



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

POLICY AND STRATEGY

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

How we will work with different organisations to implement our violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence strategy.

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Foreword

We are pleased to publish this High Level Programme Implementation Plan which provides further detail on the implementation of the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) Strategy, published by Welsh Government in May 2022.

The Blueprint framework has been developed to support the delivery of the Strategy, adopting a well-established model already used in Wales for the Youth Justice and Women's Justice Blueprints. The VAWDASV Blueprint has created a new shared governance structure, with joint ownership across devolved and non-devolved public bodies, also in partnership with the private and specialist sectors.

In October 2022, the Blueprint structure commenced with the first VAWDASV National Partnership Board being established. As Co-Chairs of the National Partnership Board, we welcome the opportunity to draw upon the knowledge, insight and expertise of Board members, including senior representatives from Health, Education, Criminal Justice, VAWDASV Specialist Sector, Trade Union Council for Wales, VAWDASV National Advisers, VAWDASV Regional Boards, and the Commissioners for Older People in Wales and Children in Wales and the Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales.

This High Level Programme Implementation Plan describes the purpose of each of the workstreams which have been established and sets out their high level actions, which will contribute to the National Objectives of the VAWDASV Strategy 2022 to 2026. Contributions from the members of each workstream, along with the inclusion of voices of survivors from all aspects of VAWDASV, will be instrumental in taking forward these actions. The voices of survivors will be at the heart of all we do.

We know that since we published the National Strategy last year, there have

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been further cases where workplace harassment has been highlighted by the media, as well as by organisations themselves. We will be calling upon employers in all sectors in Wales to look at their own policies and practices to ensure that the workplace is a safe place for women and girls. The workplace harassment workstream will consider what levers and tools can support employers to make the cultural, societal changes we desire.

We know both women and men can be affected by domestic abuse and sexual violence, however, women are disproportionately affected. Women and girls shouldn't need to change their behaviour, we all need to improve their safety, by not being a bystander, and by calling out inappropriate behaviour whenever we witness it. We welcome the inclusion of violence against women and girls in the 2023 Strategic Policing Requirement which sets out the view from UK Government that the scale of the problem required a whole system response and places expectations for local, national police and partners to work together to tackle all aspects of domestic abuse and sexual violence.

In our VAWDASV Strategy, we set out the needs for a whole system approach to ensure we prevent domestic abuse and sexual violence, and to protect and support those who have experienced this. We will be testing ways to do this in the coming months and will update you on progress being made regarding this and the other commitments set out in this plan in October 2023, and annually thereafter.

We are extremely grateful for the commitment already demonstrated by all the partners and survivors involved in taking this work forward, together, we have the best opportunity to influence long term, positive changes to society to stamp out the misogynistic culture which is the underlying factor for violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

We want Wales to be the safest place to be a woman, and we look forward to seeing how we can work together to realise this ambition. Wales will not be a bystander to violence against women, domestic and abuse and sexual violence.

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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).

Strategic context

The Welsh Government published its **VAWDASV National Strategy 2022 to 2026** in May 2022. The Welsh Government and Policing in Wales agreed to adopt a Blueprint approach to support delivery against the Strategy, which meant that devolved, non-devolved agencies, non-governmental organisations, specialist services and survivors could work together to coordinate actions and drive activities to deliver our shared priority of tackling VAWDASV.

Adopting this Blueprint approach has enabled the establishment of new shared governance structure reflecting the joint ownership of this shared priority, tackling VAWDASV. Adopting a Public Health approach to our work will ensure that we remain focused. The underlying principles that guide our collective efforts are:

- to challenge public attitudes
- to increase awareness in children
- increased accountability for those who perpetrate violence and abuse
- prioritise and focus on prevention
- confident and informed workforce
- provision of inclusive and accessible services that are trauma informed and needs led

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Blueprint governance structure

The VAWDASV National Partnership Board

Is co-chaired by the Minister for Social Justice for Welsh Government and PCC Dafydd Llywelyn on behalf of Policing in Wales. The National Partnership Board provides a forum in which to broker shared decisions and commitments. It does not usurp the autonomy of any of its members, but it does provide a space in which co-operation can develop common and complementary approaches. Partners will take mandates secured at the National Partnership Board back to their own organisations and offer accountability for their progress to partners through the Board.

The Board will also oversee the work of VAWDASV regional boards to ensure they deliver the all-Wales approach whilst still reflecting regional difference. Membership of the Board will reflect those bodies who have key duties in tackling VAWDASV. In developing the Board membership, we will consider how best to include representative voices to ensure that the interests of providers, survivors, and employers can inform discussion.

The VAWDASV National Programme Board

Is co-chaired by Senior Responsible Officers (SRO's) from the Welsh Government and Policing in Wales. The National Programme Board will ensure the milestones set out in the Blueprint Programme are being delivered through overseeing progress being made through the 6 Workstreams, informed by input from members of the Partnership Board and other stakeholders as required. The National Programme Board will be accountable to the National Partnership Board and will report on a quarterly basis, via its SRO's.

