

Dadansoddi ar gyfer Polisi



Analysis for Policy



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Evaluation of Ask and Act

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Policy background

Welsh Government's National Strategy on Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (2016) following on from VAWDASV (Wales) Act (2015).

National Strategy Objectives:





What is Ask and Act?

“A process of targeted enquiry across the Welsh public service in relation to violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence and a process of routine enquiry within maternal and midwifery services mental health and child maltreatment settings” (Welsh Government, 2019, p.3).

Training aimed at Group 2 and Group 3 professionals under National Training Framework (NTF) (Welsh Government, 2019), including roles within:

- Local Authorities
- Health Boards
- Fire and Rescue Services
- NHS Trusts
- Welsh Ambulance Service NHS Trust



Aims of Ask and Act

- to increase identification of those experiencing VAWDASV
- to offer referrals and interventions
- to begin to create a culture across the public service sector where the importance of addressing VAWDASV is understood,
- to improve the response to those who experience VAWDASV with other complex needs
- to pro-actively engage with those who are vulnerable and hidden, at the earliest opportunity



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Ask and Act evaluation

In September 2020, the Welsh Government commissioned Sheffield Hallam University and Sonnet Advisory and Impact to undertake the evaluation. These slides provide the methodology, key findings and recommendations from the work.

The full detail is available in the report:

Harris, C., McCarthy, L., Speake, Hulbert, A. & Clifford, J. (2022).

Evaluation of Ask and Act. Cardiff: Welsh Government, GSR report

number 2/2022. Available at: <https://gov.wales/evaluation-ask-and-act>

**Sheffield
Hallam
University**





Ask and Act evaluation

The aims of the evaluation were:

- to explore the effectiveness of the implementation of the training to date
- to explore the impact of the Ask and Act training on individuals and consequently to assess how successful it is in meeting the aims of Ask and Act
- to explore how effectively the training is contributing to the National Strategy objectives.

Methodology



Stage 1: Scoping

- 10 in-depth interviews with strategic stakeholders (4 Welsh Government, 3 Welsh Women's Aid, 3 relevant authorities)
- Secondary data identification
- Observations of training sessions
- Interim report to Welsh Government

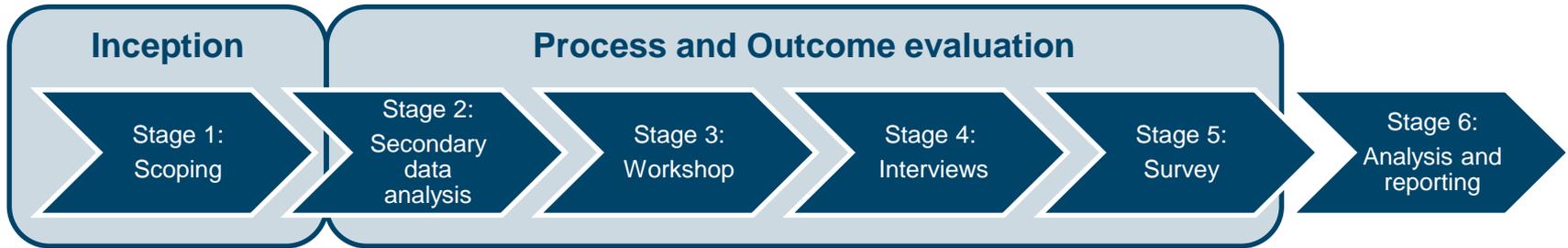
Stage 2: Secondary data analysis

- Training materials, monitoring tools and evaluation reports

Stage 3: Workshop

- Half-day online workshop with 6 Ask and Act trainers

Methodology



Stage 4: Interviews

42 in-depth interviews, including:

- 10 regional coordinators
- 24 Ask and Act trainers (16 local authority, 4 health boards, 4 third sector specialists)
- 5 Ask and Act 'learners'
- 3 training leads

Stage 5: Survey

- 382 responses
- Response rate c.3%
- 45% LA staff, 38% health boards, 12% fire and rescue, 5% third sector/specialist
- **23% were Ask and Act trainers** – 83% had attended Group 2 Train the Trainer, 42% had attended Group 3 Train the Trainer. 71% were using WWA, 21% were using NHS.
- **63% had attended awareness training** Of these 99% had attended Group 2 and 6% has attended Group 3.
- Most had attended awareness training in 2021 and therefore had done this online (73%).

