

Mid and West Wales VAWDASV Strategic Group

Safer Lives, Healthier Families

Tackling Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence in our Communities

Foreword

All forms of violence and abuse are unacceptable and anyone who experiences violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence deserves an effective and timely response from all public services.

The enactment of the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 requires the public sector in Wales to work together in a consistent and cohesive way to improve the outcomes for individuals and their families subjected to Violence against women, Domestic Abuse or Sexual Violence. The Act sits alongside the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014 which provides a legal framework for transforming social services and improving the well-being of adults and children who need care and support and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 which requires public bodies to think about what actions and activities are required to improve the well-being of current and future generations. Collaboration, preventative activity, the involvement of individuals, and long-term incremental improvements in the services delivered are threaded throughout our legislative landscape.

This is Mid and West Wales' first joint strategy to tackle Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence and outlines how the region will support victims and survivors, tackle perpetrators, ensure professionals have the tools and knowledge to act, increase awareness of the issues and help children, young people and other vulnerable groups to understand inequality in relationships and that abusive behaviour is always wrong.

We want to ensure that Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence is acknowledged as "everyone's business"; a cross cutting theme that requires all areas of public policy to address and shape and improve the delivery of services for those affected.

This strategy will contribute to the National Strategy on Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence – 2016 – 2021¹ and the Mid and West Wales Safeguarding Executive has adopted the overarching objectives of the national strategy as drivers for the strategic priorities outlined within this document. This strategy sets out to provide the leadership and direction that will promote consistency and best practice for the way in which violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence is prioritised and tackled across the region.

¹ <http://gov.wales/docs/dsjlg/publications/commsafety/161104-national-strategy-en.pdf>

People do not experience violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence in a vacuum and neither can services, nor wider society, tackle such issues in isolation. With a strong focus on preventative, protective and supportive mechanisms we must work in partnership with survivors, stakeholders and communities to ensure the meaningful delivery of this regional strategy.

Our collective vision is for survivors, their children, wider family and communities to know how and where to get the help that they need, to provide that help in a consistent and co-ordinated manner, and to work towards a society in which no form of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence is tolerated.

Strong leadership and accountability is required by us all to ensure that the priorities identified in this strategy are translated into actions that can make a real difference to the well-being and safety of people living in Mid and West Wales, both now and in the future.

Mid and West Wales Safeguarding Executive

Statement of Intent

Our vision is for all individuals to live their lives free from violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation and for their rights to be protected.

This strategy sets out the integrated regional approach that will deliver a collective vision to stop violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence, to improve the health and well-being of individuals and families affected by abuse and hold to account those who perpetrate such abuse.

It aims to provide a framework that will improve the planning, coordination and collaboration of responses and, furthermore, support the integration and transformation of service delivery; enabling a step change in action to achieve a sustainable reduction in violence and abuse, improve outcomes for all individuals and families affected by Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence and prevent such abuse from happening in the first place.

It aims to build on existing successful partnerships and collaborative working opportunities in the region, and to further increase public awareness and assist local communities, individuals, family members and agencies to deliver a robust response to violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence prevention across Mid and West Wales.

Our aim for this strategy is for it to underpin, influence and directly contribute to key regional priorities. Accordingly, there needs to exist formal lines of reporting from the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategic Group to demonstrate the role that this strategy has in contributing to a number of key regional priorities for:

- The four Public Service Boards
- CYSUR Regional Children's Safeguarding Board
- CWMPAS Regional Adult's Safeguarding Board
- The two Regional Partnership Boards
- The Supporting People Regional Collaborative Committee
- The two Area Planning Boards (Substance Misuse)
- Dyfed Powys Criminal Justice Board

The Strategy aims to embed Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence as "everyone's business" and a cross cutting theme that requires all areas of public policy to address and to shape and improve the delivery of services for those affected.

Through clearly defined expectations and agreed reporting arrangements, the strategy will hold agencies accountable in relation to the arrangements for the

protection, prevention, support and safeguarding of all individuals affected by Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence.

“The status quo is unacceptable” is how one stakeholder described the current Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence landscape in the region. Our first regional strategy provides an opportunity for us to challenge this status quo and to be bold and radical in our approach to driving forward improvements for all individuals affected by Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence.

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A Strategy for who?

The enactment of the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 (The Act) requires the public sector in Wales to work together in a consistent and cohesive way to improve the outcomes for individuals and their families subjected to Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse or Sexual Violence.

Section 5 of the Act requires local authorities and Local Health Boards to jointly prepare, publish and implement a Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence strategy.

Our decision to develop a regional, Mid and West Wales approach to Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence aligns with the regional approach to safeguarding and the strong partnership and collaborative working culture already established across such a large regional footprint.

Our decision also aligns with the Welsh Government's preferred approach for organisations to collaborate on a regional basis, complementing the direction of travel of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and improvements to the delivery arrangements for the Supporting People programme.

We anticipate the move to a regional approach will achieve the key outcomes specified below:

- promote improved effectiveness in service design, procurement and contracting
- contribute to improvements in population outcomes across the region, and reduces the proportion of service users who experience negative outcomes from services
- provide common streamlined commissioning arrangements
- promote effective working relationships, trust and good communication between organisations
- common approaches to encourage better use of data and analysis and promote more effective strategic decision making, ultimately reducing the proportion of service users who receive inappropriate or ineffective services.
- provide a reduction in duplication of commissioning activities
- cost savings and better investment due to pooling of budgets.
- Greater focus on funding to support the direct delivery of services as opposed to general co-ordination.
- Extension of reach of some services, and reduction of duplication of others.

- Strengthening accountability and co-operation of local and regional partnerships by encouraging areas to work together to prioritise their objectives and plan to address priority areas, which will help pave the way for implementation of the Act, in particular in relation to the development of local strategies.
- Enhanced governance and improved strategic leadership

The Mid and West Wales region comprises four local authority areas; Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire and Powys and two local health boards; Hywel Dda University Health Board and Powys Teaching Health Board and it is these authorities that are required, by the Act to jointly publish a Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence strategy.