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The Survivor Voice Scrutiny and Involvement Panel

Is Co-Chaired by the VAWDASV National Advisers and is integral to the Blueprint approach as the survivor voice will be the Golden Thread throughout the whole of the Blueprint Governance Structure. The panel will be represented at the National Partnership, Programme Board and to each workstream, when considering actions, policy and strategy.

The VAWDASV Workstreams

The Leads of each workstream will report directly to the National Programme Board as members of that Board. The Workstreams will take forward and oversee work on key actions set out in the VAWDASV National Strategy 2022 to 2026, (summarised in the high-level plan), as well as identifying other priorities when drawing upon wider evidence/learning relevant to the VAWDASV agenda which must be in agreement with the National Programme Board. These Workstreams may change over time as progress is made and priorities develop. However, initially these will address:

- gender-based harassment in all public spaces
- workplace harassment
- tackling perpetration
- sustainable commissioning: whole system approach
- older people's needs
- children and young people's needs

We recognise that the Workstreams will overlap in some areas, particular regarding the cross cutting focus to prevent, protect and support those impacted by domestic abuse and sexual violence. The Blueprint team and the Programme Board will ensure that there is appropriate links between the Workstreams to avoid silo working.

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The workstreams are not the sole focus of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence issues in Wales. Welsh Government Policy team will continue to work on its regular business such as providing funding to Regional Boards and the Specialist Services, and building on good practice to support women and girls who experience domestic abuse and sexual violence.

Equality statement

The impact of VAWDASV is not uniform, affecting different people in different ways. Most obviously, women are disproportionately affected by VAWDASV and the strategy recognises this gender imbalance. This is both a cause and consequence of gender inequality. Gender inequality provides the underlying conditions for violence against women. It exists at many levels in our society; from the disproportionate levels of men in leadership and decision-making roles, economic factors like the gender pay gap, and family and relationship roles and expectations. There is a strong and consistent association between gender inequality and violence against women.

Beyond this, however, the lived experience of VAWDASV is intrinsically linked to factors that relate to a wider range of equality characteristics. As a result of intersecting forms of discrimination and oppression, some groups of people experience different, more frequent or more severe violence, or face additional barriers to help-seeking. Crucially, the impact can be cumulative for people with more than one such characteristic (e.g. black women or LGBTQ+ children). An intersectional approach is therefore vital, to help us develop our understanding of VAWDASV and address the diverse needs of all those affected, including children, older people, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people, disabled people and LGBTQ+ communities. Each workstream will need to take these issues into consideration throughout their work, to ensure our outcomes promote equality consistently and comprehensively

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Programme of work: progress and key actions

Progress made to implement the VAWDASV Blueprint Programme up to 31 March 2023

- National Partnership Board established, along with the Blueprint Governance Structure.
- National Programme Board established.
- Workstreams established.
- Survivor Voice Scrutiny and Involvement panel recruitment commenced.
- The jointly funded Blueprint Programme delivery team recruited.

Key actions to underpin the programme of work

- Create a 'central repository of knowledge' as a staffed body to co-ordinate and disseminate what is known about VAWDASV and what works and to shape future research. To include Multi agency data on VAWDASV trends in Wales.
- The Welsh Government will review the National Indicators to ensure that they reflect this strategy and can be used to measure our progress in delivering our aims and objectives, and establish a pattern of reporting on progress against National indicators.
- Develop a Theory of Change model which will illustrate the priorities, activities and outcomes of the Blueprint Programme.
- In line with the Well-Being of Future Generations Act we will continue with a collaborative approach to implementing this Strategy to involve all relevant stakeholders and service users.
- Build upon lessons learnt and best practice to focus on what actions we need to prioritise, to develop our approach further.

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National strategy objectives

Objective 1

Challenge the public attitude to violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence across the Welsh population through awareness raising and space for public discussion with the aim to decrease its occurrence.

Objective 2

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

Objective 3

Increase the 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.

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Objective 6

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

Workstreams: purpose and high level actions

Gender-based harassment in all public spaces

Purpose

- To prevent and protect people from public sexual harassment and other forms of gender-based harassment in all public spaces across Wales, including online spaces, through increasing the unacceptability of the societal beliefs, attitudes and behaviours that underpin it and by holding perpetrators to account.
- We will use a robust evidence base, including the lived experience of victim/survivors, to build an intersectional and trauma informed whole-system approach to tackle public sexual harassment, and other forms of gender-based harassment, in all public spaces across Wales. We will identify, develop and promote tools and levers that enable societal change and support primary prevention. Furthermore, we will improve the environment for reporting and providing support and protection to all victim/survivors and witnesses.
- Through a public health approach, we will have impact at the whole society level that reduces the likelihood of violence against women and girls, domestic abuse, and sexual violence, and will improve the overall safety and

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feelings of safety for women and girls in all public spaces across Wales.

Links to VAWDASV national strategy

- Objectives: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

High level actions

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

Workplace harassment

Purpose

- To develop a common approach to eliminate workplace harassment, including sexual harassment and other forms of gender-based harassment towards women and girls, in all workplaces across Wales. Furthermore, we

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will seek to ensure that the workplace can be a key place of safety for victim/survivors, regardless of where they may have experienced abuse.

