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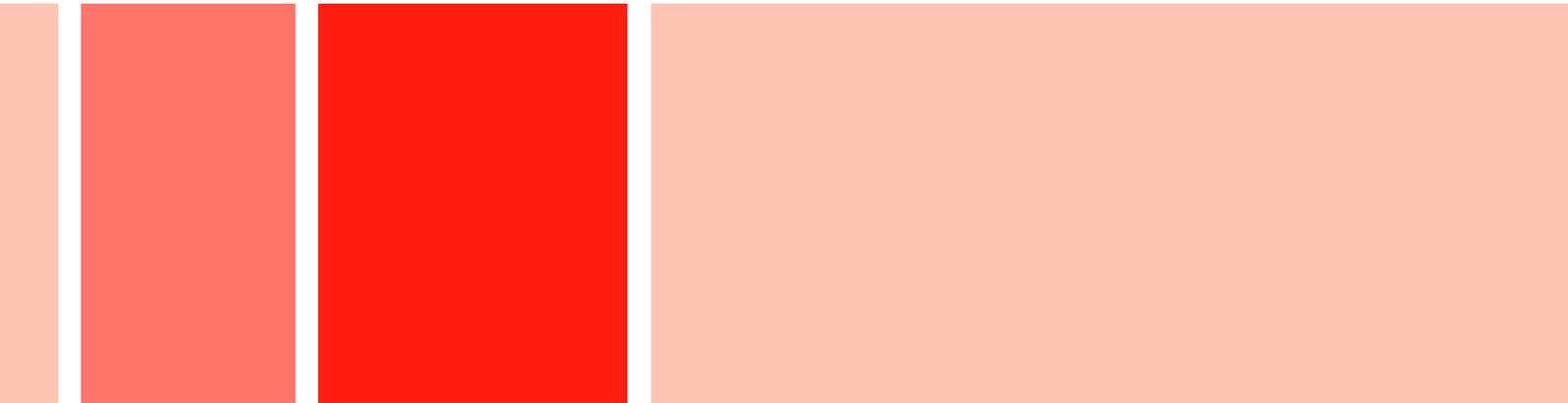


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All-Wales Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Helpline Evaluation

Summary of main findings



All-Wales Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Helpline Evaluation: Summary of main findings

Cordis Bright Consulting

Views expressed in this paper are those of the researchers and not necessarily those of the Welsh Government.

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Glossary of acronyms

CB	Cordis Bright
CBA	Cost Benefit Analysis
DA	Domestic Abuse
DA/SV	Domestic Abuse/Sexual Violence
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender
MARAC	Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Timebound
SV	Sexual Violence
WG	Welsh Government
WWA	Welsh Women's Aid

1 Introduction

The Welsh Government (WG) commissioned Cordis Bright (CB) to conduct an evaluation of the All-Wales Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (DA/SV) Helpline. The evaluation is based on a review of strategic documentation and monitoring data, and consultation with WG policy representatives, Welsh Women's Aid (WWA) senior managers¹, Helpline staff, callers to the Helpline experiencing DA/SV and agency representatives.

The purpose of the evaluation is to help inform decision-making in relation to the Helpline in the future.

2 The Helpline logic model

Currently, the Helpline does not have set SMART² targets in terms of activity, outputs, outcomes and impacts; rather aims and objectives are general and not clearly defined as to how they can be measured. The lack of set criteria by which to measure success was a key challenge in evaluating how effectively the Helpline has been operating.

The technical report presents a proposed logic model³ for the Helpline. It outlines inputs, activities and outputs that the Helpline is currently delivering, as well as views on what it aims to achieve in terms of outcomes and impacts.

Recommendation one: Develop and agree a SMART logic model

The WG should develop and agree a SMART logic model for the Helpline. This should clearly outline SMART indicators of success for the Helpline in terms of activity, outputs, outcomes and impacts. The model should include who is responsible for collecting, collating and analysing measures and when reporting will occur. The logic model outlined in the technical report could be used as a starting point for developing and agreeing a logic model for the Helpline.

