

TEO consultation on draft Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) and Foundational Action Plan

Closes 3 October

Introduction

1. This consultation seeks views on the new draft Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) and Foundational Action Plan, being led by the Executive Office (TEO).
2. The seven-year (2023-2030) Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Women and Girls has been co-designed with over 50 partners from across government, community and voluntary sectors and organisations, as well as wider society. Importantly, these partners also include those with lived experience.
3. It sets the agenda for all of government and society here to end violence against women and girls. It is ambitious, long term, and wide reaching. It is a living document and will be adapted along the journey responding to emerging needs.

Consultation

1. The consultation will run for 13 weeks from 04 July 2023 to 03 October 2023.
2. While we want to hear from as many people as possible on as many of the changes as possible, please feel free to comment on as few or as many of them as you see fit.
3. The proposals for the Strategic Framework and Foundational Action Plan are subject to the views of the Executive who will be responsible for final approval.

Purpose

1. This seven-year (2023-2030) Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG), builds on the evidence received, and the key issues identified through the Call for Views consultation process, which took place in 2022. It sets the agenda for all of government and society to end violence against women and girls. It is ambitious, long term, and wide reaching. As a living document, it will be adapted along the journey according to emerging needs.
2. The **problem statement** that this Strategic Framework is addressing was agreed by our co-design group as,
“Societal culture and systemic attitudes and beliefs enable violence against women and girls”.
3. Wellbeing for all is at the heart of what Government aims to deliver in this jurisdiction. The ability to form and enjoy healthy relationships is central to individual wellbeing, and vital to building communities and a society where everyone can thrive. This is something that we want for all our children, and for every individual and community here.
4. Violence against women and girls, in all its forms, is a critical obstacle to achieving this goal of wellbeing for all. It is damaging to women, girls, men and boys. Stopping violence against women and girls by

changing the attitudes, behaviours, and social norms that accept and enable it, can create a future that is not only better and safer for women and girls, but more just, equal, and respectful for everyone.

Overview of the Strategic Framework

The co-design process to develop the Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Women and Girls began in October 2022. It saw a group of over 50 partners come together from across government, different sectors, and wider society, including intersectional representation and, importantly, those with lived experience, to create a Strategic Framework that has been **designed with**, not for, our communities and society.

Vision

The Vision of the Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Women and Girls is

A changed society where women and girls are free from all forms of gender-based violence, abuse and harm including the attitudes, systems and structural inequalities that cause them.

Aim

The Aim of the Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Women and Girls is:

To work together as partners across every sector of society to prevent and eradicate all forms of violence against women and girls with a focus on root causes.

Four Themes

In developing this Strategic Framework our co-design group identified 4 broad themes and 6 big changes or 'outcomes' required to end violence against women and girls. The outcomes are grouped under the four themes:

1. **Prevention;**
2. **Protection and Provision;**
3. **Justice System;** and
4. **Working Better Together**

Prevention

The emphasis of this Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Women and Girls is on the theme of **prevention**. Effective prevention can both stop violence from occurring in the first place, such as education and campaigns; as well as interrupt the cycle of violence, like making public transport safer. Our main focus will be on those outcomes associated with prevention:

- Changing attitudes, behaviours, and social norms
- Building knowledge and skills of individuals to form healthy relationships
- Ensuring that women and girls are safe and feel safe everywhere.

Outcomes

The 6 big changes required to end violence against women and girls identified by our Co-design group were grouped into six outcomes, with priority areas identified under each outcome:

- **Outcome 1: Changed Attitudes, Behaviours, and Social Norms.**

Everyone in society understands what violence against women and girls is, including its root causes, and plays an active role in preventing it.

- **Outcome 2: Healthy, Respectful Relationships.**

Everyone in society is equipped and empowered to enjoy healthy, respectful relationships.

- **Outcome 3: Women and Girls are Safe and Feel Safe Everywhere.**

Organisations and institutions across government and society embed the prevention of violence against women and girls in all that they do so that women and girls are safe and feel safe everywhere.

