



violence **against** women

EAST AYRSHIRE PARTNERSHIP

Annual Report 2024-25 Quick read version



What is East Ayrshire Violence Against Women Partnership (EAVAWP)?

It's a multi-agency partnership established with the aim of addressing violence against women and girls (VAWG), in all its forms, including:

- **domestic abuse**
- **sexual violence**
- **commercial sexual exploitation**
- **honour-based abuse**
- **female genital mutilation.**

It is made up of representatives from:

- Police Scotland
- Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
- NHS Ayrshire and Arran
- East Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership (EAHSCP)
- Council for Voluntary Organisations East Ayrshire
- Community Justice Ayrshire Partnership
- HMP Kilmarnock
- East Ayrshire Women's Aid
- Barnardo's
- Break the Silence
- ASSIST
- Victim Support
- STAR Centre
- Recovery Enterprises
- East Ayrshire Council, including services across Education, Housing, Vibrant Communities, Early Years and Community Safety services.

EAVAWP works to the priorities of Equally Safe, Scotland's strategy to prevent and eradicate all forms of violence against women and girls.

EVAWP Strategic Plan

The Violence Against Women Partnership has a strategic plan which focuses on:

- gaining a better understanding of the prevalence and impact of VAWG on our communities, the support that's available and where there are key gaps/areas of unmet need
- creating cultural change around VAWG
- providing opportunities for victims/survivors of VAWG to play a key role in shaping and monitoring the work of EVAWP
- providing services for women, girls and children affected by VAWG

When creating the plan, two consultation sessions took place with groups hosted by East Ayrshire Women's Aid, where women shared their complex experiences openly and honestly in order to help make things better for other women.

All of the women had experienced services from education, social work, Women's Aid and the justice system, amongst others. The groups were supportive of the plan's strategic themes and the information they provided became actions that have been included in the plan.

Some of the things they spoke about included:

- difficult experiences with services and feeling that they weren't being believed
- services and practitioners not having a full understanding of the complex nature of domestic abuse, or the behaviours of perpetrators



They thought their experience would be improved if:

- there were shorter waiting times to gain access to services
- gaps in services for children recovering from abuse and trauma were addressed
- wider public messaging was issued detailing what abuse is – many of the participants advised they did not realise they were in abusive relationships until they saw a media campaign.

Specialist services



In respect of all violence against women, referrals went up across all services by 11.5% in 2023-24.



For young women aged 16-25, referrals to specialist services increased by 18% compared to 2022-23.

A positive theme to emerge was that across all age groups, women, girls and children are reporting greater feelings of safety after accessing specialist VAWG services in East Ayrshire such as those below. Read on to hear comments about these services from service users.

East Ayrshire Women's Aid

"Thank you for calling me back and checking in. I'm much better now and things have calmed down. I feel that I am in control."

"When I first reached out for support, I felt invisible and that's a scary place to be. You have helped me find myself again."

"I really wasn't expecting much from coming here but you have really got me thinking. I like the way you challenge me, even if it is difficult at the time. I feel like I am beginning to find me for the first time."

The STAR Centre: Rape Crisis Ayrshire

"To say my experience from STAR and (Worker) has literally changed my life is an understatement. To reach 62 years of age and have suffered for the vast majority of my life, I only wish I had met (Worker) earlier in my life. Everything would and could have been so very different. Then again (Worker) is unique, and it took a lifetime to meet someone who had the gift, kindness and compassion to care enough to bring something out in me that no one had ever been able to offer before."

"(Worker) was amazing start to finish, she made me feel seen and heard which is something that I really needed to be able to gain confidence with going to court. She supported me every step of the way and I'll never be able to thank her enough for everything she has done for me. Without the STAR Centre I would still be lost and broken. Always remember the difference you all make."

Break the Silence

"I found everyone at Break The Silence very friendly and kind which made the experience a lot easier. Therapy has been a difficult experience but very much needed and very helpful. The people at Break The Silence have all made a bad experience a lot easier for me."

"You're met with warmth, patience, and understanding, something I firmly believe is required for survivors to truly heal."

