

Number: WG29374



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Welsh Government Consultation Document

National Strategy on Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence

A framework for delivery 2016 - 2021

Date of issue: 15 August 2016

Action required: Responses by 10 October 2016

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.
This document is also available in Welsh.

National Strategy on Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence

Overview

The Welsh Government proposes the adoption of the principles in this strategy which outline the ways Welsh Ministers propose to tackle violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence and to move to a society where everybody can live fear free. The principles provide strong strategic direction which promotes consistency and best practice in the way in which these issues are tackled across Wales, focusing on preventive, protective and supportive mechanisms. It fulfills the commitment as set out in section 3 of the Domestic Abuse, Violence against Women and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015.

How to respond

This is a written, electronic consultation. Questions are summarised in a questionnaire at the end of this document, please use this questionnaire to provide your feedback.

Responses to this consultation should be e-mailed/posted to the address below to arrive by **10 October 2016** at the latest.

Further information and related documents

Large print, Braille and alternative language versions of this document are available on request.

The consultation documents can be accessed from the Welsh Government's website at www.gov.wales/consultations

Contact details

For further information:

Violence Against Women and Domestic Abuse team
Community Safety Division
Welsh Government
Merthyr Tydfil Office
Rhydycar
Merthyr Tydfil
CF48 1UZ
e-mail: VAWdateam@wales.gsi.gov.uk
Tel: 0300 062 8465

Data protection

How the views and information you give us will be used

Any response you send us will be seen in full by Welsh Government staff dealing with the issues which

this consultation is about. It may also be seen by other Welsh Government staff to help them plan future consultations.

The Welsh Government intends to publish a summary of the responses to this document. We may also publish responses in full. Normally, the name and address (or part of the address) of the person or organisation who sent the response are published with the response. This helps to show that the consultation was carried out properly. If you do not want your name or address published, please tell us this in writing when you send your response. We will then blank them out.

Names or addresses we blank out might still get published later, though we do not think this would happen very often. The Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 allow the public to ask to see information held by many public bodies, including the Welsh Government. This includes information which has not been published. However, the law also allows us to withhold information in some circumstances. If anyone asks to see information we have withheld, we will have to decide whether to release it or not. If someone has asked for their name and address not to be published, that is an important fact we would take into account. However, there might sometimes be important reasons why we would have to reveal someone's name and address, even though they have asked for them not to be published. We would get in touch with the person and ask their views before we finally decided to reveal the information.

Contents

Ministerial Foreword	1
Introduction	3
Why is it important to tackle Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence?	9
Who needs to be involved?	15
Vision	16
Objectives	17
Prevention	19
Protection	22
Support	24
Governance and accountability	27
Annex 1	28

Foreword by the Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children

In 2010 we published our first Right to be Safe Strategy for tackling all forms of violence against women, which set out 4 key priorities: prevention and raising awareness, providing support for victims and children, improving the response of criminal justice agencies, and improving the response of health services and other agencies.

Six years on, this Strategy sets out our renewed commitment to tackling violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence in Wales. We continue to work closely with the Home Office and criminal justice agencies in Wales to ensure all parties work together, across devolved and non-devolved responsibilities, to achieve our goals.

Public services need to work together to protect people experiencing violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence from suffering any further harm, and protect any children within the family.

The purpose of the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 (“the Act”) is to improve prevention, protection and support for people affected by violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence, and we are making good progress on implementation.

We have published the National Training Framework which will help professionals to deal with disclosures of abuse and ensure consistent training is available for specialist professionals. A key part of the Framework is the e-learning package, published in 2015. This e-learning will raise the awareness of a quarter of a million Welsh public service workers over the next 2 years.

We are developing “Ask and Act”. Our aim is that this will require professionals like Health Visitors and Housing Officers to identify symptoms of abuse and to ask clients if they are being abused.

To enable us prevent violence and abuse in the future, we have to focus on children, to make sure they understand what constitutes a healthy relationship and how to recognise the symptoms of unhealthy relationships. So far we have published a Whole Education Approach Good Practice Guide, produced by Welsh Women’s Aid and awareness raising guidance for school governors, published in March 2016.

We have taken significant steps to reduce the incidence, and to protect victims of Female Genital Mutilation, Forced Marriage and Honour Based Violence.

We are also working with victims and survivors to help us shape our ongoing approach.

For the future, we know that a big part of tackling violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence will be to tackle perpetrators. We are working with the National Probation Service and the National Adviser for Violence against Women and other forms of Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence, on guidance for working with perpetrators.

Improving the quality of and access to services, as well as transforming societal attitudes and behaviours will not be easy. However, we hope the objectives identified in this Strategy will continue to build on the foundations which have already been made and create a stronger, more resilient sector to support individuals and families who are either at risk, or

are struggling with the consequences of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carl Sargeant". The signature is written in a dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Carl Sargeant AM
Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children

1. INTRODUCTION

We want to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales to achieve a prosperous, resilient, cohesive, healthier and more equal nation and society. This can only be achieved if individuals and groups within our communities are able to live fear free from violence and abuse.

In 2010, the Right to be Safe Strategy set out an integrated, cross government programme of action to tackle all forms of violence against women and children.

Much progress has been made over the past six years to improve the way we work with those affected by violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence. Multi agency working is commonplace and a strong, professionalised specialist third sector works alongside the public sector to deliver essential services across Wales.

There is still more to do however and the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 ('The Act') places a strategic, and statutory, focus on the issues, including the requirement to have a National Strategy.

This refreshed Strategy, which fulfils the commitment in section 3 of the Act, builds on our collective progress to date, and prioritises delivery in the areas of prevention, protection, and provision of support, in line with the purpose of the Act.

The objectives specified in this strategy will contribute to the pursuit of the prevention of violence and abuse, the protection of victims and the support of all those affected. The ultimate aim is to move to a society where everybody is able to live fear free.

Definitions

The Act covers all forms of 'gender based violence' in recognition that both men and women are victims of violence, threats of violence or harassment arising directly or indirectly from values, beliefs or customs relating to gender or sexual orientation, and also forced marriage.

There are a number of national and internationally recognised definitions of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence and we recognise that organisations will also work in line with these wider definitions. The Act provides definitions which are right for Wales, whilst taking into account the different views both within the UK and internationally of what these phrases mean.

