



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Violence against women, domestic abuse  
and sexual violence:

**Progress report for the period  
1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018.**

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## **Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence: Progress report for the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018.**

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 between April 2017 and March 2018. As this report is not being published within 12 months of the last Assembly elections it does not include predictions of likely trends for 2018-2019. Work that has taken place after March 2018 is not included.

### **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 an outline of progress against the objectives of the National Strategy on Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (2016 – 2021) has been provided.

The National Advisors for Violence against Women, other forms of Gender-Based Violence, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence will develop the National Indicators and we anticipate publication in 2018.

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

## **Objective 1: Increase awareness and challenge attitudes of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence across the Welsh population.**

This objective has been progressed through several complementary work streams. Work to develop a National Survivor Engagement Framework has created far stronger links with survivors of abuse which, in turn, has created a working relationship with survivors and survivors' groups that has improved creativity and the quality of the policy work put forward this year. The approach to the creation of campaigns and communications has been strongly influenced by survivors of abuse and this work has been taken forward in partnership with expert stakeholders.

### **Key achievements**

In June 2017, the Welsh Government published "Information and Guidance on Domestic Abuse: Safeguarding Older People in Wales". This guidance was created in partnership with the Older People's Commissioner for Wales. It enables professionals within Welsh public services to work more effectively with older people who are experiencing or who have experienced domestic abuse.

In September 2017 direct consultation with survivors of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence began in order to develop proposals for a National Survivor Engagement Framework. Fourteen survivor groups were engaged including sixty people with lived experience of abuse. In March 2018 an options paper for a National Survivor Engagement Framework was launched alongside an online survey. These options were based on the survivor consultation. The survey will close in May 2018

In January 2018 the Welsh Government launched THIS IS ME; a campaign to challenge gender stereotypes. The THIS IS ME campaign challenges gender stereotypes in a positive way and encourages conversations about gender and gender inequality as a cause and consequence of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

### **Spotlight on Communications**

#### **The THIS IS ME campaign**

In March 2017 the Welsh Government convened the first Welsh Government Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Communications group, comprised of subject experts, those with lived experience and those with communications responsibility from across the Welsh public service. The group designed a 'Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Communications framework' and began planning for launch of two new campaigns. Survivors of Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence were involved at every stage; assisting with the specification design and selection of a communications agency to deliver the campaign brief.

In January 2018 the THIS IS ME campaign was launched, aimed at challenging gender stereotypes in a positive way, stimulating conversations about gender and encouraging people to 'live fear free' from gender constraints and gender norms.

The campaign comprised a TV and radio advertisement, supermarket advertising and social media activity. Those viewing the campaign were encouraged to join the conversation using #thisisme.

### **Campaign reach**

- Live Fear Free website use increased by 6,042%
- 2 million impressions through TV advertisements
- Almost 5 million impressions through radio advertisements
- 43% increase in page likes on Facebook
- 117 new followers on Twitter.

The THIS IS ME campaign attracted significant new followers and users to the Live Fear Free website, attracted lively online debate and positive feedback:

“An inspiring campaign, one of the best I've ever seen in Wales. So important to make the link between VAW and gender norms”

“So proud to be part of this campaign to challenge harmful gender stereotypes”

“Brilliant campaign from @WelshGovernment. Always 1 step ahead #VAWG #domesticabuse #GenderEquality #thisisme”

The Welsh Government “Don't be a Bystander campaign” will launch on the 25<sup>th</sup> April using the hashtag #waleswontstandby. This campaign will share the words of survivors of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence through film, radio and social media activity.

### **Next steps**

Additional new campaign work which builds on #thisisme and the Bystander campaign is launching in 2018-2019.

**Objective 2: Increased awareness in children and young people of the importance of safe, equal and healthy relationships and that abusive behaviour is always wrong.**

This objective places a strong emphasis on the education of children and young people. However, it has also been addressed through the THIS IS ME campaign which has resonated with children and young people, who will be a key audience for this campaign going forward.

### **Key achievements**

In June 2017 “A review of healthy relationships education” was published by Estyn. This report evaluated the quality of provision for healthy relationships education in schools in Wales. It identified strategies to support schools in improving provision and outcomes for pupils. The Welsh Government published its response to Estyn’s thematic report: ‘A review of healthy relationships education’ in November 2017.

In January 2018 a report setting out the recommendations of the Sex and Relationships Education Expert Panel (convened by Welsh Government in March 2017) was published. The report makes 11 recommendations which focus on the status of Sex and Relationships Education in the curriculum, professional learning and the availability of support and resources. The Cabinet Secretary for Education will respond to the recommendations in spring 2018.

