



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

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Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence: progress against the blueprint high level action plan 2023

What we have done since we published our blueprint high level action plan in March 2023.

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Foreword

Tackling Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence and its root causes is complex and challenging and we all have a part to play in the eradication of all forms of VAWDASV. We remain extremely grateful for the commitment already demonstrated by all of our partners and survivors involved in taking this work forward, together, we have the opportunity to influence long term, positive changes to society to stamp out the misogynistic culture, and together shape and inform policy and practice that eradicates violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

In March 2023, the Welsh Government published the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) Blueprint High Level Programme Implementation Plan, to set out how the Blueprint partnership approach would deliver against the objectives of the VAWDASV National Strategy 2022 to 2026. We committed to provide you with an update on progress being made via the Blueprint in October 2023.

The Blueprint supports a partnership approach to delivery against our National VAWDASV Strategic objectives. It seeks to influence policy and service developments, shaped by survivors, evidence, and best practice. The Welsh Government Policy team will continue to work on its ongoing responsibilities, providing funding to Regional Boards and specialist services, and working to build on good practice to support women and girls who experience domestic abuse and sexual violence.

The Blueprint delivery team's priority over the past 6 months has been on implementation. A great deal of energy and time has been invested by all to provide strong foundations; investing time to understand roles and responsibilities across the Blueprint partnership, strengthening stakeholder relationships, establishing the workstream leadership and membership has enabled the Blueprint Delivery team to work with partners to shape agree key

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priorities and direction of travel for workstream delivery plans.

We have now moved from the implementation phase to the delivery phase, and we would like again to acknowledge the input from partners at all levels who have contributed to the progress we have made.

We are particularly pleased that collectively we have been able to develop key pieces of work that provide consistency and focus.

We are grateful for the work undertaken by the Blueprint Team to consult on and develop our VAWDASV Theory of Change, providing clarity in terms of the change we expect our collective efforts to realise. The Welsh Government is now undertaking a review of the National Indicators with survivors, stakeholders and interested parties, and the subsequent identification of measures of success. These will cover not just our Blueprint activity which is about what we will do differently but also our existing work to eradicate VAWDASV and support survivors. We have recently published the VAWDASV National Advisors Annual Report and will shortly publish the Welsh Government's VAWDASV Annual Report, which will cover activity undertaken during 2022 to 2023.

We are encouraged that the Survivor Voice Scrutiny and Involvement panel is now established with 8 members on the panel, each with lived experience of domestic abuse or sexual violence, their contributions will be invaluable in helping the workstreams shape policy and practice going forward.

Our understanding of the evidence base has become more informed, with each workstream gathering evidence and mapping services, the results of which will be concluded in the coming quarter. As a result of this activity, our insight into programme interdependencies has been strengthened which will avoid unnecessary duplication and enhance efficiencies.

In addition to the reporting against workstream delivery plans, there remain a number of priority activities/approaches being developed that will be reported on

in the next Ministerial update. All are vital to ensure that our approach is truly inclusive and responsive to the needs of all victims.

1. National Indicators and measures.
2. Communication Strategy and toolkit.
3. Intersectional approach.

Once again, we would like to extend our thanks to those who are leading on delivery, our survivor panel and to our committed partners and stakeholders who are key to success. We believe we are making real the expectations of the Well-being of Future Generations Act with our partnership model and consequently giving ourselves the best chance of achieving our ambitions to end violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

Jane Hutt MS, Minister for Social Justice.

Dafydd Llywelyn, Police and Crime Commissioner for Dyfed-Powys Police (On behalf of Policing in Wales).

(Co-Chairs of the VAWDASV National Partnership Board).

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.

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Update

- A literature review was completed by Welsh Government's VAWDASV Policy Team.
- ACE Hub Wales have completed a rapid review of existing evidence, 'Gender-Based Harassment in Public Spaces: An Evidence Review'.
- ACE Hub Wales have agreed to complete a separate rapid review which will focus specifically on the existing literature around online gender-based harassment.
- Research on the manosphere, its impact and considerations, is being collated into a report by South Wales Crime Commissioner's Office.
- The Violence Prevention Unit have shared their recent report 'Collecting Behavioural Insights for Sexual Harassment Prevention' within the Blueprint. This research was undertaken to better understand the facilitators and barriers for men intervening when they witness sexual harassment or problematic sexual behaviour, and focuses on men aged 18 to 54 who live or socialise in South Wales.
- Cowshed Media have agreed to share information on the evidence base for Welsh Government's SOUND campaign's concept and approach, what was learned from the campaign's focus groups and survey, and future information sharing from campaign surveys and evaluations.
- Plan UK is funding test and learn projects with organisations who deliver interventions/activities with boys and young men that may help in reducing VAWDASV. Plan UK has commissioned the Violence Prevention Unit to conduct a literature review on 'What Works to Engage Men and Boys in Violence Prevention'. This study also includes a mapping survey conducted in Wales, and focus groups with the test and learn projects.
- North Wales Police, on behalf of the 4 Forces in Wales, have collated information on the existing legislation, powers and legislative and civil orders in relation to gender-based harassment in all public spaces in Wales. This will support an exercise to understand how legislation and other protective

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measures are currently used in Wales.

