

Gender Based Violence in the Modern World

Friday 29th November 2019 - Princess Royal Events Centre, Ayr



Background

Gender based violence (GBV) is a major public health, equality and human rights issue. It covers a spectrum of violence and abuse, committed primarily but not exclusively against women by men. This includes, but is not limited to:

- domestic abuse
- rape and sexual assault
- childhood sexual abuse
- stalking and harassment
- commercial sexual exploitation
- harmful practices - such as female genital mutilation, forced marriage and so-called 'honour' based violence

Violence against women and girls, in any form, has no place in a vision for a safe, strong, successful Scotland. It damages health and wellbeing, limits freedom and potential, and is a violation of the most fundamental human rights.

Locally, our three Violence Against Women Partnerships (VAWPs) bring together key public and third sector organisations and are responsible for working to prevent and eradicate all forms of violence against women and girls within their area.

At a national level the Scottish Government's Equally Safe strategy aims to prevent and eradicate violence against women and girls. It recognises the need for a broad range of actions to address gender-based violence and is designed to:

- deliver greater gender equality
- ensure a swift, robust response to perpetrators of violence and abuse
- promote early, effective intervention to prevent violence or mitigate its impact

Every area of the workforce and wider society has an important role to play in tackling gender-based violence and it is only by working together across all areas of Scottish life that we will successfully prevent and eradicate violence against women and girls.

“There is one universal truth, applicable to all countries, cultures and communities: violence against women is never acceptable, never excusable, never tolerable.”

(Ban Ki-Moon, United Nations Secretary-General)

Gender Based Violence in the Modern World Conference

During the 16 Days of Action Campaign Community Justice Ayrshire, NHS Ayrshire & Arran Public Health and members of East, North and South Ayrshire Violence Against Women Partnerships hosted a pan-Ayrshire gender-based violence conference on Friday 29 November 2019.

A planning group met for several months to discuss the aims of the event and to help shape and develop the day. The group were keen to:

- Explore various forms of gender-based violence across the life course
- Raise awareness about the different ‘guises’ that violence against women and girls can take
- Look at our varied responses to violence against women and girls
- Share messages with frontline practitioners across a variety of disciplines within statutory and third sector agencies

‘16 Days of Action’ is an annual international campaign which runs from 25 November until 10 December each year. Established in 1991, the campaign raises awareness of the reality of domestic violence and pushes for positive change to increase women's (and men's) safety. The 16 Days campaign is an opportunity for individuals and groups around the world to call for the elimination of all forms of gender-based violence by:

- increasing women's and men's safety
- highlighting the nature and prevalence of gender-based violence
- raising awareness of gender violence as a human rights issue
- strengthening local work to tackle gender violence

Our three Violence Against Women Partnerships, and their member organisations, support the campaign and co-ordinate a range of activity to promote 16 Days of Action throughout East, North and South Ayrshire. White Ribbon Scotland is a campaign to involve men in tackling violence against women. It is a joint initiative by a coalition of organisations, individuals and groups of men around Scotland.

Hosted by Councillor Anthea Dickson, Chair of Community Justice Ayrshire, inputs were provided on the day by a range of speakers:



Opening Remarks – A Personal Story

Councillor Jim McMahon, Ambassador for White Ribbon Scotland

Cllr Jim McMahon opened the event by speaking about his role as a White Ribbon Ambassador for White Ribbon Scotland and the work he is doing with men and boys to challenge culture and behaviour that leads to abuse or violence

Everything you wanted to know about the world's new 'gold standard': Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018

Dr. Marsha Scott, Chief Executive, Scottish Women's Aid

Dr Marsha Scott spoke about Scotland's commitment to women and children's human rights, building services that are competent and sensitive to gender and coercive control, and implementing Safe & Together



Jasvinder Sanghera, a survivor's story

Jasvinder Sanghera CBE, founder Karma Nirvana

Jasvinder Sanghera shared her own personal story as a survivor of forced marriage, her work to bring the issue of forced marriage into the public and political domains, and discussed charity Karma Nirvana, who support both men and women affected by honour-based abuse and forced marriages





Musical Performance

The STARbeats

The STARbeats performed an energetic and well received performance after lunch, with plenty of audience participation! The group evolved from a taster session delivered at The STAR Centre and say they come together to “drum, drink coffee, talk a lot and support each other”

