# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **TITLE**  | **International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women** |
| **DATE**  | **25 November 2019** |
| **BY** | **Jane Hutt, Deputy Minister and Chief Whip** |

Today marks the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and the beginning of 16 Days of Action. It is also White Ribbon Day.

The Welsh Government is leading a drive to increase the number of men signing up as White Ribbon Ambassadors. Ambassadors pledge never to commit, condone or stay silent about male violence against women.

Last week, just a few days before White Ribbon Day, the Wales Audit Office published its report about the implementation of the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015. The report shows the Act is improving services across Wales but that there is more to do. We welcome the report and its recommendations, which we will take time to reflect on.

I want to use White Ribbon Day and the start of 16 Days of Action, to highlight the many positives contained in the WAO’s report, not least that this ground-breaking piece of made-in-Wales legislation is helping to drive the transformation of services.

The Welsh Government is committed to making Wales the safest place for women in Europe but this is not a simple goal, which can be achieved overnight. I want to thank the services that have been working hard, during this prolonged period of austerity, to prevent violence and abuse; to support and protect victims and survivors and, importantly, working with perpetrators to change their behaviour. I want to give those services the recognition they deserve in achieving as much as they have while operating under very difficult circumstances.

Regional VAWDASV partnerships are in place and, with support from Welsh Government guidance, are collaborating more effectively, mapping and commissioning services. Key partners have come together to explore how they can make best use of available funding to develop a more sustainable approach, and more professionals than ever are being trained to recognise violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence and to provide appropriate support.

Our national training framework has attracted attention throughout the UK, with approaches to deliver our Ask and Act training and calls to include training as a statutory requirement in the UK Domestic Abuse Bill.

Our National Advisers, Yasmin Khan, and Nazir Afzal, paid tribute to the tremendous work being taken forward in Wales in their annual report in September.

We agree there is more to do and we are working with organisations and partners across Wales to direct and support efforts. We want to work collectively to end violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence in Wales.