The region has the same geographical footprint as Heddlu Dyfed Powys Police and, other key partners in tackling Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence in the region include the Police and Crime Commissioner, National Probation Service, Community Rehabilitation Company, Welsh Ambulance Service NHS Trust, Public Health Wales, Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service, Housing providers, the Specialist Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence providers and the wider third sector.

The region of Mid and West Wales is unique in that it covers a very large geographical area spanning almost half of the land mass of Wales, which, in itself, presents challenges within the context of meeting the needs of a wide and diverse mix of communities.

The region has a population of 515,871, according to the latest mid-year estimates², and is predominantly rural with a few centres of dense urban population. Much of the rural areas in mid and west Wales can be characterised as being isolated with poor infrastructure and transportation links.

The Welsh language is spoken widely in the region with communities in Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire being a traditional stronghold of the language.

Demographically, the region's population is aging with a high proportion of residents being in the over 65+ age category³. When compared to the rest of Wales the region has a higher than average proportion of older people and this trend is expected to continue over the coming years due to predicted increases in average life expectancy.

Some of the particular challenges identified and explored in the development of this strategy include rurality, accessibility of services, availability of services in the Welsh Language and meeting the needs of an increasing older population and marginalised / minority groups.

² Office of National Statistics, Population Estimates, June 2015 accessed via: RLP Website
<http://rlp.infobasecymru.net/IAS/metadata/view/indicator>

³ Office for National Statistics <http://web.ons.gov.uk/ons/data/web/explorer>

The strategy aims to create a high level, single point of reference for survivors, stakeholders and commissioners across the region;

For survivors - A transparent way forward defining their role in the planning, shaping and monitoring of services and the mechanisms by which they can hold us to account for delivery

For “relevant authorities” – A framework to support the requirements set out in the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015

For wider stakeholders – clear, co-produced and collectively agreed priorities and expectations to improve outcomes for all individuals and families experiencing any form of Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence

For commissioners - Whilst recognising that this is not a commissioning strategy, the content and associated strategic delivery plan should inform and influence Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence commissioning decisions and investment of resources across the region.

This is Mid and West Wales’ first joint strategy to be published in line with the Act and outlines how the region will support victims and survivors, tackle perpetrators, ensure professionals have the tools and knowledge to act, increase awareness of the issue and how to access support and help children and young people to understand inequality in relationships and that abusive behaviour is always wrong.

It is intended that this strategic framework, and the associated actions and activities detailed within the accompanying delivery plan, will support the Welsh Government and UK Government legislative, strategic and delivery framework to achieve the prevention of violence and abuse, the protection of victims and the support of all those affected.

Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence – Prevalence and Scale in Dyfed Powys

Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence are large scale, pervasive problems which, every year causes needless deaths and damage to thousands of lives across Wales. Whilst the incidence of is high, those who experience these forms of violence and abuse are known to under-report and official data therefore represents an under representation of the problem.

Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence has far reaching consequences for families, children, communities and society. The direct harm to the health and well-being of victims is clear, and at its most severe can, and does, result in death. However, impacts are wide-ranging not just on health and wellbeing but include human rights, poverty, unemployment, homelessness and the economy. It is also important to note that this affects not only adults and children exposed to and who experience abuse in the home or in intimate or family relationships but wider family members also and the experience of abuse and violence can often also be perpetrated in public spaces impacting the wider community.

Key data

- An estimated 1.2 million women and 713,000 men adults aged 16 to 59 years experienced domestic abuse in the last year, according to the year ending March 2017⁴
- Younger women aged 16-24 are most at risk and a woman is killed every 2.4 days in the UK, with 148 UK women killed by men in 2014
- Extrapolating this data to Wales shows that 11% women and 5% men a year experience 'any domestic abuse', while rates of 'any sexual assault' in the last year were also higher for women (3.2%) than men (0.7%)
- Approximately 124,000 women, men, boys and girls over the age of 16 in Wales, have been the victim of a sexual offence
- There has been a 26% increase in the number of recorded sexual offences involving children under 16 in Wales in the past year. Figures have more than doubled in the last decade⁵. Last year the rate of recorded sexual offences against children under 16 in Wales was 3.3 per 1000 children
- There were 251 rape prosecutions in Wales, with a conviction rate of 55.4%. This rate is below the average across England and Wales, at 57.6%. In the same year, there were 792 prosecutions for sexual assault, with a conviction rate of 79.2%, comparable to the average across England and Wales at 79.5%

⁴ Crime Survey for England and Wales

⁵ Bentley et al, 2016.

- UK Government figures estimate that each adult rape costs society over £96,000 in its emotional and physical impact on the survivor, lost economic output due to convalescence, treatment costs to health services and cost incurred in the Criminal Justice System, with sexual violence costing society in England and Wales an estimated £8.5bn
- In 2011 an estimated 137,000 girls and women were living with consequences of FGM in the UK and in 2011 an estimated 60,000 girls under the age of 15 were living in the UK who were born to mothers from FGM practising countries and therefore could be at risk of FGM. It is estimated there are 140 victims of FGM a year in Wales.
- 80% of cases dealt with by the Forced Marriage Unit involved female victims; 20% involved male victims. It is estimated there are up to 100 victims of forced marriage a year in Wales.
- It is estimated that over 39,000 older people are experiencing domestic abuse in Wales, a proportionately higher figure than the rest of the UK⁶

Domestic Abuse alone costs Wales £303.5m annually. This includes £202.6m in service costs and £100.9m to lost economic output. If the emotional and human cost is factored in there are added costs of £522.9m.

The Home Office Ready Reckoner (a key action in the Violence Against Women and Girls strategy) show the estimated cost of domestic and sexual violence in an area based on population.⁷ Estimated costs for Dyfed Powys are provided below based on Census 2011 population data for females 16-59 year old and therefore do not account for males experiencing domestic abuse or sexual violence or those over the age of 59. .

