



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

The Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse  
and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015:

**Progress report for the period  
29 April 2015 to 31 March 2017**

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## **Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence: Progress report for the period 29 April 2015 to 31 March 2017.**

Under section 12 of the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 ('the Act'), the Welsh Ministers must, in respect of each financial year, publish a report which addresses the following:

- ✓ progress made towards achieving the objectives in the national strategy on violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (2016-2021);
- ✓ progress made towards achieving the purpose of the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 in Wales (by reference to the national indicators)
- ✓ Predictions of likely future trends and any other analytical data (if published during the period of 12 months beginning with the date of a general election)

This report covers the period of time between the date section 12 of the Act came into force (5th October 2015) and the end of the following financial year (31<sup>st</sup> March 2017). As this report is not being published within 12 months of the last Assembly elections it does not include predictions of likely trends for 2017-2018. Under the Act, there should be a report published in respect of each financial year, and going forward, there will be an annual report each year outlining progress.

### **To note**

The Act requires that progress made towards achieving the purpose of the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 in Wales be reported through reference to the national indicators. National indicators are not yet in place so a chronological outline of progress has been provided. It is anticipated that the National Indicators will be published in 2018, under the auspices of the new National Advisor.

The Act also requires that this report provides an explanation for any revisions to the strategy. There have been none.

Date	Related strategic objective (National Strategy on violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence 2016-2021) and/or related section of the Act	Progress
June 2015	<p><b>Objective 4:</b> Make early intervention and prevention a priority.</p> <p><b>S.15</b> Power to issue statutory guidance to a relevant authority on how the authority should exercise its functions with a view to contributing to the pursuit of the purpose of this Act.</p>	<p><b>Pilot of “Ask and Act” launched in two early adopter sites.</b>  “Ask and Act” is a process of targeted enquiry to be practised across the public service for forms of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.</p> <p>Approximately 1300 employees of the Abertawe Bro Morgannwg Health Board and Gwent local authorities have been trained to “Ask and Act”</p> <p>This pilot will provide a clear model of “Ask and Act” which will be rolled out further in 2017 for further testing.</p>
July 2015	<p><b>S.20</b> The Welsh Ministers must appoint a person as the National Adviser</p>	<p><b>Appointment of the National Adviser</b>  The first National Adviser for Violence against Women, Gender-based Violence, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence.</p>
September 2015	<p><b>Objective 5:</b> Relevant professionals are trained to provide effective, timely and appropriate responses to victims and survivors.</p>	<p><b>Launch of Elearning on violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence</b>  This elearning provides basic, free training on violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence and is available to everyone across Wales.</p> <p>Over 25,000 relevant authority employees have been trained so far.  <a href="https://learning.wales.nhs.uk/">https://learning.wales.nhs.uk/</a></p>
September 2015	<p><b>Objective 2:</b> Increased awareness in children and young people of the importance of safe, equal and healthy relationships and that abusive behaviour is always wrong.</p>	<p><b>Youth Participation Project</b>  Welsh Government funded BAWSO and NSPCC Cymru/Wales to work collaboratively on an innovative youth participation project, tackling the issues of girl’s rights and harmful practices, particularly female genital mutilation (FGM).</p>

