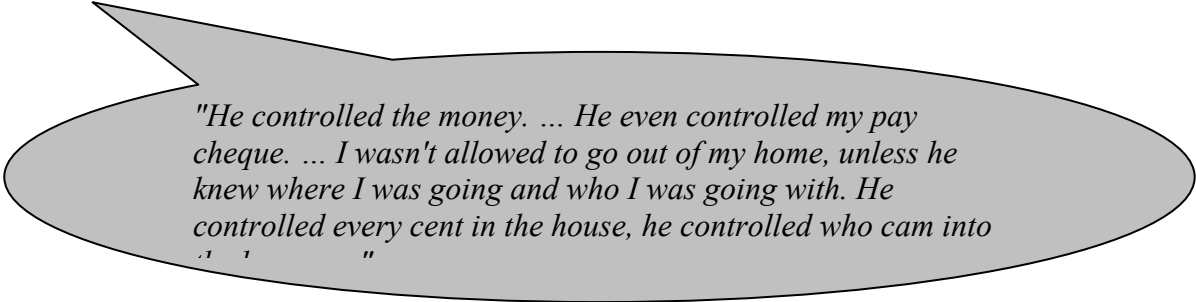
[www.zerotolerance.org.uk](http://www.zerotolerance.org.uk)

[www.scottishparliament.gov.uk](http://www.scottishparliament.gov.uk)

## Appendix I – What is meant by domestic abuse

1. The definition of domestic abuse adopted by the Scottish Partnership on Domestic Abuse and accepted in full by the Wellbeing Alliance Strategy Group in September 2001 is as follows:

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



*"He controlled the money. ... He even controlled my pay cheque. ... I wasn't allowed to go out of my home, unless he knew where I was going and who I was going with. He controlled every cent in the house, he controlled who came into*

2. The Highland Wellbeing Alliance Strategy has been developed in a climate of increasing concern about domestic abuse both in Scotland and internationally.

The 4<sup>th</sup> UN World conference on Women in Beijing in September 1995 highlighted violence against women as a priority area for action by member states. At a national level, the UK Government's Cabinet Sub-Committee on Women has stated its commitment to tackle violence against women. The Scottish Executive has published 'Preventing Violence Against Women: action across the Scottish Executive (9/2001). The Scottish Partnership on Domestic Abuse has published a Report and a National Strategy to Address Domestic Abuse in Scotland (11/2000).

3. 'The National Strategy to Address Domestic Abuse in Scotland' was accepted in full by the Scottish Parliament in November 2000.

The overall aims are those identified by the Zero Tolerance Trust. They are:

**Prevention:** active prevention of crimes of violence against both women and children;

**Protection:** appropriate legal protection for women and children who experience domestic abuse;

and **Provision:** adequate provision of support services for women and children.

*"It took 3-4 years to become solvent ...my husband put such pressure on me to draw out my superannuation that I now know that I will have to work until I'm 65 or, if I retire before, sell my house as there is no way I can pay the mortgage."*

*I lived in a very isolated and remote part of the country and could not access my own car to escape. He had sold my original car and bought me a 'better' one but registered it under the name of his business (supposedly for tax purposes), this enabled him to report it as stolen and then sit back and let the police track me down if I ever chose to leave.*

The range of common effects of domestic abuse includes physical injury, poor health and a range of psychological difficulties. The effects on children who may witness the abuse, or who may be used in the abuse, are also recognised as including a range of forms of stress or fear, as well as the additional connection between domestic abuse and child abuse.

The existence of violence against men is not denied, nor is the existence of violence in same sex relationships, nor other forms of abuse, but this Strategy recognises that domestic abuse requires a response which takes account of the gender specific elements and the broader gender inequalities which women face.

4. Whilst it is recognised that domestic abuse is set within the wider context of inequality issues and other forms of violence against women, this strategy tackles only domestic abuse perpetrated by men against women and does not directly address:

- Child Protection issues covered by the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 and Highland Council's Child Protection Procedures
- Domestic Abuse within same sex relationships or male victims of abuse perpetrated by women. In both of these cases however, the Wellbeing Alliance notes that abuse is unacceptable and will ensure that anyone who experiences abuse will be treated using the principles contained within the strategy

- Elder abuse and the abuse of vulnerable adults covered by the Protection of Vulnerable Adults Document

## **Appendix II - New Group Structure - Domestic Abuse**

In recognising the complexity and diversity of the work involved in tackling domestic abuse, taking into account that projects, funding and staffing vary significantly in size, and that duplication is best avoided, it is important that careful thought is given to support and monitoring mechanisms for both the Strategy and individual projects at the development stage. This process will include consideration of the appropriate membership of groups and ensure that mechanisms enable appropriate reporting to take place.

