



Women's
voices.
Shaping
change.



**WOMEN'S SUPPORT
PROJECT
IMPACT REPORT
2025-2026**



**WOMEN'S
SUPPORT
PROJECT**

WHO WE ARE

The Women's Support Project (WSP) is a national organisation based in Glasgow. We aim to raise awareness of the extent and effects of violence against women and girls (VAWG), and to support those affected by this.

Key themes in our work are addressing unmet need and emerging issues, making links between different forms of violence and abuse, and supporting multi-agency and partnership approaches, ensuring the root causes of male VAWG are addressed.

Our priority areas of focus are:

- Commercial Sexual Exploitation (including women involved in selling or exchanging sex)
- Racially minoritised women's experiences of VAWG (including Female Genital Mutilation and harmful practices)
- Technologically facilitated abuse



Our Vision

The Women's Support Project's vision is of a Scotland free of male violence against women and girls.



Our Principles

The organisation works from a feminist perspective that views male violence as an abuse of power, rooted in gender inequality. Our work is informed by an understanding of links and overlaps between different forms of discrimination and oppression and how these contribute to male VAWG.

Addressing male VAWG includes not only supporting survivors but also challenging and dismantling the structural inequalities that perpetuate it.

The organisation is female-led and is committed to remaining female-led. Where direct support is provided, the organisation ensures dedicated female-only space for women and girls.

The WSP strives to be a fair and positive employer; to ensure diversity in relation to trustee, staff and volunteer recruitment; and to actively consult and involve service users, female survivors of male violence, staff, and volunteers as appropriate.



Our Approach

Understand

We use research and evidence from survivors of male violence to understand the interconnectedness of different forms of male VAWG and how they impact on women's lives. We work to identify areas of unmet need and to improve agency responses.

Challenge

We challenge practitioners and policy makers to consider and respond to all forms of violence against women (with a focus on those that are less considered), highlighting the fact that male VAWG is a continuum and that different forms are interlinked.

Capacity building

We work at national and local levels, building capacity across the statutory and third sectors. We work to develop practitioners' understanding of less considered forms of male VAWG and work to improve responses.

Amplify

We work with women with experience of all forms of male VAWG (with a focus on those that are less considered) to ensure their voices are heard at national and local levels.

Support

We aim to provide support and assistance to women and girls subjected to all forms of male VAWG.



Our Focus

The Women's Support Project is the lead national organisation focusing on Commercial Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). As an emerging theme impacting women in Scotland, we are directing focus and attention around tech facilitated VAWG.

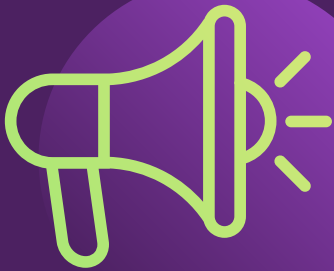
We are proud of the work we do, which ensures the needs of women affected by these issues are recognised.

EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

Our five-point framework
for the Women's Support
Project, including work
with CSE and FGM



1



WHAT WE DO

- Share knowledge and good practice through building networks, delivering training, developing briefings and bulletins, influencing policy makers, undertaking research, attending forums and meetings
- Amplify women's voices through the provision of opportunities to engage
- Raise awareness about CSE/FGM and the links with other forms of VAWG
- Keep CSE/FGM on the VAWG agenda
- Host and facilitate practitioner and service networks

2



WHO WE WORK WITH

- Frontline Practitioners
- Elected Members
- Policy Makers
- The Public
- The Media
- Women in the Sex Industry
- Multi-Agency Partnerships
- Researchers
- Women subjected to FGM
- Communities

3



WHAT THEY LEARN AND GAIN

- That CSE/FGM is a form of VAWG and that it is an issue that needs addressed across Scotland
- Greater awareness of CSE/FGM and women's needs – how this links with other forms of VAWG and the experiences of marginalised groups
- Stronger understanding of the practice and policy responses required to meet women's needs
- Opportunities to explore, with other professionals, their responsibility for addressing CSE/FGM and how to address this