The Act provides a relatively wide definition of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence which will enable functions under the Act to be exercised in respect of violence or abuse which evidence suggests is an issue in Wales. The definitions below are taken from section 24 of the Act:

- 1) "abuse" means physical, sexual, psychological, emotional or financial abuse.
- 2) "domestic abuse" means abuse where the victim of it is or has been associated with the abuser.
- 3) A person is associated with another person for the purpose of "domestic abuse" if –
 - They are or have been married to each other;

- They are or have been civil partners of each other;
 - They live or have lived together in an enduring family relationship (whether they are of different sexes or the same sex);
 - They live or have lives in the same household; and for this purpose a person is a member of another person's household if –
 - The person normally lives with the other person as a member of his or her family; or
 - The person might reasonably be expected to live with that other person;
 - They are relatives;
 - They have agreed to marry one another (whether or not that agreement has been terminated);
 - They have entered into a civil partnership agreement between them (whether or not that agreement has been terminated);
 - They have or have had an intimate personal relationship with each other;
 - In relation to a child, each of them is a parent of the child or has, or has had, parental responsibility for the child.
- 4) If a child has been adopted or falls within (5) below, two persons are also associated with each other for the purposes of the definition of “domestic abuse” if –
- One is a natural parent of the child or a parent of such a natural parent; and
 - The other is –
 - The child; or
 - A person who has become a parent of the child by virtue of an adoption order, who has applied for an adoption order or with whom the child has at any time been placed for adoption.
- 5) A child falls within this entry if –
- An adoption agency, within the meaning of section 2 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002, is authorised to place the child for adoption under section 19 of that Act (placing children with parental consent) or the child has become the subject of an order under section 21 of that Act (placement orders); or
 - The child is freed for adoption by virtue of an order made –
 - In England and Wales, under section 18 of the Adoption Act 1976; or
 - In Northern Ireland, under article 17(1) or 18(1) of the Adoption (Northern Ireland) Order 1987; or
 - The child is the subject of a Scottish permanence order which includes granting authority to adopt.
- 6) gender-based violence means:
- (a) violence, threats of violence or harassment arising directly or indirectly from values, beliefs or customs relating to gender or sexual orientation;
 - (b) female genital mutilation;
 - (c) forcing a person (whether by physical force or coercion by threats or other psychological means) to enter into a religious or civil ceremony of marriage (whether or not legally binding);
- sexual violence means sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, or threats of violence of a sexual nature.

Welsh Context

There are several pieces of Welsh legislation which impact on this area and objectives and actions identified in this strategy take these into account.

These are:

- The Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 sets out seven well-being goals which are relevant to prevention of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence and support of survivors, including an equal Wales, a healthy Wales and a Wales of cohesive communities, that public sector bodies have to take action to achieve.
- The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 provides a legal framework for improving the well-being of people (adults and children) who need care and support, carers who need support, and for transforming social services in Wales. This requires local population needs assessments to inform the development of local strategies (with the first due no later than 1 April 2017).
- The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 enshrines in legislation the role of the Local Authority in preventing and alleviating homelessness. This Act specifies that whether a person or a member of that person's household is at risk of abuse, including domestic abuse, is a factor in determining whether it is reasonable to continue to occupy accommodation.
- The Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016 sets out a new approach to joint contracts which will help survivors by enabling perpetrators to be targeted for eviction.

The strategy has also been informed by Welsh survivor voices. In early 2016, a group of survivors, who between them had experienced a range of violence and abuse including domestic abuse, sexual violence, forced marriage, FGM, 'honour-based violence', sexual exploitation, trafficking and child sexual abuse, provided a report to the Welsh Government outlining their recommendations and priorities. Their recommendations are being worked through and many will feature in the delivery plan which will be published following the publication of this strategy; however the principles they outline have been woven into this strategy, particularly around improving the support, accessibility and signposting of specialist services for the victim, survivor and their families.

The UK context and working with non-devolved organisations

This strategy sits within a wider UK and global context and we are committed to working with all of our partners, locally, nationally and internationally to achieve our goals.

Successfully tackling violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence will not be achieved by action undertaken by the Welsh Ministers alone. The Welsh Ministers are committed to maintaining and developing close working relationships with other important public sector partners in this endeavour. These partners include Local Government in the exercise of their various functions such as Social Services and Housing, Chief Constables, Police and Crime Commissioners and the National Offender Management Service.

The UK Government 'Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2016-2020' builds on a number of initiatives undertaken by the UK Government including the introduction of a

new offence of controlling or coercive behaviour in an intimate or family relationship in section 76 of the Serious Crime Act 2015. The Act's definition of abuse is very broad and already captures controlling, coercive and threatening behaviour. Seeking to control or coerce another person requires some form of abuse, as defined in the Act. The Serious Crime Act 2015 complements the work we are doing in Wales to improve the public service response to domestic abuse, and violence against women and sexual violence.

Other relevant legislation, and measures introduced by the UK Government include: the Modern Slavery Act 2015, the Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPOs) under the Crime and Security Act 2010, the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS), female genital mutilation (FGM) Protection Orders under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 ("the 2003 Act") and an FGM mandatory reporting duty inserted into the 2003 Act by the Serious Crime Act 2015 and strengthening measures to manage sex offenders or those who pose a risk of sexual harm.

Whilst the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 does not extend to the criminal justice agenda, we will continue to work closely with all relevant agencies – including the police, probation and courts – to ensure all parties work together to complement and enhance each other's work and to achieve our goal of ending all forms of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

This requires a consistent, coordinated approach, including information sharing, across agencies to ensure the safety of victims and that perpetrators are dealt with appropriately.

In 2014, the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) issued "*Domestic violence and abuse: how health services, social care and the organisations they work with can respond effectively*". This guidance, which applies across England and Wales, highlights that domestic abuse is a complex issue that needs sensitive handling by a range of health and social care professionals. The cost, in both human and economic terms, is so significant that even marginally effective interventions are cost effective.

In 2016, NICE issued further Domestic Abuse Quality Standards for healthcare providers. The Welsh Government has an agreement in place with NICE covering the Institute's guidelines, and there is an expectation that NHS bodies in Wales take full account of the recommendations made by the Institute when commissioning and delivering services to patients.

The NICE guidance is for everyone working in health and social care whose work brings them into contact with people who experience or perpetrate domestic violence and abuse. This includes: people working in criminal justice settings and detention centres, health and social care commissioners, including clinical commissioning groups and Local Authorities, and staff working for specialist domestic violence and abuse services. The latter could be working in Local Authorities, the NHS and other organisations in the public, private, voluntary and community sectors. The guidance is also aimed at local strategic partnerships and health boards.

The Global context

The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence ('Istanbul Convention'), to which the UK is a signatory, sets out to:

- a) protect women against all forms of violence, and prevent, prosecute and eliminate violence against women and domestic violence;
- b) contribute to the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and promote substantive equality between women and men, including by empowering women;
- c) design a comprehensive framework, policies and measures for the protection of and assistance to all victims of violence against women and domestic violence;
- d) promote international co-operation with a view to eliminating violence against women and domestic violence;
- e) provide support and assistance to organisations and law enforcement agencies to effectively co-operate in order to adopt an integrated approach to eliminating violence against women and domestic violence.

