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Review of the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse, and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) data landscape in Wales

Executive summary

Background to the research

Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse, and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) is a public health crisis often rooted in gender inequality. Evidence shows that women facing multiple forms of disadvantage experience disproportionate harm from VAWDASV. In Wales, the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse, and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 provides a comprehensive legislative framework focused on prevention, protection, and support, underpinned by statutory duties for national and local strategies, and oversight through a National Adviser. Subsequent UK legislation, including the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, further strengthens protections for survivors and establishes consistent definitions and safeguards across the UK.

To implement the Welsh statutory framework, the [National Strategy on VAWDASV 2016–2021](#) and [National Strategy on VAWDASV 2022–2026](#)) set out whole-system approaches to challenge harmful attitudes, strengthen prevention, improve professional training, and ensure accessible, high-quality services. The current strategy expands its focus through an intersectional lens, stronger perpetrator accountability, and the establishment of a multi-agency Blueprint framework to

support the delivery of the 2022 to 2026 strategy. The Blueprint is structured by workstreams on safety in all public spaces, workplace sexual harassment, perpetrator interventions, sustainable commissioning, the needs of children and older people, and survivor voice. While progress has been made, significant challenges remain. These include gaps in Welsh-specific data, barriers faced by marginalised groups, and inconsistent funding for support services, as well as gaps in data to measure progress against the National Indicators.

To support the Welsh Government in ensuring that policy and commissioning are rooted in high-quality and ethically collected data, Alma Economics was commissioned by the Welsh Government to undertake a review of the VAWDASV data landscape in Wales.

Methodology

The research was undertaken in two phases. Phase 1 included an in-depth review of key Welsh legislation alongside academic and grey literature to establish a clear understanding of the policy context. A systematic data search and screening protocol was then implemented, resulting in the identification of 77 relevant datasets, all catalogued using a structured Data Extraction Sheet, a tool used to capture key information about datasets in a systematic way. The data search was also informed by 11 semi-structured scoping interviews to identify further gaps, datasets, and limitations. Finally, additional evidence was collected through a Call for Evidence disseminated to the sector, which allowed respondents to provide their thoughts on the data landscape and information on additional datasets through open-text and structured responses. The Call for Evidence also allowed stakeholders to provide information on unpublished data, which may not have been included in the systematic review.

Phase 2 focused on analysing the evidence gathered to identify data gaps. Responses to the Call for Evidence were reviewed using thematic analysis and stakeholder follow-up. A bespoke data quality assessment framework adapted from national and statistical standards was applied to assess each dataset across timeliness, consistency, completeness, relevance, structure, and trustworthiness. Quality is reported at the Blueprint workstream level and is based on the available data, with data gaps assessed in a separate chapter. Findings were synthesised and organised around the 6 workstream areas, enabling a structured mapping of data strengths and weaknesses across the VAWDASV landscape.

Drawing on the systematic review, stakeholder input, and working-group feedback, the research team developed a set of targeted recommendations to improve the accessibility, quality, and coherence of VAWDASV data in Wales.

This review provides a snapshot of the data landscape for the period during which the research was carried out, from July to November 2025. The review is not

exhaustive, and therefore, not all existing datasets will be captured. The Gap Analysis chapter provides further detail on which indicators are more fully covered by the identified data and which have more salient gaps.

Main findings

Wales-wide findings

Stakeholders consistently highlighted significant challenges in data sharing and availability across the VAWDASV sector, citing incompatible systems, limited technical capacity, GDPR concerns, and fears about competition for funding, all of which hinder collaboration and create risks of double-counting victims or missing repeat patterns. The data landscape was described as fragmented, with valuable information often siloed, regionally inconsistent, or missing altogether. However, there were some examples of best practice, such as the Violence Prevention Unit's multi-source portal and the SAIL databank, which demonstrate the potential of integrated, linked data despite cost and accessibility barriers.

A major limitation identified was the lack of Wales-specific prevalence data and meaningful demographic disaggregations, with the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) serving as the primary source but offering limited Welsh-level breakdowns due to small sample sizes. Stakeholders noted a broader structural gap in nationally representative datasets for Wales, compounded by infrequent data collection and inconsistent inclusion of VAWDASV measures, making it difficult to track trends or assess progress over time.

Quality of the data identified

As part of the review, the quality of each dataset identified was assessed in terms of timeliness, consistency, completeness, structure and format, relevance, and trustworthiness. Each dataset was then assigned a score from 0 to 12. Datasets assigned scores from 0 to 4 are considered to be low-quality, those assigned scores from 5 to 9 are considered medium quality, and any data with a score of 10 or higher is considered high-quality. The quality of the data in the report is assessed at the Blueprint workstream level, and does not take workstream-level gaps into consideration.