- Workplace harassment is not inevitable and through social partnership working with trade unions, employers and businesses, and collaboration with the specialist sector, criminal justice partners and others, we will support its eradication by challenging the harmful behaviours, cultures and structures that enable it to occur. Together we will support the creation of safer, more respectful and more inclusive workplaces across Wales.
- We will support disclosure and improve response for victim/survivors as well as facilitating culture change. Vivaly, we will adopt an intersectional and trauma informed approach and ensure that victim/survivors remain at the centre of our work.
- We will use and enhance existing tools and levers for change and promote excellent practice to support the creation of zero tolerance environments for workplace harassment across Wales. Importantly, this will include establishing a coherent and effective response to abuse of trust in public bodies, challenging and supporting public bodies to lead by example in exemplifying the behaviours, workplace cultures and processes we want to see in others.

Links to VAWDASV national strategy

- Objectives: 1,3,4,6.

High level actions

- 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.
- Develop a whole system approach to support the effective prevention and response to workplace harassment towards women and girls, and so tackle

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workplace harassment in all workplaces across Wales.

- 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.
- 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.

Tackling perpetration

Purpose

- Preventing and tackling perpetration and working with those who commit violence and abuse is fundamental to our public health approach to Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence. To achieve this, we will build on existing work in this area by developing an evidence-based approach which tackles the root causes of perpetration. This will require us to tackle perpetration at the whole society level as well as increase our collective focus on those who perpetrate Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence.
- We will adopt an approach that will both challenge and support those who carry out abuse to deter and disrupt perpetration, manage risk and facilitate changes in behaviour. We will work to embed this approach within the criminal and civil justice systems through collaboration with public services and within non-statutory services aimed at those who carry out Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence.
- We will seek co-ordination between perpetrator services and specialist survivor support for the whole system to address abuse alongside supporting victims. Crucially, we will work with commissioners to ensure perpetrator

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interventions are safe, well-resourced and do not compromise the level of provision for victims and survivors.

Links to VAWDASV national strategy

- Objectives: 1,2,3,4.

High level actions

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

Sustainable commissioning: whole system approach

Purpose

- Commissioning is the process of assessing need and prioritising, planning,

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designing, and monitoring services to get the best outcomes; To that end, commissioning is essential for delivering a whole system approach. Sustainability is about ensuring that commissioning in Wales is open, consistent, and underpinned by needs-based strategic planning that gives confidence to service providers.

- To sustainably commission the services necessary to prevent Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence and protect and support those affected by it, it is essential that the right structures for understanding need, planning and procurement are in place across Wales.
- We will review and refresh existing regional and national arrangements. Where appropriate, we will make recommendations on how these arrangements can be strengthened to better align with the purpose of the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Act (2015).
- We will ensure that statutory public services are responsive to the needs of victims and survivors; look at the specialist sector and the procurement approach needed to secure sustainability; and review existing processes and guidance for needs assessments, strategic planning, and procurement so that they are optimal for our whole system approach to deliver services equitably across Wales. In doing so, we will include the broader scope of the Blueprint, which encompasses both devolved and non-devolved bodies, to support effective collaboration between services.

Links to VAWDASV national strategy

- Objectives: 4,5,6.

High level actions

- 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

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Sexual Violence Act (2015).

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

Older people's needs

Purpose

- As part of the comprehensive understanding of Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence, we will consider our understanding of the needs of older people in order to ensure service responses are appropriate and that harms are prevented and addressed for these groups.
- We will work to understand the links between ageism and abuse, and challenge systemic and societal ageism across Wales to increase the recognition and unacceptability of abuse and harms experienced by older people.
- We will promote appropriate and specific actions on behalf of older people experiencing and/or perpetrating abuse. We will also ensure that the needs

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of this group are recognised across all elements of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence policy and practice.

- We will address parity in terms of service provision and support to overcome the specific disadvantages faced by older people who are at risk of, or experiencing, abuse.

Links to VAWDASV national strategy

- Objectives: 1,3,4,5,6.

High level actions

- 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.
- Develop a Wales-wide whole-systems approach which ensures clarity and cohesion between Safeguarding and Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence.
- 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.
- Prioritise and influence specific awareness raising campaigns to improve the recognition, knowledge and understanding of the abuse of older people.

Children and young people's needs

Purpose

- There is a danger that the needs of children and young people have not

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been adequately recognised to date. As part of the comprehensive understanding of violence against women, domestic violence and sexual abuse, we will consider our understanding of the needs of children and young people to ensure service responses are appropriate and that harms are prevented and addressed for these groups.

- Working alongside Welsh Government Safeguarding, we will ensure that there is clarity and cohesion in approaches to Safeguarding and violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence. The group will also be able to support the implementation of the Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) curriculum's promotion of healthy relationships, as well as work to address peer on peer sexual harassment and abuse.

Links to VAWDASV national strategy

- Objectives: 1,2,4,5,6.

High level actions

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Strengthen accountability mechanisms to ensure public services are meeting the needs of children and young people impacted by domestic abuse and

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sexual violence including services, responses, auditing, inspection, and grant monitoring.

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