Key findings – effectiveness of delivery

Challenges:

- Capacity to attend courses, complete assessments and deliver training
- Establishing and maintaining a pool of trainers – staff turnover and limited opportunities to train new trainers
- Staged rollout meaning Group 3 trainers were not yet trained
- Amount and allocation process of the Ask and Act subsidy grant

So that is a big problem because when our regional person came to us and said we've only got this funding which equates to about 12 Ask and Act courses, I've put in about 40 courses, so the rest of that our local authority needs to find the funding [...] we're all being stretched to the limit with local authority departments at the moment.

Trainer 1, non-specialist

Enablers:

- Business and admin support in coordinating training
- Clear communication of aims and objectives of Ask and Act
- Co-delivery of training with third sector specialists

They're experts in their own field as well so they're not there just to provide admin, they put their own contributions in and it's been quite beneficial because you have the expertise of another service. For example, one of the first deliveries I did was with someone who worked in the SARC [Sexual Assault Referral Centre] team so really useful in terms of when we were talking about the sexual violence side of the training, they were able to put some really good input into that.

Trainer 12, third sector specialist

Key findings – need for Ask and Act and fit with other approaches

- Ask and Act seen as an effective way of putting VAWDASV on the agenda in organisations – clear need and priority.
- Ask and Act fills a gap in terms of developing skills in ‘asking and acting’ and early intervention.
- Train the Trainer model is supported – local ownership, investment from staff and ongoing point of contact.
- Loose interpretation of priority groups for training – relevance of Ask and Act for everyone.
- Importance of continued funding and support and increases to subsidy grant.

Welsh Women’s Aid already support us to provide a full day of domestic abuse training on a multi-agency basis and they do that perhaps six times a year and they also do half day training on coercive control, we’ve had that for some time. So I think Ask and Act supplements that because it is more specific [...] I think before Ask and Act they wouldn’t have considered themselves to be the right person to ask those questions, they would have thought that was somebody else’s business.

Trainer 6, non-specialist

I think it builds, with my background we’ve always done safeguarding training, domestic abuse has always been part of that but where I’ve done it before it’s been very much focused on, obviously on the individual and the survivor, but very much from the perspective of safeguarding the child as well. This is additional, I think it’s really important.

Trainer 10, non-specialist

Key findings – monitoring and evaluation

- More challenging to collect pre- and post-training questionnaires due to move to online training – poor returns.
- Connecting feedback from learners to trainers would be helpful.
- A monitoring system for collecting medium to longer term impacts would be helpful, e.g. monitoring of referrals.
- Processes are needed to enable better data collection locally and more consistent data overall, whilst minimising the burden on professionals.



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Key findings – impacts of Ask and Act

I have increased knowledge and awareness of the signs and symptoms of VAWDASV

87%

I have increased knowledge and awareness about different forms of VAWDASV

87%

I feel more confident in knowing what to do (e.g. offering referrals or interventions) if I receive a disclosure from someone experiencing VAWDASV

83%

I feel more confident to ask appropriate questions to encourage disclosures from survivors

80%

I feel able to implement my training directly following the course ('asking' and 'acting')

73%

Source: Ask and Act survey. Base: 311-316



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Key findings – impacts on organisational culture

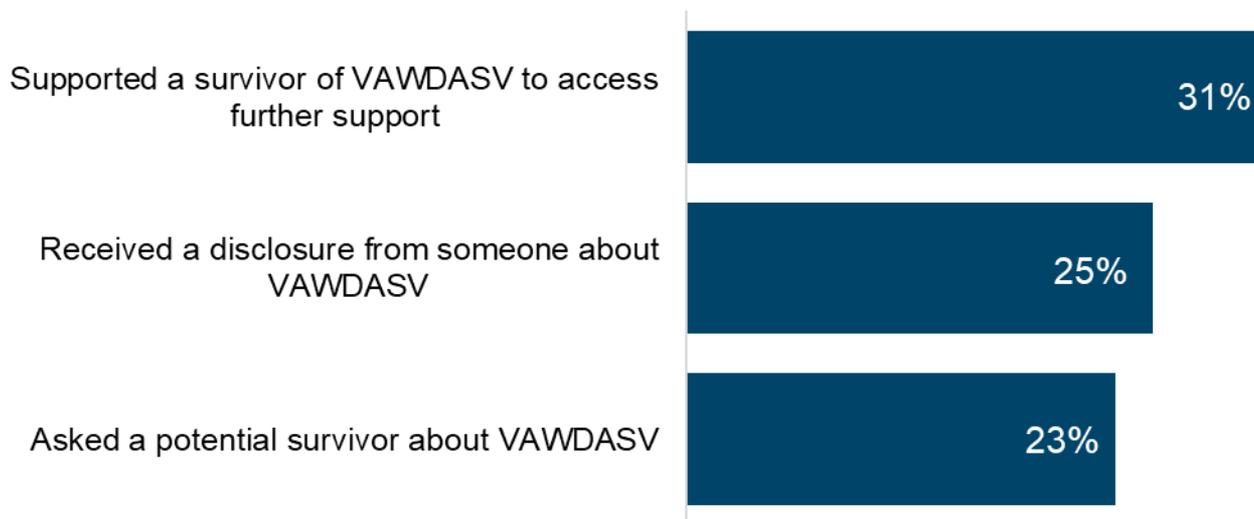
Since Ask and Act training has been rolled out....



