



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

PUBLICATION

Cabinet paper: Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence National Strategy

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Decision required

- note the position and approach taken within the draft National Strategy for tackling Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence
- agree to the proposed next steps to publish the strategy for consultation and develop a Blueprint approach for delivery to make Wales the safest place in Europe to be a woman.

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Summary

1. It is a statutory requirement under s3(1) of the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 for Welsh Ministers, following a general election, to prepare and publish a National Strategy to prevent gender-based violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence and to protect and support victims.
2. The National Strategy is the vehicle for delivering on the Programme for Government to:
 - a. strengthen the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) Strategy to include a focus on violence against women in the street and workplace as well as the home
 - b. expand the 'Ask and Act' and 'Don't be a Bystander' training and awareness campaigns
 - c. make Wales the safest place in Europe to be a woman.
3. The revised strategy has been prepared through extensive consultation with a Working Group of key partner organisations, as well as the National Advisers on VAWDASV. Details of the working group and meetings convened is at Annex B.
4. A public consultation is planned to launch in late November/early December 2021 to obtain wider views on the strategy. The final strategy will be published in early 2022.
5. Delivery of the strategy will be through a Blueprint approach which brings together devolved and non-devolved organisations. The VAWDASV team will lead the delivery for Welsh Government but, in order to be a success, the strategy requires joint working with other departments including education, health, housing and crime and justice.

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The strategy

6. The consultation document of the National Strategy sets out the objectives for the Welsh Government and partners to tackle VAWDASV, proposed governance arrangements and the Blueprint approach for delivery.

7. The draft strategy recognises that tackling male violence, and the misogyny and gender inequality that lie behind it, are how we will break the cycle and address the root causes of VAWDASV. We must challenge attitudes and change behaviours of those who behave abusively. It is not for women to modify their behaviour, it is for abusers to change theirs.

8. VAWDASV is committed primarily but not exclusively by men against women. The strategy recognises therefore that not all victims of VAWDASV are women and it can also affect men and those with a non-binary identity. All perpetrators, regardless of their gender, will be held to account for their actions, however the strategy recognises that male violence defines VAWDASV and properly addressing the power and control dynamic created by gender inequality is key.

9. The draft strategy proposes a set of principles to define its approach:

- Tackling male violence
- A public health approach
- A whole society approach
- A trauma informed approach
- A comprehensive understanding of VAWDASV
- The survivor's voice
- Collaborative working and co-production.

10. The draft strategy's objectives are:

Objective 1

Challenge the public attitude to violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence across the Welsh population through awareness raising and

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space for public discussion with the aim to decrease its occurrence.

Objective 2

Increase awareness in children and young people of the importance of safe, equal and healthy relationships and empowering them to positive personal choices.

Objective 3

Increased focus on holding those who commit abuse to account and supporting those who may carry out abusive or violent behaviour to change their behaviour and avoid offending.

Objective 4

Make early intervention and prevention a priority.

Objective 5

Relevant professionals are trained to provide effective, timely and appropriate responses to victims and survivors.

Objective 6

Provide victims with equal access to appropriately resourced, high quality, needs-led, strength-based, inter-sectional and responsive services across Wales.

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The Blueprint model for delivery

11. The strategy proposes adopting a Blueprint approach for delivery. This approach creates a delivery structure and action plan that is jointly owned by devolved and non-devolved organisations and will be based on the successful Blueprints for Female Offending and Youth Justice.

12. The benefit of the Blueprint approach is that it creates a sense of shared ownership for the delivery of the strategy and encourages accountability as well as peer support and challenge. This is achieved through the governance structure which has at the top a new co-chaired Ministerial-led National Partnership Board.

13. The board will oversee the work of the regional boards and also sub-groups which will be created to take forward key actions. At present the draft strategy mirrors Programme for Government commitments and suggests that sub groups cover street based harassment and abuse, workplace harassment and abuse, tackling perpetration, sustainable commissioning and user engagement.

14. Membership of the board will reflect those bodies who have key duties in tackling VAWDASV and will include departments across Welsh Government, police, PCCs, HMPPS and WLGA. Advisory voices from the specialist sector will be included. In particular we will involve people with lived experience of VAWDASV on the Board so that the survivor voice is heard at the highest level.

