



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

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Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence: progress against the blueprint high level action plan 2024

What we have done since we published our blueprint high level action plan in March 2024.

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Gender-based harassment in all public spaces

Action 1

Consolidate and enhance the evidence base on the prevention of, and response to, public sexual harassment and other forms of gender-based harassment in public spaces, and the safety of women and girls in public spaces, to understand prevalence, causes and effective interventions.

Update

- The workstream commissioned a second evidence review, 'A systematic review of reviews: Online Sexual Harassment, and Online Gender-Based Harassment'. The review is being undertaken by the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Hub Wales, and the publication of this work is anticipated in early 2025.
- Various partners have developed reports, research and evidence-based recommendations which the workstream is drawing from, including:
 - A report on 'The Manosphere: The Black Pill and an evolving threat', by South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner's Office, which advances our understanding of the online space and how it can foster harmful attitudes and behaviours.
 - The evaluations of a 'test and learn project' examining barriers and enablers in engaging men and boys in VAWDASV prevention through targeted interventions, by Plan International UK.
 - 'Engaging Men and Boys in Violence Prevention Toolkit', which consolidates evidence and professional insights on supporting men and boys in violence prevention, created by Wales Violence Prevention Unit, in partnership with Plan International UK.
- The workstream will also draw from the qualitative data collated through

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Welsh Women's Aid's #NoGreyAreas phase two campaign survey which launched in June 2024. Findings on women's experience of public sexual harassment, its impact on victim/survivors and how it affects their future behaviours, are anticipated in early 2025.

- An action to understand how legislation and other protective measures related to gender-based harassment in public spaces are currently being applied in Wales has been delayed. This is due to a potential overlap with part 2 of the independent Angiolini Inquiry, which may request similar information from police forces, efforts to progress this action have now been paused. The action will resume, as appropriate, once further details of part 2 of the Angiolini Inquiry are available, ensuring there is no duplication of efforts.

Action 2

Develop a preventative, whole-system approach to tackle public sexual harassment and other forms of gender-based harassment in public spaces, to increase safety and feelings of safety for women and girls.

Update

- A mapping exercise has been completed by the Welsh Government's Knowledge and Analytical Services in partnership with workstream members, which provides an overview of existing initiatives across Wales that aim to prevent or respond to gender-based harassment in public spaces. This document is now available for use within the workstream and will serve as a living document to reflect ongoing developments and identify emerging best practices and gaps in provision.
- The workstream is exploring the feasibility of leveraging sport in Wales as a strategic tool to prevent gender-based harassment and violence, and other forms of VAWDASV, both within sports settings and in wider communities.

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- The workstream is currently exploring, in collaboration with key partners, the development of an effective scalable approach, which could be trailed. This work is in its early stages and the workstream is drawing insights and learnings from international models of best practice to guide and shape the process.
- In response to the Senedd's Equality and Social Justice Committee report 'How we must all play our part: a public health approach to halting the epidemic in gender-based violence', Welsh Government has accepted 'Action 5' of the report, which focuses on responsibilities for higher education institutions in Wales.
- With the transition of the Higher Education Funding Council of Wales into the new commission, Medr, in August 2024, initial discussions between the Welsh Government's VAWDASV Policy Team, Tertiary Education Policy Team and key partners, such as Medr, are underway with a focus on identifying ways to enhance current efforts.
- The next Welsh Government VAWDASV public communications campaign will focus on addressing gender-based harassment in public spaces. The specific focus and brief for the campaign was informed by valuable input from workstream members and wider partners. The campaign is expected to launch in spring 2025.

Action 3

To identify, develop and implement effective interventions that enable everyone in society to challenge misogynistic attitudes, beliefs and behaviours, in order to change the culture of misogyny and harassment that feeds abuse.

