



**Report submitted by Iceland
pursuant to Article 68, paragraph 4
of the Council of Europe Convention
on Preventing and Combating Violence
against Women and domestic violence
(1st thematic evaluation round)**

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Report from the Government of Iceland on the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence

First thematic evaluation round: “Building
trust by delivering support,
protection and justice”

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Report from the Government of Iceland on the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence First thematic evaluation round: “Building trust by delivering support, protection and justice”

dmr@dmr.is

<https://www.stjornarradid.is/raduneyti/domsmalaraduneytid/>

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1. Introduction

The Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (hereinafter referred to as the Istanbul Convention) was ratified by the Government of Iceland in April 2018 and entered into force in August of the same year. The baseline evaluation procedure took place in 2021-2022 and in December 2025 Iceland reported on the implementation of the recommendations.

This report describes the Government of Iceland's respond to the questionnaire prepared by GREVIO for the first thematic evaluation round, with the theme of building trust by delivering support, protection and justice.

The report was prepared by the Ministry of Justice with input from relevant authorities including the Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education and Children, Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Culture, Innovation and Higher Education, the Directorate of Equality, National Agency for Children and Families, Directorate of Health, Directorate of Immigration, University of Iceland, University of Akureyri, National Commissioner of the Icelandic Police (hereinafter NCIP), Landspítali University Hospital, Akureyri Hospital, Judicial Administration and Iceland's emergency helpline 112.is.

Other information was obtained from the websites of NGOs and institutions referred to in the report.

The Icelandic government has emphasised working systematically on actions against gender-based violence and considers combating gender-based violence a core element of achieving gender equality. Following the baseline evaluation report, a range of measures to enhance policy coherence and ensure fuller compliance with the Istanbul Convention have been introduced and adopted. This has been done by reviewing and amending legislation with specific action plans. Additionally, actions against violence have been mainstreamed into major parliamentary resolutions and national action plans. Appropriations for measures addressing gender-based violence have been increased across public institutions. Long-term funding agreements have been concluded with specialized support services for victims of gender-based violence, as well as with programmes targeting perpetrators of violence. Furthermore, grant funding has been provided to civil society organizations delivering support services to victims of gender-based violence, contributing to the sustainability and accessibility of these services.

Several reforms, reviews and reports have been conducted in recent years in the field of gender-based and sexual violence, inter alia to respond to observations made by GREVIO in the first baseline evaluation report.

Key measures include, but are not limited to:

- National Programme against gender-based violence against women 2026-2030
- Gender Equality Action programme for 2026-2029
- Prevention Plan against Gender-based and Sexual Violence among Children and Young People 2026–2030
- Action Programme on LGBTQI+ issues 2026-2029
- Action Plan for the Handling of Sexual Offences 2023-2025
- Long term service agreements with organizations that service victims of gender-based violence
- Increased funding for the police

Part I: Changes in comprehensive and co-ordinated policies, funding and data collection in the area of violence against women and domestic violence

Article 7: Comprehensive and co-ordinated policies

Since the baseline evaluation the Icelandic government has implemented a range of measures aimed at strengthening comprehensive policies across the areas of prevention, protection and prosecution. These Measures include legislative amendments, action plans and strategic framework. Collectively, they contribute to a more integrated and holistic approach to preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence.

The platform for the Coalition Government of the Social Democratic Alliance, the Reform Party and the People's Party from 2024 states that "Strong action will be taken against organized crime, cybercrime, human trafficking and gender-based violence. In tandem with this, other aspects of the justice system will be strengthened to ensure prompt and secure handling of cases." In March 2025, the gender equality portfolio was moved to the Ministry of Justice; the Department of Equality was transferred along with the portfolio and is now located within the Ministry of Justice. Since September the same year the Department of Equality has been responsible for the portfolio for gender-based violence and human trafficking due to the synergies between the portfolios.

Statutory amendments

Act amending the Act on Restraining Orders and Expulsion, No. 43/2026¹

An act amending the Act on restraining orders and expulsion from home was adopted in April 2026. The aim of the Act is to strengthen the legal position of victims of domestic violence and stalking. It authorizes the police, subject to certain conditions, to use electronic monitoring with location-tracking devices, such as ankle bracelets, in conjunction with a decision on a restraining order or eviction from the home.

Act amending various acts concerning co-operation and supervision in the labour market, No. 105/2024²

At the beginning of 2026, new legislation entered into force to combat criminal activity in the labour market, including human trafficking. The legislation establishes a co-operative framework for supervisory authorities to ensure compliance with laws, regulations and collective bargaining agreements.

Act amending the Act on Borders, the Police Act and the Customs Act (passenger information for police and customs authorities), No. 36/2025³

In June 2025, further legislative amendments were adopted to allow airlines and other passenger carriers to share passenger information with Icelandic authorities. This strengthens the ability of law enforcement to obtain and analyse data — an essential tool in preventing and investigating serious crime, including human trafficking and organized crime.

¹ [Act on Restraining Orders and Expulsion No. 43/2026.](#)

² [Act amending various Acts concerning cooperation and supervision in the labour market, No. 105/2024](#)

³ [Act amending the Act on Borders, the Police Act and the Customs Act \(passenger information for police and customs authorities\), No. 36/2025](#)

Act amending the Media Act, No. 27/2024 (EEA rules, audiovisual media, etc.)⁴

A bill amending the Media Act, No. 38/2011 (EEA rules, audiovisual media etc.) was adopted as law in 2024. It entrusted the already existing Media Commission with monitoring video sharing services under Icelandic jurisdiction. Video-sharing platforms refer to websites, applications and certain social media that transmit video content, whether it originates from the medium itself or is user-generated content.

The Media Commission's role is to monitor whether video sharing services have adopted appropriate and sufficient measures to protect the public from harmful content covered by the Media Act. According to Article 36. b of the Media Act, video-sharing services shall take measures to protect the public from content, user-generated content and commercial messages that incite violence or hatred against a group or individuals from a group on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, language, political opinions, life or religious beliefs, genetic characteristics, nationality, social class, cultural, economic, social or other status in society, cf. subparagraph a. Furthermore, to take appropriate measures to protect the public from content, user-generated content and commercial messages that incite conduct that is considered a criminal offense, especially incitement to terrorism and conduct related to racial hatred and xenophobia, cf. subparagraph b.

These measures may include, for example, systems that allow users to flag or report unlawful content, tools for identifying commercial messages, age-verification and parental-control systems, procedures for handling reports, measures to promote media literacy, and mechanisms for informing users about the outcome of reports they have submitted.

Act amending the Healthcare Practitioners Act, No. 34/2012 (reporting domestic violence)⁵

A bill amending the Act on Healthcare Practitioners concerning the reporting domestic violence was adopted as law in May 2023. With the adoption of the Act, healthcare practitioners are authorized to report domestic violence to the police at the patient's request. In such cases, the patient's general personal information, information about the patient's injuries, as well as other information related to the violence and the patient's situation may be passed on to the police where considered necessary for the police to take appropriate measures to ensure the necessary protection and support for the patient. It is necessary to increase the flow of information from the health system to the police in these cases and improve co-operation to ensure protection and support for the victim and reduce the likelihood of repeated violence. The objective of the amendments is to satisfy more clearly obligations that Iceland has undertaken under Istanbul Convention.

Act amending the General Penal Code, No. 29/2022 (child sexual abuse material, hate speech, discrimination etc.)⁶

The bill of the Minister of Justice amending the General Penal Code, Act No. 29/2022, concerning child sexual abuse material (CSAM), hate speech, discrimination etc. was passed by Icelandic parliament *Althingi* (hereinafter Althingi) in June 2022. The main changes were firstly, that in determining punishment, cf. Art. 70 of the Act, consideration shall be given to whether the offence can be attributed to specified aspects concerning the victim personally, therefore making the offence a type of hate crime. In addition, as a general rule, punishment should be more severe if an offence is committed in the presence of a child under 15 years of age. Secondly, and closely related to the first point, the hate speech provision of Art. 233a of the General Penal Code was expanded to include ethnic origin unequivocally and to provide protection for people with disabilities and people with atypical sexual characteristics comparable to that of other groups considered to need special protection. Thirdly, a similar amendment was made to the first paragraph of Art. 180 of the General Penal Code so that the same groups enjoy

⁴ [Act amending the Media Act, No. 27/2024 \(EEA rules, audiovisual media, etc.\)](#)

⁵ [Act amending the Healthcare Practitioners Act, No. 34/2012 \(reporting domestic violence\)](#)

⁶ [Act amending the General Penal Code, No. 29/2022 \(child sexual abuse material, hate speech, discrimination etc.\)](#)

protection under that provision as under Art. 233a. This means, among other things, that it is a criminal offence to deny persons with disabilities a product or service on the same terms as others. Fourthly, the CSAM provision of Art. 210a of the Act was divided into four paragraphs. CSAM is defined and the maximum punishment increased, while at the same time it is stipulated that the provision does not apply to personal contact between young people if further conditions are met. Lastly, a new provision was added, Art. 210c, on repetitive and related violations of the CSAM provisions, i.e. Articles 210a and 210b.

Act amending the Act on Marriage, No. 40/2022 (age of spouses-to-be, examiners etc.)⁷

The bill of the Minister of Justice amending the Act on Marriage was adopted by Althingi in June 2022. The law abolished an exemption from the prohibition against the marriage of persons under 18 years of age. It codified a general principle for recognition of marriages performed abroad. Under the Act, marriages of individuals under the age of 18 that take place abroad are not recognised in Iceland, with very strict exceptions. The aim of the changes is to harmonise the Marriage Act with international recommendations and views regarding the minimum age for marriage. Furthermore, the intention is to improve the quality of examinations made of the conditions for marriages, to harmonise practices, respond to criticism of existing legislation on jurisdiction in divorce proceedings and make the Act consistent with the rules that apply elsewhere in Nordic countries.

Act amending the Code of Criminal Procedure, No. 61/2022 (legal status of victims, people with disabilities and family members)⁸

The bill of the Minister of Justice amending the Code of Criminal Procedure was adopted in June 2022. The aim of the amendments is to improve the legal situation of victims of crimes and people with disabilities, as well as that of family members of deceased persons, both during investigation by the police and court procedure. The main changes and innovations are that the legal adviser's access to data during the investigation phase is basically the same as that of the defence attorney; that the victim is allowed to attend a closed court session after having given their statement; that the legal adviser is authorized to directly question witnesses in court; and that victims are to a greater extent appointed legal advisers in the handling of appealed cases. In certain cases, the judge can decide that the questioning of a disabled victim or witness be held in specially equipped premises, and that the judge can call upon expert assistance during the questioning of a disabled witness. In cases where the police investigation focuses on the cause of the victim's death, a family member of the deceased victim will be authorized to act as a representative of the deceased during the investigation of the case by the police and, in certain instances, it will be possible to appoint a legal adviser for the representative.

Parliamentary Resolutions and Action Plans

National Programme against gender-based violence against women 2026-2030⁹

A new National Programme against gender-based violence against women 2026–2030 was introduced in April 2026 and has already taken effect. The programme consists of 25 actions and provides measures against gender-based violence in a comprehensive manner. It reflects the objectives of the Istanbul Convention and recommendations from GREVIO's 2022 report. The programme replaces and incorporates measures from the previous action programme on handling sexual offences from 2023-2025, ensuring that actions related to sexual offences are included within the broader framework against gender-based violence. By merging these programmes, the government aims to improve oversight of measures, resources and services, enhance co-ordination of data collection and statistics, streamline procedures across systems, strengthen follow-up and optimise resource use. All

⁷ [Act amending the Act on Marriage, No. 40/2022 \(age of spouses-to-be, examiners etc.\)](#)

⁸ [Act amending the Act on Criminal Procedure, No. 61/2022 \(legal status of victims, people with disabilities and family members\)](#)

⁹ Ministry of Justice (2026), [Landsáætlun gegn kynbundnu ofbeldi gagnvart konum 2026-2030, Réttur til öryggis](#). See also English version in supporting documents.

actions in the programme aim to strengthen victims' rights. Special attention is given to GREVIO's recommendations focusing on femicide, honour-related violence and negative social control. The programme is the first of its kind in Iceland and includes two specific actions addressing honour-related violence and negative social control directed at women and girls. One measure is whether performing sterilizations without informed consent should be explicitly prohibited under general criminal law. This measure aims to protect the legal rights of women, particularly women with disabilities, against forced sterilization. The National Action Programme is attached as a supporting document.

Gender Equality Action Programme 2026-2029¹⁰

The Parliamentary Resolution on a gender equality action programme for 2026-2029 was approved by Althingi at the beginning of February 2026. The action programme includes 41 measures to promote gender equality, including concrete measures combating gender-based violence. Key actions include a National Programme against gender-based violence against women 2026-2030, awareness-raising regarding the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (the Istanbul Convention); and the application of trauma-informed approach within the justice system, including addressing the specific needs of women in prisons. The programme also addresses the role of men in preventing gender-based and sexual violence, with the establishment of a working group on men and gender equality, focusing on masculinity, boundaries and consent. In addition, efforts to prevent honour-based violence and harmful social control will be strengthened through targeted training and educational materials for professionals in social services, law enforcement, schools, youth services, healthcare and other relevant sectors. Additional measures to address gender-based violence include the development of services for perpetrators of domestic and sexual violence. Available interventions for perpetrators will be mapped having regard to practices in selected countries. The programme also provides for the continued implementation and evaluation of standardized procedures within the healthcare system for responding to victims of violence. This includes assessing existing protocols, analysing data from electronic registration systems and gathering feedback from healthcare professionals to better understand the prevalence and manifestations of domestic violence and the effectiveness of current responses. Furthermore, the programme addresses sexual harassment in the tourism sector through an analysis of its prevalence and underlying causes, and suggests possible measures in response. The programme also includes measures to prevent bullying, gender-based and sexual harassment and violence in upper secondary schools. These focus on awareness-raising and improving education on gender equality and bullying, gender-based and sexual harassment and violence, with the aim of increasing knowledge and prevention capacity in the school environment.

Prevention Plan against Gender-based and Sexual Violence among Children and Young People 2026–2030¹¹

The plan was introduced in February 2026 and outlines a comprehensive framework of measures aimed at combating gender-based and sexual violence among children and young people for the period 2026–2030. It builds on the foundation established by the previous action plan (2021–2025) and is designed to ensure the continued development of structured, systematic prevention efforts across relevant sectors. The overarching objective of the plan is to establish and maintain co-ordinated preventive measures that reduce the incidence of gender-based and sexual violence and harassment. It emphasizes the importance of safeguarding children and young people in all areas of their lives, including schools, leisure activities and digital environments. The action plan consists of 23 targeted measures organized into five key thematic areas: general actions; digital gender-based and sexual violence and harassment; education and awareness-raising; guidelines and procedures; and monitoring and evaluation. These measures are designed to strengthen institutional capacity, improve knowledge dissemination, and ensure co-ordinated responses by all stakeholders. A central priority of the plan is addressing the growing risks associated with the digital environment. Rapid technological developments have introduced new forms of violence, including online harassment, non-consensual sharing of intimate material and AI-generated abuse. The plan therefore

¹⁰ [Þingsályktun um framkvæmdaáætlun í kynjajafnréttismálum fyrir árin 2026-2029](#)

¹¹ Ministry of Justice (2026), [Forvarnaáætlun gegn kynferðislegu og kynbunndnu ofbeldi og áreitni meðal barna og ungmenna 2026-2030](#)

includes specific actions aimed at enhancing digital safety, strengthening regulatory frameworks and increasing awareness among children, parents and professionals. Education and training are key pillars of the plan. Emphasis is placed on equipping professionals who work with children and young people with the skills and tools needed to prevent, identify and respond to violence. Preventive education is to be integrated into school systems and leisure activities, ensuring age-appropriate and continuous learning about boundaries, consent and respectful relationships. Furthermore, the plan highlights the importance of co-ordinated implementation and accountability. A steering group, led by the Ministry of Justice, will oversee the execution of the plan, while a dashboard will be established to monitor progress and ensure transparency. The development of the plan was guided by broad stakeholder consultation, including input from young people themselves, ensuring that the measures reflect real experiences and emerging challenges. Attention was given to vulnerable and marginalized groups to ensure inclusive and effective prevention efforts. Overall, the action plan represents a structured and forward-looking approach to preventing gender-based and sexual violence, with a strong emphasis on collaboration, evidence-based measures and adaptation to societal and technological changes.

Action Plan on Measures Addressing Violence Among Children and Against Children¹²

The Action Plan on Measures Addressing Violence Among Children and Against Children establishes a comprehensive framework for preventing and responding to violence involving children in Iceland. The plan addresses violence both among children and perpetrated against children, recognising this as a serious and multifaceted societal problem, including physical, psychological and sexual forms of violence, as well as bullying and domestic violence. A broad set of measures is outlined to enhance both preventive and responsive capacities. These include strengthening multidisciplinary case management, improving access to treatment and support services for children, and establishing clearer procedures for handling cases involving both child victims and children who display violent behaviour. The plan also includes measures to reinforce community policing, increase the visibility of law enforcement and improve follow-up in cases involving juvenile offenders.

In line with international standards, the plan emphasises the application of child-friendly, trauma-informed and culturally sensitive approaches across all stages of prevention and intervention. It acknowledges the significant and long-term impact of violence and adverse childhood experiences on children's health, development and well-being, and underscores the importance of ensuring that all measures are guided by the best interests of the child. The plan further prioritises early intervention and targeted support for children in vulnerable situations, including those at risk of social exclusion. Measures are included to strengthen support systems within schools and communities, as well as to develop services for children not engaged in education, employment or training. Preventive efforts are framed as both a child protection priority and a cost-effective strategy, given the well-documented long-term social and economic consequences of violence in childhood.

Implementation of the plan is supported by a structured monitoring and evaluation framework. This includes the systematic collection of data from multiple sources, such as law enforcement, child protection services, educational institutions and healthcare providers, to assess the prevalence and nature of violence and to measure the effectiveness of interventions. Regular reporting mechanisms ensure accountability and inform ongoing policy development.

LGBTI+ Action Programme for the period of 2026–2029¹³

An Action Programme on LGBTQ+ issues for 2026-2029 was introduced in November 2025 and its implementation has begun. The programme includes targeted measures to prevent and combat violence against LGBTQ+ persons, notably through strengthened support for LGBTQ+ victims of domestic violence, mandatory and continuous training of law enforcement personnel to ensure rights-based and inclusive responses, and measures to prevent and

¹² The Government of Iceland (2024) [Actions addressing Violence Among Children](#)

¹³ Ministry of Justice (2025), [LGBT+ Action Programme for the period of 2026-2029](#)

address hate speech and harassment, including in online and digital environments, with a particular focus on young people. A dashboard has been created, showing the status of actions under the Action Programme in LGBTQ issues.

Iceland's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security for the period of 2025-2030¹⁴

In April 2025, the Government of Iceland presented its fourth National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security for the period of 2025-2030. The plan focuses on three key priorities: strengthening international advocacy and support for women's participation in peace processes and post-conflict recovery; ensuring the protection of women and girls in conflict settings, including through gender-responsive humanitarian action, refugee reception and the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence; and leading by example through the continued integration of gender equality perspectives in Iceland's domestic security and defence-related institutions.

Action Plan Against Human Trafficking 2026

A new national action plan will be launched in 2026 following broad consultation. It will focus on co-ordination, prevention, victim assistance, investigation and prosecution. For the first time, bodies responsible for implementation will be able to apply for funding through a dedicated implementation fund within the Ministry of Justice. One of the plan's key actions involves better defining procedures and clarifying the roles of all frontline actors who may encounter or support victims of trafficking.

Parliamentary Resolution on a National Action plan for Disability Affairs 2024-2027¹⁵

The first Parliamentary Resolution on a National Action plan for Disability Affairs 2024-2027 was approved by Althingi in March 2024. The action plan includes an action aimed at increasing protection for people with disabilities, especially women and non-binary people. A working group will assess what legislative and regulatory changes are needed regarding services for victims and perpetrators of violence under the Istanbul Convention. Following necessary changes to the regulatory framework, procedures should be developed regarding responses to violence in services for people with disabilities.

Action Plan for the Handling of Sexual Offences 2023-2025¹⁶

The Action Plan for the Handling of Sexual Offences 2023–2025 was published in March 2023. In drafting the plan consideration was given, among other things, to recommendations from the report of GREVIO, the monitoring committee on the implementation of the Council of Europe's Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence. Through this action plan, systematic efforts directed at improving the handling of sexual offences in the judicial system will continue. Emphasis is placed on speeding up the processing of sexual offence cases, for instance, with increased budget appropriations and an increase in the number of full-time employees investigating sexual offences. In addition, the aim is to improve the experience of and services for both victims and defendants, including by offering victims a suitable support interview with a professional following questioning by the police, and increasing information disclosure by the police to victims on the progress of their cases. The new National Programme against Gender-based Violence Against Women 2026-2030 succeeds this plan.

Parliamentary Resolution on a National Action Plan on immigration 2022-2025¹⁷

¹⁴ Ministry for Foreign Affairs (2025), [Iceland's National Action Plan on women, peace and security 2025-2030](#)

¹⁵ [Þingsályktun um framkvæmdaáætlun í málefnum fatlaðs fólks fyrir árin 2024-2027](#)

¹⁶ Ministry of Justice (2023), [Aðgerðaáætlun um meðferð kynferðisbrota 2023 -2025](#)

¹⁷ [Þingsályktun um framkvæmdaáætlun í málefnum innflytjenda fyrir árin 2022-2025](#)

In June 2022 a Parliamentary Resolution on a National Action Plan on Immigration for 2022-2025 was adopted. Action 2.6 Violence is aimed at ensuring that victims and perpetrators of violence of foreign origin know the services and resources that are available. Furthermore, that organisations and individuals providing services and emergency response receive training on immigration issues, cultural sensitivity and multiculturalism. The action consists in ensuring that education and resources for victims and perpetrators of violence throughout Iceland consider the needs of immigrants who do not speak Icelandic or English sufficiently well, paying special attention to the needs of children.

Parliamentary Resolution on an Action Plan in LGBTQ Issues for 2022–2025¹⁸

In June 2022 a Parliamentary Resolution was adopted on an Action Plan in LGBTQ Issues for 2022-2025. This was the first action plan dealing specifically with the issues of LGBTQ people. It includes an action focusing on LGBTQ people and domestic violence with the aim of creating knowledge about domestic violence among LGBTQ people and combating it.

Mechanisms

Implementation and monitoring bodies

Steering group on the implementation and execution of the national action programme against combatting gender-based violence against women 2026-2030

To respond to GREVIO's recommendations No. 50, on a national coordinating body tasked with ensuring the implementation, follow-up and co-ordination of measures against gender-based violence, and No. 46, on increased involvement of non-governmental organizations in policymaking, a steering group will be appointed with representatives from all ministries responsible for implementing the National Programme against Gender-based Violence Against Women 2026-2030. The steering group will monitor and follow up on the execution of the plan's measures. As the national action plan entails the implementation of the Istanbul Convention in Iceland, the steering group will serve as the co-ordinating body provided for in Article 10 of the Convention. To fulfil this role and propose appropriate measures when needed, the group is authorized to submit reasoned proposals to the Minister of Justice regarding updates to the plan. To ensure co-ordination, the group will convene meetings of key stakeholders involved in the field, including non-governmental organizations, generally twice a year.

The Icelandic Human Rights Institute

The Act on a National Human Rights Institution, No. 88/2024 was passed by Althingi on 22 June 2025. The institute commenced operations on 1 May 2025. It is independent in its operations and acts on behalf of the Althingi to promote and protect human rights in Iceland, as defined in the Icelandic Constitution, legislation, international treaties and other international obligations.

Task force on violence against and among children

A task force on violence against and among children was appointed in June 2024. The group is tasked with implementing 14 measures presented by the Ministry of Education and Children and the Ministry of Justice, as well as measures from the Ministry of Health relating to children's health and well-being. The aim of these actions is to counter a trend toward increased violence, strengthen preventive efforts and bring together a wide range of service providers and response agencies in a co-ordinated effort against rising violence among children and youth in Iceland. Strong emphasis is placed on close and effective collaboration among all those involved in children's affairs. The group includes representatives from the Ministry of Education and Children, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Infrastructure, the Association of Local Authorities in Iceland, the Directorate of Education and School Services, the City of Reykjavík, the National Agency for Children and Families, Primary Healthcare of the

¹⁸ [Þingályktun um aðgerðaáætlun í málefnum hinsegin fólks fyrir árin 2022-2025](#)

Capital Area, the Office of the NCIP, police districts, and the organization Home and School. The task force was to prioritize actions, develop an implementation plan, oversee execution, and measure outcomes. The task force has published follow up reports on the implementations of the measures.

Steering Committee on Measures against Trafficking in Human Beings

The government's steering committee on Measures against Trafficking in Human Beings, composed of representatives of all the ministries responsible for the implementation of the action plan, is tasked with monitoring the implementation of the Action Plan against Trafficking in Human Beings (THB) as well as the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. In order to fulfil the latter role, the steering committee is mandated to submit a reasoned proposal to the Minister of Justice concerning updates to the action plan. In that context, it takes into account the discussions of a special governmental consultative group against trafficking in human beings, which consists of all the parties in the fight against THB and is convened twice a year. At its meetings, the progress of the measures is reviewed, new knowledge is shared among the participants, and challenges within the field are highlighted.

Synergy Network against Gender-Based and Domestic Violence

Iceland participates in the SYNERGY network, which brings together governmental and non-governmental actors from beneficiary and donor countries co-operating under the EEA and Norway Grant programme to prevent and combat gender-based and domestic violence (GBDV). It works closely with the Council of Europe's Pathways to End Violence Against Women initiative, anchored in the Istanbul Convention and EU Directive 2024/1385 on combating violence against women and domestic violence. The network will be adopting a new strategy for 2026-2032, built around three priorities: capacity building through four thematic Working Groups (Prevention, Protection, Prosecution and Co-ordinated Policies); strategic communication, including annual SYNERGY conferences and the eeagender.org platform; and network co-ordination underpinned by a structured co-funding model across EEA and Norway Grant programmes. Iceland has been invited to participate as a co-lead of the Working Group on Prosecution alongside Bulgaria, the Council of Europe and other interested beneficiary countries. In parallel, work is progressing on related initiatives that feed into SYNERGY where the NCIP, the Icelandic police and other partners would work closely on pre-defined and bilateral initiatives on gender-responsive policing and against Gender-based and Domestic Violence.

Alignment of definition of domestic violence and violence against women.

Action 1 in the current National Programme against gender-violence against women 2026-2030 provides for the possibility of a review of the current definition of domestic violence in Article 218b of the General Penal Code to align more closely with Article 3 of the Istanbul Convention. This action aims at clarifying the meaning of *domestic violence* as violence that occurs within former or current partners, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared a residence with the victim. There are also plans to review whether violence perpetrated against disabled and elderly women living in service and residential centres should be considered domestic violence according to Article 218b of the General Penal Code.

Enhancement of intersectionality of policies

Reference is made to Article 7, Comprehensive and co-ordinated policies, and the descriptions regarding the Parliamentary Resolutions and action plans under the heading Parliamentary Resolutions and Action plans. Actions to address gender-based violence are integrated into action plans that target specific marginalized groups and in other broader action plans.

Reference is made to the description of the National Action Programme against Gender-Based Violence Against Women 2026-2030, which states that special consideration will be given to women belonging to marginalized groups in the implementation of the plan. The plan also includes actions on disabled people and sexual health, mapping of honour-based violence and negative social stigma against women and girls, education on honour-based violence and negative social stigma against women and girls and prohibition of forced sterilization.

Reference is made to the discussion of the Act amending the Code of Criminal Procedure, No. 88/2008 (legal status of victims, people with disabilities and family members), under the heading Statutory amendments.

Reference is made to the description of the Act amending the General Penal Code, No. 19/1940 (child sexual abuse material, hate speech, discrimination etc.), under the heading Statutory amendments.

1.1 Article 8: Funding

The fight against gender-based violence has been a priority for the Icelandic government. This is reflected in increased funding for law enforcement, institutions, and organizations combating gender-based violence. Additional resources have been allocated to crime prevention, police staffing has increased and two crime prevention specialists have been appointed at the NCIP and the first National Programme against gender-based violence against women 2026-2030 has taken effect. The National Programme has a special implementation fund of ISK 10 million annually, a total of 50 million ISK from the state budget, for projects under the ministries under the National Programme in the period 2026-2030.

ISK 40.4 billion were spent on law and order and public safety in 2024, this amount was raised to ISK 445 billion in 2025. Although not all the increased funds were dedicated to combating violence against women, in 2025 ISK 227 million was used to support NGO's, see also the answer to question 14.1.

Approximately ISK 500 million has been allocated to projects promoting child welfare. Project managers have been hired in all regions to establish regional welfare councils that will develop plans for prioritizing child welfare measures.

Several action plans, including those on gender equality, LGBTQ+ issues, and a prevention Plan against Gender-based and Sexual Violence among Children and Young People, have dedicated special implementation funds of ISK 10-12 million annually. These funds are intended to make it easier for stakeholders to implement actions. It is noted that, in addition to these funds, actions are financed by the implementing parties within the budgeting framework of each ministry.

Long-term service agreements have also been made with several NGO's to carry out services to victims of gender-based violence and perpetrators, to ensure operations and services for victims.

Since the baseline evaluation, there have been notable developments in the allocation of financial and human resources to strengthen the response to violence covered by the Istanbul Convention in the Icelandic health system.

Financial resources allocated to violence-related projects have increased significantly in recent years. In 2024, total funding amounted to ISK 76 million, increasing to ISK 243 million in 2025, with the same level of funding maintained in 2026. This represents a substantial scaling-up of financial commitment to prevention and response measures.

In addition, a detailed cost assessment has been carried out for the establishment and operation of a specialised reception service for child victims of violence. The estimated annual cost for staffing such a service, based on 2026 price levels, is approximately ISK 201.3 million in its full operational form. The proposed staffing model includes a multidisciplinary team consisting of a project manager, specialist physician, advanced practice nurse (team leader), registered nurse, psychologists and social workers.

The staffing plan foresees a phased implementation. While the full annual cost is estimated at approximately ISK 201.3 million, lower operational costs are expected during the initial implementation phase (ISK 120.6 million in 2026 and ISK 168.9 million in 2027), before full capacity is reached in 2028.

These developments demonstrate a clear commitment to strengthening both financial and human resources in a structured and sustainable manner. The emphasis on multidisciplinary staffing and phased implementation supports the development of integrated services that can provide co-ordinated, trauma-informed care to victims of violence.

Funding for efforts against gender-based violence is covered by the affected sectorial authorities and relevant services in the government's national budget. That includes health services, police, child welfare and violence victims support centres. Special implementation funds are a part of several action plans to ensure the implementation of the actions. The government provides various types of support for the activities of non-governmental organisations and public bodies working in the fight against violence towards women and domestic violence. There are examples of NGOs receiving budget appropriations, ministries making service agreements or providing grants for activities or for specific projects, as detailed below. The authorities also fund special measures for perpetrators of violence.

Appropriations to shelters and violence victims support centres

Several NGOs dedicated to combating gender-based violence and supporting victims receive fixed annual appropriations in the state budget. These include the Women's Shelter Association and the service centres for victims of violence Stígamót, Bjarkarhlíð, Aflið, Bjarmahlíð and Sigurhæðir. In 2023, their combined funding amounted to ISK 254.3 million, compared to ISK 231.1 million in 2022. In the 2025 budget, ISK 280.1 million was allocated in 2024 to these organisations.

In a one-off contribution from the Budget committee of Althingi for 2026, funds were allocated to the Women's Shelter and the service centres for victims of violence. The Women's Shelter received ISK 15 million ISK, Bjarkarhlíð ISK 15 million, Sigurhæðir ISK 17 million, Bjarmahlíð ISK 16 million and Suðurhlíð ISK 20 million.

Special agreements

The government has also concluded agreements with various organisations for specific projects. In 2024, a two-year agreement was signed with Bjarkarhlíð to expand services for victims of trafficking in human beings. In 2025, a long-term agreement was signed with Stígamót to continue the "Sick Love" project, an online chat service for young people to discuss relationships, communication and violence, ensuring its operation for the next three years with ISK 12 million in funding each year. This project had received yearly funding of ISK 12 million in 2021-2024. A long-term contract was signed with the Icelandic Women's Rights Association for 2024-2027.

Women in substance abuse

In early 2023, the Ministry of Health granted ISK 4.2 million to Rótin, an association focused on women, trauma and substance abuse, for a project on healthcare services for marginalised women. Konukot, a shelter for homeless women, consequently, offers low-threshold healthcare services in the local community. In December 2022 Rótin also received a special grant in the lead-up to Christmas from the Prime Minister's Office to support activities assisting victims of violence and women in vulnerable situations.

Foreign women

Foreign women can receive counselling on their rights and available resources in Iceland from WOMEN. The organisation assists women who experience violence and provides advice on divorce, isolation, intimate partner violence, public administration in Iceland, education and more. The counselling is free of charge. WOMEN's counsellors speak Icelandic, English, Spanish, Russian and other languages. WOMEN regularly receive grants from public sources for specific projects, most recently in November of 2025 for a seminar on gender-based violence.

Grants in response to consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic

As part of the government's measures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the government implemented targeted measures to address the increase of gender-based violence, including the provision of grants for projects aimed at preventing and combating gender-based violence.

Grants for projects aimed at ensuring that victims and perpetrators of violence throughout the country have access to support and counselling.

During the period 2023-2025, the Minister of Social Affairs and Housing allocated yearly grants to projects aimed at ensuring that victims and perpetrators of violence across the country have access to support and counselling.

In 2025, ISK 60 million ISK was allocated to the following four projects:

The Women's Shelter – ISK 30,000,000. Grant awarded for the operation of the Akureyri shelter in 2026, providing services for women and children fleeing violence. The shelter ensures safety, addresses specific needs and complements existing services in Reykjavik.