<p><b>October 2015</b></p>	<p><b>Objective 2:</b> Increased awareness in children and young people of the importance of safe, equal and healthy relationships and that abusive behaviour is always wrong.</p>	<p><b>Good Practice Guide: A Whole Education Approach to Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence in Wales</b> We published this good practice guide. This guide recognises the importance of education settings as environments where positive attitudes towards gender equality and healthy respectful relationships can be fostered through a rights based approach.</p>
<p><b>December 2015</b></p>	<p><b>S.11</b> Publish indicators (“national indicators”) that may be applied for the purpose of measuring progress towards the achievement of the purpose of this Act.</p>	<p><b>A Task and Finish Group was established to develop the National Indicators</b> The Task and Finish Group will serve in an advisory and consultative role rather than a decision-making one. It is anticipated that the National Indicators will be published in 2018.</p>
<p><b>December 2015</b></p>	<p><b>Objective 2:</b> Increased awareness in children and young people of the importance of safe, equal and healthy relationships and that abusive behaviour is always wrong.</p>	<p><b>National Education Conference - Keeping Learners Safe – Everybody’s Business</b> We held an all Wales education conference with DfES, with a focus on violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence. At the conference we launched a new child sexual exploitation resource and provided practical help and support for education practitioners in tackling all aspects of gender based violence.</p>
<p><b>March 2016</b></p>	<p><b>Objective 5:</b> Relevant professionals are trained to provide effective, timely and appropriate responses to victims and survivors</p> <p><b>S.15</b> Power to issue statutory guidance to a relevant authority on how the authority should exercise its functions with a view to contributing to the pursuit of the purpose of this Act</p>	<p><b>Statutory guidance on the National Training Framework published.</b> For the first time, standards have been set on <b>training related to violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (VAWDASV)</b>, raising the profile of these issues and up-skilling the public service to better respond to those experiencing them.</p> <p><b>Since publication of the National Training Framework the Welsh Government has:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Funded nationwide targeted training for domestic abuse workers, significantly expanding the amount of qualified, specialist professionals across Wales.</li> <li>-Offered a bursary to address a training gap for specialist Independent Sexual Violence Advisers.</li> </ul>

		<p>-Provided the first Welsh training course for specialist service managers.</p> <p>-Created new training courses for sexual violence crisis workers and counsellors.</p> <p>-Created a specialist subject syllabus of Agored Cymru accredited units to aid standardisation of VAWDASV training across Wales.</p> <p>-Created a suite of films aimed at public service leadership to raise awareness VAWDASV. The films have been viewed over 6,500 times.</p>
<b>March 2016</b>	<b>Objective 2:</b> Increased awareness in children and young people of the importance of safe, equal and healthy relationships and that abusive behaviour is always wrong.	<p><b>Awareness raising guidance for school governors published</b></p> <p>The guide contains a number of actions which governors can take to make their school safer.</p>
<b>June 2016</b>	<b>Objective 2:</b> Increased awareness in children and young people of the importance of safe, equal and healthy relationships and that abusive behaviour is always wrong.	<p><b>Review of existing healthy relationship and violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence related teaching resources</b></p> <p>As part of the package of education measures developed to support the implementation of the Act, Welsh Women's Aid in partnership with AVA (Against Violence and Abuse) were commissioned to research and compile a package of recommended best practice materials on VAWDASV which were published to provide information and guidance to primary, secondary and further education providers.</p>
<b>June 2016</b>	<b>Objective 2:</b> Increased awareness in children and young people of the importance of safe, equal and healthy relationships and that abusive behaviour is always wrong	<p><b>Healthy Relationships</b></p> <p>Estyn was commissioned to carry out a review of existing healthy relationship education within schools. The report provides a baseline on the extent to which healthy relationships education is being delivered to pupils in schools across Wales and recommendations on how practice could be improved.</p>
<b>August 2016</b>	<b>Objective 6:</b> Provide victims with equal access to appropriately resourced, high quality, needs led, strength based, gender responsive	<p><b>Commissioning Guidance for violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence services.</b></p> <p>Officials worked with the Lloyds Bank Foundation to create a collaborative commissioning toolkit for VAWDASV services in Wales</p>