We support the principles underlying the Convention which are embedded in the laws of the UK and other administrative measures. This strategy further strengthens our commitment to the principles of the Convention by setting out further measures which are directly relevant to the provisions of the Convention. The purpose of the Act is to prevent, protect and support which links with the purposes of the Convention as noted above. By working to fulfil the purposes of the Act, this strategy is directly linked to a number of the provisions of the Convention, including:

- a) by teaching and educating our children and young people about healthy relationships (articles 12 and 14);
- b) by training professionals and other public sector workers via the National Training Framework (articles 12 and 15);
- c) by raising public awareness (articles 12 and 13);
- d) by supporting and encouraging collaborative approaches between relevant authorities and other providers and by publishing commissioning guidance (article 7); and
- e) by developing work on perpetrator programmes (articles 12 and 16).

Internationally, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) has provided a platform for addressing discrimination against women. Work to fulfil the purposes of the Act links to the Convention purposes in that:

- a) raising awareness of healthy relationships, and public awareness campaigns to combat violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence will help to reduce discrimination against women;
- b) the National Training Framework will offer proportionate training to strengthen the response provided across Wales to those experiencing these issues, including women. It will formalise the requirements of those offering specialist and universal services and raise awareness and understanding of such violence and abuse.

Welsh Ministers are under a duty to comply with the European Convention on Human Rights,¹ in the exercise of all their functions, as are all other public authorities. The Welsh Ministers also support the principles contained in the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

¹ See section 81(1) of the Government of Wales Act 2006.

This includes goal 5 - Achieve Gender Equality and empower all women and girls which includes a target in relation to violence against women and girls. Welsh Ministers are also under a duty to have regards to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Act, this strategy and our wider policy programme supports victims and acknowledges violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence as issues for children and young people. The actions and principles contained in this strategy have been identified and developed in the spirit of the principles of all these international instruments and where possible to further embed those principles in the measures adopted in Wales to combat violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

Conclusion

This strategy is necessarily focused on matters that the Welsh Government has responsibility for but we acknowledge the invaluable contribution made by other organisations and we would encourage relevant authorities to work closely with them in contributing to the pursuit of the purpose of the Act.

This strategy provides the leadership and direction which will promote consistency and best practice in the way in which violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence is prioritised and tackled across Wales, focusing on preventive, protective and supportive mechanisms.

Local Authorities and Local Health Boards are required under the Act to have regard to the national strategy in the preparation of their own local strategies. The local strategies will therefore be informed by the national priorities set out in this strategy.

We will publish a delivery plan to complement this strategy. This plan will include more detail on the actions outlined within the strategy and alongside national indicators will enable us to monitor whether we are achieving our goals.

2. WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO TACKLE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, DOMESTIC ABUSE AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence is a fundamental violation of human rights, a cause and consequence of inequality and has far reaching consequences for families, children and society as a whole.

Since the enactment of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, public bodies are required to think more about the long-term, work better with people and communities and each other, look to prevent problems and take a more joined-up approach. It is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales.

To achieve our ambition for everyone to live fear free, we need to tackle the enduring social problems of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence. Despite a significant amount of work in Wales by the Welsh Government and partners over the last few years, we know that many men, women and children are still at risk of, or experiencing violence or abuse.

These issues affect both men and women but as the evidence below indicates, women and girls are disproportionately impacted by much of the violence and abuse covered by the Act:

- 1.4 million women and 700,000 men aged 16-59 report experiencing incidents of domestic abuse in England and Wales;
- Extrapolating this data to Wales shows that 11% women and 5% men a year experience 'any domestic abuse', while rates of 'any sexual assault' in the last year were also higher for women (3.2%) than men (0.7%).²
- In 2011 an estimated 137,000 girls and women were living with consequences of FGM in the UK³ and in 2011 an estimated 60,000 girls under the age of 15 were living in the UK who were born to mothers from FGM practising countries and therefore could be at risk of FGM⁴. It is estimated there are 140 victims of FGM a year in Wales.
- 80% of cases dealt with by the Forced Marriage Unit involved female victims; 20% involved male victims. It is estimated there are up to 100 victims of forced marriage a year in Wales⁵.
- 750,000 children and young people, across the UK witness or experience domestic abuse every year⁶.
- In a study of young people in intimate relationships by the NSPCC, 25 per cent of the girls and 18 per cent of the boys experienced physical abuse; 75 per cent of the girls and 14 per cent of the boys experienced emotional abuse, and 33 per cent of the girls and 16 per cent of the boys experienced sexual abuse⁷. It found that not only do girls experience more abuse, but they also experience more severe abuse more frequently, and suffer more negative impacts on their welfare, compared with boys.

Whilst it is important that this disproportionate experience is acknowledged and communicated through the strategy and the subsequent work of the relevant authorities, the purpose of the strategy is to set out the steps the Welsh Ministers intend to take to tackle all

² Robinson et al., The Welsh Government's proposed 'Ending Violence Against Women and Domestic Abuse (Wales) Bill': Recommendations from the Task and Finish Group 2012.

³ Macfarlane, A. J. & Dorkenoo, E. (2014). Female Genital Mutilation in England and Wales: Updated statistical estimates of the numbers of affected women living in England and Wales and girls at risk - Interim report on provisional estimates. London: City University London.

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Home Office and Foreign and Commonwealth Office – Forced Marriage Units Statistics 2015.

⁶ Department of Health, 2002.

⁷ NSPCC - Radford, L. et al (2011) Child abuse and neglect in the UK today. <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/services-and-resources/research-and-resources/pre-2013/child-abuse-and-neglect-in-the-uk-today/>

gender based violence and abuse. This strategy recognises that anyone (women, men, children and young people) can experience and be affected by domestic abuse, rape and sexual assault, sexual abuse, forced marriage, stalking and harassment, sexual harassment and exploitation. This can happen in any relationship regardless of age, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, disability, income, geography or lifestyle.

Tackling violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence will require targeted action and support to overcome barriers to accessing safety and support. Women who are known to be especially vulnerable to violence and/or who are marginalised, such as women in prostitution, women from BME communities, disabled women, women with mental health or substance abuse problems, young women in care, will require specialised approaches.

Survivors' voices and experiences must be central to informing the development and delivery of legislation, policy and strategy in order to ensure systems and services best meet survivors' needs.