Bjarkarhlíð – ISK 22,000,000. Two grants: ISK 15 million for organizational operations and ISK 7 million for support and counselling for victims in West Iceland and the Westfjords, where no comparable services exist. Ensures equal access to professional support and protection.

Women's Counselling – ISK 4,500,000. Grant dedicated to providing legal advice at service centres for victims of violence, including Bjarkarhlíð, Bjarmahlíð and Suðurhlíð.

Association for Men's Shelter – ISK 3,500,000. Grant supports counselling, education and guidance for male victims of violence.

In 2024, ISK 61 million ISK was allocated to the following seven projects:

The Women's Shelter – ISK 26,000,000 for the operation of the Akureyri shelter.

Suðurhlíð – ISK 13,500,000 for a victim support centre in the Suðurnes region.

The South Iceland Police – ISK 7,500,000 for the project Safer South Iceland

The NCIP – ISK 4,100,000 for EXIT – a way out of crime.

The NCIP – ISK 4,100,000 for the National Conference Against Violence.

Women's Counselling – ISK 3,000,000 for legal advice for victims of violence.

The Women's Shelter – ISK 2,800,000 for education and counselling services in rural areas.

In 2023, ISK 60 million ISK was allocated to the following six projects:

The Women's Shelter – ISK 26,250,000 for a Women's Shelter in Akureyri. Grant awarded for the operation of the Akureyri shelter, providing services for women and children fleeing violence. The shelter ensures safety, addresses specific needs and complements existing services in Reykjavik.

The Women's Shelter – ISK 9,450,000 for education and visibility work.

The NCIP and local authorities in the Suðurnes region – ISK 18,800,000 for regional consultation on combating violence and crime in Suðurnes.

The Soroptimist Club of South Iceland (for Sigurhæðir) – ISK 3,000,000 for the training of Sigurhæðir's staff in a trauma-oriented approach based on Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) methodology;

Women's Counselling - ISK 2,000,000 for legal advice, specifically for individuals who cannot afford legal assistance, thereby levelling the playing field for people from different segments of society.

Bjarkarhlíð - ISK 500,000 for services to victims of violence using the Acute Stress Syndrome Stabilization Treatment (ASSYST) methodology

Grants for projects aimed at reducing violence and addressing its consequences.

In 2023 the then Minister of Social Affairs and Labour allocated ISK 17 million to the following projects aimed at reducing violence and addressing its consequences:

Stígamót – ISK 5,000,000 for a support programme engaging men to counter sexual and gender-based violence and for the anonymous youth chat “Sick Chat”.

Agreements on resources for perpetrators

Since the GREVIO baseline report the government has provided support for mechanisms providing support for perpetrators.

Heimilisfriður

Since 2006 the Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing has concluded an annual agreement with Heimilisfriður, a treatment and knowledge centre on violence in close relationships, for specialised psychological services for individuals who have used violence against their partners. The aim of the service is to reduce the likelihood of further violent behaviour by supporting clients in developing constructive ways to deal with conflict and difficulties in their relationships.

Take the Step

Since 2021, the government has provided support each year for the programme “Take the Step”, which offers specialised psychological treatment for individuals who have demonstrated harmful sexual behaviour or are concerned about their sexual conduct online or towards other persons. The organisation has also received funding to provide appropriate support to defendants in sexual offence cases following their questioning by the police. In December 2023 the Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing allocated ISK 8,000,000 to Take the Step for specialized support for individuals concerned about their own sexual behaviour or who have committed sexual abuse. The ministry allocated ISK 8,500,000 to the project in 2024 and ISK 8,500,000 in 2025.

Immigration Affairs Development Fund

Grants are awarded annually from the Immigration Affairs Development Fund, hosted by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing. In 2023 and 2024, Slagtog, an association for feminist self-defence received ISK 4,400,000 each year for the project, Courageous Steps: Migrant Women Combating Gender-based Violence.

Grants for actions against violence among children

In 2025, the Ministry of Education and Children allocated ISK 474 million to municipalities to support children's well-being, with a focus on preventing and reducing violence among children. A total of 119 applications from 37 municipalities were received, many involving collaboration with stakeholders such as police, sports clubs and NGOs, with emphasis on prevention and early intervention.

Fifteen projects across 14 municipalities received funding, reflecting diverse and collaborative approaches nationwide. Key initiatives include a rapid response team for child violence cases in the capital area, regional prevention programmes, and integrated family support services. Overall, the funded projects aim to strengthen co-ordinated responses, provide early support and improve the well-being and social participation of children and families.

The Gender Equality Fund¹⁹

The purpose of the Gender Equality Fund is to finance or support projects, including research projects, that aim to promote gender equality in Icelandic society and internationally. A total of ISK 60 million is allocated every two years. The rules on allocations from the fund state that, as a general rule, the grants shall be awarded to projects aimed at various measures, including work against gender-based violence, gender-based harassment, and sexual

¹⁹ [Gender Equality fund](#)

harassment, including comprehensive education, preventive measures and coordinated responses. In recent years several projects regarding gender-based violence have been funded through the Gender Equality Fund. In 2025, the following projects related to gender-based violence received funding: the project Manifestations of Violence in the Emergency Department of University Hospital; the project Is There a Gender Difference in Narratives of Sexual Violence, Social Responses and Mental Health Impact; and the project Ethics of Intimacy: Young People, Consent and Boundaries in the Wake of MeToo. In 2023, the following projects received funding; the project Disabled Women and Violence: Access to Justice; the project Strengthening Icelandic Schools in Prevention, Education and Response to Gender-based Violence; and the project The Experiences of Immigrant Women of Intimate Partner Violence in Iceland.

Grants for projects and events in the field of gender equality

Since 2023, the Minister responsible for gender equality has advertised grants for projects and events in the field of gender equality. The total amount available for allocation has been ISK 10 million annually and each individual grant may amount to a maximum of ISK 2 million. Several grants have been allocated to projects regarding gender-based violence. In the 2025 allocation, particular emphasis was placed on projects and events related to combating gender-based violence, which were given priority in the selection process.

1.2 Article 11: Data collection and research

Several institutions in Iceland, including the police, child protections services, the health system and the education system collect and publish statistics on gender-based violence. Steps have been made since Iceland's baseline report to improve recording and data collection on gender-based violence.

Justice system

The Service Division of the NCIP keeps track of police statistics. While annual statistics on reported offences were published previously, the Office of the NCIP began publishing quarterly reports on domestic violence at the beginning of 2023, and on sexual offences at the beginning of 2024. These reports include comparisons to the corresponding periods in previous years. The data is broken down by type of offence and the gender and age of both perpetrator and victim. Currently, information regarding the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim is only available for domestic violence, although work is underway to include this information for sexual offences as well.²⁰

When interpreting these statistics, especially for international comparison, it is important to note Iceland's recording practices. The Icelandic police record offences at the point of first contact or initial report, rather than waiting for a formal decision to investigate. Furthermore, in the cases of domestic violence, it is the police who determine whether there is suspicion of a crime based on their assessment of the scene, regardless of whether the victim formally identifies it as such or wishes to press charges. Statistics can also be requested from each individual police district, as well as from courts, Director of Public Prosecutions and District Commissioners. However, it should be noted that current data systems do not allow for the tracking of individual case outcomes seamlessly across the entire justice system, from the initial police report to the final court verdict. Furthermore, a police victim survey is conducted annually among Icelandic citizens 18 years and older. It includes questions on physical violence, sexual violence, digital sexual violence, domestic violence and intimate partner violence.

²⁰ The National Police Commissioner, [Statistics and reports](#)

The NCIP published, in April 2026, a dashboard²¹ showing the number of individuals who were suspected of violations of the General Penal Code or specific criminal offences from 2019 to 2025. It also includes data on the gender of suspects by categories of offenses, for example, sexual offenses.

The City of Reykjavík and the Reykjavík Metropolitan Police collaborate on the project Together Against Violence and publish statistical information²² from both the police and the city's welfare department on incidents and reports of domestic violence in Reykjavík. The project was first launched in 2015, and in 2025 data collection and publication began on the sexual orientation of victims and perpetrators in domestic violence cases.

Children and youth

The National Agency for Children and Families collects monthly data²³ on the number of incident reports to child protection committees, among other things in connection with violence. These are classified as: a) emotional violence, b) domestic violence (if a child witnesses domestic violence, it is recorded separately as domestic violence, c) physical violence, d) sexual violence and, since 2022, e) digital sexual violence.

The Icelandic Youth Survey²⁴ is conducted every year. The survey collects data on children's and young people's views on various well-being factors in their own lives. It includes questions on physical violence, sexual violence, digital sexual violence, domestic violence, and intimate partner violence. The survey is administered annually in compulsory schools, every other year in upper secondary schools, and regularly among young people outside the school system. The results are used to map the well-being of children and young people at any given time and are useful both for policymaking and for prioritizing interventions and services for children, young people, and their families, in accordance with the Act on the Integration of Services in the Interest of Children's Prosperity, No. 86/2021. The results of the study are published in school reports for participating compulsory and upper secondary schools (provided participation is sufficient) and in municipal reports for the compulsory school survey. In a national report on well-being, selected indicators from the study are used in the Dashboard on Children's Well-being, published on the website on children's well-being. The dashboard²⁵ was first published in 2024 and defines five fundamental pillars of well-being: education; health and well-being; safety and protection; quality of life and social status; and participation and social connections. The dashboard presents statistics on gender-based violence which can be broken down by various variables, such as gender, background, region, age and more.

Health

The Public Health Watch system²⁶ monitors some of the main determinants of health and well-being among adults, and key determinants of health over time. The monitoring framework includes questions on experience of violence in the past 12 months, covering physical, sexual, psychological and digital forms of violence. In 2026, an additional question was introduced on the identity of the perpetrator; however, data on this aspect remains limited. Comparable questions were included in the 2022 Health and Well-being Survey²⁷, which is conducted regularly and is to be administered again in 2027. Findings from this survey have been published in Public Health Indicators²⁸ and in Talnabrunnur²⁹, an electronic newsletter published by the Directorate of Health, that provides updates on the recording, collection, analysis and interpretation of health data. Analyses have also specifically examined the health

²¹ The National Commission of the Icelandic Police, [Dashboard on on suspected individuals](#)

²² The City of Reykjavík and the Reykjavík Metropolitan Police, [Together Against Violence](#)

²³ The National Agency for Children and Families, [published material](#)

²⁴ The University of Iceland, Institution of Educational Science, [The Icelandic Youth Survey](#)

²⁵ The Ministry of Education and Children, [dashboard on Prosperity of Children](#)

²⁶ Directorate of Health, [The Public Health System](#)

²⁷ Directorate of Health, [Health and Well-being survey](#)

²⁸ Directorate of Health, [Public Health Indicators](#)

²⁹ Directorate of Health, [Talnabrunnur](#)

and well-being of victims of sexual violence. Many of the indicators presented in this dashboard have previously been published in Public Health Indicators reports and/or in Talnabrunnur. The data are derived from regular online surveys conducted by Gallup on behalf of the Directorate of Health.

Female genital mutilation

Statistics on female genital mutilation are not collected systematically. However, the Directorate of Health can always compile the data using the appropriate ICD-IS code (International Classification of Diseases published by WHO: routine and delayed circumcision, and NCSP-IS code: KGSV religious circumcision), if they have been recorded during a visit or hospital stay. The Directorate of Health publishes a special national version derived from the NCSP+ mapping file, called NCSP-IS.

Reports and analyses

Report on the situation of women receiving disability pensions in Iceland³⁰

A report on the situation of women receiving disability pensions in Iceland was published in August 2025. The report was commissioned by the Icelandic Social Insurance Administration, in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing, the Welfare Watch, and the Administration of Occupational Safety and Health. The aim of the underlying research was to increase knowledge as to why women aged 50 to 66 are more likely than men to receive disability pensions. The findings of the study show that women receiving disability pensions are more likely to have experienced socio-economic marginalization, including lower levels of education, significantly lower income and greater housing insecurity compared to women in the general population. Importantly, the report also indicates that women in this group are more likely to have been exposed to adverse life experiences, including various forms of violence and long-term stress. It suggests that women who have been exposed to violence or other forms of adversity may face compounded disadvantages, including increased risk of long-term illness, financial insecurity and social exclusion.

Report on violence in close relationships and families of LGBTQ+ people in Iceland³¹

A report by the Social Science Research Institute at the University of Iceland for the Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing on violence in close relationships and families of LGBTQ+ people in Iceland was presented in December 2024. The study aimed to map the prevalence and manifestations of violence in intimate relationships and households of LGBTQ+ people. Data was collected through a survey sent to members of the National Queer Organisation of Iceland, Samtökin '78, a questionnaire distributed in a discussion group on the Queer Chat (*Hinseginspjallið*) platform, and individual interviews with LGBTQ+ people. In addition, responses from upper secondary school students in the Icelandic Youth Survey were analysed.

Government actions against gender-based and sexual violence and harassment³²

A summary of the government's actions against gender-based and sexual violence and harassment in 2020-2023 was published at the beginning of January 2024. The summary contains an overview of actions, bills of legislation, Parliamentary Resolutions, specific actions and projects that aim to combat sexual and gender-based violence and harassment.

Report on Co-ordinated Healthcare Services for Children who are Victims of Sexual Violence³³

³⁰ The Institute of Social Sciences at the University of Iceland (2025), [Reynsla og aðstæður kvenna með örorkulífeyri Samanburðarrannsókn](#)

³¹ The Institute of Social Sciences at the University of Iceland (2024), [Ofbeldi í nánum samböndum og fjölskyldum hinsegin fólks á Íslandi](#)

³² The Prime Minister's Office (2024), [Government Actions against Gender-based and sexual Violence and Harassment 2020-2023](#)

³³ Ministry of Health (2023), [Samræmd heilbrigðisþjónusta við börn sem þolendur kynferðisofbeldis, Skýrsla starfshóps](#)

A Report on Co-ordinated Healthcare Services for Children who are Victims of Sexual Violence was published in October 2023. The Minister of Health has approved proposals in the report on the introduction of procedures for forensic examinations and sampling and for the establishment of a working group tasked with mapping the arrangements for healthcare services for children who live with violence of any kind and clarifying the future vision for healthcare services in the field.

Report on Arrangements for Services in connection with Violence³⁴

A Report on Arrangements for Services in Connection with Violence with recommendations was published in March 2023. The report assesses what legal and regulatory changes are needed for services in connection with violence, taking into consideration provisions of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence.

Report of the Director of Public Prosecutions Working Group on the processing time for sexual offences³⁵

The report was published in August 2022. Its aim was to examine those sexual offence cases with a lengthy processing time to see which aspects most delayed the processing of the cases and whether and how procedures could be improved and the processing time thereby shortened. The report made proposals for improvements including assistance for employees working on cases of sexual offences, prioritisation of cases, the use of remote conferencing equipment for questioning and harmonised recording in the police records system countrywide.

Report on co-ordinated healthcare services in connection with sexual violence³⁶

A Report on Co-ordinated Healthcare Services in connection with Sexual Violence was published in December 2022. It contains, among other things, proposals for procedures, standardised registration forms and the development of educational material for healthcare practitioners on the reception of victims.

Report on healthcare service procedures for reception of victims of domestic violence³⁷

A report on the procedures of healthcare services for reception of victims of domestic violence was published in August 2021. The report contains recommendations for the procedures, ideas for educational materials, a standardised registration form for forensic examinations etc. The procedure is focused on the reception of adult victims of domestic violence. Subsequently work began on the development and introduction of a uniform procedure in domestic violence cases, which has now been included in the quality document of the National University Hospital (LSH), and work is underway on implementing it. Funding has been provided to provide digital instructions and a registration form for forensic examinations.

Reports on children and digital media

In 2021 and 2023 studies on children and digital media by the Media Commission of Iceland was conducted in collaboration with the School of Education at the University of Iceland. The surveys, conducted in Icelandic, English and Polish, covered students in primary and upper secondary schools nationwide. . They included questions on sexual harassment. From these surveys several reports have been published, including a report on online sexual

³⁴ Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing (2023), [Fyrirkomulag þjónustu vegna ofbeldis, Skýrsla starfshóps](#)

³⁵ Director of Public Prosecution (2022), [Skýrsla starfshóps Ríkissaksóknara um málsmeðferð kynferðisbrota](#)

³⁶ Ministry of Health (2022), [Samræmd heilbrigðisþjónusta vegna kynferðisofbeldis, Skýrsla starfshóps](#)

³⁷ Ministry of Health (2021), [Verklag í heilbrigðisþjónustu við móttöku þolenda heimilisofbeldis](#)

comments and nude photos for the surveys 2021³⁸ and 2023³⁹ and reports on the use of pornography for the surveys in 2021⁴⁰ and 2023⁴¹.

Report on Health and Healthcare, Gender and Equality Perspectives⁴²

The report Health and Healthcare, Gender and Equality Perspectives was published in 2021. The aim of the project was to map the state of health in Iceland from gender and equality perspectives and to assess whether healthcare services meet the needs of all genders. A section of the report was dedicated to gender-based and sexual violence against women. Based on the project's findings, recommendations for improvements were put forward, including the need to assess the effectiveness of procedures and interventions for reception of victims of domestic violence in the healthcare system. Additionally, the project deemed it necessary to examine how information is shared between healthcare and the welfare system, as well as services and support measures. These recommendations have been responded to, among other things, with statutory amendments in the Act amending the Healthcare Practitioners Act, No. 34/ 2012 (reporting domestic violence) and new procedures for the reception of victims of domestic violence in healthcare institutions. The procedures are designed from an interdisciplinary approach and within the healthcare system, where nurses, physicians, social workers and psychologists work together on victims' cases. There is also strong emphasis on co-operation between different bodies, such as the police, social services, emergency shelters and child protection services.

Evaluations

Evaluation of Heimilisfriður⁴³

A report with an evaluation on the effectiveness of the treatment programme Heimilisfriður was published in January 2024. The report examined the attitudes and experiences of the programme by clients and their partners.

Analysis of service centres for victims of violence⁴⁴

An Analysis of service centres for victims of violence was published in June 2023. The analysis was conducted at the request of the NCIP in accordance with the decision of the Minister of Justice in co-operation with the then Minister of Social Affairs and Labour and the Minister of Health. The main conclusions of the analysis were that both financial and systemic support from the government are needed to ensure the operation of victim service centres in the future, including possibly adopting specific legislation on service centres for victims of violence, defining and promoting support services for victims of violence, revising legislation on local authorities' social services and formulating harmonised rules for partners and guidelines for professionals.

New developments in collection and publishing disaggregated data collection

National Programme against gender-based violence against women 2026-2030

The National programme against gender-based violence against women 2026-2030 includes an action on data collection, recording and publication. This measure requires law enforcement, prosecution authorities, courts, healthcare services, social services and child protection services to regularly collect, record and publish disaggregated statistical data on all forms of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention, in line with GREVIO's

³⁸ Media Commission of Iceland (2022), [Börn og netmiðlar, Kynferðisleg komment og nektarmyndir](#)

³⁹ Media Commission of Iceland (2024), [Börn og netmiðlar, Kynferðisleg komment og nektarmyndir](#)

⁴⁰ Media Commission of Iceland (2022), [Börn og netmiðlar, Áhorf á klám](#)

⁴¹ Media Commission of Iceland (2024) [Börn og netmiðlar, Áhorf á klám](#)

⁴² Ministry of Health (2021), [Heilsufar og heilbrigðisþjónusta, Kynja- og jafnréttissjónarmið](#)

⁴³ The Institute of Social Sciences at the University of Iceland (2024), [Heimilisfriður: Árangur af meðferð. Viðhorf og reynsla skjólstæðinga og maka til meðferðarúrræðisins á tímabilinu 2017-2023](#)

⁴⁴ Kirstín Anna Hjálmarasdóttir (2023), [Greining á þjónustumiðstöðvum fyrir þolendur ofbeldis](#)

recommendations No. 60, No. 283 (statistics on the use of restraining and eviction orders, breaches and resulting measures) and No. 191 (data on custody and visitation decisions where there is a history of violence). The aim is to ensure that policymaking in the fight against gender-based and domestic violence is informed, responsible and based on reliable statistical information by obtaining data from all entities providing services to victims, including healthcare and police. The action involves: harmonising data collection and registration between police, prosecution, and courts for all forms of violence under the Convention. Data should be broken down by gender, age of victim and perpetrator, type of violence, and relationship between victim and perpetrator; collecting data on the number of cases reported to the police, complaints, indictments, convictions, and other sanctions for all forms of violence against women; gathering data on breaches of restraining orders and cases where women were subjected to further violence or killed due to such breaches; collecting statistics across municipal social services and healthcare services, including the number of individuals seeking assistance for all forms of violence, disaggregated by gender, age, nationality, and relationship between victim and perpetrator, as well as the type of services provided; publishing statistics on all forms of violence under the Convention, including data analysis and mapping of trends; collecting data on custody and visitation cases involving violence.

The National Programme also includes an action on improving data collection for granting international protection on the grounds of gender-based persecution. Changes are being made to the Directorate of Immigration's registration system that will enable provision of better statistics than is currently possible. This will enable the recording, collection and publication of data on the number of applicants for international protection on the grounds of gender-based persecution.

Statistical data on emergency barring and protection orders

Since the 2022 GREVIO baseline evaluation, several steps have been taken to improve the collection and disaggregation of data on restraining orders and eviction from the home under Act No. 85/2011, breaches of such orders and the resulting sanctions, although significant gaps remain.

Since February 2022, the NCIP has published quarterly statistics on gender-based violence; including domestic violence, sexual offences and homicides on a dedicated section of logreglan.is. Recording protocols for mandatory registration of information on victims in sexual offence cases have been issued, and work is under way to improve the recording of victim-perpetrator relationships in sexual offence cases and the tracking of case outcomes through the criminal justice chain. The Service Division of the NCIP has been reviewing how requests for restraining orders and eviction orders are registered by all police units, with the aim of harmonizing recording practices and making it possible to track in aggregate how many requests are approved by chiefs of police or confirmed by the courts – information which at present cannot be reliably extracted from the case-management system.

Act No. 298/2026 (adopted on 27 April 2026) allows the use of electronic monitoring to track individuals who are subject to restraining orders or have been evicted from their home. Moreover, it makes a breach of electronic monitoring an independent criminal offence, making it possible to generate a distinct data category that will allow disaggregation between breaches of restraining orders, eviction orders and electronic monitoring conditions, together with resulting sanctions following the implementation phase and updating of registration practices.

Updated figures for 2023-2025 on requests, breaches and sanctions have already been supplied by the Service Division of the NCIP insofar as they are available.

Statistical data on custody decisions resulted in the restriction and withdrawal of parental rights

Statistics on the number of custody decisions that have resulted in the restriction and withdrawal of parental rights because of violence perpetrated by one parent against the other are not comprehensively collected at this time, therefore these statistics are not available. However, with the action on Data collection on all forms of gender-based violence in the National programme against gender-based violence against women 2026-2030, efforts will be made to collect these statistics.

Measures to allow cases of violence against women and domestic violence to be tracked from reporting to conviction

The NCIP is responsible for publishing nationwide statistics up to the stage of prosecution. When an offence is reported to the police, it is registered under a case number. Once a case has been transferred to the prosecution stage, the Director of Public Prosecutions is responsible for statistics concerning the number of indictments issued and cases discontinued. However, the same case number assigned by the police is retained by the prosecution authorities, therefore, it would be possible to trace the progression of a case through the criminal justice system up to the delivery of a judgment, provided that the necessary co-ordination is undertaken.

The case management system of the prosecution authorities is not designed to systematically record whether the outcome of judicial proceedings resulted in a conviction or an acquittal. Responsibility for publishing statistics on the number of judgments and their outcomes lies with the Courts Administration. However, with the action on Data collection on all forms of gender-based violence in the National Programme against gender-based violence against women 2026-2030 efforts will be made to collect these statistics.

2. Part II: Information on the implementation of selected provisions in priority areas in the field of prevention, protection and prosecution

2.1 Article 12: General obligations

Primary prevention measures aimed at changing mindsets and attitudes

Addressing harmful gender stereotypes, prejudices, customs and traditions based on the idea of inferiority of women.

The Icelandic authorities have adopted a range of legislative, policy and educational measures aimed at preventing gender-based violence, combating prejudice and harmful stereotypes, and promoting respectful attitudes towards women and girls. These measures are reflected, inter alia, in the Parliamentary Resolution on the Gender Equality Action Programme for 2026–2029, as well as in the newly adopted Prevention Plan Against Gender-based and Sexual Violence Among Children and Young People for 2026–2030.

Within the framework of the Gender Equality Action Programme 2026–2029, Iceland has introduced specific measures to strengthen awareness of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (the Istanbul Convention). In accordance with Article 13 of the Convention, awareness-raising activities will be conducted with the objective of increasing public knowledge and understanding of the various forms of violence covered by the Convention.

Recognising the importance of engaging men and boys in prevention efforts the Gender Equality Action Programme for 2026–2029 includes an action on Men's Committee. The Committee has been appointed with the role of preparing a report with an overview of the social status of men and boys and the challenges that they face in relation to gender equality issues. The committee will examine how gender equality policymaking can better take into account the status of men and boys and submit proposals for increased participation of men in discussions on gender equality and how they can be further mobilized to participate in gender equality work.

The Gender Equality Action Programme for 2026–2029 also includes an action on a working group on men and gender-based violence. The mandate of this group will include examining the role of men in preventing and combating sexual and gender-based violence, as well as analysing the links between such violence, sexual harassment, prevailing concepts of masculinity, personal boundaries and consent. The working group will also take into account relevant Council of Europe guidance concerning the role of men and boys in promoting equality and preventing gender-based violence. The objective of this measure is to identify effective strategies for increasing male engagement in prevention efforts.

In response to emerging and intersectional forms of abuse, the Gender Equality Action Programme 2026–2029 also provides for an action against so-called honour-based violence and negative social control. Training will be strengthened for professionals working in social services, law enforcement, schools, extracurricular programmes, the health sector and other relevant institutions in order to improve understanding of the characteristics and manifestations of such violence. Tailored educational materials will also be developed and disseminated. These measures are intended to enhance institutional capacity to identify cases and respond effectively.

The Gender Equality Action Programme for 2026–2029 includes several actions related to gender equality. It includes an action to ensure that gender equality education is integrated into teaching at all school levels, and the quality criteria for evaluating the work of preschool, primary and secondary schools and after-school activities in primary schools will be reviewed. This will promote targeted gender equality education in accordance with the National Curriculum Guides. An assessment of gender equality education will also be included in the three-year plan

of the Ministry of Education and Children's Affairs. The Gender Equality Action Programme for 2026–2029 also includes an action to increase and strengthen the knowledge of teachers, administrators and other staff in upper secondary schools in gender and equality education, among other things to ensure integration within schools and teachers' skills to teach such subjects and integrate them into other teaching and school activities. The Gender Equality Action Programme for 2026–2029 also includes an action to review and update the checklist for curriculum authors so that it is suitable for all school levels and better serves a changing society. Allocations from the curriculum development fund will take into account whether curriculum has been developed in accordance with the updated checklist of the Directorate of Education and School Services. Curriculum that has been developed in accordance with the checklist related to gender equality and gender studies by school level will also be made available electronically. There is also an action to work on raising awareness of gender equality issues in upper secondary schools by strengthening education and knowledge of gender equality and bullying, gender-based and sexual harassment and violence in upper secondary schools.

The Prevention Plan Against Gender-based and Sexual Violence Among Children and Young People 2026–2030 complements these measures through a number of targeted actions addressing contemporary risks and the protection of children. In particular, the authorities will develop an online training module for school leaders, teachers and professionals working with children and young people on the links between extremism, polarisation, misogyny, hate speech and gender-based violence. The purpose of this initiative is to strengthen the capacity of professionals to recognise harmful narratives, identify early warning signs, and respond with evidence-based methods. The training will be disseminated throughout the education and youth sectors and made accessible to parents and guardians.

Further, standardised guidance and awareness-raising materials will be prepared for parents and guardians concerning digital violence, including exposure to pornography, online sexual abuse and risks associated with emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence. This measure seeks to ensure that parents and guardians have access to reliable and consistent information enabling them to support children's safety online and to engage in discussions concerning consent, boundaries and online conduct.

The authorities have also resolved to strengthen the preventive role of community policing in matters affecting children and young people. Measures include increasing the visibility and accessibility of community police officers and establishing clear communication channels between police, schools and families. This is intended to support a co-ordinated and child-sensitive prevention system based on early intervention, trust-building and effective responses to concerns relating to violence or risk behaviour, including in digital environments.

Finally, throughout the implementation period of the Prevention Plan, regular awareness-raising activities will be carried out in order to disseminate information on prevention measures, available support services and educational resources relating to gender-based and sexual violence affecting children and young people. A more structured communication strategy, including regular campaigns and co-operation with public institutions and civil society organisations, will be pursued, with particular emphasis on reaching parents, guardians and relevant professionals.

Taken together, these measures demonstrate Iceland's continued commitment to fulfilling its obligations under the Istanbul Convention by addressing the structural causes of violence, promoting equality, strengthening education and prevention systems, and ensuring that children, young people and the wider public are equipped with the knowledge necessary to prevent and respond to gender-based violence.

Exposure to gender-based violence by women and girls at risk of intersectional discrimination

The Icelandic authorities have adopted a broad range of legislative, administrative and policy measures to ensure that the implementation of the Istanbul Convention is inclusive and responsive to the needs of persons exposed to heightened risks of discrimination or violence, including persons with disabilities, LGBTQ+ persons, migrants, refugees and persons facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.

Accessible information and awareness-raising measures have been developed to ensure that persons with disabilities are able to obtain information concerning violence and available support services. In this regard, the national emergency helpline and information website, 112.is, contains specific informational material on violence against persons with disabilities. The website explains that persons with disabilities are at increased risk of experiencing different forms of abuse, including physical, psychological, sexual, financial and digital violence, and provides accessible guidance on available protection and support services.

The Directorate of Equality has published a booklet called Your Rights, which contains important information for immigrants in Iceland. The booklet is available in eight languages: English, Polish, Spanish, Thai, Russian, Arabic, French and Ukrainian. All editions also include an Icelandic translation. It discusses the main rights of people in intimate relationships and everyday life, including: marriage, cohabitation, divorce and separation, pregnancy, maternity care and termination of pregnancy, custody, access rights and family matters, violence in intimate relationships, human trafficking and prostitution, how to file a complaint, receive a grant or apply for a residence permit. The booklet also contains contact details and information on assistance, including telephone numbers, addresses and websites of institutions and associations. The booklet is both printed and published electronically to facilitate distribution and accessibility.

The Icelandic legal framework contains strong constitutional and statutory safeguards against discrimination. The first paragraph of Article 65 of the Constitution of the Republic of Iceland, No. 33/1944, states that all persons shall be equal before the law and enjoy human rights irrespective of sex, religion, opinion, nationality, race, colour, property, descent or other status. The second paragraph of the same provision further guarantees that women and men shall enjoy equal rights in all respects. As the Constitution constitutes the supreme source of law, ordinary legislation must be interpreted and applied consistently with these guarantees.

These constitutional protections are complemented by comprehensive equality legislation. The Act on Equal Treatment in the Labour Market No. 85/2018 and the Act on Equal Treatment Outside the Labour Market No. 86/2018 prohibit discrimination on grounds including sex, race, ethnic origin, religion, belief, disability, reduced work capacity, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, sex characteristics and gender expression. These Acts provide for the right to equal treatment in employment and in access to goods and services outside the labour market.

In 2020, Iceland further strengthened its equality framework through the Act on Equal Status and Equal Rights Irrespective of Gender, which introduced, for the first time, an explicit provision concerning multiple discrimination. Corresponding provisions on multiple discrimination were also incorporated into the legislation governing equal treatment in and outside the labour market. This represented the first formal incorporation of the concept of intersectionality into Icelandic legislation and significantly improved the legal capacity to address situations in which individuals experience discrimination on more than one prohibited ground, such as gender, disability, ethnicity or sexual orientation.

The Directorate of Equality serves as the competent public authority responsible for the implementation and promotion of equality legislation and provides guidance, counselling and assistance in matters relating to equality and anti-discrimination rights.

Important procedural safeguards have also been introduced within the justice system. Amendments to the Code of Criminal Procedure No. 88/2008, adopted in June 2022, were intended to strengthen the legal position of victims and persons with disabilities. The amendments expanded the rights of legal rights protectors acting on behalf of victims, including broader access to investigative materials comparable to that of defence counsel, the right of victims to attend closed court hearings after giving testimony, and the authority of legal rights protectors to question witnesses directly before the court. The amendments also strengthened access to legal representation in appellate proceedings. In addition, judges may, where appropriate, order that the questioning of a victim or witness with disabilities take place in specially equipped premises and may seek expert assistance during such questioning. These measures were adopted to improve accessibility, procedural fairness and effective participation in criminal proceedings.

Iceland has also adopted targeted measures to address violence and discrimination affecting LGBTQ+ persons. In June 2022, the first Action Programme on LGBTQ+ issues. The plan included a dedicated action concerning LGBTQ+ persons and domestic violence, with the aim of increasing knowledge regarding domestic violence within LGBTQ+ relationships and strengthening responses thereto.

This work has continued under the Action Programme on LGBTQ+ issues for 2026-2029, which contains several actions concerning discrimination, violence and support services. These include research into intersectional discrimination affecting LGBTQ+ persons with disabilities; the standardisation of police procedures relating to hate crimes against LGBTQ+ persons; improved support for LGBTQ+ victims of domestic violence; and enhanced safety measures for LGBTQ+ youth. The plan also includes measures within the education system, such as support programmes for LGBTQ+ children and increased visibility of LGBTQ+ identities within primary school curricula.

At municipal level, the Democracy and Human Rights Office of the City of Reykjavík employs a specialist on LGBTQ+ issues and provides educational programmes on intimate partner violence in LGBTQ+ relationships, thereby complementing national prevention efforts.