#Emilytest – Tackling Gender Based Violence in Education

Fiona Drouet, Founder and CEO #Emilytest

Fiona Drouet shared the emotional and hard-hitting story of her daughter Emily, and the work she is taking forward with the Scottish Government, Universities, Colleges, Police Scotland and the third sector to reshape further and higher education’s response to violence against women across the UK and Ireland



From Hurt to Hope

Detective Superintendent Gordon McCreadie, Police Scotland’s National Lead for Domestic Abuse, Forced marriage, Honour Based Abuse and Stalking and Harassment

Det Supt Gordon McCreadie closed the event by speaking about Police Scotland’s implementation of the new Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 , his collaborative working to establish organisational policies and direction around domestic abuse and the role of the Domestic Abuse Task Force

Delegates were also provided with the opportunity to attend two of four different workshops on the day, highlighting some of the key issues relating to gender-based violence in the modern world:

Hiding in Plain Sight – Supporting Trafficked Women

The Glasgow-based Trafficking Awareness Raising Alliance (TARA) support women who have been trafficked for the purposes of commercial sexual exploitation. This workshop aimed to raise awareness of the links with human trafficking and the Scottish sex industry, identification of survivors and the work of the TARA service to support women to safety



Understanding Coercive Control

Women's Aid services are non-profit organisations committed to providing information, support & accommodation to women, children & young people. This jointly delivered workshop aimed to increase participant's understanding of domestic abuse, explore coercive control and build an understanding as to why victims stay in abusive relationships



Gender 10 – Taking a Whole School Approach to Gender Equality

Delivered by East Ayrshire Women's Aid, NHS Ayrshire & Arran and East Ayrshire Council, this workshop explored the links between gender inequality and gender-based violence while providing practical examples of how to challenge gender stereotypes and promote gender equality within a school setting



What is Forced Marriage and How Can You Support Those at Risk?

Shakti Women's Aid provide help for black minority ethnic (BME) women, children and young people who are experiencing, or who have experienced, domestic abuse. This workshop explored what forced marriage is, the legislation around forced marriage and good practice and procedures



Dynamic Marketplace

A dynamic marketplace was hosted in the main hall of the venue where delegates were encouraged to engage with the various services and organisations in attendance and learn about the work they are doing towards eradicating gender-based violence in all its forms.

Stalls were hosted by the following organisations and services:

ASSIST	Ayrshire College	Barnardo's	Break the Silence
Click	East Ayrshire Housing Options & Vibrant Communities	Forced Marriage – Ayrshire Multi Agency Practitioner's Guide	Gender 10
Moving On Ayrshire	NHS Ayrshire & Arran	North Ayrshire Housing Services	Police Scotland
South Ayrshire Housing Services	The Caledonian System & Justice Services	The Journey	The Scottish Centre for Personal Safety
The Star Centre	Victim Support Scotland	Violence Against Women Partnerships	Women's Aid



Ayrshire College

We were delighted to welcome students from Ayrshire College to the event who offered a variety of treatments including hand and arm massage and nail treatments during the lunch break. Delegates appreciated the opportunity to take some time out and benefit from the student's skills.



"Until we end violence against women, we cannot have true gender equality, either here in Scotland, or elsewhere around the world."

