



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence

Guidance for Governors

A Practical Guide for School Governors

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Summary

Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence can have a huge impact on affected children and young people. It can affect their safety, health and wellbeing, educational attainment, family and peer relationships, and their ability to enjoy healthy, happy, respectful relationships in the future.

It is likely that there will be young people and staff within your school who are experiencing or perpetrating violence against women, domestic abuse or sexual violence. Every school should be responsible for making sure its learners and staff are safe and healthy.

We have produced this guide to inform school governors of the issues surrounding violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence, and the need to have an appropriate policy in place to help staff to recognise the signs of abuse and how to get help for themselves, to assist their colleagues and the young people in their school. The guide contains a number of actions which governors can take to make their school safer. There is a checklist at Annex C which will enable you to determine how well your school is equipped to support children and young people on issues of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

1. Introduction

What is violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence?

The types of behaviour include (but are not limited to) domestic abuse, rape and sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation (FGM), so called 'honour' based violence and forced marriage.

How common is violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence?

These issues affect men and women, but are mainly experienced by women and girls:

- 1.4 million women and 700,000 men aged 16-59 report experiencing incidents of domestic abuse in the past year, in England and Wales;¹
- younger women aged 16-24 are most at risk and a woman is killed every 2.4 days in the UK, with 148 UK women killed by men in 2014;²
- 750,000 children and young people across the UK witness or experience domestic abuse every year and a significant proportion experience abuse in their own relationships;³
- approximately 124,000 women, men, boys and girls over the age of 16 in Wales have been the victim of a sexual offence;⁴
- 137,000 girls and women are living with consequences of FGM in the UK⁵ and 60,000 girls under the age of 15 are at risk of FGM in the UK.⁶ It is estimated there are 140 victims of FGM a year in Wales;
- 82% of cases dealt with by the Forced Marriage Unit involved female victims; 18% involved male victims. It is estimated there are up to 100 victims of forced marriage a year in Wales;⁷
- in a study by the NSPCC of young people in intimate relationships, 25 per cent of the girls and 18 per cent of the boys experienced physical abuse; 75 per cent of the girls and 14 per cent of the boys experienced emotional abuse; and 33 per cent of the girls and 16 per cent of the boys experienced sexual abuse.⁸ It found that not only do girls experience more abuse, but they also experience more severe abuse more frequently and suffer more negative impacts on their welfare, compared with boys.

¹ Office for National Statistics (2015), citing the Homicide index from the Home Office.

² Office for National Statistics (2015), citing the Homicide index from the Home Office

³ Department of Health, 2002.

⁴ Based on data from the Overview of Sexual Offending Report 2013

⁵ Female Genital Mutilation in England and Wales: Updated statistical estimates of the numbers of affected women living in England and Wales and girls at risk - Interim report on provisional estimates.

⁶ <http://www.forwarduk.org.uk/key-issues/fgm/>

⁷ Home Office and Foreign and Commonwealth Office – Forced Marriage Units stats Jan-Dec 2013.

⁸ NSPCC - Radford, L. et al (2011) [Child abuse and neglect in the UK today](#)

These statistics mean that we probably all know someone who has experienced these issues. For example:

- In a workplace with 4,000 employees, between 800 and 1,000 of the staff will have directly experienced domestic abuse at some point in their lives. So, in a school with 250 staff, it is likely that around 50 have been, or are, victims of such violence and abuse; and
- In a secondary school of 1,000 children, made up equally of both genders, 250 girls and 180 boys will have experienced some form of violence from their boyfriend or girlfriend.⁹

This is why it is so important that everyone in a position of responsibility in our schools is aware of, and committed to, a whole school approach to tackling violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

⁹ Based on NSPCC figures - Partner exploitation and violence in teenage intimate relationships - Christine Barter et al

2. Why should schools address violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence?

Schools are well placed to recognise signs and symptoms of an adult, child or young person who may be distressed:

- violence and abuse can affect children and young people's academic and personal development;
- schools can also be a safe place for adults, children and young people experiencing violence at home;
- violence against women and children, domestic abuse and sexual violence is a cross-curricular issue which can be integrated into a range of other issues and subjects such as bullying, personal, social, economic and health education, sex and relationships education, as well as through literature, mathematics etc.