These figures do not include additional costs from stalking, female genital mutilation, "honour based violence" or forced marriage.

	Total costs (not including human and emotional costs)	Physical and mental care costs	Criminal Justice costs	Social services costs	Other costs (including housing, civil, legal and unemployment)	Human and Emotional Costs (not included in total)
Domestic abuse and	53,678,869	11,567,035	7,285,678	1,372,034	33,454,122	171,385,720

⁶ Prevalence study Department of Health and Comic Relief 2007

⁷ The costs of domestic abuse is calculated using figures from Walby (2004); The Cost of Domestic Violence and the cost of sexual assault is calculated using figures from Jarvinen et al (2008); Hard Knock Life. The cost figures which are for 2003/2004 have been multiplied by HM Treasury GDP deflation multiplier of 1.139 to bring in line with 2007/08 costs but other changes in costs have not been accounted for.

sexual violence						
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In Dyfed Powys it is estimated that:

- 18,000 people aged between 16 - 59 had, on average, been victims of Domestic Abuse each year throughout 2013 – 2016 (note that this does not include individuals 60 years of age or above)
- 6.8% of the local population are estimated to have experienced abuse in the last year, 10.3% of the Female population, 3.3% of the Male population.

In 2016/17, Heddlu Dyfed Powys Police recorded

- 4635 incidents of domestic abuse
- 69 sexual offences crimes including rape
- 405 stalking / harassment crimes

In 2015/16 Dyfed Powys Police recorded one crime of "Honour Based Violence" but no crimes of this nature in 2016/17 and one case of Female Genital Mutilation was reported in the region in 2016/17.

Between March 2013 and April 2017 there have been 9 Domestic Homicides in Dyfed Powys.

During the period July 2016 to June 2017, 1373 cases were discussed in the MARAC meetings in the region. This is 63 MARAC cases discussed per 10,000 adult female population, which is higher than the national average, and higher than the recommendation of 40 cases.

The Live Fear Free helpline received 1760 calls from the Dyfed Powys region in 2016/17, 12.5% of total calls to the helpline for that period and an increase in calls compared to 2015/16 (1507).⁸

In 2016/17 over 2500 individuals accessed specialist Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence services in Dyfed Powys

- 601 individuals accessed the Sexual Assault Referral Centres
- 172 adults and 90 children received counselling related to sexual violence and abuse however 273 adults and 63 children remain on the waiting list for this service
- 276 women and 18 men accessed accommodation based services in the region (refuge, safe house, dispersed or supported accommodation)

⁸ Caller location data is subject to callers disclosing this information, and excludes calls from specialist domestic abuse services and out of hours calls from refuges; "2 ring" calls, hang ups, missed and testing calls.

- 264 children and young people accessed accommodation based services with their non-abusive parent
- 1395 women and 100 men accessed community based support

Domestic Abuse was a parental factor in between 13% and 20% of Children in Need cases⁹ and a referral factor in between 7% and 34% in Children in Need cases¹⁰.

It is important we acknowledge that the quality of data collection on the nature and prevalence of Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence is problematic both nationally and regionally and further work is required in the region (as in other areas) to ensure regional data collection aligns with the national framework of indicators and outcomes. It is in response to this that one of the “enablers and sustainers” for this strategy is identified as the development of a clear reporting framework to include coordinated, consistent and meaningful data from all relevant agencies.

⁹ <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Health-and-Social-Care/Social-Services/Childrens-Services/Children-in-Need/parentalfactorsofchildreninneed-by-measure-year>

¹⁰ <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Health-and-Social-Care/Social-Services/Childrens-Services/Children-in-Need/referralfactorsofchildreninneed-by-measure-year>

POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

In Wales, the UK and internationally, Violence against Women is considered to be a violation of human rights and a cause and consequence of inequality between women and men. It happens to women because they are women, and women are disproportionately impacted by all forms of violence in this context.

The term “Violence Against Women” which is used internationally refers to the range of crime types which are predominantly, but not exclusively, experienced by women and girls. Such gender-based violence includes domestic abuse, rape and sexual violence, stalking, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, crimes committed in the name of ‘honour’, trafficking, sexual exploitation, including commercially through the sex industry, and sexual harassment in the workplace and public sphere.

Whilst it is important that this Strategy acknowledges and communicates the disproportionate experience of women and girls this does not, in any way, negate violence and abuse directed towards men and boys, or violence and abuse perpetrated by women. This Strategy recognises that anyone can experience and be affected by domestic abuse, rape and sexual assault, sexual abuse, forced marriage, child sexual abuse, stalking and harassment, sexual harassment and exploitation regardless of sex, age, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, disability, religion or belief, income, geography or lifestyle.

At a global, European, UK and national level, legislation and policy acknowledges that Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence operates as a means of social control that maintains unequal power relations between women and men and reinforces women’s subordinate status. It is explicitly linked to systematic discrimination against women and girls. Failing to make the connections between the different forms of violence women and girl’s experience, and how this is explicitly linked to the unequal position of women and girls in society, can hinder the effectiveness of interventions and prevention work.

It is also important to recognise that different groups of women experience multiple inequalities which can intersect in ways that lead to further marginalisation.

Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence includes the following crime types:

- Sexual violence
- Domestic abuse
- Sexual harassment and stalking
- Trafficking and/or sexual exploitation
- Female genital mutilation (FGM)
- Forced marriage

- So-called 'honour' based violence (HBV) and crimes

The International Context

This Strategy is intended to align with the **UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women** (1993), most recently enshrined within the UN Sustainable Development Goals 2030¹¹ (2015), and the **Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence** -The Istanbul Convention (2014).

The UN Declaration¹² defines violence against women as:

Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological, or economic harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.