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 task and finish group has been established to complete a mapping exercise; mapping the existing national, regional and local community initiatives, partnerships, pilots and recognisable schemes across Wales and the UK that support the prevention of, and appropriate response to, gender-based harassment in all public spaces, to identify best practise and gaps in provision.
- New connections established with key stakeholders, such as Transport for Wales and Welsh Government Sports Policy, Sports Wales and the Welsh Rugby Union, in order to identify and respond to new opportunities to co-ordinate and develop actions across Wales.
- Ongoing discussions with the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales to provide updated guidance for Welsh Universities, which will support the creation of safe, inclusive and supportive higher education environments and ensure institutions take effective measures to prevent and respond to gender-based harassment in public spaces and other forms of VAWDASV.

Action 3

To identify, develop and implement effective interventions that enable everyone in society to challenge misogynistic attitudes, beliefs and behaviours, in order to

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change the culture of misogyny and harassment that feeds abuse.

Update

- A connection has been established with Kindling Interventions to take learning from their bystander intervention programme and to learn from their future evaluation of the National Bystander Intervention Initiative.
- Learning will be taken from Plan UK's findings from test and learn projects with organisations who deliver interventions/activities to boys and young men that may help in reducing VAWDASV.
- An exercise has begun to map initiatives and interventions across Wales that have been identified through 'what we know works' as showing promise, and will be further developed to produce a 'snapshot' of the current offer in Wales.

Action 4

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

Update

- North Wales Police are leading on an action across all four Police Forces in Wales to explore the best use of analysis down to lower layer super output geographical areas to recognise patterns in recorded crime, incidents and other problematic behaviour in relation to gender-based harassment in all public spaces

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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

- Welsh Government's VAWDASV Policy Team has commenced a rapid review of existing sources to better understand the prevalence, causes and impact of gender-based harassment in the workplace. This will be delivered in four phases. Phase one, a literature review, has been completed.
- A sub-group has been formed with the purpose of establishing the next steps for research-based delivery actions

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

- A pilot practise sharing event was held to capture the interest of leaders in Wales, raise awareness of VAWDASV and workplace harassment and share best practise. This event was held virtually and attended by senior leaders

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from the public sector in Wales.

- The Minister for Social Justice, Jane Hutt, MS, has advocated for the amendment Equality Act 2010 to include provision in relation to the protection of workers and the duties of employers via the Worker Protection Bill.

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

- A task and finish group has been established with the purpose of establishing the initial steps to commence a mapping exercise across the public, private and third sector, to collate information on what good practice and tools already exist, or are being developed, on a national, international and local level in relation to preventing and responding to gender-based harassment and other forms of VAWDASV in the workplace.
- Initial discussions have taken place with Beyond Equality, a charity organisation which specialises in working with men and boys, including within the workplace, around gender equality and healthy masculinities in order to create positive cultural change and prevent VAWDASV. Early discussions have already resulted in stakeholders running pilot workshops through Beyond Equality.

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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

- This action will be taken forward fully once the workstream is in a position to make recommendations.
- As an initial step, enquiries are being made into how the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023 may relate to codes of conduct in the public 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

- The workstream has expanded its membership to include academic representation and specialist sector providers to support with the development of an evidence base.

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- Progress has been made in producing an all-Wales perpetrator intervention map to gather information on statutory and third sector interventions. The workstream is finalising the template for the mapping exercise and determining which software to use to launch the survey, with a view to going live with it in the Autumn. This is a substantial piece of work that has taken much of the workstream's attention and resources.
- The workstream is in the planning stages for developing an all-Wales perpetration data dashboard, which will initially focus on gathering and displaying criminal justice data.

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

- A paper has been developed which provides an overview of relevant legislation, policy, and guidance for VAWDASV and perpetration.
- Cross-governmental connections have been made between the VAWDASV and Communications teams and other external key stakeholders to explore opportunities for analysing and utilising the findings of prevention-focussed communications campaigns targeted at men and boys.
- The workstream is working with Sustainable Whole System Approach workstream to include questions about responses to perpetration in the consultation they are developing.

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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's policy leads and project delivery manager have met to begin scoping work for this action.