### **Multi-Agency Domestic Abuse Group**

**Aim: To monitor the implementation of the Domestic Abuse Strategy and Action Plans and continue to define direction of Strategy**

- Monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Domestic Abuse Strategy and Action Plans including service plans of partner agencies
- Continue to define direction of Strategy
- Monitor and evaluate the implementation of Highland awareness raising campaign
- Work with the Highland Domestic Abuse Forum
- Contribute to the Scottish Executive agenda and their decision making
- Provide progress reports to Scottish Executive where required
- Explore future and longer term funding opportunities
- Maintain an overview of budget provision
- Co-ordinate progress reports and other appropriate reports
- Approve funding applications where appropriate
- Monitor equity of service provision

**Representation will include:**

- Highland Council, reps from SW, Education, and Housing
- The Procurator Fiscal
- Community Safety Unit
- NHS Highland, Board and Trusts
- Northern Constabulary
- Women's Aid
- HDAF
- Voluntary sector
- Wellbeing Alliance. WBA officers and partners will be asked to nominate representation on the partnership.
- Elected Council members and board members from partner organisations.

To ensure consistency it is important that each organisation establishes regular representation and is responsible for feeding back information to all parts of their service. Replacements can be sent in the absence of the nominated

representative, and additional attendees will be invited where relevant to the agenda items.

### **Domestic Abuse Sub Group**

**Aim: to maintain an overview of project operation, support other groups where requested and highlight inequities in service provision**

- Provide support to Women's Aid refuge accommodation and wider services (This should cover both Ross-shire and Inverness, and in the future Caithness and Lochaber)
- Provide support to local practitioner groups and women's groups where requested
- Monitor budget reports from link groups/workers
- Maintain overview of budgetary provision
- Highlight inequities in service provision
- Make recommendations to Multi-agency Domestic Abuse Group
- Report to Multi-agency Domestic Abuse Group
- Provide advice and support to link groups/workers
- Monitor project outputs
- Co-ordinate funding bids where appropriate

**Representation will include:**

- Link workers or appropriate representative from the link groups
- Additional agency representative where appropriate
- Representative to provide financial and budgetary advice - accountant

### **Link Group/Worker**

**Aim: To provide support to projects and look in detail at operation and funding**

- Provide advice and support as required
- Ensure that Service Level Agreement is being satisfactorily operated
- Ensure best value for money is achieved from partnership funding
- Provide quarterly reports to the Domestic Abuse Sub Group
- Advise on budgetary adjustments

Funding agencies, together with projects will agree how they are represented. Some existing groups may continue, and others may merge i.e. outreach provision may be discussed as part of overall refuge provision. Some funding agencies may wish to provide just one representative to carry out the above functions. This might be an area or pan Highland function.