3 Implementation of the Helpline

The Helpline has evolved over time in terms of its delivery and implementation. Key changes include: (a) moving from a 12 to 24 hour a day service in 2005, (b) extending its remit to include Sexual Violence from 2011, and (c) developing partnership working and integration into the wider network of Welsh Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (DA/SV) services.

¹ Welsh Women's Aid is the current provider of the Helpline.

² S=Specific, M=Measurable, A=Achievable, R=Relevant, T=Timebound

³ Please see section three of the technical report for an explanation of logic models

The Helpline appears to be delivering in line with the WG's current service specification. For example, the Helpline:

- Is delivered by a team of skilled, well-trained, bilingual and experienced practitioners.
- Provides a service 365 days a year, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It ensures that if necessary this is achieved through emergency working protocols and procedures.
- Has (and was the first Helpline in Wales to do so) achieved The Helpline Association's Quality Mark accreditation⁴.
- Collects and delivers monitoring data in line with the requirements of the WG's service specification (but could be improved).
- Has a set of recruitment, retention and training protocols and procedures in place which support the delivery of the Helpline appropriately.
- Has a set of operational policies, protocols and procedures in place which support Helpline staff to deliver the service effectively and consistently.
- Has a set of performance management and internal quality assurance protocols which in the view of Helpline staff, support a positive learning environment and reflective practice.
- Helpline staff are positive about the leadership of the Helpline.

There is recognition by both the WG and Helpline staff that in the future, albeit not straightforward, it would be positive to be able to demonstrate the outcomes and impacts the Helpline has on callers. Through the development of SMART outcome and impact measures it could be possible to measure longer term outcomes and impacts of the Helpline. However, this may be resource intensive due to the transitory nature of the service and the vulnerability of callers.

4 Effectiveness

Between 2008 and 2013 the Helpline has:

- **Increased the numbers of calls it manages overall.** Based on a review of yearly monitoring reports provided to the WG by the Helpline the number of calls managed by the Helpline has increased by 33% between the financial year 2008-2009 (22,285 calls) and 2012-2013

⁴ For more information please see: <http://www.helplines.org/quality-standard.html>. Last accessed 23rd May, 2014.

(29,718 calls). The number of calls from those experiencing DA/SV has increased by 7% over the same period from 2,960 to 3,158 calls.

- **Managed 27,830 calls in the year January 2013 - December 2013.** Further analysis shows that on average the Helpline manages⁵ 76.2 calls per day. This includes: 11.2 calls per day from callers experiencing DA/SV, 2.4 calls a day from concerned others, 41.4 calls a day from agencies and 15.9 calls per day relating to Helpline staff including testing and personal calls for staff.
- **Developed partnerships and integrated its service into the wider network of Welsh DA/SV services:** Examples of developing partnerships and integrating into the wider Welsh DA/SV system include taking on the management of UK Refugees Online in Wales and conducting a pilot Helpline referral project with the ambulance service in Swansea.

Findings from consulting with the Helpline key stakeholders and the analysis of monitoring data suggest that the Helpline currently meets the needs of different service users, including those experiencing DA/SV and those professionals working on their behalf. With regard to the latter, the views communicated via an online survey (carried out with victims, concerned others and agencies that have used the Helpline) suggest that Helpline users are positive about the service. For example:

- Ten respondents who called the Helpline and had experienced DA/SV said that they felt supported and safe having called the Helpline⁶. Sixteen respondents reported that they felt confident to deal with their situation. They also reported that they were aware of services to support them; knowledgeable about their rights; able to recognise the signs of abuse and violence; knowledgeable about what to do next; positive about the future; and in control of the situation having called the Helpline.
- Agency representatives (209 responses in total) were also positive about the Helpline as 95% agreed/strongly agreed that the quality of the service provided by the Helpline was excellent (80%) or good (15%); 94% felt that the Helpline was an effective first point of contact for making enquiries about DA/SV; 98% reported that their expectations were met by the Helpline; 97% reported being very satisfied (77%) or satisfied (20%) with the outcome of their call to the Helpline; 90% strongly agreed (59%) or agreed (31%) that the Helpline makes effective referrals; and 89% reported that the Helpline works very well (72%) or well (17%) in partnership with other organisations.

