What is Violence Against Women?

Violence against women is a direct consequence of the inequalities between women and men. It denies women their most basic human rights, such as the right to health, and undermines the social and economic development of communities and whole countries.

Various studies from around the world show that violence against women and children is widespread and cuts across class, age, religion and ethnic group. Common attempts to justify or excuse gender-based violence include unemployment, personality disorders and the use of drugs and/or alcohol. However, it has long been established that there can be no justification or excuse for any form of violence against women and children. Without doubt, the majority of men do not enter into any form of violence against women and children, yet the minority has the capacity to harm many.

It is recognised that men also experience violence but it must be acknowledged that due to gender inequalities which exist within society, women are at greater risk of domestic abuse.

Kofi Annan, former UN Secretary General (2001-2006) said:

"Violence against women is perhaps the most shameful human rights violation, and it is perhaps the most pervasive. It knows no boundaries of geography, culture or wealth. As long as it continues, we cannot claim to be making real progress towards equality, development and peace."

Violence Against Women includes:

- Domestic Abuse
- Sexual Crimes
- Forced Marriage
- Stalking
- Sexual Exploitation/Commercial Sexual Exploitation
- Honour Based Violence
- Female Genital Mutilation
- Human Trafficking
Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse is physical, sexual, emotional or financial abuse which takes place within an intimate relationship. Domestic abuse is characterised by a pattern of coercive and controlling behaviour and incidents will increase in both severity and frequency. Domestic abuse is gender specific in that it is most commonly experienced by women and perpetrated by men. Domestic abuse may, and often does, include a range of abusive behaviours, not all of which are, in themselves, inherently “violent”. Yet, all forms of domestic abuse stem from the abuser’s desire for power and control over his partner. Any woman can experience domestic abuse regardless of race, ethnic or religious group, class, disability or lifestyle. Examples of forms of abuse are detailed below; however this list is by no means exhaustive.

**Physical abuse** includes all physical violence such as punching, slapping, biting, kicking, pushing, burning and strangling

**Emotional abuse** includes humiliation and degradation, isolation from friends and family, threats against the woman or her children and name calling.

**Sexual abuse** includes rape, using force, threats or intimidation to make a woman perform sexual acts or any degrading sexual treatment.

**Financial abuse** includes not being allowed to gain employment, being denied access to money which is yours or being forced to ask for money for essentials

For further information on domestic abuse visit:

http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Equality/violence-women/Key-Facts

South Ayrshire Women’s Aid – telephone crisis line 01292 266482/ office line 01292 885667 or visit

www.southayrshirewomensaid.org.uk/
Sexual Crimes

Women and girls of all ages and backgrounds experience rape and sexual assault and it can happen at any time in their lives. This is usually perpetrated by men they know, women and girls are often deprived of their choice to report due to fear, shame or the feeling that they will be blamed or not believed. The link below provides information on some of the myths and misconceptions in relation to rape and sexual assault:


What does sexual abuse mean?
Sexual abuse refers to any action that pressures or coerces someone to do something sexual they don't want to do.

Many survivors of sexual abuse and rape don’t tell anyone for many reasons including fear, shame or guilt.

Abuse is usually perpetrated by someone known to the victim.

What can you do to get help?
If you are living in South Ayrshire, whether you are in the immediate aftermath of rape or the abuse is historic, you can seek help from:

Moving On Ayrshire who offer support and counselling for survivors in South Ayrshire.
Telephone 01292 290546
http://www.movingonayrshire.com/
enquiries@movingonayrshire.com

Rape Crisis who offer a National helpline.
Telephone 08088 010302
http://www.rapecrisisscotland.org.uk/help/

What Moving On Ayrshire can offer.
Moving On Ayrshire offer adult survivors of sexual abuse and rape free one-to-one counselling in a safe environment which can enable them to address their issues and help them work towards a healthier and happier future. The counselling service is confidential
and provides a safe and secure place where you can talk freely and be listened to without being judged.

In the immediate aftermath of rape we provide quick access to support and counselling which can help victims deal with the complex feelings and emotions that have resulted from their trauma.

Support and advice is also available for relatives and friends who are finding it difficult to deal with what has happened to their loved one.

For further information and advice on rape and sexual assault, please visit the links below or telephone:

**Women’s Support Project** – telephone **0141 418 0748**
http://www.womenssupportproject.co.uk/content/supportandinformation/172/

**South Ayrshire Women’s Aid** – telephone crisis line: **01292 266482**/ office line: **01292 885667** or visit
Forced Marriage

You have the right to choose who you marry, when you marry or if you marry at all.

Forced marriage is when you face pressure to marry from your immediate family members or the wider community. This may take the form of physical/sexual violence, threats, emotional blackmail or revolve around notions of ‘shame’ and ‘family honor’. Women and girls who are at risk of forced marriage often feel they are unable to say no to the marriage.

The Forced Marriage etc. (Protection and Jurisdiction) (Scotland) Act was passed by the Scottish Parliament on 22 March 2011 to provide a specific civil remedy for those threatened with forced marriage and those already in such a marriage. The Act received Royal Assent on 27 April 2011 and came into force on 28 November 2011 (ref: Scottish Government 2013.)