The evidence also highlights that violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence is not rare, regardless of the gender of the victim. We know these issues are common and happening to lots of people in Wales right now. They affect hundreds of thousands of people in Wales every year.

We also know violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence:

- will often include lots of different types of abusive and controlling behaviour which are used together, intentionally to control another person or to have power over them;
- is rarely a one-off incident and usually gets worse over time. Where a person does experience a one-off incident the abuser is likely to do it again, and to others;
- can happen to people of all ages, sexualities, cultural, social and ethnic backgrounds; and
- perpetrators are most likely to be known to the person experiencing it; a partner, family member or an ex-partner.

The experience of violence and abuse is often made up of a combination of different types of abuse. It isn't always physical. It often includes emotional, psychological and financial abuse and other controlling and manipulative behaviours. In many cases physical and sexual violence, or threats of physical and sexual violence, are used alongside these other types of abuse to control someone. It is a confusing, frightening and isolating experience.

Wider implications for victims, survivors and their families

Children and young people

Since 2004 the Welsh Government has used the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) as the basis of its work for children and young people. Violence against women, including domestic abuse or sexual violence in any family unit that includes children is a child protection issue and should be dealt with using the relevant safeguarding procedures. Many women who are the victims of violence have children, and ensuring the well-being of those children must be a priority for both public services and the victim.

We need to ensure that partner agencies are able to identify children who are at risk so that appropriate action can be taken. We already know that women and children are at increased risk when they are involved in family court proceedings.

Child Sexual Abuse

We are committed to tackling and preventing child sexual abuse in our society including non-recent abuse which has taken place and will uphold and action the recommendations to come out of the UK Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse.

Older People

There is sometimes confusion between the experience of domestic abuse in later life and “elder abuse” (a term which encompasses all forms of violence, abuse and neglect experienced by older people). Such confusion can result in victims of abuse falling between the systems which are designed to offer them protection.

As we work towards enhancing and strengthening the role of our Public Service in preventing these issues, it is crucial that we work to overcome such confusion and, instead, ensure our systems and working relationships are integrated and the knowledge and skill set of our employees is geared towards identifying potential abuse as early as possible and providing tailored, effective support as soon as possible.

The experience of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence can be even more damaging to victims where it is experienced alongside other complex needs or vulnerabilities. Whilst it is wrong to homogenise older people as “vulnerable” or “frail” it is important that Public Services and specialist providers are prepared and able to link safeguarding systems to offer a suite of support which addresses all of the issues which may be faced by an older person experiencing violence and abuse.

Black and minority communities and violence and abuse

Survivors may face additional barriers to seeking help, such as racial discrimination, religious stereotyping, fear of community dishonour and rejection, and an insecure immigration status, all of which may prevent them from accessing protection. Additionally, survivors from ethnic minority communities are likely to have barriers to receiving, or asking for, services, including:

- Lack of information and awareness about services and options due to language barrier and lack of familiar community networks.
- Involvement of family members in interpretation and support to access services that defeats the purpose of confidentiality and elevates risks of harm.
- Pressures of socialisation and from family on the pretext of honour and shame. In such cases, women fear that their experiences will not be validated in an alien, mainstream context.
- Concerns around suitable cultural environment for praying, specific socio-religious food habits and familiar environment for children in temporary accommodation.
- BME women not only fear the perpetrator, but racism and marginalisation in society that undermines their confidence to lead an independent life.
- Fear of isolation and racism within a mainstream service.
- Increased likelihood that perpetrators use other forms as part of the abuse e.g. threats of deportation and abandonment, isolation, entrapment, multiple interested parties and violence condoned by family and community.

Migrant, refugee and asylum seeking women and those with No Recourse to Public Funds

A major concern to service providers is their ability to assist migrant, refugee and asylum seeking women who have suffered, or are suffering violence against women and who have no recourse to public funds. This group can often be subject to issues such as FGM, so called 'honour' based violence and forced marriage, as well as the already complex issues of domestic abuse and sexual violence. Visa issues, cultural, language and communication barriers can further complicate and isolate these women.

Abuse and the Workplace

Employees who suffer from abuse or violence are often absent from work or perform poorly, and perpetrators can often target their victims in the workplace or seek to limit their access to work. This has an impact on the employer's business activity as well as the employee's wellbeing. Employers can therefore play an important role in addressing these issues in their own workforce.

Sex Industry, Exploitation and Trafficking

Our priority in this context is public protection; people involved in prostitution can be particularly vulnerable to sexual and other violent crime and may in fact be victims of child sexual exploitation or modern slavery. We want to increase protection and access to appropriate and support services for this often vulnerable group.

LGBT+

The Welsh Government funded research in 2014 which highlighted the barriers faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people when accessing domestic abuse and sexual violence services. The report highlighted individual, interpersonal and structural and cultural barriers and made a series of recommendations to improve accessibility to services, including flexibility, confidential access and inclusivity.

Victims who offend

We know that many victims of sexual, physical and emotional abuse can also be drawn into offending behaviour. Statistically it is shown that women involved in the criminal justice system are more likely to have experienced some form of abuse during their childhood, and many also report that their offending was to support their partner or someone else's substance misuse⁸. Women tend to have shorter sentences than men and they are more likely to self harm in custody. We are working with local areas and National Offender Management Scheme (NOMS) in Wales to ensure a more effective joined-up approach to addressing these women's complex needs.

The Welsh Government works closely with NOMS and the secure estate to prevent women from getting into the criminal justice system. However, there is much that can be done in other areas, such as health, education, housing and social services, to help and prevent women from getting into the criminal justice system in the first place.

⁸ Corston. J. (2007) The Corston Report: The need for a distinct, radically different, visibly-led, strategic, proportionate, holistic, women-centred, integrated approach
<http://www.justice.gov.uk/publications/docs/corston-report-march-2007.pdf>

Since 2013 Welsh Government has been working with NOMS and the Police and Crime Commissioners on the Integrated Offender Management (IOM) Cymru Women's Pathfinder, which was informed by the Corston Report (2007). This is an integrated, women-centred, multi agency approach to working with women who come into contact with the criminal justice system and has become known as a Whole System Approach. So far this includes a diversion scheme, Offender Managers being co-located in domestic abuse services (e.g. Newport Women's Aid), multi-agency case conference arrangements and coordinated access into support / interventions for all women into local provision.

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 forms the basis of the new statutory framework for social care in Wales. Section 145 of that Act enables the Welsh Ministers to issue codes on the exercise of social services functions. A code of practice has been issued which relates to the functions contained in Part 11 of the Act. It provides requirements on local authorities in relation to care and support for:

- Adults in prisons, approved premises or bail accommodation in Wales (including those aged over 18 in youth detention accommodation); and
- Children in youth detention accommodation, prison or bail accommodation in England and Wales.

