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ZERO

TOLERANCE

Safe,
equal,
free

A manifesto for an equal Scotland
free from men's violence against
women and girls

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We all want to live in safety, freedom, and fairness. And most of us want that not just for ourselves and our loved ones, but also for our wider communities, and even for those we've never met.

It's these shared values that have helped us take strides towards equality in Scotland –but there is further to go.


Men's violence against women and girls continues to cause great harm:

- In 2024–2025, Police Scotland recorded more than 40 sexual crimes per day (Scottish Government, 2025a) – and 1 in 3 girls aged 13 to 17 years old report experiencing some form of sexual violence (Scottish Government, 2018).
- Domestic abuse is on the rise, with Scottish Police recording more than 174 incidents of domestic abuse a day, of which 81% of incidents involved a female victim and a male perpetrator (Scottish Government, 2024a).
- Such violence especially harms women and girls of colour, disabled women and girls, LGBTQI+ women and girls, migrant and refugee women and girls, younger and older women, and women experiencing poverty (Zero Tolerance, forthcoming; Nevens et al., 2024).

We are failing to keep women and girls safe and fulfil their human rights.

But there's a solution. By addressing the roots of men's violence against women and girls – in our social structures, our culture, and our attitudes – we can build a Scotland where everyone can thrive. A Scotland where violence is never tolerated, where we are confident of our safety, and where we're all – regardless of gender – free to be our true selves and live full lives.

Be the party to build a Scotland free from men's violence against women and girls by investing in primary prevention.



Help us break free from limiting gender stereotypes and shift harmful attitudes about masculinity.

Ready solutions that parties can deliver now

Together, we can end men's violence against women and girls. As Scotland's experts in ending this violence, we've come up with five recommendations that you can commit to in the 2026–2030 parliamentary term to make strides in preventing men's violence against women and girls.

1. Expert-led prevention campaigns

Everybody in Scotland should be free to be themselves, whatever their gender. But rigid gender norms, including outdated ideas about how men should be, are widespread. Stereotypes of masculinity harm men and women of all ages and backgrounds. The pressure to be strong, competitive, and stoic isolates men and makes anger one of the few ways it's acceptable for them to express emotion.

We have developed messaging proven to shift men's attitudes and expand our society's understanding of normal, healthy, and human ways to be. We call on parties to commit to a long-term public campaign, backed by evidence, to help us **break free from limiting gender stereotypes** and **shift harmful attitudes** about masculinity – so that everyone can live more fully and freely as themselves.


2. Community prevention programmes for men and boys

Most of us care about having fulfilling relationships, positive mental health, and a world that's safe for everyone. But outdated masculine stereotypes can pressure men to behave in ways that are harmful to themselves and others.

Creating safe spaces for men and boys to openly discuss masculinity, gender, and relationships can free them from the pressures of restrictive gender norms, and at the same time increase their empathy and respect for women and girls (Duffy et al., 2024). We are calling for **community-based prevention programmes with men and boys** to be piloted, to create these safe spaces that enhance men's and boys' wellbeing and prevent harm and violence against women and girls.

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We call for timely statutory education on relationships and sex for young people.

3. Statutory relationships and sex education

All children and young people in Scotland should be able to access accurate, inclusive information about healthy relationships. This allows them to make responsible choices, form meaningful connections, and be free to be themselves.

Many young people in Scotland are not able to access education on sex and relationships. Disabled girls and young women of all faiths are particularly at risk of being denied access to vital information (Scottish Government, 2025b). Current programmes are not adequately meeting LGBTQI+ young people's needs (LGBT Youth Scotland, 2023). This exposes young people to risky decision-making, worse health outcomes, unplanned pregnancies, lack of respect in personal relationships, and a poor understanding of consent (Public Health England, 2019; Scottish Government, 2024b; RSHP Scotland, 2025).

We call for timely **statutory education on relationships and sex** for young people, rooted in a **whole-school approach** to equality and human rights.

4. Follow-through on promises

Most of us want to see a just, equal Scotland where everyone can thrive. Building that Scotland means making responsible policy choices, and ensuring that everything the government does supports gender equality.

The Equally Safe Strategy, and talk of ambitious legislation such as the Misogyny Bill and the Human Rights Bill, means little without action. Women and girls need real change, not just promises. And we need change now.

Close the gap between policy and practice:

- fully implement commitments on women's equality
- fund the women's sector sustainably
- centre the needs of women who need this work most: disabled and minority ethnic women and girls (Zero Tolerance, 2023).

5. Regulation of online platforms

Everyone should be free to explore and enjoy the online world safely. But violence against women thrives online, and far-right groups use social media algorithms to rapidly spread their misogynistic messages, which justify and incite harm against women and girls, to men and boys (Duffy et al., 2024).

We call on parties to recognise radical misogyny as a form of extremism, and **work with UK and international partners to regulate online platforms** and tech companies who profit from allowing online violence to thrive. We can all work together to build a peaceful, equal, and just digital future.

As Scotland's experts on preventing men's violence against women and girls, we at Zero Tolerance are excited to work with you on these solutions to create a safer and more equal Scotland.

**Together, we can end men's violence
against women and girls.**

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