

Equality Impact Assessment

1.	Title of Proposal:	Scottish Borders Equally Safe Strategy (2016-2021)
2.	Service Area: Department:	Safer Communities Team, People Department
3.	Description:	<p>The Scottish Borders Equally Safe Strategy has been developed by the Scottish Borders Violence against Women (VAW) Partnership to enable the prevention and eradication of violence against women and girls, as per the Scottish Government's Equally Safe Strategy 2014. It will be designed to provide a strategic framework and shared understanding of the issues including a more nuanced view of violence against women – evidence shows that the tactics of coercive control (a behaviour that seeks to strip away the victim's freedoms and sense of self) are rooted in gender inequality, roles and assumptions.</p> <p>This strategy has been developed in consultation with VAW Partnership members, the general public and survivors of gender based violence and is underpinned by a strategic assessment conducted in 2015. It also builds in the excellent partnership work in the Scottish Borders and a significant investment in specialist services over the last five years. However, Equally Safe takes a more radical approach in that it aims to tackle the causes and consequences of gender based violence such as gender inequality in its widest sense, holding perpetrators more accountable and addressing the societal attitudes that perpetuate gender based violence.</p> <p>In short, the four main aims of the Scottish Borders Equally Safe strategy will be working in partnership to ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Scottish Borders' society embraces equality and mutual respect, and rejects all forms of violence against women and girls.

- Women and girls in the Scottish Borders thrive as equal citizens: socially, culturally, economically and politically.
- Interventions are early and effective, preventing violence and promoting women’s safety and wellbeing in the Scottish Borders.
- Men in the Scottish Borders desist from all forms of violence against women and girls and perpetrators of such violence receive a robust and effective response.

This will be a long term strategy requiring a phased approach; a Scottish Borders Equally Safe Delivery Plan will set out the short, medium and long term outcomes, directing the work and resources of partner agencies and maintaining gender based violence as a priority strategically and politically. Additionally, a gender based violence data set will be developed to ensure the local response is based on good evidence and can demonstrate step-changes in addressing violence against women and girls.

The focus for Scottish Borders Equally Safe will continue to be on all forms of violence against women, acknowledging that women and girls are at risk of such abuse precisely because they are female. Clearly boys and men can also experience violence and there is no diminution of the seriousness of the harms they can experience or any proposal to alter the support offered to them. However, Equally Safe acknowledges “that being female in itself can lead to a range of discrimination and disadvantage, including experience of male violence” (Scottish Government Equally Safe 2014).

In formulating the strategy the following consultation has taken place:

Spring 2016

Scottish Borders Violence Against Women Partnership members – SBC, NHS, Police Scotland, Children1st, Border Women’s Aid, Safer Communities, Scottish Borders Rape Crisis, Scottish Borders LGBT Equality; Elected Member; Solicitor

A total of 9 responses were received from partner agencies

July to September 2016

General public via SBC website, communities of interest eg children and young people, survivors of gender based violence.

A total of 16 responses were received from the wider, community based response

A “You Said, We Did” document was devised and shared via the SBC website. Any consultee who wished a direct response and who shared an mechanism for contact received a response from the VAW Partnership Chair.

4.	Relevance to the Equality Duty.	
	Do you believe your proposal has any relevance to the following duties of the Council under the Equality Act 2010?	
	Duty	Yes/No
	Elimination of discrimination (both direct & indirect), victimisation and harassment.	Yes
	Promotion of equality of opportunity?	Yes
Foster good relations?	Yes	

5.	Which groups of people may be impacted (both positively and negatively) if the proposal is advanced?				
	Equality Characteristic	Impact			Description
		No Impact	Possible Positive Impact	Possible Negative Impact	
	All characteristics and the following themes: Age Disability Gender Race Groups: People with Religious or other Beliefs Sexual Orientation, Carers Poverty Employees		x		Implementing the strategy should increase awareness, knowledge and support available to those belonging to a protected characteristic ensuring access to specialist domestic abuse services. A focus on prevention and tackling gender inequality will ensure an effective response to addressing violence against women and girls.

6.	Mitigation	
	Where you have identified a potential negative impact, please detail what mitigations will need to be put in place in order for your proposal to progress. If you are unsure of the answer please state this and recommend further investigation.	
	Characteristic	Mitigation & Recommendations
All	Much has been proposed in the strategy, and an action Plan identifies how it may be delivered. A budget for the activity needs to be secured and the Council will actively look to secure this.	Yes
	This is a new strategy and whilst at this stage equality impacts are proving to positive, it is recommended that the strategy will be reviewed 1 year from publication in order that it remains fit for purpose and that negative impacts have not become apparent.	Yes

7.	How certain are you of the answers you have given?	
	Answer	Tick One
	Certain - I have populated the evidence base to support my answers.	X
	Fairly Certain – but don't have concrete evidence to support my answers so would recommend further assessment is conducted if the proposal is progressed.	
	Not Certain – further assessment is recommended if proposal is progressed.	

Signed Off			
Name:	Graham Jones	Directorate:	People Department
Post:	Safer Communities Manager	Date:	16 th March 2017

EIA Completed By				
Name	Post	Service Area.	Date(s)	
Andrea Beavon	Violence Against Women Co-ordinator	Safer Communities Team	Initial assessment	29 th August 2016
Jenny Williamson	Project Officer	Safer Communities Team		
Simone Doyle	Equality & Diversity Officer (HR)	Human Resources	Final assessment	15 th December 2016