The code came into effect on 6 April 2016.

The homelessness provisions of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 came into effect in April 2015. They are designed to reduce homelessness through a stronger focus on prevention and a more inclusive approach to helping everyone in need, based on an individual assessment and a partnership approach. National Pathways for Homelessness Services to Children, Young People and Adults in the Secure Estate have been developed in partnership with the NOMS Wales, the Wales Community Rehabilitation Company and the Welsh Local Government Association. Both provide improved support for those in custody, including women.

Good practice in Wales exists, and includes a network of women-centred provision, provided by Safer Wales, women's centres (like Cardiff Women's Centre, North Wales Women's Centre), and the work of domestic abuse and sexual violence services that support women involved in the justice system.

However, more needs to be done to develop the Whole System Approach to other sites and geographical areas and into custodial settings to ensure a seamless multi-agency approach throughout the community and custody with a focus on reducing the high numbers of short sentences women have.

Building Provision

We recognise that gaps remain in the provision of specialist services for survivors of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence in Wales. We know for example that some people living in more rural areas do not have access to services and this is also the case for those suffering from forms of violence such as female genital mutilation that are focused within particular communities. With our specialist partners, we will continue to address these gaps whilst continuing to support those that are already in place and will target additional resources where there is greatest need.

The views and experiences of survivors of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence need to be listened to and acted upon as they know first-hand what it is like and what may help others in a similar situation.

There needs to be a collaborative approach to identifying the need in each area of Wales and that support needs to meet the identified needs of those seeking support. Welsh Government will support and direct commissioners it funds and will work with commissioners who hold their own funding to build a more integrated and strategic approach to providing services which address the needs in each area.

3. WHO NEEDS TO BE INVOLVED?

Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence prevention is central to improving health and well-being, reducing crime and the harm caused by violent crime; safeguarding children and adults and promoting equality.

Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence happens in communities, in public spaces or workplaces, in families, behind closed doors and beyond the boundaries of organisations. To achieve our objectives we need to work together beyond those organisational boundaries or we will fail those that are most vulnerable in society. We need an integrated approach from leadership to frontline professionals which mainstreams and prioritises the issue making it “everyone’s business”.

This means that, as well as the Relevant Authorities set out in the Act (Local Authorities, Local Health Boards, NHS Trusts and Fire and Rescue Authorities), we need to work with the Police, Police and Crime Commissioners, education services, housing organisations, the third sector, specialist services, survivors, crime and justice agencies, and probation services.

It is particularly important that we listen to survivors, and act upon what they tell us. Survivor engagement should be a continuous process that informs the development of policies and services.

“...survivors’ experiences of protection and support services and systems in Wales are key to understanding their effectiveness and to informing practice and service improvements. Survivors’ voices and experiences are also essential to informing prevention work and to ensuring that legislative and policy developments, the National Strategy and National Adviser’s Plan place survivors’ needs and experiences at the centre”⁹.

This is no easy task for either the survivor or those they are engaged with. There are frequent complex issues which require needs led, strengths based person centred services unique to the individual and their family.

⁹ Are you listening and am I being heard? Survivor Consultation: A report of the recommendations of survivors of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence in Wales, March 2016: Cymorth i Ferched Cymru / Welsh Women’s Aid

4. VISION

Our overall vision for Wales is one which meets the seven well-being goals:

- A globally responsible Wales
- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales
- A healthier Wales
- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of Cohesive Communities
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language

The enduring social problem of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence undermines our communities and remains a significant barrier to Wales achieving this vision and becoming a fair and prosperous society.

We must therefore aim to eliminate violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence. We believe its existence is not inevitable and that it can be radically reduced and prevented with the necessary political will, collaboration and culture change. Public services need to work together to protect people experiencing violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence from suffering any further harm, and protect any children within the family.

Our approach to enabling individuals and groups within our communities to live fear free from violence and abuse in Wales is a demonstration of our application of the five ways of working outlined in the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act through; Involvement, Prevention, Integration, Long Term and Collaboration.

The objectives specified in this strategy maximises the contribution to the pursuit of the prevention of violence and abuse, the protection of victims and the support of all those affected.

The ultimate aim of moving to a society where everybody is able to live fear free contributes across all of the well-being goals, delivering well integrated outcomes for the people of Wales. This strategy sets out how we will achieve this aim through the objectives and through collaboration with private, public and third sector organisations. In delivering these, the strategy will help to prevent long term problems such as socio-economic inequalities through Prevention, Protection and Support.

In Wales the drive to eliminate violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence will contribute strongly to the well-being goals by:

- ending discrimination against women and girls;
- eliminating all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation; and
- eliminating harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation.

5. OBJECTIVES

This strategy sets out what Welsh Government will do to contribute to the pursuit of the purpose of the Act, however, the Act also places a duty on Local Authorities and Local Health Boards to prepare and publish joint local strategies for tackling violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence. These local strategies will need to take into account the objectives set out in the national strategy.

Welsh Government will provide strategic leadership on these issues and on the implementation of the Act. The Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Advisory Group provides expert advice to Welsh Government to support the further development and implementation of the Act and supporting policy and programmes. This Group will also act as a checkpoint for progress against the outcomes in this strategy.

The purpose of the Act is to improve:

- Arrangements for the **prevention** of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence;
- Arrangements for the **protection** of victims of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence;
- **Support** for people affected by violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

It is these three **purposes** upon which this strategy is based and upon which we expect our partners to consider and develop their own strategies and policies.

This strategy outlines six objectives which the Welsh Ministers consider, if achieved, contribute to the pursuit of that purpose. Further detail on the objectives and the actions that the Welsh Ministers propose to take to achieve those objectives is set out in the sections below. Further specific actions by the Welsh Ministers will be informed by the consultation exercise on this strategy and will be included in the Delivery plan to be published in November 2016. We are also working with the National Adviser on the National Indicator Framework so we can measure the effectiveness of these objectives.

The Welsh Ministers recognise that organisations across Wales will play a vital role in tackling the issues of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence. Working with these organisations will ensure the Welsh Ministers will successfully achieve the objectives.