This encompasses, but is not limited to:

(a) Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation;

(b) Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the general community, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere, trafficking in women and forced prostitution;

(c) Physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the State, wherever it occurs.

Article 4 of the Istanbul Convention¹³ covers:

Fundamental rights, equality and non-discrimination

1. Parties shall take the necessary legislative measures and other actions to promote and protect the right for everyone, particularly women, to live free from violence in both the public and the private sphere.
2. Parties condemn all forms of discrimination against women and take, without delay, the necessary legislative and other measures to prevent it, in particular by:
 - embodying in their national constitutions or other appropriate legislation the principle of equality between women and men and ensuring the practical realisation of this principle;

¹¹ <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/gender-equality/>

¹² <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/48/a48r104.htm>

¹³ <http://www.coe.int/en/web/Istanbul-convention/home>

- prohibiting discrimination against women, including through the use of sanctions, where appropriate;
 - abolishing laws and practices which discriminate against women.
3. The implementation of the provisions of this Convention by the Parties, in particular measures to protect the rights of victims, shall be secured without discrimination on any ground such as sex, gender, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, state of health, disability, marital status, migrant or refugee status, or other status.
 4. Special measures that are necessary to prevent and protect women from gender-based violence shall not be considered discrimination under the terms of this Convention.

The **European Union Directive on Victims' Rights** which establishes minimum standards and obligations on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime in the UK.

The UK Context

For non-devolved services the Strategy is supported by the Home Office Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Cross Departmental Strategy 2016-2020.

The Mid and West Wales Strategic Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Group members include Dyfed Powys Police, Dyfed Powys Police and Crime Commissioner, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Services and the Wales Community Rehabilitation Company. These arrangements build on the strong, long standing partnerships across the region between the devolved and non-devolved sector and reflect other strategic regional arrangements in the Public Services Boards, Regional Partnership Boards and Safeguarding Boards.

Associated legislation that supports delivery at a UK level includes:

- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 ("the 2003 Act") introduces FGM Protection Orders and an FGM mandatory reporting duty inserted into the 2003 Act by the Serious Crime Act 2015.
- Crime and Security Act 2010 – which introduces Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPOs) and the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS).
- Welfare Reform Act 2012 – A paradigm change to the current social security system which will change the way welfare benefits are claimed and paid throughout the UK.
- Anti-social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 - which introduces Sexual Harm Prevention Orders (SHPOs) and Sexual Risk Orders (SROs).
- The Modern Slavery Act 2015 - Considers slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour and human trafficking, includes provision for the protection of victims.

At the time of writing this strategy we await the UK Government's consultation on the Domestic Violence and Abuse Bill, a Bill expected to consolidate relevant legislation, introduce new measures to help victims and create a Domestic Abuse Commissioner role. The Bill provides an opportunity to introduce measures that would allow the UK to ratify the Council of Europe's convention on preventing and combating violence against women, "the Istanbul Convention".

Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse – The Inquiry will examine the extent to which institutions in England and Wales have taken seriously their responsibilities to safeguard and protect children. We will monitor the progress of the inquiry and once the findings are made we will look at what actions we can take in Mid and West Wales to address any recommendation.

Guidance that informs the delivery of this Strategy includes:

- The 2014 **National Institute for Clinical Excellence** (NICE) guidelines: "Domestic violence and abuse: how health services, social care and the organisations they work with can respond effectively".¹⁴ This guidance, which applies across England and Wales, highlights that domestic abuse is a complex issue requiring sensitive handling collaboratively with health and social care professionals.
- **FGM statutory guidance**¹⁵ issued under section 5C(1) of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 and extends to England and Wales and includes updated procedural information.
- Updated statutory guidance on conducting **Domestic Homicide Reviews** (DHR). This considers the changing landscape and refers to new tools that have been implemented, such as the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme and Domestic Violence Protection Orders, as well as the new coercive and controlling offence introduced in the Serious Crime Act 2015. This statutory guidance is accompanied by key findings from analysis undertaken by Home Office researchers on a sample of forty DHRs from across England and Wales completed between 2013 and 2016.¹⁶
- Updated **Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme** guidance – often referred to as "Clare's Law" – which sets out procedures that could be used by the police to disclose information about an individual's previous violent and abusive offending behaviour, where this may help protect their partner, or ex-partner, from violence or abuse.

¹⁴ <https://www.nice.org.uk/Guidance/PH50>

¹⁵ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/573782/FGM_Mandatory_Rep_orting_-_procedural_information_nov16_FINAL.pdf

¹⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-homicide-review-lessonslearned>

- The 2016 England and Wales **National Statement of Expectations**¹⁷, sets out what local commissioners (Police and Crime Commissioners, Local Authorities or health commissioners) need to put in place to ensure their response to violence against women and girls is collaborative, robust and effective.

The Welsh Context

The Welsh policy and legislative landscape has prioritised Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence for a number of years and the objectives and aims of this strategy encompass both the responsibilities and expectations of all partners working to address Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence across the region.

In 2010, the Wales “Right to be Safe Strategy” set out an integrated, cross government programme of action to tackle all forms of violence against women and children. This was refreshed in November 2016 and published as the Welsh Government’s National Strategy on Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence, 2016 – 2021, itself a requirement of the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015.

This Regional Strategy will also support the delivery of a number of key priorities in the Welsh Government “Taking Wales Forward” five-year plan, as well as the following relevant legislation:

The **Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015** sets out seven wellbeing goals relevant to the prevention of Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence and support of survivors. The Act puts in place a “sustainable development principle” which requires public bodies to follow five ways of working to ensure they work collaboratively with people and communities, avoid repeating past mistakes and to tackle some of the long-term challenges being faced. The five ways of working in the context of Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence are:

Prevention: Understanding and recognising that prevention and early intervention are the overarching principles to tackling violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence and improving outcomes victims, survivors and their families

Integration: Integrating activity across the statutory and third sector and ensuring the coordination of programmes of work such that they achieve the maximum benefit. Consider how the violence against women domestic abuse and sexual violence objectives impact upon each of the well-being goals, and on the objectives and priorities of other key statutory strategies and priorities.