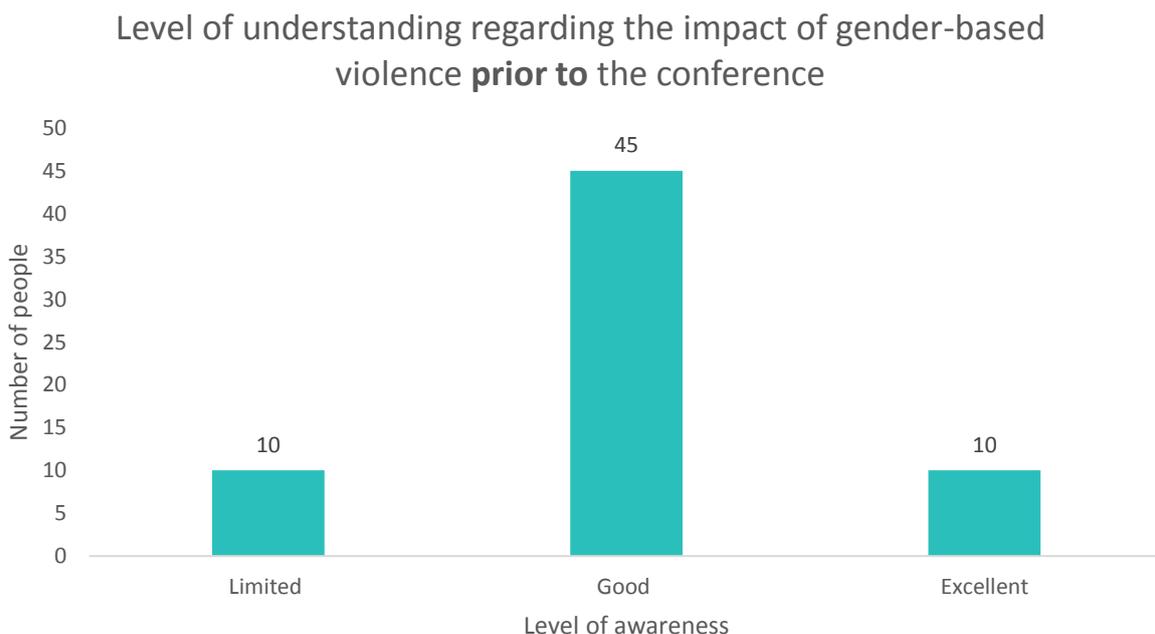
(Nicola Sturgeon, First Minister of Scotland)

Event Feedback

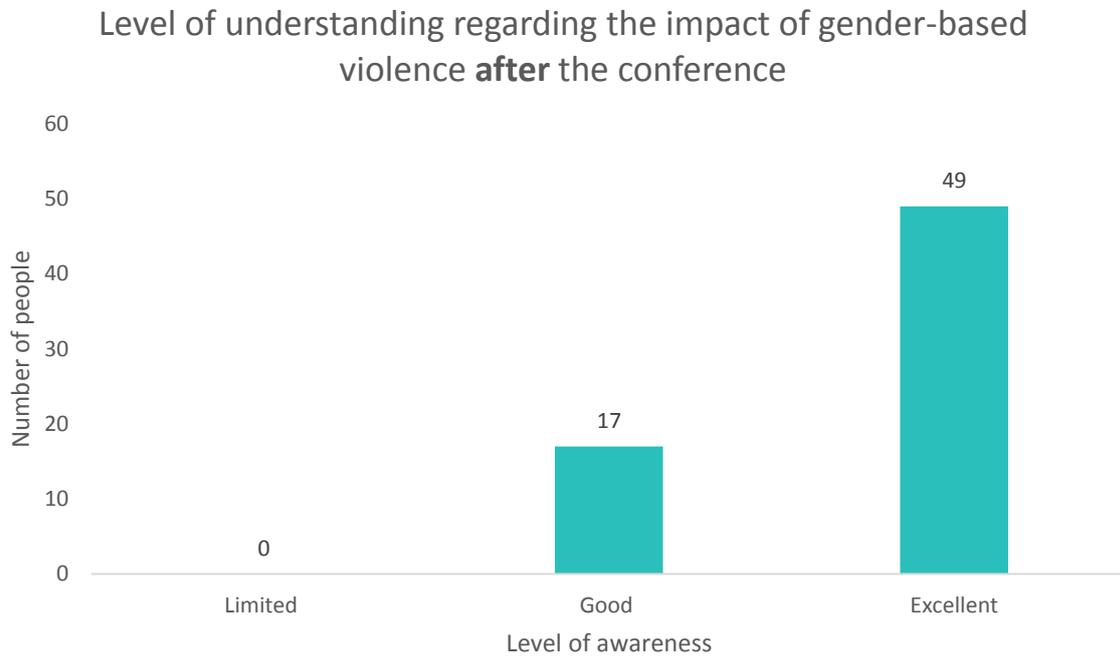
Over 190 people attended the conference. Delegates were asked to make a pledge around what they could do differently to tackle gender-based violence in their own sphere of influence and an evaluation form was circulated via SurveyMonkey after the conference.