Schools also have a number of legal requirements relating to this work (see Annex A):

- schools have a safeguarding duty to protect the welfare of children;
- schools are legally obliged to promote pupils' moral, spiritual and social development.

3. What can schools do to address violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence?

Schools can adopt a whole education approach which includes preventative education throughout school life, and which involves the community. This has been identified as having a significant, positive impact for pupils and staff. Research has also shown the significance of this approach in teaching and adopting bullying prevention techniques and strategies, and in relation to child sexual abuse prevention.¹⁰

The Welsh Government and Welsh Women's Aid have published a *Good Practice Guide: A Whole Education Approach to Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence in Wales* which will help schools in addressing violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence. The guide:

- outlines the key elements of a whole education approach to violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence, including the development of policies and strategies and the role of governors;
- provides a guide for schools, and FE establishments, on how to develop, embed and successfully deliver a whole education approach to promoting gender equality and respect and to challenging violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence; and
- identifies examples of effective practice being delivered in Wales and the UK.

The guide can be found at: <http://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/communities/safety/domesticabuse/publications/good-practice-guide-a-whole-education-approach/?lang=en>.

The Welsh Government is also undertaking a review of resources on violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence, which will be accessible through <http://livefearfree.gov.wales>. This will also help schools and governors in identifying suitable materials and best practice.

¹⁰ Cross et al (2011), Farrington and Ttofi (2009) and Vreeman and Carroll (2007).

4. What can school governors do to minimise the effects of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence in their school?

Support through awareness raising and healthy relationship education

School governors have a key role to play in adopting and supporting a whole education approach to violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence. Governors are advised and encouraged to take measures to ensure everyone in school is treated with dignity and respect, including:

1. Supporting the head teacher and senior school staff by ensuring the school has an appropriate policy in place which:
 - raises awareness amongst staff and pupils;
 - promotes a whole-school ethos on these issues; and
 - creates an environment where victims of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence are empowered and helped to disclose their experiences;
2. Ratifying and publishing a policy addressing violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence as part of the whole education approach to violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (the checklist at Annex C will help identify what action is required in your school. There is a model policy at Annex D);
3. Nominating a designated governor to support the head teacher and senior staff in monitoring the school's policy. It is suggested that the most appropriate governor would be the Child Protection Link Governor, although monitoring will require the support of the whole governing body;
4. Working with the Local Authority counselling service for children and young people¹¹, as part of a whole-school approach to supporting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing. This whole school approach may encompass other methods to support emotional wellbeing, for example nurture groups, mindfulness-based approaches, Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL), Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS), to name a few; and
5. Encouraging governors and staff to receive training in line with the National Training Framework on violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence under the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015. An awareness raising eLearning package is available free of charge¹² and, from April 2016, local training on how to "Ask and Act" about violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual abuse and the role of a "champion" will be available regionally.

¹¹ Local authorities are required to make reasonable provision of counselling services for children and young people aged between 11 and 18 in their area and pupils in year 6 of primary school.

¹² <http://livefearfree.gov.wales/guidance-for-professionals/national-training-framework/?lang=en>

Identification and monitoring of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence in schools

Monitoring the school's policy in relation to violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence *may* include:

- regularly reviewing the school's adopted policy in relation to violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence is regularly reviewed (role as at Annex B);
- ensuring the role of the designated governor includes specific reference to support and protection in respect of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence;
- liaising with and encouraging the school council to look at the school's policy in relation to violence against women and young persons, domestic abuse and sexual violence and, if necessary, suggest ways to improve it;
- consulting pupils in an appropriate and sensitive manner after seeking consent from parents and ensuring the material is in an appropriate format;
- consulting parents so that the school's adopted policy on violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence takes into account their views and experiences;
- ensuring that the policy and the issue of supporting staff and young people who are suffering violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence in their school is discussed regularly in meetings of the governing body by asking for regular reports from the head teacher about the effectiveness of the school's policy on violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence in their school;
- working with the head teacher to ensure systems are in place to identify and report incidents of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence, and that everyone in the school knows about the systems and what to do, including referring to specialist services when required;
- supporting the head teacher and senior school staff to implement age appropriate healthy relationships lessons which are provided through, for example, the Welsh Government funded Hafan Cymru's Spectrum programme, Welsh Women's Aid Children Matter Project and the All Wales Schools Liaison Core Programme. These programmes can be used to train staff, help develop a curriculum with relevant lessons, co-facilitate lessons, help monitor and evaluate the lessons, build relationships to aid referral pathways or offer support services and drop-in sessions;
- supporting the head teacher to introduce appropriate mechanisms for gathering evidence about the incidence of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence amongst pupils and staff;

- ensuring that information is put on the school website to help pupils learn about violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence, such as links to the Welsh Government's Live Fear Free website and the 24 hour Live Fear Free Helpline.