¹⁷https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/574665/VAWG_National_Statement_of_Expectations_-_FINAL.PDF

Collaboration: Collaborating across the regional and local statutory boards and with partners and survivors to improve the planning and coordination of services and ensuring that the actions and objectives of this strategy are met.

Involvement: Listening to victims, survivors and others affected by violence and abuse to better understand their experiences in order to continually review and inform improvements in responses. Recognition that Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence is “everyone’s business” and involving all agencies that can make an impact.

Long Term: Considering the long-term outcomes for victims, survivors and their families and in particular any children and young people exposed to Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence.

The **Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014** provides a legal framework for improving the well-being of people (adults and children) who need care and support, carers who need support, and for transforming social services in Wales. The Population Needs Assessments¹⁸ for West Wales and Powys set out seven core themes and identifies Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence as one of these.

The **Housing (Wales) Act 2014** enshrines in legislation the role of the local authority in preventing and alleviating homelessness.

The Welsh Government guidance which supports the practical delivery of the legislation advises local authorities and their partners that:

“Local authorities should be led by the wishes and feelings of the victim of domestic abuse when determining accommodation arrangements. The first option, where appropriate, should be for the perpetrator to be removed from the property to enable the victim to remain in their home. The Local Authority must also consider improving the security of the applicant’s home to enable them to continue living there safely. Alternatively, the Local Authority must assist the victim in sourcing alternative accommodation, whether on a permanent or temporary basis”.¹⁹

The **Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016** - sets out a new approach to joint contracts which will help survivors by enabling perpetrators to be targeted for eviction.

The **Wales Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE)** study²⁰ examined the exposure in childhood to a range of ACEs and presented research on the developmental well-being of children growing up in such households. Domestic abuse, emotional, physical and sexual abuse, parental separation, as well as parental incarceration, are all indicators that affect childhood development due to the

¹⁸ <http://www.wwcp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/West-Wales-Population-Assessment-March-2017.pdf>
http://pstatic.powys.gov.uk/fileadmin/Docs/Adults/Integration/Powys_Population_Assessment_Summary_-_Final_V1.pdf

¹⁹ Welsh Government 2016. Code of Guidance for Local Authorities on the allocation of housing and homelessness

²⁰ Public Health Wales (2015) Wales Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) study

stressors they cause. In addition, those exposed to four or more ACE's are more likely to adopt health harming behaviour in later life and are more likely to be future victims or perpetrators of crime and violence.

In developing the strategy, we have paid regard to the following as required by the Act;

- the most recently published national Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence strategy;
- the most recent assessments for the local authority's area under section 14 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 (assessment of needs for care and support, support for carers and preventative services);
- the most recent strategic assessments prepared in accordance with regulations under section 6 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 relating to reducing crime and disorder in the local authority area;
- the most recent strategic assessments prepared in accordance with regulations under that section relating to combating substance misuse in the local authority area;
- the most recent strategic assessment prepared in accordance with regulations under that section relating to the reduction of re-offending in the local authority area

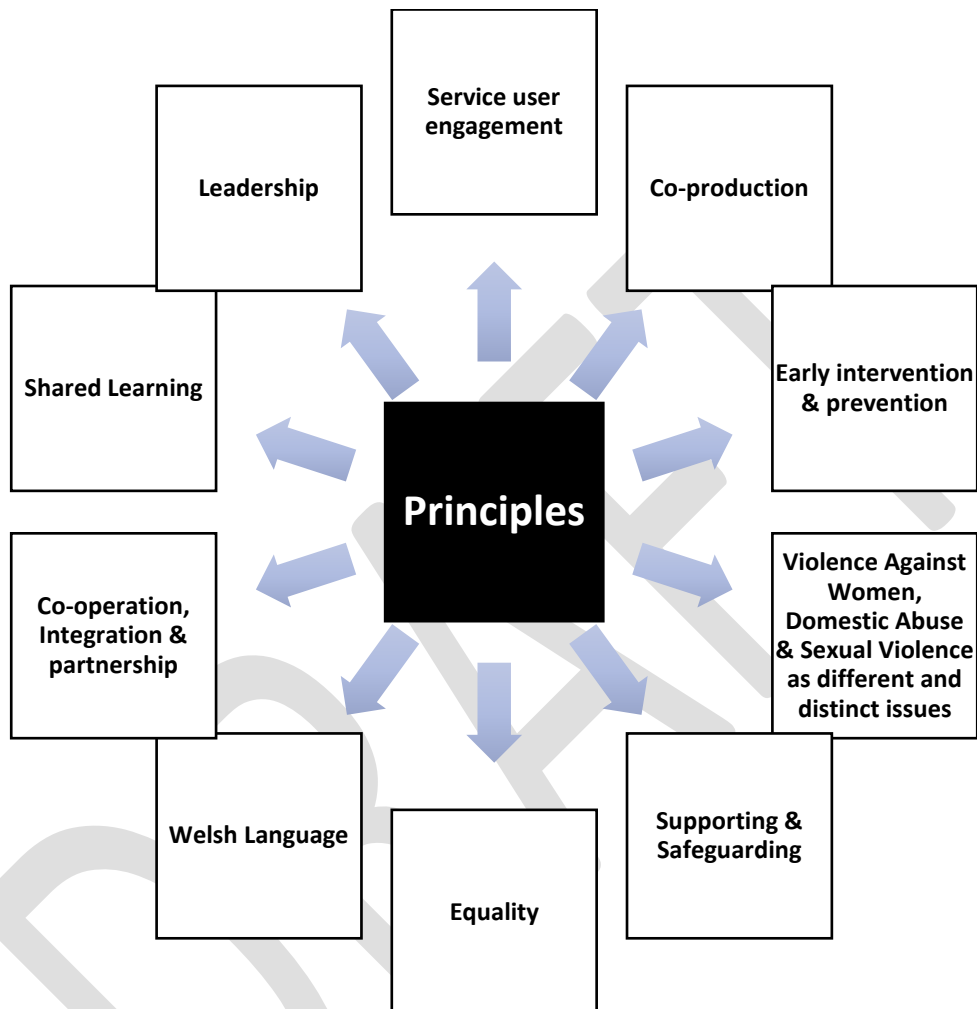
In addition, we have also considered the following regional strategic assessments and plans;