Contact the Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) if you’re trying to stop a forced marriage or you need help leaving a marriage you’ve been forced into.

fmu@fco.gov.uk
Telephone: 020 7008 0151
From overseas: +44 (0)20 7008 0151
Out of hours: 020 7008 1500 (ask for the Global Response Centre)

For further information on forced marriage please visit the links below:

https://www.gov.uk/stop-forced-marriage
http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Equality/violence-women/forcedmarriage
http://www.shaktiedinburgh.co.uk/arrangedmarriageswomen.html


**Stalking**

Stalking is defined as ‘a constellation of behaviours in which an individual inflicts upon another repeated unwanted intrusions and communications’. *(ref: Mullen, 1999)*

Examples of stalking can include following, maintaining surveillance, loitering and sending unwanted gifts or messages. Stalking may escalate to physical assault, sexual assault, and/or even murder. If two or more occasions of unwanted attention are directed repeatedly towards a specific individual, is experienced as unwelcome or intrusive, and triggers fear or concern, then it is stalking. *(ref: Action Against Stalking 2013)*

**Anyone affected by stalking can call the National Stalking Helpline on 0808 802 0300 or email advice@stalkinghelpline.org**

For further information and advice on stalking please visit the link below for ‘Action Scotland Against Stalking’

[www.scotlandagainststalking.com](http://www.scotlandagainststalking.com) or email stalking.scotland@yahoo.co.uk.
Sexual Exploitation

Commercial Sexual Exploitation

Commercial sexual exploitation is also included in the spectrum of violence against women and children and includes areas such as adult entertainment, lap dancing, prostitution and pornography. For further information and additional reading on commercial sexual exploitation, visit the link below:

http://www.womenssupportproject.co.uk/content/commercialsexualexploitation/173,172/

Sexual Exploitation

There are different aspects of sexual exploitation that can have an impact on children and young people – these include:

- **Grooming** - the behaviours used by predators to target and prepare children and young people for sexual abuse and sexual exploitation.

- **Pornification** – this happens when references, messages, ideas and images from pornography have moved into our entertainment, media and mainstream culture.

- **Sexting** - is sending sexually explicit messages via mobile phone, email, web chat, social networking sites, Bluetooth or instant messenger. To put it simply Sexting = sex + texting.

- **Sexualisation**: is when sexuality is inappropriately imposed upon a person

(Ref: Women’s Support Project – Source: http://www.womenssupportproject.co.uk/content/groomingandsexualisation/303,172/ accessed July 2013)

The Women’s Support Project has produced information booklets for parents and workers on the aspects above and these can be accessed by visiting the link below:

**Women’s Support Project** – telephone **0141 418 0748**

http://www.womenssupportproject.co.uk/content/groomingandsexualisation/303,172/
**Honour Based Violence**

The terms 'honour crime', 'honour-based violence' and 'izzat' embrace a variety of crimes of violence (mainly but not exclusively against women), including physical abuse, sexual violence, abduction, forced marriage, imprisonment and murder where the person is being punished by their family or their community. They are punished for actually, or allegedly, 'undermining' what the family or community believes to be the correct code of behaviour. In transgressing this, the person shows that they have not been properly controlled to conform by their family and this is to the 'shame' or 'dishonour' of the family. 'Honour crime' may be considered by the perpetrator(s) as justified to protect or restore the 'honour' of a family. *(ref: Scottish Government 2013 - [http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/12/22165750/4](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/12/22165750/4))*

For further information on Honour Based Violence, please refer to the multi-agency practice guidelines which have been development by the Scottish Government visit the link below:


If you need to speak to someone about Honour Based Violence, please contact:

**Shaktie Women’s Aid**, telephone **0131 475 2399**
[http://www.shaktiedinburgh.co.uk/](http://www.shaktiedinburgh.co.uk/)

**Amina, the Muslim Women’s Resource Centre**, telephone **0808 801 0301**

**Hemat Gryffe Women’s Aid**, telephone **0141 353 0859**
Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM involves procedures which include the partial or total removal of the external female genital organs for cultural or other non-therapeutic reasons.

For further information on FGM please click on the links below:

http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Equality/violence-women/MinorityEthnicIssuesPages/FemaleGenitalMutilation

NSPCC Scotland has launched Female Genital Mutilation Helpline. It will operate 24/7, and will be staffed by specially child protection trained helpline counsellors who can offer advice, information, and assistance to members of the public and to professionals. Counsellors will also be able to make referrals, as appropriate, to statutory agencies and other services.

The helpline can be contacted on:

0800 028 3550 and emails sent to fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk.
**Human Trafficking**

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (in Article 3, paragraph (a) of the ‘Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons’) define ‘Human Trafficking’ as:

‘the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs (ref: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime’ [source http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/what-is-human-trafficking.html accessed May 2013]

The United Nations describe Human Trafficking as having 3 elements as detailed in the table below (‘act’ - what is done, ‘means’ - how it is done and ‘purpose’ - why it is done) – this table clearly identified the link between human trafficking and violence against women, particularly in relation to the ‘purpose’ which includes prostitution and sexual exploitation.

**Elements of human trafficking**

If you are a victim of trafficking or suspect someone may be trafficked you can:

Contact the Police by dialling 999 for an immediate response or

Contact Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111 if you have information that will help lead to the identification and recovery of trafficking victims in the UK or visit

http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Justice/crimes/humantraffick/victims