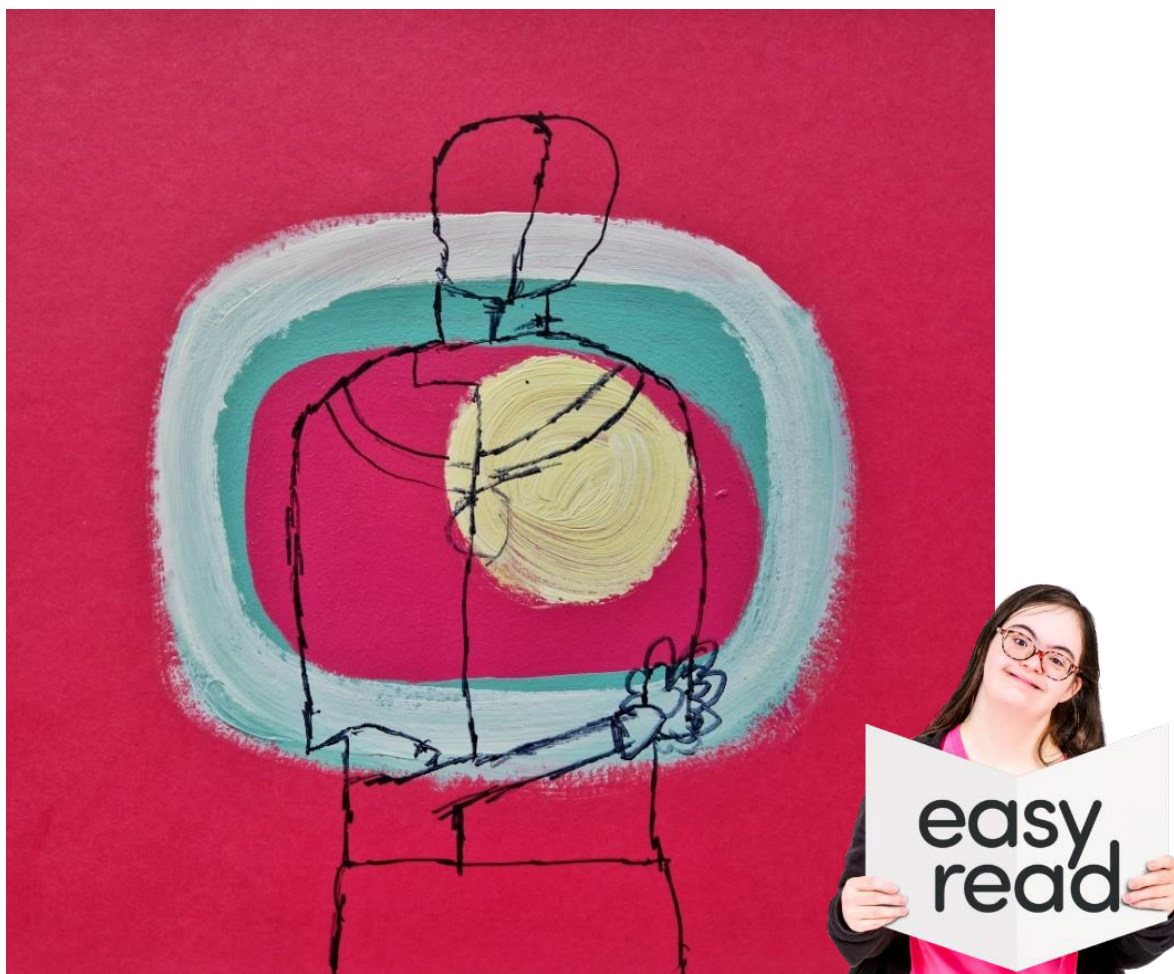


Summary Report



Unequal, Unheard, Unjust: But Not Hidden Anymore.

Women with Learning Disabilities Experience of Gender-Based Violence in Scotland.