- Assessments of Local Well-Being undertaken to inform Well-Being Plans in line with the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- "Safeguarding our Communities Together" Dyfed Powys Police and Crime Commissioner Police and Crime Plan 2017-2021
- Draft National Community Cohesion Strategy
- Regional Safeguarding Boards' Annual Plans
- Mid and West Wales Regional Collaborative Committee Strategic Plan 2017 - 2020

It is intended that this strategic framework, and the accompanying delivery plan, will, in addition to supporting the Welsh and UK Government legislative and strategic frameworks also underpin, influence and directly contribute to key regional priorities for citizens and communities of Mid and West Wales.

KEY PRINCIPLES

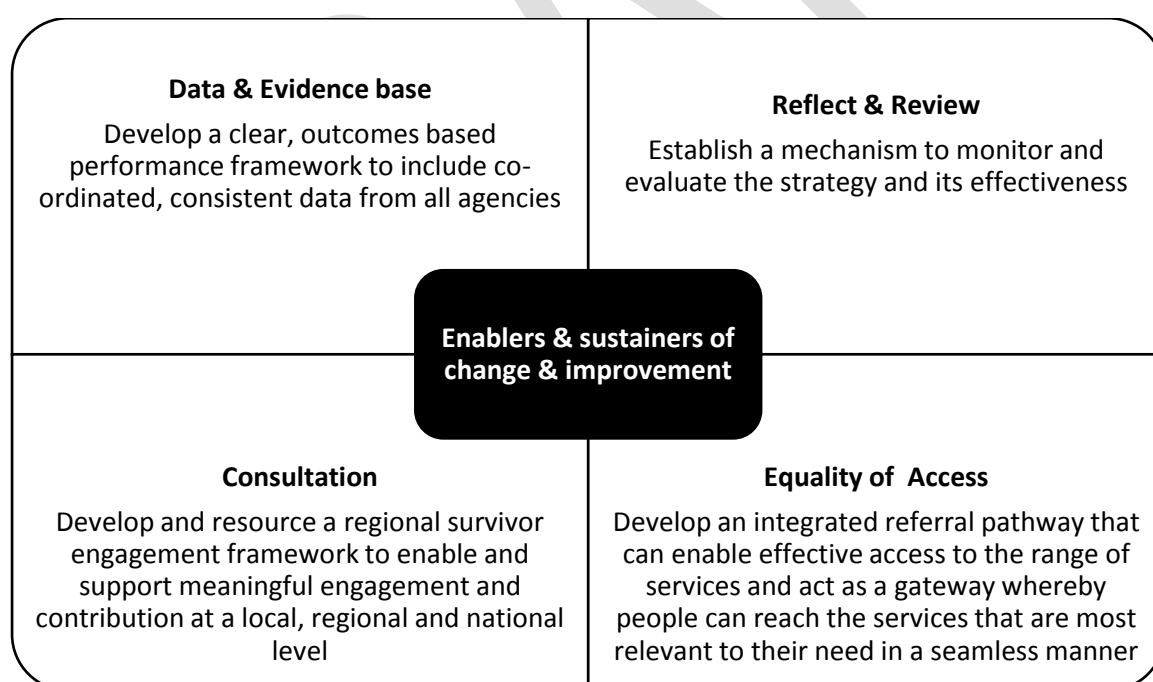
Ten key principles have been identified through consultation and engagement with stakeholders and survivors. These will underpin the priorities set out in this strategy and our approach to delivery.



- **Survivor Engagement** as integral; survivors are involved, heard and are central to why we are making the changes needed
- A commitment to **Co-production**; solution focussed, people given equal status and are meaningfully involved at all stages
- **Early Intervention and Prevention** – the foundation for the effectiveness of the strategy
- Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence – a **whole system response** that recognises the different and distinct elements and responses required to meet needs of survivors for all forms of violence against women, sexual violence and domestic abuse.

- **Supporting and Safeguarding;** ensuring that all individuals are safeguarded from violence and abuse, receive an efficient, effective and coordinated response and are supported to access a range of services to meet their needs
- **Equality** - positive approach to diversity, strategy that is responsive to all and equally accessible provision across the region to meet needs
- **Welsh Language** – ensuring the provision of services in Welsh to those who need it
- **Co-operation, Integration & Partnership;** joint endeavour for improvement and innovation, promoting positive change at a community level
- **Shared Learning;** promoting a culture of continuous improvement, reflection and review to improve outcomes for individuals and families
- **Leadership;** a need to ensure regional to local continuum, accountability and clarity of direction

Whilst developing our strategic priorities we identified four components which can be seen as **enablers and sustainers of change and improvement**. They involve improving and integrating core processes to facilitate the development of consistent and cohesive ways to improve outcomes for individuals and their families subjected to Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse or Sexual Violence. These enablers are;



ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

Engagement and consultation was carried out with survivors, specialist service providers, generic service providers, commissioners, stakeholders and members of the Mid and West Wales Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategic Group.

To develop regional priorities that accurately reflected local experiences, a series of locality based workshops were held in addition to targeted focus groups and interviews.

The range of engagement activity provided an opportunity for stakeholders, commissioners, providers and survivors to directly contribute to the development of the strategy, identify what works, highlight gaps in current provision and opportunities for improvement. Participants were also provided with an opportunity to articulate their vision for the strategy and to identify priorities for action.

Participants were highly engaged in providing observations of the current and future landscape and the information gathered during this process provided a broad spectrum of opinions which are reflected within our identified strategic priorities.