4



WHAT THEY DO DIFFERENTLY

- Take action within their roles to improve women's experiences
- Become allies, ensuring CSE/FGM is considered at both local and national levels of government and in service responses
- Work with us to further amplify our work and the voices of women
- Our work is used to inform policy development, legislation and service responses

5

WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES THIS MAKE

- Women involved in CSE/subjected to FGM receive improved responses
- Practitioners are more confident and feel they have a framework of support to allow them to respond to women's needs
- A CSE as a form of VAWG lens is applied across a wide range of policy areas
- There is a more robust policy, practice and legislative framework informed by women's lived experience
- The links between CSE/FGM and other forms of VAWG are built into policy and service responses



WHAT WE DID IN NUMBERS



17

CSE Aware
training sessions
delivered

7

CSE webinars held,
including consent in
the sex industry
and CSE Easy
Read launch



22

CSE inputs at
conferences,
events, etc.



2,281

CSE event
participants



4

CSE practitioner
forums



3

CSE briefings published:
learning disability,
migrant women
and motherhood



3

policy responses:
Improvement Service on
substances and VAWG,
UN Rapporteur on VAWG and
motherhood, Justice
Committee on proposed
new legislation on
prostitution



10

people supported to
give evidence to the
Justice Committee on
proposed new legislation
on prostitution





63

national CSE meetings attended including 8 with the Scottish Government, 3 Joint Strategic Board and 6 with the National Violence against Women Network

879

unique users per month to the CSE Aware website



2

FGM Awareness sessions delivered

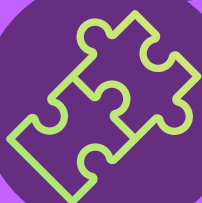


33

local CSE meetings attended including those with 12 different local violence against women partnerships

43

people attended a multi-agency FGM event



11

CSE bulletins published, with average of 1088 subscribers per issue



31

women supported to improve their digital skills



£26,064

in grants accessed to directly support women



2

memberships of national working groups related to FGM



72

women supported through Rights and Choices project



WHAT DIFFERENCE WE MADE

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OTHER WORK



RIGHTS AND CHOICES

What we did and who we worked with

We have delivered a Rights and Choices Project since 2018. From April to June 2025, the Rights and Choices project supported 72 migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women.

As project funding was due to end on June 30th, support focused on the immediate practical issues women were facing. This included securing grants to address financial insecurity. During this period, we successfully accessed £26,064 in funding, which went directly to women.

We also signposted and referred women to other organisations so they could continue to access support after the project ended.

We held 2 group sessions to celebrate the project and to recognise the impact the loss of the project would have on the women supported.

What was learned and gained

Women told us they were disappointed the project was ending and fearful that they wouldn't be able to access the support they got from the WSP elsewhere. This was due to the holistic approach the project took which meant women could access support to:

- build confidence
- combat isolation and loneliness
- address financial insecurity
- access college courses
- increase their knowledge about living in Glasgow
- address housing and other issues

The following quotes from women highlight the breadth of support received and what women gained from their involvement.

"I attended the financial literacy course, it was amazing. It helped me understand how to manage my finances more. The mental health sessions have been liberating."

"I really appreciated the WSP for the kindness, care and love towards me. With this group of women, I was always able to make a lot of friends. I was helped here with being able to attend training courses and they also helped me with my asylum process. I really appreciate all the love and care; it has helped me with my wellbeing."

"It was so helpful and supported me in many ways during difficult times. I needed support with money, clothing and letters. I was also supported with my mental state and self-confidence."

"I first came with a friend who recommended I go with her, that first day I came I was so happy to be among the people in the group. I have learned so much about Scotland with the W2G sessions. I also met a lot of people who are now my friends."

What difference it made

Women who were supported through the Rights and Choices project experienced increased levels of confidence and lower levels of isolation and loneliness. For many, this led to improved mental health as the following quotes highlight.

"I have been attending sessions with the WSP and they have really helped my mental health."

"My feeling is that I have been helped a lot with my mental health by being much less isolated attending these groups. I have also learned a lot of things from the WSP by the confidence building, yoga, computing and more. I've also met many ladies from different cultures in the diverse group. I have been helped greatly because there are things I couldn't do on my own but with the influence and support of these groups, I can now do with no difficulty. It was of a great help to me."