Source: Ask and Act survey. Base: 160-263

Key findings – impacts of Ask and Act for learners

- Learners reported the training was relevant to their role (86%) and organisation (91%) and found information on ‘asking’ and ‘acting’ particularly useful.
- Significant numbers had provided direct support for survivors or potential survivors following training:



Source: Ask and Act survey. Base: 254



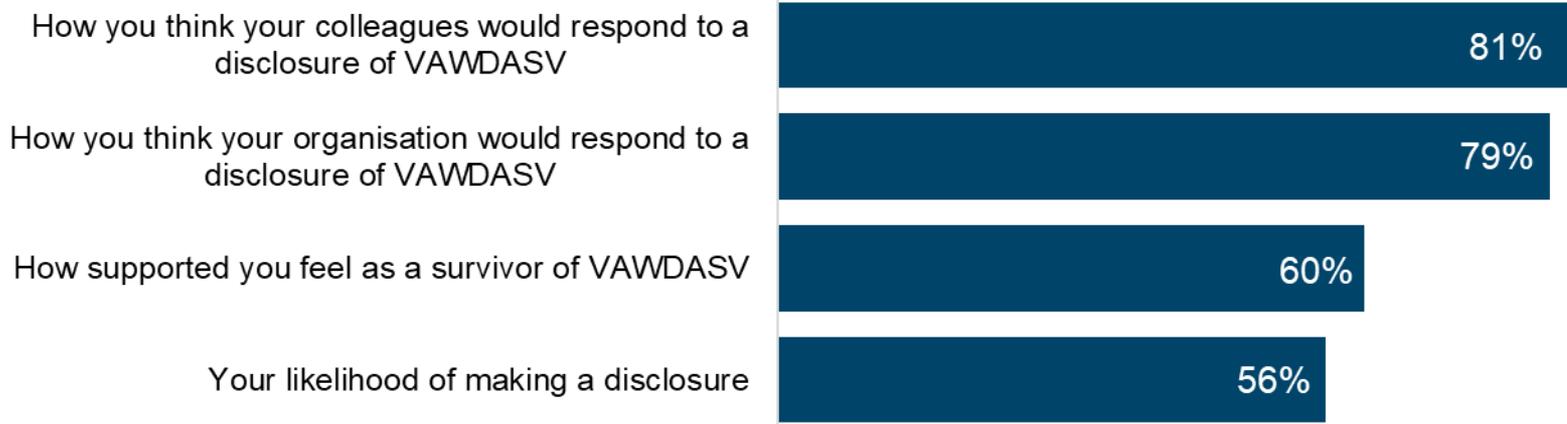
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Key findings – wider impacts

- Impacts of Ask and Act extended beyond the workplace with some applying their training in their personal lives with friends and family.
- 15% of respondents were survivors of VAWDASV themselves (48 respondents) and 4% had made a disclosure since receiving Ask and Act training (9 respondents).
- These respondents reported positive impacts of Ask and Act in the following areas...

The whole thing about Ask and Act is that it's not just for people we come into contact within our professional capacity, the service users that we come into contact with, it's for our friends, family, colleagues and I've been astounded at how many employees have been affected by domestic abuse, there's at least one or two people on every training session.

Trainer 9, non-specialist



Source: Ask and Act survey. Base: 47-48

Key findings – effectiveness of Ask and Act

Challenges:

- Training being delivered to two audience types – trainers and specialist VAWDASV
- Some gaps in training content
- Some lacking in confidence to deliver following Train the Trainer
- Uncertainty around adapting training package

To carry on doing [Ask and Act Train the Trainer], it needs to make sure that it's not just about domestic abuse, that it is about other forms of violence against women and sexual violence

Trainer 14, third sector specialist

Enablers:

- Welsh Women's Aid – continuous development approach
- Importance and value of co-delivery with third sector specialists
- Ability to adapt training package – sense of ownership

If somebody had said to me 'you're going to deliver it all on your own' I would have been like 'I don't know if I'm ready for that'. I think because we had the knowledge base from the specialist, because I'm more familiar with training in terms of that, it wasn't so bad for me, but I did feel the first couple of times are nerve-wracking'

Trainer 3, non-specialist

Key findings – impact of Covid-19

Challenges:

- Delays to start of rollout of Awareness training
- Adjustments to training for online delivery
- Interaction and engagement with training lower due to remote nature of sessions
- Concerns around online delivery of sensitive topics – mitigated through additional health and wellbeing support
- Staff capacity impacted with some redeployed due to the pandemic

So, there's very little scope for discussion, it's just us and six or eight other people and if they're quiet then it doesn't feel very participative at the moment, hopefully when we get back in a room it will be better.