Key themes from the engagement events are outlined below:

- A lack of understanding amongst professionals of the nature, effects and long-term consequences of Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence leading to reduced confidence in professional contacts.
- Both recognition and concern over the preventative and pastoral role of education in dealing with issues of Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence.
- The lack of consistency and availability of safe interventions across the region aimed at holding perpetrators to account and providing opportunities to change behaviours.
- The lack of specialist provision for children and young people who are experiencing Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence
- The persistent challenge to prioritise and resource early intervention and prevention.
- Inconsistency of commissioning practices and sustainability of funding.
- Complexity of current referral pathways resulting in confusion, response “overload” and duplication of services
- The lack of coordinated approaches to service provision and the need for an integrated referral pathway into services
- Lack of awareness amongst individuals experiencing Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence, their friends, families and professionals of what services are available and how to access information and support

- The inconsistency of service availability across the region leading to a “postcode lottery” of provision
- The lack of “whole family” approaches across the region
- The critical role of leadership and accountability for Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence across the region
- Recognition that what seem like opposing views are often a product of parties with a variety of roles seeing things through a different lens; a need to utilise and harness these ‘differences’ to work creatively and collaboratively cross sector in a solution focussed manner to best meet individual and family needs
- The need to maintain and sustain equal and respectful partnerships with professionals who are experts in their field, in particular agencies in the third sector who have a wealth of specialist knowledge, strategic expertise and operational skills
- The value of involving partners at an early stage and to work in partnership with service providers to co-produce the regional approach to addressing gaps in provision, avoiding duplication and maximising resources

Our strategy recognises the vital importance of collaborating with survivors and service users, who are 'experts by experience' in terms of what has worked for them, their pathways through services and how easy (or difficult) it has been to find the right service and move towards independence and freedom from abuse.

“Survivors have lived through violence and abuse. They know first-hand what it is like and what may help others in a similar situation”²¹

To inform the development of this strategy, nine focus groups were held across the region with 56 survivors who have been involved in services. At least one group was held in each local authority area with specific focus groups held for male survivors and individuals who had experienced sexual violence and abuse. The purpose of the focus groups was to better understand the experiences of survivors of domestic abuse, sexual violence and all forms of violence against women in the region when accessing support, their views about preventing Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence and priority considerations for the strategy.

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Survivors spoke about the importance of being able to access services at the time you need them, accessible for the most vulnerable groups and for services to be visible and available in local areas.

Survivors expressed concerns about waiting lists for some services in particular counselling for sexual violence and abuse and about the barriers faced by some survivors in accessing services if they were still in a relationship with the perpetrator;

"don't tell someone to come back to drop in when they are ready to leave and that there's nothing you can do until then"

Survivors spoke about the need for more community based support, bringing services into communities across the region to address some of the regional challenges presented by rurality and transport infrastructure.

Both male and female survivors supported this priority but emphasised the need for "separate, safe space".

3. Improved awareness of and response to domestic abuse, sexual violence and all forms of violence against women by professionals involved in the family justice system (CAFCASS Cymru, judges and court personnel, contact centres)

Survivors spoke negatively about their experience of the family court system, child contact proceedings and the lack of understanding and consideration given to domestic and sexual abuse. Survivors spoke about their experience of perpetrators using the family court system to continue to abuse and control them and how the courts seemed dismissive of domestic and sexual violence.

4. Safe child contact with parents/carers following separation, in cases of domestic abuse and sexual violence.

5. Accessible 'refuge service' support in every area, accompanied by safe, affordable, longer-term housing options for survivors of abuse, that provide flexibility, choice and meet survivors' needs.

Survivors spoke about the need for a range of safe accommodation options to meet needs of individuals and families and to address barriers currently facing some individuals e.g. larger families, individuals with complex needs, individuals who are working.

5. Survivor groups and peer support available in every area, to reduce isolation and maximise independent spaces that increase confidence, esteem, and empowerment.

Survivors spoke about the need for "safe space" in communities to allow them the opportunity to maintain the positive changes that have been achieved and "grow our own support networks" through peer mentoring and skill sharing. Both male and female survivors supported this priority but emphasised the need for "separate, safe space". Survivors also called for increased opportunities to improve employability through training / qualifications and safe work experiences.

6. Compulsory, age appropriate, prevention education in all schools and colleges

7. Counselling and therapeutic services for survivors that is available, in every area, when needed, is age-appropriate, and helps build resilience and recovery from abuse and trauma.

8. Greater focus on stopping perpetrators' behaviour and holding them to account by public services and opportunities to change their behaviour based around victim safety

9. Improved training for all services on all aspects of Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence, informed by survivors' experiences.

Survivors spoke about all professionals being able to recognise Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence and understand its impact and consequences. One survivor summarised that all professionals should be able to "see it, know what it is and do something"

10. Challenge attitudes, behaviours and culture towards domestic abuse, sexual violence and all forms of violence against women.

Survivors spoke about the need to change public perceptions and the availability of visible information for individuals, families and friends.

Survivors spoke about professionals' attitudes towards them as victims of violence and abuse and the need to challenge and change perceptions, assumptions and behaviours. Survivors consistently wanted professionals to "Listen, believe and don't judge".

11. Preventing Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence from happening in the first place, through increasing awareness of the issues and, importantly for survivors, friends and families, increasing awareness of help available in local communities and how to access information, help and support. Survivors spoke about the need for "community contact points" as access routes to information and support.

12. Support for families as a whole – survivors wanting to see a "whole family" approach to support and intervention.

Survivors also identified some systemic barriers that prevented them from accessing support and protection;

- The lack of service provision in the Welsh language; a survivor spoke about not being able to access services for themselves and their children in Welsh. Welsh is their first language and the relevant services were not available to them in Welsh
- Survivors feeling that they that they were not believed or taken seriously by public services and as a result the responsibility was on them to prove the violence and abuse

- Survivors spoke about not being able to access Legal Aid and the additional trauma this caused

Survivors spoke about the role of specialist Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Services. They spoke about the importance of simply being listened to, believed and taken seriously;

"I didn't realise the enormity of my situation"

"I was treated like a human being"

Survivors spoke about the importance of having someone who understood their experience and who could advocate on their behalf.

