



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

PUBLICATION

# Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence: progress report 2019 to 2020

Summary of progress made on the national strategy from April 2019 to March 2020.

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## Introduction

Under section 12 of the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 ('the Act'), the Welsh Ministers must, in respect of each financial year, publish a report which addresses the following:

- progress made towards achieving the objectives in the national strategy on violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (2016 to 2021)
- progress made towards achieving the purpose of the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 in Wales (by reference to the national indicators)

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This report covers the period between April 2019 and March 2020 and includes work undertaken during the period prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Work that has taken place after this time is not included.

**The National Indicators** were published on 24 June 2019.

This was the first set of Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) National Indicators and work was subsequently undertaken with stakeholders to further develop the indicators and data sources with the aim of producing a final set of VAWDASV National Indicators by summer 2020. However this was delayed because of the coronavirus pandemic. As the final National Indicators are not yet in place, progress has been reported against the objectives in the national strategy.

## **Objective 1**

### **Increase awareness and challenge attitudes of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (VAWDASV) across the Welsh population**

#### **Action we took**

##### **Communications and campaigns**

The approach to the development of campaigns and communications has continued to be strongly influenced by survivors and this work has been taken forward in partnership with specialist sector stakeholders and survivors.

Further phases of the ‘This is not love: This is control’ campaign, which was launched in January 2019, were delivered during the period. ‘This is not love. This is control’ highlights the treacherous, cumulative nature of coercive control as well as its subtlety.

‘This is not love. This is control’ campaign was developed following a series of

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survivor engagement events and input from specialist service via the VAWDASV communication group. Direct consultation with survivors of domestic abuse, sexual violence, young people and women who are asylum seeking or refugees indicated that for many victims, coercive control is the main element of domestic. Despite it becoming a criminal offence in England and Wales for someone to subject another person to coercive control in 2015, it remains to be insidious, for many; difficult to identify, very hard to disclose, and for those outside of the abusive relationship, difficult to see and understand. Raising awareness of this crime and the support available was the main ask of those we engaged with.

Phase 3 reflected the experiences and challenges young people face as they develop relationships and a sense of individual identity. It provided information on how to recognise an unhealthy relationship and guidance for parents and carers. Research suggests that young people are significantly more likely to be victims of sexual assault than any other age group, and that at least half of young people experience controlling behavior within relationships. However, over a third of young people would not know where, or who, to turn to for support if they were experiencing abuse. Increasing the awareness amongst young people and their support networks was a key aim of the campaign phase.

During September and October 2019, the Welsh Government rolled out the first burst of the campaign, targeting the messaging at young people aged 19 to 21. Campaign activities were directed mainly at university students to coincide with Fresher's Week across Wales. The campaign was developed further to target young people aged 16 to 18 year olds and those close to them, to highlight the issue of coercive control.

During sexual violence awareness week in February 2020, we launched Phase 4 of the campaign focused on those experiencing control and sexual violence. It was estimated that 2.9% of adults (700,000) aged 16 to 59 years had been victims of sexual assaults in the last year.

This is not love. This is sexual abuse' explores and highlights the exploitation, grooming, manipulation and fear that coercive control involves when perpetrated within families and within intimate relationships.

The campaign and all four scenarios are based on survivors' real experiences.

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The aim of this campaign phase was to bring these horrific crimes to the forefront of peoples understanding; challenge myths and stereotypes and make the subject one we can openly talk about, they should not remain taboo subjects. Survivors shared how embarrassment and fear of not being believed were some of the main reasons for not wanting to report sexual abuse crimes. The campaign was a platform to start reducing these barriers, give victims and survivors more confidence they will be listened to and ensure they know there are services available when they need them.

## **Community Communications**

To extend the reach of our communications across Wales, we worked closely with regional VAWDASV coordinators to fund community communication activities. These activities were aimed at raising awareness of VAWDASV, local services as well as both local and national Live Fear Free campaigns. Activities were led by survivors of abuse in partnership with specialist services. Events were primarily focused around the 16 Days of Activism and International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and Girls in November and included:

- a survivor-led podcast
- conferences in South West Wales for victims and professionals
- development of resources for working with survivors of VAWDASV with additional learning needs
- a community event for young advocates
- awareness raising and additional training for 'Healthy Relationship Ambassadors' in secondary schools

## **Key achievements**

Campaigns phases during this period attracted over:

- 300,000 engagements on Facebook
- 44,000 unique page views to the Live Fear Free website during the campaign period
- 9,800 interactions with the Live Fear Free helpline during the campaign period
- And the 'This is not OK' campaign video was viewed almost 200,000

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(196,573) times

'This is not love. This is sexual abuse' was launched in partnership with specialist sexual violence agency, New Pathways. The launch was attended by over 70 people (specialist agencies, survivors and general public). The launch received interest from national media and 'This is sexual abuse' was shown as a top story on ITV Wales News, and featured as a top story on Wales Online. At the end of the campaign period in March 2020, 'This is not love this is control' campaign videos had been viewed more than 240,000 times online and there had been over 76,000 campaign page views on the Live Fear Free website.

