Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) Barriers to Engagement: Engaging Survivors from Diverse Groups

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Glossary

Acronym/Key word	Definition
Ethnic Minority Groups	All ethnic groups *except* the White British group, who share the experience of racism.
Gender Critical	The view of sex over gender, which cannot be decided or changed, opposing intersex, gender dysphoria and transitioning
LGB+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and all other sexual attractions (not including gender identities or intersex people)
LGBTQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans+, Queer; heterosexual identities would not be included (unless a heterosexual person holds another identity within the LGBTQ+ umbrella).
LGBTQI+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans+, Queer, Intersex; heterosexual identities would not be included (unless a heterosexual person holds another identity within the LGBTQI+ umbrella).
Male Survivors	Heterosexual, Gay, Bisexual and Trans men who have experienced any form of domestic abuse, sexual violence, stalking or harassment
Older Survivors	Survivors of abuse who are older. Precise age limits to be 'older' fluctuate across services, varying upwards from 55 years old
Trans+	Trans+ is used in this context as an umbrella term to describe people whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth. This includes: • Transgender (a person whose gender identity does not correspond with their birth sex)

	• Transman (a transgender person who transitioned from female to male)
	• Transwoman (a transgender person who transitioned from male to female)
	• non-binary (a person whose gender identity is not in the binary of male or female)
	• gender-fluid (a person who does not identify as having a fixed gender)
	• demi-girl/boy (a person who identifies partly, but not fully, with being female/or male)
	• and other self-defined terms.
VAW	Violence Against Women
VAWDASV	Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence

1. Introduction

1.1. This research aimed to explore what the barriers are for survivors of abuse from diverse and under-represented populations in engaging with participatory programmes, such as survivor forums. It also aimed to establish solutions for each of the barriers raised by engaging with diverse survivors as well as professional services.

1.2. Following the implementation of the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015, the Welsh Government created the National Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) Strategy 2016-2021, in which they committed to ensuring survivors' voices will inform their work, and that a sustainable, national survivor engagement framework would be established. In order to create this framework, a series of research projects were conducted, the first to establish how survivors wish to engage with Welsh Government, and the second to evaluate a pilot survivor panel.

1.3. Phase One of the project aimed to explore the opinions of engagement, barriers and what needs to be implemented in order to engage with survivors of VAWDASV who were male, LGBTQ+, disabled, from minority ethnic groups including Gypsy, Roma Travellers, or either older (65+), or younger (18-24) survivors. These data were collected through consultation responses from survivors and stakeholder services and a survey during 2017 and 2019 respectively. This project presented a series of recommendations for engaging with survivors in following stages.

1.4. Phase Two of the project then conducted a pilot of a survivor forum during 2019. While the pilot was a success, with 12 survivors initially in attendance, the survivors were a relatively homogenous group of white, heterosexual, British females (with two males initially attending with ten females). While the dominant narrative of VAWDASV is of domestic abuse perpetrated against females by males, this is not the only experience, and therefore, a survivor forum should reflect this.

1.5. Data from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) shows there are 1,600,000 female victims of domestic abuse each year; while this does represent the majority, there are still approximately 757,000 male victims reporting domestic abuse every year (ONS, 2020). The pilot survivor forum in phase two initially engaged two males, with one then dropping out. Statistically, for future engagement half the number of male to female victims should be in attendance in order to be representative of victim statistics.

1.6. The pilot was also only attended by heterosexual females. Research has shown that lesbians and bisexual women experience domestic abuse at similar rates to heterosexual women (Stonewall, 2012), which would call for a proportionately similar amount of lesbian women to heterosexual women included in engagement. Gay and bisexual men are more likely to experience domestic abuse from a partner or family member than heterosexual men, with 49 per cent reporting this (Stonewall, 2012), so these experiences were also missed from the pilot forum.

1.7. None of the survivors in the pilot disclosed being trans+; however, 80 per cent of trans+ people have reported experiencing domestic abuse (Roch et al, 2010), which shows how trans+ people are more likely to experience VAWDASV than non-trans+, and their experiences vary from the dominant narrative.

1.8. Disabled women are also 40 per cent more likely to experience Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) than non-disabled people (Brownridge, 2006), but again, only non-disabled people were in attendance at the pilot survivor forum.

1.9. By only white, British survivors being included in the pilot forum, not only were minority ethnic people's experiences of domestic abuse and sexual violence not captured, but experiences of other abuses included within VAWDASV, which are often associated with minority ethnic groups, such as so called 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation and forced marriage, were missed. Between 2010 and 2014, over 11,000 so called 'honour' based crimes were recorded by UK police forces (Safelives, 2017), while the government's Forced Marriage Unit gave advice and support to 1355 people in 2019 (Forced Marriage Unit, 2019). These statistics show the extent of these forms of VAWDASV, experiences which

need to be included in the survivor forum if a whole VAWDASV lens is adopted, opposed to a domestic abuse and sexual violence lens.

1.10.   Considering awareness of the above and acknowledging that the original survivor forum pilot was non-representative and not inclusive of diversity, the phase two report made a recommendation that the VAWDASV policy team should consider further engagement with stakeholder organisations to understand the barriers of engagement, specifically for marginalised (diverse and under-represented) survivors. Whilst engagement was conducted in phase one, the lack of representativeness following implementation of recommendations suggests there may be additional barriers. Since phase one, there has also been a global pandemic, which may have affected engagement preferences and skills.

1.11.   Therefore, before the creation of the new National VAWDASV Strategy, and finalisation of decisions on how a future survivor framework would be conducted, this report aimed to explore and understand what the barriers are for survivors of VAWDASV from diverse and under-represented populations and how these can be overcome, before presenting recommendations for future Welsh Government survivor engagement.

1.12.   In order to form recommendations, this project consisted of a literature review, as well as primary data collection with stakeholder organisations and survivors from diverse and under-represented populations. This report will first outline the methodology for the literature review in section two, before presenting thematic findings from the readings in section three. As methods and design for primary data collection were informed by the literature review findings, these will be presented in section four. Section five will present the findings from primary data collection, before section six will provide concluding comments. A series of recommendations are included in section seven, which could increase the representation of survivors from diverse and under-represented populations in future engagement.

2. Literature Review Methodology

2.1. An exploratory study is an appropriate approach to understand the barriers facing survivors from diverse populations. However, if standard processes were used to recruit and conduct this study, the survivors we need to talk to may not come forward due to the very barriers for their groups which we will be discussing. Therefore, before any data collection, a review of literature was conducted on what barriers are faced by diverse and under-represented groups, which then informed the methodological approach to the current study with diverse survivors.

2.2. To compile articles for the literature review, various terms were entered into Google Scholar and the databases Scopus and ASSIA (Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts) in May 2021 (see Annex A for search terms). To begin, general terms focussing on all diverse and under-represented groups were searched, followed by terms focussing on engaging specific groups.

2.3. The general terms searched included Social Research Participation Barriers, Research Participation Barriers, Recruiting Marginalised Groups in Research, Involving Minority Groups in Social Research and Marginalised Groups Participation Research.

2.4. Terms used to yield searches on specific marginalised groups combined the word 'researching' with each targeted group and terms which relate to them: ethnic minorities, LGBT, lesbian, gay men, bisexual, transgender, male victims, disabled people and older survivors.

2.5. Titles and abstracts for responses on the top five pages for each search were reviewed, with the full content of any article discussing barriers or solutions for engaging diverse groups in research being selected. This search yielded 87 articles. On reading the full articles, 12 were excluded as they did not cover the needed points, leaving 75 included articles. Each article was read and key points regarding barriers and summaries for diverse groups in general, or unique to specific groups were noted. These notes were then thematically analysed to determine key barriers and solutions for engaging diverse groups. These themes will be presented in section 3.

2.6. Solutions which could be implemented for each of the themes in relation to this project were proposed to the research and policy team, which then influenced the design of data collection and further steps in the project, which will be outlined in section 4.

3. Literature Review Findings

3.1. This section of the report will outline the themes which emerged from the literature review into barriers faced by diverse groups in engaging in research or participatory activities.

Mistrust of Research/Researchers

3.2. A theme which emerged from almost all of the readings on engaging diverse groups regarded mistrust of research and researchers. This mistrust stems from a history of oppression and discrimination towards diverse and underrepresented groups from society in general, as well as specific examples of abuse and experimentation from researchers.

3.3. While inclusion in these groups can still result in the population being marginalised by society, belonging in some groups historically was deemed criminal, for example, being a homosexual male was illegal in England and Wales until 1967 (Sexual Offenses Act, 1967). Even once being gay was made legal, the LGB+ society was still viewed through an 'illness' lens until the mid-1970s (Bettinger, 2010) and was subsequently stigmatised by the AIDS epidemic (Centre for AIDS Prevention Studies, 2016). Furthermore, the marginalisation of trans+ people is perpetuated in society through stigma as they can be diagnosed as mentally ill with gender dysphoria under the DSM-V. Therefore, identifying with these groups can position individuals as historically criminal or deviant or mentally ill by those in power.

3.4. While their inclusion in their groups was not historically criminal, those of minority ethnic backgrounds and disabled people have experienced experimentation at the hands of 'researchers'. For Black-Americans, a notable example is the Tuskegee experiments where participants were allowed to suffer and die with syphilis, despite a cure being available (Brandt, 1978), and disabled people have also been subjects of medical experiments (Dowse, 2009). Knowledge and stories of these experiments pass down through generations and perpetuate mistrust of research and researchers (Dancey et al, 2004; Dowse, 2009; George et al, 2014).

3.5. This is especially the case when the researcher is an 'outsider' who does not belong to the under-represented group in question (Andrews, 2005; Bettinger, 2010; Brown et al, 2012; Taylor, 2004). Potential participants also worry the researcher may not credit them/their group, may not do anything with the findings or their input, or that the research is just an academic exercise which won't change anything for their community and that their involvement is therefore tokenistic (Chaplin et al, 2018; Dancey, 2004; Delman et al, 2019; Heaphy et al, 1998; Price, 2011; Scheyvens et al, 2011).

3.6. Solutions regarding the mistrust of researchers has been presented in literature, including that researchers/facilitators should be clear and honest about intentions, motivations, expectations (of the project and of participants) and issues which may be encountered so that participants are informed from the outset of the research study (Owen-Smith et al, 2016; Vincent, 2018).

3.7. Researchers should also build trust with participants prior to engaging them in the research. This can be done through going through gatekeepers, or community leaders, or just by taking time to immerse yourself in the community before collecting data (Chaplin et al, 2018; Ellard-Gray et al, 2015; Woodall et al, 2010); however, this has the limitation of being time intensive.

3.8. Researchers should also consider personalising themselves, offering some information about themselves to extend trust to the participants (Bhopal, 2010; McClennen, 2003; Taylor, 2004; Vincent, 2018), or referring to themselves in other terms e.g. the student conducting the research instead of the researcher (Bonevski et al, 2014; Scheyvens et al, 2011).

3.9. Where possible, using a researcher who belongs to the diverse group will help with mistrust (though not eradicate it); however, objectivity may be extremely hard for a researcher who closely identifies with the diverse group, and consequently results may not be impartial (George et al, 2014). Participants may also not explain their perspective to the fullest extent as they may assume the researcher has had similar experiences, for example, saying that 'you know what it's like' (Chaplin et al, 2018) which may lead to information and perspectives being missed in research. It is also impossible for one researcher to identify with

all groups, and there will always be an aspect of the researcher's identity which does not align with participants, e.g., they may be an older lesbian, but then cannot be a young lesbian. Conversely, results may also have more impact if delivered from an outsider to the researched group as they are seen to be more objective (Henderson, 1998).

3.10.   In addition to general mistrust of authority due to their marginalised status, trans+ people also worry that research into their experiences is voyeuristic. Trans+ people are often sexualised/fetishized and have explained how they are tired of being the object of study when it does not improve their community but is just of interest to others (Chaplin et al, 2018; Owen-Smith et al, 2016).

3.11.   Described solutions for this fear of voyeurism from researchers include being knowledgeable about trans+ history and being 'trans-friendly' so that you are aware of the struggles of the movement and do not take their issues lightly (Owen-Smith et al, 2016; Vincent, 2018). Researchers also need to be mindful of the language they use, especially pronouns and labels, and each person should be asked what terms and labels they use (Vincent, 2018).