DELIVERING
EQUALLY SAFE



IN SOLIDARITY & HOPE

What this report is about

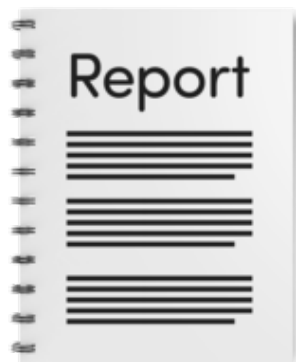


The Scottish Commission for People with Learning Disabilities and People First (Scotland) have been looking at how women with learning disabilities experience gender-based violence in Scotland.

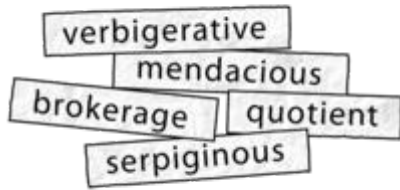


The Scottish Commission for People with Learning Disabilities is also known as SCLD.

The report explains



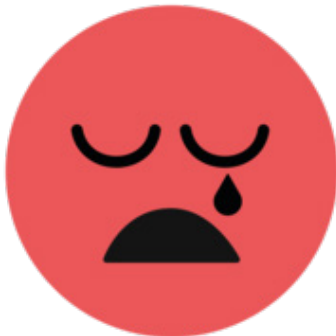
- what we already know about women with learning disabilities and gender-based violence
- what we did about it
- what we found out
- what needs to happen next.



Some of the words in the report can be difficult to understand. These are in **bold**.



There is a list called 'difficult words' at the end of the report to tell you what they mean.



Reading the report could make you feel upset.



There is a list of people who can help you at the end of the report.

What we know



Gender-based violence is an abuse of women's **human rights**.



Most, but not all, gender-based violence is done to women and girls by men and boys.



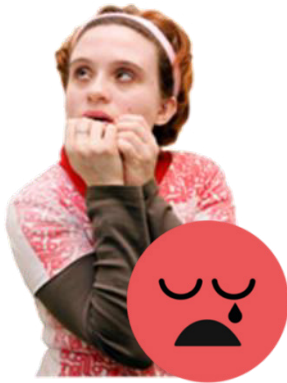
In this report gender-based violence means a person being treated badly or hurt because they are a woman.



It is against the **law** for men to be violent towards women and girls in Scotland.



The Scottish Government have made **policies** and **laws** to protect all women and girls in Scotland from gender-based violence and abuse.



Abuse is when someone says or does something to hurt you or make you feel bad.



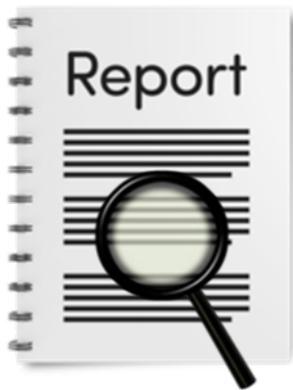
The Scottish Government know that women with learning disabilities experience gender-based violence and abuse more than other women in Scotland.



We believe the Scottish Government has to make **policies** to protect and support women and girls with learning disabilities who have been abused.



What we did



We read lots of reports about women and girls with learning disabilities' experiences of gender-based violence.



We asked women with learning disabilities about their experiences of gender-based violence and abuse.



We asked people that support women who have experienced gender-based violence about their experiences of supporting women with learning disabilities.



We asked all the Councils in Scotland and the Scottish Government about how they use the **Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) 2007 Act** to protect women with learning disabilities who have experienced gender-based violence and abuse.

What we found out

Here is what women with learning disabilities said



Women with learning disabilities told us about severe sexual, emotional, physical and financial abuse and neglect.



All of the women we spoke to had experienced different types of abuse from different people.

This included family members, support staff, boyfriends, husbands, and people they met online.



Women with learning disabilities told us they sometimes did not report gender-based violence because they did not understand what it was or that they were being abused.



The women we spoke to told us not having support from an **appropriate adult** made it harder for them to report abuse to the police.