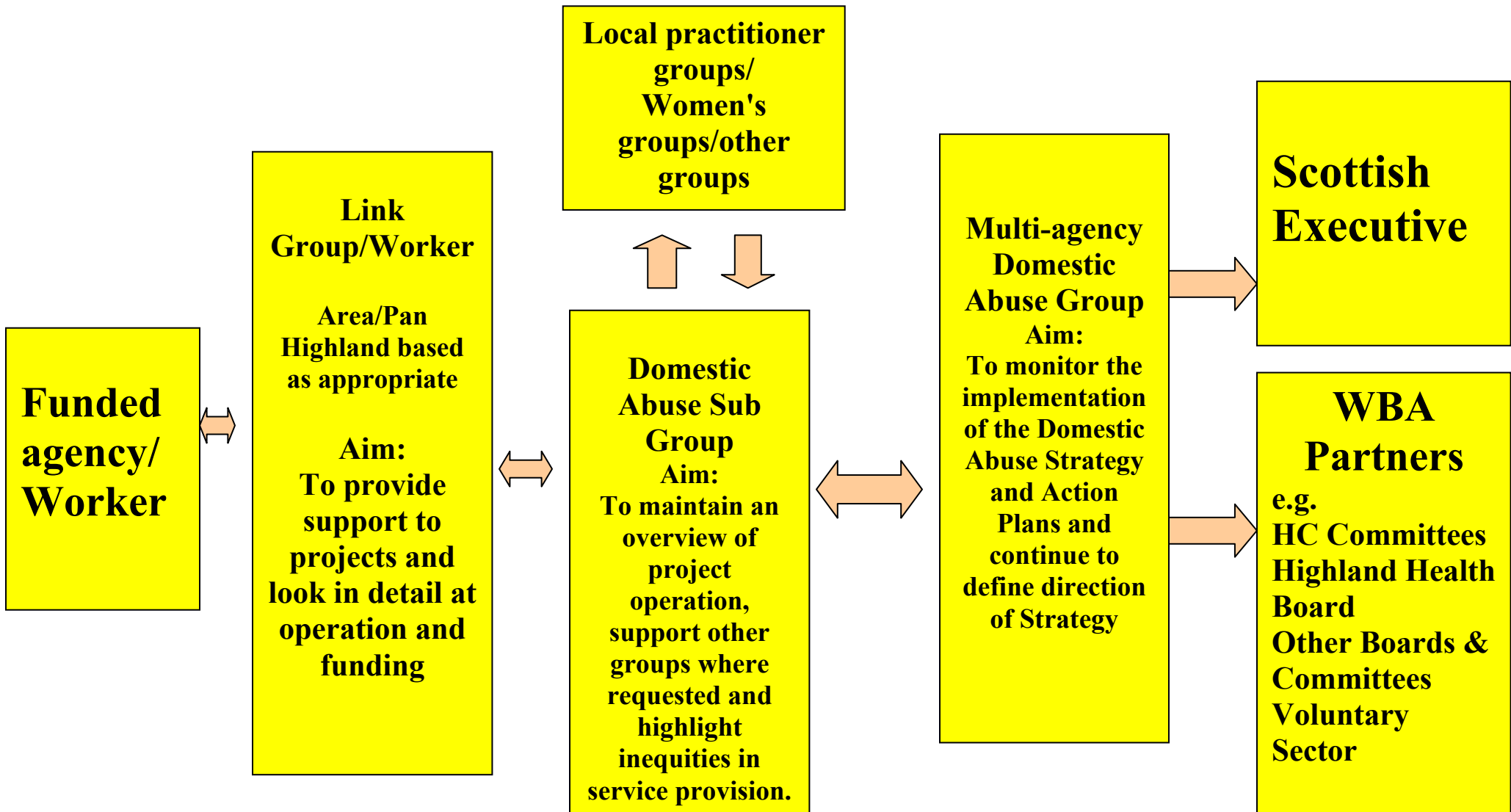
*Example*

Social Work Service/Scottish Executive joint funded Specialist Domestic Abuse Social Worker who works closely with primary schools. The funded worker could work with a Link Group made up of:

- Community Safety Unit representative as conduit for Scottish Executive funding
- Social Work area representation
- Social Work Area Team Manager
- Education Culture and Sport Service representative could be invited to participate
- Specialist Domestic Abuse Social Worker

This Link Group would select a representative for the Domestic Abuse Sub Group. If the project is replicated in other areas, it *might* be appropriate to nominate one shared representative for this purpose.

## Group Structure – Domestic Abuse



### **Appendix III – Membership of the Domestic Abuse Strategy Group**

Ann Clark (Chair)	Highland Council
Di Norris	Domestic Abuse Forum Project
Cath King	Community Safety Unit, Highland Council
Cllr Ella MacRae	The Highland Council
Graeme Napier	Area Procurator Fiscal
Fraser MacPherson	Highland Council, Community Education
Helen Ross	Highland Council, Housing Services
Irene Bloomfield	Highland Council, Social Work Services
Bill Alexander	Highland Council/Highland NHS Board
Moira Paton	Highland NHS Board
Hilda Hope	Highland Primary Care NHS Trust
Susan Gemmell	HMP Inverness
Kate Donaghy	Inverness Women's Aid
Kathleen Rooney	Ross-shire Women's Aid
Liz McCaffrey	Inverness Women's Aid Outreach Project
Sgt Donald MacNeil	Northern Constabulary
Ed Hughes	Rape and Abuse Line/SCVO
Jan Nichol	Ross-shire Women's Aid
Amanda McKay	Scottish Homes
Hamish Wood	Victim Support
Jane Barry	Voluntary Services Forum
Malcolm MacBean	Witness Service
Sue MacLaren	Child Protection Committee
Cllr Margaret Davidson	Highland Council
Cllr Deirdre Steven	Highland Council
Marilyn Ross	Ross & Cromarty Outreach, Women's Aid
Ann Keatinge	Voluntary Services Forum
Donellen Mackenzie	Highland Council Social Work Service
Lynn Millar	Highland Council Criminal Justice Service
Andrew Stevenson	Highland Council Social Work Service
Rachel Soplantila	Highland Acute Care NHS Trust
Mirian Morrison	Highland Primary Care NHS Trust
Dr Marion Flett	Highland Council Education Culture and Sport Service

## **Appendix IV - Links to other strategies**

To effectively tackle domestic abuse this strategy will not, and should not stand alone. It is important that its principles are incorporated into other strategies, policies and service plans

Including:

- Highland Council Service Plans
- Highland Health Plan
- The Wellbeing Alliance Highland Community Safety Strategy
- The Wellbeing Alliance Joint Health Improvement Plan
- For Highland's Children, Services for Children and Families in Highland 2001–2004
- Sexual Health Strategy
- The Wellbeing Alliance Community Plan