Measures have also been adopted to support migrants, immigrants and refugees. The Multicultural Division of the Directorate of Labour provides counselling services and information regarding rights and services available in Iceland to immigrants and refugees. Counselling is offered in multiple languages, including English, Polish, Spanish, Arabic and Ukrainian, and interpretation services may be requested where necessary.

The National Programme against gender-based violence against women 2026-2030 further includes specific measures addressing honour-related violence and negative social control. One measure concerns the examination of whether sterilisation without informed consent should be explicitly prohibited under general criminal law, with particular relevance to the protection of women and girls with disabilities against forced sterilisation. The plan also includes actions relating to sexual health for persons with disabilities, including targeted LGBTQ+ education within broader sexuality education frameworks.

The rights of persons with disabilities have been further strengthened through the incorporation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities into Icelandic law on 12 November 2025. In addition, Althingi approved in March 2024 a National Plan for the implementation of the convention covering the period 2024–2027. This plan includes a specific action aimed at increasing protection against violence, with particular emphasis on women and non-binary persons with disabilities. A dedicated working group is tasked with examining the specific challenges faced by these groups, consulting directly with persons with disabilities and their representative organisations, and developing standardised procedures for responding to violence involving disabled victims or perpetrators. These procedures are intended to prioritise safety, support and accessible information on prevention and response mechanisms.

Finally, Iceland has introduced targeted measures in response to the increased flow of refugees from Ukraine and other applicants for international protection. Special arrangements were implemented to ensure the safety of women in reception settings. The police undertook to inform women applying for international protection, irrespective of nationality, about their rights and available protection against violence, including domestic violence, and to provide guidance on where assistance may be obtained. Subsequently, gender-sensitive approaches and staff training were introduced in accommodation facilities.

Taken together, these measures demonstrate Iceland's efforts to implement the Convention in a non-discriminatory and inclusive manner, ensuring that prevention, protection and support measures are responsive to the needs of women and girls exposed to multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination or vulnerability.

The government has embarked on various preventive measures and awareness raising about gender-based and sexual violence, including to engage men in actions against gender-based violence.

Awareness-raising campaign against child abuse

The awareness-raising campaign "Take the Step" (*Taktu skrefið*)⁴⁵ against digital sexual relations between adults and children was launched in the fall of 2023. The campaign encouraged persons who view, search for, display, save, possess or distribute sexual material of children to cease these activities and seek the help of experts through the resource "Take the Step".

Awareness raising against sexual violence in three phases

The first phase of the awareness-raising campaign was titled "Is everything okay?" (*Er allt í góðu?*)⁴⁶ and started in early March 2022, focusing on partying and social activities. The campaign encouraged the public to be on the lookout for violence and ask the question: "Is everything okay?" if they were concerned and call the emergency line 112 if the response was negative. The second phase of awareness raising took place in the summer of 2022 with the "Have Fun" (*Góða skemmtun*)⁴⁷ campaign focusing on events, festivals and partying throughout the country to encourage "good fun" without violence. The public was encouraged to be aware of what was going on around them and to call 112 if someone needed help. Training was also provided to employees of bars and night clubs on how best to ensure the safety of guests. The third phase of the awareness raising took place in the run-up to Christmas 2022, focusing on partying and events in the weeks prior to Christmas. The public was encouraged to have fun but to remember that having fun means that everyone should be safe from sexual violence and harassment. People were also informed that if they had concerns about sexual violence or harassment, they should contact 112.

Awareness campaign against sexual violence directed at men

The awareness campaign "Don't be that guy" (*Ekki vera þessi gaur*)⁴⁸ was launched in December 2021. The awareness raising was aimed at men between the ages of 18-35 and, among other things, was aimed at highlighting unsuitable attitudes and where the boundaries lie in interaction with others. The campaign was intended to spotlight attitudes towards sexual offences and to point out that sexual violence starts earlier than many people think. At the same time, the campaign was aimed at countering the demonising of perpetrators and opening up discussion of unacceptable attitudes in men's relationships with women.

Men's Equality Committee

In the action plan on gender equality for the years 2026–2029, there is a measure on appointing a Men's Equality Committee. The Committee was appointed in February 2026. Its role is to produce a report on the social situation of men and boys and the challenges they face in gender equality, including issues that may contribute to social isolation and how concepts of masculinity and stereotypes about men's roles affect their position, as well as gender equality issues more broadly. The committee is to submit proposals on how gender equality policymaking can better consider the situation of men and boys. It will also propose ways to further engage men in gender equality work.

A working group on men and gender-based violence

In the action plan on gender equality for the years 2026–2029, there is a measure on a working group on men and gender-based violence, that is to specifically examine the role of men in combatting sexual violence. The project will, among other things, address the relationship between gender-based and sexual harassment and violence on the one hand, and ideas about masculinity, boundaries, and consent on the other. The working group is to take into

⁴⁵ See: <https://taktuskrefid.is/>

⁴⁶ See: <https://www.112.is/verum-vakandi>

⁴⁷ See: <https://www.112.is/godaskemmtun>

⁴⁸ See: <https://www.112.is/abuse/thessi-gaur>

account the Council of Europe's approved guidelines on the role of men and boys in gender equality issues and in the prevention of gender-based violence. Special efforts are to be made to seek co-operation with NGOs servicing victims of gender-based and sexual violence.

Harmless

Harmless is an awareness campaign launched in 2022 by the Directorate of Equality.⁴⁹ The campaign raises awareness about gender-based and sexual harassment and microaggressions that are often seen as harmless but can have harmful and far-reaching effects. It highlights how repeated everyday actions or comments toward marginalized groups can increase stress, reinforce marginalization and negatively affect people's lives. Because microaggressions are sometimes disguised as compliments, they can be difficult to recognize and address.

Using comics based on real stories from people in Icelandic society, the campaign aims to make these experiences more visible and relatable, increase public awareness and encourage discussion about harassment and its consequences. The campaign has been held five times, it was developed in collaboration with organizations representing marginalized groups, focusing on the experiences of women, LGBTQ+ people, disabled people, women of foreign origin, and children and young people. It is available in all Nordic languages and English.

End Discrimination

In 2025, the Directorate of Equality launched a new webpage called End Discrimination, available in both Icelandic and English.⁵⁰ The webpage provides information about discrimination and explains that discrimination is illegal both in the workplace and in everyday life. This includes discrimination based on gender, race, religion, beliefs, disability, reduced work capacity, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, sex characteristics or gender expression. Discrimination can take many forms. It may occur, for example, when applying for a job or purchasing services. Assessing such cases can be complex, but advisors at the Directorate of Equality are available to provide guidance and support. Cases can be submitted to the Equality Complaints Committee within six months of the alleged discrimination. It is therefore important to report suspected discrimination as soon as possible. The webpage also includes a "Contact an Advisor" button, allowing individuals who believe they have experienced discrimination to contact the Directorate directly for assistance.

Our words

In February 2024 the Directorate of Equality launched a campaign called "Our Words" (*Orðin okkar*).⁵¹ The campaign aimed at highlighting the harmful impact of hate speech on individuals and society by encouraging people to reflect on the power of their words. The campaign was part of promoting increased equality in Icelandic society and combating hate speech and its roots, such as prejudice, negative stereotypes and the marginalization of minorities. A public survey revealed that 67% of respondents had seen the campaign, with 55% reporting increased reflection on their speech.

Let's work together

Following the Recommendations of the Action Group against Bullying, Sexual Harassment, Gender-based Harassment and Violence in the Workplace published in 2021, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration was tasked with implementing them. The Administration of Occupational Safety and Health launched a project awareness campaign #Let's work together: Take action against harassment and violence in the work environment.⁵² Workplaces are encouraged to foster a healthy workplace culture and take appropriate action if harassment or

⁴⁹ See: <https://island.is/en/o/directorate-of-equality/harmless-against-microaggressions>

⁵⁰ See: <https://island.is/en/o/directorate-of-equality/your-rights>

⁵¹ See: <https://ordinokkar.is/en/>

⁵² See: <https://island.is/en/o/aosh/let-s-work-together-everyone-home-safe>

violence occurs. One part of the project was an awareness campaign aimed at supporting workplaces in the fight against harassment and violence in the. The project also includes practical educational materials and tools that workplaces can use to respond and work systematically to combat such behaviour. With this project, the Icelandic Occupational Safety and Health Administration wants to support this work with clear instructions, education and accessible tools. The project website includes, among other things, videos and educational materials, step-by-step instructions for workplaces, examples of response plans and advice to managers.

Empowering women

Iceland has developed several progressive policies and made legislative amendments aimed at advancing gender equality and empowering women in all areas of life, including politics and the labour market. According to the World Economic Forum's latest report on gender equality, published in June 2025 year, Iceland led the Gender Gap Index for the 16th consecutive year. Iceland is the only country to have closed more than 90% of its gender gap This success is largely driven by high levels of women's political participation, high levels of education and equal access to health services, among other factors However, the government remains fully aware that inequalities and power imbalances persist, many of which, such as gender-based violence, are not captured in the index, and has more work to do before closing the remaining gender gap.

Empowering women in politics

In the parliamentary elections on November 30, 2024, women comprised 46% of elected representatives, and in the 2022 local government elections, women comprised 47% of elected representatives after decades of struggle to achieve this. In 1982 and 1983 women founded specific political parties, the Women's List and the Women's Alliance, and were elected to local government and the Parliament, resulting in a significant increase in women's representation at local government and in Althingi.

Iceland has also adopted progressive legislation requiring the proportion of women and men on committees, councils and boards of state and local government to be as equal as possible and not less than 40% when there are more than three representatives. This applies to the boards of public limited companies and companies at both municipal and national levels.

In the spring of 2021 amendments were made to the Standing Orders of the Althingi to ensure that the proportion of women and men in committees, councils and boards acting on behalf of Althingi is as equal as possible. The amendment is intended to establish parliamentary rules providing for consideration of gender equality in committee appointments. When appointing members to committees, councils and boards on behalf of Althingi, care shall be taken to ensure that the proportion of women and men is as equal as possible and not less than 40% of either gender in the case of more than three representatives. Given how recent these changes are there is little evidence on the impact of this practice.

Many political parties in Iceland have some policies, rules or even gender quotas to ensure gender balance within the party lists for parliamentary elections. Many of them also have equality plans and or policies and response plans against bullying, sexual harassment, and gender-based harassment and violence.

In addition to these measures the Ministry of Infrastructure included in its last two Regional Development Plans actions to encourage participation of women and equality in local politics. The Regional Development Plan for 2018-2022 included an action to increase the number of women in local government. The action involved encouraging women to participate in local community management and to work systematically to improve the gender ratio in local governments. This was followed by an awareness-raising campaign before the local government elections in 2022, called *Játak*,⁵³ where all candidates for municipal and local government elections were encouraged to consider diversity, defend equal rights for all genders and present lists that reflect the diverse spectrum of human life. Játak

⁵³ See: <https://island.is/en/o/directorate-of-equality/jatak-diversity-among-candidates>

was an initiative of the Directorate of Equality and the Prime Minister's Office in collaboration with the Icelandic Women's Rights Association, the Ministry of Transport and Local Government, the Multicultural Centre and the Association of Local Authorities in Iceland. After the local elections 2022, women made up 47% percent of elected members of local governments a proportion that had never been higher. The Regional Development Plan for 2022-2026 set out an action to increase equality in local governments. The action entailed that local governments would be encouraged to reflect the diversity of human life so that decision-making in the interests of services to residents is as optimal as possible and in accordance with local government plans on equality issues. Work would be systematically done to maintain an equal gender ratio in local governments and encourage people with diverse backgrounds, e.g. of foreign origin, to participate in the management of the local community. At the same time, work would be done to adapt working conditions in local governments to the diverse circumstances of people and make it easier to reconcile such work with family responsibilities and private life. A checklist for local governments was developed and published on the importance and benefits of diversity in local government. The checklist was published in the fall of 2025 on the website of the Directorate of Equality, it was presented at the Regional Development Agency's regional conference, and a number of promotional e-mails were sent out. At the beginning of 2026, the awareness-raising campaign Játak – an equality initiative in diversity was carried out again.

Empowering women in the labour market

Equality in the labour market is high on the political agenda in Iceland. Closing the gender pay gap is a key element when it comes to gender equality as well as being an extremely important tool to work towards the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls. The Icelandic government has worked systematically to promote gender equality in the labour market through legislation and public policy ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women. These measures include equal pay legislation, gender quotas on company boards, parental leave, universal daycare, flexible working hours and work on evaluation of work of equal value. Today Icelandic the rate of women's participation in the labour market is one of the highest in Europe.

The government's focus on equality in the labour market is reflected in the Gender Equality Action Programme 2026–2029, which includes measures to reduce the gender pay gap and address labour market segregation. Planned actions include developing a job evaluation system to ensure equal assessment of traditionally female and male jobs and reviewing equal pay laws and regulations to simplify implementation and reduce costs while maintaining equality objectives. Studies will also be conducted on the gender pay gap in Iceland, the wage gap between native and immigrant women, and the possible effects of multiple discrimination in the labour market. In addition, a comprehensive analysis will examine sick leave during late pregnancy, parental leave usage by gender, and parents' return to work, with the aim of assessing how pregnancy and maternity leave affect gender equality in the labour market.

Actions against gender-based violence in foreign policy

Gender equality is a cross-cutting priority of Iceland's foreign policy and Iceland uses every opportunity to advocate for the importance of it globally, within international organisations as well as in bilateral relations with other countries.

Icelandic embassies organize events and work to advance gender equality in a variety of ways. Icelandic representatives emphasize gender equality and women's empowerment, and the importance of women's participation in decision-making. These perspectives are integrated into advocacy and project work in the areas of security and defence, international trade, and human rights. Iceland prioritises gender equality in negotiations in international fora and in statements at the UN as appropriate, including in the UNHRC, UN 3rd committee, as well as in the Council of Europe, OSCE and with other Nordic Countries in the context of the work at the Nordic Council of Ministers.

Gender-based violence, bullying and harassment

Gender equality is both a specific and cross-cutting priority in Iceland's International Development Cooperation Policy for 2024-2028. A special emphasis is placed on eradication of gender-based and sexual violence. As a response to the growing backlash on gender equality globally the government of Iceland has increased its core

funding to UN Women and the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) in recent years. In the past two years alone, Iceland has doubled its core funding to UNFPA, enabling its important work to tackle gender-based violence and harmful practices. In addition to core funding, Iceland supports UN Women and UNFPA in Afghanistan and UNFPA's work in Ukraine and Yemen, providing crucial services to survivors of gender-based violence in fragile settings. Furthermore, Iceland supports projects with focus on GBV prevention and/or services to survivors of gender-based violence in all its bilateral partners countries in Africa – Malawi, Uganda and Sierra Leone.

Iceland encourages all Embassies and Permanent representations to participate in the 16 days of activism against gender-based violence each year. Participation has included posting on Embassy's socials, lighting Embassies up and holding events.

Men, boys and equality

Iceland supports UN Women's work on Masculinities – Engaging Men and Boys and because of this partnership a revised Barbershop Toolkit was launched in 2025. The toolkit is grounded in the latest research, intersectional perspectives, and emerging global priorities and provides a platform for male-to-male dialogue, encouraging men to reflect on their behaviors, privileges, and roles in dismantling gender inequality. One of the toolkit's ten modules focuses specifically on gender-based violence.

Women, peace and security

Iceland's fourth National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2025–2030) sets out the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 and related resolutions, with 15 actions across three priority areas in cooperation with civil society, international organizations, and academia. Over the past year, implementation has placed strong emphasis on preventing and responding to gender-based violence. This includes integrating gender perspectives into humanitarian assistance and refugee reception, improving gender-sensitive services and information for refugees, and strengthening systems for prevention, protection, accountability, and survivor support related to sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment.

Iceland has also reinforced prevention efforts by promoting gender-responsive policies in international cooperation and increasing funding to key partners such as UN Women and UNFPA. Support to the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund further contributes to addressing gender-based violence in conflict settings, including in Afghanistan and Ukraine. In addition, Iceland emphasizes gender criteria in humanitarian funding through partners like the United Nations and the Red Cross, helping ensure that prevention of gender-based violence is systematically integrated into crisis response.

Domestically, Iceland has strengthened gender equality policies in security and defence with a clear goal of zero tolerance for gender-based violence and sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment by 2030. Prevention efforts include integrating gender perspectives into national security policy and civil protection legislation and improving gender-sensitive services for refugees and asylum seekers.

Through its WPS National Action Plan, Iceland also promotes prevention of gender-based violence in international cooperation and peacekeeping, supports gender mainstreaming in humanitarian action, and deploys gender experts, including within NATO.

Overall, the approach prioritizes prevention, protection, accountability, and survivor support, coordinated across government institutions and led by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

Collaboration with Ukraine

Iceland supports Ukraine's recovery and reform efforts in gender equality through the GRÓ GEST Gender Equality Studies and Training Programme (University of Iceland and UNESCO-associated). The MFA has already funded four students from Ukraine to study at GRÓ GEST in international gender equality studies. The programme also includes adapted online courses in Ukrainian and training so participants can later deliver gender equality education in Ukraine including on gender-based violence. This support is part of Iceland's implementation of its fourth National

Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security and reflects its commitment to strengthening women's participation, human rights, and gender equality in conflict-affected settings, in line with its broader support to Ukraine on democracy, human rights, and gender equality reforms. The edX blended learning course Ending Violence: Human Rights Frameworks, implemented by the GRÓ GEST programme with support from the MFA of Iceland to be rolled out in Ukraine in the coming months aims to strengthen capacity in Ukraine to prevent and respond to gender-based violence in conflict and post-conflict settings. The course combines online and in-person training and targets civil society, government institutions, and practitioners working on gender-based violence, human rights, and peacebuilding. It equips participants with tools to analyse violence as a structural and gendered issue, and to use human rights frameworks for advocacy and accountability. A key component is the training of Ukrainian fellows (supported by Iceland), who will lead local rollout and ensure sustainability. Expected outcomes include stronger advocacy skills, practical action plans to address gender-based violence, and enhanced networks to support long-term, gender-transformative recovery in Ukraine.

Female Genital Mutilation

The government of Iceland has supported the UNICEF-UNFPA Joint Programme on the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) since 2011 and remains a firm supporter. The programme is implemented in 18 countries in Africa and Asia. In addition, Iceland has a bilateral partnership with UNFPA on the elimination of FGM in Sierra Leone. During the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence in 2025 UNFPA and Iceland convened a high-level event at the United Nations Headquarters in New York focusing on the critical role of technology and artificial intelligence in accelerating efforts to eliminate female genital mutilation.

International events and projects

Iceland has actively used international platforms such as the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in New York to highlight and advocate for the need to end gender-based violence, both online and offline. At the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in recent years, the Government of Iceland has consistently emphasized that gender-based violence is a systemic global challenge requiring stronger, coordinated action. Iceland has highlighted both traditional and emerging forms of violence, including online abuse, and called for enhanced prevention, accountability, and support for survivors in both offline and digital spaces. It has also promoted international cooperation and shared national efforts, such as legal reforms and initiatives to combat sexual harassment and technology-facilitated violence. In parallel, Iceland has engaged actively in the Beijing+30 process, reaffirming its commitment to eliminating all forms of gender-based violence and advancing concrete, results-oriented action at the global level.

International commitments/action alliances

Within the UN Women Beijing+30 Action Agenda, "zero violence" is identified as a core global priority, with Member States - including Iceland - submitting concrete actions to turn commitments into measurable progress. In this context, Iceland has emphasized the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls, both offline and online, strengthening prevention, accountability, and survivor support systems, addressing emerging forms of digital gender-based violence, integrating gender perspectives across peace, security, and humanitarian efforts

Iceland's national statements in the Beijing+30 process underline a continued commitment to "eliminating all forms of violence and discrimination against women and girls" and to advancing practical, results-oriented measures in international cooperation. Overall, Iceland's contribution to the Beijing+30 high-level process reflects a clear focus on translating global commitments into concrete action toward zero gender-based violence

Iceland has played a leading role in the Generation Equality Forum, particularly through its active participation and co-leadership in the Action Coalition on Gender-Based Violence. As part of this coalition, Iceland has committed to concrete and measurable actions to prevent and eliminate gender-based violence at all levels—domestic, institutional, and global. These commitments include strengthening prevention efforts, supporting survivor services, promoting accountability, and addressing harmful social norms, including by engaging men and boys. Iceland has also emphasized the importance of tackling emerging forms of violence, such as online abuse, and integrating

gender-based violence prevention across development, humanitarian, and peacebuilding efforts. Overall, Iceland's participation in the Action Coalition reflects a strong commitment to translating global pledges into practical action toward the goal of zero gender-based violence.

Iceland is a founding member of the Global Partnership for Action on Gender-Based Online Harassment and Abuse, a 16-country initiative working to address gendered disinformation and technology-facilitated gender-based violence. Iceland actively promotes international cooperation to make digital spaces safer, with a strong focus on preventing and responding to online violence against women and girls. It advocates for stronger political commitment, coordinated global action, and improved accountability, including in human rights forums. Iceland also supports related initiatives led by UN Women and collaborates with partners such as Equimundo on research and awareness-raising on online backlash and harmful gender norms. Overall, Iceland uses the partnership to push for practical action, stronger cooperation with tech companies, and sustained global efforts to reduce gender-based online violence.

Focus at the United Nations

Human Rights Council

Iceland is a member of the United Nations Human Rights Council for the term 2025 to 2027. During this time Iceland actively contributes to the Council's core mandate of advancing the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms of all people and addressing human rights violations and abuses. Specific priorities include advancing the human rights of women and girls, upholding the rights of children, fighting discrimination against LGBTQI+ persons and addressing the linkages between human rights and the environment. Iceland works collaboratively across all regions and fora towards zero tolerance for sexual and gender-based violence, sexual exploitation and abuse, and sexual harassment. Iceland actively participates in negotiations on resolutions within the Human Rights Council that focus on gender equality and the rights of women and girls. This includes resolutions on the discrimination against women and girls, prevention of violence against women and girls and prevention of maternal mortality and morbidity to name a few. In negotiations, Iceland promotes and protects language on gender equality, including on sexual and reproductive health and rights and anti-discrimination against women and girls. During the membership Iceland continues to work towards achieving equal pay for work of equal value in the labour market, in this regard Iceland led a joint-statement commemorating International Equal Pay Day in 2025 as well as co-led statement on Human rights in care and support Systems alongside Chile, Mexico and Spain.

In the Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Reviews, Iceland presents recommendations to states relating to gender equality. As appropriate, Iceland recommends improved policies to combat sexual and gender-based violence, including better implementation of the Istanbul Convention, increased access to sexual and reproductive health services, and anti-discrimination laws and policies. All states under review get recommendations within these priority areas.

Iceland actively participated in negotiations on the triennial resolution 59/16 on Elimination of female genital mutilation and joined as a co-sponsor to the resolution which was adopted by consensus.

OHCHR contributions

Iceland contributes yearly unearmarked core-contribution to the Office of the High Commissioner to Human Rights. During bilateral meetings with the agency, Iceland ensures to uphold the importance of gender equality.

2.2 Article 14: Education

Iceland's education system (from preschool to upper secondary) is based on six core pillars: literacy, sustainability, health and welfare, democracy and human rights, equality and creativity. These interrelated values are foundational to the National Curriculum and shape learning environments, teaching methods and school operations. Equal opportunity is a cornerstone of Iceland's education laws. It ensures that all students have equal access to education

and are treated with respect, regardless of background, gender or physical ability. The National Curriculum is designed to prepare students to become active, autonomous and responsible participants in a democratic society, with respect for human values, tolerance and civic participation.

According to Icelandic law, the National Curriculum Guide for Compulsory Schools, parliamentary resolutions and international agreements, the Icelandic authorities are obligated to ensure education on sexual health, human rights and gender equality within the school system. The National Curriculum Guide for Compulsory Schools includes competency criteria related to education on individual sexual health, and these criteria are integrated throughout school activities and teaching. Although sex education takes place at all school levels, it is important that it reflects the age and maturity of the students concerned. The objectives and emphasis of sex education therefore differ at each level, and it is up to the leadership of each school to entrust their teachers and other professionals involved in the instruction to determine how the teaching is carried out. The competency criteria in the National Curriculum Guide for Compulsory Schools are divided into the primary, middle, and lower secondary levels. The following are competency criteria related to sex education:

Primary level, Classes 1-4: Students develop awareness of their own bodies and private body parts, as well as to explain physical differences between individuals. They learn to respect themselves and others, express emotions, empathize with others, and discuss their rights and responsibilities.

Middle level, Classes 5-7: Students learn about the physical development of individuals and genders, and develop an understanding of important values such as love, human dignity and social justice. They learn how different gender roles are shaped and change over time, how to evaluate the influence of role models and stereotypes, and how to recognize their own strengths and weaknesses. Students should also be able to understand the importance of mutual respect in relationships between genders.

Lower secondary level, Classes 8-10: By the end of 10th grade, students should be able to discuss and reason about sexual health, gender and stereotypes, the consequences of bullying, and take an active stance against violence. They should also recognize their own responsibility for physical and mental health and for responsible sexual behaviour.

Teaching and prevention programmes, materials and initiatives in formal education

The Icelandic government has emphasized the importance of prevention as an important tool in the fight against gender-based and sexual violence; the education system is a key part of this prevention work.

Parliamentary Resolution on preventive actions among children and young people against sexual and gender-based violence and harassment, together with a plan of action for 2021–2025

The first comprehensive plan on preventive actions among children and young people against sexual and gender-based violence and harassment, together with a plan of action for 2021-2025, was approved by the Althingi in the summer of 2020 and was fully funded. The plan was based on Iceland's international commitments, including those concerning eradication of violence against women and children. For the first time comprehensive improvements were proposed, based on preventive actions that are integrated with teaching and work at all school levels, in leisure centres, community centres and other youth and leisure activities. A steering group was appointed responsible for co-ordinating working methods, clarifying responsibilities, analysing overlaps and establishing effective co-operation between the responsible parties in the implementation of the plan. There were 18 responsible parties, including the following key parties: the Icelandic Association of Local Authorities, the Directorate of Education, the National Agency for Children and Families, the Directorate of Health and local education offices. By the conclusion of the period of the Parliamentary Resolution, most of the plan's actions were considered complete and a dashboard with an overview was published on the government's website.

The Parliamentary Resolution emphasised developing and updating educational materials on gender-based and sexual violence, along with teaching guidelines for all levels of schooling and making these materials accessible in a

single location. The website [Stopp-ofbeldi.is](https://stoppofbeldi.is)⁵⁴ was created, providing a variety of learning and educational material for preschools, primary schools and upper secondary schools, including learning material for special education programmes, aimed at the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence in a single location.

Another pillar of the Parliamentary Resolution was an interactive online course from the National Agency for Children and Families with basic education about sexual and gender-based violence. The objective of the actions related to educating staff who work with children was to have 90% of personnel complete the course programme. The courses explain symptoms displayed by children who have experienced sexual violence and how to react if a child reports violence and are intended for persons who work with children and young people. The courses are in four parts and focus on the following targeted audiences: 1) preschools, i.e. 2–6-year-old children, 2) junior grades of primary school and after-school centres, 6–12 year old children 3) higher grades of primary school and youth centres, 12– to 16-year-old children and 4) upper secondary schools, 16–18-year-old children. The course programme is designed in a way that enables managers to monitor whether staff members have completed the course and automatically provide the National Agency for Children and Families with information about the total number of participants. Following publication of the courses a series of meetings was held with school leaders at all educational levels and leaders in sports activities and other leisure activities such as art and music schools, to introduce the course and encourage participation. In addition, the prevention co-ordinator requested information from nearly all schools in the country on how many staff members had completed the course. As of January 2026, 16,640 people had finished these courses. In the 2–6-year-old age group, 6,615 people had completed the course; in the 6–12-year-old age group 5,020 people; in the age group 12–16-year-old, 3,477 people and in the oldest age group, 16–18-year-olds, 1,528 people had finished the course. It should be noted, however, that some individuals were registered in more than one age group, and it is also fairly common for staff members to watch the courses together but register as a single individual.

Another measure of the Parliamentary Resolution was to launch an educational campaign on sexual privacy, especially on the nature and consequences of digital sexual violence, along with increased education in primary schools and upper secondary schools. Subsequently the short film competition *Sexan* was held during the City of Reykjavík's Sexual Health Week (Week 6) in February 2023. The event encouraged 7th grade youngsters to make their own short film on boundaries and consent, as well as on the origin, manifestations and consequences of digital violence using their chosen approach and language, how digital violence appears from their perspective. The competition is structured so that all 7th-grade classes in compulsory schools across the country are invited to participate. Participants receive education and an opportunity to create and submit a short film addressing manifestations of digital violence. The competition has become established as an annual event and was held for the fourth time in spring 2026. *Sexan* has been organised by the emergency hotline in collaboration with the police, the City of Reykjavík, the National Association of Local Authorities, the Directorate of Equality, Icelandic National Broadcasting, the National Agency for Children and Families and the Directorate of Health.

Another action in the Parliamentary Resolution was on Prevention in Youth Centres. Stígamót, a centre for victims of sexual violence, was responsible for the action. Education on sexual and gender-based violence and harassment was directed at young people through youth centres. Stígamót continued the education of youth centre staff that has taken place in connection with the "Sick Love" (*Sjúk ást*) campaign.⁵⁵ In this way, the arrangement was formalized whereby young people who attended an annual dance held by Samfés, the national association of youth centres and youth houses, had to receive education in their youth centre. In the year 2025 at least 4500 young people received education from Stígamót on sexual and gender-based violence and harassment. Many youth centres also take the opportunity to deliver the education to all attendees, as well as entire year groups in collaboration with primary schools, and it can therefore be assumed that the education reached significantly more young people.

⁵⁴ See: <https://stoppofbeldi.namsefni.is/>

⁵⁵ See: <https://sjukast.is/>

One action was aimed at strengthening teaching in gender studies in upper secondary schools. A promotional campaign on the value of gender studies in upper secondary schools was to be set up. At the same time, learning material on sexual and gender-based violence and harassment, and on sexual health and sexual behaviour, was presented to upper secondary school teachers. Teaching materials for upper secondary schools was completed and published on the webpage StoppObeldi.is. In addition, a teacher's guide on gender-based violence and the school system was developed to support teachers in delivering the material. The guide, prepared by gender studies teachers in upper secondary schools, includes instructional guidance as well as ideas for classroom activities. The teaching materials, together with the guide and the importance of gender studies education, have been presented to headteachers, teachers and students in upper secondary schools on various occasions.

The digital handbook *Violence against Children*⁵⁶ addresses violence as experienced by children. Its purpose is to inform teachers and other school staff about the signs and effects of violence on children, and to raise awareness of prevention, intervention and the resources available to safeguard students' well-being. A summary of educational and informational materials is provided at the end of the book. The book was first published in 2014 as part of a national awareness initiative on sexual, emotional and physical violence against children, in collaboration with the Directorate of Education. The digital edition was revised and updated by the authors in co-operation with the Directorate of Education in 2022, following the Parliamentary Resolution on the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence and harassment among children and young people, along with a plan of action for 2021–2025. These prevention efforts are intended to be integrated into teaching and school activities at all educational levels, as well as in after-school programmes, youth centres, sports and other leisure activities. This book is a practical tool for school staff working in this field.

"I Know" (*Ég veit*)⁵⁷ is a website for preschools and compulsory schools that addresses violence, abuse, bullying and children's rights. The material was developed by Salaby in Norway in collaboration with local experts and has been translated, localized and adapted to the Icelandic national curriculum. The material should always be delivered by preschool and compulsory school staff who know the children or student group well and can tailor the instruction accordingly, adapting it to their context, explain it clearly, and create a safe framework for learning. The cartoons, photographs and texts are intended to provide a positive and safe access route to these topics. When introducing each topic, emphasis should be placed on basic knowledge about the body and emotions, healthy relationships and everyone's right to feel good and be safe. The National Agency for Children and Families instructs that, in preschools, the material should be used with groups of the oldest children or school-readiness groups, while teachers should always assess whether the material is appropriate for their particular student group.

The NCIP has, in co-operation with police departments nationwide, worked on prevention of digital violence among children and young people, including an awareness-raising campaign at the beginning of 2022. A presentation was distributed to all compulsory schools in the country with teenage classes, intended for students in the 8th grade, concerning digital violence and the value of consent in digital and sexual communication. This included instructions for teachers and an information letter for the children's parents in Icelandic, English and Polish. Where community police were active, the educational material was followed-up with visits to compulsory and secondary schools. Information and advice on Internet safety for children has also been added to the 112.is website.

The NCIP received a grant of ISK 10 million at the beginning of 2023 to develop technical solutions and to set up a notification and information sharing portal to ensure that children can use the Internet in a way that is compatible with their right to protection from harmful content.

Measures addressing forms of violence against women covered by the Istanbul Convention

⁵⁶ See: https://vefir.mms.is/flettibaekur/namsefni/ofbeldi_gegn_bornum/

⁵⁷ See: <https://egveit.is/>

The Act on the Integration of Services in the Interest of Children's Prosperity took effect in January 2022, often referred to as the Prosperity of Children Act for simplicity. The Act is designed to ensure that children and parents have easy access to the services they need and receive the right assistance at the right time, from the right parties. Integrating services and working together makes it easier for children and parents to receive appropriate support. The goal is for those working with children and their families to contribute to ensuring that protective factors are present in every child's life, often referred to as the five pillars of prosperity: Health and well-being, Education, Participation and social connection, Safety and protection, Quality of life and social status.

Children and their parents have access to a key contact in primary healthcare, preschools, elementary schools, secondary schools or social services. There they can receive assistance in accessing appropriate services, without barriers, at all levels of service. In more complex cases, children and parents have access to a case manager within social services or where the child's needs are most prominent. This is an offer for the integration of services for parents and children upon request. The purpose of the legislation is to ensure that children and their families do not fall between systems and are not shuffled between service providers of municipalities or state institutions. The starting point in everything we do should be the child and their best interests.