Findings by Blueprint Workstream

Gender-based harassment in all public spaces

Eight datasets relating to gender-based harassment in all public spaces were identified, along with an additional 7 datasets related to online harms. However, many sources are published irregularly or include violence-related questions only in specific survey waves. Most data comes from self-report surveys capturing feelings of safety, fear of crime, trust in police responses, and experiences of harassment. This is supplemented by police-recorded crime data publicly available only in an

aggregated form that does not distinguish specific offences or victim gender. Relevant instances of crime are typically recorded as “violent or sexual offences.” Stakeholders noted that although this area appears relatively well-covered compared with other Blueprint workstreams, significant gaps remain, particularly around lower-level incidents such as catcalling and unwanted comments, as well as social attitudes that shape risks and behaviours. The overall quality score for the data on gender-based harassment in all public spaces was assessed as an 8.8.

Workplace harassment

Five datasets on workplace harassment were identified, mostly based on self-reported survey data and generally available only at the Wales-wide level. While the 2024 Skills and Employment Survey provides the most robust measure of workplace harassment, it is the only wave to include these questions, limiting the ability to analyse trends over time. Additional one-off surveys by Welsh Women’s Aid and TUC Cymru offer further insights but lack continuity. NHS staff surveys provide annual data on bullying, harassment, and violence, but their results are not disaggregated by demographic characteristics (including gender), and other surveys, such as Time to Talk Public Health, include relevant questions only irregularly.

A few comments were made by stakeholders with regard to the data landscape as it pertains to workplace harassment. One stakeholder noted that workplaces are generally good at capturing data on harassment, compared with other settings such as schools or health care settings. However, they also noted that this data can be inconsistent or patchy and is often not published, as different organisations may measure or record data in different ways. The overall quality score for the data on workplace harassment was assessed as 7.2.

Tackling perpetration

Generally, high-quality and robust data on perpetrators was identified as a key gap in our review. While there were 20 datasets related to tackling perpetration, the vast majority of these were based on policing and crime data, thus not capturing the vast majority of perpetration, which does not result in an arrest or conviction. This lack of data on perpetration also makes it difficult to assess the effectiveness of early intervention and prevention services and programmes.

The remainder of the data identified (5 datasets) comes from specialist services, with a notable lack of survey self-report data from perpetrators of VAWDASV. Stakeholders broadly echoed these findings, noting that while there was extensive policing and crime data, this was often limited or incomplete. One stakeholder noted that within the third sector, the lack of data is partially due to the fragmentation within the perpetrator services sector. The quality of the data related to tackling perpetration was recorded as 9.3. Strengths of the data included the structure/format, as the majority of data was recorded in a specific tool or data

recording platform, or Microsoft Excel. Specific weaknesses related to inconsistent data recording across areas or services.

Sustainable commissioning (whole-systems approach)

Data informing sustainable commissioning was mixed, both in terms of service use and demand and service provision and response. Generally, there were few indicators with a “whole-systems lens,” with most data related to a specific service or sector. Overall, our review identified 6 datasets related to service use and 11 indicators related to service provision. Key indicators included survey data from the Public Health Wales Time to Talk Public Health survey, police-recorded crime data on violent and sexual offences, and worry about crime from the National Survey for Wales.

Stakeholders highlighted that sustainable commissioning is hindered by complex partnership structures, fragmented funding arrangements, and limited data sharing, resulting in overlapping reporting requirements that place a significant burden on service providers. Data sharing is further constrained by differing data formats, funding, and organisational priorities, confidentiality concerns, and issues related to General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). Overall, the quality of data related to sustainable commissioning was scored at 8.2.

Older people’s needs

Older people’s needs were identified as a key gap. Seven datasets included indicators for people aged 65 years or over in Wales, and data came from self-report surveys and service use data from both specialist and statutory services. The Violence Prevention Unit Portal, which provides data on emergency room admissions, ambulance callouts, and victimisation of crime by age and gender, is a key source of information related to older people. While prevalence measures, such as those included in the CSEW, do include observations for people aged 65 years or over, disaggregations for Wales along both gender and age are not publicly available. Despite the small number of datasets, the average quality score assigned to datasets for this workstream was 9.8, with particular strengths in terms of its structure, with minor weaknesses in terms of consistency in data recording.