Impact

15. The enduring social problem of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence remains a significant barrier to Wales achieving the vision set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 in particular the aim to make Wales more resilient, healthier, more equal and a country of more cohesive communities and becoming a fair and prosperous society.

16. We must therefore aim to eliminate VAWDASV in both public and private

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spaces. Its existence is not inevitable and it can be radically reduced and prevented with the collaborative, whole-system approach set out in the National Strategy and subsequent Blueprint.

17. Delivery of the Strategy sits with the VAWDASV team however delivery of the Blueprint approach involves both devolved and non-devolved partners. Work has already begun between Welsh Government, the police and PCC's offices and will be taken forward with survivors, specialist providers and other public bodies to design the Blueprint and put in place some of the governance structures to enable the plan to start delivering as soon as the strategy is published in 2022.

18. The VAWDASV team will lead the Blueprint development and delivery for Welsh Government and a key part of their role will be to work closely with police and PCC colleagues to create a truly whole-system approach. It will be important to match the resources made available by partners in the Police and PCC's offices to demonstrate the Welsh Government's commitment and to deliver effectively, recognising that some of this will be dependent on the outcome of the draft Budget.

Cross-government working

19. We are taking a whole society approach to tackling VAWDASV, which in turn means taking a whole Government approach. The strategy based on the theory of change that we must tackle misogyny in all its manifestations if we are to remove the ground in which violence and abuse thrives. This means Welsh Government must be both, an exemplar within its own space and utilise all its levers to tackle VAWDASV. Key aspects of this approach will include working with the Workforce Partnership Council to address workplace harassment and extending the promotion of Healthy Relationships through all relevant service delivery building on the work already done within education.

20. I am therefore seeking the commitment of all Cabinet members to the delivery of this strategy through their own portfolios. The strategy seeks to deliver on the Programme for Government commitment to extend the scope of

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VAWDASV beyond the domestic realm into the public one on the street and in the workplace. The strategy does not set out an extensive list of new cross-government commitments. That is not what we are asking at this stage. Rather it creates a structure to develop and drive solutions which are co-produced and collaborative. The commitment is therefore to participate in the blueprint structure and challenge ourselves to find answers as an employer, a funder and a commissioner to contribute to delivering the theory of change.

Communications and publication

21. No communications activity is planned in relation to this Cabinet Paper however the publication of the consultation and the resultant final strategy will be publicised and a communications plan developed.

22. It is intended to launch the draft Strategy for public consultation during the 16 days of activism that follow White Ribbon Day on 25 November 2021.

23. We will be providing a number of webinars during the consultation period to provide information on the draft Strategy and the Blueprint approach to delivering against it. It is hoped these will ensure potential respondents to the consultation are better informed on our proposals before they respond to the consultation. We will also work with partner organisations to facilitate a series of focus groups with VAWDASV survivors and others to ensure their views are heard and they have an opportunity to respond to the consultation.

Recommendation

- note the position and approach taken within the draft National Strategy for tackling Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence.
- agree to the proposed next steps to publish the strategy for consultation and develop a Blueprint approach for delivery to make Wales the safest place in Europe to be a woman.

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Annex A: Statutory, finance, legal and governance matters

Statutory requirements

1. Section 3 of the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 (“the Act”) requires the Welsh Ministers to prepare and publish a National Strategy which, amongst other things, specifies objectives which the Welsh Ministers consider will, if achieved, contribute to the pursuit of the purpose of the Act.
2. Section 4 of the Act provides that the Welsh Ministers must, in exercising their functions, take all reasonable steps to achieve the objectives specified in the most recently published National Strategy.
3. Section 60 of the Government of Wales Act 2006 enables Welsh Ministers to do anything that they consider appropriate to achieve the object of promoting or improving the economic, social and environmental well-being of Wales and section 58A of the Act which enables them to carry out executive ministerial functions so far as exercisable within devolved competence, which will include the provision of VAWDASV related funding.

Finance requirements and governance implications

4. The publication of the consultation document does not have any significant financial implications. All costs related to the development of the refreshed National Strategy can be met from within existing budgets.
5. The VAWDASV Team has allocated £55k to undertake further engagement

work during the consultation, translation, design and for the analysis of consultation responses. This was agreed in MA/JH/1361/21.