The Prosperity of Children Act is designed to catch children that need support or protection at an early age. Issues of domestic violence are a part of that, as well as concerns in other parts of the Istanbul convention, such as forced marriage, female genital mutilation, forced abortion and sterilization, and violence in the name of honour.

In 2024, the Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Infrastructure, Ministry of Education and Children, Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs decided to increase the number of measures regarding violence among and against children and to increase funding for actions in response.

Extensive cross-ministerial co-operation has taken place to map the manifestations of violence against and among children and youth. The measures are based on this work. An action group has already begun the work, prioritizing and implementing the measures. Further measures were taken in 2024, with the aim of increasing the multidisciplinary approach to violence among children. The measures are:

- Support treatment resources at the National Agency for Children and Families.
- Establish protocols for children below the age of criminal responsibility and resources for children who commit serious violence.
- Review case handling and resources for children of an age of criminal responsibility.
- Strengthen community policing.
- Implement regional co-ordination nationwide.
- Strengthen the national team of the Centre for Education and School Services to support children, parents and schools.
- Establish resources for youth aged 16–17 who are neither in employment nor education (NEET).
- Strengthen youth work in the capital district of Breiðholt.
- Strengthen Flotinn – the mobile youth centre.
- Increase education and prevention – community campaign.
- Promote parental engagement – the SAMAN group.
- Launch an international co-operation project on a sustainable society.
- Co-ordinate actions against violence and formulate future strategy.
- Establish screening for violence in elementary schools.
- Create guidelines for healthcare professionals to respond to female genital mutilation.
- Update and co-ordinate protocols at all healthcare institutions for services to children who are victims of violence.
- Prepare educational materials for healthcare professionals on correct responses and procedures.
- Clarify communication between child protection services, police and healthcare regarding the outcomes of cases.

- Co-ordinate nationwide protocols for healthcare services as well as forensic examinations and sampling when sexual violence against a child is suspected.
- Define a future vision for healthcare services for children living with violence.
- Increase law enforcement response capabilities and visible policing.
- Increase support for Tier 1, 2 and 3 services in all municipalities regarding prosperity.
- Support the implementation of the Child Protection Action Plan 2023–2027.
- Increase follow-up on offenses committed by children and youth.

The Ministry of Education and Children distributed ISK 474 million in 2025 to municipalities for efforts to improve children's prosperity, with an emphasis on countering the trend of increased violence among children. These grants are part of the government's measures against violence among and against children.

One of the largest projects to receive funding is the Emergency and Response Team for Violence Among Children, a collaboration between the City of Reykjavík and other municipalities in the capital area, the National Agency for Children and Families and the Reykjavík Metropolitan Police. The goal of the project is to reduce violence and ensure a co-ordinated and rapid response from service providers in the spirit of the Prosperity of Children Act. The team, which is multidisciplinary and centralized for all municipalities in the capital area, is activated within 24 hours when cases of violence involving children aged 10–18 arise. The project also includes follow-up, school support and professional guidance. The University of Iceland is responsible for the evaluation of the project in co-operation with responders and parents. The new Emergency and Response Team has already begun operations.

The Ministry of Education and Children has prioritized the implementation of the Prosperity of Children Act in very close co-operation with the National Agency for Children and Families, municipalities, the healthcare sector, police and NGOs.

A dashboard (BI board) on the welfare of children was developed, with special emphasis on creating a comprehensive focus on the welfare of children in Iceland, based on various existing data in various organizations.

Furthermore, Child-Friendly Iceland is a policy for the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child for 2021–2024. The main purpose of the policy was to implement the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child so that children's human rights would be strengthened and implemented in a targeted manner. The Ministry of Education and Children has now published a report on its implementation and the status of actions.

The policy was approved by Althingi in June 2021 and marked the first comprehensive implementation plan for the Convention on the Rights of the Child by the Icelandic government. The policy was developed in co-operation with the government's Steering Group on Children's Affairs and also involved public entities and NGOs. In the formulation of the policy, emphasis was placed on ensuring that the best interests of children were always prioritized and that a holistic vision was developed for policymaking in this sector, taking into account the perspectives of all parties involved in children's and families' affairs — not least the children themselves.

The Parliamentary Resolution proposal included both a policy and an action plan with 27 measures aimed at strengthening children's rights in Iceland. Actions were undertaken across ministries in co-operation with diverse parties possessing extensive experience and knowledge in the field, such as Save the Children (*Barnaheill*), the Ombudsman for Children, UNICEF Iceland, and others. Emphasis was placed on implementing procedures and processes that ensure equality and the active participation of children and youth within the administration, increased co-operation between public entities, and impact assessments based on children's rights and welfare. In total, 85% of the actions were completed or in progress as of May 2025.

One example of an action undertaken was the so-called Child Rights Impact Assessment. A vital part of implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child is involving children in all decision-making, as set forth in Article 3 of the Convention. The objective of this assessment is for authorities to systematically consider what effects their decisions have on children and their rights. A guide and template were published on the government's website in November 2024, intended to simplify the implementation of the assessment. The use of Child Rights Impact Assessments is intended to promote the continued implementation of the Convention in the domestic legal

environment. The guide was developed in co-operation with the Ombudsman for Children, and work is underway for further implementation and use of the assessment in government.

Additionally, several acts of legislation were revised during the policy's term based on the provisions of the Convention, with special emphasis on early support, the participation of children and the best interests of the child (cf. Articles 3 and 12 of the Convention). Examples include the revision of acts concerning preschools, primary schools and secondary schools, where various changes were made to ensure increased involvement of children and youth in policymaking, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention and the recommendations of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child to the Icelandic government.

Success in other areas covered by the policy should also be mentioned, such as the Child-Friendly Cities project and the Rights-Respecting Schools and After-School Programmes led by UNICEF; increased educational material on the implementation of the Convention produced by the Ombudsman for Children; and the consultation forum of ministerial representatives (the Government Steering Group on Children's Affairs), which was codified in the Act on Integrated Services in the Interest of Children's Prosperity. Furthermore, a dashboard with regularly updated and accessible statistical data on children's prosperity was established. Additionally, significant success was achieved in international co-operation, where Iceland has actively advocated for children's human rights on the international stage during the policy term and initiated a newly published ISO international standard for services for child victims of violence, based on the operations of the Icelandic Barnahús Children's House.

The implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child is an ongoing task for the government, involving the re-evaluation of procedures, laws and regulations with a view to ensuring children's rights.

Digital literacy and online safety in formal curricula

The website vitundin.is⁵⁸ focuses on digital citizenship education and aims to empower children and young people by teaching them the skills and knowledge they need to learn and participate actively in today's digital society. The learning material is designed to help students develop both the skills and knowledge needed in a digital world; while also promoting positive values and attitudes so they use technology in a thoughtful and beneficial way. In the 2024 National Curriculum Guide for Compulsory Schools, competence criteria related to digital citizenship were included for the first time, with five criteria for each age level. These criteria and the learning material on the website are closely aligned.

The material is intended for grades 1–10 and is adapted from the US programme Common Sense Education. It is based on the latest research in digital citizenship and is structured around six core areas: Media balance and well-being, Privacy and security, Digital footprint and identity, Relationships and communication, Cyberbullying, digital drama, and hate speech, and News and media literacy.

The material includes slides, worksheets, videos and teaching guides. It is most effective when teachers familiarize themselves thoroughly with the teaching guides to ensure the content is delivered effectively.

The website midlalaesi.is⁵⁹ features information on media and digital literacy, including six videos on social media and children's well-being, news and fake news, exposure to pornography and hate and bullying online. It also includes teaching support materials for teachers with each video, along with supplementary content and assignments for classroom use.

At the beginning of 2024, the Icelandic Safer Internet Centre (SAFT) was transferred from the non-profit organization Home and School to the Media Commission and the SAFT project was moved from the Ministry of Education and Children to the Ministry of Culture, Innovation and Higher Education. The change also means that the Media

⁵⁸ <https://vitundin.is/>

⁵⁹ <https://midlalaesi.is/>

Commission will, among other things, be the contact point and contracting party for the European Union in the European Union's Safer Internet Programme (SAFT) and will be responsible for its implementation in formal co-operation with stakeholders in Iceland. Education for children and young people about the Internet and media issues has always been a top priority of the SAFT project, as well as raising awareness about responsible Internet and media use and digital citizenship.

Eliminating gender stereotypes in teaching materials

One of the responsibilities of the Directorate of Education and School Services is the publication of educational materials that support students in their learning and teachers in their work. A Handbook on Education Material for Curriculum Authors is intended to support the professional and purposeful creation of teaching materials. It combines quality criteria and practical guidelines that are useful to authors – whether the material is intended for print, digital media or both. The handbook discusses the creation of curriculum materials based on human rights and equality, i.e. free from prejudice, for example, based on place of residence, disability, gender, sexual orientation, social class or religion. It actively counters attitudes that promote or sustain inequality or racial prejudice and takes a clear stance against all forms of violence and oppression. The material addresses issues concerning minority groups with respect and with the aim that students from all groups can relate to the content. It presents diverse backgrounds and the circumstances of different students in a constructive and balanced manner. Gender equality is upheld throughout the material. One-sided or stereotypical representations of genders are avoided and there is balance in gender representation in both text and images. Children and adults are shown in a variety of roles, not merely traditional gender roles.

Interventions aimed at preventing gender-based violence and empowering girls, including those at risk of intersectional discrimination.

As part of parliamentary resolution on preventive measures against sexual and gender-based violence and harassment among children and young people, along with an action plan for 2021–2025, educational materials have been developed to support school staff, including a teacher's guide aimed at strengthening knowledge on prevention, education and appropriate responses to gender-based violence. The approach places strong emphasis on early intervention, both in supporting child victims and in addressing harmful behaviour at an early stage, including children at risk of developing violent behaviour. These measures contribute to creating safer environments and empowering children, including those in vulnerable situations.

The National Programme Against gender-based violence against women 2026-2030 includes actions targeting minorities. One action provides for educational materials and teaching guidelines to be developed for professionals and others involved in services to disabled people on sexual health, manifestations of violence against disabled people, social relationships, intimate relationships, etc. so that knowledge can be passed on to disabled people. Another focuses on education on honour-based violence and negative social control of women and girls. Education on the symptoms and manifestations of honour-based violence and negative social control will be prepared and disseminated to staff in social services, the police, within the school and leisure sector and the health system. A third action aims at mapping honour-based violence and negative social restraint of women and girls. Attention will be directed at social and child welfare services, the education system, leisure, sports and recreational activities and the health system.

Communication Consultant for sports and youth affairs

A communication consultant for sports and youth affairs began work in 2020. The role of the consultant is, among other things, to guide individuals who seek advice in connection with incidents or misdeeds that have occurred in organized sports and youth activities concerning, for example, bullying, violence, gender-based or sexual harassment. The consultant also provides sports and youth clubs with prevention education in this field. The communication consultant for sports and youth affairs received a grant of ISK 8 million in 2022 in response to increased demand for services. In 2022 the consultant published a harmonized response plan for violence, bullying

and similar incidents for sports and youth activities. Furthermore, checklists and guidelines were prepared for the recruitment of staff and volunteers in sports and youth activities.

2.3 Article 15: Training of professionals

Reference is made to Tables I and II in the appendix for an overview of the professional groups that receive initial and ongoing training on the various forms of violence against women and domestic violence.

Regarding the training of police officers, the education of the police is carried out at university level and the University of Akureyri is responsible for the education. The University of Akureyri currently offers a 120-credit, two-year, work-related diploma programme in police science, which qualifies students to work as a police officer. It is also possible to complete a bachelor's degree in police science consisting of 180 credits. The programme includes two mandatory courses, Violence and Power Relations and Diversity and Law Enforcement. These issues are also covered in other courses, such as Policing (an introductory course that covers, among other things, the history of policewomen, and women and minorities in relation to police work). Both courses that cover the subject are also integrated with practical teaching in the Education and Career Development Centre, so students get to experience connecting theoretical and practical learning in these areas. The Police Education and Career Development Centre manages and organizes the practical part of the programme in collaboration with the University of Akureyri. Emphasis is placed on police-related training and practical projects.

The course Violence and Power Relations discusses violence with a broad reference to power imbalances. The subject is examined from a sociological, psychological and legal perspective. The causes, consequences and circumstances of violence are examined, as well as mental, physical, sexual and financial manifestations. Sexual violence is particularly discussed, including rape, digital sexual violence and sexual abuse of children. Domestic violence and violence in intimate relationships are also discussed. Research is examined on how unequal power positions can lead to gender-based violence, the #MeToo movement and women's experiences of the justice system. Questions concerning persons of foreign origin, queer relationships, sexual offences against people with disabilities and sexual and domestic violence against boys and men are special topics. Human trafficking in the Icelandic context is also discussed, both prostitution and labour trafficking. It discusses police investigations of sexual crimes in a broad sense, interdisciplinary collaboration between the police and other agencies and organizations regarding both victims and perpetrators, and prevention of sexual violence. Three seminars focus solely on domestic violence. An additional four seminars address it in related contexts: violence against children (two sessions), legal rights of victims, and sex trafficking. The course is mostly taught on-line and runs for 12-13 weeks and includes a 2 x 45-minute seminar each week (a 45-minute lecture and 45 minutes of discussion). In addition, students complete 7 written assignments in which they apply academic approach to largely video-based material, including public talks and documentaries on different forms of gender-based violence. Students also complete 6–7 short examinations over the duration of the course, as well as a mid-term examination and a final examination. The students meet twice in person in relation to the course: firstly, to undertake a practical exercise focusing on a complex case which includes suspicion of sex trafficking and intimate partner violence where students conduct a preliminary interview with a victim (actor), and secondly, in a four-hour seminar in which representatives from governmental and non-governmental specialised services present their work. Participating organisations include the Women's Shelter, Barnahús Children's House, Stígamót (centre for victims of sexual violence), Heimilisfriður (counselling and support for perpetrators of intimate partner violence), and others.

The course Diversity and Law Enforcement applies a sociological perspective to social problems, law enforcement, equality and diversity in modern societies. It discusses groups that live in subordination in society and seeks to increase understanding of how power systems work, with particular attention to gender roles, poverty, sexuality, race, class and the interaction of these factors that often leads to social problems. Emphasis is placed on definitions of social problems, the theoretical basis of such definitions and the impact they are believed to have on groups and individuals in modern society.

Domestic violence is further addressed in the following mandatory courses: The Penal Code (6 ECTS), Criminal Procedure (6 ECTS) and Forensic Psychology (6 ECTS), and in vocational training courses.

Regarding teaching in the internship, the emphasis is on domestic violence and the handling of such cases in the internship III, for second-year students. There are three sessions and this topic is covered in session 1. The assignment is a report on domestic violence. At the beginning of session 2, there is a lecture on what could have been done better in the reporting process, and the students submit their peer-reviewed reports. In the same session, there are practical exercises on domestic violence, which are most recently divided into three assignments. Assignment one is taking statements from victims of assault at the police station, securing evidence and reviewing the B-safer checklist. Assignment two is investigating the scene, the apartment where the domestic violence had occurred and evidence that children live in the home. Assignment three is arresting the perpetrator in the case and transporting him to a prison cell. Practical exercises in session 1, with a focus on domestic violence, comprise 5 teaching hours. Students are taught: connecting/disconnecting case units with secondary parties, recording party relationships in the name register, adding a photo to the name register, search options in LÖKE (NPIC's case file system), searching for individuals and vehicles, using the blacklist in the police information database LÖKE, using an information sheet for arrested persons and thoroughly reviewing Article 117 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. The assignment is an initial report on domestic violence (related to practical exercises). Students are given a checklist to work with. The initial report is to be accompanied by an arrest report, information sheet for arrested persons and a longer journal entry. This report is then reviewed by the students with a peer review and checklist. Session II – 1 lesson, reviews the points after writing the report on domestic violence. Students submit homework which is a review of the initial report and supporting documents on domestic violence. The final exam in LÖKE and reporting was on domestic violence, the total time to complete the exam is 5 lesson hours.

Taboo (*Tabú*), a feminist disability movement that focuses on multiple forms of discrimination against people with disabilities, assisted the Centre for Police Training and Professional Development in preparing educational material for the police. The Centre has held courses for active police officers on how violence is manifest in the lives of people with disabilities. The aim of the courses was to give professionals in the field of law enforcement dealing with the disabled a deeper understanding of the history and situation of people with disabilities and how violence in the lives of people with disabilities is sometimes manifest in ways different from that of non-disabled people.

With regard to the training of judges, the Judicial Administration, an independent administrative institution established in 2018, is responsible for training and educating judges and other court staff, including in the field of gender-based and sexual violence. Continuing education for judges in Iceland is governed by Act No. 50/2016, on the Judiciary. While the Act does not impose a formal obligation on judges to participate in regular training, it underscores the importance of continuous professional development and recognises it as a natural and integral part of judicial work. As part of this framework, judges and court staff are offered regular training on legal issues. The Judicial Administration is responsible, inter alia, for organising continuing education for judges and other employees in the service of the courts. In planning such training, care is taken to ensure that it covers a broad and diverse range of topics.

The Department of Education at Landspítali University Hospital and the Icelandic Health Care Development Centre are working together to provide education on domestic violence, its symptoms and remedies. Educational material has been published and made available on the website of the Health Care Development Centre. The material is intended to provide general information for healthcare workers about domestic violence in order to promote awareness and increased discussion. Courses have also been held for professionals at healthcare facilities and hospitals over the past eight to ten years in collaboration with midwives at Landspítali on domestic violence and how to respond. In 2023, new procedures were developed that are available to everyone on the website of the Health Care Development Centre. The procedures include asking about violence when taking a health history and are intended to make it easier for healthcare workers to inquire, show support and guide their clients.

Regarding education for health care workers at university level on gender based and sexual violence reference is made to Table 1 in the appendix. Ensuring the expertise of specialist support services is integrated into both the

design and implementation of training within several health-related education programmes. External experts from specialised services regularly contribute to teaching and training activities, including professionals from Bjarkarhlíð, Barnahús, the University Hospital emergency service for victims of sexual violence, and other specialised healthcare and support services.

The Directorate of Equality offers two courses on gender-based violence. One of them is an open online course for all professionals. The aim of the course is to increase the knowledge of professionals throughout Iceland about domestic violence and respond to questions such as: How do we identify victims and perpetrators? How should one respond? What resources are available in Iceland? What needs to be considered when working on cases involving people with disabilities, pregnant individuals, people of foreign origin, LGBTQ+ people, and individuals from other minority groups? The course consists of 13 videos: Violence in Close Relationships, Domestic Violence – The Role of the Police, Child Protection's Handling of Domestic Violence Cases, Procedures for Receiving Victims of Intimate Partner Violence/Domestic Violence, Domestic Violence During Pregnancy – Prevalence and Impact, Bjarkarhlíð – Centre for Victims of Violence, Heimilisfriður – Treatment for Men and Women Who Use Violence in Close Relationships, Rights Protection for People with Disabilities – Violence in Close Relationship, From the Women's Shelter, Does the System and Society Respond the Same Way When the Victim Is a Woman of Foreign Origin, LGBTQ+ People and Domestic Violence, Domestic Violence and People with Disabilities, and Screening for Violence.

The other course on gender-based violence is on-site instruction for workplaces, who can order the training from the Directorate of Equality. The aim is to enable employees and managers to recognise the manifestations and consequences of sexual harassment and to have tools to combat such behaviour. Emphasis is placed on increased awareness and how workplaces can create a better working environment and more open discussion on the issue. Special emphasis is also placed on the responsibility of managers and the importance of a good workplace culture. The course is also available in English. According to the Act on Equal Status and Equal Rights Irrespective of Gender, No. 150/20220, workplaces must take special measures to prevent gender-based violence, gender-based harassment and sexual harassment. The course is a response to the requirements of the law.

The National Programme against gender-based violence against women 2026-2030 includes an action to educate the justice system about gender-based violence against women. The action addresses GREVIO Recommendation No. 94, which calls for education and knowledge-sharing among professionals involved in violence cases, particularly within the justice system. Based on a study of the attitudes and experiences of professionals handling gender-based violence cases within the justice system, education will be prepared for the police, prosecutors, district magistrates and judges. Training and education for experts on the causes, manifestations and consequences of gender-based violence is important in combating such violence and in ensuring fair proceedings within the justice system. It is important that police, prosecutors and court personnel receive education on the handling of gender-based violence cases within the justice system. It is also considered useful for subsequent proceedings within the judicial system that similar training be provided to the employees of District Commissioners working in family matters, especially cases that are prosecuted on the basis of the Children's Act, the Marriage Act, the Act on Legal Competence and the Act on the Protection of Rights of Disabled Persons. If victims do not contact the police following a gender-based violence case, the case could possibly be discussed during the handling of family matters. To ensure objective assessment of evidence and a better experience for victims of the hearings, it is important that experts within the judicial system and the courts have knowledge and understanding of the reactions that trauma, such as gender-based violence, can have on victims' statements.

Evidence assessment in sexual offense cases is unique in that it is based primarily on an assessment of the credibility of the victim's and defendant's statements and on circumstantial evidence. With the use of social media, interpersonal communication is increasingly taking place through messages and other digital media. Experts within the system, detectives, prosecutors and judges, need to know how digital evidence is obtained and how to process and read the data to ensure its quality and validity. Therefore, education on evidence assessment and the acquisition of evidence, especially digital data, in sexual offense cases must be ensured. Education among experts on the definition of rape based on lack of consent must be strengthened, cf. the amendment to the provision of the

first paragraph of Article 194 of the Code of Criminal Procedure by Act No. 16/2018. There, rape is defined as based on lack of consent, i.e. that intercourse or other sexual acts can be punishable if explicit consent to participate in a sexual act is not given. This approach is called the consent principle.

It is important that the legal benefits for people with disabilities, cf. Act No. 61/2022, on amendments to the Code of Criminal Procedure, are adequately reflected in the handling of cases at the investigation stage and in court. The Act provides, among other things, for a judge to decide in certain cases that a statement from a disabled victim or witness will be taken in specially equipped premises. For these reasons, it is necessary to educate the police, prosecutors and judges about the position of people with disabilities in the legal system and how their needs can be met.

2.4 Article 16: Preventive intervention and treatment programmes

Preventive and treatment programmes for perpetrators of domestic and sexual violence

Since Iceland's baseline report, the government has continued to emphasize the importance of providing perpetrators of domestic violence and sexual violence with appropriate assistance and treatment, as these measures have a preventative value and can preclude continued or repeated violence.

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing is currently renewing a contract with a service provider (*Heimilisfriður*) specializing in treatment for perpetrators. In addition, a contract remains in effect with a service provider for the programme Take the Step, that offers support to individuals who are concerned about their sexual behaviour and consider themselves at risk of committing sexual violence.

The Parliamentary Resolution on a Gender Equality Action Programme for 2026-2029 was approved by Althingi at the beginning of February this year. Action 26 in the programme, Services for perpetrators of domestic and sexual violence, focuses on improving services for perpetrators of domestic and sexual violence. It proposes mapping available interventions in comparable countries to identify ways to expand and diversify support options in Iceland. The goal is to examine what types of support exist abroad, who provides them and how effective they are, with the aim of increasing the number of resources for perpetrators of gender-based violence in Iceland.

Defendants in sexual offense cases have been provided with psychological support through Take the Step in the form of a support interview following police questioning.

Information for perpetrators and/or defendants in cases of sexual violence has been added to the emergency helpline portal 112.is on ways to stop using violence and on the handling of cases by the justice system. Special mention is made of the resources "Take the Step", Heimilisfriður and the Red Cross helpline. In June 2022 a Parliamentary Resolution on a National Action Plan on Immigration Issues for 2022-2025 was adopted. One of the actions under that plan is aimed at ensuring that victims and perpetrators of violence of foreign origin know the services and resources that are available.

In 2022, a grant of ISK 5 million was awarded to Stígamót for projects to mobilise men in combating violence and for an analysis of Stígamót data on perpetrators of violence.

Measures taken to increase the number of boys and men attending perpetrator programmes

The National Programme against Gender-based Violence against Women 2026-2030 includes an action that involves making the probation of perpetrators of intimate partner violence and sexual violence increasingly conditional on their undergoing treatment. The action involves training for prosecutors and judges on making probation of persons convicted of intimate partner violence or sexual violence conditional on treatment. In tandem with this, rules will be established on supervision by the Icelandic Prison and Probation Service of the enforcement of suspended sentences that are suspended subject to special conditions.

The awareness-raising campaign "Take the Step" concerning digital sexual relations between adults and children was launched in the fall of 2023. The campaign encouraged persons who view, search for, display, save, possess or distribute sexual material involving children to cease these activities and seek the help of experts through the resource "Take the Step".

An awareness campaign against sexual violence directed at men, "Don't be that guy", was launched in December 2021. The awareness raising was aimed at men between the ages of 18-35 and, among other things, was aimed at increasing awareness of unsuitable views and where the boundaries lie in interaction with others. The campaign was intended to highlight views towards sexual offences and point out that sexual violence starts earlier than many people think. At the same time, the campaign was aimed at countering the demonising of perpetrators and opening up discussion of unacceptable attitudes in men's relationships with women.

Efforts have been made to increase the visibility of existing programmes Heimilisfriður and Take the Step both through social media and through various educational and awareness-raising initiatives. Demand for these services has steadily increased in recent years.

Applying standards of best practice in perpetrator programmes

Heimilisfriður is a part of a range of treatment programmes in the Nordic countries based on the work of *Alternativ til Vold* (Alternatives to Violence, ATV) in Norway. There is close collaboration with ATV, and staff at Heimilisfriður undergo specialised training and engage in continuing professional development.

Ensuring the safety of victims

Heimilisfriður conducts risk assessment at the beginning and at the end of treatment, both for perpetrators and their partners. There is also a good co-operation with other stakeholders involved in domestic violence cases, such as the police, the healthcare system, emergency services (112) and other relevant stakeholders.

Monitoring and evaluation of outcomes of programmes

Two evaluations of the service that Heimilisfriður offers have been carried out, both of which have demonstrated positive results. The evaluations examined the attitudes and experiences of clients and their partners regarding the programme.

2.5 Article 18: General obligations

Multi-agency co-operation mechanisms for the protection and support of victims of violence against women

Icelandic authorities have established several multi-agency co-operation mechanisms, structures and co-ordinated measures intended to protect and support victims of the forms of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention. These mechanisms are based on inter-institutional collaboration between state authorities, municipalities, health services and specialised support services, with the objective of ensuring timely protection, integrated support and effective referral pathways for victims of gender-based violence against women.

Integrated support centres for adult victims of violence

A key example of multi-agency co-operation in Iceland is Bjarkarhlíð, a family justice and support centre for adult victims of violence located in Reykjavík. Bjarkarhlíð functions as a multidisciplinary "one-stop-shop" service, enabling victims to access a range of services in a single location.

The centre brings together social services of the City of Reykjavík, healthcare professionals, police representatives, legal advisers and specialised counselling services. It also co-operates with civil society organisations with expertise in violence against women, including sexual violence and victim support services.

The model is designed to reduce the burden on victims of navigating multiple institutions and to ensure co-ordinated, victim-centred assistance. Services include psychosocial counselling, legal guidance, safety planning, referrals to

shelters or health services, and support in interactions with law enforcement and child protection authorities where relevant.

A comparable regional model, Bjarmahlíð in Akureyri, provides similar integrated services for victims outside the capital area. It operates on the same principles of inter-agency co-operation between municipalities, healthcare providers, police authorities and specialised support actors, thereby improving geographical accessibility to co-ordinated support services across the country.

Multi-agency response for child victims and witnesses of violence

The Barnahús Children's House model constitutes a long-established and internationally recognised multi-agency response for child victims and witnesses of violence in Iceland.

Barnahús brings together child protection services, police, prosecutors, medical professionals and psychologists in a single child-friendly setting. The aim is to avoid repeated interviews, ensure co-ordinated forensic interviewing and provide integrated assessment, treatment and case follow-up.

The model applies in cases involving sexual or physical abuse as well as situations where children have witnessed domestic violence. It is guided by the principle of acting in the best interests of the child, with a strong emphasis on safety, recovery and avoiding re-traumatisation.

Inter-agency procedures in domestic violence cases

In cases of domestic violence involving adult victims, the police follow co-ordinated procedures in co-operation with municipal social services, child protection authorities, emergency healthcare services and shelters, depending on the circumstances of the case.

Where children are present in the household, notifications are systematically made to child protection services. Victims may be referred to emergency shelters, counselling services or healthcare providers. These co-ordinated responses aim to ensure immediate safety, risk reduction and continuity of support following police intervention.

Co-operation with shelters and civil society organisations

Shelter and crisis support services constitute an essential component of the multi-agency framework.

The Women's Shelter and specialised civil society organisations with expertise in domestic and sexual violence co-operate with public authorities through referral pathways, consultation and service provision. These organisations provide specialist trauma-informed support that complements statutory services and forms an integral part of the protection system.

Gender-sensitive and victim-centred approach

Icelandic multi-agency responses increasingly reflect a gender-sensitive understanding of violence against women as a manifestation of structural inequality. Existing integrated service models and referral systems prioritise the safety of women and girl victims, confidentiality, informed consent and empowerment, while seeking to minimise secondary victimisation. Victims are provided with information on their rights, available protection measures and support options, thereby enabling informed decision-making regarding criminal proceedings and protective measures.

Furthermore, as has already been described above, all police departments have signed declarations of co-operation in their areas of operation with municipalities, secondary schools, health institutions, District Commissioners and other key stakeholders on regional crime prevention consultations, under the heading "Safer Regions". These initiatives have placed particular emphasis on improving services relating to domestic violence and sexual offences, including the development of common procedures, joint response training and standardised forms for referral and information-sharing concerning victims. The NCIP has supported the development of the "Safer Regions" model with the support of the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing.

Resources

Multi-agency mechanisms are funded through a combination of state budget allocations, municipal contributions and service agreements or grants to civil society organisations.

Human resources include social workers, psychologists, legal professionals, healthcare staff, police liaison officers, child protection specialists and administrative personnel. Resource availability varies to some extent between regions and services, and efforts continue to strengthen nationwide coverage and the sustainability of specialist support services.

Evaluation and impact

The continued operation and expansion of integrated service models such as Bjarkarhlíð, Bjarmahlíð and Barnahús indicate that these mechanisms are considered key components of Iceland's response to violence against women and domestic violence.

Barnahús has received significant international recognition and has informed similar models in other jurisdictions. Domestic evaluations and stakeholder feedback generally highlight improved accessibility, strengthened inter-agency co-ordination and reduced secondary victimisation as key benefits of the integrated service approach.

At the same time, the authorities recognise the importance of ongoing monitoring, data collection and periodic evaluation to ensure consistent service quality and equal access across the country.

Legal and policy basis for multi-agency co-operation mechanisms for support services

In Iceland, several co-operation mechanisms and integrated service structures for the provision of support to victims of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention are based on legal and policy documents that either require or promote multidisciplinary and inter-agency approaches.

A key example is the aforementioned Barnahús model, which is supported by the legal framework governing child protection, criminal procedure and the rights of child victims. Relevant legislation includes the Child Protection Act and the Code of Criminal Procedure, as well as provisions regulating investigative interviews of children and child-sensitive justice procedures. These legal instruments provide the basis for co-ordinated actions involving the police, prosecutors, child protection authorities, psychologists, healthcare professionals and courts. The model is therefore grounded in law and reflects a mandatory multidisciplinary approach aimed at preventing repeated interviewing, reducing secondary victimisation and safeguarding the best interests of the child.

In contrast, integrated service centres for adult victims, such as Bjarkarhlíð in Reykjavík and Bjarmahlíð in North Iceland, are primarily based on governmental policy decisions, service agreements and national strategies. While not established through a single dedicated statute, their operation is consistent with national policy objectives and Iceland's obligations under the Istanbul Convention, particularly regarding specialist support services and multi-agency co-operation. These centres operate as formalised one-stop services through structured collaboration between state authorities, municipalities and relevant institutions.

More broadly, successive national action plans on violence against women, domestic violence and gender equality provide a policy framework that explicitly promotes co-ordinated responses, prevention efforts, victim protection and inter-institutional co-operation. These policy instruments guide co-operation between ministries, law enforcement authorities, municipalities, healthcare services and educational institutions, and support the development of protocols, training and referral pathways.

In addition, amendments to the Code of Criminal Procedure, No. 88/2008, including reforms strengthening victims' rights and protection for persons with disabilities, further support co-ordinated justice responses and improve the procedural role of victim representatives.

Finally, the legal framework governing municipalities and social services creates an operational duty to co-operate in practice, particularly in domestic violence cases where municipal welfare services, police, healthcare providers and shelters must co-ordinate their responses.

The one-stop-shop approach

Iceland has partially implemented a one-stop-shop approach in its support services for victims of violence against women.

Bjarkarhlíð and Bjarmahlíð function as one-stop-shop type centres for adult victims, providing integrated access to multiple services in a single co-ordinated setting. This reduces the burden on victims and ensures streamlined access to assistance.

For children, the Barnahús model represents a fully developed one-stop-shop system, integrating investigative, protective and therapeutic functions in one child-friendly environment.

However, not all services are delivered through a one-stop-shop model. Many remain distributed across separate institutions, particularly outside urban areas or where specialised services are required. In such cases, integration is achieved through co-ordination, referral pathways and inter-agency case management rather than physical co-location.

2.6 Article 20: General support services

General framework

Iceland provides recovery-oriented support for victims of violence against women through a combination of specialised integrated services, general health and social welfare systems, and municipal support measures. These services aim to ensure psychosocial recovery, access to healthcare, financial support where relevant, as well as assistance with education, training, employment and housing.