This strategy outlines six objectives that the Welsh Ministers expect to achieve by November 2021:

Objective 1: Increase awareness of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence across the Welsh Population

Objective 2: Enhance education about healthy relationships and gender equality

Objective 3: Challenge perpetrators, hold them accountable for their actions and provide interventions and support to change their behaviour

Objective 4: Ensure professionals are trained to provide effective, timely and appropriate responses to victims and survivors

Objective 5: Provide victims with equal access to appropriately resourced high quality, needs led, strength based, gender responsive services across Wales

Objective 6: Work together as a sector to understand and meet the needs of our communities, increasing the sustainability and capacity of the sector

In meeting these we will work towards our overarching objective to adopt a whole system approach, including early intervention and prevention to tackle adverse childhood experiences, ensuring that violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence is seen as “everybody’s business”

6. PREVENTION

Welsh Government are committed to challenging attitudes and behaviours across society which lead to violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence and seek ways to prevent them from occurring in the first instance or repeating.

Three of the objectives support the purpose of preventing violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence:

Objective 1 – Increase awareness of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence across the Welsh Population

We will continue to challenge attitudes in order to prevent violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence happening in the first place. Ultimately we intend to build a society which does not tolerate violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

Survivors have told us:

"I've moved from my family home after a lot of sexual and financial abuse. I didn't know a husband could rape you. He told me I don't have any rights to say no, he's my husband and he can do what he wanted. It wasn't until I spoke with women's aid that I knew what rights I had and I now know what rape means." (Survivor)

"In our communities women are even more scared to speak out or share their experience with others. We need to educate these communities so they can speak out, get help and support." (Survivor)

What will Welsh Government do to achieve this objective?

We will:

- Continue to raise public awareness and change social norms, values, beliefs, attitudes, behaviours and practices in relation to all forms of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence with specific public communications, based on a wide reaching communications strategy, and resources directed to challenging beliefs and inequalities amongst communities.
- We will challenge cultural attitudes which can underpin traditional harmful practices like Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), forced marriage and Honour Based Violence, raising awareness within all communities. We will work with and support specialist BME violence against women services in Wales to engage and support community champions to improve community responses to survivors of violence and abuse.
- Through our communication campaigns we will positively engage men and boys in challenging all forms of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.
- We will improve the way we work with survivors to develop policy and actions. We will develop a sustainable survivor engagement framework to ensure that we are able to understand their needs. This will both inform our awareness raising activities and enable us to prevent survivors from becoming victim to further abuse.
- We will continue to support the introduction of a National Training Framework to raise the awareness of all individuals within the public service on the signs and symptoms of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence. The

framework will introduce consistency of training to fundamentally improve the understanding of both the general and specialist workforces.

Objective 2: Enhance education about healthy relationships and gender equality

Looking at the long term, we know that violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence can have a huge impact on children and young people. It can affect their safety, health and wellbeing, educational attainment, family and peer relationships, and their ability to enjoy healthy, happy, respectful relationships in the future.

We know that adults in Wales who were physically or sexually abused as children or brought up in households where there was domestic violence, alcohol or drug abuse are more likely to adopt health-harming and anti-social behaviours in adult life¹⁰. Research is identifying the long-term harm that can result from chronic stress on individuals during childhood. Such stress may arise from the abuse and neglect of children but also from growing up in households where children are routinely exposed to issues such as domestic violence or individuals with alcohol and other substance use problems¹¹.

It is critical therefore, for the long term health and welfare of our nation that we intervene early to reduce and prevent the incidence of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence. We want to ensure that our children have the best possible start in life.

What will Welsh Government do to achieve this objective?

We will:

- Work with schools and third sector organisations to ensure teaching professionals are aware of the signs of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence and ways they can introduce healthy relationships and equality into their lessons.
- Support schools in educating children and young people of the importance of respect and consent in relationships by building upon the Good Practice Guide: Whole Education Approach to Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence in Wales¹².
- Ensure that the development of the new curriculum, and specifically the Health and Well-being Area of Learning and Experience, helps children and young people to build the knowledge, understanding and skills that will enable them to develop positive and appropriate relationships.
- Work with our partners to ensure we tackle adverse childhood experiences to reduce health-harming and anti-social behaviours in adult life

Objective 3: Challenge perpetrators, hold them accountable for their actions and provide interventions and support to change their behaviour

We recognise that we cannot tackle violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence effectively without working to prevent perpetrators from abusing in the first place.

¹⁰ Welsh Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study, Adverse Childhood Experiences and their impact on health-harming behaviours in the Welsh adult population: Mark A. Bellisi, Kathryn Ashtoni, Karen Hughesii, Katharine Fordii, Julie Bishopi and Shantini Paranjothy
Public Health Wales; Centre for Public Health Liverpool John Moores University

¹¹ *ibid*

¹² <http://livefearfree.gov.wales/policies-and-guidance/good-practice-guide-a-whole-education-approach?lang=en>

Perpetrator programmes are therefore an important element of prevention and this is an area Welsh Government is committed to develop. Work with perpetrators remains a new and emerging area of practice where the evidence base is still developing. Whilst a significant piece of research was published by the Mirabal Project¹³ in January 2015, it is clear that gaps remain and further research is necessary.

What will Welsh Government do to achieve this objective?

- We will continue to work with the National Probation Service Wales and the National Adviser to develop guidance and evidence bases of what works.
- We will review the findings of the Behavioural Insights report to identify whether future work in this area should be considered by Welsh Government. Based on this review we will develop further good practice guidance which may include minimum expectations for the commissioning of perpetrator programmes, to ensure that the safety of individuals and families is priority and the management of risk and support to partners/ex partners is integral to any programme being commissioned in Wales. We will learn from the results and evaluation of programmes like DRIVE in developing perpetrator work in Wales.
- Increase the focus on holding perpetrators to account and providing them with opportunities to change their behaviour; ensuring that victim safety is central.
- We will work with the Home Office, Police and Crime Commissioners and Community Safety Partnerships in Wales to ensure that people are protected in circumstances outside the home where they are potentially vulnerable. This will include actions under the draft Substance Misuse delivery plan 2015-18 such as Area Planning Boards, Community Safety Partnerships, Police and Crime Commissioners, the Police and Trading Standards working together to share intelligence and deliver targeted harm reduction campaigns related to the Night Time Economy.

¹³ <https://www.dur.ac.uk/resources/criva/ProjectMirabalfinalreport.pdf>

7. PROTECTION

Protection is a critical aspect of our work; we need to work together as a public service to protect those who are currently experiencing violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence from suffering any further harm, and protect any children within the family setting.

Survivors have told us:

"To go to a refuge service ... it was the best thing I've ever done, it saved my life."
(Survivor)

"The women in this service saved my life. I couldn't cope and they gave me my life back. I was living in an unreal situation and they understood. They made me feel less isolated and helped me find myself again." (Survivor)

This requires a coordinated and collaborative response where the expertise and experience of the third sector and survivors will be critical if we are to get it right. We will continue to identify how this multi-agency collaboration could look, in the context of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

One of our objectives supports the purpose of protecting those currently experiencing violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence:

Objective 4: Ensure professionals are trained to provide effective, timely and appropriate responses to victims and survivors

What will Welsh Government do to achieve this objective?