⁵ These figures relate to all calls that the Helpline manages both incoming and outgoing. For more information please see the technical report.

⁶ In total 17 responses were from respondents who identified themselves as 'Someone who has a personal experience of Domestic Abuse and/or Sexual Violence' (n=14) or as 'A relative, friend or carer of someone who was experiencing Domestic Abuse and/or Sexual Violence' (n=3).

Comparison of the annual costs of providing the Helpline divided by the average number of calls (in the most recent twelve month period for which data is available) indicates that the Helpline has an average cost per call of £16.04, compared with £21.40 for the Scottish Helpline and £13.99 for the England-based National Domestic Violence Helpline. However, these figures should be treated with caution, since this evaluation does not include an assessment of the quality of the service provided by other helplines.

Recommendation two: Social Return on Investment analysis

The WG, in partnership with the organisation contracted to deliver the Helpline, should consider conducting a Social Return on Investment analysis. This could follow an approach outlined by the New Economics Foundation. In order to achieve this outcome, appropriate measures and associated tariffs will need to be agreed between the Helpline and the WG.

5 Awareness

According to Helpline staff, marketing and raising awareness of the Helpline is an area that could be improved and developed to be more effective. A similar view was communicated in the online survey by agency representatives: 17% felt that enough people know about the Helpline in Wales, 46% reported that not enough people know about the Helpline and 36% stated that they did not know whether enough people know about the Helpline in Wales.

Suggestions for improvement included: (a) adopting a more consistent and systematic approach; i.e. creating a marketing campaign that has a core and consistent message, (b) agreeing an approach that will ensure the effective use of available resources, (c) conducting a radio or TV marketing campaign, and (d) making better use of social media to target a wider audience at relatively low cost.

Recommendation three: Review the effectiveness of current marketing activity

The Helpline provider should review the effectiveness of current marketing and awareness raising activity and make recommendations to the WG. This should include analysis of methods that can be evidenced as being effective and those that are not effective. This will help to inform the development of a more “joined-up” approach to awareness raising and marketing.

Recommendation four: Develop an awareness raising / marketing plan

The Helpline provider should develop an awareness raising plan which outlines what marketing aims to achieve. The plan should clarify the roles, detailing responsibility and accountability for each and be submitted to the WG for consideration.

6 All-Wales Referral Hub

This evaluation will help to inform the service specification for the Helpline contract from 1 April 2015. As part of this evaluation, consideration was required of the potential of the Helpline to act as an All-Wales Referral Hub. Some Helpline staff felt that the service was in some instances already acting as a Hub. For instance, they stated that the Helpline already worked closely with a range of DA/SV and partner agencies across Wales. They also felt that the Helpline Co-ordinator was already working to increase more partnership working between the Helpline and a range of agencies which could help with the groundwork in relation to creating an All-Wales Referral Hub.

7 Areas for development

In addition to improving marketing and awareness-raising, other areas for development include:

- **Continuing to develop and improve partnership working:** Helpline staff felt that, although significant improvements to partnership working had been achieved over the past few years, this should continue to improve. For instance, it was felt that the MARAC referral system between the Helpline and the Betsi Cadwaladr Local Health Board could be replicated with other Local Health Boards. It was recognised that the ambulance service pilot in Swansea was promising and that a similar approach could also work with the Police. This was one of the reasons some Helpline staff felt that the Helpline was already moving towards an All Wales Referral Hub for DA/SV in Wales.
- **Reduce duplication between local and national helplines:** This is an issue that both the WG and Welsh Women's Aid (WWA) recognise needs to be resolved. A potential solution for all stakeholders (including the WG, WWA, local commissioners and agencies) would be to agree expectations and responsibilities and ensure that public funding is allocated accordingly.
- **Improve the way monitoring data is collated, analysed and reported:** This is to ensure that it meets the needs of the WG in terms of performance management, service development and measuring success, namely outcomes and impact. Evidence collected as part of the evaluation suggests that the monitoring system could be improved. Currently, the Helpline collects a significant amount of monitoring data, conducts regular analysis and provides monitoring reports to the WG. A lot of effort is made in relation to monitoring, but it is questionable how well the monitoring data collected by the Helpline is used. The approach to monitoring should be led by providing the WG with information that is useful in informing both strategic and operational decision-making.

- **Develop an agreed approach to measuring outcomes:** Both the WG and WWA staff acknowledged the need for agreeing a clear outcomes framework as the lack of one has been a source of misunderstanding between commissioner and provider. The Helpline is currently developing an outcomes framework, which could be agreed with the WG as part of the development of a SMART logic model for the Helpline.
- **Devise a plan for increasing capacity:** The WG and WWA believe there will be an increase in the number of calls relating to DA/SV in the wake of recent well publicised cases such as the Welsh care homes and Saville cases. The 'Ask and Act' requirement in the planned Gender-based Violence, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Bill is anticipated to increase the demand for requests for information and advice, as professionals will need to develop skills in dealing with disclosures.
- **Make improvements to the Helpline website:** Suggestions included:
 - Having a separate page containing information specifically for agencies.
 - Having a feedback form on the website so that enquirers could feed back about the information on the site or their experience of calling the Helpline.
 - Developing an on-line resource portal that will fit in with the planned role of the Helpline as a first point of contact.
- **Devise a plan for bridging gaps:** Helpline staff recognised that more could be done to encourage use of the service by groups for whom there are fewer appropriate services and who are less likely to come forward. A suggested approach was to work with other agencies to identify improvements, which would make the Helpline more accessible to these groups and to identify the right channels for publicising the service. Examples given were working with the Older People's Commissioner, LGBT Housing Helpline and MEIC⁷. This would involve co-ordination at a national level.
- **Demonstrating the Helpline's longer term outcomes and impact on callers:** Monitoring the aftermath of each call via longitudinal research would be the most suitable approach to identify the outcomes and impacts that the Helpline is making. However, any future research would have to overcome potential barriers in relation to information sharing and ensuring callers' anonymity and confidentiality, as well as the challenge of recruiting vulnerable research participants and following them over time.

⁷ See: <http://www.promo-cymru.org/projects/meic> . Last accessed 5th May 2014.

Recommendation five: Develop a strategic plan for the Helpline

In developing the specification for the forthcoming re-tender of the Helpline service, the WG should develop a strategic plan for the Helpline that will outline the inputs, activity and outputs required to meet the envisaged outcomes and impacts. This should be linked to a SMART logic model (including an outcomes framework) for the Helpline that would guide future monitoring and evaluation activity.

Recommendation six: Review approach to monitoring data

Linked to the above recommendation, the WG should introduce an approach to monitoring that will ensure the consistent recording and efficient delivery of information that can be used to make strategic and operational decisions.

Recommendation seven: Scope whether the Helpline can be an All Wales Referral Hub with partners

The WG should scope (a) what an All Wales Referral Hub would look like for DA/SV services in Wales, and (b) whether current resources for the Helpline are sufficient in being able to deliver this.

Recommendation eight: Reduce duplication between the national Helpline and local Welsh Women's Aid Helplines

The WG, WWA, local commissioners and agencies should jointly agree expectations and responsibilities. They should ensure the proper allocation of public funding to reduce the duplication that currently exists between the national Helpline and local WWA Helplines.