The women we spoke to said their experiences of getting support for gender-based violence were not good, especially when they tried to get **justice**.



They felt no one believed them when they reported abuse.



The women we spoke to sometimes did not report the abuse because they were afraid that **Adult Support and Protection** might be used and they might have their children taken away from them.



The women we spoke to told us they needed accessible information on what gender-based violence is and how to get support for it.



The women we spoke to said it helped them to work with other women with learning disabilities who have experienced gender-based violence, and this helped them to stand up for their **human rights**.

Here is what the people that support women who have experienced gender-based violence said



Women with learning disabilities reported these the most:

- Sexual assault. Sexual assault is when someone touches your body in a sexual way when you do not want them to.



- Coercive control. This means getting someone to do things they do not want to do, or stopping someone doing things they do want to do.



- Commercial sexual exploitation. This is when someone tricks you into having sex or sharing pictures of your private parts with other people, for money. This can happen in private or on the internet.



The people who abused women with learning disabilities were family members, boyfriends, husbands, people pretending to be boyfriends, support workers and men who sexually exploited women for money.



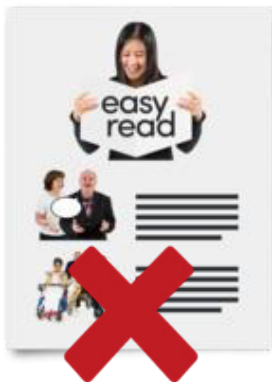
Being sexually exploited is when someone tricks you into having sex.



Service providers told us that women with learning disabilities find it hard to get support for gender-based violence.



This is because some service providers don't understand what a learning disability is, and some don't understand what gender-based violence is.



Service providers also told us that support was not accessible, and women with learning disabilities found it hard to trust people.



Service providers told us that women with learning disabilities find it hard to get **justice** for gender-based violence.



Service providers told us that women with learning disabilities found it difficult to understand the **justice** system and to get support to report **crimes**.



Service providers told us that women with learning disabilities felt they were not believed or taken seriously.



Women who experience gender-based violence normally get support from women's support projects, advocacy or **MARAC**.



A **MARAC** is a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference. This is a meeting where information is shared, and a plan is made to keep women who are at high risk of domestic abuse safe.



Service providers also told us that women with learning disabilities find it hard to access the same support as other women.



Service providers highlighted that women with learning disabilities who have experienced gender-based violence are often referred to Adult Support and Protection.



Services providers told us about what needs to happen to make support and **justice** accessible for women with learning disabilities who have experienced gender-based violence.

This includes:



- Education about relationships.



- Challenging negative **stereotypes**.



- Access to **trauma-informed care**.

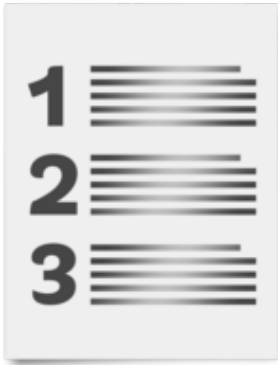


- Better understanding of learning disability, gender-based violence and how to make services accessible.



Service providers said they need more money and resources to support women who have experienced gender-based violence.

What needs to happen next



Here is a list of our recommendations about what needs to happen next.



Scottish Government to look into a national **advocacy service** to support women with learning disabilities who have experienced gender-based violence to access **justice**.



National Human Rights Institutes to develop and deliver human rights training to everyone working to stop gender-based violence. This should be done in partnership with women with learning disabilities.



Scottish Government and partners, including women with learning disabilities, to look at how services collect information about gender-based violence against women and girls with learning disabilities.



The Scottish Government and partners should follow the rules of the:

- **United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**
- **Istanbul Convention**



The Strategic Review of Violence Against Women and Girls Services in Scotland to consider the recommendations of women with learning disabilities who have experienced gender-based violence.



Scottish Government to make it a law that every woman in Scotland has access to Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs).