Specialist Partners (Police and Crown Prosecution Service) and survivors of sexual abuse were key to the launch, all sharing how they dealt with, tackled or overcame sexual abuse. Their input was integral to the development of this campaign phase and we thank them for sharing their experiences within our networking and development groups.

## **Next steps**

With the support of the VAWDASV Communication Group, key specialist providers and survivors we will develop a 2022-2027 National Communication Framework to run alongside the next five-year National VAWDASV strategy.

We will continue to deliver the 'Home shouldn't be a place of Fear' campaign to respond to impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **Seren Môr**

Seren Môr Consortium organised and delivered two learning events in December 2019, held in Port Talbot. The events were developed and delivered collaboratively with service users and intended to raise the awareness of the Welsh Government VAWDASV campaigns, 'This Is Not Love – This Is Control' and 'Don't Be A Bystander.' The first event was aimed at service users and survivors who currently or historically access support services. The second event was aimed at front-line professionals, local organisations, businesses and commissioners from across Swansea, Neath Port Talbot and Bridgend area.

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## Reach

18 service users and survivors attended the first event and 64 front-line professionals were involved in the second event.

A total of 82 delegates increased their knowledge of the messages delivered by the Welsh Government VAWDASV campaigns, 'This Is Not Love. This Is Control' and 'Don't Be A Bystander' within the Swansea, Neath Port Talbot and Bridgend area.

Evaluation following the service users' event showed:

- 89% said their awareness of VAWDASV had improved
- 58% of participants had no previous knowledge of the 'This Is Not Love' campaign. 42% had a little or some knowledge of the campaign
- 100% of participants evidenced improvement in their knowledge and awareness of the campaign

Evaluation following the front-line professionals event showed:

- at the beginning of event 61% said they were confident or very confident, 34% said they had a little confidence and 5% said they had no confidence in their ability to seek help or provide support in relation to VAWDASV
- after the event 96% said they were confident or very confident, and 4% now said they had some confidence in their ability to seek help or provide support in relation to VAWDASV

## Objective 2

### **Increased awareness in children and young people of the importance of safe, equal and healthy relationships and that abusive behaviour is always wrong**

#### **Action we took**

Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence can have a huge impact on children and young people. It can affect their wellbeing, their educational attainment, family and peer relationships, and their ability to enjoy healthy, happy, respectful relationships now and in the future. Raising children and young people's awareness of equality, respect and consent is crucial if we are to stop VAWDASV. We want to ensure all children and young people have access to developmentally appropriate, high quality learning that responds to their needs and experiences.

We continue to fund Hafan Cymru's Spectrum project, which promotes the importance of healthy relationships and raises awareness of VAWDASV in schools. Spectrum also delivers training for school staff and governors on understanding the impact of domestic abuse on children and adopts a whole school approach to tackling domestic abuse.

Sex and Relationships Education will be renamed as Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE). This will be made a statutory part of the new curriculum for all learners between the ages of 3 and 16.

The refined Curriculum for Wales framework, was published in January 2020, and detail was provided to reflect how RSE should be embedded across the curriculum in future.

The Welsh Government and WJEC have discussed the development of an Advanced Welsh Baccalaureate Health and Wellbeing Peer Mentoring programme, but due to COVID-19 pandemic this work is currently on hold.

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## Key achievements

VAWDASV guidance for Higher Education Institutions was published in March 2020 as planned.

With the support of a group of nine young people, the VAWDASV campaign, 'This is not ok' was successfully launched in October 2019. Animations for both young people and their parents/carers were developed, highlighting the differences between healthy and unhealthy relationships, how to access support, and how parents should respond to disclosures from young people. The campaign saw over 3 million impressions through digital advertising and more than 200,000 views of the [campaign videos](#).

## Next steps

The Relationship and Sexuality Education RSE Working Group will continue to assist with the design of the new RSE Statutory Guidance working closely with practitioners.

We will work closely with the WJEC to design the Health and Wellbeing Peer Mentoring programme and propose to pilot this across South Wales schools. We aim to re-start the work on the proposed Peer Mentoring pilot as soon as the impact of COVID-19 eases.

We have established a VAWDASV Vulnerable Children and Young People Stakeholder Group to identify challenges, concerns and issues due to COVID-19 and to identify appropriate solutions. This group will be producing posters and factsheets for both children and young people and practitioners around the safeguarding and prevention of VAWDASV.