3.12.   For Gypsy, Roma and Travellers, the mistrust for researchers also stems from a general mistrust of those in authority positions, due to the only interaction with authority being negative, such as with the police (Condon et al, 2019). To resolve this, researchers should approach these communities using a gatekeeper that community trust, which will extend the trust to them.

Fear

3.13.   Linked to issues of mistrust of researcher intentions, participants from marginalised groups can be fearful of repercussions against them and their communities as a result of participation in research. This could be that they are frightened of any results being used to harm their community, which historically has been the case for some minority groups (George et al, 2014; Hussain-Gambles et al, 2004; Owen-Smith et al, 2016; Scheyvens et al, 2011).

3.14.   It could also be that they are frightened of being targeted for taking part or identified by others which may pose a risk to their physical and emotional safety

(Bettinger, 2010; Breitenbach, 2004; Brown et al, 2012; Ellard-Gray et al, 2015; George et al, 2014; Jones, 2016; Price, 2011). For LGBTQ+ people, this is exacerbated by the possibility that participating may 'out' them when they are not open about their identities (Ellard-Gray et al, 2015; Macapagal et al, 2017; Owen-Smith et al, 2016). In the case of trans+, this issue is also relevant as they could be 'living in stealth' having moved post transition to new areas where they are completely unknown (Chaplin et al, 2018).

3.15.   Participants may also be fearful of legal repercussions to them with disclosure of positions or acts, for example, they may be breaching their visa or dependent on substances (Brown et al, 2012; George et al, 2014; Njie-Carr et al, 2019). LGB+ participants have also disclosed fear over losing access to children should their sexual identity become known (Breitenbach, 2004).

3.16.   Fear and shame are barriers for male survivors as they worry about being seen as unmanly, or non-confidentiality affecting their 'image'. They also can feel shame over being abused themselves, as well as their own violent/abusive behaviour, and shame about male VAW. (Maddox et al, 2019)

3.17.   For participants from minority ethnic groups, culture and religion can be barriers to participation, "women told the providers that it was "Haram" (bad) to discuss marital problems and their "Hadith" (religious beliefs) prohibited such disclosures" (Njie-Carr et al, 2019: 9). Therefore, discussing 'marital problems' can create fear of reprisal from their community, due to these discussions not being allowed.

3.18.   Solutions to these barriers were presented in the literature, which focussed on ensuring projects, data collection and researchers are aware of and sensitive to specific issues facing diverse groups. This includes taking steps to protect identities, with strict confidentiality and anonymity where possible (Ellard-Gray et al, 2015; George et al, 2014; Macapagal et al, 2017; McClean and O'Connor, 2003; Njie-Carr et al, 2019; Price, 2011).

Recruitment and Sampling

3.19.   Diverse and under-represented groups are harder to recruit into research/participation activities because they often do not access the same spaces as majority populations, so usual strategies will not reach them (Ellard-Gray et al, 2015). For example, if posters are only put in cafes of a financially stable area, or churches, they will miss those of other faiths or those who live in poorer areas. To resolve this, researchers should use a variety of recruitment strategies and advertise the project in numerous places and ways. If access to participants is predominantly gained through gatekeepers, researchers should not just rely on these services for recruitment, but also advertise in other ways to reach others who do not access services (Njie-Carr et al, 2019; Renert et al, 2013).

3.20.   During recruitment and throughout engagement, potential participants may not identify with the label placed on their diverse status (e.g. LGBTQ+, older, minority ethnic, Ellard-Gray et al, 2015). For example, they may be aware of their sexual identity, but not identify with a specific LGBTQ+ label, or may not think of themselves as an 'older' survivor. To combat this, all recruitment and reference to participants should be clear and descriptive, instead of relying on labels which may not be identified with e.g., aged over 65, or provide many labels which would maximise inclusion (for example, trans+ including transgender, gender-fluid, non-binary, demi-girl/demi-boy).

3.21.   Terminology used can also affect engagement, for example, through appearing insensitive or incorrectly grouping diversities (Beadle-Brown et al, 2012; Burlew et al, 2019; Bury, 1996; Garland et al; 2006). For example, while this report uses terminology of 'disabled people' to acknowledge the social model of disability, there are People First movements which use the terms 'people with disabilities'. To address this, all participants should be allowed to state their own terms and labels. All participants should also be asked what their pronouns are so that correct terms can be used (Vincent, 2018).

3.22.   While it is often seen as the best strategy, random sampling is highly unlikely to reach diverse groups due to lower numbers in society (Ellard-Gray et al, 2015), unless participation is mandatory or very wide (e.g., Census data).

3.23.   Convenience sampling can help (for example, going through gatekeepers) to first access diverse groups, which can then be built upon with snowball sampling (Burlew et al, 2019; Ellard-Gray et al, 2015); however, this will often mean respondents are all similar due to friendship/familial groupings, so this needs to be considered as a limitation.

Accessibility

3.24.   Diverse and under-represented groups often need alternative accessibility requirements. These can include, but are not limited to, issues around:

- Not speaking English, or English being a second or third language, while they would prefer to converse in first languages (Brown et al, 2012; Njie-Carr et al, 2019)

- Having low levels of literacy, due to learning disabilities or cultural aspects such as leaving education early (Beadle-Brown et al, 2012; Cameron and Murphy, 2006; Condon et al, 2019; Dowse, 2009)

- Being physically disabled, such as low mobility or fatigue, or needing time for appointments (Andrews, 2005; Beadle-Brown et al, 2012; Hassouneh et al, 2011)

- Caring responsibilities, for children and others (Marcantonio et al, 2008)

- Having more pressing personal issues, such as dealing with immigration proceedings or looking for employment (Brown et al, 2012; Ellard-Gray et al, 2015)

- Having transport issues including having no access to a car, being unable to afford additional travel and venues not having disabled parking (Crook et al; 2015; Barner, 1999; Ellard-Gray et al, 2015; Owen-Smith et al, 2016)

3.25.   To address these barriers to participation and enable individuals from diverse groups to share their experiences and knowledge, projects need to be adaptable and flexible throughout, to take account of different needs. Multi-method projects

can give different opportunities for access (Aldridge, 2014; Chesser et al, 2020), but different access requirements should be designed in. For example, provide different times for contact or different methods.

3.26.   To enable those with low literacy levels or an alternate first language to engage, simple, clear language should be used, along with visual aids and large print where needed (Cameron and Murphy, 2006; Chesser et al, 2020; Dowse, 2009).

3.27.   If researchers know that the project will involve engagement with groups for whom English is not a first language, bilingual interviewers could be employed or translation services should be built into the project (Njie-Carr et al, 2019; Woodall et al, 2010).

3.28.   Participants should be reimbursed for travel costs and possibly compensated for time spent (Bonevski et al, 2014; Chesser et al, 2020; Ellard-Gray et al, 2015); however, reimbursement for time spent can be ethically troublesome due to worries of buying consent (Rugkasa and Canvin, 2011; Wilson and Hodgson, 2012). In the mix of methods provided, online engagement should be included so participants do not need to physically travel, and training on virtual methods should be provided where possible (Chesser et al, 2020).

Mortality

3.29.   A reported barrier specific to older people participating in projects is due to their advanced age, and reality of their mortality. Older people have cited that they do not want to get involved in longer term projects as they may pass away during that time or may not get to see the outcome or output of their participation (Marcantonio et al, 2008). To counter this, researchers and facilitators of participatory projects should provide some visible outcomes so older people can see their contribution; however, researchers need to be mindful of being realistic to what change they may see (for example, we will not practically see the elimination of VAWDASV in five years).

3.30.   Older people also cited, however, that while they are aware of their advanced age, they should not be treated as fragile, and facilitators should not be

overprotective as this is a barrier (Ross et al, 2005). Researchers should be clear about expectations and what will be involved for participation but do so without treating them 'like Faberge eggs' (Ross et al, 2005: 273).

Tensions

3.31.   Researchers need to be mindful that there can be tensions between the groups within LGBTQI+ which can spark conflict (Breitenbach, 2004). For example, lesbians who identify with 'Get the L Out' oppose being grouped with trans+ people.

3.32.   Researchers and activists can also be targeted or receive harassment for being involved in the LGBT+ movement (McClennen, 2003). This is also true for those focusing on the VAWDASV sector by people who associate with anti-feminism movements (Dekeseredy, 2006; Dragiewicz, 2011; Van Wormer, 2008).

3.33.   Because of this, all researchers should be prepared for conflict, against other participants, the project and the researcher. Signposting to support agencies for participants should also be built into the research and teams need to ensure support for researcher.

Bi-invisibility

3.34.   Research can often be a dichotomy between heterosexual and homosexual, with bisexuality either being ignored, or argued that it doesn't exist which makes a section of the LGB+ community 'invisible' (Barker et al, 2012; Bettinger, 2010; Price, 2011).

3.35.   To combat this, research should make distinct bisexuality from other sexualities and make sure their input isn't erased by other sexualities, othered, or belittled (Barker et al, 2012; Price, 2011).

Sex/Gender of Researcher

3.36.   Any research with Gypsy/Traveller women needs to be conducted by a female researcher due to community traditions and beliefs, and unrelated males not being allowed to spend time with females (Bhopal, 2010). In solution to this, all researchers working with Gypsy Travellers should be female.

Power Imbalance

3.37. This is not necessarily a stand-alone barrier to participation for diverse and under-represented groups, but something that permeates across all topics mentioned so far. The power imbalance between diverse groups and (an often majority identifying) researcher is evident to participants (Bochel et al, 2007; Dancy et al, 2004; Scheyvens et al, 2011; Smith, 2008). The researcher needs to be aware of this and the effects it can have on diverse participants. For example, they may share information they are not comfortable with sharing because you are in a position of power, and not because they truly consent. Researchers need to be aware of their positionality and reflexivity and the impact of this on the diverse groups they are working with and the project as a whole.

3.38. Linked to awareness of their power, researchers also need to be aware that ethical approval procedures can be a barrier to involving diverse groups, who are often seen as vulnerable physically, psychologically, culturally, and financially, and who therefore require additional levels of protection which need to be built into the project (Aldridge, 2014).

Summary

3.39. The findings of this literature review have presented different barriers which need to be addressed in conducting research with diverse and under-represented groups, including issues around trust, fear, recruitment, ethics and accessibility. Each of these barriers has been considered in devising the methods for this project, which will be outlined in section 4.

4. Primary Data Collection Methodology

4.1. As stated in section 2, because this is an exploratory study, aiming to determine what the barriers are for survivors from diverse populations in engaging in research and participatory activities, a qualitative approach is appropriate. Initially, a focus group design was planned using Microsoft Teams.

4.2. Whilst in person data collection would be best for this project, as conversations are better suited to ensure survivors' wellbeing while discussing potentially upsetting topics (e.g., being able to read body language – Gilbert, 2004), due to this research being conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic, all interaction was restricted to being virtual, to protect both participants and the researcher. Conducting research online poses a limitation for this project, as it prohibits those without relevant technology, technological skill and internet access from engaging, which can especially effect those in rural areas, poorer people and older individuals (Ofcom, 2021). However, the literature on engaging diverse and under-represented groups suggests that using virtual methods, as opposed to in-person data collection, can assist in participation as it allows participants to remain hidden and protect from shame and embarrassment (Njie-Carr et al, 2019; Tarzia et al, 2017). Additional steps were taken to ensure the wellbeing of participants during the project which will be explained in the next subsection.

4.3. In line with online methods making anonymity easier for participants, and fear of identification being a considerable barrier for diverse groups (see sections 3.14-3.17), it was decided that this project would also include an online survey which addresses the same questions as the planned focus groups, but which could be completed anonymously by survivors.

4.4. To address the issues surrounding enhanced ethical procedures when studying diverse populations (section 3.19), the researcher obtained enhanced Welsh Government security clearance early in the project. An in-depth assessment of ethical considerations via the Government Social Research checklist was also completed post literature review and reviewed monthly throughout the project with managers to ensure all steps to protect participants were being taken, whilst also taking steps to overcome barriers.

4.5. This section will outline the methods and steps taken for first the planned focus groups and the resulting interviews, before explaining how the survey was conducted, applying findings from the literature review.