- Promote the use of integrated referral pathways to ensure people are directed to the service they need when they need them.
- Enable the views of victims and survivors to be heard and acted upon through the development of a national survivor engagement framework. This will support the design and delivery of services from the earliest stages through to their conclusion.
- Through the National Training Framework¹⁴ on violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence we will support Public Services to increase their understanding and knowledge of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence, resulting in improved responses to disclosures.
- Under the National Training Framework, Ask and Act will enable frontline professionals to understand the signs of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence, to use targeted enquiry and to act by referring the person appropriately.
- Continue to provide support, for example through the Live Fear Free Helpline, by providing a safe confidential place for victims to gain advice and disclose abuse.
- Ensure frontline staff have the right tools and expertise to identify victims of sexual exploitation, including through the commercial sex industry, and trafficking, and offer them appropriate protection and support, bearing in mind the special needs of children.

¹⁴ <http://gov.wales/docs/dsjlg/publications/commsafety/160317-national-training-framework-guidance-en.pdf>

- We will work with the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (CAFCASS) CYMRU to ensure staff identify and assess the associated risks and impact and appropriately report their concerns to local support services. We are also taking action to ensure that adult's and children's services work more effectively together to identify and support families at risk
- Work with the Wales 'Sex Work Group' to support the delivery of their work-plan; ensuring priorities and progress contribute to discussions at the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Advisory Group.
- Work with Families First and Flying Start services to ensure appropriate support services are provided to victims of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.
- Through multi-agency involvement support the mechanisms that are in place to ensure that all information on a child is shared to allow the best course of action/protection to be put in place. Under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 relevant partners of the LA are under a duty to report to social services when there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is (a) experiencing or is at risk of abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm; and (b) has needs for care and support
- Work with schools to ensure awareness of the Keeping Learners Safe guidance that states a school must 'maintain an ethos of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, and protecting staff.

8. SUPPORT

Providing support for people affected by violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence can be complex, as people's experiences and needs can be vastly different. However, we need to promote a supportive culture, underpinned by a range of services that are best placed to respond to the needs of individuals and families

Survivors have told us that support is vital:

"The group was the most helpful thing as it made me feel less isolated. I had contact with other women and realised for the first time in years that I wasn't the only one living with this." (Survivor)

"We need more support for us so we're not seen as a case to be closed or passed on to someone else, we have needs in our own right, and support should be available for as long as we need it, not time limited." (Survivor)

"The worse thing was the children didn't have the option of speaking to someone. They wouldn't say anything to a teacher or a police officer... but if there was a support worker there for children they'd have spoken to them." (Survivor)

We know that *how* services are delivered is as important as *what* is delivered. Timely responses which respond to multiple needs without judgement are needed. We need to support survivors to navigate an often complex route to services and support them to develop positive coping strategies, and enable empowerment and self-protection.

The Supporting People programme, for example, aims to help and support the victim and any children to stay in their homes, thus avoiding the negative impacts which can be associated with having to move. Public Services Boards provide a means by which an even more integrated approach to local services and support can be achieved drawing on the funding available from a variety of sources.

Survivors do not experience violence in silos and neither should agencies respond in silos; accessible and holistic provision is needed; all forms of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence need to be addressed by services and partnerships in an integrated and coordinated way.

Two of our objectives underpin the purpose of supporting those experiencing violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence:

Objective 5: Provide victims with equal access to appropriately resourced high quality, needs led, strength based, gender responsive services across Wales

What will Welsh Government do to achieve this objective?

- We will work with the National Adviser, the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, specialist services, Public Health Wales and children's services to ensure that families identified and needing support for living with several adverse childhood experiences relating to domestic abuse and sexual violence, have access to existing interventions delivered by specialist services.
- Continue to support Local Authorities to provide services based on their local and regional needs, including by providing guidance and support for commissioning

- Promote opportunities for early intervention and prevention and development of innovative services to tackle, for example, adverse childhood experiences.
- Work alongside the National Safeguarding Board to further inform safeguarding approaches in Wales as they relate to violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.
- Implement the Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016, which will enable perpetrators of domestic abuse to be targeted for eviction, enabling the victim and other family members to remain in their home where it is safe to do so.
- Through the current Supporting People programme, which provides essential help to some of our most vulnerable people through a strong prevention and early intervention approach through refuge and floating support provision, we will ensure we support people to stay within their homes and communities where they wish to and where it is safe to do so; the Supporting People programme needs to continue to develop and reform so that it delivers effective risk based approaches.
- Develop a sustainable funding model which will provide service providers with greater certainty and enable greater flexibility and innovation in responding to individual needs
- Ensure integrated pathways of support to meet the needs of victims experiencing multiple disadvantages.
- Continue to support families, including through the Families First programme which provides an integrated, whole-family approach to supporting families in Wales.
- We will work with Local Authorities and Local Health Boards as they develop their local strategies under the Act and undertake needs analysis, including mapping their existing services, and developing new commissioning approaches, to ensure that the services they provide meet the need of their community.
- We will continue to work with Police and Crime Commissioners, the Crown Prosecution Service, lawyers and magistrates, the courts, probation and prisons, to improve the response of all the criminal justice agencies in Wales to those who report a crime to the police. We know there are gaps in training with some police officers lacking the knowledge, skills and understanding to tackle domestic abuse effectively¹⁵. We explore links between our National Training Framework and the training proposed by forces and the College of Policing.
- We will be conducting a review of the various funding streams for Children's Services with specialist services to ensure that we are making the best use of available funding to support children in all violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence services.

Objective 6: Work together as a sector to understand and meet the needs of our communities, increasing the sustainability and capacity of the sector

Accessible and holistic provision is needed for all forms of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence. Organisations need to work across organisational barriers, working in partnerships, in an integrated and coordinated way, with clear referral pathways between specialist services. Each of the organisations set out in Section 3 of this Strategy will have a part to play in achieving this objective.

A collaborative approach will ensure greater focus on the delivery of services and will facilitate greater value for money and flexibility of funded services to meet local need.

¹⁵ Increasingly everyone's business: A progress report on the police response to domestic abuse: HMIC 2015
<https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/increasingly-everyones-business-domestic-abuse-progress-report.pdf>

It is the aim of Welsh Government to encourage services which are effective, maintained and of a consistently high standard across Wales. Evidence-based interventions are key to ensuring those experiencing violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence are getting the most effective services possible.