"It's been nice having groups of people in the same situation and being able to relate to others. Makes you feel less alone."

"WSP was very supportive and helpful, especially for women in difficult situations. Women who were isolated and experienced violence. WSP has changed my life for the positive, it gives me confidence."



FGM AWARE EVENT

What we did and who we worked with

In February 2026, to mark the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation, we hosted an FGM Aware event which included an input from the then Equalities Minister Kaukab Stewart MSP along with workshops on:

- Working within communities (British Red Cross and Women's Support Project)
- Working with Men (Community InfoSource)

- The Law/Protection Orders (Just Right Scotland)
- FGM and Maternity services (NHS Blossom Service)

The event was attended by 43 people from across a wide range of services including social work, housing and community organisations.

What was learned and gained

This event created a space that brought together organisations who have been tackling FGM for years with workers for whom the issue was new. Feedback from those who attended included:

"As an organisation we have limited knowledge on FGM but this event has shown us we have a lot to learn to make sure we are supporting women and communities we work with in the best way we can."

"This was an excellent opportunity for workers to get together and talk about partnership working to support women and communities affected by FGM."

"A very positive day showing that organisations want to work together to tackle FGM."

What difference it made

Civil servants who attended the event praised its format, prompting initial discussions about adapting the model for national delivery.

The event also helped shape the FGM Aware network's priorities for the coming year. It gave practitioners opportunities to strengthen their confidence and explore referral pathways for responding to FGM.

EASY READ RESOURCE

What we did and why

WSP has supported The Encompass Network to undertake annual snapshots looking at the backgrounds, issues and needs of women involved in CSE who access their services. The 2024 Snapshot highlighted the numbers of women involved in CSE who had learning disabilities.

Through CSE Aware we identified the gaps in frontline practitioners' knowledge around the specific risks and vulnerabilities experienced by women with learning disabilities who are involved in CSE.

Through consultation, workers recognised the need for resources with one commenting:

"Accessible resources (are needed) to work with the women and explain to them what's happening. ... From basic things to information about their rights, information about exploitation, information about what their options are in terms of emotional, practical support, advocacy."

WSP decided to develop a programme of work to address this gap. This led to the development of new targeted Easy Read resources.

Who we worked with

WSP consulted with The Scottish Commission for People with Learning Disabilities (SCLD) who had identified that:

"The types of gender-based violence and abuse which services encountered were mostly sexual assault, coercive control and commercial sexual exploitation."



We also worked with Central Advocacy Project, People First (Scotland) and specialist CSE services, conducting focus groups with workers who supported women. Through People First, women were involved in developing and refining the resource content and illustrations.

What was learned and gained

Through focus groups and surveys with workers, a number fed back that they had worked or thought they had worked with women in CSE but that there was a gap in awareness, information and training. This helped confirm that CSE is an issue that women with learning disabilities are affected by and increased awareness of women's needs and the support workers needed to improve their practice.

It was important that this resource was co-produced by women with learning disabilities, and their input was crucial in designing a resource that was accessible.

Women from People First who were involved in its development spoke at the resources launch and shared:

"We were delighted to be invited by the Women's Support Project to share our experience and give them feedback on how to make the easy read information better. It's great to be asked and for the opportunity to be appreciated and recognised."

"Everyone got really involved and shared their comments and we had a lot to say and we were told it was all very useful."

"We had the chance to make the information easier to understand by looking through each page and saying what we thought about the image and about the text. We offered support on what could be explained better and what images could look different. The Women's Support Project gave us questions to answer but we were able to add our own extra comments."

"We appreciated working together with The Women's Support Project. They have been very respectful of our opinions and of our needs as women with learning disabilities. Special thanks to their staff for keeping us up to date and being understanding of the time we need to do our work."

"Our partnership working on the document has been a good example of the value of close working relationship and of the learning that can happen on both sides. We hope more services and organisations will take on this good example and take on people with lived experience in their work."

The graphic designer WSP uses undertook research on illustrations and developed a new set to ensure the resource was engaging and accessible. Feedback received from women included:

"We like how clear, colourful and accessible it is."

"We think it is good having the text and the pictures as it makes it clearer. We would prefer to have the text at the top and then the images."