Focus Groups/Interviews

4.6. To counter the fear of identification or reprisals from taking part (sections 3.14-3.17), it was initially decided that a series of focus groups would be held, with each diverse group having their own focus group. This would also allow participants to discuss barriers and solutions which are unique to their group. Whilst trans+ and LGB+ are traditionally grouped together under the LGBTQ+ banner, due to the tensions between the cohort (section 3.33), the voyeurism that trans+ individuals face (section 3.10) and trans+ experiencing different barriers to LGB+, for the purpose of this project these two groups would be separated.

4.7. As well as including survivors from the diverse groups in the project, in order to gather as much rich data as possible, professionals who work in engaging diverse survivors were also invited to participate. Professionals could then provide their insight regarding the barriers and solutions to engaging their dedicated group of diverse survivors.

Recruitment

4.8. Recruitment for the focus groups began with approaching organisations who specialise in supporting survivors from diverse and under-represented groups. Initial contact asked whether organisations would be willing to take part in the focus groups, as well as if they would share adverts for the project to recruit for the focus group and share the survey. Diversity leads within Welsh Government were also approached for assistance in contacting organisations and to review terminology and language used. Eleven services which provide support to either victim-survivors of VAWDASV or general people who identify as part of diverse populations expressed an interest in taking part in this project. These included national VAWDASV services, local VAWDASV services, services dedicated to supporting diverse survivors and services for diverse populations who are not necessarily survivors.

4.9. In line with the findings outlined in the literature review, while gatekeeping organisations were approached to assist in recruitment, additional recruitment processes were also included to improve the reach of the project, and to include individuals who may not access services (sections 3.21). The Welsh Government Live Fear Free social media pages shared a picture advert for the project (one in English and one in Welsh - Annex B) on both Facebook and Twitter, which included a link to an online page with more information about the project and an expression of interest form created on the online survey platform, SmartSurvey, to take part in the focus groups (Annex C). This advert was then also shared by other organisations and into survivor and diverse networks on social media.

4.10. The expression of interest gathered contact information, including names and preferred (and safest) mode of contact, from email, phone and address. For any potential participant who chose telephone, it stated that no information about the project would be given to anyone other than the participant to ensure their safety and confidentiality. In the event that an unexpected voice answered the call (for example, a baritone voice for a potential participant who did not select male survivor or trans+ on the expression of interest) the researcher would use a cover story to not identify the project and would attempt to contact them again at another time.

4.11. The expression of interest also collected information on which diverse group(s) potential participants identified with, as well as asking them to state what their preferred terms/label is (in line with section 3.23 regarding using participants own labels). In line with being descriptive instead of using labels which could be determined in various ways (section 3.22), older survivors were stipulated as survivors aged 65 or over in line with the phase one data collection.

4.12. To make the process as flexible as possible (section 3.27 of literature review), the researcher included a section for preferred timing for the focus groups, including selections of weekdays and weekends at different times of day.

4.13. Completion of the expression of interest demonstrated the difficulties in recruiting survivors from diverse populations, with many people abandoning the form on being asked for their name. Some survivors completed their name and

which diverse group they belonged to, and then abandoned the form on being asked for contact details. Other survivors completed a name, but nothing else (which could be due to not being from a diverse group, and therefore not being eligible, but could also be due to fear). Seven people completed the form, of which four were eligible survivors and two were professionals who wanted to take part. The fifth survivor was contacted on completion and clarified that they were not a member of a diverse population (this survivor was informed they were ineligible for this project, but that they could apply to take part in future survivor engagement). The numbers of completion rate are included in table 4.1

Table 4.1: Completion Rates of Expression of Interest

Level of Completion	Number
Abandoned before completing name	10
Only completed name	6
Completed name and diverse group	2
Fully completed by diverse survivor	4
Fully completed by professional	2
Fully completed by non-diverse/ineligible survivor	1

4.14.   Following the expression of interest being completed, the researcher contacted each potential participant to provide more information, answer any questions, and to provide documentation. This documentation included the full legal privacy notice, as well as a shorter summary of this information (Annex D), which was written in plain and clear English. This simplified document was provided with the legal document in response to findings of those with low literacy levels, learning disabilities, or not having English as a first language not understanding formal information (section 3.28). These documents were translated into Welsh and issued with English versions to those who had completed the expression of interest.

4.15.   Another document sent to potential participants included some information about the lead researcher; this included a picture, her experience, her identification as a survivor-professional and also some personal interests including that she has children. This information was provided to build trust and

rapport with participants (see section 3.8) by demonstrating the researcher's passion and knowledge in the sector, as well as personalising her. The potential participants were assured of the project being voluntary, and also that they could ask questions at any time.

4.16.   Of the four eligible survivors, one identified as having a disability, two identified as being from minority ethnic groups and the fourth identified as gender-fluid (which falls under the trans+ category), bisexual, being disabled and also being from a minority ethnic group. While this fourth survivor was not over 65 years old (in line with the categorisation in this report), she was over 55, and considered herself as an 'older survivor'; therefore, she was also asked questions regarding age.

4.17.   Due to the low response rate, there were not enough survivors for each group to warrant separate focus groups for each diverse population, and one of the minority ethnic survivors expressed a wish for confidentiality. Because of this, it was decided that semi-structured interviews would be conducted in place of focus groups, so that each survivor could share their thoughts and experiences alone with the researcher.

4.18.   This decision to conduct survivor interviews separately also meant that professionals would need to engage in interviews opposed to focus groups with the survivors present, which was not expressed as a problem by any who were engaging. If numerous professionals from one organisation wanted to take part, these were done in group/dual interviews.

4.19.   Of the four diverse survivors who expressed an interest in taking part, three of them attended online interviews with the researcher. These interviews took place throughout September 2021, using Microsoft Teams. They lasted between 30 minutes and one hour, using the record and transcribe functions as all survivors agreed to its use. The transcriptions were then checked using the recording and cleansed of personal data before the recordings were destroyed.

4.20.   Of the original 11 services which expressed an interest in taking part, interviews (either solo or dual) were conducted with seven, which included services who directly support diverse survivors and 'by and for' services

(stakeholders listed in Annex E). As with the survivor interviews, these were conducted on Microsoft Teams using the record and transcribe functions (approved by all), with recordings being destroyed once transcriptions were checked.

4.21.   In line with the privacy notice, all identifiable factors were then cleansed from the transcripts, before they were entered into MaxQDA software for thematic analysis.

Survey

4.22.   In order to widen participation in line with findings of fear and mistrust (sections 3.14-3.17) an anonymous survey was created, based on the same key questions as the expression of interest and interviews.

4.23.   Whilst this survey and its findings are important due to being able to gather information from survivors who wish to remain anonymous, issues of deindividuation and disassociation need to be kept in mind, as those who can respond in a faceless capacity can respond in a violent, harsh or antisocial manner, which would not be shared if they were identifiable (Nussbaum, 2011). Due to the nature of the project, the researcher was prepared to receive responses criticising the project itself, lines of questioning and the researcher on the grounds of insensitivity and representation, and also to receive criticisms on favouring diverse groups over majority groups (as raised in section 3.34 of the literature review). If any responses were deemed by the research team to not be answering the questions or presenting valid concerns and were just used to complain about any of the above, these would be cleansed from data analysis.

4.24.   The survey was provided in both English and Welsh on Smart Survey. It was designed by the research team and the VAWDASV policy lead to gather data on barriers and also asked some key questions surrounding the make-up of future forums. After introducing the topic and providing both privacy notices, respondents were asked to select their diverse group/s, provide their own label[1] (from section 3.23) and were then asked a series of questions on barriers faced

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[1] As the sample was the Welsh public, and not a defined group, this information was deemed not to be identifiable by the Chief Social Research Officer, and therefore in keeping with the anonymity of the survey.

and how these could be overcome (see Annex F for the survey questions). Instruction for wording of questions was taken from example questions shared throughout articles used in the literature review.

4.25. The survey was open throughout September 2021, and was shared via social media, by gatekeeping organisations, and also in community groups.

Table 4.2: Completion Rates of Survey

Level of Survey Completion	Number
Abandoned with no response	6
Only eligible survivor status (yes) completed	4
Completed diverse group and own label	7
Completed some questions on barriers but not all survey	5
Fully completed survey	8
Ineligible survivor response, ending survey	8
Fully completed by non-diverse/ineligible survivor	1

4.26. As with the expression of interest, there were a number of incomplete submissions, and there were also submissions from people who did not have lived experience of VAWDASV (on selecting this option the survey was ended). In total, 13 responses included answers regarding barriers to engagement and how they can be overcome. There were 26 abandoned, partial or ineligible submissions which were not included due to not addressing survey questions. Full completion rates are displayed in table 4.2.

4.27. None of the eligible respondents identified as being trans+ or a survivor aged 65 and over. Seven disclosed being disabled, while six were from the LGB+ community, three were from minority ethnic groups, and two were male.

4.28. The research team was also contacted via email by a member of the public to raise that those who do not speak English or Welsh could not answer the survey, which is a barrier in itself. This concern has been included with the findings regarding language which were presented in the interviews.

4.29. Of the respondents, three used language and provided answers which could be construed as inflammatory (regarding society as a whole as well as the research), which may be linked to deindividuation; however, these responses

could also stem from a passion in the sector, which would also be presented in person. These responses also included answers to the questions, so their responses have been included for analysis.

4.30. Once the survey was closed, all data was downloaded and checked that it did not include identifiable factors. Eligible data was then entered into MaxQDA with the interview transcripts, and thematically analysed.

Reflexivity

4.31. As raised in the literature review (section 3.7-3.9), the identity of researchers and facilitators can be important in engaging with diverse and under-represented groups. While the lead researcher was recruited to this project prior to discovering these findings, she does identify as a survivor of VAWDASV, which was disclosed to potential participants following recruitment to focus groups. The lead researcher also belongs to some of the stipulated diverse groups; albeit her identification in these groups was neither visible, nor publicised to participants on personal preference. None of the participants asked whether she identified with any of the diverse groups during interactions or interviews.

4.32. While the researcher acknowledges that sharing personal information with participants prior to sign up can aid with recruitment (for example, sharing the information which was given to potential participants earlier) this needs to be balanced on grounds of personal safety and preference, and also needs to be stipulated to researchers/facilitators prior to recruitment. This is especially true in researching VAWDASV due to the tensions which come with the sector (see section 3.34).

4.33. The researcher also needs to acknowledge her situational privilege in conducting this research, including benefits from her previous experience in the sector, which provided opportunities and access which may have not been available to other researchers.

Summary

4.34.   The methods of this project were led by the literature review findings, taking into account fear, trust, labelling, accessibility and recruitment and putting in steps to overcome them. Data was collected on barriers to engagement and solutions to them via online interviews with diverse survivors of VAWDASV, online interviews with professionals who work with diverse survivors of VAWDASV and also an anonymous, qualitative online survey. In total, data from seven professional services, one member of the public and 16 eligible survivors were collated and thematically analysed via MaxQDA. Findings will be presented together in section five.

5. Primary Data Findings

5.1. This section will outline the findings from primary data collection. Many of the findings support those from the literature review. Where these are similar, they are grouped under the same name; however, some findings were not presented in the literature review. The findings have all been grouped thematically into the following sections: findings from completion of data; mistrust of research and authority; fear and shame; recruitment and sampling; knowledge of diversity; acknowledging all forms of abuse within VAWDASV; the facilitator/researcher; accessibility; not wanting to remember abuse; in person versus online; and group makeup/mixed groups.

Findings from Completion of Data

5.2. Before addressing the content of data collection, there are interesting findings regarding preferred modes of engagement from diverse and under-represented communities within completion of primary data. There was more engagement with the anonymous survey than with the expression of interest and subsequent interviews, which supports literature findings around fear and mistrust of research, and therefore the desire for anonymity, and accessibility, as participants can complete a survey more flexibly than an interview/focus group.

5.3. In this project, there were high rates of LGB+ and disabled participants who completed the anonymous survey, compared to other diverse groups, such as minority ethnic groups. The anonymous survey was also the only method through which male survivors engaged throughout the project. This supports the literature review suggestions of anonymity being favoured by those who are frightened of being outed, or shame of being identified as a male survivor. Higher levels of survey completion by disabled survivors also supports the need for surveys as their completion is more flexible, as well as being anonymous.