We are continuing to work with HEFCW to identify support needs and awareness raising activities to support staff and students during the next academic year.

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## Objective 3

### **To increase focus on holding perpetrators to account, and to provide opportunities to change their behaviour based around victim safety**

#### **Action we took**

The Good Practice Guidance for Non-Specialist Public Services on Working with Adult Perpetrators' was published in November 2019.

In 2019 to 2020, the Welsh Government gave £120,000 in grants to the seven regions to support them to improve the provision of perpetrator services in their areas. The Welsh Government also offered further support and expertise to aid in the delivery of these projects.

The Welsh Government provided support and supervision to a number of Master's degree projects in Forensic Psychology at Cardiff Metropolitan University, which involve Master's students providing an evaluation of perpetrator services as a part of their academic programme.

Quarterly practice-sharing events were held in Cardiff and Llandudno Junction throughout the year. These provided opportunities for those who work with, or conduct research into VAWDASV perpetrators to come together and share examples of their work and their findings.

The VAWDASV work stream of the 'framework to support positive change for those at risk of offending in Wales' met quarterly. Three task and finish groups reporting to the work stream were set up to focus on perpetrator service commissioning, service standards and service user engagement.

The Welsh Government provided support and supervision for the Swansea University harassment research study, which the Welsh Government funded in collaboration with Knowledge Economy Skills Scholarships (KESS II), part of the European Social Fund.

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## Key achievements

Practice Sharing Events were held quarterly, allowing those who work with or conduct research around perpetrators an opportunity to share examples of the work and their findings. A total of eight practice sharing events, attended by 175 people, were held across North and South Wales from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020. Following the events, partners provided positive feedback in response to these learning and networking opportunities.

Good Practice Guidance for Non-Specialist Welsh Public Services on Working with Adult Perpetrators was published.

## Next steps

Further quarterly practice sharing events have continued since March 2020, including an online event held in August 2020, with a particular focus on sharing best practice information to support partners with the COVID-19 response.

The team will continue to work with the Home Office to advise on the allocation of perpetrator-related funding in Wales.

The team will continue to work with regions to ensure perpetrator services are considered in their strategies.

A new task and finish group is being established to support effective delivery of the VAWDASV Perpetrator Services Programme. The group will sit under the VAWDASV work stream of the framework to support positive change for those at risk of offending in Wales and focus on trauma-informed approaches when working with individuals convicted of sexual and domestic abuse offences. It is anticipated that any learning will be shared with members through a future practice sharing event.

# Objective 4

## Make early intervention and prevention a priority

Identifying VAWDASV at the earliest opportunity and providing an appropriate response to minimise impact and harm is critical in achieving the early intervention and prevention objective of the national strategy. The Welsh Government recognises that intervening early is vital to identifying and reducing harm caused by violence or abuse.

### Action we took

#### Ask and Act

Our approach to early intervention has seen continued roll out of “Ask and Act” a policy and training programme which gives key public service workers the skills to undertake targeted enquiry, to identify abuse and then to refer to appropriate support services.

‘Ask and Act’ training is available across Gwent and Cwm Taf regions, all three Fire and Rescue Services, the Welsh Ambulance Service Trust as well as Local Health Boards and Trusts. During 2019 to 2020 both North Wales and Mid and West Wales regions have implemented the policy and have been delivering training the programme.

#### National Survivor engagement Framework

Development of the National Survivor engagement Framework continued with a two phased approach.

With the support of VAWDASV specialist services and VAWDASV Survivor groups a theory of change model was agreed for the methodological approach to developing pilot Survivor panels.

During September and November 2019 three pilot panel sessions took place

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which intended to provide insight into how a survivor engagement panel could be organised and discussions facilitated. 12 Survivors were invited to participate within the panels. Panels were focused on discussing the National Strategy 2016 to 2021 and was used as an opportunity for survivors to inform the forthcoming National Strategy, due to be published in 2021.

## **Key achievements**

At the end of March 2020 4,343 public sector workers had been trained to Ask and Act (an increase of over a 1000 workers trained since 2018 to 2019).

The 'Ask and Act' programme is currently operating in seven areas of Wales, and implementation is underway in Bridgend, Swansea Western Bay and Cardiff. This will be a national programme by 2021.

## **Next steps**

We will continue to support new adopter sites on the journey to full national rollout by the end of 2021. Implementation meetings have taken place with Bridgend, Western Bay as well as Cardiff and the Vale.

Ask and Act programme is due to be independently evaluated to consider its effectiveness prior to making the guidance statutory during 2021.

