

A review of preventative work in schools and other educational settings in Wales to address domestic abuse



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

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Research Summary

Social research

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The review of school based work to address domestic abuse maps and reviews preventative work in schools and other educational settings to address domestic abuse. It incorporates:

a literature review around what works well in terms of initiatives to address domestic abuse

a mapping exercise of existing work in schools and other educational settings in Wales to address domestic abuse and to examine how this fits into the curriculum being delivered in schools

identification of examples of work that is seen as good practice in projects and programmes delivered in schools and other educational settings to address domestic abuse

recommendations on the key components of a successful programme to address domestic abuse, to be delivered in schools and other educational settings.

Research methodology and sample

The methodology comprises four distinct yet complimentary stages, some of which were undertaken simultaneously.

Stage one comprised project inception activities. Stage two involved a review of literature pertaining to the rationale behind and need for Domestic Abuse Initiatives (DAIs), and to known DAIs which are currently or have previously been delivered in schools and other educational settings in Wales, the UK, and the rest of the world.

Stage three of the project involved data collection from a sample of key stakeholders, combining an electronic pro-forma with a comprehensive interview programme, as outlined below.

Stage four of the project methodology involved a review of the monitoring and evaluation data gathered from stage 3 of the research.

Dadansodi ar gyfer Polisi



Analysis for Policy

The sample

26 electronic pro-formas were completed by Domestic Abuse Coordinators, other local authority support staff, and personnel from domestic abuse prevention and support agencies.

Four pro-formas were received about DAIs which operated throughout all of the counties in Wales. The other 22 pro-formas were completed by stakeholders involved with DAIs which were currently or had been functioning in single or multiple local authorities in Wales.

In total, 42 interviews were conducted; 22 with key personnel with strategic or operational roles in each of the identified DAIs in Wales, 16 with a practical role in the DAI's delivery or coordination, and 4 with staff from schools in which the DAIs had been delivered.

Key Findings

The mapping exercise

From the electronic pro-formas, 26 DAIs were identified as operational in Wales. Of these, the four largest were the All-Wales School Liaison Core programme (delivered by

Police School Liaison Officers in every Welsh LA), the Spectrum Programme (delivered in 18 of the 22 LAs by Hafan Cymru and WWA), Keeping Safe (delivered in 17 out of the 22 LAs by SERAF, which is part of Barnardos Cymru), and Crucial Crew (delivered in 10 of the 22 LAs by Hafan Cymru and WWA). The 22 other DAIs identified were delivered in individual or groups of LAs by providers which included WWA, youth services, Barnardos Cymru, education welfare services and other LA staff.

DAIs are delivered in a wide range of settings, in addition to mainstream and special schools. These included FEIs, HEIs, PRUs, youth centres, hostels for the young homeless, a community centre, and a young offenders' institution.

The most common themes addressed in the DAIs in Wales are:

- The components of a healthy relationship
- Legal issues surrounding domestic abuse

How to spot the warning signs of a potentially abusive relationship

The different forms of domestic abuse

Exploring power and control in relationships

Gender issues and stereotypes

The sources of help and support available for those experiencing domestic abuse.

The fieldwork and literature review

DAIs are needed to eradicate domestic abuse, to raise awareness of it and of sources of help and support among children and young people. Schools have a vital role to play in this.

DAIs should be tailored to suit the age, needs, and comprehension levels of their audiences. A 'one size fits all' approach to their delivery is not appropriate.

DAIs in Wales are typically delivered to large numbers of children and young people in assemblies or as year groups.

Some DAIs are stand-alone programmes, but they are often delivered as part of the PSE curriculum. The number of sessions in which they are delivered range from one to ten sessions, and good practice is observed when follow-up sessions are held following delivery.

Practice in signposting young people to help and support for domestic abuse and related issues is generally good in Wales, but the appropriateness of the sources of help and support is an issue.

DAIs in Wales are most frequently delivered by WWA workers, other local support organisations or CYPP staff rather than schools staff. Schools staff do not have sufficient training in domestic abuse and related issues, which might lead to them dealing with disclosures incorrectly.

Schools vary considerably in terms of their attitudes to DAIs; some are unwilling to

acknowledge the extent of the problem and are far less willing to have DAIs delivered in their institutions than others.

The needs of children with ALN/disabilities are not being met through DAIs currently being delivered in Wales. The extent to which the needs of other potentially marginalised groups of pupils are being met varies between LAs and schools in Wales, but good practice in DAI delivery is observed where staff from specialist support agencies are involved in creating and delivering targeted programmes.

Factors which underpin the effective delivery of DAIs are identified as challenging attitudes which perpetuate domestic abuse, using interactive and contemporary techniques and resources especially visual and audio-visual ones, challenging gender-based stereotypes, incorporating sexual exploitation, and having the

support of senior management staff in schools.

Factors which are associated with less effective delivery included delivering DAIs too late, assuming that the perpetrators of domestic abuse are strangers rather than individuals who are known to the victim, ignoring the complexities of social networks, and DAIs not being compulsory or delivered in all schools.

Monitoring and evaluation of DAIs in Wales is not undertaken systematically. This is largely due to staffing and funding constraints.

Summary of recommendations

Key recommendations for the **Welsh Assembly Government** include:

Including domestic abuse awareness training in initial and continuing teacher training
Rolling out DAIs across all schools and a greater number and range of educational and

alternative non-educational settings in Wales

Introducing a regional support service with and for children experiencing domestic abuse in conjunction with specialist agencies

Issuing guidance to ensure that the needs of all children and young people including those with ALN, those from marginalised groups and those from different faiths and ethnic backgrounds are met in terms of educating them about domestic abuse and how to access help and support

Supporting DAI deliverers to implement more consistent monitoring and evaluation activities, which take account of the views of children and young people, including those with ALN/disabilities

Considering making domestic abuse education a compulsory part of the school curriculum in Wales.

It was recommended that **Directors of Children's Services** in Wales should:

Ensure that CYPP Plans incorporate DAI provision for all

children and young people, including those who may not attend school regularly.

Key recommendations for **Domestic Abuse Coordinators** in Wales include:

Ensuring that DAIs are delivered consistently in schools and other educational settings through working with partner agencies

Exploring the potential of alternative settings for DAI delivery

Developing free, multi-modal domestic abuse support services for children and young people.

Key recommendations for **schools** in Wales include:

Ensuring all staff receive domestic abuse training, which is provided by specialist personnel and agencies

Ensuring counselling sessions are provided after DAI delivery

Following correct procedures following disclosures of domestic abuse

Ensuring non-schools staff deliver DAIs, but that a teacher remains present during delivery to maintain discipline

Ensuring parents are informed about the content and aims of DAIs prior to delivery, and that they are encouraged to reinforce their key messages in the home.

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