The National Action Programme against gender-based violence against women 2026-2030 includes an action on mapping out co-ordinated work processes and guidelines. It will be ensured that work processes for those involved in providing services to victims of gender-based violence, including the police, social services and child protection services, include all types of gender-based violence covered by the Istanbul Convention. The action meets GREVIO recommendations No. 94, on guidelines and clear work processes in all services to victims, No. 249, on the importance of training for law enforcement officers, Nos. 112 and 131, on the importance of interdisciplinary co-operation, and No. 113, on the need for clear work processes in this regard. The aim of the action is to respond to all manifestations of violence against women in a rapid and effective manner and, where appropriate, make decisions on necessary improvements, co-ordination and areas of responsibility. GREVIO has highlighted the importance of governments having clear procedures and guidelines to respond to all forms of violence that cover all women, including women of foreign origin and women at risk of multiple discrimination. To address this, the action includes reviewing the procedures and guidelines that exist for those involved in providing services to victims of gender-based violence, including the police, social services and child protection services. On the basis of such a mapping, it will be decided whether further harmonisation of procedures and clear areas of responsibility are needed to ensure that all manifestations of violence are addressed in accordance with the Istanbul Convention and take into account the different needs of women, including women of foreign origin and women at risk of multiple discrimination.

Integrated support centres

Bjarkarhlíð has operated since 2017 as a multidisciplinary, low-threshold service based on co-operation between state authorities, the City of Reykjavík, the Reykjavík Metropolitan Police and civil society organisations, including Stígamót, the Women's Shelter and the Women's Counselling Service.

The centre follows a Family Justice Centre model and provides co-ordinated, victim-centred services in one location for persons aged 18 and older. Services include psychosocial counselling, trauma-informed support, legal guidance, safety planning, and structured referrals to health, social welfare and justice services.

Partner organisations are permanently or regularly present at the centre, ensuring integrated access to specialised support. The police provide on-site assistance and information on legal procedures, while NGOs contribute specialist counselling and advocacy services.

The service is free of charge and receives users from across the country. Demand has increased significantly, with 785 individuals attending a first appointment in 2024. In response, services have expanded, including group work, strengthened inter-agency co-operation, regional outreach and enhanced support for victims of trafficking. A dedicated position focusing on trafficking cases is jointly funded by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing and the Ministry of Justice. Despite expansion, waiting times have increased to approximately six weeks due to high demand.

Regional integrated services: Bjarmahlíð, Sigurhæðir and Suðurhlíð

Similar integrated service models have been developed in other regions:

Bjarmahlíð (Akureyri) provides multidisciplinary, low-threshold support for victims of violence outside the capital area. It is based on co-operation between municipalities, police, healthcare services and specialised NGOs, ensuring co-ordinated access to counselling, legal information, psychosocial support and referral services.

Sigurhæðir (Selfoss / South Iceland) offers integrated support for victims of violence in the South Iceland region. It operates as a multidisciplinary centre bringing together social services, healthcare actors, police and specialist counselling services, with a focus on accessible psychosocial support, safety planning and co-ordinated referrals within the welfare system.

Suðurhlíð (Reykjanes Peninsula) functions as an additional low-threshold support and counselling service in the Reykjanes Peninsula. Suðurhlíð provides accessible psychosocial support, counselling and guidance, and contributes to early intervention and referral to specialised services within health, social services and the justice system.

Together, these centres strengthen geographical accessibility and ensure more uniform access to co-ordinated, trauma-informed recovery support throughout Iceland.

Health system response and trauma care

The health system provides essential services for the recovery of victims of violence, including emergency care, psychosocial support and specialised trauma treatment. Primary healthcare services provide initial assessment, counselling and referral pathways, with multidisciplinary mental health teams offering psychological support and trauma-informed care. Priority is given to vulnerable groups, including pregnant women, parents of young children and individuals with suicidal ideation. Hospitals, including regional services and Landspítali, provide emergency care, psychological support and specialised trauma services. Victims of domestic and sexual violence may be referred to social workers, psychologists and trauma specialists. Landspítali operates a dedicated trauma service providing both acute and long-term treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder, including telehealth options and temporary accommodation where needed. A dedicated domestic violence reception, established in 2022, provides co-ordinated multidisciplinary support, including psychological care and structured referral pathways. Demand for trauma-related services has increased significantly in recent years, reflecting greater identification of need. Efforts are underway to further strengthen integrated trauma care through the development of Bryndísarhlíð – the Landspítali Centre for Violence and Trauma, intended to provide national-level, multidisciplinary, trauma-informed services for children, families and adults, in close co-operation with child protection and other relevant services.

Municipal social services, financial assistance and housing

The aim of the Act on Municipal Social Services is, among other things, to ensure financial and social protection. The Act does not specifically address the obligations of municipalities to provide victims with necessary services due to violence such as psychosocial counselling. Local social services provide a variety of support and counselling to individuals and families who have been affected by violence primarily when it comes to counselling, financial assistance and housing solutions.

Municipalities also work in cooperation with nearby support centres and refer victims, when needed, to the centres where they get more specialized services. In most regions of the country there are victim support centres or access to services provided by such centres is regularly available. In most regions, regional cooperation against violence has also been established, involving representatives from the main service systems responsible for providing assistance and support to victims of violence.

The social services often refer perpetrators of intimate partner violence to a specialized program for perpetrators.

Police service portal

The National Programme against Gender-Based Violence against Women 2026-2030 includes an action on providing information to victims in response to GREVIO recommendation No. 296, on the importance of

governments applying victim-oriented resources that are available in a systematic and targeted manner. The police service portal will be further developed, in part to enable victims of more types of gender-based violence to use it, and information provision will be increased. The portal will then be put into use by the police nationwide so that victims throughout the country can avail themselves of it. The aim of the action is to improve the provision of information to victims and increase their trust throughout the country in the police and the prosecution. In December 2021, the Minister of Justice opened an electronic service portal where victims who have reported sexual crimes can access information about their cases (mitt.logreglan.is) to meet the need for increased information provision to victims about the progress of cases in the justice system. The development of the portal is a collaborative project between the Metropolitan Police Commissioner and the NCIP but has only been in use by the Metropolitan Police and the Suðurnes police. The action includes further developing the portal so that victims of other forms of violence, such as intimate partner violence, can also use it, in addition to making the timeframes clearer and more accessible, ensuring that victims receive clear information about the progress of the case. Furthermore, the use of the service portal will be implemented by the police nationwide so that victims of violence enjoy comparable resources regardless of their place of residence.

The Violence Portal, www.112.is

At the beginning of the corona virus pandemic, there was a significant increase in reports of domestic violence. The authorities decided to take action to stem this alarming trend. One of these measures was to create a neutral place for all information about violence in one location - which was named the Violence Portal and is hosted on the website of the emergency helpline, 112.is. The portal has been developed to serve as a web portal regarding domestic violence, sexual violence, digital violence, violence against children and other forms of violence, through which victims, relatives and perpetrators can find information and resources to stop the violence.

Emphasis was placed on 112.is being accessible, inclusive and free from judgment. The purpose and objectives of the Violence Portal are to lower the threshold for victims of violence to seek help, through information and education that is presented in a clear and accessible manner. Special emphasis was placed on addressing vulnerable groups such as people with disabilities, queer individuals, immigrants and older people.

The portal has a special area for children and teenagers, with information on violence and instructions on what to do if children and teenagers are exposed to or witness violence.

Guides on the justice system, how it works and how a case progresses under the system are available on the violence portal for victims of sexual violence. There are three guides: 1) for persons 18 years of age and older, 2) for young people aged 15-17 years and 3) for children 14 years of age or younger. Videos ("Stories") explain the main resources for victims of sexual violence, showing people how to get to them and helping them to overcome the obstacle of entering an unfamiliar situation to seek help.

Information for perpetrators and/or defendants in cases of sexual violence is provided on the portal on ways to stop using violence and on the handling of cases by the justice system. Readers are encouraged to make use of specific perpetrator resources, such as Take the Step, Heimilisfriður and the 1717 helpline.

The portal has been strengthened to further improve online access for people of foreign origin by allowing users to select between 15 languages, and for users with various disabilities, from blindness to cognitive impairment. The website is therefore accessible to persons who do not use a keyboard and mouse, written in easy-to-understand language and illustrated with neutral drawings.

The goal of the Violence Portal is to be easily comprehensible, gender-neutral and enable users to appropriate content for learning about violence at any given time. The website traffic always increases when public discussion flares up.

The website does not store any personally identifiable information about users browsing the content, does not use other means of tracking the user on the website and can always be exited by a single click. The goal is to make the website a safe area for all users, to ensure that the user comes back if they need to.

An awareness campaign was held in parallel with the opening of the Violence Portal, where different manifestations of violence were discussed, ranging from violence in intimate relationships, to child protection, to violence against the elderly and disabled people and people of foreign origin.

Traffic to the Violence Portal has increased steadily since its inception. The use of online chat has also increased steadily, as online chat is another option to gain direct contact with an emergency responder at any time.

On 11 February 2023, a co-operation agreement was signed between the emergency helpline and the Ministry of Justice on continued work on the Violence Portal, to ensure public access to information about violence for the next five years.

2.6.1 Questions specific to the public health sector:

Responses to the safety and medical needs of women and girl victims

Iceland has taken specific measures to ensure that public health services respond to the safety and medical needs of women and girls subjected to violence covered by the Istanbul Convention through standardised national and regional protocols.

Landspítali University Hospital and Akureyri Hospital have formalised quality documents and clinical procedures are in place across hospital units and are embedded in internal quality management systems. These protocols address violence through screening, prevention, treatment, referral and co-ordinated multidisciplinary responses and are harmonised at national level.

In addition, the Capital Area Primary Health Care Service reports that national procedures have been developed for use throughout the country, including guidance for adult psychological services and sector-specific procedures for antenatal care, child health services, school health services and primary care.

Standardized procedures for safety and medical needs.

Identification and screening of victims

Standardized screening procedures are used in several areas of the healthcare system to identify possible victims of violence. These include routine screening in antenatal care, targeted questions in infant and toddler health services and screening in school health services, including structured wellbeing interviews with pupils. These measures aim to improve early identification of women and girls exposed to violence and to facilitate timely referral and intervention.

Medical treatment and supportive care

Victims are offered supportive and trauma-informed care through primary healthcare, hospital emergency departments and specialized trauma services. Available responses indicate that support may include immediate medical treatment and physical assessment; psychosocial support and crisis intervention; psychological counselling and trauma treatment; and referral to specialized mental health or emergency services where needed. Priority access is provided in urgent situations, and multidisciplinary mental health teams are available within the public health system.

Collection of forensic evidence and documentation

Protocols include procedures for the collection and preservation of forensic evidence in cases of recent violence. The materials indicate that: evidence collection may take place within defined timeframes following recent violence; emergency departments apply written procedures for forensic examinations; standardised evidence collection tools are used, including materials supplied through police channels where appropriate. This supports the evidentiary needs of victims who may wish to pursue criminal proceedings.

Communication of support and victim-centred response

Although no single standardized communication model is described, the available information indicates that protocols emphasize supportive dialogue, trauma-informed care and clear communication with victims. The healthcare response is designed to ensure that victims receive a clear message of support, are treated respectfully, and are informed about available services and next steps.

Referral to specialist support services

Protocols include structured referral pathways to specialist services forming part of Iceland's broader multi-agency framework. Depending on the case, victims may be referred to specialized trauma services at Landspítali University Hospital, Barnahús for child victims and witnesses, child protection authorities, specialized counselling and support organizations, or other health and social welfare services. These referral systems support continuity of care and integrated assistance.

Identification and referral of children exposed to violence

The available materials indicate that children exposed to domestic violence or other forms of gender-based violence are identified through maternity care, child health services and school health services. Where concerns arise, healthcare professionals are required to notify child protection services in accordance with mandatory reporting obligations. Referrals may also be made to Barnahús where appropriate. Although Akureyri Hospital notes that it does not have a separate child-specific written protocol, existing procedures are applied with children's needs in mind and mandatory child protection obligations apply.

Procedures for the documentation and collection of forensic evidence by public health services in cases of domestic violence, sexual violence and female genital mutilation

The current material describes a mixed but workable approach. In the Capital Area Primary Health Care Service, guidance states that forensic evidence after recent violence should be collected within 48 hours. The regional health services collect evidence locally, while in the Capital Area users are referred to the emergency department in Landspítali University Hospital for adult violence-related cases; children are referred to Barnahús and child protection services. The same response notes that health professionals record violence-related information in the medical record, although recording practices vary somewhat between institutions.

At Landspítali University Hospital, forensic evidence is collected at the emergency unit when victims present within 3–5 days. Evidence includes biological samples, hair, nail scrapings, swabs, clothing and injury photographs. Nurses are responsible for evidence collection, labelling, sealing and secure storage. Evidence is kept in controlled-access locked facilities and released only with written authorization. Procedures follow police technical guidelines and staff receive dedicated training.

Akureyri Hospital reports that evidence collection is carried out according to emergency department procedures. In domestic violence cases, evidence collection is based on the history of the case; in sexual violence cases, standardized tools and swabs are used, sourced through the police. Doctors and nurses share responsibility for the process, and the recording and storage rules are set out in the procedure and applied in practice.

Genital Mutilation

In 2025 The Development Centre for Primary Healthcare published guidelines for healthcare professionals on female genital mutilation (hereinafter FGM). The guidelines describe the symptoms and manifestations of FGM. They also state that female genital mutilation is illegal and that there is an obligation to report it to child protection authorities. To prevent FGM among girls and women living in Iceland, healthcare professionals need to be aware of the issue and know how to provide appropriate assistance when needed. Both healthcare professionals and society in general should be informed about FGM and able to respond to questions that may arise. Education or training on FGM is considered important to improve knowledge of the subject. It is necessary to ask individuals in at-risk groups whether they have undergone FGM in their home country, how they feel, and whether they experience any

complications. These may need to be explained, as women are often unaware that their symptoms are related to FGM. A similar guideline was published on FGM but the target group was more general. These guidelines and more information can be found on the Development Centre for Primary Healthcare webpage. The Iceland emergency helpline 112.is webpage has information on FGM especially focusing on teens. It states what FGM is, that it is illegal, what problems FGM can cause and offers guidance on where help can be found.

Equal access to healthcare services for all women victims of violence

All victims of violence are entitled to receive healthcare services. Primary healthcare services are available on-site at the reception centre for persons seeking international protection in Iceland. The healthcare services provided at the reception centre include screening for violence. Where information indicates that a woman has been subjected to violence, the reception centre has informed the Directorate of Labour and the Directorate of Immigration accordingly. When women are received at the centre and there are indications that they may have experienced or been subjected to violence, they are informed about the support services and protection measures available in Iceland, including how the police respond to cases of domestic violence.

The domestic violence team within the healthcare system provides services to all victims of domestic violence, irrespective of their residence status or other legal status. Where a victim of violence presents at a primary healthcare centre, healthcare personnel may refer the individual to the specialised domestic violence team through a formal referral process.

In addition, emergency healthcare services are provided to all persons requiring urgent medical assistance. Where an individual is not covered by health insurance, efforts are made to identify means of covering the associated costs; lack of insurance coverage does not prevent access to medical treatment or assistance from healthcare professionals.

Landspítali University Hospital notes that access to healthcare is guaranteed by law and supported by system-level measures, including patient representatives who assist vulnerable groups. However, increasing demand for specialized trauma services indicates growing pressure on resources.

Furthermore, according to Landspítali University Hospital, access is formally equal for all women, men and non-binary people using the services, but they also identify several practical barriers. The Capital Area Primary Health Care Service reports that access to psychological care is uneven in the country, with different waiting times and different service models depending on the health centre and region. It notes that there can be a wait for both assessment and treatment, and that trauma therapy is not available at all primary care sites in Iceland.

Reported measures to reduce barriers include increased use of social workers, immediate social-work appointments in some pathways, referrals to the most appropriate service when another level of care is not available, and co-operation across institutions. The regional services also provide interpreter support where needed. Akureyri Hospital states that the service is free, that there are no known barriers in its emergency pathway and that a translation Language Line can be used when language difficulties arise.

The current evidence indicates equal formal access, but also shows that geography, waiting times, limited staffing and service variation still create practical barriers. The main mitigation measures reported are referral pathways, interpreter support, free access in the emergency pathway, and service co-ordination.

Identification and protection of victims of violence against women in institutional settings

The Reykjavík Metropolitan Police have co-operated with nursing homes in the capital area in relation to the development of procedures concerning violence and neglect against residents within institutional care settings. In this context, a designated liaison officer in the police was appointed for cases involving suspicions of violence against older persons.

Within the framework of the co-operation initiative between the Reykjavík Metropolitan Police and City of Reykjavík, entitled “Together Against Violence”, a working group was established which produced a report on violence against

older persons. The report included several recommendations aimed at improving responses and services in this field.

During the spring months, the Reykjavík Metropolitan Police have also provided awareness-raising and educational sessions for older persons in the capital area concerning domestic violence and police responses to such cases.

Persons with disabilities who are victims of violence in cases brought to the attention of the police have access to the services of an independent rights protection officer. The Reykjavík Metropolitan Police have furthermore engaged in discussions with the City of Reykjavík concerning the improvement of incident registration relating to violent incidents occurring in homes and service facilities for persons with disabilities. In addition, co-operation has taken place concerning individual residential homes and institutions operated by the municipality in response to specific incidents occurring within such facilities.

Landspítali University Hospital reports that general procedures apply to all patient groups, complemented by specific protocols for vulnerable populations such as children, patients with dementia and psychiatric patients. Numerous detailed guidelines address prevention, assessment and response to violence across these groups.

Neither of the currently received health-sector information reports a separate written protocol specifically for institutions for persons with disabilities, institutions for older people, or closed reception facilities for asylum-seekers. The Capital Area Primary Health Care Service states that existing practice is adapted as much as possible to the needs of the user, and that professionals working in antenatal care, infant/toddler care, school health and psychology services are asked to adjust their practice to the user's needs in order to secure equal access. Akureyri Hospital similarly reports that no separate protocol exists for older people or persons with disabilities, but that the service tries to meet needs individually and follows general procedures.

Measures to insure informed and free consent to sterilisation and abortion procedures

Informed consent at Landspítali University Hospital is regulated by the Patients' Rights Act. Treatment requires explicit consent, preferably documented in writing, and interpreter services are provided where necessary. Exceptions apply in emergency situations where consent cannot be obtained.

The information currently received does not describe a dedicated national procedure specifically for sterilisation or abortion decisions among women and girls from different groups. However, the Akureyri Hospital response does provide the general informed-consent framework used in practice: consent is established through dialogue with the patient, interpreter services are used when needed, and a signed treatment agreement or consent form is used in the psychiatric outpatient pathway. The service also keeps a record in the medical file of who may receive information, and the patient information sheet is available in English. The response further refers to privacy law and child-rights legislation as the broader legal basis for handling information.

To meet GREVIO's recommendation No. 222, that forced sterilization should be clearly criminalized, the National Programme against Gender-Based Violence against women 2026-2030 includes an action to examine whether sterilization without informed consent should be criminalized in the General Penal Code. According to the Act on Sterilization No. 35/2019, sterilization is permitted at the request of a person who has reached the age of 18, and the person concerned must be informed about what the procedure entails, the risks associated with it and the consequences. There is a special provision in the Act on sterilization of persons who are minors due to their youth. Violations of the provisions of the Act are governed by the General Penal Code and the Act on Health Professionals, as applicable, cf. Art. 8. of the Act.

2.7 Article 22: Specialist support services

Specialist support services for women victims of gender-based violence

Iceland provides a range of specialist support services for women victims of the different forms of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention, including domestic violence, sexual violence, stalking, sexual harassment and other

forms of gender-based violence. These services are delivered through a combination of specialised shelters, integrated support centres, healthcare services, specialised trauma teams and civil society organisations. The overall system is based on low-threshold access, multidisciplinary co-operation and a victim-centred, trauma-informed approach.

Shelters and safe accommodation

Specialist shelter services are available for women who need to leave their homes due to domestic violence. Two women's shelters currently operate in Iceland, one in the capital area and one in North Iceland. These shelters provide emergency safe accommodation, practical support and counselling for women and accompanying children.

In addition, the Women's Shelter operates a transitional halfway house consisting of 18 apartments. This service provides temporary accommodation following a stay in the emergency shelter and is intended to support women and children in rebuilding stability and independence. The usual duration of stay is up to one year, although longer stays may be possible where necessary. Support and counselling continue throughout the stay. Municipal social services may also provide temporary accommodation and facilitate access to longer-term housing solutions, including social housing.

Medical support

Victims of violence have access to medical support through primary healthcare services, emergency departments and specialised hospital services. Healthcare responses include emergency physical assessment and treatment, sexual assault examinations and forensic evidence collection where relevant, referral to specialised trauma and mental health services, and follow-up care through primary care and hospital-based teams.

Both Landspítali University Hospital and Akureyri Hospital provide structured responses to victims of domestic and sexual violence through established clinical procedures and multidisciplinary services.

Short- and long-term psychological counselling

Psychological counselling is available through specialised support centres, shelters, healthcare services and civil society organisations. Bjarkarhlíð, Bjarmahlíð, Sigurhæðir and Suðurhlíð all provide psychosocial counselling and trauma-informed support to victims.

In addition, Landspítali operates a specialised domestic violence and trauma team providing both acute and long-term psychological care, including treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder. Services are available nationwide, including through telehealth where appropriate.

Trauma care

Specialised trauma care is available through the public healthcare system, particularly through the Landspítali Trauma Team. Services include crisis intervention, specialised trauma assessment, short- and long-term trauma treatment and multidisciplinary follow-up.

Further strengthening of trauma services is underway with the development of Bryndísarhlíð, a national centre intended to provide integrated trauma-informed care for adults, children and families affected by violence.

Legal counselling

Free legal counselling is available through several services. All major integrated support centres, including Bjarkarhlíð and Bjarmahlíð, provide access to legal advice and guidance.

In addition, District Commissioners provide free legal information in relevant matters, while the Women's Counselling Centre offers free legal and social counselling. Civil society organisations and legal professionals also co-operate with support centres to ensure access to legal remedies and information on available protection measures.

Outreach services

Specialised outreach services are increasingly provided through integrated support centres and specialised NGOs. This includes regional outreach by Bjarkarhlíð, decentralised service delivery through Bjarmahlíð, Sigurhæðir and Suðurhlíð, and active referrals from healthcare services, police and social services. These measures aim to improve accessibility, particularly for victims living outside the capital area, and include targeted support for vulnerable groups, including victims of trafficking.

Telephone helplines

The Women's Shelter operates a 24-hour telephone helpline. The helpline is available to victims, relatives and professionals seeking advice or support, and provides crisis support, practical guidance and referral to appropriate services. Additional telephone and digital support is available through specialist civil society organisations and public support services.

In Iceland, the emergency helpline 112 has played an important role in providing rapid and safe assistance to those in need around the clock, including in cases of domestic violence, violence against children, and human trafficking. Helpline personnel receive training in handling such calls and assessing their urgency, and they are well informed about the support resources available.

The helpline website 112.is has been developed to serve as a web portal regarding domestic violence, sexual violence, digital violence, violence against children and other forms of violence. It provides information for victims, relatives and perpetrators and resources to stop the violence. The 112.is website has a special area for children and teenagers, with education about violence and instructions on what to do if children and teenagers are exposed to or witness violence. Guides on the justice system, how it works and how a case progresses under the system are available on the Violence Portal of 112.is for victims of sexual violence.

There are three guides: 1) for persons 18 years of age and older, 2) for young people aged 15-17 years and 3) for children 14 years of age or younger. Videos ("Stories") explain the main resources for victims of sexual violence, showing people how to get to them and helping them to overcome the obstacle of entering an unfamiliar situation to seek help. Information for perpetrators and/or defendants in cases of sexual violence has been added to the Violence Portal 112.is on ways to stop using violence and on the handling of cases by the justice system. Special mention is made of "Take the Step", Heimilisfriður and the 1717 helpline.

The portal has been strengthened to further improve online access for people of foreign origin and with disabilities. The information is in several languages. Tabú, a feminist disability movement that focuses on multiple forms of discrimination against people with disabilities, and 112.is have jointly produced educational videos about violence against disabled people that are available on the 112.is website.

Other forms of support

Additional support includes socio-economic assistance through municipal welfare services, including access to financial assistance, welfare benefits, education and vocational training, employment support and housing assistance. Victims may also receive specialised support related to trafficking, group counselling and peer-support services.

These measures are intended to support long-term recovery, independence and sustainable reintegration into society.

Specialist support services providing psychological and multidisciplinary support for children exposed to domestic violence, including inter-parental violence

In Iceland, the primary specialist support service for children who have been exposed to domestic violence is provided through Barnahús, a child-friendly, multidisciplinary and interagency service.

Barnahús brings together child protection, law enforcement, medical and mental health professionals under one roof to ensure a co-ordinated and trauma-informed response. It provides both assessment and specialised therapeutic

interventions delivered by trained child psychologists and other mental health professionals. An individual assessment is conducted prior to determining the most appropriate intervention.

Within this framework, the following evidence-based therapeutic services are offered to children exposed to domestic violence.

Combined Parent-Child Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CPC-CBT):

This is a structured, trauma-informed intervention designed for children aged 3 to 17 and their non-offending caregivers in cases involving domestic violence, including emotional and/or physical abuse against the child and coercive parenting practices, where continued contact is assessed as safe and in the best interests of the child. The intervention typically consists of 16 to 20 structured sessions, including individual sessions for the child and caregiver, as well as joint family sessions to strengthen the parent-child relationship.

The child receives trauma-focused support to address the emotional and behavioural impact of the violence. The caregiver receives intervention focusing on the development of positive parenting skills, emotional regulation, non-violent discipline strategies, and increased awareness of the impact of violence on the child. Joint parent-child sessions focus on improving safety, strengthening the parent-child relationship, enhancing communication and supporting family recovery.

Grounded in cognitive behavioural therapy and integrating trauma-informed, family systems and developmental approaches, CPC-CBT addresses trauma-related symptoms, including post-traumatic stress disorder, depression and behavioural difficulties. The programme supports children in processing trauma and promotes recovery, while empowering caregivers to regulate emotions, adopt non-violent parenting strategies and provide a safe and supportive environment. A key objective is to break the cycle of intergenerational violence and enhance the safety and well-being of all family members.

Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (TF-CBT):

This is an evidence-based treatment for children who have been exposed to trauma, including witnessing domestic violence between caregivers/parents. TF-CBT supports children in processing traumatic experiences, reducing symptoms of post-traumatic stress, anxiety, or depression, and developing coping skills. It also includes structured caregiver involvement and psychoeducation.

In addition to these structured interventions, Barnahús provides psychoeducation and supportive counselling for children and caregivers in cases where long-term therapy is not required.

These services are supported by broader governmental efforts to strengthen multidisciplinary and integrated responses to violence against children. This includes improved co-ordination between child protection, health, social and education systems. These developments form part of a governmental action plan (2024–2026), which consists of 25 measures for key pillars, including enhanced co-ordination, strengthened interventions and prevention.

In Iceland, specialised support for children exposed to domestic violence is provided through a combination of healthcare and child protection services. At Landspítali, specialised trauma services include multidisciplinary teams with psychologists, social workers and medical professionals who provide trauma-informed care to both adults and children. The ongoing development of Bryndísarhlíð, the Landspítali Centre for Violence and Trauma, will further strengthen this capacity by establishing integrated services specifically designed to support children who have experienced or been exposed to violence.

In addition, children are referred to Barnahús, a specialised child protection centre that brings together professionals from different sectors, including psychologists and social workers, to provide co-ordinated assessment, support and follow-up in cases of violence against children, including domestic violence.

Specialist support services for migrant, refugee and minority women and girl victims of violence against women

Specialist support services are available for migrant women and girls and for those belonging to national or ethnic minorities who are victims of violence, including women seeking asylum and those who have been granted refugee or international protection status.

At Bjarkarhlíð all individuals aged 18 and over, regardless of gender, nationality or legal status, can book an appointment directly. No referral is required and the service is free of charge. While Bjarkarhlíð does not specialise in asylum or refugee matters, there are dedicated professionals within municipal social services and the Directorate of Labour who are responsible for co-ordinating services and support for these groups. If cases of violence arise, however, these individuals can also seek assistance from Bjarkarhlíð and receive the same support as other victims.

The same applies to victims of human trafficking, who may have very different legal and social statuses in Iceland. The priority is to reach victims as early as possible and ensure co-ordinated, victim-centred support. When needed, an in-person interpreter is arranged, preferably of the same gender as the victim if requested. If this is not possible, remote interpretation services such as Language Line are used.

The emergency hotline 112 and the website 112.is have been developed to serve as a web portal regarding domestic violence, sexual violence, digital violence, violence against children and other forms of violence. It offers victims, relatives and perpetrators information and resources to stop the violence. The information is in several languages.

2.8 Article 25: Support to victims of sexual violence

Support to victims of sexual violence, forensic evidence and accessibility

Specialized services for victims of sexual violence are available within the Icelandic health system. These include emergency services providing immediate medical care, forensic examination and crisis intervention, as well as specialized outpatient services offering longer-term psychological and psychiatric support.

Landspítali University Hospital operates a specialized emergency service for victims of sexual violence. Services include medical examination, forensic documentation, trauma support and referral to specialized care. Cases reported within 3–5 days receive full forensic examination, while cases up to three months old are managed in outpatient settings. The service receives approximately 150–180 victims annually. Access is available without the requirement for a prior report to police and is adapted to the needs and timing in each case.

Akureyri Hospital has a sexual-violence emergency service within the emergency department. The service provides support, examinations and counselling by nurses, doctors and social workers, and aims to minimize the physical and psychological harm often associated with sexual violence. Patients receive a specialist examination for injuries and forensic evidence. The service is available to everyone, regardless of sex and age.

The same hospital also has an outpatient psychiatry service that can provide specialised psychological and psychiatric treatment after sexual violence, including evidence-based trauma therapies such as, Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT), Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing (EMDR), medication management in close co-operation with other professionals; and wider trauma-focused support as needed.

There are no restrictions on access to the emergency service other than the clinical need for care. For the outpatient psychiatry service, the patient must already be under the care of the department and must meet the clinical criteria for trauma treatment. Referrals may come from Landspítali, the inpatient psychiatry ward, a general practitioner or another specialist, and outside parties cannot refer directly to the trauma treatment pathway.

Akureyri Hospital reports that the emergency service for victims of sexual violence receives approximately 15 to 20 users per year. For the outpatient trauma-treatment pathway, the hospital has provided annual figures for all trauma-related treatment requests (not limited exclusively to cases of violence). The number of requests recorded annually was as follows: 6 in 2015, 16 in 2016, 17 in 2017, 13 in 2018, 1 in 2019, 4 in 2020, 5 in 2021, 19 in 2022, 9 in 2023, and 11 in 2024. In 2025, four cases were recorded, of which three remained in treatment. In 2026 to date, five cases

have been registered, including one individual currently in treatment, one case which was withdrawn; three individuals on a waiting list, with the oldest request dated 18 March 2026.

The emergency department uses standardized tools and police-supplied swabs/kits for evidence collection, and the primary care response states that evidence after recent violence should be collected within 48 hours. The service path is free of charge and there are no reported criteria based on insurance, residence status or prior police reporting in the emergency pathway.

The National Programme against Gender-Based Violence against Women 2026-2030 includes an action on a co-ordinated procedure in health services for victims of violence in intimate relationships. The action meets GREVIO recommendations no. 112 and 131, on the importance of multidisciplinary co-operation, and no. 113, on the need for clear procedures in this regard. A multidisciplinary working group procedure based on the 2021 report on health and health services will be implemented in all health institutions in the country. All health professionals involved in providing services to victims of gender-based violence will work according to clear procedures, including which service to refer a patient to. Part of the procedure is the use of a registration form where information on cases of violence in intimate relationships will be recorded in a single location in the medical records system. The decision to develop a co-ordinated and improved procedure is based on the findings of the report Health and Health Services: Gender and Equality Policy Guidelines, prepared for the Ministry of Health in 2021. A multidisciplinary working group was appointed and tasked with developing a co-ordinated procedure based on the report, for services to victims of intimate partner violence who seek care in the country's health institutions. The procedure aims to comprehensively address the needs of the individual. Among other things, there is a connection with a social worker and a trauma team that can provide appropriate psychological support nationwide and possible treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder if necessary. Social workers and a psychologist have been specifically engaged to implement a procedure for receiving victims of intimate partner violence and the services of lawyers have been strengthened. Part of the process is to set up an electronic registration form in the health record system, which supports the process and is intended to ensure the same service to all victims of intimate partner violence, regardless of residence, financial situation or other variables. The goal of the work is to ensure the best possible service for victims, break the cycle of violence and thus reduce repeated and escalating violence.

2.9 Article 31: Custody, visitation rights and safety

Custody and visitation rights in cases involving violence against women and domestic violence

According to Icelandic law, incidents of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention are explicitly taken into account in decisions concerning custody, legal domicile and visitation/access rights of children. The overarching guiding principle in all such decisions is the best interests of the child.

This is reflected in the Children's Act No. 76/2003, as amended by Act No. 61/2012, which strengthened children's right to protection against violence and introduced an explicit obligation to consider the risk of violence when determining custody and visitation arrangements.

Domestic violence as a statutory criterion

The second paragraph of Article 34 of the Children's Act provides for courts to determine custody and legal domicile in accordance with the best interests of the child and to take into account, inter alia, the risk that the child, a parent, or others in the child's home have been or may be subjected to violence.

Similarly, the first paragraph of Article 47 of the Act requires District Commissioners to consider the same risk when deciding on visitation rights.

The explanatory notes to Act No. 61/2012 further state that violence and degrading conduct in the child's home have harmful effects on the child's mental and physical development. This explicitly includes not only violence directed at

the child, but also violence between parents or other individuals in close relationships within the home. These provisions are applied in practice in custody and visitation determinations.