"It is easy to read because the sentences are short which is good."

What difference it made

As a result of this work there is a greater recognition of CSE as a form of VAWG that women with learning disabilities are especially vulnerable to, and that practice around this needs to improve.

Feedback from a member of the cross-party group on disabilities highlights the impact the resource has had.

"I just wanted to extend my thanks, for sharing your Easy Read resource on Commercial Sexual Exploitation and women with learning disabilities. It's a well-designed, accessible guide on such an important topic, and I can see it being a really valuable tool in supporting understanding among the women who use our service. It's exactly the kind of clear and thoughtful material that helps bridge understanding in a sensitive but empowering way."

Discussions have taken place with [Adult Support and Protection](#) leads to improve policy and practice with seminars planned for 2026.

WSP was contacted by academic researchers who are now planning to explore issues raised in our consultation process and briefing, including women's experiences of protection services.

The resource has been shared by [Learning Disability Today](#), a news website for families and professionals to help raise awareness of CSE and support them to engage with the issues.

Since its launch, the Easy Read resource has been among the top five most viewed pages on the CSE Aware website, highlighting its ongoing relevance.



EAST AYRSHIRE VAWP

What we did and who we worked with

In this period, we maintained our links with Violence Against Women Partnerships across Scotland. We engaged with 12 VAWPS and offered more targeted support to 4 partnerships. This included supporting partnerships to develop a deeper understanding of CSE, engaging with elected members, sharing and disseminating information and resources, delivering public education sessions and staff training.

In East Ayrshire, we built on work previously undertaken with the partnership. This included:

- The organisation of a CSE-focused conference for local adult support and protection leads through social work with 93 attendees. The 2025 conference covered issues such as routes into CSE, vulnerabilities, practice points around disclosure, with attendees applying their learning through case studies.
- In November 2025, WSP presented at the local 16 Days conference on how CSE helps create conditions that enable all forms of VAWG. The conference brought together 84 people from a range of sectors and organisations across the local authority area, including many men.



What was learned and gained

The input to the conference highlighted the role the sex industry plays in creating a context which allows VAWG to happen. It linked access to pornography and the sexual objectification of women with men's demand and how this creates the attitudes and beliefs that cause VAWG. This clearly highlighted that CSE is a form of VAWG and is an issue that needs to be addressed across Scotland at national and local levels.

Conference delegates were asked for their highlight or takeaway from the day; many featured the impact of the WSP contribution. These included:

- Pornography's impact: pervasive influence of the porn industry and its role in VAWG, not just on young people but on society and culture at large.
- Scale of the problem: the data presented on pornography use and the scope of the sex industry was described as "mind blowing" and "shocking".
- Data shock: the scale of the problem and the statistics presented were genuinely "surprising" and "overwhelming", but they spurred a desire for local action.
- Specific training needs: attendees specifically requested more training in complex areas such as domestic abuse, commercial sexual exploitation and trauma-informed practice.
- Increased knowledge: the day resulted in "increased knowledge and awareness", but the complexity of the issues necessitates continued learning.

What difference it made

The work we have delivered in this area has ensured that CSE and the needs of women involved have remained on the agenda, with local partners developing initiatives to ensure this issue remains visible. For example:

- A local public health practitioner developed and delivered an input on CSE at a national event, highlighting the previous and ongoing contribution of WSP to local understanding, work and new training opportunities.
- CSE has now been embedded into VAWG training delivered by local organisations with WSP providing ongoing guidance, resources and updated information.
- Organisations have started asking the question about CSE when they are working with women.

The Local Needs Assessment carried out in East Ayrshire highlighted that CSE was recognised as an issue being experienced by women in the area. Additionally, this showed that while the work that had been undertaken so far was positive and had improved practice, there were still gaps in responses to sexual exploitation and grooming within communities. There was a recommendation to continue work to raise awareness of commercial sexual exploitation (CSE) and embed routine enquiry in practice.



CSE TRAINING SESSIONS

What we did and who we worked with

CSE Aware developed and delivered a comprehensive awareness and capacity building programme through the year with 50 sessions delivered both face-to-face and online.