5. Members of Staff

School governors are not only responsible for the welfare of pupils, they also have a legal duty of care towards school staff, particularly with regard to an individual's health which may be at risk as a result of excessive and sustained levels of stress.

One source of stress can arise when a member of staff of either gender experiences any form of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

6. Perpetrators – staff and pupils

Given the prevalence of unhealthy relationships and the statistics quoted earlier in this guide, it is likely that some pupils and staff at your school are perpetrating this form of bullying or harassment. The law requires schools to have a written behaviour policy which encompasses anti-bullying, or which has clear links to a separate anti-bullying policy. Staff disciplinary procedures should also be in place for dealing with allegations against members of staff where appropriate, and which should be referred to in the violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence policy.

(Annex D)

7. Supporting people who experience forms of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence – staff and pupils

It is essential to set violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence within the existing school/FEI safeguarding framework to ensure practice is aligned to the *Keeping learners safe* guidance. This includes use of the role of the designated senior person (DSP) for child protection to act as the first point of contact for any concerns about violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence regarding children and young people.

There should be links to specialist violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence support services. To discuss any concerns around these issues, anyone can contact the 24 hour **Live Fear Free Helpline** (0808 80 10 800).

Legal requirements and guidance

Safeguarding

It is essential to set this process within the existing school safeguarding framework to ensure practice is aligned to the *Keeping learners safe* guidance

<http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/keeping-learners-safe/?lang=en>

This includes use of the role of the designated senior person (DSP) for child protection to act as the first point of contact for safeguarding matters which include issues relating to violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence regarding children and young people.¹³

The document contains guidance for Local Authorities and governing bodies on arrangements for safeguarding children under section 175 of the Education Act 2002. There are legal obligations for employers and educational institutions in these areas and these are highlighted in the guidance.

The All Wales Child Protection Procedures includes the *All Wales Practice Guidance on Safeguarding Children and Young People Affected by Domestic Abuse* to support practitioners in responding to concerns.

Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015

In 2016, statutory guidance on education will be issued under section 15 of the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015. The guidance will outline the expectations on Local Authorities in relation to a whole education approach to healthy relationships, and in respect of champions. The Act also includes provision to place a requirement on Local Authorities, through Regulations, to report annually on the action they are taking in their educational settings, including schools, to address violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

Equality Act 2010

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires all schools in England, Scotland and Wales to eliminate discrimination, including discrimination on the grounds of gender and sex, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

¹³ Chapter 3 of *Keeping learners safe* p.93 Appendix 3: All Wales Child Protection Procedures 2008
<http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/150114-keeping-learners-safe.pdf>

Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003

In the UK, all forms of FGM are illegal under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003. *The All Wales Child Protocol on Female Genital Mutilation* provides advice on safeguarding girls from FGM. The Home Office has also produced *multi-agency guidelines* which outline the actions that should be taken by front-line professionals, such as teachers, health professionals, police officers and social workers, to protect girls and women and offer them the support they need.

Forced marriage and honour-based violence

The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 makes it a criminal offence to force someone to marry.

HM Government's multi-agency practice guidelines: *Handling cases of Forced Marriage*, updated in August 2014, provide step-by-step advice to professionals, including teachers. It complements the statutory guidance *The Right to Choose* which came into force with the launch of the Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act in November 2008 and sets the broader strategic responsibilities of chief executives and senior managers in tackling forced marriage locally.

Forced Marriage and Learning Disabilities: Multi-Agency Practice Guidelines helps professionals dealing with the forced marriage of people with learning disabilities. It is designed to help raise awareness and support practitioners in identifying the warning signs of this complex and often hidden practice. Chapter 9 of *Safeguarding Children: Working Together Under the Children Act 2004* also includes guidance on forced marriage.