Update

- The Welsh Government funded Bystander Intervention Training Initiative pilot, Lead the Change, is now being delivered. This 3 year pan-Wales pilot,

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is being delivered by Kindling Transformative Interventions and Plan International UK and will include a full evaluation. The training is designed help individuals recognise the signs of abuse and harassment and teach practical skills to prevent VAWDASV. It is free and open to the general public.

Action 4

To review and make recommendations for an equitable approach on the use of interventions and initiatives across all agencies and communities.

Update

- A Sub-group has been established to identify how the workstream can achieve equity across all its actions. The Intersectionality Guide and Toolkit is now finalised which will help contribute to this action.

Workplace harassment

Action 1

Establish and maintain a robust evidence base, including capturing lived experiences of workplace harassment, so that we better understand the scale of workplace harassment and the actions which help prevent it.

Update

- A literature review on workplace sexual harassment, considering the scale

and severity of the problem, survivor impact and the intersection with protected characteristics, was conducted by Welsh Government and an analysis of the findings completed.

- On behalf of the workstream, Welsh Government's Race Disparity Evidence Unit has commissioned research on Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic women's experiences of workplace sexual harassment in Wales. Findings will support the VAWDASV Blueprint, Anti-racist Wales Action Plan, and Fair Work programmes. The finalised report is expected in February 2025.
- The workstream has engaged with a range of partners to deepen understanding and enhance its approach. This has included gleaning key insights from partners who have faced challenges, are implementing promising practise, and delivering innovative training.

Action 2

Develop a whole system approach to support the effective prevention and response to workplace harassment towards women and girls, and so tackle workplace harassment in all workplaces across Wales.

Update

- The workstream launched a conference series for public sector leaders and key partners across Wales to address workplace sexual harassment. The first event was held in South Wales in September 2024. The conferences, organised in social partnership, aim to equip leaders with knowledge and tools to foster safe, respectful and inclusive workplaces and support victims, survivors, and whistleblowers. The series will feature experts in the field, organisational perspectives and lessons learned, survivor voices and actionable insights.
- The first event was held in South Wales in September 2024. We are extremely grateful to the survivors who provided their powerful testimonies at

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the conference ensuring that survivor voice was central to the day. The Blueprint's Survivor Voice and Scrutiny panel members also played a role in advising on the event's agenda.

- A strong connection has been developed with the Workforce Partnership Council for Wales' recently established Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Sub-group, ensuring alignment and collaboration on key initiatives moving forward.

Action 3

Use and enhance existing tools and levers to raise awareness, promote excellent practice and support active change to eliminate workplace harassment towards women and girls, and to improve workplace responses to all forms of violence against women and girls, domestic violence and sexual abuse.

Update

- Following dialogue with the Equality and Human Rights Commission regarding their role as a regulator, lines of accountability and what this looks like in practise, the workstream is undertaking an action to gain a deeper understanding of the roles, responsibilities, and current approaches of other regulators.
- The workstream has compiled a comprehensive list of existing evidence-based guidance and resources to prevent and address workplace sexual harassment into a single document. This practical step aims to facilitate the sharing of best practise. The document will initially be distributed through the conference series.
- The workstream is taking forward an action to explore the Social Partnership and Public Procurement Act (Wales) 2023 and whether this could be used as a lever to increase protection from workplace sexual harassment. The Act has been reviewed through a VAWDASV lens and, as a next step, work will

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now commence into how the Act can be interpreted and used to enhance protection for employees.

Action 4

Provide challenge and support for all organisations across Wales to go beyond their legal and other mandatory duties and to adopt exemplar standards of behaviour in the workplace.

Update

- The Workplace Sexual Harassment conferences aimed at Public sector across Wales have commenced, and we will build on the feedback from these events to inform future plans for the wider sector.

Tackling perpetration

Action 1

Consolidate and enhance existing evidence bases and needs analyses on perpetration of Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence in Wales.

Update

- A Perpetration Intervention Mapping Survey was launched in December 2023 for an 8-week period. The survey findings have been analysed and written up into a formal report. The report and the recommendations included

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within it have received sign off from the VAWDASV National Partnership Board. The report has been made available to stakeholders.