WSP engaged 2,281 people through presentations, online training, forums, conferences, workshops and webinars. Most sessions were organised and facilitated directly by CSE Aware. We also supported partner organisations by providing specialist contributions, presentations and bespoke training.



What was learned and gained

The awareness-raising and capacity-building programme had a range of impacts on participants linked to changes in levels of awareness, knowledge and confidence. Sessions in this period included CSE and motherhood, substance use, disclosures, safety, consent, the needs of migrant women and sexual violence.

Feedback from attendees highlights the impact these sessions had on increasing awareness, knowledge and confidence:

"These webinars and workshops have helped to solidify our organisational approach in a way that has been easy for them to understand and now I can see them fully on board with it."



"Really good training with good practical strategies to take forward to support women with safety planning. It was also realistic, acknowledging that all risk can never be eliminated completely."

"Made me learn and think about taboo subjects - but now am motivated to make a difference with boys and men, spread the word."

"The case studies were also very helpful to put the discussions we were having into context and gets you to really think about the safety measures available and the risks associated for woman selling sex."



What difference it made

This work has helped increase practitioners' confidence levels and provided them with frameworks and tools that support them to provide appropriate responses to women. This has included supporting practitioners to ask about women's involvement in CSE, identify risks and vulnerabilities, and support women in relation to these. The following quotes highlight how this has changed practice.

"The information I have learned today will definitely be adapted into my practice in respect to when I come across respond to circumstances of this nature. I will feel more confident knowing the different areas of CSE and what can be involved in this, what signs to look for a better knowledge at how to respond and support."

"I have asked more directly, and got really positive responses. While they did not disclose any involvement in transaction sex, it opened the doors to really honest, helpful and frank conversations about her situation."

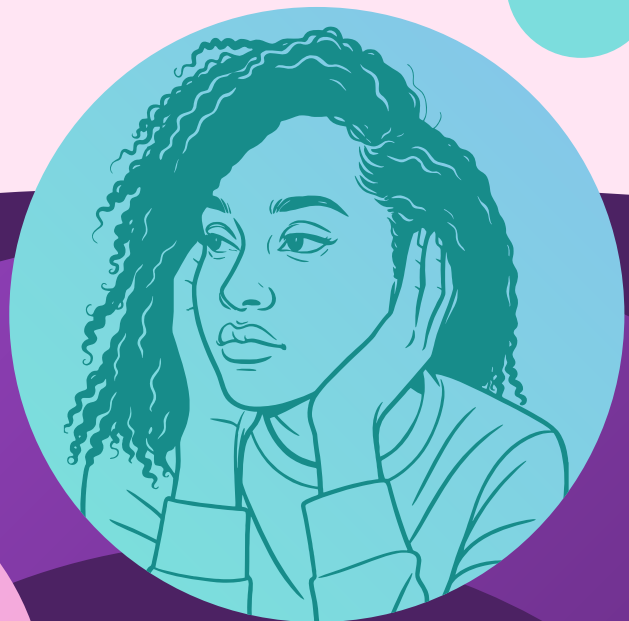
"I will be able to take away from this session a clearer understanding of what CSE is, what is legal and illegal in the country and also signs that i can use as a professional to pick up on the signals should my service use become or is involved in this."

It also encouraged staff to develop work in their own settings and contexts, as the following quotes highlight:

"I will be more equipped to answer questions around CSE in our own GBV training or add conversation points to our GBV training."

"I am taking all this learning back to review our own pathways, information and training for staff to ensure that we are all up to speed."

Individuals who attended the training followed up with requests for further bespoke training for their own organisations such as employability services and asylum/refugee support teams. This has helped ensure the links between CSE and these areas are recognised.



JUSTICE COMMITTEE

What we did and who we worked with

We supported 10 people with lived experience of CSE to feed into the evidence taken by the Justice Committee as part of their consultation and evidence gathering on the proposed members bill on changes to legislation on prostitution in Scotland.

We worked with the Scottish Parliament's Participation Unit to develop a trauma-informed approach that enabled survivors to give evidence safely to the committee. It was agreed that WSP would support people with lived experience of selling or exchanging sex to participate and have their voices heard.

We conducted recorded one-to-one interviews with nine women and one man, using pre-agreed questions. We then worked with each participant to refine and approve their responses. These were shared with the Participation Unit and formed the basis of a report that informed the committee.