Estyn

Estyn's common inspection framework includes criteria for evaluating the wellbeing of pupils. This takes into account how well the school safeguards its pupils; arrangements for managing child protection matters; policies to address bullying and violence; aspects of the curriculum which cover healthy life choices; and the importance of positive and respectful relationships.

A child or young person's development and education can be compromised as a result of domestic violence and abuse. It is vital that schools' safeguarding arrangements identify victims and provide support to help them keep safe and achieve their potential.

Estyn's evaluation criteria for a school's wellbeing and safeguarding arrangements take account of the care, support and guidance provided by schools. These are directly relevant to addressing violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

Estyn's inspection guidance for inspecting a school's provision for care support and guidance states that inspectors will make the main judgements about the school's provision for safeguarding and promoting welfare, including:

- child protection;
- bullying;
- harassment and discrimination;
- sex and relationships education;
- internet safety;
- the behaviour and safety of pupils
- pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development

The role of the Child Protection Link Governor

www.governorswales.org.uk/publications/2012/09/19/0312-link-governors/

Child protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm. Effective child protection is essential as part of wider work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

The governing body is responsible for ensuring the school has effective policies and procedures in place for safeguarding children, and monitoring the school's compliance with them. It is recommended that each governing body has a nominated governor for child protection to promote the importance of safeguarding and child protection. The child protection governor will support and assist the governing body to have a better understanding and knowledge of child protection and safeguarding provision within the school. The role includes:

- confirming that the school has a Child Protection Policy, which is consistent with The All Wales Child Protection Procedures 2008¹⁴, that it is reviewed annually and is readily accessible to all members of staff;
- being familiar with the schools Child Protection Policy, The All Wales Child Protection Procedures 2008, Welsh Government Circular Guidance "Safeguarding Children in Education"¹⁵ and keeping informed of child protection and safeguarding initiatives, nationally and locally from the Welsh Government and Local Authority;
- ensuring that the school has an up-to-date and agreed staff disciplinary procedure for dealing with allegations of misconduct against staff, including child abuse allegations, that complies with the relevant legislation including the appointment of an independent investigator, and has regard to Welsh Government guidance and locally agreed inter-agency procedures;
- meeting as and when required, by appointment, with the designated member of staff for child protection to monitor the effectiveness of the Child Protection Policy in the school (in accordance with the Governor Visits to Schools policy);
- working with the SEN link governor (if appropriate);
- helping to ensure that the school works well with relevant agencies and individuals;

¹⁴ All Wales Child Protection Procedures 2008 <http://www.awcpp.org.uk/9547.html?diablo.lang=eng>

¹⁵ <http://www.governorswales.org.uk/publications/2008/04/01/safeguarding-children-education/>

- helping to ensure that accurate records are being kept by the school and that the child protection file is up to date;
- being aware of the number of pupils currently on the child protection register;
- checking that staff and governors are appropriately trained and that all members of staff and governors know what to do if they have any child protection concerns;
- ensuring safe recruitment procedures are in place and appropriate checks are being carried out on new members of staff and volunteers;
- understanding how safeguarding and child protection issues are addressed through the curriculum;
- reporting, on at least an annual basis, to the governing body, without discussing the details of individual pupils, on the implementation of the child protection policy; and
- keeping child protection knowledge up to date by attending governor relevant training courses run by the Local Authority.

Checklist for Schools (adapted from AVA prevention guidelines for schools)

This checklist will help you to assess how well your school is equipped to support children and young people with the issues of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (VAWDASV).

Key action points	Yes	No	If no, how can this be achieved?
The designated senior person for child protection has undertaken training in VAWDASV			
The governing body has a comprehensive policy in place which is made known to all staff and pupils and posted on the schools website for parents and pupils.			
The school recognises the potential impact of VAWDASV on a child's educational attainment and behaviour			
There are procedures in place to deal with perpetrators who attempt to use the school to track down their former partner or child			
Leaflets and posters about VAWDASV and available services are clearly displayed			
Children living in temporary accommodation as a result of VAWDASV are able to join the school quickly			
The school delivers VAWDASV prevention programmes			
All staff have undertaken appropriate training on VAWDASV			
Staff are alert to specific warning signs that a child may be affected by VAWDASV and know how to take appropriate child protection action			
The school has developed buddy schemes and peer support and education projects			
The school provides alternative opportunities for children to do their homework			

Example Workplace Policy (adapted from the Bristol Ideal Example Policy)

(School name) recognises that some employees will be amongst those affected by violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence, either as a victim or a perpetrator.