	<p>services across Wales.</p> <p><b>S.15</b> Power to issue statutory guidance.</p>	<p>which launched in August 2016. The WG has involved the sustainable funding task and finish group in the production of draft guidance and will formally consult on guidance before laying before the Assembly in 2018.</p>
<b>November 2016</b>	<p><b>S.3</b> Duty to prepare, publish and review a national strategy</p> <p><b>S. 4</b> Duty to implement the national strategy</p>	<p><b>National Strategy on Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence - A framework for delivery 2016-2021</b></p> <p>The National Strategy outlines six objectives that the Welsh Ministers expect to achieve by November 2021. It is based on strong survivor and stakeholder consultation.</p> <p>In February 2017 a task and finish group was established to take forward a delivery framework for the strategy.</p>
<b>February 2017</b>	<p><b>Objective 6:</b> Provide victims with equal access to appropriately resourced, high quality, needs led, strength based, gender responsive services across Wales.</p>	<p><b>Regional and local commissioning arrangements and processes and the production of statutory commissioning guidance.</b></p> <p>A secondee with specialist knowledge of community safety joined Welsh Government in early 2017 to develop a proposed regional approach to funding and service delivery between local authorities and Third Sector organisations.</p> <p>A multi-agency task and finish group has been established to develop a sustainable funding model, including exploring appropriate regional and local commissioning arrangements and processes and the production of statutory commissioning guidance.</p> <p>If the proposal to regionalise is taken forward, and the guidance is to be statutory, it will be consulted on.</p>

<p><b>February 2017</b></p>	<p><b>Objective 2:</b> Increased awareness in children and young people of the importance of safe, equal and healthy relationships and that abusive behaviour is always wrong.</p> <p>Section 9 of the VAWDASV Act amended s.29 of the Education Act 1996 to provide the Welsh Ministers with a regulation making power in relation to information about educational provision to promote the purpose of the VAWDASV Act.</p>	<p><b>Sex and Relationships Expert Panel</b>  The Cabinet Secretary for Education established an expert panel to provide advice and support to the Welsh Government on issues relating to the delivery of Healthy Relationships education within the current curriculum. Officials from the VAWDASV team were members of the Panel.</p> <p>This work will inform any potential regulations made under section 29 of the education Act 1996.</p>
<p><b>March 2017</b></p>	<p><b>Objective 1:</b> Increase awareness and challenge attitudes of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence across the Welsh Population.</p>	<p><b>Communications</b>  A VAWDASV Communications group was set up to inform future Welsh Government campaigns on violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence and provide feedback as these campaigns develop.</p> <p>This work will take place within a VAWDASV Communications Framework to improve coherence of communications activities across Wales.</p>
<p><b>March 2017</b></p>	<p><b>Objective 3:</b> Increased focus on holding perpetrators to account and provide opportunities to change their behaviour based around victim safety.</p>	<p><b>Perpetrator project.</b>  A secondee from Her Majesties Prison and Probation Service joined Welsh Government early in 2017 to take forward this work.</p>

## **Emerging research and data with impacts for violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence policy making in Wales.**

Significant research was published during the period covered by this report. Research is mentioned here where it has a direct relevance to the purpose of the Act.

### **A Cry for Health**

In November 2016 Safelives published “A cry for health”. This research has direct implications for the implementation of “Ask and Act” and the role of Health in violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

The research described the inextricable link between domestic abuse and health. The research found that almost 60% of victims identified in hospital had mental health concerns and that just under half (49%) of victims identified in hospitals had post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

The research also suggested that professionals within health are missing opportunities to support victims and reduce the impact on their health and wellbeing but that without the provision of specialist support to respond to a disclosure of domestic abuse, clinical staff are unlikely to ask about it. This finding will inform the rollout of “Ask and Act”.

### **The Femicide census report.**

In December 2016, the Femicide Census Report, based on the work of Karen Ingala Smith and Women’s Aid with support from Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer LLP and Deloitte LLP, was released covering seven years and bringing together information on 936 women in England and Wales killed by men.

Whilst the Welsh Government were not referred to directly in this report, it provides useful data and its recommendations will be considered within Wales.

### **Project Mirabal - Domestic Violence Perpetrators - Changing the Story**

This research started in 2009 with a formal launch in January 2015. It sought to address whether domestic violence perpetrator programmes work in reducing men’s violence and abuse and increasing the freedom of women and children. It also considered how perpetrators can be held to account, since even if Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programmes do work, their limited capacity means the majority of men do not access them.

**Saving Services to Save lives**

This research was published in early 2016 by Welsh Women's Aid and was informed by the experience of 23 specialist services in Wales. It made recommendations regarding sustainable funding arrangements and commissioning which will be considered as part of the planned work on these subject matters.