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 recognises that there are fundamental interdependencies with the Whole System Approach workstream and will undertake work on this when both workstreams are in a position to collaborate.

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

- A consultation session was held with Regional Advisers to seek their views on the challenges and barriers to implementing the VAWDASV Act as well as current successes.
- A broader national consultation framework is in development with a view to launching in the autumn. The consultation will take a mixed approach by using surveys and targeted engagement sessions with key stakeholder groups. This is a substantial piece of work and has been the workstream's central priority.
- Workstream membership has expanded to ensure there is a rounded view and understanding of the current landscape for the implementation of existing guidance and delivery against the VAWDASV Act.
- The workstream has developed a positive working relationship with the Ministry of Justice and is exploring further opportunities for collaboration on its programme of work.

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.

Update

- A paper has been drafted which provides a comprehensive overview and summary of key legislation, policy, and guidance for a whole system approach to VAWDASV.

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

- Will be progressed once the national consultation has been completed.

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

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explicit.

Update

- Will be progressed once the national consultation has been completed.

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 has agreed that a collective definition of the National Framework of Standards requires development.
- The National Framework of Standards will be informed, in part, by responses from the consultation and the 5 other VAWDASV Blueprint workstreams.

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

- Welsh Women's Aid have been commissioned to undertake two pieces of that will inform on the future scope and direction of the workstream. This work includes a rapid review of existing evidence, and mapping on the available services in Wales. The following piece of work will involve the inclusion of the voice of children and young people within the workstream.
- Data has been gathered on Operation Encompass across the four Force areas. We will use this data to understand the experiences and support offered to children and young people through the process, and we will consider the challenges surrounding Operation Encompass. The outcomes of this action will support a Wales-wide whole-systems approach.

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

- Cross-governmental links have been established with both Education and Safeguarding.
- Interdependencies between the Peer-on-Peer Sexual Harassment Plan are in process of being established.
- Individual actions have been allocated as appropriate to Welsh Government colleagues and the workstream is aiming to engage with the relevant Health colleagues.

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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.

Update

- Work has begun on understanding the process and impact of Operation Encompass across Wales by using referral data. This will be extended to identify training and upskilling opportunities for education providers. Information and lessons learned will feed into the Sustainable Whole Systems Approach workstream.

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

- Input on local landscape, good practice and issues has been contributed by the Regional Advisors.
- VAWDASV Educational Toolkit is to be updated.

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

- Members have started to look at the existing mechanisms within their organisations to include the voice of older people to shape and direct our work.
- Existing pieces of research and work have been highlighted by members to identify gaps in knowledge.
- Data relating to older people has been identified which provides a snapshot of current older people in sexual violence services (including age at the time abuse occurred, age at disclosure, gender, ethnicity, geographic location). This data dispels some myths regarding older people and sexual violence, and displays clearly that victims of sexual violence often wait decades before disclosing.

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.

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Update

- Cross-governmental links have been established with Safeguarding and VAWDASV Team, in addition to co-chair Philip Mulraney.
- The workstream has linked with the Welsh Government National Action Plan on the abuse of older people.
- Contribution and collaboration with the VAWDASV Regional Advisors regarding local landscape and issues.
- Comprehensive mapping of both National and Regional Boards in Wales relating to older people has been completed with a view to ensure interdependencies are clearly highlighted.

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

- Comprehensive mapping work of services available to older people is in progress. This includes information on survivor and perpetrator services across Wales, and whether the service is specific to VAWDASV and older people. Next steps for this work have been established including engagement with mapped services and service users.
- Cross-governmental link established with the National Training Framework.
- Monitoring return data for each Police and Crime Commissioner in Wales has been gathered relating to the demographics of service users within commissioned services. The data will be used to identify gaps and trends

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within the commissioned services.

- The workstream has highlighted that review of Ask and Act may be beneficial to assess whether the training materials are relevant to older people. In addition, the workstream has discussed the need to review safeguarding training, and possibly review Domestic Homicide Reviews to ascertain how many included older people.

Action 4

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

Update

- Collaborative options have been established with Safer Communities Wales for communications.
- Interdependency established with Objective 2 of the Welsh Government National Action Plan on the abuse of older people, building upon the existing campaign of “Home shouldn’t be a place of fear”.
- New Pathways have published 4 dates for Older People and Sexual Violence training to be delivered between November 2023 to January 2024. The speed in which these sessions were filled is indicative of a current lack of knowledge of older people and sexual violence, and of the high demand for this learning. The people booked onto the courses are from a wide range of organisations including Police, Social Services staff, local authority, Government departments, and Social Care providers; this is useful information and can inform on possible future commissioning of training in this area. Abridged training is also being developed for the Blueprint workstream due to high demand.

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