

EVERYDAY HEROES

A call for **action** on gender-based violence and gender equality from children and young people

The Everyday Heroes programme consulted children and young people across Scotland. It asked them:

- What would improve the journeys of young abuse survivors through services and the justice system?
- What could help improve societal attitudes and people's lives in relation to gender equality?

This briefing summarises their priorities for action:

- To improve services, justice and education responses.
- To tackle gender inequality and societal attitudes.
- To ensure sustained participation of young abuse survivors, children and young people in taking these actions forward.

125 Children and young people in engagement sessions

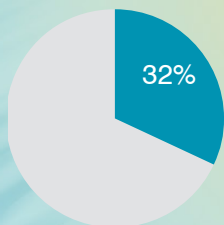
439 Young survey participants

71+ Young abuse survivors

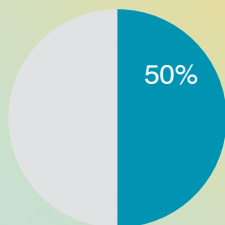
17 Organisations

32 Local Authorities

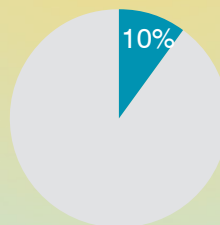
5 Partners



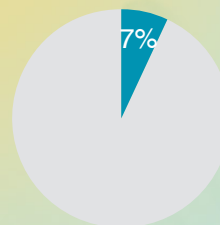
Gender Based Violence



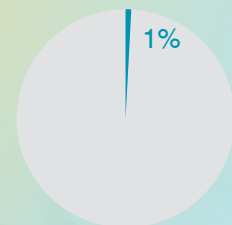
Domestic Abuse



Rape / Sexual Assault



Sexual Abuse



Forced Marriage

The Everyday Heroes programme was designed and coordinated by the Equally Safe Participation Partnership of young and adult experts from University of Edinburgh IMPACT project, Barnardo's Scotland, Scottish Women's Aid, Rape Crisis Scotland and the Scottish Youth Parliament.

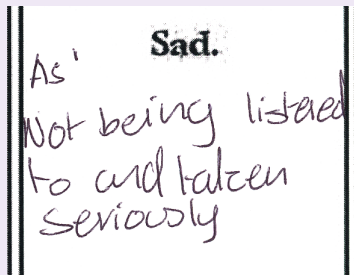
Funded by the Scottish Government to inform and influence Equally Safe action.

Everyday Heroes: Priorities for Action

Improve services

Young survivors' recommendations:

- Train Education, Police, Social Work and Health professionals in appropriate responses to children and young people experiencing gender-based violence as a matter of urgency.
- Improve the accessibility of services to children and young people experiencing gender-based violence and improve the information available to children, young people and professionals about these services.
- Increase the provision of welcoming, appropriate, well-resourced and supportive spaces within mainstream services and justice systems.
- Increase children and young people's access to specialist support and advocacy workers.
- Improve information sharing and children/young people's involvement in decision-making about their lives.



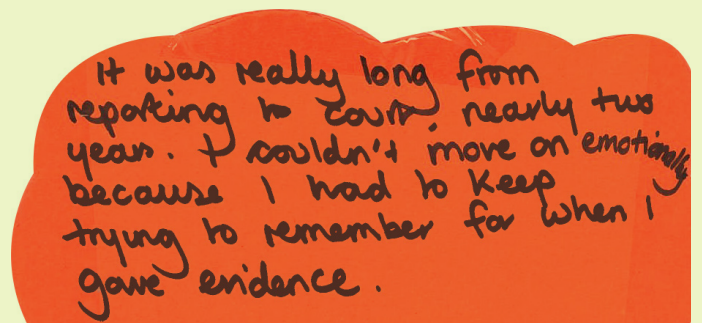
What young survivors told us

It's hard for young survivors of domestic and sexual abuse to speak out: when they do, they tell us services don't know how to respond – how to listen, respect and believe them. Combine this with a lack of clarity of relevant services, intimidating environments and a fear of privacy being maintained their recommendations to improve services are understandable, important and urgent. Improved universal services alongside specialist support and advocacy workers are imperative.

Improve justice responses

Young survivors' recommendations:

- Raise awareness, educate and run campaigns to reassure children and young people that they have a right not to suffer abuse; it is OK to report abuse and that they will be believed, listened to and supported.
- Better implement children and young people's right to have their views heard in matters affecting them, and for these views to be given due weight in decision-making within the justice system.
- Increase access to consistent, specialist support and advocacy workers throughout the justice process.
- Improve information and communications processes for children and young people throughout the justice journey.
- Make practical improvements to ensure the criminal justice system is child-friendly and to reduce re-victimisation and trauma.
- Provide robust training for professionals to improve early intervention and justice responses to gender-based violence.
- Hold the perpetrator to account for the abuse and ensure that young and adult victim/survivors do not feel to blame or on trial.
- Ensure that children and young people have choice and control over when, how and if they have contact with an abuser and that this is monitored and reviewed alongside the child or young person.