5.4. However, no-one over 65 completed the survey or interviews, with only one over 55 engaging in the interviews. This demonstrates how online recruitment and methods can exclude older survivors, which needs to be addressed to engage with this group.

Mistrust of Research and Authority

5.5. Survivors and professionals expressed concerns around the research itself as being a barrier for diverse and under-represented groups engaging in participatory activities and research. The concerns expressed under this theme include: worries of tokenism, worries of institutional racism, previous negative experience with research or services, and lack of trust, culminating in a need for clear intentions and wanting to see findings published and used.

5.6. The first component of this is that survivors from diverse and under-represented populations worry that their involvement has been tokenistic;

> Survivor; interview - 'I sometimes wonder if I've been a tick box token gesture. It's just get her in here because she's coffee coloured and you know she ticks that ethnic minority box. We've covered that aspect'

> Survivor; survey - 'LGBT+ is just tagged in at the end to SEEM inclusive'

5.7. Diverse survivors can feel like they were only included in projects to give the perception of representation, rather than their identities and opinions being valued, which stops them from wanting to engage. This supports findings from the literature review on tokenism of inclusion.

5.8. A second issue is the worry of institutional racism from projects;

> Survivor; interview - 'you know I mentioned [group based on diversity], their constant battle is with Welsh Government to be heard to be acknowledged. One of the women [from the group] said, I felt like crying when she said it, she said they see a headscarf coming along and they just go into blank mode'

> Service; interview - 'I think institutional racism is absolutely a thing in the government and in the police'

5.9. Survivors from minority ethnic groups will not want to engage with Welsh Government and other authorities for fear of prejudice and discrimination. This can be based on perceptions that they are institutionally racist and corroborates accounts in previous literature, where minority groups have been victimised by authorities due to them being part of certain groups.

5.10. Where diverse survivors had previously had negative experiences with research, this could also form a barrier to engagement,

> Survivor; survey - 'having felt similar activities were not right for me or had made no difference'

> Service; interview - 'negative responses from agencies. So if people have had done in the past and haven't been helped or they felt judged and that that could just have a legacy.'

5.11. Where participants felt that previous experiences had been discriminatory, or tokenistic, this has influenced them not to engage further, which shows the importance for addressing these barriers, as one negative experience may stop a diverse survivor from further contributing to the field.

5.12. Ultimately, each of these points leads to a lack of trust in researchers and services;

> Service; interview - 'there is a long history of not particularly person-centred research around trans+ lives and identities. And so for anyone who understands that background in how trans+ people have been represented within certain bits of academia, I think it is fair to be concerned about how your voice might be presented within that'

> Service; interview - 'I don't think there's any trust'

5.13. This supports the literature review that trust needs to be built with any participants from diverse and under-represented populations so that they will be willing to take part in any activities.

5.14. One such way that trust can be built is by any engagement having clear intentions;

> Survivor; survey - 'explain why you're conducting the research and what you intend to do with the results, what you hope to achieve'

> Service; interview - 'It needs such a clear like cut agenda. The objectives need to be set ahead of time'

5.15.   This would explain to participants what is realistically expected of them and to come from the project, and could evidence that their inclusion is not on a tokenistic basis, which will not influence findings or practice.

5.16.   This trust in the project can also be built by sharing and publishing any findings and reports with the survivors who take part;

>   Service; interview - 'people are getting asked and then it kind of goes off into nowhere and you never hear about it ever again'

>   Survivor; interview - 'nothing is done with it and you know I asked to see things afterwards and nothing happened there, you know.'

5.17.   By sharing any findings and published documents with participants, this can validate their contribution as they see the impact that they have had in a process.

Fear

5.18.   As in the literature review, primary data also demonstrated that fear is a barrier in engaging survivors who are from diverse and under-represented groups. These worries of fear include: fear of reprisal from community; fear of an unwanted service response; fear of reprisal from sharing own views; fear of racism; fear of being outed; and of voyeurism, which can be combatted through anonymity and confidentiality.

5.19.   A key barrier of fear cited by ethnic minorities was the fear of reprisal from their community;

>   Survivor; interview - 'if you are from that ethnic background, you can almost guarantee people will be watching what you're doing. Then there will be people inside the Welsh Government buildings who will report back on what they're seeing. The anonymity is the safety of women'

>   Survivor; interview - 'right now, as I'm speaking to you now, I am in their own minds, I am very bad… you see the community that I am coming from and none of them is my family member. I just met them here because we are from Africa but yet they will make life unbearable for me because of this'.

5.20. This supports the literature of culture sometimes being a barrier for minority ethnic groups, as communities have their beliefs on what should and should not be discussed.

5.21. Survivors can also fear receiving an unwanted response from services if they take part in projects;

> Service; interview - 'that puts people off … fear of the impact that will have, you know, potentially social services getting involved if they have children'.

5.22. By taking part in participation projects, and talking about the abuse they, and perhaps their children, experienced, survivors can fear having services involved with them when they do not wish for this. While all steps can be taken for confidentiality, this cannot be ruled out, as if participants share that there is current risk to the child, safeguarding steps need to be taken. However, this should be explained to participants at the beginning of processes, and if other agencies need to be informed, the participant should be informed of this, and it should not just be sprung on survivors.

5.23. One diverse survivor also stated how she was afraid of sharing her own views in VAWDASV research;

> Survivor; survey - 'I face the risk to my livelihood if my employer were aware of GC [Gender Critical] views so I cannot publicly express my views'.

5.24. If providing opinions for research or engagement projects risks a participant's livelihood, this will act as a barrier, suggesting anonymity may prevent any negative backlash from engagement.

5.25. Minority ethnic survivors raised concerns of being exposed to racism from other participants in engagement projects and how this has previously happened;

> Survivor; interview - 'you'd get the other survivors saying the only reason she's here is because [of her race]. And then you get the other survivors going [slowly, pronouncing each word] What. Brings. You. Here?'

> Survivor; interview - 'all it is, is the colour of my skin. Then I'm a scapegoat, oh she doesn't really understand'

5.26. This shows that dealing with institutional racism is not enough to make survivors from minority ethnic groups feel welcome in projects, but that racism across all participants needs to be addressed for fair and non-discriminatory engagement.

5.27. As well as fear of racism, survivors also worry about being labelled as a perpetrator if they disagree with others;

> Survivor; interview - 'if you don't fit in with what others say or do you're labelled then, they say you're a perpetrator, or you've learned behaviour from a perpetrator'.

5.28. This fear of being labelled a perpetrator may stop survivors engaging in projects, even if they attend, especially where their experience varies from that of the majority in the room.

5.29. Those who are part of the LGBTQ+ community may also fear being outed by engaging with any projects;

> Service; interview - 'fear of being outed might not be the lived experience of everybody or even most. But yeah, you're certainly going to miss a proportion of people'

5.30. As the quote states, while this may not be an issue for all, it is a barrier for some in the diverse community.

5.31. In a similar vein, people can also be fearful of being outed as a survivor, specifically with male survivors who feel shame at being victimised;

> Survivor; survey - 'men find it hard to discuss feelings and often feel ashamed if they are a survivor'

> Service; interview - 'older men as well, who have said that they felt that they were very strong, they were protectors, though this is quite an old fashion attitude to have, but that they're protectors and suddenly they

are in a situation where they feel vulnerable that there's lots of shame and embarrassment about that'

5.32. This shows how societies view of masculinity makes males feel ashamed when their experiences deviate from the traditional strong protector, or if they show emotions, which are not in keeping with the traditional view.

5.33. There is also the fear of voyeurism for trans+ people;

> Service; interview - '[society] want to hear the nitty gritty facts about it, so with trans women like oh what happened and then we justify it often, for example saying that's because you didn't tell him that you were trans'

5.34. This could be a barrier as they would be put in a place to have to defend their experience of victimisation because of their identities.

5.35. Possible solutions for each of these are to ensure confidentiality of participants;

> Service; interview - 'but some people might just leave that one to one as well, rather than just groups'

5.36. Or to offer methods which are anonymous;

> Survivor; interview - 'one of the biggest things is the anonymity side of it'

5.37. This would guarantee that participants will not suffer personal repercussions from their engagement with the project.

Mortality

5.38. Within the literature there was acknowledgement that older people do not want to get involved with projects as they do not have much longer to live. Whilst this was expressed by a service for older survivors;

> Service; interview - 'I've unfortunately witnessed someone very much being outspoken about that, being very outspoken about the fact that 'we've been waiting ages for changes here and I feel like it's I'm not going to see it in my lifetime' … and they didn't'

5.39. It was also raised by both the service, and the 55+ survivor that some older people engage more because they have less time;

> Service; interview - 'people going 'I haven't got much time I'm going to get it, I'm going to make sure that what I've got, I'm gonna put it to use''

> Survivor; interview - 'I'm not dead yet'.

5.40. Therefore, whilst mortality may be a barrier for some, for others it is a motivator for engagement.

Recruitment and Sampling

5.41. As with the literature review, recruitment and sampling were raised as potential barriers to including survivors from diverse and under-represented communities in research and engagement projects. Issues within this include: the acknowledgement that random sampling will not select a representative sample; the potential of using existing survivor forums; using gatekeepers for recruitment; using social media for recruitment; the need for face to face recruitment; using a mix of recruitment processes; often including the same sample; and the need to recruit sensitively.

5.42. While previous sections have stated that diverse and under-represented survivors are worried about being included in a tokenistic manner, survivors acknowledged that random sampling would not work;

> Survivor; interview - 'Yeah, how would you do with it though? You can't drop names in a hat. You won't win there',

5.43. This is because probability of random selection from the whole population means under-represented groups would be missed in selection.

5.44. While the services included in this project were pleased at Welsh Government commitments to involve survivors centrally in their work, it was shared that instead of creating a new group for survivors, that existing survivor's groups should be utilised;

Service; interview - 'you know community group's communities already have Survivor forums. And even if they don't class it as that, they are there'

Service; interview - 'why put the pressure on you to build trust with communities in Cardiff in six months' time when someone has been doing that work in their community their whole lives. Just saves time and makes sense, but obviously everyone has to come together and like collaborate absolutely'

5.45.   As well as utilising existing groups for practical reasons, services also stated that by accessing existing survivor forums for diverse and under-represented populations, diverse communities can be included, but their unique experience of abuse will be protected;

Service; interview - 'how they can sort of be part of the forum, but also be protected by their 'by and for' ness that they have created themselves'.

5.46.   This would mean that participants have access to their tailored service, and would also aid in recruiting diverse survivors into a wider, Welsh Government panel.

5.47.   Both survivors and services cited the importance of using gatekeeping organisations for assistance in recruitment;

Service; interview - 'we often go through our members, you know, getting them to circulate it on our behalf, 'cause it reaches a wider network'

Survivor; interview - 'meetings with a group of minority leaders'

5.48.   For services, using members is beneficial as more exposure is gained, while for survivors, gatekeepers were important as a point of safety and community acceptance of the project.

5.49.   Recruitment through social media was raised by services as beneficial in reaching diverse survivors;

Service; interview - 'getting people to tweet on Twitter as well'

5.50.   However, they also cited that this can become a main source of recruitment which may miss some diverse groups;

> Service; interview - 'unfortunately, as organisations we rely a lot on social media and social media is not gonna capture those people that you would want it to speak to'.

5.51.   This shows that whilst social media is a useful tool for recruitment, other methods are also needed.

5.52.   Face to face recruitment was cited as being important for diverse communities, specifically by minority ethnic participants;

> Survivor; survey - 'if you want targeted research in a specific population you need to go out to those populations, not send out an on-line questionnaire via a government bulletin'

> Service; interview - 'in my sort of community, more traditional forms of engagement are sort of key, so like community centres, being in hubs and things like that and having a sort of community feel'.

5.53.   Whilst this was not possible for this project due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the participants have raised that this is a more appropriate recruitment tool for projects which would like to engage survivors from diverse and under-represented communities.

5.54.   From the above points on using gatekeepers, online methods and face to face recruitment, a mixed approach would reach the most diverse and under-represented survivors;

> Service; interview - 'there has to be a range of methods',

5.55.   This could increase representativeness of subsequent projects.

5.56.   However, a problem with recruitment of diverse survivors is that it is often the same people who engage with projects;

> Service; interview - 'mainly we go through sort of 50 plus forums which you'll be aware of anyway. But even from those groups it it's the same

people who will stand up and say yes, I've got the time and I want to do that'

Service; interview - 'how do we get hold of people who aren't the normal voices?'