Some key points from the feedback are as follows:

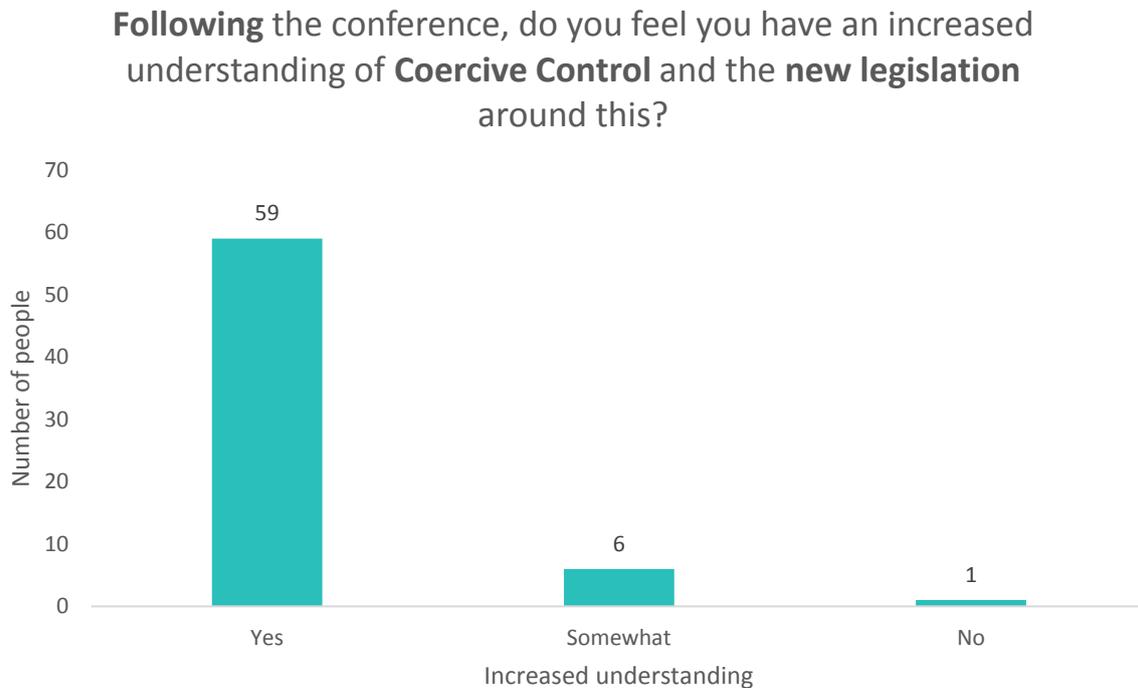
1. What was your level of understanding of the impact of gender-based violence prior to the conference?



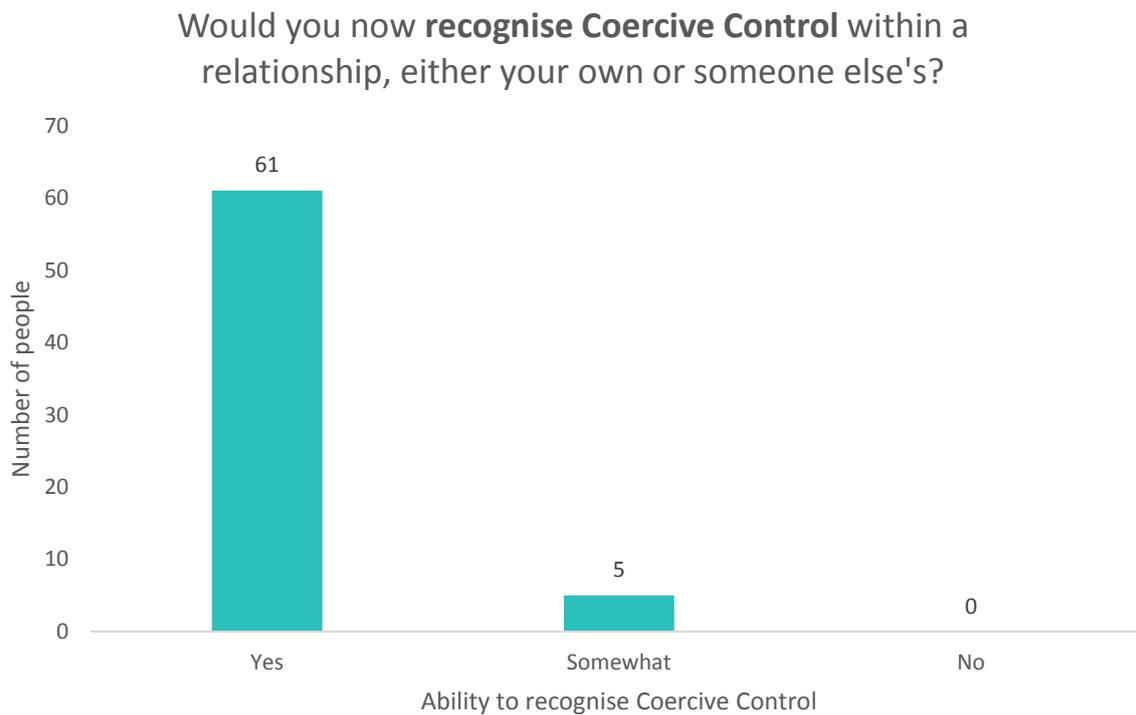
2. After attending the conference, how would you now rate your understanding of the impact of gender-based violence?



