# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **TITLE**  | **National Survivor Engagement Framework: Next steps** |
| **DATE**  |  **20 September 2018** |
| **BY** | **Julie James, Leader of the House and Chief Whip** |

The National Strategy on Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence 2016 - 2021 contains a commitment to develop a sustainable national survivor engagement framework to ensure that the needs and experiences of survivors are understood.

We can only understand and respond to violence and abuse by listening to and working alongside those with lived experience. Many survivors are not able to be heard, even though they are the true experts in the effects of violence and abuse. We are committed to learning from their experience and working with survivors to provide a platform that amplifies their voice.

From November 2017 - January 2018 we engaged with over sixty survivors and with stakeholder organisations. This engagement showed strong support for the development of a formal sustainable engagement mechanism. Survivors and stakeholders all felt that survivor voices and experience should be central to policy development, should be planned and meaningful and should be considered from the outset of policy design. At the same time we also undertook a literature review to identify the barriers and enablers to successful survivor engagement.

This background evidence and learning informed the development of a number of options for a national survivor engagement framework. We consulted on these options in the spring and have published a summary of responses:

<https://livefearfree.gov.wales/policies-and-guidance/national-survivor-engagement-framework?skip=1&lang=en>

Responses to the consultation were helpful but limited in number and representation. Although a diverse range of survivors from across Wales have been engaged with this work, there remain hidden groups of survivors including those not accessing services or not part of any formal structured engagement who are not being heard. These groups include men, Gypsy Roma and Travellers, and LGBT+ communities.

It is important that everyone’s voice is heard, and therefore my officials will initiate a project in September to deliver two main activities:

* improving representation of future survivor engagement by undertaking primary research with those survivor groups who are under-represented in the findings from previous survivor engagement work; and
* a small scale pilot for a national survivor engagement panel.

The pilot will run until March 2019 and will make recommendations for longer term practice following assessment of the findings. I look forward to sharing the outcomes in due course.