5.57.   While listening to experiences of the same people constantly can provide some diverse experiences, it misses the experiences of others, which may widely vary, meaning that steps will need to be taken to vary who is included in forums.

Knowledge of Diversity

5.58.   Another theme which is a barrier for engaging survivors from diverse and under-represented communities in participatory projects regards knowledge of diversity, including: lack of knowledge of diversity; societal attitudes; other participants' knowledge and attitudes; and combatting this with training.

5.59.   Lack of knowledge of diversity in the design of the project, or in staff members was cited as a barrier;

> Survivor; survey - 'lack of understanding from lack of knowledge or just thoughtlessness'

> Service; interview - 'you know it's not intentional, but they just don't know'

5.60.   Knowing that they may be encountered by ignorance can be a barrier, as if this arises, participants either need to educate on the error, or endure it, which can be tiresome.

5.61.   Another barrier regarding knowledge of diversity comes from societal attitudes,

> Service; interview - 'attitudes are a major barrier, one of the biggest for disabled people; people that have that sort of medical model view of disabled people. So in what I mean by that is disabled people are the problem and you know the fact that they live with health conditions and impairments, that's the main focus and you know that's problematic for people'.

5.62.   These attitudes are encountered daily by diverse survivors, and if they are continued through projects then they can serve as a barrier to engage, as disabled people do not want to be positioned as a 'problem'.

5.63.   Participants also cited other survivors' knowledge and attitude toward diversity as a barrier to engaging;

> Survivor; interview - 'I said sorry autism, I'm using the autism card here. You're gonna have to reword exactly what you just said in that sentence, 'cause I'm hearing something completely different and I'd like to understand it. And somebody will say, Oh yeah, we're all autistic. Or, you know we've all got autism or we're all on the spectrum. Like that is really dismissive, you know.'

5.64.   By dismissing their experiences, diverse survivors can feel 'less worthy' to be attending engagement events.

5.65.   To counter these, participants raised that equality and diversity training;

> Service; interview - 'have that equality and diversity training and most definitely come to understand each other and to respect each other'

> Service; interview - 'so you know it's just opening people's mindset to some of that'

5.66.   Awareness of numerous diverse community issues would for all facilitators and participants may be beneficial. This also supports having facilitators who are part of diverse groups, as they will already be aware of some diverse approaches.

Acknowledge All Forms of VAWDASV

5.67.   Another barrier raised by survivors from diverse and under-represented populations is that their experience of abuse differs from the dominant narrative of intimate partner male to female violence, and that this is often not recognised or acknowledged by services, researchers or other survivors. The issues raised were: inclusion of familial violence; a male survivor and female perpetrator; survivor and perpetrator both being female; experiencing abuse from a partner or

family member who is also a carer; hierarchies of abuse and also the appropriateness of labelling abuse.

5.68.   One diverse survivor shared her experience of engaging following familial violence;

> Survivor; interview - 'I keep bringing in this wild card with my abusers are my sisters and the room goes quiet 'cause it's like, no it's going to be an ex-husband or an ex-partner and I'm like well where are the groups for me? I've given up even looking for them 'cause they don't exist.'

5.69.   This shows how survivors of familial violence feel excluded from discussions as their experience is not what is expected due to the dominant narrative.

5.70.   This is also the case regarding male survivors who had female perpetrators;

> Survivor; survey - 'getting people to realise all genders are capable of abusing the other'

5.71.   This from a male survivor suggests that he has encountered those who do not realise that his experience of abuse can happen, which can silence their experiences.

5.72.   As with the above male survivor, a service also raised an anecdote regarding a lesbian survivor, and how she left a participatory group as she felt excluded by all perpetrators being presented as male;

> Service; interview - 'she would have felt well this you know they're not talking about my situation, so this is why I'm not going to engage'

5.73.   While acknowledging only the dominant narrative of female survivor and male perpetrator favours the majority, those whose experience varies can feel excluded from discussions.

5.74.   For disabled or older survivors whose perpetrator partner was/is also their carer, this is often not acknowledged as an aspect of VAWDASV which needs to be included in survivor forums;

Service; interview - 'for the disabled community it's again the lack of keeping them in mind and not understanding how it looks like for people with disabilities. And for example sort of carer abuse not being recognised at all'

5.75. This links with the lack of knowledge around diversity and societal attitudes, where disabled people are viewed as a problem and any carer unable to be viewed as abusive, which then fails to acknowledge carer-partner abuse as an aspect of VAWDASV to be included in engagement.

5.76. In survivor engagement, hierarchies and competitions over severity of abuse where survivors compare whose experience was worse were also reported;

Service; interview - 'because the type of abuse of women experience, the male's experience then would be diluted as lesser and less worthy, which might alienate a man even more'

Service; interview – 'We don't need to just keep comparing all the time, do we? Like this experience has been a bad experience in my life, maybe it hasn't been as severe or ongoing or you know, like a threat to life for example. But it's still a bad experience'

Service; interview – 'like [when] minoritised people talk about their experiences, it almost feels like it's a competition for other people who haven't experienced those barriers'

5.77. This can be detrimental for diverse survivors as the dominant narrative of intimate male-on-female violence is deemed more life-threatening and fearful than other forms of VAWDASV. With these diverse survivors feeling ineligible for survivor engagement due to not conforming to the dominant narrative, it suggests that spaces need to be provided where alternate experiences can be shared freely.

5.78. Participants also raised how forums are not an appropriate place to decide what should and should not be labelled as abuse and who is allowed to be there;

Service; interview - 'You're not in this space to label what abuse is and what isn't, and even if we don't have the name for it doesn't mean that it mattered less it's it doesn't mean that it's not abuse'

5.79.   These quotes show how diverse survivors worry that if their experience is different to the dominant narrative, other survivors will belittle their survivor status or experience of abuse during any sessions, which can stop them from engaging with projects and discussions. This also supports the case for separate spaces where alternate experiences and opinions to the dominant narrative can be shared to aid in elimination of VAWDASV.

The Facilitator/Researcher

5.80.   The literature review raised the importance of the facilitator/researcher in engaging with diverse and under-represented populations, which was supported by the findings of this project. This section includes: being a survivor-professional; identifying with a diverse group being preferred, but not necessary; bad facilitation; gender of facilitator; and considerations over the facilitator sharing personal information.

5.81.   The first point about the facilitator or researcher, from both services and survivors, was that they should be a survivor-professional, someone who has lived experience of VAWDASV themselves;

Service; interview - 'without a doubt you need that you need someone and I think you know from my own experience, when I've been speaking to people who've been going through domestic abuse, and I tell them that I'm survivor, instantly you feel like there's a oh, OK, yeah, you might understand some of this, you know? I definitely think you get far more from people and they feel far more relaxed'

5.82.   This links to findings on increasing trust with participants, as they will know more about the facilitator and motivations in the field.

5.83.   As well as identifying as a survivor-professional, survivors also raised that it is beneficial if the facilitator identifies with a diverse group;

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> Service; interview - 'I think having more people from more diverse backgrounds working as professionals is a way that's going to reduce those barriers, because when you see somebody like you, you think I can do it'

> Survivor; survey - 'have people who are members OF [sic] the different communities to engage with those in the communities you want to talk to'

5.84.   This suggests having diverse facilitators would encourage other survivors from diverse groups to engage with projects, and signal that the group will be accepting of them.

5.85.   However, as raised in the literature review, it is not possible for facilitators to be able to identify with all diverse groups at once, or practical to have one facilitator who identifies with numerous groups. One service expressed how a group facilitator worried about not identifying with all populations in her group, but how this did not become a problem;

> Service; interview - 'I don't think we have to hold that representation in us as long as we don't pretend that we know more. And I think that's the way or not a way around it. It's just the way forward really I think, and we've found that to be really successful'

5.86.   This shows that even if a facilitator from a diverse group is favoured, it is not needed as long as the facilitator is open to learning about different opinions and experiences.

5.87.   One survivor spoke about a previous experience of bad facilitation of a charity engagement program, where the facilitator had no training or knowledge on the group she was working with, which had negative effects on some participants. This survivor stated;

> Survivor; interview - 'it really put me off doing another group or another activity, especially if I'm feeling like I'm walking into something where this person is supposed to be in charge has got no clue of the audience that she's dealing with'

5.88.   This emphasises that facilitators should have knowledge of abuse and diversity to adequately engage diverse survivors.

5.89.   Regarding the gender of facilitators, females were suggested for both female and male survivors;

> Service; interview - 'I just felt like my voice was neutral enough for them. I think sometimes we have an impression of someone who we want to help us and that's kind of like the woman voice'

> Service; interview - 'for men I really don't think [having a male worker] matters, the reason being we've got a female worker and it's never been an issue'

5.90.   However, if males are present with female survivors, this can be detrimental to their feelings of safety;

> Service; interview - 'we have one male worker in our building and you actually notice women's body language change as they heard his voice down the corridor'

5.91.   The 'by and for' LGBTQ+ service did, however, state that while females would be best to facilitate most groups, that trans+ survivors would prefer a trans+ facilitator;

> Service; interview - 'I would always encourage people who have lived experience [of being trans+] to be the ones that are doing that work'

5.92.   This means they have more knowledge of their experiences and participants will be more open.

5.93.   Sharing personal information was also found to be beneficial as otherwise the dynamic between facilitator and participants can seem imbalanced;

> Survivor; interview - 'it seems really unfair, really one sided. I have been in meetings and groups and I'm in a room with someone, and I'm talking to somebody and I'm sharing my, you know and being really vulnerable and open about it and think well, hopefully you won't cause me any harm with

this and confidentiality stays and anonymity stays. And there's so much trust from the person like from me'

5.94.   One survivor fed back on the information shared by the lead researcher for this project, and how this encouraged her to take part in the project;

> Survivor; interview - '[about the researchers bio] Absolutely yeah. Especially saying you've got children. Actually I like that bit. It's just making you more human and more approachable and where I like you and I like your picture, and the colour of your hair. So all of those sort of things I thought, OK, I'll give this one a go'

5.95.   This supports the literature review findings, where researchers extending trust and giving some personal information takes steps to re-balance the power dynamic between researcher and participant.

5.96.   However, while sharing information can benefit trust building, some staff may not feel comfortable sharing personal details due to separation of personal and private spheres;

> Service; Interview - 'my thing is my home life is very separate to work'

5.97.   As well as staff choosing not to share personal details, the safety of staff members in sharing information also needs to be considered;

> Service; Interview - 'I don't share that information. I think it's risky anyway with this line of work, because then you've got the risk of them going back to the perpetrator anyway, then knowing far too much about you'

5.98.   Therefore, while it can be beneficial to share information with participants to improve trust, this needs to be balanced with the safety and autonomy of potential facilitators/researchers.

Accessibility

5.99.   Accessibility was cited as a barrier to engagement for survivors from diverse and under-represented populations, including: accessibility of physical venues; good transport links and arrangements; literacy; language barriers; asking about

requirements; including disabled people in the design of projects; digital exclusion and how this is changing with the pandemic; digital means reducing geographical barriers; and training for using virtual means.

> Survivor; survey - 'Venues not [being] accessible'

5.100. This stops disabled survivors engaging with survivor projects. As well as having facilities such as lifts and ramps, buildings also need additional facilities to be accessible for disabled survivors;

> Service; Interview - 'the RNIB (Royal National Institute of Blind People) would say the lighting, the colour schemes, the contrasts all that sort of thing needs to be considered in terms of the environment. Even the fire alarms need to have flashing lights for somebody who's hearing impaired'

5.101. An autistic survivor explained how factors of the room can affect her;

> Survivor; Interview - 'the room is really important to me. I really need to have windows in a room that I go into 'cause I do a lot of dissociation like looking out windows. It calms me down and I've always done that since I was little. And it needs to be well ventilated'

5.102. Without each of these factors, and others, being considered, the venue is not accessible and therefore a barrier for disabled survivors.

5.103. As well as the end location being accessible, good transport links or arrangements are also needed to encourage engagement from diverse and under-represented communities;

> Service; Interview - 'you have to think about public transport if you're having people come to a physical space' and 'particularly if someone's vulnerable or older. Are you gonna suggest they get on a 20 minute bus ride if that's not something they normally do?'