"I feel safe, heard and seen. And not fighting this battle all alone."

ASSIST

ASSIST is also a key partner in supporting victims and survivors of domestic abuse who are going through a court process.

Other work going on across East Ayrshire

Equally Safe at work

East Ayrshire Council has bronze accreditation in the Equally Safe at Work (ESAW) programme, run by [Close the Gap](#), in recognition of its commitment to gender equality and preventing violence against women.

Equally Safe in Practice

EAWWP recommends the use of the Equally Safe in Practice modules across the Partnership which are part of a public health approach to preventing and ending violence against women and girls. The 'Together for Gender Equality', 'Understanding Domestic Abuse' and 'Understanding Sexual Violence' modules have been produced by Scottish Women's Aid in conjunction with the Scottish Government and are available, free, for the public sector.

The modules have been made available for East Ayrshire Council, Health and Social Care Partnership, East Ayrshire Leisure Trust and Ayrshire Roads Alliance employees. This complements the Equally Safe at Work approach to ensure that employees are equipped to respond to women who are experiencing violence in our communities.

EQUALLY SAFE IN PRACTICE
Knowledge, Skills, Change

Violence against women is everyone's business.

Learn more by completing these modules which are available to everyone employed by
EAC/EAHSCP/ARA/East Ayrshire Leisure Trust.

Together for gender equality • Understanding domestic abuse • Understanding sexual violence



These are available
for all employees on
our Learnpro platform.



Period dignity

East Ayrshire Council believes in the importance of making sanitary products accessible for all members of our community. Residents can therefore now receive two months' worth of period products by collecting them from a local pick-up point. Information on stocked venues can be accessed via the PickupMyPeriod App.

- [PickupMyPeriod App for Android](#)
- [PickupMyPeriod App for Apple](#)

If you live in rural areas, products can be accessed by filling out an online form or ordering by phone on 01563 554400. Pupils and students can also access free products from their school/college/university.

Safer Schools app

The [Safer Schools app](#) is specifically designed with safeguarding in mind and is the main form of communication with parents and carers. It supports parents and carers to navigate the online world and gives them access to national and local supports including information from Scottish Women's Aid; Refuge and NSPCC. The app content cannot be tracked so there is no way of someone looking at the device and monitoring its use.



16 days of action

EAVAWP takes part in the 16 days of action campaign every year to help end gender-based violence.

The 'Reclaim the Night' march is a key event in the campaign calendar and here are just a few comments from women who have taken part:

"A great night with fantastic women saying no more to violence against women and girls. Women still face violence from day-to-day harassment to sexual assault and murder. Hopefully these walks can highlight that this behaviour is totally unacceptable and not just banter or men being men."

"Standing shoulder to shoulder with others, I felt the strength of a community determined to make our streets safer and our voices louder. This was more than a march; it was a statement. A call to end violence, harassment, and fear, and to reclaim not just the night, but our power, our freedom, and our right to feel safe. To everyone who walked, chanted, and stood in solidarity - thank you for reminding me that together, we are unstoppable."



Safe Spaces

The Safe Spaces Smile on Service was developed in 2020 as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic and associated restrictions to support those experiencing domestic abuse. Women can access specialist support through a 'safe space' at the North West Area Resource Centre in Kilmarnock by going to the dental reception and asking for the Smile on Service.

A sister service is now available at CentreStage in Kilmarnock which provides similar access to information.

Future developments for the EAVAWP

Throughout 2025, the EAVAWP will work on progressing:

- the implementation of the East Ayrshire Violence Against Women and Girls Strategic Plan 2024-27, including the strategic needs assessment and developing work on lived and living experience
- development days for EAVAWP membership focusing on roles, responsibilities and remit.

For further information, please contact:

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**23 women and
24 children supported
in refuge due to
domestic abuse in East
Ayrshire 2023-24**



**39 women
have lost their lives
due to intimate partner
homicide in Scotland
in the past
5 years**



**1409 women and girls
referred to specialist
VAW services in
East Ayrshire 2023-24**



**1552 reported
incidents of domestic
abuse recorded by the
Police 2022-23 in
East Ayrshire**



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