- The workstream is developing an interventions directory using the information gathered through the survey. The directory will provide professionals with information about interventions which tackle perpetration available in their region and across Wales.
- The workstream are exploring options to work with stakeholders on existing plans to develop a data dashboard that can hold information on VAWDASV.
- A data scoping exercise was launched by the workstream in April 2024 to understand what information was currently gathered regarding perpetrators and/or those using harmful behaviours. The exercise revealed an inconsistent picture with the type of information captured and the agencies regularly recording data. More work is required to improve data on perpetrators and/or those using harmful behaviours.

Action 2

Develop a Wales-wide whole system approach for tackling perpetration of Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence that encompasses early intervention and prevention through to the criminal justice response.

Update

- The workstream is exploring options for commissioning a piece of research on measuring efficacy of perpetration interventions. This research will inform the development of a workstream position statement on efficacy that will underpin much of the work undertaken to deliver High-level Action 2. The position statement is also intended to help partners measure outcomes and efficacy of services they deliver or commission.
- Following the Interventions Mapping Survey report, the workstream has

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committed to collaborating with the Sustainable Whole System Approach workstream to address challenges identified regarding sustainability of funding, needs assessments and commissioning processes.

Action 3

Establish clarity on the responsibilities to prevent and tackle perpetration of Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence of all relevant authorities under the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Act and other non-devolved public services.

Update

- The workstream will focus attention on High-level Action 3 in 2025. However, the data capture exercise and subsequent findings will support delivery against High-level Action 3.

Action 4

Strengthen accountability mechanisms to ensure public services are meeting their responsibilities to tackle and prevent perpetration of Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence.

Update

- The workstream has committed to working with the Sustainable Whole System Approach workstream on developing a national minimum standard for VAWDASV data. This data set will support accountability by ensuring that relevant authorities are collecting data on VAWDASV.

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Sustainable whole system approach

Action 1

Review existing practice to understand the current landscape for the implementation of existing guidance and delivery against statutory responsibilities under the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Act (2015).

Update

- The workstream launched an all-Wales multi-agency survey in February 2024. This survey sought to gather information on the strengths and challenges in a number of areas including the development of needs assessments, partnership arrangements, delivery against the VAWDASV Act and commissioning.
- In June 2024, 2 in-person seminars were held in North and South Wales which were attended by a range of partners. These seminars were held to supplement the findings of the all-Wales multi-agency survey.
- A report of the survey and seminar findings has been drafted and will be escalated through the VAWDASV Blueprint governance structure for sign off.

Action 2

Review and refresh existing guidance for developing needs assessments as well as prioritising, planning, designing, and monitoring services to develop a whole system approach to sustainable commissioning.

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Update

- The workstream has begun initial planning for drafting new guidance for developing needs assessments. The guidance will be drafted using the all-Wales multi-agency survey and seminar findings and through consultation with key stakeholders.

Action 3

Review existing procurement and grant guidance for Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence and other related disciplines to ensure equity, innovation and quality in the delivery of services and provision across Wales.

Update

- The workstream will focus on drafting needs assessment guidance before proceeding with High-level Action 3.

Action 4

Develop guidance to ensure regional partnership structures for Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence are coherent and that the relationship between local planning, service delivery and commissioning is explicit.

Update

- A regional VAWDASV partnership governance structure mapping exercise has been undertaken. The findings revealed a complex picture which showed unclear lines of reporting between various meetings and inconsistencies in where VAWDASV sits as a priority.
- The workstream will be using the findings of the mapping exercise to develop guidance on regional partnerships for VAWDASV.

Action 5

Develop a National Framework of Standards which will provide guidance on the requirements for good service delivery, set out minimum service levels, and articulate clear expectations for commissioning partners to commit to these Standards.

Update

- The workstream will prioritise the development of guidance as set out in High-level Actions 2,3 and 4 before proceeding with High-level Action 5. There is agreement that foundational work is needed before we are able to establish minimum service levels for commissioning partners to implement across regions.

Children and young people's needs

Action 1

Consolidate, enhance, and identify gaps in existing evidence bases and needs analyses on the children and young people impacted by domestic abuse and sexual violence.

Update

- The first piece of commissioned work with Welsh Women's Aid has been concluded; the report "I'm a survivor too: how can you help me?" is in its final design, and makes recommendations for the Blueprint and wider stakeholders. The Blueprint Policy and Delivery Team have undertaken an analysis of the recommendations which will be distributed to members in the coming months.
- The second piece of work is due to be concluded by the end of 2024; a rapid mapping exercise has taken place and outlines the child voice mechanisms and forums currently available in Wales, including the referral pathway. We are now working closely with Welsh Women's Aid to establish how we embed a mechanism into the workstream, and this will be reinforced by our existing Survivor Voice, Scrutiny and Involvement Panel. The Operation Encompass referral data has been gathered for the previous financial year for the Police Force areas in Wales. A pilot approach is taking Place in Gwent, in light of the recent Victims and Prisoners Act introducing a duty for Chief Officer of Police for a force to "Notify schools etc if child is suspected victim of domestic abuse. This introduction amends the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 in section 49.
- It is agreed that there is little evidence on Child and Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse (CAPVA) in Wales. We met with a PhD student at

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Cardiff University who is undertaking research in this area. This has aided us in refining our delivery plan and it is anticipated that the research findings will be shared with us in early 2025.

- The workstream continues to draw on insights from partner organisations and stakeholders to strengthen our knowledge and recognise key activity and progress taking place across the sectors

Action 2

Establish clarity on the responsibilities of all relevant authorities under the Violence Against Women Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Act and other non-devolved public services to identify, respond to, and reduce domestic abuse and sexual violence experienced by children and young people.

Update

- A reporting process has been agreed for the Peer-on-Peer Sexual Harassment Plan; progress against the plan is to be reported at a minimum annually to the workstream. The most recent iteration of the Plan was published in January 2024 so it is anticipated that we will receive a progress update before January 2025.
- Further links have been established with colleagues in each Police and Crime Commissioner Office across Wales who will be integral to supporting high-level action 2.

Action 3

Develop a Wales-wide whole system approach to meet the needs of children and young people impacted by domestic abuse and sexual violence, encompassing maternity and early years through to adulthood.

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Update

- The workstream has engaged with each Police Force area in Wales to obtain Operation Encompass referral data for the previous financial year. It is acknowledged that the data alone may not be significant, and also excludes large cohorts of children and young people. Therefore, further work needs to be undertaken to understand how we better support children and young people throughout this process. Gwent is currently establishing a pilot approach for Operation Encompass which may highlight a path to be rolled out nationally.
- Following some initial exploration into Child and Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse (CAPVA), we hope to co-produce a knowledge sharing event with Cardiff University in Autumn 2025.
- As outlined in high-level action 2, the Children and Young People's Needs workstream holds accountability for the annual reporting on the progress of the Peer-on-Peer Sexual Harassment Action Plan; we anticipate receiving a first update before January 2025.

Action 4

Strengthen accountability mechanisms to ensure public services are meeting the needs of children and young people impacted by domestic abuse and sexual violence including services, responses, auditing, inspection, and grant monitoring.

Update

- Work has been undertaken in the Blueprint in 2024 to map out the Regional VAWDASV governance structures throughout Wales, in addition to mapping priorities across other pieces of legislation (Social Services and Wellbeing,

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Well-Being of Future Gens). Additionally, the CYP Voice mechanism is due to be implemented in the Blueprint by the end of 2024; these two pieces of work will inform us on strengthening accountability mechanisms in Wales regarding the needs of CYP.