5.104. Choosing any physical venue needs to include consideration of transport, including availability of disabled parking spaces and being close to public transport links, which can enable diverse survivors to physically attend meetings.

5.105. Levels of literacy and the formats of information can also be barriers for diverse survivors;

> Service; Interview - 'accessible formats, so people know where to find that information, but also having it in range of formats like easy read for people, learning difficulties or large print or Braille, if somebody needs that or even audio'

> Service; Interview - 'people who are dyslexic who said that they found it quite difficult to follow along if we have videos with subtitles and things like that, and also we work with journals and quite long written material'

5.106. Also some people who have learnt English as an additional language can understand the language but not read or write;

> Survivor; Interview - 'sometimes they also feel shy because the person can understand what you saying but the person cannot write so it makes that person feel shy'

5.107. This can affect willingness to engage where there will be the possibility of reading or writing.

5.108. Language barriers were cited as an issue for minority ethnic survivors;

> Survivor; interview - 'language, definitely'.

5.109. However, services explained how there are problems with providing translation including: the practicalities of group discussions;

> Service; interview - '[a survivor] spoke very little English and before we even engaged we tried to find ways that we could make the group accessible for her, but I found it really difficult just to even find the possibilities to make it accessible. In theory, there are things there, but in practice it would have been really difficult to have that available'

5.110. The dangers of supplying a translator who knows the survivor or who is part of the perpetrating community;

Service; interview - 'obviously that's the biggest danger with using interpreter is making sure we kind of go further afield'

5.111. There can also be issues with errors in text translations;

Service; interview - 'when we translate, we don't keep [context changes] in mind, so we just use sort of formal translators. But where there's no one in our service who speaks these languages, we're releasing content that doesn't make sense. So for example, we're making animations, and so far we have about 14 scripts and 12 have come back [from proofreading] with changes needed, even though we've used a service to translate it. And that wouldn't be picked up if we didn't really identify the need to [check them with native speakers]'.

5.112. Disabled people should also be included in the design of any project to ensure all aspects of accessibility have been addressed from the beginning;

Service; interview - 'disabled people need to be involved in that design, so it's involving disabled people, disabled organisations in what is required rather than adding it on afterwards as an add on, you know, it doesn't work like that. It needs to be fully inclusive from the start'

5.113. This would make disabled survivors feel more wanted in engagement, instead of as an addition to non-disabled survivors.

5.114. It was also raised that it should always be asked in initial engagement if potential participants have any accessibility requirements;

Service; interview - 'quite often people fail to ask disabled people what they require and then just expect they will turn up, you know? So people need to be asking the question up front. You know, what are your access requirements? Do you require any support in order for you to participate?'

5.115. This way, if there are any accessibility requirements which have been missed in the design of the project, they can be addressed before survivors begin substantive engagement with the project so that access barriers can be removed.

5.116. Digital inclusion and accessibility can pose a problem for virtual designs, such as this project;

> Service; interview - 'digital exclusion was a really big thing as well. So it was like if you're gonna have it an online consultation it won't reach them. Even if it's just specifically for the Gypsy Roma traveling community'

> Service; interview - 'not everyone has access to technology and they might not have the finances to fund a laptop or even pay for their broadband. Or they could even live in quite rural areas that have very poor broadband so you know people are still experiencing barriers in terms of being fully included because they can't get online'

5.117. However, since the Covid-19 pandemic, digital exclusion has started to change;

> Service; interview - 'digital exclusion has dropped because actually with things like Zoom and having to keep it, people want to keep in touch with family that was far away, that couldn't see anybody and started to use technology more and families introducing their older relatives to how to stay in touch.'

5.118. There have also been reports that the accessibility of some populations has actually improved with the switch to online;

> Service; interview - 'it's what a lot of people with disabilities talked about how they could finally participate in society, because we all shifted online'

5.119. This is because they do not need to make physical arrangements to attend sessions.

5.120. Using digital means also reduces geographical barriers;

> Service; interview - 'that's one thing about Zoom and online teams, whatever is that you could get a meeting together and get people from North Wales in attendance or wherever you are because they can dial in, and so that's better'

5.121. This assists in closing the North-South divide in Wales. Therefore, while using digital methods for engagement can be a barrier for some, it can also improve accessibility for others, so a mix of methods may widen engagement opportunities.

5.122. However, if virtual means are chosen due to increasing accessibility for some diverse populations, knowledge cannot be assumed,

> Service; interview - 'I think you can't just set up a meeting and send a link out and go there we go. It's all the prep work before, isn't it?'

5.123. Therefore, upskilling and providing technology was cited as a solution to some digital exclusion,

> Service; interview - '[provision for] digital champions, so they actually trained our volunteers to be able to train older people on using iPads and being able to use Zoom and that kind of stuff'

5.124. Alternate means could also being suggested to access the software, so that more people can engage;

> Service; interview - 'some you can dial in and actually phones aren't that new a technology for most people and think you know if someone is feeling, well I don't know how to set up videos and cameras and all that kind of stuff, to be able to say look you can dial in as you would phone in, it's just there'll be more voices'.

Not Wanting to Remember Abuse

5.125. While some survivors choose to engage in projects post receiving support, a further barrier to survivors from diverse and under-represented, or any population, is that once they have left the abusive partner they do not want to reflect or think about the abuse;

> Service; interview - 'for a lot of people, it's like I've done that. I've done that talking. I have done that work. I have processed this and now I want to move on and just not really have to think about it anymore. And that's OK.'

5.126. While this is a barrier, attempts should not be made to overcome or solve this, as each survivor has the autonomy to choose whether to engage or move on. Despite this, however, many survivors choose to engage and assist the sector, as a way to repay services who helped them, and try to stop other people experiencing the same. This may even be increased in diverse survivors;

> Service; interview - 'they want to make things better for them, especially when we know for, for example, with LGBT+ people, we know the responses are not where they should be'

5.127. This is because many services do not cater to their experiences, so they want to influence them for the better.

In-Person versus Online Engagement

5.128. As posed in previous themes, barriers for engaging survivors from diverse and under-represented populations can be centred on accessibility, both physical and digital. This raises thoughts on whether future engagement would be better being either in person or virtually, with the below presenting arguments for each, before suggesting a mix of approaches to maximise accessibility.

5.129. In person sessions were reported as being beneficial due to separating home life from activism or work;

> Service; interview - 'when you talk about these things it might not be appropriate to do at home. You might want it to be like this is my safe space, I'd like to talk about it in other spaces'

5.130. In these cases participants would be more open when away from their own home. In person sessions are also favourable for safety when talking about sensitive issues;

> Service; interview - 'I think [physically seeing each other is] so important. So if you do see someone that's you know, clicking a pen, you know that something is eating them and to read body language'

5.131. By being able to read body language, facilitators can assess if there are any issues and address them as needed.

5.132. Alternatively, online engagement was reported as being favoured by others as being in their personal space added feelings of safety;

> Service; interview - 'joining from home meant they were in a safe environment and that they knew they could just close their laptop or turn their phone off or turn their camera off. And so I think in some ways we've gained participation'

5.133. This contradicts the need to be away from home and keep their 'safe space' separate. Services also reported that online surveys have received more participation;

> Service; interview - 'we had far more response to surveys and we did face- to-face focus groups. Yeah, more people, more people engaged through surveys than they did for joining us'

5.134. This finding was supported by the participation in this project. Both males who contributed to this project stated they would prefer to be engaged online rather than in person;

> Survivor; survey - 'I have found speaking with others online a lot easier'

5.134.1.1. With one stating that this way he would not be confronted by those who do not value his experiences.

5.135. Therefore, as both approaches are favoured by different people, a mixed methods approach to engagement would engage more diverse survivors;

> Service; interview - 'there just needs to be a mix, doesn't there of different ways of people engaging the way that works for them, so that maybe having an option?'

> Service; interview - 'I think it might be nice to support a mixture of approaches'

> Service; interview - 'just have a range of options'

5.136. This would therefore make projects more representative of the overall survivor population.

Group Makeup/ Mixed Groups

5.137. If groups are used as part of survivor engagement, whether they are online or in person, decisions need to be made regarding the makeup of these, and whether they are mixed groups, or separated by protected characteristics. This section will present findings from services and survivors regarding whether to mix everyone together, or whether groups should be separated to increase engagement of survivors from diverse and under-represented populations, due to diverse participants' worries of safety or being excluded by the dominant narrative (male to female partner violence).

5.138. Ideally, survivor engagement would consist of one mixed group of all diversities;

> Service; interview - 'I think it's good for pro social modelling, you know. I think it's good for male victims to see that not all women are evil and for female victims, see not all males are evil'

> Survivor; interview - 'I think it challenges other people to get over judging and stigma as well of other people you know. And accepting somebody might say blue, another person might hear green'.

5.139. By mixing people together, survivors would get to hear other experiences, and this could break down barriers. However, while services cited that separating survivors into groups based on protected characteristics ensures that that there are spaces for experiences different to the dominant narrative, one service attempted this, and the diverse groups did not receive good attendance in favour of larger mixed groups;

> Service; interview - 'we have tried to do the whole separate group things, but then the two groups that have been most popular have just been the generic domestic abuse group, in the sense that it's open for everyone who's a survivor of any form of domestic abuse, and then sexual violence group'

5.140. This suggests that even if separate groups for different diverse populations are created, they do not remove the barriers for diverse survivors, and instead could segregate survivors further.

5.141. However, as already acknowledged within the findings, there are various tensions between survivors and diverse groups which would make one mixed group potentially dangerous and upsetting for survivors. Firstly, female survivors shared how they do not feel safe being with males;

> Survivor, survey - 'please consider the needs of sexual assault survivors who do not want male bodied people (men) in their spaces'

5.142. This quote also links to others from this project, where female survivors have expressed their displeasure at trans+ survivors being included in the research;

> Survivor; survey - 'Enough with the virtue signalling. Men who pretend to be women are NOT a vulnerable group - statistics show they are actually at LESS risk of violence than not only women but also than men as a whole'

5.143. These quotes (from lesbian participants, supporting the highlighted tensions within the LGBTQ+ community) highlight the transphobic views which trans+ survivors could be faced with attending mixed groups. This fear over negative consequences for trans+ survivors in mixed groups were also raised by services;

> Service; interview - 'I believe that we could be putting [a trans woman] at risk'

5.144. One service also raised that they had experienced conflict in a group on these grounds,

> Service; interview - 'there has been conflict around where there's one woman saying that she wouldn't attend because she believed that another woman was trans'

5.145. This can negatively affect the alleged trans+ survivors' wellbeing, and also the dynamics of the group.

5.146. While female survivors expressed worries over safety for wanting separate spaces, male survivors and male services expressed how they would prefer dedicated spaces so that their experiences can be recognised and not dismissed, and not seen as perpetrators;

> Survivor; survey - 'Women can be dismissive on this subject thinking it is only men that have the potential to be abusive'

> Survivor; survey - 'men will always be seen as a threat by women even if we are recognised survivors'

5.147. A male service also raised how being confronted with the dominant narrative of male violence can upset male survivors, by making their often less life-threatening experience seem unimportant;

> Service; interview - 'make their experiences feel less and less important or valued, and I don't think that's fair neither 'cause it's their experience'

5.148. They can also feel shame from being presented with the harms caused by their sex;

> Service; interview - '[As a professional male listening to female abuse] I just think 'God, men are sh*t'. It's not a comfortable place to be and I've experienced that'

5.149. An instance was also shared where a male survivor had received 'backlash' from trying to raise awareness of males being victims of VAWDASV on social media;

> Service; interview - 'straight away he got backlash on Twitter and he was upset like, what have I done wrong'

5.150. This shows how experiences that differ from the dominant narrative are shut down, providing a barrier to male survivors engaging with participation projects.

