

Scottish Women's Aid: Scotland's pioneering new Domestic Abuse Bill

Media Release
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Scottish Women's Aid have today (21st March) welcomed Scotland's pioneering new Bill on domestic abuse, launched yesterday by the First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Justice in Glasgow.

The new law is set to capture and criminalise abusive behaviours that have historically slipped through the gaps of legislation, and prevented victims accessing justice. Within the bill, emotional, financial, sexual and physical abuse, and coercive control are all included, finally bringing the law around domestic abuse into line with those who have experienced it.

Once the Bill goes through Holyrood, the new law will help to bridge the gap between experience and legislation, to make sure that police, prosecutors and the court system have the tools they need to deal with perpetrators of domestic abuse appropriately. Critically this has the potential to vastly improve victim-survivors access to justice.

Speaking about the launch of the bill, Marsha Scott of Scottish Women's Aid said:

“Women and children have told us for many years that the most traumatic impact of domestic abuse comes from the emotional abuse inflicted by perpetrators, but this is often the most difficult aspect to capture when it comes to the current law.

“One of the reasons we’re excited about this bill is that it creates space for a national conversation where we can talk about the horrific reality of all forms of domestic abuse – not just physical. The abuse of money, children, family, and of all the ties that are so important in our lives does damage that everyone in our communities and country suffer from.

“Gaps in legislation and in public understanding about what ‘counts’ as abuse have always been the biggest problem to improving Scotland’s response. This new Bill undoubtedly moves us forward and takes us one step closer to a Scotland where women and children live free from fear and violence.

“We are immensely proud to have helped to bring this Bill to being, and we should all be proud that Scotland is set to be amongst the first in the world to have a specific offence that captures and criminalises the horrific reality of all aspects of domestic abuse.”

(ENDS)