What will Welsh Government do to achieve this objective?

- Continue to promote work place policies on violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence with employers across Wales.
- Publish guidance to Local Authorities and Local Health Boards to inform the development of local strategies, including needs analyses.
- We will ensure that commissioning guidance will highlight the benefits and importance of provision that is best suited to the needs of survivors. Where there is identified need, gender responsive services are an integral part of providing necessary support. We will specifically require them to demonstrate how they have engaged with survivors as well as services in the development of commissioning
- Work with devolved and non devolved organisations across the UK to better understand the UK and Wales context; to better integrate services and influence how services are commissioned to ensure there is relevant service delivery as well as maintaining a complementary approach to ensure all agencies are working to the same set of principles, whether devolved or non-devolved and managing this by building relationships at a strategic level.
- Develop multi-agency guidance to encourage and support greater collaboration and information sharing on service delivery.
- Promote and embed learning from relevant reviews and innovative and developing practices across UK and beyond to continually improve responses.
- Continue to support schools and education services to ensure that they are able to identify child welfare concerns and take action to address them in partnership with other agencies.

9. GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

In accordance with section 12 of the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 we will publish an annual report on the progress we have made towards achieving the objectives in this strategy.

Additionally, Section 11 of the Act requires Welsh Ministers to 'publish national indicators that may be applied for the purpose of measuring progress towards the achievement of the purpose of this Act.'

The national indicators will measure collective national progress in achieving the purpose of the Act. The national indicators, together with the progress reports referred to above, will measure the success of this and subsequent, national strategies.

Local data, which may be a disaggregation of any national data, should be used to measure the success of local strategies.

The national indicators will be measures of progress not targets. We want to focus on where we want to be, which is why we are taking this outcome-based approach. They will help the specified public bodies, together with wider stakeholders, to understand the extent to which the shared vision, as set out in the national strategy, is being achieved.

The Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Advisory Group provides an opportunity for the Cabinet Secretary to meet formally with the National Adviser and senior external stakeholders. The Group provides expert advice to support the further development and implementation of the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act.

1. The language used within the national strategy

There are a number of different definitions of domestic abuse and gender-based violence. The Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 provides a definition which is right for Wales, whilst taking into account the different views both within the UK and internationally of what these phrases mean.

The Act provides a relatively wide definition of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence which will enable functions under the Act to be exercised in respect of violence or abuse which evidence suggests is an issue in Wales.

Coercive control is captured within the definition of abuse, as exercise of coercive control requires some form of physical, emotional, psychological or financial abuse.

2. Glossary

Abuse (as defined by the Act): Physical, sexual, psychological, emotional or financial abuse

Ask and Act: A process of targeted enquiry across the Welsh Public Service in relation to violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence

Collaboration: The term “collaboration” refers to a co-ordinated interagency response via a formal structure, or fora, where the primary focus is to safeguard the victim, reduce secondary victimisation and hold perpetrators to account.

The fora should:

- (a) adopt consistent, joint policies and procedures, including an agreed risk assessment and risk management and safety plan, which co-ordinates and standardises the professional interventions to all those at risk and which reduces the risk of harm;
- (b) share information to increase the safety, health and well-being of victims/survivors - adults and their children;
- (c) work together to reduce repeat victimisation;
- (d) improve agency accountability;
- (e) improve support, including training, for all staff involved in domestic abuse cases; and
- (f) determine whether the alleged perpetrator poses a significant risk to any particular individual or to the general community.

Domestic abuse (as defined by the Act): Abuse where the victim of it is or has been associated with the abuser. A person is associated with another person for the purpose of the definition of “domestic abuse” if they fall within the definition in section 21(2) or (3) of the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015.

Female Genital Mutilation: an act that is an offence under sections 1, 2 or 3 of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (c. 31)

Gender-based Violence (as defined by the Act):

- (a) violence, threats of violence or harassment arising directly or indirectly from values, beliefs or customs relating to gender or sexual orientation;
- (b) female genital mutilation;

(c) forcing a person (whether by physical force or coercion by threats or other psychological means) to enter into a religious or civil ceremony of marriage (whether or not legally binding);

Harassment: A course of conduct by a person which he or she knows or ought to know amounts to harassment of the other; and for the purpose of this definition:

(a) a person ought to know that his or her conduct amounts to or involves harassment if a reasonable person in possession of the same information would think the course of conduct amounted to or involved harassment of another person; and

(b) “conduct” includes speech.

Independent Domestic Violence Adviser (IDVA): Trained specialist worker who provides short to medium-term casework support for high risk victims of domestic abuse

Local Authority (as defined in the Act): A county council or county borough council

MARAC: Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference

Public Service: Public services are services delivered for the benefit of the public. This can include services delivered through the third sector, through social enterprise or through services that are contracted out.

Relevant authorities: county councils and county borough councils, Local Health Boards, fire and rescue authorities and NHS trusts.

Sexual exploitation (as defined by the Act): something that is done to or in respect of a person which

(a) involves the commission of an offence under Part 1 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (c. 42), as it has an effect in England and Wales,

or

(b) would involve the commission of such an offence if it were done in England and Wales;

Sexual Violence (as defined by the Act): sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, or threats of violence of a sexual nature.

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

National Strategy on Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence

Consultation response form

Your name:

Organisation (if applicable):

e-mail/telephone number:

Your address:

Responses should be returned by **10 October 2016** to

Violence Against Women and Domestic Abuse team
Community Safety Division
Welsh Government
Merthyr Tydfil Office
Rhydycar
Merthyr Tydfil
CF48 1UZ

or completed electronically and sent to:

e-mail: VAWdateam@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Question 1 - Do you agree with the priorities under prevention? Do you have any further suggestions? Please include any evidence (data, research or anecdotal).

Question 2 - Do you agree with the priorities under protection? Do you have any further suggestions? Please include any evidence (data, research or anecdotal).

Question 3 - Do you agree with the priorities under support? Do you have any further suggestions? Please include any evidence (data, research or anecdotal).

Question 4 - Do you think the priorities will have a positive / negative impact on protected characteristics? If so, which and why/why not? Are there further opportunities not covered by the priorities to promote equality? Please include any evidence (data, research or anecdotal).

Question 5 - What opportunities does this strategy give to promote the use of the Welsh Language? Do you have concerns that this strategy could have an adverse effect on opportunities to use the Welsh language?

Question 6 - We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related issues which we have not specifically addressed, please use this space to report them.

Responses to consultations are likely to be made public, on the internet or in a report. If you would prefer your response to remain anonymous, please tick here: