



The 10 principles of “Ask and Act”

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Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence require a Public Service response. Professional confidence to identify these issues, to ask about them and to respond effectively is fundamental for good practice across the relevant authorities.

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Those who disclose violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence should mirror the diversity of the population of the locality.

3

The Public Service has an important role to play in addressing these issues, by supporting clients and strengthening the services they receive. A more consistent approach to identifying those who experience violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence, assessing risk and referring appropriately is required across Wales.

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Clients will not always tell professionals about their experience without being prompted. It is the professional's role to consider whether it would be appropriate to ask direct and sensitive questions within a safe, confidential environment.

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Clients require clarity of how their confidentiality will be treated.

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Whilst never an interrogation, “Ask and Act” is not a single intervention. Every question is an opportunity to offer support. A process of targeted enquiry should include follow-up with victims beyond identification and repeat questions.

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Having a conversation with a client is preferable to use of a screening tool. A general question about someone's experience of abuse may lead to a disclosure of several forms of abuse.

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Partnerships between Public Service providers and local specialist providers should be solidified in order to provide more comprehensive delivery of policy and practice.

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Implementation of a process of “Ask and Act” must be accompanied and supported by training and leadership.

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Missed opportunities to identify violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence are missed opportunities to prevent further abuse, identify risk to children and save lives.