6. Further costs involved in the implementation of the Strategy and the Blueprint as the vehicle for delivering the Programme for Government have been included by the VAWDASV team in the spending review and budget returns for 2022-2025 as part of the Social Justice (SJ) MEG.

7. The Programme for Government expands the remit of the VAWDASV team in order to strengthen the strategy. As a result, the spending review return contains a request for an additional £957,000 for each of the three years to develop the Blueprint which will include policy scoping and development around street and workplace harassment and abuse. The budget return also requests an additional £93,000 to expand the training commitments under the Ask and Act scheme and the communications activity to raise awareness of VAWDASV.

8. Following the outcome of the UK government's Spending Review on 27 October, prospects for the Welsh Government's budget beyond the coming year are tight. The availability and nature of funding from 2022-23 onwards will need to be considered as part of our future budget planning and investment will need to be prioritised for any additional costs incurred by future proposals which may have opportunity costs. This is dependent on the outcome of the Welsh Government's draft Budget and investment will need to be prioritised within the SJ MEG, where the risk will lie, once indicative allocations are available.

9. The VAWDASV Team have made bids for additional staffing resource in order to match resources made available by partners in the Police and PCC's offices to demonstrate the Welsh Government's commitment and to deliver effectively.

10. This Cabinet paper has been cleared by Budget and Government Business Division and the Education and Public Services Operations Team (EPS/JH/74/21).

Research and / or statistics

11. The paper has not included any research or statistics and therefore approval

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by Knowledge & Analytical services is not required.

Joined-up working

12. The following Welsh Government departments contributed to the development of the draft National Strategy and will work with the VAWDASV team to deliver the objectives:

- Education
- Health and Social Services Department
- Equality and Prosperity
- Housing Policy
- Crime and Justice
- Local Government and Public Services

Annex B: Consultation completed to date

1. The consultation draft is the result of extensive engagement with a Working Group set up with representation from the specialist sector, relevant government departments, police and PCC's offices and other interested parties. A full list of the invited participants is as follows:

- Welsh Government VAWDASV National Advisers
- VAWDASV Regional Advisers / Teams
- BAWSO
- Cafcass Cymru
- Cymorth Cymru
- Dewis Choice
- Hafan Cymru
- Hourglass
- HMPPS
- Local authorities
- National Probation Service
- New Pathways

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- NSPCC
- Office of the Children’s Commissioner for Wales
- Office of the Older People’s Commissioner for Wales
- Police Forces and Police & Crime Commissioners
- Public Health Wales (various teams)
- Race Council for Wales
- RASA Wales
- Respect UK
- Safer Wales
- South Wales Fire and Rescue Service
- Stepping Stones
- Welsh Local Government Association
- Welsh Women’s Aid
- Youth Justice Board

2. The consultation meetings conducted to date are:

16 Feb 2021

Objective 1 – Awareness raising

(2hrs)

16 March 2021

Objective 3 – Perpetrator work

(2hrs)

30 March 2021

Objective 5 – Training/Education

(2hrs)

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26 April 2021

Objectives 2 and 6 – Children and young people, female genital mutilation and honour-based abuse

(2hrs)

20 May 2021

Services, Funding & Commissioning

(2hrs)

9 June 2021

Criminal Justice / Blueprint

(2hrs)

24 June 2021

Governance

(2hrs 25mins)

15 July 2021

Progress update and consultation planning

Agenda:

1. Welcome and introductions

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2. Note and Actions of Previous Meeting
3. Outline of proposed National Strategy for consultation
4. Consultation and engagement planning
5. Agreed actions and next steps

(55mins)

19 August 2021

Progress update and consultation planning

Agenda:

1. Welcome and notes/actions of previous meeting
2. Review of Working Group comments on draft National Strategy for consultation
3. Consultation engagement
4. Agreed actions and next steps

(55mins)

16 September 2021

Progress update

Agenda:

1. Note and Actions of Previous Meeting
2. Draft Strategy / Consultation update
3. Presentation on “What works to prevent VAWDASV?” (Lara Snowdon, Wales Violence Prevention Unit)
4. Agreed actions and next steps

(55mins)

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11 November 2021

Progress update

Agenda:

1. Note and Actions of Previous Meeting
2. Draft Strategy / Consultation update
3. Agreed actions and next steps

(55mins)

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