Trainer 2, non-specialist

Enablers:

- Most continued delivery with many meeting their targets
- Training more widely accessible – travel time and expenses removed, leading to some increased sign-up and attendance

If anything Covid has helped to be able to reach some professionals because people can log on rather than having to travel to the training.

Regional Coordinator 5



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Recommendations

Delivery and rollout

Recommendation 1: Continued and additional support and funding from Welsh Government for relevant authorities to enable organisations to allocate greater resources (staff time for trainers and administration) to the programme and secure support from specialist partners.

Recommendation 2: Earlier communication from Welsh Government of allocations of the Subsidy Grant to allow more effective planning of resources in relevant authorities.

Recommendation 3: More flexibility for relevant authorities in accessing Ask and Act training in response to specific relevant authorities' level of demand / capacity to deliver and/or need to train additional trainers. For example, providing a rolling training programme allowing relevant authorities to book individuals onto training outside of the scheduled training programme rollout to ensure organisations can maintain a pool of active trainers.

Recommendation 4: Continuation of some online training sessions to enable greater flexibility and remove geographical barriers to attendance.

Recommendation 5: Providing online refresher courses (including Group 1) to ensure staff knowledge and confidence is maintained.

Recommendation 6: Sharing and dissemination of findings from this evaluation and ongoing monitoring with relevant authorities. Focusing on highlighting the value and importance of the programme to sectors / organisations to encourage commitment to supporting staff with accessing Ask and Act training and delivering (e.g. providing additional resource / time).

Recommendation 7: Mechanisms to allow trainers (non-specialist and third sector specialists) to review evaluation forms on a regular basis to support them with continuously developing Awareness training.

Recommendation 8: Provision of additional support mechanisms giving staff involved in Ask and Act at all levels opportunities to share learning and experiences, raise issues and ask questions (peer-to-peer and with Welsh Government).

Recommendations

Course content and training materials

Recommendation 9: Changes to the content of the Ask and Act Train the Trainer and Awareness courses, including:

- more practical examples and case studies for discussion
- a greater focus on how to ask questions, have conversations about VAWDASV, and deal with disclosures ('asking and acting')
- inclusion of workplace scenarios.

Recommendation 10: Changes to the microteach element of the Train the Trainer courses including:

- asking attendees to present a part of the course they will be delivering rather than an element of VAWDASV
- asking attendees to focus on an area covered in the first session
- allocating more time for attendees to prepare for the presentation.

Recommendation 11: Provision of additional supplementary materials to support the delivery of Ask and Act and improve take-up including:

- creation of 'role profiles' for Group 2 trainers and Group 3 'Champions' to support regional coordinators and training leads in 'recruiting' staff to those roles
- creation of short 'information leaflets' and email templates to succinctly communicate the aims, objectives and format of Ask and Act to staff at all levels to increase understanding and awareness of the programme
- more specific materials or modules for the training courses tailored to each sector / type of organisation covered by the National Training Framework.

Recommendation 12: Consultation and involvement of relevant authorities in developing supplementary materials (described in Recommendation 11) to support the delivery of Ask and Act.



Recommendations

Evaluation

Recommendation 13: Ongoing monitoring and evaluation nationally to monitor longer-term outcomes, including through development of template data collection tools (e.g. a shorter version of the survey used in this evaluation) to enable more consistent data collection and inclusion of Ask and Act on national indicators which local authorities are required to report on.

Recommendation 14: Establishing consistent processes within Welsh Government and across regions to enable better data collection within organisations, whilst minimising the burden on professionals. Improved joined-up working between relevant authorities and third sector (referral) organisations to monitor whether referrals have come through as a result of Ask and Act (e.g. adding Ask and Act as an option on 'where did you hear about us?' forms)

Recommendation 15: Further research with:

- a. relevant authorities to identify additional priority groups who may benefit from the training
- b. specialists to monitor numbers of referrals and identify ways of tracking referrals via Ask and Act (for impact measurement)
- c. survivors to explore and monitor the impact of Ask and Act on the experience of survivors as the programme is rolled out.