Recognition of harm from witnessing violence

The legal framework and its preparatory works explicitly acknowledge that exposure to violence in the home, including witnessing violence between parents, is harmful to children's well-being and development.

This recognition is embedded in the interpretation of the "best interests of the child" standard applied in both custody and visitation decisions.

Preference for non-violent caregiver

While the Children's Act does not contain an explicit statutory rule stating a formal preference for custody with a non-violent parent over foster care, the requirement to assess violence and its impact in the assessment of the child's best interest operates in practice as a strong safeguard ensuring that exposure to violence is considered when determining custody arrangements.

Screening of custody and visitation proceedings

In both custody and visitation proceedings, decision-makers are required to assess whether there is a history or risk of violence. Courts consider this under the second paragraph of Article 34 in custody cases. District Commissioners are required under the first paragraph of Article 47 to assess the same risk in visitation cases. This ensures that proceedings are systematically screened for indications of domestic violence when determining arrangements for the child.

Risk assessment and use of expert information

The legal framework allows decision-makers to consider risk-related information, including assessments provided by competent professionals and stakeholders, when determining the best interests of the child.

At all stages of proceedings, it is also possible to involve specialists in children's affairs to assist in interviewing the child or providing professional assessments, including regarding the risk of violence.

Mediation and procedural safeguards

Under Article 33a of the Children's Act, parents are generally required to attend mediation before initiating proceedings on custody or visitation. However, participation is not mandatory in practice, and parties may request separate meetings where violence in close relationships is indicated.

If mediation does not take place after formal summons, a certificate to this effect is issued and the case may proceed. Importantly, no party is compelled to participate in joint mediation sessions, and safeguards exist to avoid exposing victims to further harm.

The purpose of mediation is to facilitate communication and support agreements that serve the best interests of the child, rather than to impose outcomes.

Policy developments and reforms

Several policy and legislative initiatives have further strengthened the consideration of violence in custody and visitation decisions.

National action plans, as well as gender equality strategies, have consistently emphasised improved protection of children exposed to violence.

Following GREVIO's evaluation of Iceland and subsequent governmental review processes, proposals have been made to further clarify and strengthen the provisions of the Children's Act regarding the assessment of violence in custody and visitation cases. A draft legislative reform currently under review also considers reducing mandatory mediation in cases involving violence.

In addition, broader child welfare initiatives aim to ensure systematic assessment of children's best interests across all decision-making processes, including legislative and administrative procedures, supported by guidelines and policy frameworks developed in co-operation with the Ombudsman for Children.

Measures to ensure judicial and professional capacity in domestic violence-related custody and visitation proceedings

Iceland has taken measures to strengthen the capacity of judges and other legal professionals to address domestic violence and its impact in family law proceedings, including cases concerning custody, legal domicile and visitation rights. These measures primarily consist of continuing judicial education, specialized training, access to expert knowledge and the use of child specialists in relevant proceedings.

These efforts are aimed at ensuring that decision-makers understand the dynamics of intimate partner violence, adequately consider victims' grievances and children's experiences, and apply the best interests of the child principle in a violence-informed manner.

Judges' training on domestic violence and the dynamics of intimate partner violence

Continuing education for judges is co-ordinated through the Judicial Administration, which regularly provides and promotes specialized training relevant to violence against women and domestic violence.

Recent training initiatives have included:

- a lecture in March 2026 by Hildur Fjóra Antonsdóttir on the legal status of victims, power dynamics and victims' rights in criminal proceedings, from a victimology and sociology of law perspective;
- specialised training in September 2025 delivered by investigators from Barnahús on interviewing children in cases involving suspected child sexual abuse, including children's memory, interview techniques and the impact of questioning on evidence quality;
- a seminar in March 2025 by Hrefna Friðriksdóttir on developments in the Children's Act, including custody and visitation issues;
- a seminar in May 2024 by Tim Brennen on assessing witness credibility;
- a lecture in September 2024 by Anna Kaldal on the credibility of children's testimony in criminal proceedings;
- a lecture in November 2023 by Ragnheiður Bragadóttir on consent and rape law in light of recent case law;
- training in October 2022 on digital violence and sexual privacy delivered by María Rún Bjarnadóttir.

In addition, judges are regularly informed of international training opportunities, including through the Council of Europe HELP Programme.

Communication with victims and children and taking grievances into account

Under the Children's Act No. 76/2003, the best interests of the child are to be the primary consideration in all custody and visitation proceedings.

This includes, assessing the risk of violence affecting the child, a parent or others in the child's home, hearing the views of the child, taking age and maturity into account, and considering the experiences and concerns raised by victims of domestic violence.

At all stages of proceedings, it is possible to appoint or consult specialists in children's matters to assist in interviewing children or providing expert assessments, including on the risk of violence and the impact of exposure to domestic abuse.

A workshop and round-table discussion on children in the justice system and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, led by Salvör Nordal, has further supported awareness of children's procedural rights.

Awareness of “parental alienation” and similar concepts

While Icelandic legislation does not specifically refer to parental alienation, the legal framework governing custody and visitation decisions requires an individualised assessment based on the best interests of the child, including explicit consideration of violence and its harmful effects. This reduces the risk that allegations of domestic violence could be overshadowed by unsupported claims or concepts that may minimise coercive control or abuse. Recent training on victimology, domestic violence dynamics, child testimony and the impact of violence on children further supports a violence-informed judicial approach and contributes to greater awareness of the risks associated with misinterpreting abuse-related family dynamics. In addition, a current legislative review of the Children's Act includes proposals to further clarify the assessment of violence in custody and visitation cases, with the aim of strengthening protections for victims and children.

Inter-agency co-operation and information-sharing in custody, visitation and family mediation proceedings

In Iceland, procedures concerning custody, legal domicile, visitation rights and family mediation are governed by a legal and administrative framework requiring competent authorities dealing with family-related matters to obtain relevant information and co-operate, where necessary, with other public bodies and professionals in order to safeguard the best interests of the child and ensure due regard to domestic violence and other risks. Such co-operation may involve communication with law-enforcement authorities, child protection services, healthcare professionals, educational institutions and, where appropriate, specialist support services.

The principal legal framework is set out in the Children's Act No. 76/2003, as amended, which governs parental responsibility, custody, legal domicile and visitation rights. Under the Act, all decisions concerning children must be based on the best interests of the child. In determining those interests, the competent authority may consider information relating to violence, abuse, neglect, conflict between parents, the child's safety and the ability of each parent to meet the child's needs. Where disputes are handled administratively by the District Commissioners or judicially by the courts, authorities may request or receive information from relevant institutions in accordance with applicable procedural and confidentiality rules.

Where allegations or indications of domestic violence arise, family-law authorities may consider information originating from criminal justice bodies, including police records, protective measures, pending criminal proceedings or convictions, insofar as relevant and lawfully accessible. While family courts and criminal courts operate under separate jurisdictions, existing procedural rules allow parties to submit relevant judgments, police documentation or expert evidence, enabling the competent authority to assess whether custody or visitation arrangements would place the child or a parent at risk.

Child protection authorities play a central role within this framework. Where concerns arise regarding violence, abuse, neglect or harmful family circumstances, matters may be referred to child protection services, which exercise statutory responsibilities under child welfare legislation. Information from child protection authorities may be considered in custody and visitation proceedings, subject to legal safeguards, and co-ordination may occur where protective interventions are already in place. This is particularly important where children have witnessed domestic violence, which may itself be relevant to the assessment of the child's welfare.

Healthcare and mental health professionals may also provide relevant information where the health, trauma, substance misuse or safeguarding needs of a parent or child are material to the proceedings. Similarly, schools and educational professionals may provide reports or relevant information concerning the child's well-being, attendance, behavioural concerns or developmental needs, where legally permissible and relevant to the best-interest assessment.

As regards judicial proceedings, Article 42 of the Children's Act No. 76/2003 provides that judges in disputes concerning custody or legal domicile shall supervise the gathering of evidence and may direct the parties to obtain

specific evidence relating to their personal circumstances or those of their children. Where a party fails to comply or is unable to do so, the judge may obtain the material considered necessary to resolve the case. All persons from whom such information is requested are required to provide the necessary material free of charge. Judges may also direct the parties to obtain expert opinions where necessary, or appoint experts directly, including authorising such experts to obtain evidence relevant to the personal circumstances of the parties or the child. The judge may reject requests for expert assessment where such evidence would conflict with the best interests of the child or is clearly unnecessary. Under the second paragraph of Article 38, judges are also required to notify the relevant District Commissioner when custody or domicile proceedings are formally brought before the court.

Regarding proceedings before the District Commissioners, Article 74 of the Children's Act authorises them to secure the assistance of experts in matters concerning children and to obtain expert reports, opinions or similar material where necessary for the resolution of a case. The extent and nature of expert assistance are determined on a case-by-case basis, depending on the circumstances and the needs of the proceedings.

Under Regulation No. 1450/2021, experts appointed in matters concerning children must hold a university degree conferring professional qualifications in psychology, social work or a comparable field, and must possess appropriate knowledge of the needs and rights of children and the circumstances of parents.

Article 33a of the Children's Act requires parents, and in certain cases other involved persons, to undergo mediation before requesting a ruling from the District Commissioner or initiating court proceedings in matters concerning custody, legal domicile, visitation, daily fines or enforcement. District Commissioners are required to offer such mediation, while the parties remain free to seek mediation from other qualified professionals with expertise in child-related and family matters.

Chapter III of Regulation No. 1450/2021 sets out the general provisions governing mediation under the Children's Act, while Chapters IV and V establish supplementary rules for mediation conducted under the auspices of the District Commissioner and by other providers. These provisions set requirements for the qualifications of mediators, as well as the preparation, conduct, scope and conclusion of mediation proceedings.

All mediators are required to act impartially and seek to identify interests that may facilitate consensual resolution. Article 13 of the Regulation establishes qualification requirements for mediators, including formal university qualifications in law, psychology or social work, or comparable fields, together with relevant professional experience and specialised training in mediation or dispute resolution. Mediators must also possess thorough knowledge of the Children's Act and the principal issues arising in its interpretation.

Procedures to eliminate the risk of an abused parent to be subject to further violence

Where there is a risk that an abused parent may be subjected to further violence through the exercise of visitation rights, the competent authorities may impose arrangements designed to minimise direct contact between the parents. Such measures may include structured handover arrangements, staggered arrival and departure times, the use of neutral exchange locations, or communication through intermediaries rather than direct personal contact. In appropriate cases, written or electronic communication channels may be used to reduce opportunities for harassment or intimidation.

Where the risk is serious, visitation may be restricted, suspended or made conditional upon specific safeguards. Authorities may also consider restraining orders, criminal investigations, prior incidents of domestic violence, or child protection assessments when deciding whether and how visitation should occur. If necessary, exchanges may be organised through supervised contact services or with the assistance of social services.

The purpose of these measures is to ensure that parental contact rights are not used as a means of continuing coercion, surveillance or abuse of the victimised parent after separation.

Procedures to eliminate the risk of a child to witness or experience violence

Icelandic authorities recognise that witnessing domestic violence may itself be harmful to children and relevant to their welfare. Accordingly, where there is a risk that a child may witness violence, threats or abusive conflict, or may directly experience violence, this must be considered in decisions on custody and visitation.

Depending on the circumstances, contact may be supervised, limited in duration, temporarily suspended or denied altogether if necessary to protect the child. Authorities may require that contact take place in a child-safe setting, under professional supervision, or only after risk factors have been addressed. Reports from child protection services, psychologists, schools, healthcare professionals and law-enforcement bodies may be taken into account when assessing the level of risk.

Where children have experienced trauma or fear in relation to a parent, their views and needs may also be considered in accordance with their age and maturity. The child's right to safety and healthy development takes precedence over maintaining contact in circumstances where violence poses a serious risk.

Procedures to ensure that responsible personnel are trained and facilitated to enable safe supervised visitation

Where supervised visitation is considered necessary, such arrangements may be facilitated through municipal family services, child protection services or other competent welfare authorities, depending on the case and locality. Responsible personnel may include social workers, child welfare professionals, psychologists or other trained staff experienced in family conflict, child safeguarding and domestic violence dynamics.

These professionals are expected to assess safety concerns, monitor interactions during contact sessions, intervene where necessary, document incidents and provide feedback to the competent authority where required. Training may include child protection, trauma awareness, conflict management, safeguarding procedures and recognition of coercive or manipulative behaviour.

Facilities used for supervised visits are intended to provide a neutral, child-appropriate and secure environment. Depending on local resources, this may include designated meeting rooms within municipal welfare premises or child and family service centres. Safe facilities should allow staff oversight, minimise conflict at arrival and departure, and provide a calm setting suitable for the child's well-being.

While arrangements may vary between municipalities, regions and individual circumstances of cases, the Icelandic system allows significant flexibility to tailor visitation measures to the level of risk presented. In all cases, the safety of the child and the abused parent, together with the child's best interests, are the central considerations.

The withdrawal of parental rights in criminal sentences if the best interest of the child

Icelandic law provides mechanisms through which parental rights, custody rights or contact rights may be restricted, suspended or removed where this is necessary to protect the best interests of the child. While the withdrawal of parental rights does not generally operate automatically as a standard ancillary criminal sentence, the legal framework allows serious criminal conduct, including violence against a parent or a child, to result in the loss or limitation of parental authority where the child's safety and welfare cannot otherwise be guaranteed.

Under the Children's Act No. 76/2003, decisions concerning custody, parental responsibility, residence and contact must be based on the best interests of the child. Where a parent has committed domestic violence, sexual violence, child abuse, serious neglect or other conduct threatening the child's welfare, the competent authorities or courts may decide to limit that parent's legal rights in relation to the child. This may include awarding sole custody to the non-abusive parent, restricting decision-making powers, suspending contact rights or refusing visitation altogether.

In addition, where circumstances disclose serious and continuing risks to the child, child protection authorities may intervene under the applicable child welfare legislation. Such measures may include protective supervision, removal of the child from harmful circumstances, or applications to the courts for more far-reaching restrictions of parental

authority. These interventions are guided by the principle that the child's safety and developmental needs take precedence over parental claims.

Criminal proceedings and criminal convictions may be highly relevant in such assessments. Convictions for offences such as domestic violence, sexual offences, offences against children, threats, coercion or serious assault may be relied upon as evidence in subsequent family-law or child-protection proceedings. In practice, therefore, criminal sentences can lead indirectly to the withdrawal or severe limitation of parental rights where the underlying conduct demonstrates that safe parenting is not possible.

Where the best interests of the child cannot be guaranteed through lesser measures, such as supervised visitation, no-contact arrangements between parents, treatment requirements or protective monitoring, the competent authorities may decide that termination or suspension of parental rights is necessary. The safety of the abused parent may also form part of the child's best-interests assessment, particularly in cases where continued parental authority of the abusive parent would expose the child to witnessing further violence, coercive control or ongoing instability.

Although Icelandic law does not generally frame this issue as an automatic punitive consequence attached to criminal sentencing, the combined operation of family law, child protection law and criminal justice findings ensures that parental rights may be withdrawn or significantly curtailed when required to protect the child and, where relevant, the victim parent.

Accordingly, national provisions do foresee the possibility of withdrawal or restriction of parental rights in circumstances where no other measure can adequately secure the best interests of the child, including the child's safety and, where relevant, the safety of the victim parent.

2.10 Article 48: Prohibition of mandatory alternative dispute resolution processes or sentencing

2.10.1 Criminal law:

Alternative dispute resolution

According to Icelandic law, there is a possibility of an alternative dispute resolution in cases involving violence. The Director of Public Prosecutions has issued rules on mediation (restorative justice), which were last revised on 31 March 2023.

According to these Rules, mediation may be applied, subject to authorisation by the Director of Public Prosecutions, in cases concerning sexual harassment and violations of sexual integrity under Article 199 of the General Penal Code, as well as offences against public decency under Article 209 of the same Act.

The Rules provide that mediation shall, as a general principle, not be applied in cases where there is a significant imbalance of power between the suspect and the victim, including, *inter alia*, disparities in age or maturity.

The application of mediation is further subject to the conditions that the offender has admitted the offence, that the facts in the case are considered sufficiently established, and that both the offender and the victim have given their informed consent to the referral of the case to mediation. Where either party is under 18 years of age, the consent of a legal guardian is required.

Where these conditions are fulfilled, mediation may result in the discontinuation of prosecution. Therefore, mediation is never mandatory, but rather an option for cases where the criteria are met.

Safeguards in voluntary alternative dispute resolution processes in cases of violence against women

In Iceland, criminal offences falling within the scope of the Istanbul Convention are generally dealt with through the ordinary criminal justice system, and serious offences such as domestic violence, sexual violence, coercion, threats and offences against children are subject to public investigation and prosecution rather than being resolved through private settlement mechanisms. Icelandic law does not treat mediation or conciliation as a substitute for criminal accountability in serious cases of violence against women. Accordingly, voluntary alternative dispute resolution processes do not constitute the primary response to such offences.

Where restorative or conciliatory approaches may exceptionally be considered in relation to less serious offences within the broader criminal justice system, any such process must be voluntary and compatible with the rights of the victim and the interests of justice. Participation by the victim requires free and informed consent, and it must be possible to withdraw consent at any stage. The victim must be provided with clear information regarding the nature of the process, its voluntary character, possible consequences, available support services and the right to decline participation without adverse consequences.

In cases involving domestic violence, sexual violence or other gender-based violence, the risk of power imbalance, intimidation, dependency, trauma bonding or fear of retaliation is recognised as particularly significant. For that reason, the authorities are expected to exercise heightened caution before considering any form of alternative dispute resolution. Where there are indicators of coercion, ongoing abuse, unequal bargaining power or safety concerns, mediation or conciliation would generally be inappropriate. Measures intended to prevent direct or indirect pressure include ensuring that any invitation to participate is made through qualified professionals, that the victim may consult legal counsel or support services, and that refusal to participate is respected fully and without prejudice.

Victims should not be required to meet the alleged offender directly if doing so would compromise the victim's safety or well-being. If any restorative dialogue is contemplated, arrangements must prioritize the victim's physical and psychological security and may require separate communication formats, professional facilitation or complete exclusion of face-to-face contact.

As regards criminal proceedings, the existence or offer of alternative dispute resolution does not automatically require the discontinuation of criminal investigation or prosecution in offences prosecuted in the public interest. In Iceland, serious offences covered by the Convention are generally subject to *ex officio* investigation and prosecution, meaning that the authorities retain responsibility for proceeding where legal conditions are met irrespective of private settlement attempts. Therefore, a victim's refusal to participate in mediation should not in itself terminate protection or support, or deprive the victim of access to criminal justice remedies. Nor should the victim suffer adverse legal consequences for declining participation in an alternative process. Refusal to engage in conciliation or mediation should not affect the victim's credibility, entitlement to protection measures or access to support services. Any decision by prosecuting authorities concerning the continuation of proceedings must be based on legal criteria, evidentiary assessment and public interest, rather than on pressure placed upon the victim to reconcile.

2.10.2 Civil law:

Safeguards against the use of mediation in family law proceedings involving domestic violence

In Icelandic family law proceedings, mediation is generally mandatory before a formal decision is made in disputes concerning custody and contact. However, its use is strictly conditioned by the overriding principle of the best interests and safety of the child.

Authorities are legally required to assess whether there is a risk or history of domestic violence affecting the child, a parent, or other household members before determining arrangements. Where such risks are identified, this assessment directly influences both the procedure and the outcome.

In practice, this means that mediation is not relied upon as the sole or decisive mechanism in cases involving violence. Instead, authorities may proceed to formal decision-making without relying on agreement between the parties, impose protective measures, such as supervised or limited contact, or refuse contact altogether where it is contrary to the child's best interests. Furthermore, all decision-making is supported by expert involvement and includes consideration of the child's views, providing additional safeguards against inappropriate use of consensual

procedures. Overall, while mediation remains part of the legal framework, Icelandic law ensures that it is subordinated to safety considerations and is not applied in a manner that would expose victims of domestic violence or children to further harm.

2.11 Articles 49 and 50: General obligations and immediate response, prevention and protection

Human, financial and technical resources provided to law enforcement agencies to respond and investigate all cases of violence against women

Human resources

The Icelandic police service does not maintain a centralised register of positions dedicated specifically to the investigation of violence against women. Investigations of domestic violence and sexual offences are conducted by trained investigators within individual police districts, with staffing levels determined at district level.

The principal categories of officers involved in criminal investigations are trained investigators and detective chief inspectors. Between 2021 and 2025, the combined number of officers in these categories increased by 16%, from 218 to 253. During the same period, the number of detective chief inspectors increased by 31%, from 91 to 119, while the number of trained investigators increased by 5.5%, from 127 to 134. The proportion of women in both categories also increased substantially, with the number of female investigators rising by 47% and female detective chief inspectors by 63%, indicating a broader shift in the gender composition of the investigative workforce. Data on the number of prosecutors assigned to violence against women cases within police districts are not available at national level.

Despite these developments, a 2022 working group report commissioned by the Director of Public Prosecutions identified persistent staffing shortages in the investigation and prosecution of sexual offences. The report concluded that available personnel were insufficient to manage the volume and complexity of cases, resulting in delays and repeated transfers of cases between units.

In recent years, measures have been taken to strengthen the human resources available to law enforcement authorities. In 2025, the number of police officers was increased by 50 full-time positions nationwide, including additional posts within the Capital Area Police's specialised team on human trafficking. According to the 2026 State Budget, a further increase of 50 police positions is planned. Earlier budgetary measures included the allocation of ISK 200 million in 2022 to strengthen police capacity in relation to sexual offences and gender-based violence, including the establishment of 12 additional investigative posts and procedural reforms aimed at reducing case-processing times in the capital area.

Efforts to strengthen institutional capacity have also extended to the response to human trafficking. In 2023, a permanent increase of ISK 500 million was allocated to the police budget to address organised crime, including trafficking in human beings. In addition, targeted funding is provided annually to a range of institutions involved in preventing and combating human trafficking and supporting victims, including law enforcement authorities, prosecution services, courts, social services, labour market supervisory bodies and relevant non-governmental organisations.

Training

Specialised training on violence against women is provided through the Police Education and Professional Development Centre (*Mennta- og starfsþróunarsetur lögreglunnar*), covering areas such as domestic violence, sexual offences, trauma-informed interviewing, risk assessment and related investigative skills. GREVIO has previously welcomed the existence of specialised structures and multidisciplinary co-operation mechanisms within the Icelandic police, while also underlining the need to ensure consistent training provision and adequate specialised capacity across all police districts.

Training on gender-based violence is embedded within both initial police education and in-service professional development. All prospective and serving police officers complete a Diploma in Police Science at the University of Akureyri. The curriculum includes mandatory courses relevant to the investigation of violence against women, including gender-based violence and power structures, diversity and policing, police psychology, and cybercrime investigation. These subjects form part of the core curriculum rather than optional modules.

In-service training is coordinated by the Police Education and Professional Development Centre. Training on violence against women and sexual offences constitutes a permanent component of continuing professional development for serving officers. Since 2022, mandatory online training modules on these topics have been introduced for all police officers, alongside annual specialised training for investigators handling sexual offence cases.

Notwithstanding these measures, the National Action Plan against Gender-Based Violence 2026–2030 identifies the need for further structured training across the criminal justice system, including police, prosecutors, and judges, with dedicated training measures planned for 2027–2028.

Financial resources

From a financial perspective, funding for law enforcement is allocated through the annual state budget under the policy area of policing and public security. Budgetary allocations have increased in recent years in line with government priorities concerning public safety, including responses to organised crime, sexual violence and domestic violence. At the same time, as noted by GREVIO, Iceland does not operate a single dedicated budget line for violence against women, with expenditure distributed across multiple institutions, including police, prosecution services and victim support structures.

Technical resources and the digital dimension of violence against women

The digital dimension of violence against women has become an increasingly significant challenge for law enforcement and criminal justice authorities. Investigations involving digital evidence, including social media communications, online harassment, cyberstalking and image-based sexual abuse, have increased in both complexity and volume. Law enforcement authorities report that the limited number of digital forensic specialists, combined with the growing storage capacity and complexity of electronic devices, contributes to significant delays in investigations. Cases involving digital communications frequently require mutual legal assistance requests to foreign jurisdictions or service providers, further extending processing times. These challenges were identified as a structural bottleneck in a 2022 working group report examining delays in the investigation of sexual offences.

To strengthen investigative capacity, Icelandic law enforcement authorities have invested in digital forensic tools and developed procedures for the examination of electronic devices and online evidence in accordance with evidentiary requirements. Electronic case management systems have also been introduced to support the handling of violence against women cases. These include Business Intelligence (BI) tools for monitoring offences, case progression and suspects, as well as a justice portal facilitating the electronic transmission of cases between police and prosecution authorities and providing automated feedback on court proceedings. These measures are intended to enhance continuity, efficiency and transparency throughout the criminal justice process.

Efforts have also been made to improve the use of technology in supporting victims of violence against women. The National Commissioner of the Icelandic Police has developed an online service portal (mitt.logreglan.is) for victims of domestic violence and sexual offences, enabling digital communication with police services and access to case-related information. The portal has been under continuous development since its pilot launch in 2021, with further expansion planned. In addition, victim-centred digital solutions have been introduced in selected police districts, allowing victims to monitor the progress of their cases through both police and judicial stages, with nationwide implementation envisaged. These initiatives aim to improve accessibility, transparency and victim engagement.

Technology is also increasingly being utilised to enhance victim protection. Legislation enabling the electronic monitoring of individuals subject to restraining orders or emergency barring orders has been adopted, and

implementation arrangements are currently being developed by the Ministry of Justice. The measure is included in the National Action Plan against Gender-Based Violence 2026–2030 and is intended to strengthen compliance with protection orders, improve victim safety and facilitate the collection of evidence in cases involving breaches. Its effective implementation will depend on the allocation of adequate and sustainable funding.

The development of technological solutions to support risk assessment, risk management and inter-agency co-operation in high-risk cases has likewise been identified as a priority. Effective responses to gender-based violence require integrated information systems that facilitate structured information-sharing and coordinated action among relevant authorities. While important progress has been made, further investment and dedicated resources are required to strengthen technological infrastructure and ensure that law enforcement and support services are equipped to respond effectively to both offline and technology-facilitated forms of violence against women.

Measures to ensure accessible and victim-sensitive reporting of violence against women

During the reporting period, Iceland has taken a number of practical measures to ensure accessible, victim-centred and co-ordinated services for individuals affected by violence, including at the initial stages of contact with the justice system. Comprehensive information on available remedies, reporting procedures and support services is publicly accessible through the national emergency helpline and webportal (112.is), including step-by-step guidance on navigating the criminal justice process, deciding whether to report an offence, and understanding victims' rights.

A network of specialised service centres for victims of violence operates across the country, providing free and confidential services to victims of violence of all genders. These centres offer integrated, multidisciplinary assistance, including access to counsellors, police officers, legal advisors and civil society organisations in a single location. Victims may engage with law enforcement regardless of whether they intend to file a formal complaint. In parallel, specialised services are available within the healthcare system, including a dedicated domestic violence response team at the Landspítali University Hospital, composed of psychologists and social workers, which provides confidential support, facilitates access to legal counsel and assists with referrals to the police and other services. Case managers ensure continuity of care and follow-up throughout the process. Emergency reception services for victims of sexual violence constitute a key entry point, ensuring immediate medical, psychological and forensic support.

Victims are provided with accessible information and multiple channels for reporting offences, including in-person reporting, online complaint mechanisms and digital service portals. In addition, technological solutions have been introduced to improve accessibility, including web-based chat functions, mobile applications tailored to users who cannot or prefer not to use voice communication, and systems allowing victims to track the progress of their cases online. Efforts are ongoing to further integrate police digital services into a centralised governmental platform. Updated guidance materials have been developed to ensure clarity and transparency regarding criminal procedures, including specific guidance for victims of sexual and domestic violence.

Procedural safeguards have also been strengthened in cases of domestic violence. Applicable police guidelines require that incidents be assessed and documented on-site by responding officers, ensuring that the activation of investigative procedures does not depend solely on the victim's initiative. Specific procedures and guidance have been developed for cases involving children, including differentiated approaches based on their age and the nature of the offence. Child victims are afforded specialised protection through the Barnahús children's centre, which provides a child-friendly, multidisciplinary framework for forensic interviews, assessment and support services.

Targeted measures have also been adopted in relation to persons in vulnerable situations, including persons with disabilities. The Director of Public Prosecutions has issued specific instructions⁶⁰ regarding the handling of such cases, including the involvement of legal guardians or support persons.

⁶⁰ The Directorate of public prosecution (2018), [Leiðbeiningar, RS 3/2018](#)

Specialist law-enforcement and prosecution units addressing violence against women

In Iceland, specialised police officers and prosecutors are employed in the investigation and prosecution of violence-related offences. However, practices vary significantly between police districts as to whether such cases are handled by general criminal investigators or by specialised personnel. In smaller police districts, there are no specialised investigators assigned exclusively to such offences, and violence-related cases therefore do not constitute the primary area of responsibility of the investigators concerned.

At the same time, approximately half of serving police officers in Iceland have graduated from the Police Science programme at the University of Akureyri and have therefore completed courses that, to varying degrees, include components involving specialised training on violence-related offences.

There are no mandatory training courses for police officers specifically dedicated to violence. However, specialised courses are available on domestic violence, sexual violence and trafficking in human beings. As several different courses address violence-related issues in varying ways, comprehensive data on the number of participants who have attended such training courses is not available.

Additionally, several police districts have a direct contact person within the victim support centre, enabling them to have a more comprehensive understanding of the issue while guiding victims through the system.

Measures to ensure prompt investigation and effective prosecution of violence against women and domestic violence

During the reporting period, Iceland has adopted and implemented several policy measures, procedural guidelines and prosecutorial instructions aimed at ensuring the prompt and effective handling of criminal cases, particularly those involving violence. The Director of Public Prosecutions has issued specific instructions on the length of criminal proceedings (RS 4/2017)⁶¹, which emphasize that cases involving physical and sexual violence shall be handled expeditiously. Priority is to be given to cases of rape, offences involving violence against children, domestic violence, and cases where the alleged offender is under 18 years of age.

Further measures include procedural guidelines issued by the NCIP on the handling and registration of domestic violence cases (2018), as well as guidelines issued by the Director of Public Prosecutions on the investigation and prosecution of sexual offences⁶². These measures are complemented by broader law enforcement strategies, including the National Policing Plan for the period 2019–2023.

To assess the implementation and effectiveness of these measures, and in light of Iceland's obligations under the Istanbul Convention, authorities are in the process of collecting detailed data from all police districts and the Office of the District Prosecutor. This includes information on institutional objectives regarding the quality and timeliness of criminal investigations, case-processing times in cases of rape, serious sexual offences against children and domestic violence, and the average duration of such proceedings, disaggregated by type of offence and the age of the victim.

The data collection further encompasses information on the number of cases discontinued at the investigation or prosecution stage, including those terminated due to lack of evidence, expiry of limitation periods, withdrawal of complaints by victims or deficiencies in the investigation. Additional indicators include the number of cases returned for further investigation, the duration of supplementary investigative measures, and the extent to which delays in case processing have been recorded and explained within the case management system.

Monitoring efforts also focus on the practical implementation of existing procedural guidelines, including the extent to which domestic violence protocols are applied in practice by police authorities, as well as the use of investigative

⁶¹ The Directorate of public prosecution (2017), [Fyrirmæli, RS:4/2017](#)

⁶²

tools and safeguards. This includes, inter alia, data on police response priorities, the use of body cameras, the preparation of investigation plans, and the involvement of child protection and social services at the scene. Furthermore, attention is given to the application of risk assessment tools in domestic violence cases, including the use of checklists and comprehensive risk assessments, and the extent to which such assessments are submitted to courts in support of requests for restraining orders or eviction measures.

These measures aim to strengthen accountability, improve the efficiency and quality of criminal investigations, and ensure that cases involving violence are handled in a timely and effective manner, in line with Iceland's international human rights obligations

Measures to encourage women and girls to report violence

During the reporting period, several measures have been undertaken to encourage women and girls to report violence and to improve access to information, services and reporting mechanisms.

Work has continued on the development of the police service portal (mitt.logreglan.is), including its migration to the national Digital Iceland platform. Access to the portal has been expanded to victims of sexual violence in the Suðurnes district, having previously been available only in the capital area, and work is ongoing to extend access to South Iceland. Information from the Violence Portal on 112.is has also been mirrored into the service portal and onto the police website.

Police districts have placed emphasis on access to service centres for victims of violence, with particular attention given to ensuring that different groups of victims feel welcome, including persons with disabilities, LGBTI+ persons and persons of foreign origin.

Community policing has also been further developed. Community police officers are now active in nearly all police districts. A dedicated toolkit has been developed for community police officers, containing educational material on combating gender-based violence. Particular emphasis has been placed on consent and communication in all materials prepared as part of police awareness-raising efforts. Community police officers have also followed up on the implementation of flowcharts on first responses to sexual violence and domestic violence, which are distributed to schools nationwide, together with flowcharts concerning first responses to weapons offences. In addition, community police officers have played an active role in awareness-raising on digital sexual offences in primary schools.

Regional co-operation has also been strengthened through the signing of co-operation declarations in all nine police districts under the heading "Safer Regions". These regional initiatives operate under various names containing the word "safer" and the region. In the capital area, the Metropolitan Police Commissioner has signed co-operation agreements with all municipalities within the district. Police authorities also participate in other regional co-operation initiatives, including service centres for victims of violence, and have formally taken seats on newly established regional well-being councils. At larger consultation meetings, police crime statistics, findings from Icelandic youth studies and results from the police victimisation survey have been presented, with encouragement to report offences. Available indications suggest that offences are less frequently reported in more sparsely populated areas and/or are more often classified as disputes. Police participation in service centres for victims of violence constitutes multidisciplinary regional co-operation; examples include the opening of the *Suðurhlíð* as part of Safer Suðurnes Peninsula (*Öruggari Suðurnes*) and the domestic violence exercise conducted under Safer East Iceland (*Öruggara Austurland*).