3. Following this event do you feel you have an increased understanding of Coercive Control and the new Legislation around this?



4. Would you now recognise Coercive control within a relationship, either your own relationship or someone else's?



5. After listening to all the speakers at the event, please state which presentation stood out the most and the reasons why?

“Fiona Drouet was such an emotional presentation but one that had to be heard. I have such admiration for the work she has done in promoting the Emily Test”

“It is too difficult to choose one presentation; the personal experience of each speaker was incredibly moving and real”

“All of the speakers were excellent. I particularly resonated with Jim McMahon at the very beginning as his story was both harrowing and heartfelt. Really getting the message across from real life experience and recovery ”

“They were all very informative and extremely emotional”

“Jasvinder Sanghera’s presentation was an eye opener as to the way services can be afraid of culture to the extent child protection procedures are not followed properly”

“Fiona Drouet. The fact she had the courage to stand and tell Emily’s story not that long after the tragedy was incredible. She mentioned at one stage that she didn’t feel she had ‘prepared’ Emily for things like this in the world and I came away ensuring I always have open and honest discussions with my 10-year-old daughter ”

“The Councillor supporting White Ribbon was excellent and hit home as it was from a male perspective”

“All – enjoyed hearing the Police commitment to changing the way they support and recognise Domestic Abuse”

“Jasvinder Sanghera’s presentation helped me to understand forced marriage as I had never had any previous training in this. I work as an IDAA and it has informed my practice a lot and I would like to share this training with my colleagues”

6. What did you hope to achieve from the conference?

- Increased knowledge and understanding of GBV issues
- Networking
- Knowledge of support services available
- Increased knowledge of the signs to look out for regarding coercive control
- Information regarding the new coercive control legislation
- Learn about how different organisations respond to tackling GBV
- Increased understanding of gender inequality in schools

7. Do you feel that this has been delivered? Please explain your reasons.

- Exceeded expectations – learned a lot about GBV and coercive control
- Enjoyed workshops, presentations, marketplace and networking
- Covered actions being taken at a local, national and international level to combat GBV
- Marketplace was very informative, good to speak to services/organisations directly
- Speakers were relevant and engaging
- Best conference I have been to regarding GBV
- Workshops were educational and informative
- Very well organised
- Already shared learning from the day with other colleagues
- One respondent felt the workshops were of a basic or introductory level and didn’t provide any new information

8. What were the key messages you could take away from the conference?

- Never remain silent if you think something is wrong
- Be vigilant and never judge
- Improve listening skills and ask the right questions
- Could be happening anywhere – next door, same town etc.
- Difference between forced and arranged marriages
- Keep fighting for these women
- Range of support services available
- Information about the new legislation
- The distance travelled in terms of ability to tackle GBV issues
- Important for everyone to be involved in tackling GBV
- We all have a role to play and we need to have the confidence to use our voices to speak out when we see, feel or hear abuse
- The subtlety of coercive control and its long-term effects
- GBV comes in many different forms and is more prevalent than you think
- The important role education has to play

9. How do you believe you can utilise this in your current organisation?

- Greater ability to recognise coercive control/GBV in people we work with
- Increased knowledge of what to do if you suspect someone is the victim of GBV
- Better insight into some of the issues young people in school could be facing
- Share information about support services
- Help shape and inform policies and practice
- Increased confidence in speaking about and asking about GBV

10. Please provide any further feedback regarding the conference (e.g. speakers, layout, workshops, what was missing etc.)