We also supported survivors to write directly to MSPs, cabinet members and the First Minister, ensuring their views were heard.



What was learned and gained

Survivors described taking part in the high-level national consultation as a positive experience. They felt this helped them to share their thoughts on the proposed legislation and share how their experience had shaped their views.

Feedback from the survivors who participated included:

"I read through it all and you write it so good and I see my words and what I'm wanting to say in the statement."

"It is amazing how you write this so well and I think it's awesome and amazing the way it's written."

"I am very happy with the way it's written in the statement and can't wait for law to change now to be better."

"That's fab doll, amazing!!"

"Here's hoping there are positive changes coming through soon!"

The WSP worked closely with the participation unit at the Scottish Parliament who acknowledged the valuable contribution our work had in shaping engagement and gathering contributions from survivors.

"I realise this was a big ask and we appreciate it - and all the lovely feedback from the participants. Thank you so much again for your countless hours of work on this."



What difference it made

Survivors' contributions played an important role in informing the Justice Committee about the realities of women's lives in CSE in Scotland. The Committee held a private session to review and discuss the WSP-facilitated report. The report was referenced in evidence sessions and parliamentary debates.

The work highlighted to the Scottish Parliament the challenges and opportunities involved in supporting survivors to contribute safely to consultations on policy and legislation.

[Final Summary Report](#)

[CSE Aware Blog](#)

OTHER WORK

CSE AWARE published a series of bulletins in 2025, including consent, premature deaths and the voices of survivors.

We published a blog piece featuring an interview with an attendee at training and how they used their new learning on CSE.

We published new research highlighting the risks, vulnerabilities and needs of women with a learning disability involved in CSE.

We developed and launched a new suite of resources and information on consent within the context of CSE.

We researched, wrote and submitted a response to the UN Rapporteur on VAWG, focusing on the links between CSE and motherhood.

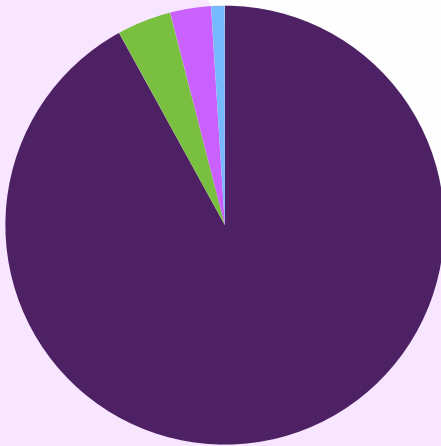
We published the Encompass Snapshot report 2024. This is the fourth snapshot report capturing the background, needs and experiences of women in CSE who access Encompass Network services.

We developed an illustrated case study of a young woman's background and journey into sexual exploitation, developed alongside a specialist service and frontline staff.



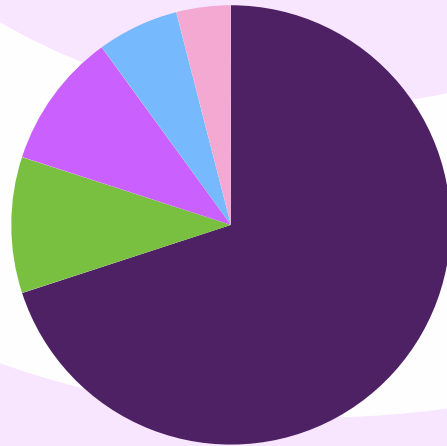
FUNDING OUR IMPACT

Income



- 92% ● Scottish Government
- 4% ● Donations
- 3% ● Glasgow City Council
- 1% ● Training and Events

Expenditure



- 70% ● Staff salaries
- 10% ● Project costs
- 10% ● Office costs
- 6% ● Financial support for women
- 4% ● Other staff costs

THANKS

We extend our deepest gratitude to the organisations and individuals who have generously supported the Women's Support Project throughout the year. Your contributions have been invaluable in helping us continue our vital work.





womenssupportproject.org.uk

Women's Support Project
Room 427, 4th Floor, Baltic Chambers,
50 Wellington Street, Glasgow G2 6HJ

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