What young survivors told us

Reassure all children and young people that they have a right not to be abused, it's OK to report and they will be believed, listened to, supported and kept informed. Justice professionals need to ensure young survivors comfort, views, rights and choices are central at every stage. The justice journey needs to be quicker, safer and less traumatic; consistent support/advocacy at all stages would help with this.

Everyday Heroes: Priorities for Action

Tackle gender inequality and societal attitudes

Children, young people and young survivors' recommendations:

- Tackle gendered inequalities in gender, domestic and caring roles and relationships in homes, families and communities.
- Reduce sexualization, objectification and idealised representations of people in advertising, fashion, media/ social media and increase diversity.
- Reduce inequalities associated with gender and age in the workplace, and in routes to the workplace, including occupation type, pay, status and childcare.
- Increase women's representation in politics and reflect diversity.
- Promote engagement of a diverse range of young people in politics, including policy and legal change.



What children and young people told us

Society needs to understand the impact of gender inequality on the health, safety and wellbeing of girls, boys and non-binary children and young people. For many young people, dealing with inequality and prejudice while, at the same time, trying to 'be who they want to be' can be traumatic. Bullying, harassment, racism, violence, abuse and discrimination are just some of the very real issues raised, especially for girls and LGBT young people.

Improve education responses

Children, young people and young survivors' recommendations:

- The Education system should work alongside children and young people to address Gender Inequality and Gender-Based Violence (GBV).
- Tackle gender bias in schools, improve schools' approaches to gender norms, stereotypes, roles, attitudes and ensure equal access to subjects, sport and space.
- Embed Gender Equality & Gender-Based Violence Education in PSE from age 3-18.
- Train all teachers on Gender Equality & Gender-Based Violence (Nursery-University, from qualification to CPD).
- Improve Education's response to children and young people who have experienced gender-based violence.

Dear....., One thing I want you to change is....

that was more protection in schools for children who are being abused/neglected

#equallysafe

What all projects told us

Children and young people - young survivors, pupils, students - across the services, justice and gender equality projects, felt that improving the education response was key to tackling gender-based violence and gender inequality. They felt the whole school/ university needed to promote gender equality, tackle the widespread gender discrimination they were experiencing and provide a space with specialist workers to help survivors safely disclose abuse. All education staff needed to be trained on, and open to, disclosures of abuse.

Everyday Heroes should be part of the action!!

Ensure participation

Everyday Heroes young experts felt strongly that children and young people should participate in taking the recommendations forward. It was particularly important that young survivors of gender-based violence were involved and recognised as experts.

They felt empowered through this programme, in 'speaking truth to power', and wanted more dialogue with people in power. They wanted involvement in the action.

They also wanted to make sure that change happens. They felt they had the right to participate in decisions that affected their lives, at an individual AND national policy level. They strongly believed they could and should help to make Scotland equal and safe.

” I mean it's important for us to be involved. You don't know what survivors need until you ask them.

” Sheriffs and lawyers should be involved in focus groups with children to identify changes needed to the system and to help decide how best to listen to children's views. Support agencies could help facilitate this.

Recommendations from Everyday Heroes young experts

- Involve children and young people in every action, review, research and evaluation that affects their lives.
- Ensure young survivors can participate in improving all services.
- Include children, young people and young survivors in reforming education.
- Involve children and young people with lived experience of gender-based violence in improving the justice system through direct dialogue, a justice young expert group and co-developing information and resources.
- Ensure children and young people participate in Equally Safe action on gender inequality and gender-based violence and set up a National Youth Commission on Tackling Gender Inequality.
- Co-develop a national Gender Equality and Gender-Based Violence Online Interactive Platform with children and young people and launch social media campaigns from it.

” Young people could be invited to share their views on the subject at meetings in government and a yearly national competition among Scottish schools for a group of students to come up with a new initiative.

Thank you and more information

Thank you to all the children and young people involved and to their support and advocacy workers without whom this would not have been possible.

Visit everydayheroes.sps.ed.ac.uk for further information: detailed reports on services, justice and gender inequality; child and young person-friendly reports and an illustration gallery from the students at Edinburgh College of Art, inspired by the words and imagery of young participants.

For more information on Equally Safe see: <https://blogs.gov.scot/equally-safe/>.

Contact claire.houghton@ed.ac.uk for information about the Everyday Heroes programme who will co-ordinate a response from partners.

This report is funded by the Scottish Government and is the result of a wonderful collaboration between the following partners:



THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH

