



Why do we accept violence against women as something that 'just happens'?

Recent campaigns around violence against women in Scotland have reminded us of the enormous scale and the debilitating effect male violence has on women and children. Others have brought home the message that there is no excuse for rape and sexual assault.

We're repeatedly told that such violence is unacceptable.

So why do domestic abuse statistics in Scotland remain so high and why are prosecutions for rape at an all time low? Engender are asking - Does our culture accept violence against women as inevitable?

Our 'Cause and Consequence' materials argue that at the root of such violence is the unequal power relations in our culture. Engender believes that the undervaluing and undermining of women is so all encompassing – social, political, cultural, sexual – that we don't notice it, don't question it and certainly don't challenge it. Our failure to tackle this inequality leads to Chicken and Egg on a global scale – violence against women is a cause and consequence of women's inequality. And women's inequality is a cause and consequence of violence against women.

Our focus on protection, provision and prevention measures to tackle violence against women is right and necessary. But thinking about prevention has failed to address the foundation of gendered violence – inequality.

We reframe violence against women as much more than many single acts of violence carried out by misguided individual men but as the product of cultural attitudes supported by historical and pervasive inequality. Helping all of us in Scotland to change the way we think

about violence against women is a big ask.... but we are asking, and we have created some new materials to promote the debate.

#### NOTES TO EDITORS

**Engender** is a membership organisation that works in Scotland and Europe on an anti-sexist agenda to increase women's power and influence and make visible the impact of sexism on women, men and society. It provides information, analysis, training, advice and networking to those people, organisations and institutions who seek to achieve equality and justice.

**Cause and Consequence** materials were produced in April 2008. You can view the leaflet and postcards here:

[\*\*Cause & Consequence Leaflet\*\*](#)

[\*\*Cause & consequence Postcards\*\*](#)

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