- In order to understand how population needs assessments are used to identify CYP requirements regionally, we will work closely with the Sustainable Whole System Approach workstream who have recently carried out a series of seminars exploring regional needs assessments and strategic planning.

Older people's needs

Action 1

Consolidate and enhance existing evidence bases and identify the gaps to improve knowledge and understanding of the abuse of older people and the services that are available to them.

Update

- Dewis Choice and New Pathways have been working with their service users to gain lived experience and insights to understand how services can be more accessible for older people. It is extremely important to the workstream that survivor voice is at the heart of policy development, and feedback will be integral to developments within the Blueprint. As of June 2024, Dewis Choice had gleaned nine survivor voices as part of this engagement activity. The thematic findings were shared with workstream members in September 2024, and the findings are being aligned with service engagement work to produce best practice infographics.
- Conversations have been held with academics at the end of 2023 to explore

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topic areas such as 'Carer Harm'. It is clear that there is much more research to be done; the workstream continues to share relevant events, webinars and training to upskill partners and raise recognition.

- The workstream continues to seek relevant data sets to build our picture of older people affected by VAWDASV in Wales. The Violence Prevention Unit creates an annual report which gathers data from a variety of sources, and can be utilised moving forwards to support our work.

Action 2

Develop a Wales-wide whole-systems approach which ensures clarity and cohesion between Safeguarding and Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence.

Update

- The workstream is beginning to explore the use of DASH risk assessments, MARAC and the relevance to older people in determining high-risk cases. It is our ambition to create an adapted tool that addresses the needs of older people; this would be taken for consideration at the National Partnership Board. Members have been identified for a task and finish group, along with key collaborative partners.
- This high-level action also aligns to the Safeguarding Older People in Wales guidance; this is due to be updated and the workstream will have input to this. The relevant contacts in Safeguarding are being identified to progress this.
- The workstream continues to engage with the Regional Advisers across Wales and is seeing great benefit from this input. Work has recently been undertaken outside of the workstream which looks at the composition of regional VAWDASV Boards, and this will be extended to establish whether

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membership of the Boards includes specific bodies which support older people.

Action 3

Improve the availability and suitability of trauma-informed services for older people, adequately recognising their diverse needs, both for survivors and those who are perpetrating abuse.

Update

- Following the conclusion of VAWDASV service mapping, a series of semi-formal engagement interviews were held with a selection of these services. A series of questions were asked to gain understanding of how these services accommodate older people specifically. The engagement sessions concluded in July 2024, and the thematic findings were collated and shared with members in September's workstream. An infographic will be created in the coming months and this will highlight best-practice that can be shared across services to keep improving visibility, accessibility, and relevance of services for older people. The content will be qualified by ensuring the workstream members and those with lived experience are able to review the best practice to ensure it is appropriate for those accessing services.
- Available training continues to be shared and distributed with members to ensure opportunities for knowledge-sharing and upskilling.
- The workstream have engaged with Welsh Women's Aid as the contract holder of "train the trainer" for Ask and Act. WWA held a spotlight session with the workstream outlining how their resources can be adapted to suit the needs of specific organisations and target groups. A feedback mechanism is available for further adaptations.
- In addition to the views obtained by Dewis Choice, workstream members continue to plan ways to obtain the voice of older survivors to inform us on

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our actions and delivery; this is in addition to the support and scrutiny of the Blueprint's Survivor Voice Panel.

Action 4

Prioritise and influence specific awareness raising campaigns to improve the recognition, knowledge and understanding of the abuse of older people.

Update

- The Blueprint continues to share relevant awareness raising campaigns relevant to older people to workstream members and wider stakeholders. This includes features such as the “Hidden Harms” (BSL) animation created by Dewis Choice and Norfolk Safeguarding Adults Board.
- The workstream has collaborated with HOPE Age Cymru to present at The Big Advocacy Event on 11th November, along with Sustainable Whole System Approach. This forum allowed us to hear about best practice directly from advocates, and help to inform on our work moving forwards.

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