5.151. Additional to mixed groups causing worries over safety and wellbeing of different groups, there is also the worry that mixed groups will only provide information from the dominant narrative;

> Service; interview - 'I think it's about getting the information that you need, and I think that when you have a big generic group, the dominant narrative is the one that gets told'

5.152. This is supported by the earlier quote regarding the lesbian who did not engage due to her experience not fitting with that of a male perpetrator, and was also expressed by male survivors;

> Survivor; survey - 'we [men] are the enemy and will be less likely to discuss things in a group with females present'

5.153. Dedicated services for male survivors and LGBTQ+ survivors also raised the need for separate groups, due to data collection purposes;

> Service; interview - 'I think it's good for men to have that space where they can say how they want to say it'

> Service; interview - 'if you had a [cis, heterosexual] men's group that included bi, gay and trans men, it would be quite feasible that you would not be getting the responses that you need from GBT men'

5.154. These show how having spaces where only the dominant narrative can be expressed can be a barrier for diverse survivors.

5.155. As these points raise, while having separate groups for all protected characteristics is not needed, there is the need to have separate groups for some. While the earlier quote expressed mixing males and females as positive (section 5.66), survivors and services acknowledge the need for separate female and male groups;

> Service; interview - 'there needs to be a like a women only group'

> Survivor; survey - 'uphold single sex exemptions and ensure that women know that there are spaces that they can be 100 per cent confident there will be no males'

> Service; interview - 'I think it comes back to having specific groups for men. I know it sounds a bonkers thing to say, but to protect men from [female survivors]',

5.156. This would keep survivors safe and comfortable when engaging.

5.157. Services (including the LGBTQ+ 'by and for' organisation) also acknowledge the need for a space for trans+ survivors, so that they can feel safe to share experiences;

> Service; interview - 'I think having specific spaces for trans and non-binary people would be quite important' and '[transphobia is] the last thing that you want, and there's ways of challenging that and dealing with that. But

> also it just shouldn't be something that someone has to deal with. It just shouldn't be'

5.158. However, whilst it is acceptable to offer separate sessions to trans+ survivors, and to explain why these have been set up, it is unlawful and inappropriate to exclude them from attending sessions for their identifying gender, if they still wish to attend.

5.159. Additional to separate groups for females and males, and offering trans+ survivors their own group, services also acknowledged the need for a group for LGB+, as their experiences differ to those of cis, heterosexual survivors;

> Service; interview - 'the needs of GBT men are far more likely to mirror those of heterosexual cis women [than heterosexual men]'

> Service; interview - '[you need] a minimum of an LGB group, and a trans and non-binary group as well'.

5.160. As with a dedicated group for trans+ survivors, the LGBTQ+ service stated that this should also be optional;

> Service; interview - 'giving [LGB+] people that free choice probably the best approach'

5.161. This is because LGB+ survivors may not feel the need to be separate from the binary groups. The findings indicate that due to current issues within the LGBTQ+ community as a whole (including anti-trans+ survey responses from lesbian survivors), this optional group should not be merged with the optional trans+ group, as it would expose trans+ survivors to the same fear of discrimination.

Summary of Findings

5.162. This section has outlined the findings from the primary data collection for this project. It has found that mistrust of research, fear, recruitment and sampling strategies, knowledge of diversity, acknowledgement of all forms of VAWDASV, accessibility and not wanting to remember abuse can be barriers for survivors from diverse and under-represented populations engaging in projects. It also explored findings for how the facilitator/researcher, method of engagement being

in person or online and whether groups are mixed can influence whether survivors engage with projects. The next section will draw together conclusions from the primary data collection and literature review findings on what the barriers are for engaging with survivors from diverse and under-represented communities, and how these can be addressed.

6. Conclusions

6.1. This section will draw together the findings from the literature review and also primary data collection, to present the key barriers for diverse and under-represented survivors in engaging with participatory projects.

6.2. The first conclusion to note from the findings is that they **mimic the barriers faced by diverse survivors in accessing support services for experiencing VAWDASV** (Burman, 2004; Burman and Chantler, 2005; Hine et al, 2020; Roulstone and Mason-Bich, 2012; Scheer et al, 2020); therefore, solutions posed in this project can be extrapolated for support services to reduce barriers faced.

6.3. While addressing the concerns raised in the findings (specifically around building trust, addressing fear of community reprisal, varying recruitment strategies, improving accessibility, acknowledging all forms of abuse and offering a variety of modes of engagement) will improve diversity of participation in engagement groups, **each of these could also benefit all survivors**. Therefore, taking steps to improve these barriers may improve the overall pool of survivors for any engagement project, instead of only including the 'same old voices' as referenced in the findings.

6.4. Findings regarding mistrust of researchers and authority, and fear of various reprisals from the literature review were supported by primary data findings. **Diverse survivors do not trust that participation will make any change, will not be taken seriously, or worry about experiencing negative effects due to taking part in projects**. To remedy this, researchers/facilitators need to take steps to build trust with communities and participants, engaging with gatekeepers and providing information about themselves and the project, so that survivors can make an informed decision. Setting clear targets will also help with this, and will also reduce worries for those concerned about taking part in long projects due to their mortality. Steps should also be taken to maintain participant confidentiality, but despite this, some diverse survivors will prefer anonymous engagement so that the chance of negative repercussions is further lessened.

6.5. **Standard methods of recruitment and sampling were also raised in both literature and primary data, with wider, more flexible recruitment favoured in order to engage with 'harder to reach' populations**. Recruitment for survivor engagement should be across a range of methods, and should also utilise existing survivor groups and gatekeeping organisations to assist in diversification of samples.

6.6. Participants in this study also explained how **lack of knowledge regarding diversity and alternate forms of VAWDASV to the dominant narrative are barriers to participation, as they can be made to feel 'less worthy' compared with other survivors** and that their experiences do not matter. Therefore, all staff and participants should have equality and diversity training and VAWDASV awareness training so that they are aware and respect all experiences and identities.

6.7. Accessibility is cited as a barrier for diverse groups. **All engagement should be designed with accessibility in mind**, ideally in consultation with disabled people, older people and minority ethnic groups, to ensure that any issues around physical, digital and language are identified. Findings also demonstrate a need for a variety of engagement modes so that the project is flexible, including physical groups, virtual groups and surveys. These methods, may also assist in addressing fears of identification and community reprisal through anonymity.

6.8. The literature review and primary data findings illustrate that **the facilitator/researcher is important in reducing barriers for diverse survivors**; how identification with them through them being a survivor or from a diverse community can help, but how this is also not a must, as objectivity is easier for someone who does not identify with the target population, so long as the facilitator is respectful of the community.

6.9. Initially, most professional services advocated for distinct engagement sessions for all diverse and under-represented groups, to ensure that all survivors would have their differing experiences, opinions and concerns acknowledged. However, where a service has attempted multiple groups like this, they have not been successful in favour of more generic survivor groups. Alternatively, survivors

stated that they did not want to be separate from those of other ethnicities and sexualities, with **diverse survivors who were interviewed sharing that they like to be mixed with survivors from other backgrounds so they can learn different viewpoints. However, these survivors did share previous experiences of discrimination and prejudice from fellow participants**, which have served as barriers for them in engaging, which would need to be pre-empted in any mixed groups.

6.10.   However, **regarding whether to hold mixed sex and gender groups, most services, including 'by and for' services for LGBTQ+ and male survivors, stated the need for separation, as the dominant narrative of a female victim with a male perpetrator often obscures other experiences**. Services also acknowledged fears of safety, with female survivors potentially being worried about male survivors being perpetrators, and male survivors being bullied by female survivors as they perceive them to be negating female experience. However, a binary view of groups based on gender excludes those who identify as non-binary or gender fluid. Additionally, any LGB+ survivors also risk having their narrative of different victim/perpetrator dynamics (for example, female perpetrator and female victims) overshadowed if they attend a binary group. Survivors and services both acknowledged and expressed concern regarding including trans+ survivors in female and male groups, in some cases as female survivors worry that they may be perpetrators, but also due to the fear for the trans+ survivors' wellbeing from being bullied or experiencing voyeurism. Therefore, having a strict setting of two groups (one female and one male) will exclude many within the diverse and under-represented LGBTQ+ bracket; to resolve this, **additional groups can be offered to LGBTQ+ survivors if they would prefer, but these should not be compulsory or forced on survivors.**

6.11.   As with every study, there were limitations to this project. One such limitation was that this study was conducted online and therefore missed accessing those who were unable to access the internet, but who would have been able to engage in person. Unfortunately, this project was conducted during the global Covid-19 pandemic, meaning that in-person data collection was not allowed. This was especially important considering how one target audience, older people, are

at a much higher risk of complications and death from Covid-19. Recommendations going forward for any survivor forum will have options for in-person recruitment and engagement, to include survivors who are not online.

6.12.   Another limitation of the project was that all engagement was only offered in English and Welsh, and therefore missed collecting data on barriers of those who cannot speak either language. While language was acknowledged as a barrier by other participants, additional potential barriers could have been missed by not engaging with non-English/Welsh speakers. In future survivor engagement, opportunities could be provided to engage with those who speak neither English nor Welsh; however, these opportunities need to be balanced with limitations of translation services, including mistranslations of text, translators being known to or part of the controlling community, or difficulties in using a translator during group discussion.

6.13.   While there were limitations to this study, there were also strengths. This report contains findings from myriad data focussed on barriers to engagement for diverse and under-represented populations, including data from a structured literature review, interview data with professionals, interview data with survivors and anonymous survey data from survivors. This variety of data provides more reliable data, as information has come from multiple sources.

6.14.   Another strength of this project is that the design of primary data collection was informed by literature review findings, with methods tailored from initial plans based on suggestions from prior studies and articles. This means that, within time and practical constraints of the project, some barriers to engagement had been addressed to increase participation.

6.15.   Following these conclusions derived from the literature and reinforced by primary data collection with survivors and stakeholders, a series of recommendations have been laid out in section 7. These start with four key recommendations which should be implemented to encourage participation from diverse and under-represented groups, which would reduce a number of barriers for survivors. These are followed by eight further recommendations which complement and expand on the first points.

7. Recommendations

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ENGAGING DIVERSE AND UNDER-REPRESENTED SURVIVORS

1. **Engagement should be comprised of a variety of methods, including physical groups, virtual groups/interviews, and an online pool of survivors, to which anonymous surveys can be provided for wider participation**. This variety would provide options for engagement from diverse and under-represented populations, empowering them to be able to be involved in ways in which they are comfortable and virtual means can also lessen geographical issues. These options can cater for those who do not want to be identified as either someone with lived experience of abuse or as part of a diverse group, and those who cannot attend physical or virtual groups for accessibility reasons.

2. **Groups (especially physical groups) should be provided to females and males separately. Any potential participants who disclose that they identify as trans+ should be given the option of being in a dedicated trans+ group (or interviews); also, those who are LGB+ should be offered a group dedicated for LGB+ survivors, if they would prefer**. These additional, optional groups for trans+ and LBG+ survivors should not be compulsory (or presented as such) but offered so that survivors can be given the chance to meet with others who have similar experiences, and to potentially feel safer due to current tensions surrounding the trans+ movement. Separate female and male groups, and LGBTQ+ being given the option for separate groups if they so choose, will make engagements safer for all survivors, protect them from discrimination from others, as well as ensuring opinions are collated from all viewpoints, not only the dominant narrative.

3. **Facilitators for engagement sessions should be survivor-professionals who identify as belonging to a diverse group/s.** This would encourage diverse and under-represented survivors to take part and also to express views in the forum. Female facilitators would be preferred by both female and male survivors, but if a trans+ group is established, a trans+ facilitator would be appropriate. Facilitators should also provide participants with some information about themselves to build trust, but only information which is safe should be shared e.g., no addresses.

Facilitators should be made aware at the earliest possible stage that they should share information about themselves, so that they can withdraw from the project if this is not appropriate for them.

4. **Accessibility should be built into all engagements**, including but not limited to - ensuring any buildings used are accessible and easy to travel to; that clear instructions or training are provided for virtual forums; that clear and simple language is used in all documents; and options are included for those who do not speak English or Welsh to contribute. **All participants should also be asked if they have any accessibility requirements on initial engagement**. Ensuring accessibility requirements have been addressed will help engage diverse communities, specifically survivors who are disabled, older, non-English speakers and those with lower literacy levels.

FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

5. As opposed to creating a completely new survivor forum, **efforts should be made to engage with existing survivor groups which can feed into a wider, Welsh Government survivor framework**. Acknowledging that not all survivors wish to engage in projects, and that participants are often those who frequently choose to take part in sessions, this would protect the same survivors from being over-subscribed to different forums. It would also be utilising, acknowledging and protecting the specialisms and experiences of the services who have these existing groups. However, any additional requirements for existing services would need to be adequately funded.