Scottish Government and partners to look at how **Adult Support and Protection** and **MARAC** are used to support women with learning disabilities who have experienced gender-based violence.



Scottish Government and other public agencies to involve women with learning disabilities who have experienced gender-based violence in their decisions.



Justice services, including Police Scotland to train their staff on how to work with women with learning disabilities who have experienced **crimes** of gender-based violence.



Scottish Government and **Delivering Equally Safe** to support the use of an **accessibility audit tool** to help make support services accessible to women with learning disabilities.



Scottish Government and the third sector to run a campaign on how women and girls with learning disabilities can get support for gender-based violence.



Scottish Government, Education Scotland, Councils and Charities to review Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood Education in schools for people with additional support needs.



Scottish Government to research the commercial sexual exploitation of women with learning disabilities in Scotland.



Scottish Government to ensure future **policies** include the views and recommendations of women with learning disabilities.



Scottish Government and **National Human Rights Institutions** to look into cases where women with learning disabilities who have experienced gender-based violence have had their children taken away from them.

Difficult Words

Accessibility Audit Tool	This information will help gender-based violence services become accessible and welcoming to women with learning disabilities.
Advocacy service	Advocacy services support people to have their say.
Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007	The Act is used to protect adults at risk. Adults at risk are people over 16 years old who are at risk of harm and cannot protect themselves because of their disability.
Appropriate Adult	Appropriate Adults are people that can help you understand what the police are saying and can help the police to understand what you want to say too.
Crime	A crime is something that is against the law.
Delivering Equally Safe	Equally Safe is the Scottish Government's plan to end violence against women and girls.

Human Rights	Human Rights are rules that protect people. Everyone has human rights. A right is something you are allowed to do.
Istanbul Convention	When countries sign up to the Istanbul Convention, they agree to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • end violence against women • protect women from violence • arrest people who are violent towards women and take them to court
Justice	This is when people are treated in a way which is fair and protects their human rights.
Law	Laws are rules created by the government which tell people what they are allowed to do and what they are not allowed to do.
National Human Rights Institutes	These are organisations who protect and promote human rights.
Policies	A policy is a plan by the government on how they want to act about a certain subject and what laws they want to pass on that subject.
Public services	These include government departments, schools, hospitals, the police and councils.

Stereotypes	Stereotypes are when people think that everyone in a group are the same. For example that all people with learning disabilities are the same.
Strategic Review of Violence Against Women and Girls Services in Scotland	The Scottish Government are looking at how to give money to support services to make sure that high quality, accessible services are available to women, children and young people experiencing any form of violence against women and girls.
Trauma-informed care	<p>Some services are starting to follow an approach called trauma-informed care. If a service says it is trauma-informed, this means all staff should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand how trauma can affect people, including how mental health problems can be reactions to trauma • ask sensitively about past trauma, and offer support if you disclose it • be aware of the potential for services to cause harm if delivered without trauma awareness • understand your strengths and recognise what has helped you survive and cope • be trustworthy, honest and include you in decisions about your care.

United Nations
Convention on the

An agreement that lots of countries have made
about the rights of people with disabilities.

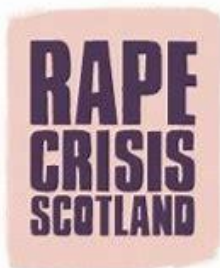
Rights of Persons
with Disabilities

Countries that agree to follow the Convention
now have to do what it says.

Here are some numbers that you can phone if you or someone you know needs help



If you feel scared of your partner, or are worried about someone you know, get in touch with Scotland's 24-hour Domestic Abuse and Forced Marriage Helpline on **0800 027 1234**



If you have been raped or sexually assaulted, get in touch with Rape Crisis Scotland on **0808 801 0302**
Or Text: 07537 410 027



For legal or advocacy information and support, get in touch with the Scottish Women's Rights Centre on **08088 010 789**



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Email: admin@sclد.co.uk