An initial findings report evidenced support for the Survivor panels to continue, provided insight into the impact on survivors and made recommendations for ongoing engagement. The publication of the full evaluation has been impacted by the pandemic and is now expected to be published by the end of January 2021. This will inform and influence the continued development a sustainable Survivor Engagement Framework.

## **Objective 5**

### **Relevant professionals are trained to provide effective,**

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# timely and appropriate responses to victims and survivors

## Action we took

### National Training Framework

One of the key mechanisms for delivering the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 is the National Training Framework (NTF) Statutory guidance; the first of its kind in the UK. The Framework offers proportionate training to strengthen the response provided across Wales to those experiencing domestic abuse or sexual violence. It sets out ambitious and clear expectations for training standards, outcomes and content on violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence

In May 2019, the relevant authorities submitted their second annual reports. It was evident from these reports that over the year, significant partnership working had taken place in relation to planning and implementation of the National Training Framework across Wales. Many of the early challenges associated with implementation of the Framework have been overcome and significant work has been undertaken to meet the requirements of the statutory guidance.

The Welsh Government continued to work with relevant authorities to increase the percentage of the workforce completing the eLearning module (basic awareness training).

The Welsh Government fully-funded an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) specialist practitioner course and a VAWDASV service manager course during this period.

### Key achievements

Llamau and Hafan Cymru were contracted to deliver roadshow-style workshops for professionals working with young people affected by VAWDASV. Thirty-six workshops were delivered throughout Wales, to professionals in roles such as

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Flying Start and Families first workers, youth offending teams, local sports groups, Brownie and Guide clubs, housing association staff and police. The Roadshows provided non VAWDASV professionals with awareness of:

- Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (VAWDASV)
- awareness of abusive behaviours
- the impact on Children and young people (CYP)
- dealing with disclosures and raising concerns
- practical tools to use with CYP
- referral processes to specialist support services

At the end of March 2020, over 173,200 professionals in Wales have accessed training through the National Training Framework. This is an increase of over 19,000 for this reporting period.

## **Next steps**

It is important that strategic leaders and commissioners receive appropriate training and a more personalised targeted regional approach to their learning needs. Welsh Government will focus on developing a mechanism that will support strategic leaders to meet their statutory duty effectively.

## **Objective 6**

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

### **Action we took**

The Welsh Government published statutory guidance on Commissioning VAWDASV services in May 2019 to promote high quality collaborative commissioning that delivers more consistent and effective services to prevent VAWDASV and protect and support victims of VAWDASV across Wales. The

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first year was a transition year to allow regional commissioning partnerships to adapt to the new approach to commissioning.

National Indicators to measure progress in delivering the purposes of the Act were published in June 2019. A series of workshops were organised with key stakeholders to identify additional data sources, and refine the National Indicators were organised.

A review of accommodation-based services, undertaken by the Wales Centre for Public Policy (WCPP) progressed through the year with the WCPP hosting roundtable events for service providers and regional VAWDASV advisers, and Welsh Government hosting a roundtable event for survivors with experience of refuge provision.

The membership of the All Wales Honour-Based Abuse (HBA) Leadership Group was reviewed to ensure that members had lead responsibility for honour-based abuse within their organisations. The group met four times throughout the year taking a strategic oversight of activity at regional and local level.

## **Key achievements**

The Welsh Government funded training in the first three months of 2020 to raise awareness of the issues faced by the LGBT+ community experiencing VAWDASV with professionals working in VAWDASV services.

The Safer Wales Dyn Project was funded by the Welsh Government in 2019 to 2020 to meet priorities under the Act and the National Strategy by providing a Wales wide service to heterosexual, gay, bisexual and transgender men in Wales.

## **Next steps**

We will strive to meet the new demands resulting from the pandemic whilst further developing the progress we have made during the previous financial year.

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Work has begun on a framework for monitoring compliance with the statutory commissioning guidance.

## **Duties under the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Act**

- **May 2019:** The Welsh Government published statutory guidance for commissioning VAWDASV services.
- **May 2019:** The relevant authorities submitted their second annual reports under the National Training Framework.
- **June 2019:** The Welsh Government published National Indicators for VAWDASV. We held a series of workshops between July 2019 and March 2020 based on each of the objectives in our National Strategy to improve and strengthen the published indicators. The final two workshops were put on hold due to the pandemic. We aim to republish the refined National Indicators and technical measures by the summer of 2021.
- **July 2019:** The Welsh Government's Violence Against women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Progress report for the period: 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019 was published.
- **September 2019:** The National Advisers published their annual progress report for 2018 to 2019.
- **November 2019:** The National Advisers published their annual plan for the next financial year 2020 to 2021.
- **November 2019:** Welsh Government published Good Practice Guidance for non-specialist public service workers on working with adult perpetrators.

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