Children and young people’s needs

The evidence base on children and young people’s experiences of violence includes administrative and service-use data and self-report surveys targeted specifically at young people. Key datasets such as the School Health Research Network (SHRN) data collection provide broad, high-quality coverage but include only a small number of violence-related questions that do not appear in every wave, creating gaps in trend analysis. Data on parental domestic abuse and childhood adversity exists but is sparse, often collected only once, and rarely focused on violence specifically. Perpetration data and indicators on young people’s attitudes or education around

VAWDASV are even more limited, with some examples including the Millennium Cohort Study and the Welsh Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Study.

Stakeholders highlighted strengths such as SHRN's robustness and linkability to administrative data, but also emphasised challenges: difficulties in designing appropriate questions for younger respondents, a lack of reliable national prevalence measures for under-16s, inconsistent school reporting practices, and weak data on prevention and early identification. Overall data quality was scored at 9.1, with strong trustworthiness but poor timeliness, hindering the ability to monitor trends or assess progress against VAWDASV objectives.

Survivor voice

Only a handful of datasets were identified that captured survivors' experience of violence, and even these offered limited Welsh-specific disaggregations. Notably, the CSEW lacked key demographic information, reflecting a general pattern across the evidence base of a lack of robust, intersectional data. This was particularly the case for minoritised communities, disabled people, and LGBTQ+ people, with no surveys directly targeting these populations and inconsistent recording of demographic factors in administrative data. Overall data quality on survivor voice was assessed as 8.4, with strengths in relevance and structure but weaknesses in timeliness and consistency, undermining the ability to build a comprehensive, intersectional understanding of survivor experiences and needs.

Findings from the Call for Evidence

Stakeholders cited challenges with inconsistent or incomplete data collection and a lack of data specific to Wales, limited data sharing between organisations, gaps in certain demographic groups, and a lack of performance metrics to evaluate service impact, which were seen as major barriers within the sector.

Of the 26 respondents who responded to the Call for Evidence, the vast majority (21 respondents) thought that VAWDASV data was either very ineffective or somewhat ineffective, and 5 respondents felt that it was "somewhat effective." When asked to explain their answers, several stakeholders highlighted the fragmented nature of the data landscape, which they felt made it difficult to understand links between systems and organisations, what sectors were most impacted, and long-term outcomes for victims and perpetrators.

The most commonly cited factor influencing the frequency of updates to VAWDASV-related data was data sharing or disclosure processes, which made regular updates more difficult (15 respondents), a lack of funding to update data regularly (12 respondents), and data being tied to administrative data or statistics (12 respondents).

Gap analysis

Alongside the discussion of where gaps exist within each Blueprint workstream, we also analysed gaps in relation to the National Indicators, providing insights into which outcomes have limited data for evaluation or to benchmark progress. The analysis draws on our findings from the Call for Evidence, the systematic data review, stakeholder interviews, and engagements with the working group. Gaps were identified across all indicators, with the most gaps identified with regards to Indicator 2 (Increased awareness across all sections of society that VAWDASV is unacceptable), Indicators 3 and 4 (Increased awareness amongst CYP in Wales of the importance of safe, equal, and healthy relationships; and that abuse is always wrong), Indicator 6 (Perpetrators are able to receive appropriate intervention), and Indicator 7 (Enable equal access and availability of effective evidence-based early interventions for victims and survivors). However, Indicators 5 (Increase in VAWDASV-related incidents resulting in arrest, prosecution, and conviction) and Indicator 9 (Ensuring victims receive adequate support) were more comprehensively covered by existing data sources.

4. Recommendations

Based on the findings from the research, the research team developed the following recommendations:

- **Improve survey-based estimates of the prevalence of VAWDASV in Wales over time**, through the inclusion of indicators on Welsh-specific or Welsh Government surveys, or working in collaboration with the ONS to increase the Welsh sample size for the CSEW.
- **Develop a National Monitoring Framework to measure progress against implementation of the Act.**
- **Explore the feasibility of a sector-wide training in best practice in data**, to improve the confidence of practitioners in using VAWDASV data, and ensure administrative data is recorded consistently and as accurately as possible across areas.
- **Create a regularly updated resource cataloguing available data in Wales**, analogous to the resource provided and updated by the ONS to improve the visibility of the existing data.



Full Research Report: Alma Economics (2026). Review of the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) data landscape in Wales. Cardiff: Welsh Government, GSR report number 31/2026.

Available at: <https://www.gov.wales/review-violence-against-women-domestic-abuse-and-sexual-violence-vawdasv-data-landscape>

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

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Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.

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