6. **Sufficient time needs to go into engaging diverse and under-represented survivors before they will agree to take part.** This would favour a rolling membership approach to engagement, as it would allow the time to build trust with diverse communities for each intake of survivors. Facilitators should engage with community leaders and specialist 'by and for' services to build trust which would aid in recruitment.

7. While a variety of options will benefit engaging diverse groups, **physical in-person groups should be used for the main forum sessions, especially where topics are sensitive so that safeguarding can be ensured**. All groups should have an

introductory session so that members can get to know each other and their backgrounds. These initial sessions should also involve basic equality and diversity training, so that all participants are aware of what is expected of them regarding accepting diversity, thus minimising discriminatory remarks in mixed groups.

8. **Full and clear details regarding the aims of engagement; practical, time sensitive outcomes; what is expected of survivors; any potential repercussions; and what will be done with the findings, need to be explained to survivors prior to engagement,** so that they can make a clear and informed choice regarding whether to participate. Potential participants should have the opportunity to ask any questions regarding the project, and clear answers should be provided. This will aid build trust with survivors, as no information will be hidden from them.

9. **All documents should be supplied in a variety of formats** in English and Welsh, including in clear simple language and in audio. This will help ensure those with lower levels of literacy can engage.

10. For the online pool of survivors, **documents should be supplied in a variety of languages**, which have been proofread by those with knowledge of the sector to ensure context is correct. This will assist those who do not speak English in giving input via online surveys.

11. **Physical groups should be held in buildings with good accessibility;** including lifts and ramps, disabled toilets, adequate and disabled parking and good public transport links. Allocated rooms should have plenty of natural lighting and windows, and enough space for participants to sit apart from each other. Physical groups should be held in a neutral location, away from Welsh Government offices, and should not have any obvious signage on rooms which could reveal participants' identity as survivors of VAWDASV.

12. **Where virtual groups or interviews are used, facilitators need to ensure participants have access to appropriate technology, and also that they have received adequate training on how to use the technology to take part**. This could be through directly providing equipment and training to survivors, or through collaboration with other services, where their equipment could be used while they are

on hand for support. This would ensure that those with minimal technological knowledge and skill could participate in virtual engagement.

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Annex A

Search Terms for Literature Review

- Research participation barriers
- Social research participation barriers
- Involving Minority Groups in Social Research
- Marginalised groups participation research
- Recruiting marginalised groups research
- Male abuse survivor access/recruit research
- Researching men
- Researching LGBT
- Researching lesbians
- Researching gay men
- Researching transgender
- Researching ethnic minorities
- Researching disabled people

Annex B

Social Media Adverts for Focus Groups and Survey

Do you identify as being from a diverse or under-represented group?

Have you experienced violence against women, domestic abuse and/or sexual violence (VAWDASV)?

We would like our Survivor Forum to represent all survivors of abuse, so we are holding focus groups to find out what the barriers are to getting involved and how we can overcome them.

www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/VAWDASV-Interest/

Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Do you identify as being from a diverse or under-represented group?

Have you experienced violence against women, domestic abuse and/or sexual violence (VAWDASV)?

We would like our Survivor Forum to represent all survivors of abuse, so if you identify as a survivor who is LGBTQI+, is from an ethnic minority group, has a disability, or are a male or older survivor, please complete our anonymous survey on barriers to engaging.

www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/BarriersSurvey

Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Annex C

Expression of Interest for Focus Group

Welcome to the expression of interest to take part in this Welsh Government project.

Welsh Government will be making a Survivor Forum for people who have experienced violence against women, domestic abuse and/or sexual violence (VAWDASV), which will be involved in future plans and policy making.

We would like this forum to **represent all survivors of abuse**, so we are looking to find out what the **barriers** are to getting involved for diverse groups and how we can **overcome** them.

If you identify as part of the groups below, and you would like to take part in an **online focus group** on how we can best involve you in the future, then we would like to speak to you.

We are looking to speak to people who are:
- Part of Ethnic Minority Groups (e.g. Black, Asian, White Non-British, Gypsy Roma Travellers)
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Pansexual +
- Trans* (e.g. transgender, non-binary)
- People with Disabilities (e.g. physical, learning)
- Male survivors of VAWDASV
- Survivors aged 65+

These online discussions will be with other people in the same 'diverse and under-represented group' as you so you have plenty of time to **discuss the barriers that make you not want to get involved and what we can do to solve these**, and will also have a professional who works with your group involved. They will last no longer than 1 hour and will be held on Microsoft Teams.

The information you give below will only be used by the researcher to contact you about the project and taking part in online group discussions, and 6 months after the project is completed, it will be deleted. For more information on how we will keep this data, please click here [link to privacy notice].

Soon we will also be advertising a survey where you can give your opinions, if for any reason the focus groups do not suit you. Please keep your eye out for this.

If you have **any questions** about this project, please contact the researcher (name) on [email] for an informal chat.

* 1. What is your name?

* 2. Which of the following groups do you identify as (tick all that apply to you):
☐ Part of Ethnic Minority Groups (e.g. Black, Asian, White Non-British, Gypsy Roma Travellers)

☐ Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Pansexual +

☐ Trans* (e.g. transgender, non-binary)

☐ People with Disabilities (e.g. physical, learning)

☐ Male survivors of VAWDASV

☐ Survivors aged 65+

* 3. How do you identify within these groups? (e.g. Black-British, Lesbian, Transwoman)

* 4. Which is the best and safest way to contact you:
○ Telephone

○ Email

○ Post

* Please give your contact details:

If you want us to contact you by telephone, if someone other than you answers the phone, we will not leave details about the project or a message to protect your privacy and safety

5. Which of these times would be best for you to attend an online discussion (tick all that apply to you):
☐ Weekday Morning

☐ Weekday Lunch Times

☐ Weekday Afternoon

☐ Weekday Evenings

☐ Weekend Morning

☐ Weekend Afternoon

☐ Weekend Evening

☐ Other (please specify):

6. Are there any dates in August or September which you cannot make?

Annex D

Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) - Barriers to Engagement

Privacy Summary

This project is looking to find out what the **barriers are for survivors of abuse from diverse groups to engaging with Welsh Government**, and how these can be overcome.

Online focus groups will be used to collect this information – to apply you will need to fill in an expression of interest and give your contact details. The **researcher can then contact you to discuss the project** and make sure you understand how things will work.

The focus **groups will not be mixed**, so you will only be in a group with others who identify with your own diverse group, the researcher, and also potentially a professional who works with survivors from your group.

If you cannot or do not wish to take part in a focus group then **you can provide your views via a survey.**

What data will we have?

If you wish to take part in a focus group then we will ask you to give us the following personal data so that we can contact you about the focus groups:

- Name
- Email address
- Postal Address or
- Telephone Number

If you take part in the survey you do not need to provide your name or any contact details.

In the focus groups and the survey, we will also be collecting which diverse group(s) you identify with, which falls under 'special category data' in the law.

If you want, you can **use a fake name (pseudonym)** for the focus group, and you will also be allowed to have your **camera switched off** so that your face is not visible.

If everyone in the group is happy, the discussion will be recorded so we can write up (transcribe) what was said. **The recording will then be deleted**. Any details which could be used to identify you will be removed from the write up (transcription).

Why are we collecting this? (Lawful basis)

We are collecting this data so that we can do our job at Welsh Government, and we are collecting your identification with a diverse group for research purposes.

Taking part is completely voluntary and if you want to stop taking part, contact Rhiannon on her email below.

By conducting this research, we will hopefully be able to find ways to include diverse groups in Welsh Government projects in the future.

How safe is your data?

All information collected will be kept on **secure computers**, with files that can only be accessed by the researcher and her team. Your names and contact details will also be **protected by password**.

The findings from the project will be published in a report on the Welsh Government website, but **no one will be able to identify you or what you said**.

How long will we keep your data?

Your details will be **deleted three months after the report** for this project has been published.

Your rights

You have rights that allow you to ask to see what information we have about you, fix any errors as well as raise objections about what we are doing.

You can make a complaint to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) who is our independent regulator for data protection.

The contact details for the Information Commissioner's Office are: Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Phone: 01625 545 745 or 0303 123 1113. Website: www.ico.gov.uk

More Information

If you have any questions or concerns please contact:

Name: Rhiannon Maniatt

E-mail address: [researchers email address]

The Welsh Government's Data Protection Officer can be contacted at:

Welsh Government, Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3NQ,

Email: DataProtectionOfficer@gov.wales.

Annex E

List of Stakeholders Which Attended Interviews

- Cardiff Women's Aid
- Disability Wales
- Dyn Project (Safer Wales)
- EDGE Project (Thrive Women's Aid)
- Galop
- We Are Hourglass
- Welsh Women's Aid

Annex F

Survey Questions

Welcome to the VAWDASV Barriers to Engagement Survey!

This survey is a **completely anonymous way to share your opinions** about barriers to engagement for diverse and under-represented survivors.

Welsh Government are exploring the best way of engaging with people who have experienced violence against women, domestic abuse and/or sexual violence (VAWDASV), which will provide ways of being involved in future plans and policy making.

We would like our engagement with those who have experienced abuse to **represent all survivors of abuse**, so we are looking to find out what the **barriers** are to getting involved for diverse groups and how we can **overcome** them.

If you identify as part of the groups below, and have experienced VAWDASV, we invite you to share your opinions in the following survey:

- Part of Ethnic Minority Groups (e.g. Black, Asian, White Non-British, Gypsy Roma Travellers)
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Pansexual +
- Trans* (e.g. transgender, non-binary)
- People with Disabilities (e.g. physical, learning)
- Male survivors of VAWDASV
- Survivors aged 65+

You do not need to give any identifiable information in the survey. If anything you say could be used to identify you, it will be removed as soon as data is downloaded. For more information on how we keep this data, please click here. (link to privacy notice page)

If you have any questions about the survey or the project, please contact NAME on [email] for a confidential, informal chat.

This survey will close on MONDAY 4th OCTOBER 2021.

1. Are you a survivor / someone with lived experience of violence against women, domestic abuse or sexual violence (VAWDASV)?
   Yes
   No

2. Which of the following groups do you identify as (tick all that apply to you):

- Part of Ethnic Minority Groups (e.g. Black, Asian, White Non-British, Gypsy Roma Travellers)
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Pansexual +
- Trans* (e.g. transgender, non-binary)
- People with Disabilities (e.g. physical, learning)
- Male survivors of VAWDASV
- Survivors aged 65+

3. How do you identify within these groups? (e.g. Black-British, Lesbian, Transwoman, Physically disabled with MS)

Welsh Government are exploring the best way of engaging with people who have experienced violence against women, domestic abuse and/or sexual violence (VAWDASV), which will provide ways of being involved in future plans and policy making.

A pilot we undertook in 2019 recommended a number of ways in which we should strive to include voices of those with lived experiences (a forum/panel, surveys, links to other groups).

We would like our engagement to represent all survivors of abuse, and are completing further research to understand the interest of a diverse groups of survivors/those with lived experience in taking part, and what prevents them from taking part.

4. In theory, would you be interested in becoming a member of the Survivor Forum? Yes/No/Maybe

5. If yes, what type of engagement would you prefer? e.g. a panel, in person, online, surveys

6. What factors do we need to consider when engaging with your diverse group?

We are interested in finding out what barriers (issues/concerns/feelings) stop survivors from diverse groups from taking part in engagement activities.

Please answer the following questions based on your experiences and knowledge from the diverse group you identify with.

7. Do you experience/ have you previously experienced barriers which stop you from taking part in research or engagement activities? Please explain why you feel this way.

8. Do you think other people who identify with your diverse group (e.g. other trans* survivors) would agree with this?

9. What do you think could be done to overcome/solve this? Please explain why.

We are interested in finding out what barriers stop survivors from diverse groups from taking part in engagement activities.

Please answer the following questions based on your experiences and knowledge from the diverse group you identify with.

10. Are there other reasons why you would not take part in research or engagement activities? Please explain why this is.

11. Do you think other people who identify with your diverse group (e.g. other trans* survivors) would agree with this?

12. What do you think could be done to overcome/solve this? Please explain why.