**Objective 3: To increase focus on holding perpetrators to account, and to provide opportunities to change their behaviour based around victim safety.**

This objective is being taken forward in close collaboration with Her Majesty’s Prison and Probation Service. This has enabled an expert, considered approach to this specialist policy area which integrates with wider work within the Criminal Justice System.

**Key achievements**

In January 2018, the Gwent region was engaged as a Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence pathfinder region, advising on effective mapping of perpetrator services via presentations, surveys and meetings. A report with recommendations will be published later in 2018.

In January 2018, the Integrated Offender Management Board Cymru approved the Project Initiation Document for the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence work stream of the 2018-2023 ‘Framework to support positive change for those at risk of offending in Wales’. A Launch event for the Framework will be scheduled for April 2018.

**Spotlight on perpetrator policy**

In June 2017, a Forensic Psychologist, Dr Cerys Miles, joined the Welsh Government on a collaborative working arrangement with Her Majesty’s Prison and Probation Service to take forward work on perpetrator policy. Work to date has focused largely on preparation for the launch of the 2018-2023 ‘framework to support positive change for those at risk of offending in Wales’, which supports the priorities of the All Wales Criminal Justice Board, including violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence. The aims and objectives of the violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence work stream of the framework were set out in a Project Initiation Document and ratified by the Integrated Offender Management Cymru (IOMC) Board.

A perpetrator services network has been established and regular 'practice sharing' events scheduled for the forthcoming year. Advice has been provided on current and potential VAWDASV perpetrator services such as WISDOM and Drive and a Rapid Evidence Review of perpetrator services is currently underway in conjunction with Cardiff Metropolitan University. In addition, we are working with stakeholders across Wales, including Police and Crime Commissioners, to develop evidence-based approaches to prevention and early intervention.

Work is also underway to develop commissioning pathways for effective perpetrator services. A mapping exercise of perpetrator services in Gwent has been undertaken, identifying current services and providing recommendations to support the ongoing development of effective and efficient services that address risk, need and responsibility.

### **Next Steps**

A task and finish group will develop agreed standards for VAWDASV perpetrator services in Wales to supplement work to date on commissioning and complement existing perpetrator frameworks.

A guidance document for public services coming into contact with VAWDASV perpetrators will be finalised and shared. This will support services in identifying and signposting perpetrators to specialist services at the earliest opportunity.

### **Objective 4: Make early intervention and prevention a priority**

Welsh Government is working to transform the response of the public service to violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence. "Ask and Act" is a policy and training programme which skills up key public service workers to undertake targeted enquiry to identify abuse. In doing so, we aim to create a multitude of new avenues through which victims of abuse can disclose their experience and get the help they need. By prioritising this process of targeted enquiry within Local authorities and Health Boards, we are also responding to evidence which suggests that these services have access to a client group who do not traditionally report to the Criminal Justice System, who experience multiple vulnerabilities and who are well placed for early intervention.<sup>1</sup>

### **Key achievements**

Two pieces of working draft guidance on "Ask and Act" were published in November 2017: Implementation of "Ask and Act": Guidance for relevant authority leaders, co-ordinators and managers and "Ask and Act" and the role of the frontline practitioner.

In September 2017, phase 2 of the national rollout of "Ask and Act" began. Five sites are now engaged in "Ask and Act" training, including the Gwent region, the Cwm Taf region, the Abertawe Bro Morgannwg Health Board, each of the Fire and Rescue services in Wales and the Welsh Ambulance Service Trust.

Planning for phase 3 has also begun and several new regions are set to join the programme in 2018-2019.

**Objective 5: Relevant professionals are trained to provide effective, timely and appropriate responses to victims and survivors.**

The National Training Framework on violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence: Statutory guidance, published under section 15 of the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 and section 60 of the Government of Wales Act 2006 was published in 2015. This sets out ambitious and clear expectations for training standards, outcomes and content on violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

For the first time in Wales, as a result of the Framework, relevant authorities must ensure that all staff are trained to recognise violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

**Key achievements**

In April 2017, in line with The National Training Framework on violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence: Statutory guidance, published under section 15 of the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 and section 60 of the Government of Wales Act 2006, all relevant authorities submitted five year training plans demonstrating how they would address the requirements of the National Training Framework on violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

In February 2018, the first annual report required by the National Training Framework on violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence was commissioned. These are due to be submitted in May 2018.