- **Outcome 4: Quality Frontline Services, Protection, and Provision for Victims and Survivors of Violence Against Women and Girls.**

Provision of high quality services for women and girls who are victims and survivors of violence against women and girls.

- **Outcome 5: A Justice System which has the Confidence of Victims, Survivors and the Public in its Ability to Address Violence Against Women and Girls.**

In the context of violence against women and girls, a justice system that considers and addresses the needs of people who come into contact with it, holds perpetrators to account, while challenging and supporting them to change, gives victims and survivors a voice and a place in the process, and has the confidence of the public.

- **Outcome 6: All of Government and Society Working Better Together to End Violence Against Women and Girls**

A whole system approach with collaboration and cooperation by default across government departments and with, within, and between the community, voluntary, and other sectors.

Each of these Outcomes, and the priorities for delivering them are explained in more detail in our Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Women and Girls.

Overview of the Foundational Action Plan

This Action Plan is a foundational one which establishes our work for the remainder of 2023/24. This approach allows us to make progress in the challenging financial climate this year, and to align our planning cycle with the financial year from March 2024. As we go forward, further conversations will be needed to allow us to advise the Executive on decisions to be taken on budgets and priorities.

The Action Plan consists of a series of key actions that were developed to lay the foundations of the work to bring about meaningful change and effective delivery as we move forward, and which the Strategic Framework can build upon in subsequent years.

Foundational Action Plan

Actions falling under the theme of **Prevention**:

1. Develop a society wide communications and engagement strategy to change attitudes, behaviours and social norms.
2. Adopt the Task Group Sprint Model to consider the needs (including Intersectional needs) of specific groups.
3. Establish a forum to coordinate work on equipping and supporting families, children and young people to enjoy healthy, respectful relationships using the curriculum (including Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE)), policies and practices in early years, schools and community sector.

4. To embed structures and processes which give space for young people's voices to participate and influence decision makers in ending violence against women and girls (EVAWG) work.
5. Establish a cross sectoral Further and Higher education working group to develop a plan to address EVAWG on and off campus.
6. Establish a cross-sectoral workplace forum (including unions, Labour Relations Agency, employers' organisations and other professional bodies) to develop workplace policy toolkits/ guidance and to promote workplace training/ best practice in professional standards on EVAWG, Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) to lead good practice in public sector.
7. Support the cross-sectoral group addressing EVAWG issues in the hospitality sector and the night-time economy.

Actions falling under the theme of **Protection and Provision**

8. Map and undertake gap analysis of violence against women and girls (VAWG) provision in general frontline services to help inform further policy development and service delivery.
9. Map and undertake gap analysis of VAWG provision in specialist frontline services including a review of referral gateways to help inform further policy development and service delivery.

Actions falling under the theme of **Justice System:**

10. Develop further tools for communicating information on the justice system and processes to improve information sharing and enhance confidence amongst victims/survivors in support of implementation of the Victim and Witness Strategy.
11. In the context of care and protections for victims in the justice system:
 - a. evaluate agreed interventions that are providing support to victims to access the Justice System;
 - b. support research on victim attrition rates in serious sexual offences and domestic abuse cases as part of implementation of Gillen Programme and Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy.
12. Explore with partners options to create specialism in VAWG cases in court proceedings including information provision for juries.
13. Undertake a review of international best practice perpetrator prevention and management systems to inform policy development and practice in support of the review under the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy.
14. Undertake a review of trends in aggravating and reinforcing factors of VAWG to inform policy development and practice.

Actions falling under the theme of **Working Better Together:**

15. Create a Knowledge and Network Hub within the Executive Office (TEO) to provide an accessible central resource on EVAWG research, data & evaluation and communication & engagement.
16. Establish a cross sectoral group located within the Knowledge and Network Hub to develop and lead the programme of EVAWG work on data and evaluation.
17. Through the Knowledge and Network Hub, develop and deliver an agreed annual EVAWG research programme with advice and support from a cross jurisdictional panel of academic research experts.
18. Through the Knowledge and Network Hub create reference groups to engage with lived experience, service provision, and academic research expertise in the development of the EVAWG work programme.

