

Drop in number of domestic abuse incidents recorded by police



The number of domestic abuse incidents recorded by police has fallen in the past year, figures show.

Official statistics show a 3% drop in the figures for Scotland, from 59,882 in 2014-15 to 58,104, the lowest number recorded since 2010-11.

Justice Secretary Michael Matheson said: “We welcome the drop in the number of domestic abuse incidents recorded, against a backdrop of an overall fall in recorded crime, and we remain confident that more victims are refusing to stay quiet about what is happening to them.

“I believe this is in no small part down to better understanding of this unacceptable behaviour and the support services available for those in need.

“Earlier this month we announced an extra £665,000 to expand advice and support services for victims of gender-based violence, through the Scottish Women’s Rights Centre. We have also invested £7.2 million over three years (2015-18) to ensure court waiting times for domestic abuse cases are prioritised, and created a new domestic abuse aggravation.

“We are now preparing new legislation to tackle domestic abuse which takes the form of controlling and coercive behaviour, widening our laws to reflect the damage of this kind of psychological abuse.”

Mhairi McGowan, from the independent domestic abuse advocacy service ASSIST, said: “There has been huge progress, but there

is still a lot to do before all victims are safe and domestic abuse is eradicated.

“In particular, I hope that the proposed new offence covering emotional and psychological abuse will be introduced, so that victims who are currently suffering in silence will be able to come forward and report what is happening.”

Assistant Chief Constable Mark Williams said: “These figures illustrate the complexity and scale of the issue but domestic abuse isn’t about statistics or numbers alone; it’s about the impact it has on vulnerable victims, their families and our communities.

“We work very closely with a wide range of partners, and dedicate significant resources to try and prevent offending taking place in the first instance. Where abuse is reported we work hard to support victims at every stage and we relentlessly pursue those who offend and think it is acceptable to carry out abuse.

“It is simply unacceptable that victims suffer, often behind closed doors in their homes where they should feel safe and secure.

“If you are a victim of domestic abuse, I would encourage you to come forward and report it. We will listen to you, you will be treated sensitively and professionally and we will ensure you have access to the right support throughout.”