Flowcharts on first responses to sexual violence, domestic violence and weapons offences have been distributed to schools nationwide, with the aim of encouraging reporting to the police. These flowcharts are intended for professionals and provide referrals to services available through 112.is, child protection services and health services, among others.

The public awareness campaign “Have Fun” (*Góða skemmtun*)⁶³, previously known as “Be Alert” (*Verum vakandi*), was launched in March 2022 as an awareness campaign against sexual violence. The campaign encouraged the public to remain attentive and to ask, “*Is everything okay?*” if concerns arose. It was subsequently expanded to address safe and respectful social environments more broadly, including in nightlife venues, schools and events during the pre-Christmas period. Continued special emphasis was placed on summer festivities.

A public guide on the handling of domestic violence and sexual offence cases within the justice system has been developed and published on the violence portal 112.is to inform the public about case processing and encourage reporting, including in relation to children and young people.

The violence portal on 112.is has been further strengthened through additional support to the emergency helpline *Neyðarlínan*. The aim is for the platform to serve as the primary access point for information and services concerning sexual violence, domestic violence and violence against children. More recently, substantial additional content relating to online safety has also been added.

Since February 2022, the Office of the NCIP has published quarterly statistical information on gender-based violence. New procedural rules have been introduced on the registration of victims in sexual offence cases, together with guidance on the registration of digital sexual offences, with the aim of improving data quality.

The NCIP and the Reykjavik Metropolitan Police also conduct an annual victimisation survey examining public experiences of crime and attitudes towards policing. The survey includes questions on experiences of sexual offences, intimate partner violence, stalking and digital sexual offences. It also includes questions on service access, including whether respondents have sought assistance from a victim support centre.

Measures concerning vulnerable groups and trust in law enforcement

During the reporting period, additional measures have been implemented to improve accessibility, trust and responsiveness in relation to vulnerable groups.

Neyðarlínan has received support to introduce machine translation on the 112.is website, with the aim of improving access to information for persons who do not speak Icelandic.

The Police Education and Professional Development Centre (*Mennta- og starfsþróunarsetur lögreglunnar*) has developed an online training course on communication with persons with disabilities, in co-operation with a wide range of stakeholders. Around the beginning of 2026, the Centre introduced the electronic learning platform *Eloomi*, which will support the implementation and follow-up of this training.

The Centre has also provided training on interviewing vulnerable individuals, with the aim of ensuring improved procedural quality during investigations.

The interministerial working group on prevention and awareness-raising under the auspice of the Ministry of the Ministry of Justice was tasked with paying particular attention to the position of persons in especially vulnerable situations in all of its activities.

The NCIP has entered into a co-operation agreement with Samtökin 78, under which educational materials on LGBTI persons have been developed. This includes training relating to violence among family members and related persons. In addition, a background variable has been added to data collection to identify whether respondents self-identify as LGBTI.

⁶³ See: <https://www.112.is/godaskemmtun>

Challenges have been identified in ensuring implementation of procedures and instructions regarding the involvement of rights protection officers for persons with disabilities during interviews, due to operational difficulties affecting the rights protection system both before and after its merger into the Icelandic Human Rights Institute.

Protocols and standard operating procedures for police handling of violence against women and evidence collection

Several procedural guidelines and standardised instructions have been adopted to guide police practice, in cases involving sexual offences and domestic violence. Regarding domestic violence, the NCIP has issued comprehensive guidelines on the handling and registration of such cases, originally adopted in 2005 and subsequently revised in 2014 and 2018, with the aim of ensuring a consistent and structured response by law enforcement authorities.

In the field of sexual offences, including sexual harassment and digital forms of sexual violence, the Director of Public Prosecutions has issued several binding instructions governing both the investigation and prosecution of such cases. These include, *inter alia*, instructions on the preparation of investigation plans and case analysis (RS 2/2018)⁶⁴, as well as instructions on prosecutorial decision-making (RS 7/2017)⁶⁵. In addition, updated procedural guidelines on the investigation and handling of sexual offences by the police were issued in December 2024, further strengthening the procedural framework.

Complementary guidance has also been developed by other competent authorities. The National Agency for Children and Families has issued detailed procedures concerning cases of violence against children, including protocols for assessing suspected violence by caregivers or household members, procedures in cases involving suspected violence against infants, and guidance on co-operation between child protection services and the police in the context of forensic medical examinations. In parallel, the National University Hospital and other healthcare institutions have established protocols for conducting forensic medical examinations in cases of suspected sexual violence, including within emergency reception services.

Efforts taken to identify and address all factors that contribute to attrition in cases of violence against women and domestic violence.

The NCIP has established domestic violence procedures and has stressed the importance of clarity and precise workflows to ensure thorough investigations and effective follow up with perpetrators and victims. Moreover, the office provides nine police districts with dashboards to monitor the number of cases, their progress and outcomes. No further efforts have been undertaken to identify and address the factors contributing to attrition.

In order to meet GREVIO recommendations no. 259, on the need to increase the capacity of the police and prosecution authorities in gender-based violence cases, and no. 264, on the need to identify factors that slow down the processing of gender-based violence cases, the National Programme against Gender-Based Violence against Women 2026-2030 includes an action on the processing of gender-based violence cases within the justice system. A study will be conducted on the attitudes and experiences of professionals working in the processing of gender-based violence cases within the justice system. The objective of the action is to investigate whether changes in the legal environment and procedures in recent years have yielded the desired results in the processing of gender-based violence cases or whether further action is needed. In 2014, research findings were published on the attitudes of professionals towards the processing of rape cases within the justice system and proposals for improvements. Since then, various changes have occurred in relation to the processing of gender-based violence cases within the

⁶⁴ The Directorate of Public Prosecution (2018), [Fyrirmæli RS:2/2018](#)

⁶⁵ The Directorate of Public Prosecution (2023), [Fyrirmæli RS: 4/2023](#)

context of the justice system. For example, amendments have been made to the provisions of Article 194 of the Penal Code. where rape is defined based on consent and violence in a close relationship is now a separate offence, cf. Art. 218b of the General Penal Code. Amendments have also been made to the Code of Criminal Procedure to improve the legal status of victims, permanent positions in the sexual offences department of the police in the capital area have been increased and the police and the prosecution have received training in the handling of sexual offences, to name a few examples. Therefore, an investigation will be conducted taking into account the results of a previous investigation from 2014 on the handling of rape cases. This investigation will not be limited to the handling of rape cases but will include the handling of gender-based violence cases within the meaning of the Istanbul Convention. In light of GREVIO's recommendations, a special effort will be made to identify which factors slow down the handling of gender-based violence cases within the justice system

The issuance of a renewable residence permit to migrant women who have become victims of any forms of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention

There are a few specific ways legislation addresses the Istanbul Convention in the Foreign Nationals Act with residence permits that are renewable.

With regards to domestic violence, Article 70 addresses this issue. Subparagraph b of the ninth paragraph states: „A foreign national who has had a residence permit under these provisions may, if special reasons exist and if compelling reasons of fairness so recommend, be granted a residence permit on the basis of special ties to Iceland, as provided for in Article 78 if the conditions of the first and second paragraphs of Article 55 are fulfilled, in addition to one of the following: b. the marriage or cohabiting partnership has been ended because the foreign national or his/her child has been subjected to abuse or other forms of violence from the partner and it has been reported to the police or child protection authorities, or if other records indicate this;“

Furthermore, the same paragraph of Article 70 addresses gender-based violence in subparagraph c: “the foreign national demonstrates that owing to the social or cultural situation in his/her home country, he/she could have difficulty returning to that country as a result of divorce or separation.”

Article 76 addresses the issue of violence against women and human trafficking: „A victim of human trafficking, and his/her child present in Iceland, may be granted a renewable residence permit for one year under special circumstances, even though requirements in the first and second paragraphs of Article 55 are not fulfilled, when it is believed necessary: a. for reasons of the individual's personal circumstances, or b. at the wish of the police for reasons of co-operation with the authorities in an investigation.“

Under Article 79 a residence permit can be granted based on a lawful and special purpose. The Article states: „A foreign national may be granted a residence permit based on a lawful and special purpose, provided that conditions of the first and second paragraphs of Article 55 are fulfilled, if he/she is older than 18 and is not covered by another article providing for a residence permit pursuant to this Act. A residence permit granted under this Article shall only be issued for one year at a time. The residence permit may be renewed if the purpose for the stay continues unchanged.“

2.11.1 Article 51: Risk assessment and risk management

The National Programme against Gender-Based Violence against Women 2026-2030 responds to GREVIO Recommendation No. 274, on the need for relevant institutions to be obliged to carry out systematic risk and safety assessments of violence, and GREVIO Recommendation No. 189(b), on violence against children, with an action on risk assessment and risk management. The action involves the establishment of a systematic and co-ordinated risk assessment and subsequent appropriate risk management, including the use of safety alarms, eviction from the home and restraining orders. Care will be taken to ensure that the risk assessment and risk management take into account the different needs of different women and their children, including women of foreign origin and other women who are subject to multiple discrimination. The experience of neighbouring countries with risk assessment and risk management will be considered and the legal environment on confidentiality reviewed to ensure professional risk assessment and response.

Pregnancy

In Iceland, standardized clinical tools and guidelines are used to assess risks related to violence against women and children. These include structured assessments of risk factors, such as clinical tools for evaluating injuries in children and identifying risk factors related to children, parents and social circumstances. The guidelines are developed at national level and apply across regions, while individual healthcare institutions are responsible for their implementation.

Risk assessments take into account a range of factors that may indicate an increased likelihood of continued or repeated violence. Pregnancy is specifically recognised as an important risk factor. All women attending antenatal care are routinely and systematically asked about domestic violence. Where violence is identified, healthcare professionals assess the need for further support, provide appropriate interventions and ensure follow-up. Particular attention is given to the safety of both the mother and the unborn child, and mandatory reporting obligations may apply where relevant.

Pregnancy is therefore considered a significant red flag in risk assessment, supporting early identification, intervention and the prevention of further violence.

Standardised risk assessment tools available to Icelandic police

The NCIP has developed a standardized triage checklist for use by all police districts on the scene of intimate partner violence cases, based on risk factors drawn from B-SAFER and SARA. The investigator fills out the checklist which includes 28 items. This list has been used since 2015 and was prepared from Dormond, K. (2014). Domestic Violence Threat Assessment. In J.R. Meloy and J. Hoffmann (editors), International Handbook of Threat Assessment (pp. 330-339). New York: Oxford University Press. Please see the triage checklist attached.

The Reykjavík Metropolitan Police employ one specialist who is qualified to carry out standardised risk assessments and has been trained in the use of such assessment tools. This specialist is also the only risk assessment specialist in the police nationwide. The tools the specialist has been trained in is: B-Safer and SARA for intimate partner violence, PATRIARCH for honour-based violence, HCR-20 for generic violence risk, SAM for stalking and SVR-20 and RSVP-V2 for risk of sexual abuse. The Northwest Police's specialist in crime prevention will be undergoing training in the spring in risk assessment. The National Commissioner's specialist in risk assessment is on a study leave, working for the FBI.

Under the 2014 Police Protocol, updated in 2018 on the handling and registration of domestic violence cases, a risk assessment must be carried out in every domestic violence case attended by the police based on the standardized triage checklist, and this practice has continued since the 2022 GREVIO baseline evaluation.

Recently, the National Hospital 's mental health department which includes its recently established nation-wide domestic violence team (and will include Bryndísarhlíð, newly established violence and trauma centre) concluded a course in HCR-20. No decision has been made whether to train the staff in B-SAFER, SARA, PATRIARK or SAM nor whether to share the use of a triage checklist.

Extent of use in practice

The triage checklist is available nationwide for intimate partner violence cases (spouse/partner, current or former), but in more complex or high-risk situations a full, structured risk assessment is required, and its use remains limited to the most serious cases owing to the very limited number of police personnel trained in using those tools, high case volumes and the time required to complete a full structured assessment properly.

The checklist is currently paper-based and scanned into the case file; results cannot be extracted electronically for aggregate analysis or systemic follow-up. A mobile application for digital on-scene assessment, real-time data sharing and electronic aggregation has been in development in collaboration with the Reykjavik Metropolitan Police but has not been introduced. Consequently, lethality risk is assessed by a specialist within the Metropolitan Police

upon request but is not consistently assessed and tracked across all domestic violence, stalking and honour-based violence cases.

In 2025, the number of domestic violence violations between spouses/partners, current or former, reported to police were 791.

Multi-agency co-operation

Article 11 of the Police Act, No. 90/1996, was amended in 2021 to provide an explicit legal basis for police co-operation and information-sharing with other authorities, institutions and service providers, including personal data where necessary for statutory functions. The provision specifically requires the police to work with social, health and education authorities on prevention and to inform those authorities of matters requiring their intervention.

This amendment has not proved sufficient in practice. It authorizes sharing of information by the police but imposes no corresponding duty on other agencies, and professional secrecy rules applicable to healthcare, social services and other providers continue to create uncertainty, leading in some cases to refusal to share or even receive information, even when there is concern for risk.

Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs)⁶⁶ have been piloted in several police districts. All the police departments have signed declarations of co-operation with municipalities in their areas of operation, secondary schools, health institutions, District Commissioners, and other key parties on regional consultation on crime prevention under the programme "Safer Regions". Many of them have emphasized developing and improving services for domestic violence and sexual offences. This has included, among other things, work on common work procedures, response training and joint forms for sharing and referring victims to services. The NCIP has supported the development of Safer Regions" with the support of the Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Social Affairs.

Specialist victim service centres

Child protection services, if children are connected to parties go to the scene in all cases if crime is suspected between related individuals. Moreover, social services (only if victims agree) also go to the scene if a crime is suspected. Social and child protection services have not been formally integrated into a nationally standardized, shared risk assessment and management process.

The victim support centres Bjarkarhlíð, Bjarmahlíð, Sigurhæðir, Suðurhlíð provide low-threshold, multidisciplinary support and co-operate closely with the police, but are not formally integrated into a nationally standardized, joint risk assessment and management process.

The Landspítali University Hospital has established a domestic violence team located at the emergency department in Reykjavik which collaborates closely with the hospital's sexual assault referral centre. The team consists of social workers and psychologists specializing in trauma and supports all health centres and hospitals around Iceland when victims seek health services. Ministry of Health and Landspítali University Hospital are working on opening Bryndísarhlíð, a special Violence and Trauma Centre supporting both child and adult victims of violence with health services. However, healthcare services and NGOs are likewise not yet formally embedded in the risk assessment process.

Linking risk assessment to protective measures

The NCIP has stressed that risk assessment must be clearly linked to investigative and law-enforcement decisions, including the use of emergency safety alarms, a written agreement with the suspect on privacy (*Selfossleiðin*), restraining orders, eviction from home, electronic monitoring and pre-trial custody, as well as decisions on

⁶⁶) [MARAK - multi-professional risk assessment - THL](#)

indictment, suspended sentences and follow-up. Without such a link, there is a risk that risk assessment could become a formality rather than an effective management tool.

Homicide review

Iceland does not yet have a formal domestic homicide review mechanism. The NCIP publishes aggregated statistics on homicides, including a dedicated overview of killing of women (21 women killed between 1999 and 2023, the majority by a current or former partner). The National programme against Gender-based Violence against Women 2026-2030 includes an action on femicide. The action includes considering establishing a system that involves specifically investigating and analysing femicide with the aim of identifying the main causal factors and possible systemic flaws. Research in this sense aims solely to reveal the causes of femicide, and not to apportion blame or responsibility, with the aim of reducing the risk of similar murders. This involves analysing and investigating the circumstances of each individual femicide with the aim of preventing the incident from recurring and identifying what improvements need to be made.

Separation/Divorce

Iceland does not employ a single standardized, mandatory risk assessment tool applied uniformly across all authorities. However, risk assessment is embedded in legal and administrative decision-making, including in family law proceedings, where authorities are required to assess the risk of violence and its impact on the child as part of a holistic evaluation. Within this framework, filing for separation/divorce or the breakdown of the relationship is not explicitly codified as a standalone red flag indicator in legislation or formal risk assessment tools. Nevertheless, relevant legal developments and practice demonstrate that such circumstances are implicitly recognized as risk-enhancing factors, particularly in the context of domestic violence: Amendments to the Marriage Act, No. 31/1993, (by Act No. 71/2022) explicitly aim to facilitate and expedite divorce for victims of domestic violence, recognizing that remaining in the marital relationship may expose victims to continued harm and control. The law allows for immediate divorce without prior separation where violence is evidenced, based on police reports, medical or psychological documentation, or other supporting information. The explanatory notes to the Act emphasize that delays in divorce proceedings may increase the risk of victims returning to abusive relationships, highlighting the period surrounding separation as particularly vulnerable. In conclusion, while the act of filing for divorce or separation is not formally defined as a red flag in a standardized risk assessment tool, Icelandic law and practice recognize separation as a critical context in which risks of violence may escalate. This is reflected in legal provisions facilitating rapid divorce in cases of violence and in the requirement for authorities to conduct comprehensive risk assessments that consider the broader circumstances of the relationship, including its breakdown.

Red flags considered in risk assessment

The triage checklist used by the Icelandic police, together with the underlying structured risk assessment tools, incorporates a range of recognised risk factors relevant to violence against women and domestic violence. As the checklist remains paper-based and its results cannot currently be extracted electronically, no disaggregated statistical data is available on the frequency with which individual risk factors are recorded.

Access to firearms is included as a risk factor. Iceland has strict firearms legislation, and firearm ownership is registered, which supports police verification during risk assessment and case handling.

Previous acts of violence are also included. Police have access to prior case history through the police database, and an alert linked to the victim's address is automatically triggered in connection with emergency calls, thereby supporting rapid situational awareness and response.

The prior issuance of restrictive measures, including current or previous restraining orders, eviction orders and breaches of such orders, is treated as an important risk indicator. The Office of the NCIP has identified repeated breaches of restraining orders as a particularly significant indicator of escalating risk and has noted that, where appropriate, such cases should be combined with electronic monitoring.

Threats to remove common children are addressed within the assessment framework under threats and coercive or controlling behaviour and are specifically relevant under the PATRIARCH risk assessment tool. Violence during pregnancy is not specifically addressed in the B-SAFER tool; however, within the SARA framework, additional factors related to violence against children may be assessed, including violence during pregnancy as one relevant risk factor. Threats involving children also constitute grounds for notification to child protection authorities, and approximately 30–40% of annual child protection notifications originate from the police.

Acts of sexual violence within an intimate relationship are recognised as a specific risk factor. In addition, the SVR-20 and RSVP-V2 risk assessment tools are used to estimate the risk of sexual assault.

Threats to kill the victim and their children are considered a significant factor in the assessment of lethality risk, with explicit death threats carrying particular weight.

Threats of suicide by the perpetrator are also included as part of the assessment of the perpetrator's mental health and instability. These threats are considered relevant both to the risk of murder-suicide and to the broader risk of serious harm.

Coercive and controlling behaviour is recognised as a risk factor across the structured assessment tools. Although coercive control is not established as a standalone criminal offence under Icelandic law, controlling behaviour is taken into account during risk assessment and may be addressed under Article 218b of the General Penal Code concerning violence in close relationships. In addition, the Reykjavík Metropolitan Police, the NCIP's Education and Career Development Centre, and the Police Science programme at the University of Education have jointly developed and delivered training on coercive control.

Inter-agency co-operation in risk assessment and individual safety planning for victims of violence against women and their children

During the reporting period, the NCIP has emphasised that systematic risk assessment and structured risk management constitute essential components of an effective response to gender-based violence and are critical to preventing serious and repeated forms of abuse. Risk assessment is understood not merely as a one-time evaluation of a victim's circumstances or the application of specific police risk assessment tools, but rather as a continuous and dynamic process in which risk is identified, reassessed and actively managed in close connection with criminal investigations, prosecution, service provision and follow-up measures. This process requires co-ordinated engagement among all relevant actors involved in the protection and support of victims.

Operational experience in Iceland, supported by international comparative practice, indicates that the most severe consequences of gender-based violence, including homicide and life-threatening injury, are frequently preceded by identifiable risk indicators. Where risk assessments are not standardised, not effectively shared across institutions, or not linked to concrete protective measures, there is an increased likelihood of fragmented and insufficient responses.

In this context, reference is made to established models in neighbouring countries, such as the MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference) model applied in Finland, which is based on regular multi-agency meetings addressing high-risk cases, joint risk assessments and co-ordinated interventions. Such frameworks facilitate structured information-sharing and ensure that decisions regarding protection, investigation and follow-up are based on a comprehensive understanding of each case rather than isolated institutional perspectives.

At present, the existing legal framework, and particularly provisions relating to confidentiality and data protection, may impose practical limitations on information exchange between institutions, except where this is based on the consent of the victim or specific statutory authorisations. This can result in a degree of caution and legal uncertainty in practice, including in cases involving a significant risk of serious harm or threats to life, or where victims are in particularly vulnerable situations. While certain authorities, such as the police and child protection services, possess statutory powers to obtain information, this does not in itself ensure consistent or reciprocal information-sharing among all relevant stakeholders. The mandates of other key actors may be limited or unclear, which may further

hinder effective risk management. There is therefore a need to establish clear procedures and guidance, and where appropriate, legal obligations to facilitate information-sharing and consultation in high-risk cases, consistent with the state's duty to protect life and physical integrity.

It is further emphasised that risk assessment must be meaningfully integrated into the investigative and prosecutorial functions of law enforcement authorities. The outcomes of risk assessments should systematically inform decisions regarding investigative measures and the application of protective interventions, including emergency alarms, restraining orders, removal of perpetrators from the home, electronic monitoring and pre-trial detention, as well as decisions related to prosecution, suspended sentencing and post-conviction supervision. Without such integration, there is a risk that risk assessment could remain a formal requirement rather than an effective operational tool.

In addition, the NCIP underlines that risk management should encompass not only victim protection but also a structured approach to perpetrators, particularly with regard to the risk of re-offending. While the protection and support of victims remain paramount, it is necessary to ensure that authorities adopt a co-ordinated and evidence-based approach to perpetrators, including the use of information on behavioural patterns, criminal history and assessed risk in decision-making processes, as well as the provision of appropriate interventions aimed at reducing recidivism.

In this regard, the development of an "EXIT" programme is noted, intended to support individuals in disengaging from criminal behaviour and breaking patterns of repeated offending. Although the initiative remains at an early stage, the conclusion of a co-operation agreement represents a significant step forward. It is anticipated that, as the programme develops, it may become an important component of a comprehensive risk management framework, particularly when linked to systematic risk assessment and multi-agency co-operation.

Finally, it is stressed that the effective implementation of risk assessment and risk management requires sustained investment in training, the establishment of clear operational procedures, and adequate resourcing in terms of personnel, technical capacity and follow-up mechanisms, in order to ensure that these measures produce tangible and measurable results in practice.

Retrospective review of gender-related killings of women and identification of systemic gaps

In line with GREVIO recommendation No. 275, concerning the need for dedicated oversight bodies to examine gender-related killings of women with a view to their prevention, the National Programme against Gender-based Violence Against Women 2026-2030 includes an action on such a mechanism. The action aims to assess the feasibility of establishing an independent committee tasked with the systematic examination and analysis of femicide cases. In its most serious instances, gender-based violence against women may result in the death of the victim. Such killings, commonly referred to as femicide, represent the extreme manifestation of gender-based violence and require targeted institutional responses. The proposed committee would be mandated to investigate the circumstances and underlying factors of such cases, with a view to identifying root causes, systemic shortcomings and potential failures in prevention, protection or intervention mechanisms. It is envisaged that the mandate and functioning of the proposed body would be modelled on existing independent investigative mechanisms in Iceland, such as the Transport Accident Investigation Board, which operates pursuant to Act No. 18/2013. Following this model, the proposed femicide review committee would be convened in each case where a woman's death was linked to gender-based violence. Its primary function would be to conduct an independent, multidisciplinary analysis of the sequence of events leading to the death, with the sole objective of preventing recurrence. The committee would operate independently of governmental authorities, law enforcement agencies, prosecutorial bodies and the judiciary. Its work would not be aimed at determining criminal liability or apportioning blame, but rather at establishing the causes and contributing factors of each case. On that basis, it would formulate evidence-based recommendations aimed at improving institutional responses, strengthening co-ordination among relevant actors, and enhancing preventive measures. The overall objective would be to reduce the incidence of femicide and to enhance the safety of women by improving the effectiveness of responses by law enforcement, social services and

the healthcare system. Through systematic analysis and the identification of structural gaps, the initiative is intended to contribute to a more coherent and preventive framework in addressing gender-based violence, in line with the State's obligations under the Convention.

2.12 Article 52: Emergency barring

Emergency barring orders

Emergency removal from the home and related protective measures are governed by the Icelandic Act on Restraining Orders and Expulsion from the Home, No. 85/2011. With said act, Iceland adopted legislative and administrative measures enabling the police authorities to issue emergency barring orders in situations of immediate danger, in line with Article 52 of the Istanbul Convention.

The police authorities are authorised to order the immediate removal of a perpetrator from the shared residence and prohibit return to the residence for a specified period. Such decisions are subject to prompt judicial confirmation, ensuring compliance with due process guarantees.

Emergency barring orders may be imposed, e.g. where there is a risk of violence, threats and/or harassment, specific conditions are met and where such measures are considered necessary to protect the victim. The measure is time-limited, with a maximum duration up to four weeks, subject to the replacement of a new order or other protective measures.

Legislative framework

The legislative framework prioritises the immediate safety and protection of the victim, including removal of the perpetrator rather than relocation of the victim and co-ordination with social services and child protection authorities where relevant. In addition, amendments to the Act adopted by the Althingi in April 2026, introduce the possibility of applying electronic monitoring under specified conditions, in connection with expulsion orders, allowing the police to require perpetrators to wear location-tracking devices to ensure compliance with an emergency barring order. This enables real-time supervision of compliance, strengthening preventive protection and significantly enhances the effectiveness and enforceability of emergency barring orders by shifting from reactive enforcement to preventive supervision, and by reducing the burden on victims to report breaches. Furthermore, the institutional framework is further strengthened by allowing the imposition and enforcement of restraining orders, expulsion from the home by all the police districts in Iceland, irrelevant of the victim's legal domicile. This ensures that police authorities across the country are uniformly empowered to act without geographical limitation, thereby enhancing accessibility and responsiveness in cases of domestic violence. This contributes to improved consistency, timeliness and availability of protection measures nationwide.

Emergency barring orders and continuity of protection

The Icelandic framework ensures continuity, i.e. avoiding gaps between emergency intervention and longer-term protective measures, as follows.

Emergency expulsion orders are issued immediately by the police where necessary. Orders are time-limited but if the conditions for the first order still apply, a new order may be issued. Under Article 7 of Act No. 85/2011, the Chief of Police decides on eviction within 24 hours and on a restraining order within 72 hours. In the case of a restraining order, the decision is only submitted to the court if the person subject to the restraining order demands it within 2 weeks.

Under Article 12 of the same Act, the Chief of Police must refer the eviction decision to the District Court for confirmation within 72 hours, and the police decision remains in force until the court rules. Evictions are issued for up to four weeks at a time and can be extended by a new decision. Under the new Act (Bill of legislation No. 298), the Chief of Police leading the investigation can issue and extend the order regardless of venue, further reducing procedural gaps.

Proactive support and advice for victims

At the point of issuance of emergency barring measures, the police provide information and referral to support services, including shelters and victim support mechanisms. Victims may be referred to social services and specialist domestic violence support services.

Police go through an on-scene triage checklist to assess the risk following callouts and develop safety plans in co-operation with social services and local child protection at the scene. Police are required to inform the victims about their case and their right to request a restraining order, and which support services are available. If police are called out by the domestic violence team at the Landspítali University Hospital or another healthcare institution, the same procedures are implemented there and safety plans developed with healthcare personnel.

Under Article 3 of Act No. 85/2011, the Chief of Police may issue an order on their own initiative. Act No. 43/2023 strengthened healthcare professionals' authority to report domestic violence and co-operate with police in multi-agency risk reduction, if victims agree to the collaboration.

If there are any children involved, child protection services go to the scene in all cases if a crime is suspected. Moreover, social services (only if victims agree) go to the scene if a crime is suspected in cases where parties are closely connected. Police are directly involved in specialist service centres for victims of violence (Bjarkarhlíð, Bjarmahlíð, Sigurhæðir and Suðurhlíð), where victims can also receive multi-disciplinary support.

Inclusion of children in emergency barring measures

Protection orders may explicitly extend to children in the household and other dependants or persons at risk. Child protection considerations are integrated into risk assessments, and co-ordination with child protection authorities may be triggered where necessary.

Contact bans and possible exceptions

Under Icelandic law, the imposition of contact bans is subject to specific legal conditions.

A restraining order may be imposed where there is reasonable suspicion that the accused has committed a criminal offence or has otherwise disturbed the peace of the victim, or where there is a risk that the person concerned will infringe upon the victim in this manner.

Expulsion from the home may be imposed where there is reasonable suspicion that the accused has committed a criminal offence under specified provisions of the General Penal Code and the act has been directed against a person closely connected to the accused, where that relationship is considered to have increased the seriousness of the offence, provided that the offence is punishable by imprisonment of up to six months. Expulsion from the home may also be imposed where there is a risk that the person concerned will infringe upon the victim in such a manner.

A restraining order may be imposed concurrently with expulsion from the home where this is considered necessary to safeguard the interests of the victim.

The police are authorised to arrest the accused at their home or wherever they may be found for the purpose of processing and deciding on the imposition of a restraining order and/or expulsion from the home.

Exceptions to contact bans are interpreted very narrowly and remain subordinate to the primary objective of ensuring victim safety. Depending on the circumstances of the case, exemptions may be granted in relation to arrangements concerning contact with children, including custody and visitation, necessary communication arising through legal or administrative proceedings, or other interactions considered strictly necessary and proportionate.

Measures adopted since the 2022 GREVIO baseline assessment

Since the 2022 GREVIO baseline assessment, Iceland has pursued a co-ordinated track of proposals, new prosecutorial instructions, a new Act. While the legal framework itself (Act No. 85/2011 on Restraining Orders and

Expulsion from the Home) was found to be compliant with the Istanbul Convention, the measures below aim to strengthen its application in practice.

Bill of legislation No. 298 (parliamentary document 413), of the 157th legislative session 2025–2026, submitted by the Minister of Justice, was passed on 27 April 2026. The new Act authorizes the police to impose electronic monitoring (GPS ankle tags) alongside a restraining order and/or expulsion where there is suspicion the perpetrator will breach the order and monitoring is necessary to ensure compliance. Modelled on Norwegian and Danish law, the Act makes a breach of electronic monitoring an independent criminal offence, subject to the same penalties as a breach of a restraining order or expulsion. It simplifies procedure by allowing the Chief of Police leading the investigation to issue and extend the order regardless of the victim's legal domicile.

The Director of Public Prosecutions' issued Instructions No. 1/2024⁶⁷ on restraining orders and expulsion from the home to guide police and prosecutors on the application of Act No. 85/2011, and need to be revised following adoption of Bill No. 298.

The National Programme against Gender-based Violence Against Women 2026-2030 links the use of restraining orders (Action 15) to systemic multi-agency risk assessment and risk management (Action 13), with measurable outcomes including data on breaches of protective measures (Action 17), responding to GREVIO's call for better statistics.

Legal and institutional framework

Iceland's framework for emergency barring orders is primarily laid down in the Act on Restraining Orders and Expulsion from the Home. This Act provides the legal basis for restraining orders and/or expulsion from the home in situations of risk or violence. The law permits the police to apply immediate expulsion from the home in cases of domestic violence risk, with subsequent administrative confirmation and judicial oversight.

Recent amendments adopted by the Althingi introduce the possibility of electronic monitoring in connection with expulsion and restraining orders. This allows authorities to monitor compliance with exclusion zones in real time and enhance enforcement of emergency protection measures.

The institutional framework has additionally been further strengthened, allowing the imposition and enforcement of restraining orders and expulsion from the home to be undertaken by all police districts in Iceland, irrespective of the victim's legal residence. This ensures that police authorities across the country are uniformly empowered to act without geographical limitation, thereby enhancing accessibility and responsiveness in cases of domestic violence. This contributes to improved consistency, timeliness and the availability of protection measures nationwide.

Enforcement of emergency barring orders and measures taken in response to breaches

Active orders should be flagged in the police case management system and trigger automatic alerts on any new call-outs so the breaches can be verified in real time. Victims at elevated risk are offered a personal safety alarm connected to the emergency helpline 112 and the police telecommunication centre.

Under the so-called Agreement on Privacy (*Selfossleiðin*) a practice required by law and judicial precedent under Articles 4-6 of Act No. 85/2011, the suspect signs a declaration with substantively the same content as a formal order. The declaration is to include an express warning that statutory measures will follow if breached. This is believed to strengthen subsequent court confirmation by demonstrating that less intrusive measures have been tried. Electronic monitoring introduced under the new law will be implemented and developed over the next 12 months.

Victims are referred to social and child protection services for follow-up support.

⁶⁷ The Directorate of Public Prosecution, [Fyrirmæli RS: 1/2024](#)

Breaches of a restraining order are punishable under the Article 323 of the General Penal Code by a fine or up to one year's imprisonment, or up to two years for repeated or serious breaches. Breach of electronic monitoring will be an independent offence with the same penalty range under the new law. Police may arrest on reasonable suspicion, open an investigation, seize and confiscate devices used to commit the breach under Article 69a of the General Penal Code, and request pre-trial custody when statutory grounds are met.

With the amendments made to Act No. 85/2011, a confirmed breach may lead to a new, longer or more comprehensive order, and/or electronic monitoring once the new law is in force, or pre-trial custody.

A working group, appointed in 2023 by the Minister of Social Affairs and Housing, recommended that repeat breaches be designated as priority cases under Instructions No. 4/2017 of the Director of Public Prosecutions, and that charges be brought earlier under the first paragraph of Article 143 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, No. 88/2008, even where investigation of other offences is ongoing.