19. Create a five jurisdiction officials forum to share best practice and encourage cross jurisdictional shared learning.
20. NICS will identify and implement mechanisms including Programme for Government (PfG) to mainstream opportunities to EVAWG in public policies and strategies at all levels.
21. Develop funding strategy for sustainable EVAWG work across departments and other sectors.
22. In order to build widespread support for a changed society where women and girls are free from all forms of gender-based violence, abuse and harm including the attitudes, systems and structural inequalities that cause them - to seek endorsement of EVAWG strategic framework and active participation in the whole of society programme of actions by political and civic leaders.

Note: at a recent information seminar TEO presented the following:

How can we work together?

Building strong partnerships

- Programme of engagement between EVAWG, NILGA and SOLACE to share information and expertise
- Consider arrangements to facilitate and support strategic collaboration
- Joining in N-wide campaigns for example Women's NightTime Safety Charter
- Building on existing problem-solving Partnerships for example Domestic and Sexual Violence Partnerships and Multi-Agency Support Hubs

Local Community Relationships

- Leadership by Mayors, Councillors and officials
- Working with local partners to deliver on 'changed attitudes and behaviors'
- Working with local community groups on healthy respectful relationships programmes and bystander approach
- Mapping community services and needs

Community Planning

- Considering violence against women and girls throughout community plans
- Role for PCSPs
- Creating opportunities to support young people in learning about healthy relationships
- Role of planning, licensing and other Council functions
- Mainstreaming safety of public spaces

Summary of Consultation Questions

Answer options:

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Please add any comments

1 Do you agree or disagree with our vision below?

"A changed society where women and girls are free from all forms of gender-based violence, abuse and harm including the attitudes, systems and structural inequalities that cause them"

2 Do you agree or disagree that Outcome 1 below, will enable us to achieve this vision?

Outcome 1 - Changed Attitudes, Behaviours and Social Norms.

Everyone in society understands what violence against women and girls is, including its root causes, and plays an active role in preventing it.

3 Do you agree or disagree that Outcome 2 below, will enable us to achieve this vision?

Outcome 2 – Healthy, Respectful Relationships.

Everyone in society is equipped and empowered to enjoy healthy, respectful relationships

4 Do you agree or disagree that Outcome 3 below, will enable us to achieve this vision?

Outcome 3 – Women and Girls Are Safe and Feel Safe Everywhere.

Organisations and institutions across government and society embed the prevention of violence against women and girls in all that they do so that women and girls are safe and feel safe everywhere.

5 Do you agree or disagree that Outcome 4 below, will enable us to achieve this vision?

Outcome 4 – Quality Frontline Services, Protection, and Provision for Victims and Survivors of Violence Against Women and Girls.

Provision of high-quality services for women and girls who are victims and survivors of violence against women and girls.

6 Do you agree or disagree that Outcome 5 below, will enable us to achieve this vision?

Outcome 5 – A Justice System which has the Confidence of Victims, Survivors and the Public in its Ability to Address Violence Against Women and Girls.

7 Do you agree or disagree that Outcome 6 below, will enable us to achieve this vision?

Outcome 6 – All of Government and Society Working Better Together to End Violence Against Women and Girls.

A whole system approach with collaboration and cooperation by default across government departments and with, within and between the community, voluntary and other sectors.

8 Do you agree or disagree with our approach of focusing on PREVENTION to end violence against women and girls?

9. Do you agree or disagree that these are the right actions to take in our foundational Action Plan?

10. Do you agree or disagree with the way in which the Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) has been carried out?

11. Do you agree or disagree with the findings of the Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)?

12. If you or your organisation would like to receive our newsletter, to keep up to date with our work to end violence against women and girls, please provide a contact email address in the box below.