Data collected by Learning@Wales (the e-learning programme host platform) and provided directly by the relevant authorities shows that the e-Learning on violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (or equivalent) has been completed by 127,103 workers in Wales.

**Spotlight on The National Training Framework on violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence – the Welsh Government e-Learning on violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence**

The National Training Framework set out, for the first time, minimum standards of training on violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence for the relevant authorities named within the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015. Since then implementation of the Framework has been a core part of the work of the Welsh public service.

Group 1 of the National Training Framework includes all staff working within the relevant authorities. Relevant authorities are required to provide training which meets the following learning outcomes. Staff will:



- understand what violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence is;
- recognise the signs of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence; and
- understand their role in tackling violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

Most of the relevant authorities meet this requirement by offering the Welsh Government designed e-Learning to their employees. In 2017-2018 work has been underway to promote uptake of the e-learning; this has included a language review of the programme, individualised feedback to each authority and local support work.

A significant increase in uptake of group 1 training has taken place during 2017-2018. Approximately 102,000 workers completed the training in 2017-2018; compared with 25,000 between 2015 and 2017.

Before completion of the eLearning, 51% of learners strongly agreed that they knew what violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence was. This rose to 79% following completion of the programme.

56% of learners agreed or agreed strongly that they felt confident to recognise the signs of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence before they began the e-learning. This rose to 96% following completion of the course.

Less than a quarter of participants were confident to signpost friends and family for help before they undertook the eLearning. This rose to 64% for following completion.

The e-learning has been used across the Welsh public service and is available to anyone who wishes to use it. So far participants have included the relevant authorities, universities and charities.

### **Next steps**

During 2018-2019 work will be undertaken to make the e-learning available via the Hwb digital learning platform to improve accessibility to those working in education.

Welsh Government will continue to work with those organisations who have not yet trained all staff members to the group 1 requirements to improve accessibility and address any outstanding technical issues.

During 2019 – 2020 work to refresh the e-learning will commence.

**Objective 6: Provide victims with equal access to appropriately resourced, high quality, needs led, strength based, gender responsive services across Wales.**

Whilst this objective cannot be achieved without collaborative funding for VAWDASV services from across many funders, the Welsh Government VAWDASV-specific portfolio provides significant funding. In April 2017 the VAWDASV revenue grant of £4.5m was awarded to local authorities and third sector specialist organisations to support delivery against the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015.

In December 2017 regional plans were submitted outlining regional structures in readiness for roll-out of regionalisation for Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence funding arrangements from 1 April 2018.

In March 2018 draft guidance for regional commissioning of Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence services in Wales was published for consultation. This guidance aims to promote high quality collaborative commissioning that delivers more consistent and effective services to prevent Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence and protect and support victims across Wales.

### **Spotlight on the commissioning guidance**

The Welsh Government committed in the National Strategy on Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence 2016-2021 to support local authorities to provide services based on local and regional need. The Welsh Government also committed to a regionalised and collaborative approach to the provision of Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence funding for local authorities to ensure greater focus on the delivery of, and access to, more effective services whilst achieving greater value for money.

Work has been undertaken with a stakeholder task and finish group to develop statutory guidance for commissioning VAWDASV services that will meet these commitments. Membership of the group included local authorities, health representatives, Police and Crime Commissioners and specialist services from across the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence spectrum.

Written to complement the pre-existing Lloyds Foundation Commissioning Toolkit and Welsh Government Local Strategies Guidance, the draft guidance sets out processes for commissioning national support services that may not fit into standard commissioning models.

### **Next Steps**

Further consideration will be given to the draft commissioning guidance, in the light of feedback during the consultation. The Welsh Government will continue to support

public services as in their commissioning of services to ensure continuity and sustainability of services for victims and survivors of VAWDASV.

### **Duties under the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Act**

In January 2018 under Section 20 of the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015, Yasmin Khan and Nazir Afzal were appointed as new National Advisors for Violence against Women, Gender-based Violence, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence, following the departure of the first National Advisor, Rhian Bowen-Davies.

In March 2018 under section 5 of the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Local Strategies Guidance was published for local authorities and local health boards.

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

### **The following research was used to inform the communications and campaigns work in 2017-2018**

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Barnes, M. (2008) 'Passionate Participation: Emotional experiences and expressions in deliberative forums', *Critical Social Policy*, Vol. 28 (4), pp.461-481

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Brosnan, L. (2012) 'Power and Participation: An Examination of the Dynamics of Mental Health Service-User Involvement in Ireland', *Studies in Social Justice*, Vol. 6 (1), pp. 45-66

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