- Excellent range of speakers – very informative, emotional, powerful, authentic
- Great venue – good parking available, great lunch and catering, workshops laid out well, spacious areas to work and relax
- Well thought out and organised
- Brilliant day – everyone should attend not just practitioners
- Marketplace was very informative
- Left feeling emotionally exhausted but uplifted at the same time
- Starbeats were great and shared a positive message
- Would have been good to see more men represented
- Would have liked to hear about LGBT issues and links with GBV
- Loved it – felt very treated e.g. getting nails done and free menstrual products
- Important to stick to time – some speakers overran
- Would have been good for Poppy Scotland to have a stall – GBV can occur after a man returns from the forces and is having difficulty settling back into civilian life

My Pledge

Before leaving the conference, delegates were asked to pledge what they could do differently to tackle gender-based violence in their own sphere of influence. The pledges were as follows:

“Discuss today with friends and colleagues to raise awareness”

“To improve my response to women presenting following domestic violence. I will also improve my knowledge of local services to signpost”

“Not to turn a blind eye on any suspected forms of violence or abuse”

“Focus organisation on domestic abuse within minority groups – time and effort”

“Never stay silent”

“To ensure every pregnant mum in my care has been asked at least once in her pregnancy if everything is okay at home”

“Recognise and understand individual circumstances more carefully and respond appropriately to situations in practice”

“Use the services I have become aware of with supporting families of domestic abuse. Keep supporting people exposed to domestic abuse”

“Go back to my workplace and explain progress and new initiatives – explaining our part as professionals”

“Always recognise true barriers to leaving an abuser and never to assume that this is in any way an easy option”

“I will do everything I can to be aware of victims of gender-based violence and assist in any way possible”

“That everyone seen by EAC Health and Homelessness is asked about GBV in a sensitive and supportive manner and that support will be offered at that time. Maintain an open-door policy for those to access supports at a later date if they decline at initial contact”

“Support, listen and respond. Continue to chip away and try to help make a difference”

“Pass on knowledge and skills from this event to my institution. Progress this agenda within my institution to influence change. Persevere and stay committed. Share the power of this event”

“Raise awareness to influence my organisation, family and friends of domestic violence to end it”

“Bring MARAC to Ayrshire to help victims of high levels of domestic abuse and threat to life. Wonderful, emotive and thought-provoking conference”

“Share the information and contact details from today’s event to work colleagues and continue to raise awareness with everyone”

“Use my voice and share all this learning today, we can’t let power and fear stop us doing the right thing”

“Not remain silent”

“Raise more awareness around GBV not only in my professional capacity but also on a personal level within my community”

“Keep up-to-date with training and reinforce this”

“Challenge poor attitudes / language and to educate friends, family and work colleagues about the issues addressed at today’s conference”

“Never stand back when I have doubts that someone is suffering from gender-based violence in Emily’s name”

“Challenge gender inequalities and stereotyping at home, in my community and my workplace. I will continue to support and protect victims and report any incidences of VAW and gender-based violence towards myself, my family, my clients and colleagues”

“Persevere”

“Talk to the men in my life to get them involved”

“Use this course to enhance my knowledge and discuss with my staff, colleagues and family about domestic abuse and gender-based abuse”

“Take my learning from today and immerse it into my daily practice at work. To be open to the plight of people who are experiencing domestic abuse, forced marriage and honour-based abuse. I will also share my learning with my team. Thank you for this informative day”

“Continue to do everything I can to raise the issue of domestic abuse in Scotland and to support others to do the same”

“Be more attentive in this area of GBV when working with my patients”

“See, listen, believe, support, assist, empower”

“Support women’s rights in Ayrshire and address inequality”

Next Steps

Following the conference, CJA will be releasing video clips of the presentations on the day. This will allow for further dissemination and provide teams with the opportunity to utilise the recordings in staff training sessions.

Further discussion on the feedback will take place and will be used to inform future work in this area.

*Kirsty Baker
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Community Justice Ayrshire
February 2020*