

A review of the role of Domestic Abuse Coordinators in Wales



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

www.cymru.gov.uk

Research Summary

Social research

Number: 12/2010

This review of the role of Domestic Abuse Coordinators in Wales was commissioned by the Welsh Assembly Government in January 2010. The purpose is to review and evaluate the work of the Domestic Abuse Coordinators (DACs) in Wales and to make recommendations for the future development of the role.

The research was based mainly on qualitative data from a range of respondents with working knowledge of the work of DACs. The research involved: a literature review to establish the policy context; an E-survey with Domestic Abuse Coordinators and their line managers and senior stakeholders

stakeholders from the Domestic Abuse Working Group in Wales (DAWG); follow up in depth interviews with DACs, line managers and members of the DAWG; focus groups with all respondents; and desk research to review DAC job descriptions and performance indicators.

Findings

From the literature review:

- Domestic Abuse is a priority for the Welsh Assembly Government, as outlined in the 2005 Domestic Abuse Strategy and The Right to be Safe, (2010a)
- Domestic Abuse Coordinators were introduced across England and Wales from the early 1990s and the posts have been funded directly by the Welsh Assembly Government since 2005
- The Right to be Safe (2010a) incorporates all forms of violence against women, including domestic abuse, into an overarching priority

Dadansodi ar gyfer Polisi



Analysis for Policy

- Since the introduction of Domestic Abuse Coordinators, their role has been developed at a local level with varying job descriptions and critical objectives however;
- Domestic Abuse Coordinators have a central function, which is to facilitate a coordinated partnership response to domestic abuse.
- The DAC role is important to help deliver on high level policy directives and strategies at a local level

From qualitative and quantitative field research:

- The large majority of DAC respondents have been in post for over 2 years (n=10, 62.5%). 31% (n=5) have been in post for over 5 years. 75% are in full-time posts and the majority of line managers are located within Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs)
- A large proportion of DAC time is spent organising training and awareness sessions for other organisations on the issue of domestic abuse
- A major focus of the work of DACs currently is on organising and developing the Domestic Abuse Forum and local Domestic Abuse Strategy
- There is no evidence of duplication between the work of DACs and Independent Domestic Violence Advocates
- A small proportion of time is spent by DACs in organising the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference; the time is spent on monitoring its progress and gaining information to help inform local priorities
- Job descriptions have some commonalities, particularly around ensuring that the Local Domestic Abuse Strategy is developed
- There is a need for a more consistent picture of what DACs should and should not do; in particular,
- There is a need to ensure that DACs do not personally provide services to address gaps but work towards identifying those gaps and agencies to address them
- The current level of seniority of the DAC post is felt to be

appropriate. Lines of accountability and influence are important for ensuring that actions from the local action plans are taken forward.

Key recommendations

For Domestic Abuse Coordinators and line managers

- Ensure that the DAC's work focuses on raising awareness of domestic abuse across large service areas and agendas, and identify service gaps and what action can address these
- Domestic Abuse Training activities should be developed as a partnership action and DACs should focus on mainstreaming these actions going forward, not provided by DACs themselves
- Line management should be sufficiently engaged with the work of the DACs and committed to the domestic abuse agenda
- Line managers should have a reasonable working knowledge of domestic abuse to effectively

engage with DACs in supervision.

Suggested short to medium term work objectives for DACs, resulting from this review include:

- Review the structure and purpose of the Domestic Abuse Forum
- Deliver updates on domestic abuse services and local research and proactively distribute to interested parties
- Liaise with the IDVA/MARAC Co-ordinator to identify lessons/issues arising from MARAC cases to be able to inform the Domestic Abuse Forum
- Research and develop a strategy for mainstreaming training activities
- Undertake a review of service gaps and reasons why these exist
- Develop an information plan in partnership with line manager, for identifying how and where to obtain data on victimisation and repeat victimisation

- Regularly review DAF attendance with particular reference to consistency of attendance
- Write an action plan for identifying appropriate Health colleague to attend the DAF and agree this with line manager.

Author: KM Research and Consultancy Ltd.

ISBN: 978 0 7504 5945 7

For Strategic policy officials, including Welsh Assembly Government and local area policy officials

- The performance management for DACs should be more consistently developed; thus the existing Wales 'KPIs' or 'performance standards' should include the work objectives identified in this review (see Section 5)
- Review and develop the purpose and structure of Domestic Abuse Forums (DAF), as a matter of urgency, to ensure that attending partners take forward actions arising from DAF meetings. These actions should be undertaken at a local level but monitored and guided by the Welsh Assembly Government.