Iceland continues to struggle with systematic registration of breaches and with tracking of prosecutions and outcomes. Recording practices need to be harmonised better between police districts. Case progression from breach to indictment, conviction and sentence cannot currently be tracked in aggregate.

A working group, appointed in 2023 by the Minister of Social Affairs and Housing, recommended national standardisation of registration practices across all police districts. Updated figures on recorded breaches 2023-2025 and rates of indictment and conviction will be provided by the Service Division of the NCIP insofar as available.

2.13 Article 53: Restraining or protection

Availability, accessibility and enforcement of restraining orders

Iceland has established a comprehensive framework for restraining orders applicable to victims of violence covered by the Convention.

Restraining orders and related measures are provided for in Act No. 85/2011. These measures prohibit, inter alia, contact, proximity and harassment. The measures can be imposed independently of criminal proceedings and may be initiated by the victim, authorities or *ex officio* by the police authorities.

The Icelandic system ensures that restraining orders are accessible without financial cost to the victim. They can be issued rapidly, adopted on an *ex parte* basis with immediate effect. The procedure is primarily administrative at first instance, ensuring low procedural burden.

Restraining orders are issued for a specified duration, up to a maximum of one year unless replaced by a new order.

Restraining orders are independent of criminal proceedings and may be applied in parallel with or prior to criminal investigations and relied upon in subsequent legal proceedings. An individual subject to a restraining order may challenge the decision before the courts in accordance with general principles of administrative and judicial review. Breaches of restraining or expulsion orders constitute a criminal offence, punishable by fines or imprisonment. In case of serious or repeated cases an aggravated penalty may be imposed.

The introduction of electronic monitoring as an enforcement tool for restraining orders entails that individuals subject to such orders may be required to wear GPS-enabled tracking devices, if specific conditions are met. This allows the police authorities to detect breaches in real time, enforce distance restrictions proactively, and intervene before harm occurs. The recent introduction of electronic monitoring significantly strengthens compliance with Article 53(3), in particular by ensuring that breaches are subject not only to sanctions but also to effective and dissuasive enforcement mechanisms in practice.

Legislative and other measures concerning restraining and protection orders in line with Article 53 of the Istanbul Convention

Since the GREVIO baseline evaluation in 2022, Iceland has taken legislative and practical measures to further strengthen the framework governing restraining and eviction orders under Act No. 85/2011, which apply to all forms of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention. These measures have been aimed at ensuring continued alignment with the requirements of Article 53 of the Convention, including accessibility, scope of application and effectiveness of protection.

Restraining and protection orders are available in Iceland in response to conduct falling within the scope of the Istanbul Convention, including domestic violence, stalking and harassment, as well as threats and coercive behaviour. The statutory framework is broadly formulated, allowing its application to multiple forms of violence against women and girls, including conduct that may also encompass sexual harassment, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, violence in the name of so-called honour, and digital manifestations of violence, insofar as such conduct falls within the general legal criteria for issuance of protective measures.

Children are specifically included within the scope of protection orders. Under Act No. 85/2011, the person against whom wrongdoing has been committed, the victim, his or her family, or another person closely connected to the victim may submit a request to the police for a restraining order and/or expulsion from the home against a person who has committed an offence against the victim or otherwise disturbed the victim's peace. The same right is granted to the legal guardian of the victim and to persons acting on behalf of social services and/or child protection services in the municipality where the person concerned is resident. The police authorities may also initiate proceedings *ex officio* where grounds exist.

Restraining and protection orders may be issued both within the context of criminal proceedings and independently of such proceedings. They may be imposed by the police and are not dependent on prior criminal conviction, thereby ensuring immediate protective effect in urgent situations.

Exceptions to contact bans are provided for under the legal framework but are interpreted very narrowly and remain subordinate to the primary objective of ensuring victim safety. Depending on the circumstances, exemptions may be granted in relation to child contact arrangements, including custody and visitation, necessary communication in the context of legal or administrative proceedings, or other strictly necessary and proportionate interactions.

Following GREVIO's recommendation in 2022, Iceland has continued to strengthen both the legislative and practical implementation of restraining and eviction orders, including through amendments and complementary measures under Act No. 85/2011, the introduction of new legislative provisions in Bill No. 298, the issuance of Instructions No. 1/2024 by the Director of Public Prosecutions, and the adoption of a new National Programme against Gender-based Violence Against Women 2026-2030. While the framework itself was assessed as compliant with Article 53, GREVIO recommended greater use of protection orders beyond domestic violence cases, particularly in relation to stalking and sexual harassment, including their digital dimension. The NCIP has noted that the statutory framework already permits such use, although application in practice remains predominantly concentrated in domestic violence cases.

Children may be included in both restraining and eviction orders under Act No. 85/2011, either as directly protected persons or as members of a protected household. In addition, child protection committees may independently seek protective measures under Article 37 of the Child Protection Act, No. 80/2002, although such applications are reportedly rare in practice.

GREVIO also expressed concern in 2022 that where restraining or eviction orders are issued solely in respect of the mother, perpetrators may continue to exercise visitation rights in relation to children, and that insufficient consideration may be given to domestic and sexual violence in custody and visitation decisions. The Icelandic authorities have acknowledged these concerns, and emphasis has subsequently been placed on strengthening regional consultation mechanisms on crime prevention and victim protection (cf. the Safer Regions initiative), with a particular focus on children and young people and on gender-based violence. These initiatives involve co-operation between municipalities, which are responsible for child protection and social services, and District Commissioners, who are responsible for visitation agreements concerning children and divorce arrangements.

Enforcement of protection orders and response to violations

The enforcement framework for restraining orders and eviction orders, as well as the criminal law response to breaches of such orders, has already been described here above.

2.14 Article 56: Measures of protection

Notification of victims in cases of escape or temporary release of the perpetrator

The Icelandic legal framework provides for several measures to ensure that victims are informed of key developments in criminal proceedings, including situations where a perpetrator escapes or is temporarily released, particularly where the victim or their family may be at risk.

Pursuant to the second paragraph of Article 13 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, Act No. 88/2008, and the Instructions of the Director of Public Prosecutions, No. 2/2023⁶⁸, victims must be notified at key stages of criminal proceedings. In addition, Article 97 of Act No. 88/2008 provides for the police or the prosecution service to inform the victim or their legal representative if the accused has been placed in custody or released from custody in cases involving offences under Chapters XXII–XXIV of the General Penal Code, or where the circumstances of the case are otherwise such that it is considered important for the victim to receive such information.

Furthermore, Article 15 of the Execution of Sentences Act, No. 15/2016, stipulates that the Prison and Probation Administration is authorised to inform the victim of arrangements concerning the execution of the sentence of the person who has offended against them.

Protection of the privacy and image of the victim

The Icelandic Code of Criminal Procedure contains a number of procedural safeguards aimed at protecting the privacy and reputation of victims during criminal proceedings.

Under Article 10 of Act No. 88/2008, the court may order that proceedings be held wholly or partially behind closed doors, either on its own initiative or at the request of the prosecutor, the defendant or the victim, where this is

⁶⁸ The Directorate of Public Prosecution, [Fyrirmæli RS: 2/2023](#)

necessary to protect the victim, the defendant, a family member, a witness or another person concerned, or for reasons of public decency or in the interest of confidentiality.

Article 11 further prohibits audio and video recording, live broadcasting or simultaneous reporting of statements made by defendants or witnesses during their examination, except where otherwise permitted. The court may also prohibit reporting on proceedings, including public hearings, where such reporting could cause distress or significant inconvenience to the family of the defendant, the victim or others not subject to criminal charges. Breaches of these provisions are punishable by fines, and the court may restrict the offender's access to future proceedings.

In addition, the eighth paragraph of Article 122 of Act No. 88/2008 allows witnesses to give evidence without disclosing their name or national identification number in open court where disclosure would endanger their life, health or freedom, or that of close relatives. The second paragraph of Article 13 further requires that such identifying information is not entered into the court record.

These safeguards are complemented by Article 9 of Act No. 88/2008, as amended by Act No. 61/2022, which provides for specially equipped facilities for the examination of victims and witnesses with mental, intellectual or sensory impairments, as well as for children under the age of 15.

Testimony without the presence of the accused and use of communication technologies

Under Article 166 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, the accused has the right to be present at the main hearing of a case in court during the taking of evidence and oral presentation of the case. This provision is based on rights guaranteed under the Constitution and the European Convention on Human Rights. However, pursuant to the first paragraph of Article 123 of the same Act, a judge may decide that the accused shall leave the courtroom while a witness statement is taken, where the judge considers that the presence of the accused may be particularly burdensome for the witness and may affect their testimony. In such cases, the judge must ensure that the accused is able to follow the proceedings as they take place, and the court retains the right to put questions to the witness on behalf of the accused or their defence counsel. Furthermore, the third paragraph of Article 123 provides for the Court Administration to issue further rules on the implementation of this procedure.

In this regard, Article 56(i) of the Istanbul Convention contains a corresponding principle, providing for victims to be able to testify without being present in court or without the presence of the alleged perpetrator, in particular, through the use of appropriate communication technologies where available.

The National Programme against Action Plan on Combating Gender-based Violence Against Women 2026-2030 includes an action responding to GREVIO Recommendation No. 296 on the systematic application of victim-centred justice in court proceedings. This action aims to ensure that the facilities and organisation of main hearings in courts across the country adequately safeguard the rights of victims of gender-based violence. In this context, three main measures are envisaged: the provision of teleconferencing equipment in appropriate courthouse facilities; the adaptation of court premises to ensure that victims may give testimony in court without physical proximity to the accused while allowing the accused to follow proceedings within the courthouse; and measures to ensure that victims and accused persons do not encounter each other outside the courtroom.

Provision of support services for victims in criminal proceedings

In recent years, the legal status of victims has been strengthened through various legislative amendments, including Act No. 61/2022 amending the Code of Criminal Procedure, Act No. 88/2008. These amendments have improved victims' access to information during the investigative phase and have strengthened the role of prosecutors, including their increased authority to present evidence in court and to question witnesses during the main hearing.

At the same time, it has been recognised that further co-ordination of prosecutorial practice at the national level is necessary in order to ensure consistent quality in services provided to victims of gender-based violence. The National Programme against Gender-based Violence Against Women 2026-2030 therefore includes measures aimed at clarifying the role and scope of prosecutors in such cases. In this context, guidelines will be issued on the specific nature of gender-based violence and on key considerations for legal professionals in ensuring victims' rights,

including the importance of early communication between legal professionals and victims prior to police interviews, as well as proactive follow-up and information-sharing throughout proceedings.

In addition, training will be provided to all legal professionals on recent legislative amendments concerning the role of prosecutors and the rights of victims of gender-based violence under the Penal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure, with due regard to the provisions of the Istanbul Convention. This will also include training on the forthcoming guidelines.

3. Part III: Emerging trends on violence against women and domestic

Emerging trends in violence against women and domestic violence

Gender-based and sexual violence is an ongoing social problem in Iceland. This is reflected both in police statistics on reported crimes and in data from victim support centres and other entities that provide services to victims of violence. Reference is made to the police reports on domestic and sexual violence, The Icelandic Youth Survey and statistics from the National Agency for Children and Families, see the description under Article 11 Data collection and research.

Domestic violence remains the most frequent form of violence handled by the police. In 2025, 1252 offences were registered of suspected domestic violence and 1233 incidents of suspected domestic dispute, which is consistent with the 2022-2024 average. While most offenses are committed by current or former partners, there is a rising trend in violence between parents and children (in both directions), indicating a broadening scope of domestic violence beyond intimate partner relationships and possible changes in the focus of the police and/or the impact of COVID-19. In 2025, 629 sexual offenses were recorded, including 194 rapes, 131 offenses of sexual harassment and digital sexual offenses and sexual abuse of children.

Digital manifestations of violence have become increasingly prominent since 2022. Following the 2021 amendment to the General Penal Code regarding sexual privacy (Art. 199a), the police have improved their work procedures in registering digital sexual offenses and emphasized prevention work through their community policing and regional consultations on crime prevention. In addition to non-consensual distribution of intimate images, trends include digital stalking on social media, threats, GPS monitoring, and the non-consensual sharing of intimate images among youth. In response, authorities have developed prevention and educational resources (e.g. on stoppofbeldi.namsefni.is, egveit.is, netvis.is and 112.is).

Regarding victim groups, it is established that women of foreign origin, women with disabilities, LGBTI+ women, and women with substance use disorders face systemic barriers including language gaps, fear of authorities, and social isolation. Additionally, suspicion of “honour-based” abuse has emerged in a limited number of cases.

Between 1999 and 2023, 21 women were victims of femicide in Iceland, most often at the hands of a current or former partner, highlighting the continued severity of intimate partner violence.

Emerging trends in domestic case law related to violence against women

Since 2022, emerging trends in domestic case law have focused on several key areas. The Supreme Court has increasingly overturned the mitigation of sentences by the Court of Appeal, see as an example case no. 6/2023, not limited to only gender-based violence.

A landmark Supreme Court judgment (no. 31/2023, January 2024) defined the boundaries of digital sexual violence in Iceland. The court ruled that when a perpetrator is not physically present but coerces a victim into performing sexual acts on camera via digital means, the conduct constitutes sexual harassment (under Article 199 of the General Penal Code) rather than rape (under Article 194). In its reasoning, the court strictly cited the principle of legal certainty, concluding that the legal definition of rape requires physical presence or contact and cannot be extended by the judiciary to include remote digital coercion without explicit legislative changes.

Case law regarding the 2018 definition of consent-based rape continues to evolve through the appellate system. Courts are increasingly prioritizing the consistency and credibility of victim testimony, bolstered by contemporaneous digital evidence (e.g. Snapchat logs and mobile data), particularly in incapacity cases where the victim was unable to consent due to intoxication or sleep.

In recent years, several cases involving victims of violence have been brought before the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) against the Icelandic state. These cases have primarily focused on the state's positive obligation to conduct effective investigations into sexual and domestic violence. The main criticism from the ECHR has been administrative delays, prosecutorial logic using intent rather than consent as the primary focus, and victim autonomy. These rulings have influenced the ongoing reforms in Iceland, including new guidelines from the Director of Public Prosecutions and increased funding for the investigation of sexual offences by the police.

Emerging trends in the allocation of funding and budgeting

Funding dedicated to measures addressing gender-based violence has been increased across public institutions. Long-term funding agreements have been established with specialized support services for victims of gender-based violence, as well as with programmes aimed at perpetrators of violence. In addition, grant funding has been allocated to civil society organizations providing support services to victims of gender-based violence, supporting the sustainability and accessibility of these services. Reference is made to the description of funding under Article 8 Funding.

Innovative approaches to primary prevention

The Icelandic government has placed emphasis on prevention in the fight against gender-based violence. Various actions have been taken to prevent sexual and gender-based violence, particularly among children and young people, but also among the general public. Reference is made to Article 12 on General Obligations, Article 14 on Education and Article 16 on Preventive intervention and treatment programmes.

Emerging trends related to access to asylum and international protection for women victims of violence against women.

According to information from the Directorate of Immigration, no specific trends have been observed regarding gender-based violence against women in the asylum process in Iceland in recent years.

4. Part IV: Administrative data and statistics

Statistical tracking of violence against women and domestic violence cases

Reference is made to the chapter on Article 11, regarding data collection and research.

When an offence is reported to the police, it is registered under a case number that is retained throughout the criminal justice process. The NCIP publishes statistics up to the prosecution stage, while the Director of Public Prosecutions is responsible for data on indictments and discontinued cases. In principle, this shared case number should allow cases to be traced through the system, but full end-to-end tracking has not yet been implemented due to methodological, interoperability and resource constraints. Thus, it is not possible to provide information on the number of reports, investigations opened, prosecutions, final convictions secured, and sanctions imposed in respect of all forms of violence against women and domestic violence covered by the Istanbul Convention. However, as has already been described, efforts to improve the collection of such data are foreseen under the National Programme against Action Plan on Combating Gender-based Violence Against Women 2026-2030.

Statistics on emergency barring orders and protection orders, including breaches and sanctions imposed

The police have data available on the number of cases where a request for a restraining order and/or expulsion from the home was registered.

Number of cases where a request for a restraining order and/or expulsion from the home was registered in 2023-2025:

	2023	2024	2025
Number of cases	94	82	95

It is not possible to say how many times the request was approved. In the coming months, the Service Division of the NCIP will focus on examining the registration of requests for restraining orders and expulsions from the home. The purpose of that review is to be sure that such prohibitions are recorded in a satisfactory manner. Work will also be done to change how registrations are arranged in case files to better manage the number of requests that are approved by police chiefs or courts. The following table shows the number of violations of a restraining order and/or expulsion from the home.

Number of cases and offences in 2023-2025, violations of restraining order/expulsion from home

	2023	2024	2025
Number of cases	33	44	36
Number of violations	63	66	41

Data on the number of decisions issued by family courts on custody/visitation/residence of children that have expressly taken into account incidents of domestic violence.

Reference is made to the chapter on Article 11, regarding data collection and research.

5. APPENDIX

5.1.1 Table 1: Initial training (education or professional training)

See also description under Article 15 Training of professionals

Initial training (education of professional training)

Professionals	Do they benefit from initial training on violence against women and domestic violence?	Is this training mandatory?	Are training efforts supported by guidelines and protocols?	Who funds the training?	Please describe the content and the duration of the training
Border guards Police officers Specialists if relevant	Yes, both human trafficking and intimate partner violence are a part of training of border guards	Yes, the training is mandatory for all students.	Yes	The NCIP and the University of Akureyri	Initial training of police officers has two components: one 6 ECTS module on Violence and power and Police psychology (trauma focused policing, memory, restorative justice, etc.) and practical training of around 20 hours (including procedural guidelines, obtaining initial account, resources for victims and perpetrators, risk assessment and report writing).
Immigration Officials	General training includes training regarding vulnerable groups. Violence against women is a part of that training.	It is mandatory for the employees who are responsible for conducting interviews at the Directorate of Immigration.	It is a training module from the EUAA.	EUAA	A three-day course; however this concerns vulnerable people in general.
Counsellors of Stígamót, a centre for victims of sexual and gender based violence	Yes, they benefit from in-house initial training and there is a requirement for basic education and an understanding of the consequences of gender based violence.	Yes	Yes, in-house guidelines (written and unwritten) and protocols	Stígamót is funded by the state, municipalities, individuals, NGOs and companies.	In addition to basic professional education (psychology, social work, anthropology etc.) newly hired counsellors follow experienced counsellors in their work to begin with, both in individual sessions and in group sessions.
Counsellors of Bjarmahlíð – Family Justice Centre)	Yes	Yes and No Partially, initial training and monthly supervision (handler outside of the organisation) are mandatory; additional training (conferences and courses)	Informally (internal procedures and practices)	Organisation (internal resources). (only the in house training and the monthly professional guidance).	Counsellors receive initial in-house training at the start of their employment. This includes shadowing an experienced counsellor and participating in client sessions during onboarding.

		are not mandatory)			
Counsellors of Aflíð - Counselling for victims of violence and their relatives	Yes	Yes	Yes – organisational trauma-informed practice guidelines, safeguarding protocols, confidentiality and data protection procedures, and structured referral pathway protocols	The training is fully funded by Aflíð, a non-profit organisation primarily funded by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour, with additional support from other organisations, groups, corporations, and individuals.	Competency-based initial training prior to independent practice covering organisational induction (trauma-informed, victim-centred framework; confidentiality, data protection, case management; violence typologies and impacts; referral pathways), counselling methodology (ethical, legal and professional obligations), safeguarding procedures (risk identification, structured response, client engagement, predefined safety measures), and team integration through participation in case discussions. Includes observation of 4–6 live sessions (incl. intake) with informed client consent and opt-out without service impact. Bi-weekly supervision by a clinically trained supervisor ensures clinical oversight and quality assurance. Completion of all components, competency assessment, and formal supervisor sign-off are required prior to independent practice. Duration is flexible and competency-based.
Counsellors of the Women's shelter	Yes	Yes	Yes	The Association of Women's Shelters Iceland.	Counsellors must have relevant education and experience. They are trained to identify relationship violence, understand the shelter's philosophy, and apply trauma-informed care and counselling techniques. Training includes discussions, reading materials, mentorship from senior staff, completing a minimum of five shifts with a shelter worker, and attending at least ten counselling sessions. Duration: 6-8 weeks.
Shelter workers at the Women's shelter	Yes	Yes	Yes	The Association of	Shelter workers are trained to recognize

				Women's Shelters Iceland.	IPV, understand shelter philosophy, and use trauma-informed care. They also learn hotline response, motivation techniques, and complete at least five shifts with an experienced worker. Duration: 3-4 weeks.
Faculty of Social Work, University of Iceland - Social workers	Yes	Yes	No	It is part of the social work education programme at University of Iceland	It is part of a course Abuse and neglect in families and is the content of the course for two weeks out of 13 weeks
BS Nursing students (University of Iceland)	Yes. Includes teaching on violence, trauma, prevention and response	Partly (core courses mandatory)	Yes – clinical guidelines included	University funded + guest lecturers	3–48 hours across courses covering trauma, violence and forensic nursing*
MS Midwifery students (University of Iceland)	Yes. Violence is covered in the curriculum, especially in relation to antenatal care, screening and communication with women who disclose violence.	Yes.	Yes. National/professional clinical guidelines and screening procedures are explicitly included.	University of Iceland; specific funding lines were not stated in the response.	10–12 hours including screening, trauma-informed care and communication**
Medicine (University of Iceland)	Yes. Training on violence is included in the curriculum	Yes (mandatory in final clinical year)	Yes – based on clinical and forensic guidelines	University funded	Mandatory training day covering injury assessment, documentation, domestic violence, sexual violence, child protection and referral pathways; complemented by a compulsory course in forensic medicine ***
Psychology (University of Iceland)	Partly. Content on violence is integrated across courses	No dedicated module	Partly	University funded	Content included in courses on psychopathology and treatment, focusing on the impact of violence and clinical response ****
Physiotherapy (University of Iceland)	Yes. Content integrated across curriculum	Yes (within core courses)	Yes – professional and ethical guidelines	University funded	Training includes identifying signs of violence, understanding trauma impacts, communication with vulnerable individuals and appropriate professional response *****
Nursing and Occupational Therapy (University of Akureyri)	Yes. Violence-related content is included in the curriculum	Yes (mandatory)	Yes – clinical guidelines and trauma-informed approaches	University funded	Training includes trauma-informed care, ACE, the cycle of violence, impact on health, and identification of and response to violence, supported by case-based and clinical learning. *****

*Examples of relevant courses include: HJÚ127G (3 teaching hours; trauma and violence and their health impact), HJÚ726G (10 + 15 hours in project work; nursing plan after violence, forensic nursing, community resources, prevention), HJÚ831G (2 + 8 elective hours; physical violence against children and child-protection reporting),

HVS501M (2 hours; violence as an interdisciplinary issue), and HJÚ830G (48 elective hours; privilege, class, institutional violence, social violence and marginalization).

**Childbearing process I (autumn, year 1) and Clinical Placement III (autumn, year 2). Approx. 10-12 teaching hours over the two years. Content includes guidelines and procedures for screening for intimate partner violence in antenatal care, the theoretical background, role-play, first responses when a woman discloses violence, trauma and childbirth, and communication skills.

***Examples of relevant training components across health-related education programmes include the following: In medical education, students receive mandatory training on violence in the final phase of their studies through a dedicated training day (LÆK 616F), which provides a comprehensive overview of violence in society and the role of healthcare and social services in supporting victims. The training covers injury assessment and documentation, domestic violence, services for victims of violence, child protection, sexual violence and forensic examination, as well as issues related to refugees, human trafficking and professional responses to violence, including reporting obligations and psychological first aid. Attendance is compulsory. In addition, a compulsory course in forensic medicine (LÆK511F) includes training on injury assessment and documentation, including injuries resulting from violence.

****In psychology programmes, although there is no dedicated module on violence, relevant content is integrated across courses such as adult psychopathology, child and adolescent psychopathology, and therapeutic interventions, which address the consequences of violence and appropriate clinical responses. Some clinical placements also provide exposure to cases involving violence, and specialised procedures and response teams at Landspítali University Hospital support training in this area.

*****In physiotherapy education, content related to violence and trauma is integrated across multiple compulsory courses and clinical training components, including SJÚ105G Introduction to Physiotherapy, SJÚ106G Growth and Development, SJÚ309G Social Environment, SJÚ508G Musculoskeletal Physiotherapy I, SJÚ509G Health Psychology and Mental Health Physiotherapy, SJÚ106F Assistive Devices and Techniques IV, and SJÚ202F Geriatric Physiotherapy. These courses address topics such as the impact of trauma and violence on physical and mental health, identification of possible signs of violence, professional communication with individuals in vulnerable situations, and appropriate professional responses within a multidisciplinary context.

*****In programmes at the University of Akureyri, training related to violence is integrated across several compulsory courses within nursing and occupational therapy education. Relevant courses include, for example, Mental Health Nursing, Women's Health, Community Nursing I and II, and Paediatric Nursing in nursing education, as well as Welfare, Attitudes and Environment, Social Environment, Support and Relationships, Communication and Professional Relationships, Health and Health Promotion, and Mind and Occupation in occupational therapy programmes. Content includes the nature and dynamics of violence, including the cycle of violence, and types of violence and their impact on physical and mental health, with particular emphasis on trauma and its effects on the nervous system. Teaching also covers trauma-informed approaches, adverse childhood experiences (ACE), prevention and available support services, as well as multidisciplinary teamwork within the health system.

Clinical training and case-based learning form an important part of the education, allowing students to engage with real-life or simulated scenarios where issues of violence may arise. Students are trained to recognize indicators of violence, respond appropriately and refer individuals to relevant services. Training is supported by clinical guidelines, including national guidelines on responses to domestic violence. In addition, postgraduate education is available through a joint programme with the University of Iceland in clinical specialist nursing (mental health), which further strengthens competencies in responding to violence and trauma.

5.1.2 Table 2: In-service training

See also description under Article 15 Training of professionals

In-service training

Professionals	Number of professionals trained	Is this training mandatory?	Frequency	Training efforts supported by guidelines and protocols	Please describe the content and duration of the training
Police officers	50	No, but mandatory in criminal investigations basic course and sergeant's leadership training	Delivered annually for each cohort in basic criminal investigations and sergeants training. No obligatory refresh training at the moment but planned.	Yes, the training is supported by law, operational procedures and knowledge-based information.	Training in trauma-focused interviewing, documentation, report writing, procedures, laws and resources as well as risk assessment.
Police employees and leaders at victim support centres Border guards Specialists if relevant See numbers and more information below		No obligatory training at the moment but planned with introduction of new online training system.	Intermittent	Yes.	As part of the ongoing professional development of police personnel, four structured one-hour TEAMS presentations were delivered during the year 2025 (not mandatory, but optional). The sessions focused on strengthening investigative practice, inter agency co-operation, and the handling of sensitive cases involving trauma, victims of violence, and child protection concerns.
Police employees and leaders at victim support centres Border guards Specialists if relevant	56	No	Intermittent	Yes	Trauma Symptoms and How They May Appear in Police Casework This session addressed common trauma symptoms and their possible manifestations during interactions with victims, witnesses and suspects. Its purpose was to enhance officers' ability to recognize trauma-related behaviours and adapt investigative approaches accordingly.

Police employees and leaders at victim support centres Border guards Specialists if relevant	81	No	Intermittent	Yes	Introduction to the Emergency Reception Centre at Landspítali This presentation provided an overview of the Emergency Reception Centre operated by the Landspítali University Hospital. The lecture focused on response procedures, services available to victims of sexual and physical violence, and collaboration between police and medical teams during acute cases.
Police employees and leaders at victim support centres Border guards Specialists if relevant	33	No	Intermittent	Yes	Physical Abuse: Case Outcomes of Matters Referred for Investigation by Reykjavik Child Protection Services This session examined the trajectory and outcomes of physical abuse cases referred by child protection authorities to the police. Topics included investigative challenges, inter agency communication, and opportunities for improving case handling and outcomes.
Police employees and leaders at victim support centres Border guards Specialists if relevant	13	No	Intermittent	Yes	The Legal Standing of Victims and their Counsel in Criminal Proceedings This lecture focused on the legal rights and procedural position of victims and their appointed legal counsel within Icelandic criminal proceedings. The session examined key legal protections afforded to victims, their access to information, their role during investigations and court proceedings, and the responsibilities and limitations of their counsels. Emphasis was placed on recent developments in legislation and practice, as well as on strengthening co-

					operation between investigators and victim representatives to support fair and efficient case handling.
Judges and assistants to judges	12	No			In March 2026 training was held for judges and judicial assistants on victimology. The lecturer is an assistant professor at the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Akureyri. The lecture addressed the legal status of victims and their rights in criminal procedure in light of victimology and legal sociology. Special emphasis was placed on the changes that occurred to the legal status of victims with amendments in Act No. 61/2022 to Act No. 88/2008, the Code of Criminal Procedure. The position of victims in Iceland was also examined in comparison with the legal status of victims in the other Nordic countries.
Judges and assistants to judges	6 judges and 4 assistants	No			Training on human trafficking in October 2025 by a lawyer at the Icelandic Human Rights Institution. Topics covered included: o Provisions of the Palermo Protocol to the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, the Penal Code provision (Article 227a), characteristics of trafficking, interviews with victims, etc.
Judges and assistants to judges	12 judges and 6 assistants	No			Training in September 2025 by specialized investigators at Barnahús Children's House (where there is suspicion that children have been subjected to sexual harassment or abuse; interviews with children). Topics

					included: Interview techniques in investigative questioning, importance of specific elements such as narrative practice, research on children's memory, the effect of questioning on the quality and quantity of accounts, and training of specialists.
Judges and assistants to judges	9 judges and 6 assistants	No			Lecture in September 2024 on the credibility of children's testimony. The lecturer was a professor at the Faculty of Law, Stockholm University. (Children's Testimony in Criminal Proceedings)
Judges and assistants to judges	18 judges and 6 assistants	No			In November 2023, a lecture was held on consent as an element of the act description in Article 194 of the Penal Code on rape, in light of recent case law by a professor at the University of Iceland Faculty of Law. (Consent as an element of the description of the act under Article 194 of the Penal Code on rape in light of recent judgments, 2023). Topics included consent and free will, conditions for consent to be considered present, interpretative approaches, and how the provision has been applied by the courts.
Judges and assistants to judges	14 judges and 9 assistants	No			In October 2022, training was held on digital violence and sexual privacy. The lecturer was a project manager at the NCIP's Office (RLS). (Digital violence and sexual privacy, 2022)
Counsellors of Stígamót, centre for victims of sexual and gender based violence	12	Yes	Annual training plan	Each counsellor sets up their training plan according to needs and interests and has five days annually to allocate for training. Each counsellor funds their training	The content and duration varies between staff members and years. Some attend annual international social worker conventions and others use their education days for formal education

				through trade union education funds. In addition there is in-house group training about 4 times a year.	(additional masters degrees, for example). The in-house training can be, for example, a lecture on the effects of psychoactive substances or training in new form of counselling group ideology. It varies and depends on what the staff members collectively decide they need to strengthen their capacities.
Counsellors of Bjarmahlíð – Family Justice Centre)	2	Yes	Monthly (supervision) + ongoing/self-directed training	Informally	Counsellors attend monthly guidance sessions, where they receive emotional support and professional guidance in their work. Additional training (courses and conferences) is encouraged. Counsellors engage in continuous professional development on their own initiative, including attending occasional training courses and consultation meetings with other NGOs in Iceland. Participation in the annual Family Justice Centre Alliance conference abroad is also encouraged. Duration varies depending on activity.
Counsellors of Aflið - Counselling for victims of violence and their relatives	8	Yes	Bi-weekly supervision; structured in-service professional development, including a recurring development phase every 3–4 months (lectures, organisational training and reflective practice); and regular individual support sessions for counsellors as part of continuous professional development and quality	Yes – organisational trauma-informed practice guidelines, safeguarding protocols, confidentiality and data protection procedures, and structured referral pathway protocols.	In-service training is continuous and focuses on trauma-informed practice, safeguarding, ethical decision-making, and case-based learning. It includes bi-weekly clinical supervision, individual support sessions, participation in case discussions, and a recurring organisational development phase every 3–4 months involving lectures, review of practice trends, and reflective practice on service delivery and emerging needs. Training also includes updates on procedures, referral pathways, and risk management. It is

			assurance.		ongoing throughout employment with structured components delivered weekly, bi-weekly and quarterly.
Counsellors of the Women's Shelter	8	Yes	Once a month	Yes	Monthly four-hour training sessions alternate between in-depth counsellor education and joint sessions with other shelter staff. Experts, partners, and peer-led discussions address topics related to violence against women. Each counsellor attends at least one relevant local or international conference or workshop annually.
Shelter workers at the Women's Shelter	12	Yes	Once a month	Yes	Monthly four-hour training sessions alternate between practical workshops for shelter staff and joint sessions with counsellor. Practical training focuses on daily tasks, while shared sessions cover topics such as coercive control, trauma-informed care, children and violence, types of support, self-care, and techniques for assisting domestic violence victims.
Primary care professionals in the Capital Area Primary Health Care Service	Not systematically recorded	No	Ongoing / as available.	Yes – national procedures	E-learning (4–8 hrs.): identification, response, referral, prevention
Antenatal / child / school health (The Primary Healthcare of the Capital Area)	Not systematically recorded.	No, but encouraged	Ongoing	Yes	Screening for violence, child protection, referrals
Akureyri Hospital	Not specified	Yes (relevant staff)	Annual refresher	Yes	~2 hours training on sexual violence response
Landspítali University Hospital	Not specified	Partly (depending on department)	Regular	Yes – internal protocols	5-day programmed (de-escalation & violence management) + half-day training (self-protection). Need for more specialized training on domestic and sexual violence