(School name) has a 'zero tolerance' position on violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence and is committed to ensuring that any employee who is the victim of such violence and abuse has the right to raise the issue with their employer in the knowledge that they will receive appropriate support and assistance.

This policy also covers the approach that will be taken where there are concerns that an employee may be the perpetrator of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

(School name) recognises that violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence is an equalities issue and undertakes to not discriminate against anyone who has been subjected to such violence and abuse both in terms of current employment or future development.

1. The Role of the Employer

1.1 The employer should be aware of the possibility of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence when implementing sickness absence policy and procedures. If the employer suspects such violence and abuse could be the root cause of absence the employer should try to create a supportive environment in which the employee is able to disclose the abuse if they wish to do so. The employer should not pressure the employee for information in this respect.

1.2 The employer should make freely available to employees information about sources of support and services for employees affected by violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence. This information should be available to all employees and not only those who are office based. For more information and resources see <http://livefearfree.gov.wales>

1.3 Arrangements should be made to give employers discretionary powers to allow reasonable time off for any employee who is seeking help to escape violence and abuse e.g. to consult a solicitor or attend a housing appointment. This may be as additional authorised leave.

1.4 Where violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence impacts on the employee's child the employee may need to be granted additional leave.

1.5 Employees may wish to alter or reduce hours of working because of the effects of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence and employers should

consider such requests positively in order to support and accommodate the employee wherever possible.

1.6 Once an employer is made aware of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence the employer should discuss with the employee whether there is any risk to the employee while at work. If the employee believes this to be the case, the employer should carry out a risk assessment and take action to minimise risks in the workplace e.g. additional security measures at the entrance to the building, interception of telephone calls, transfer to another location, redeployment. Where incidents at work do occur these should be recorded and followed up under the Health and Safety Policy. Employees may need to seek legal advice in relation to taking out an injunction against the perpetrator in the vicinity of the workplace.

1.7 The employer has responsibility for ensuring that confidentiality is maintained at all times and that information about violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence is only shared with other parties where this is necessary and where the employee has given permission. Appropriate steps should be taken to ensure files containing information about those experiencing violence and abuse do not contain details of current addresses, particularly if the employee is living in a refuge. Addresses may need to be held separately to ensure the abuser has no way of accessing them.

1.8 The employer should be aware that there may be employees who are themselves perpetrators of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence and that confidentiality is of paramount importance as both victim and perpetrator may be employees of the same organisation.

1.9 If the employee discloses such violence and abuse the employer should make information about sources of help available to the employee and should offer support.

1.10 Employees affected by violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence may be absent from work periodically. Again employers should be aware or may have reason to believe that this is the root cause and should support the employee to seek help and work towards resolving the issue. The employer should consider whether it is appropriate to issue sickness warnings where the known cause is such violence and abuse. Employers should focus on supporting rather than penalising employees affected.

2. Employees and Colleagues

2.1 If you are an employee affected by violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence you may wish to seek support and information from your line manager, personnel team, occupational health and/or trade union representative. There are a range of agencies and services that can help (<http://livefearfree.gov.wales>).

2.2 If a colleague is experiencing violence against women, domestic abuse and/or sexual violence it is important to be supportive and to ensure they have access to information about sources of help.

3. Harassment at Work

3.1 Harassment at work is unacceptable and often unlawful. Employers should ensure that employees know that jokes and comments that trivialise, condone or even encourage violence or abuse are totally unacceptable, and should deal effectively with any incidents brought to their attention.

4. Perpetrators of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence

4.1 Employees who perpetrate violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence should be aware that such behaviour goes against this policy. Some forms of violence and abuse are a crime.

4.2 Employees who perpetrate violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence may be disciplined.

4.3 Employees charged or convicted in court because of such violence and abuse should declare this formally to the employer. Where the employer believes the charges/conviction to have implications in terms of the employee's work role (e.g. where an employee works with children or vulnerable adults) an investigation should be undertaken to assess any risk and mitigating action taken accordingly e.g. redeployment, suspension from duties, moving work location or other appropriate action.