One survivor simply said that specialist services had

"saved my life".

Throughout the engagement events there was consistent feedback from survivors about their ongoing role in the development, delivery and monitoring of the regional strategy. Survivors felt that, often, their voices were not heard and that they, because of their experiences, could and should be part of shaping the solution.

In the region, specialist Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence providers have their own survivor engagement mechanisms as a means of shaping and informing their own service development and contribute to wider local, regional and national consultations.

In Carmarthenshire, the Women's Survivors Support Project is a self-supporting group of survivors of domestic abuse and is the only group of its sort in the region.

Initiatives like SEEDS (Survivors Empowering and Educating Services) being piloted by Welsh Women's Aid are providing a means by which survivors in Wales are having their voices heard by those planning and providing services and, more recently, Welsh Government has begun initial work to establish a national survivor engagement framework.

Stakeholders also felt that survivors' voices and experiences should be integrated into decision making across the region and there needed to be a mechanism to support and enable meaningful engagement of any individual who had experienced violence or abuse.

It was further recognised that engagement had to be inclusive and consider any particular needs or issues that may be experienced by people with protected characteristics and who may be marginalised or excluded, including BME people, children and young people, men, older people, migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, disabled people and those who identify as LGBT+.

Whilst recognising existing and developing approaches for engagement there is no consistent or cohesive mechanism for survivors' voices to be heard by decision makers in Mid and West Wales.

We are committed to hearing and enabling the voices and experiences of survivors to inform decision making and practice improvements in the region.

We will develop and resource a regional survivor engagement framework, strengthening and improving existing mechanisms and explore creative ways for individuals to engage and contribute.

DRAFT

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

This Strategy has been informed by a Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence needs assessment which aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of current and future needs of citizens across the region.

The Mid and West Wales Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategic Group commissioned an independent consultant to undertake the needs assessment, the process of which has collated intelligence and data to inform the nature and scale of need with regards to Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence, mapped available resources and the current services being offered locally, regionally and nationally. The needs assessment was completed in collaboration with partners, stakeholders and survivors, ensuring a practical understanding of the specific and varying needs of those affected by Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence to inform the strategy development and commissioning to improve outcomes.

The needs assessment has made full use of data from a wide range of sources and has built upon the work already undertaken in the region for the recent well-being and population needs assessments. There is a commitment to ensure that this strategy and its underpinning needs assessment will be used as the basis for forward planning and to inform the Well Being and Area Plans across the region.

We acknowledge that any needs assessment provides only a snap shot in time and this strategy recognises the need to ensure ongoing collation and analysis to continually review the relevance of our identified strategic priorities to meet needs.

Resources to address Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence

A snapshot of funding in relation to specialist service provision in Mid and West Wales 2017/18 is provided below.

In identifying resources committed to violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence we recognise that resources committed by statutory authorities in providing universal services to survivors of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence are not disaggregated and therefore cannot be included within this resource summary.

Funding Source	Amount 2017/18	Purpose
Welsh Government Supporting People Programme Grant	£1,621,603 £55,522	Women experiencing domestic abuse Men experiencing domestic abuse
Welsh Government – VAWDASV Team	£313,400	To Local Authorities for the implementation of the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Act
Welsh Government – Families First	£95,300	Via Local Authorities for services for children and young people
Police and Crime Commissioner	£200,000 £142,339	IDVA Services Sexual Violence and Abuse Services
Welsh Government - direct funding to providers	£195,000	Direct funding for domestic abuse and sexual violence services
UK Government	£36,799	Sexual violence abuse and exploitation services
Trusts and Foundations	£329,000 approx.	

This table shows a resource of over £2.9 million available in the region to tackle violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

The information provided highlights the stark disparity between the amount of funding currently allocated for domestic abuse services compared to services to address sexual violence and abuse and other forms of violence against women. This strategy provides an opportunity for all public services to address the balance between the funding available to domestic abuse and wider service provision in the region in order for all survivors to have timely access to appropriate services.

The following information is taken from Welsh Women's Aid's "Report to the National Task and Finish Group to inform the development of a model for sustainable funding for Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Specialist Services in Wales". The regional snapshot is based on the responses of the following services;

BAWSO, Calan DVS, Carmarthen Domestic Abuse Service, Hafan Cymru, West Wales Domestic Abuse Services, Montgomeryshire Family Crisis Centre, New Pathways, Seren, Threshold DAS.

The table demonstrates the reduction or increase in funding nationally and regionally between 2016/17 and 2017/2018 to demonstrate national and regional differences.

% Funding by source into VAWDASV third sector specialist services between 2016/2017 and 2017/18 funding levels	All Wales	Dyfed Powys
	%	%
Total income for the organisation / VAWDASV service	-3.04%	+3.73%
Council grants/contracts	-35.29%	-34.35%
Council grants/contracts- <i>children or families first</i>	-13.56%	-34.98%
Police and Crime Commissioner/Police	-8.84%	-5.73%
Supporting People (VAWDASV support element only)	-3.64%	+4.84%
Refuge rent/service charges for VAWDASV supported housing only (paid by residents/HB/UC)	+2.38%	+1.61%
Regional Health Boards	+0.50%	None
NOMS Cymru / CRC / IOM Cymru Board	-20%	None
Welsh Government direct funding (VAWDASV team)	+8.61%	+30.45%
Welsh Government direct funding (Dept. of Health & Social Services)	-73.52%	-80.34%
Public Health Wales	All funding lost	None
Home Office	None	None
Ministry of Justice	+20.82%	Same level

Dept. for Work and Pensions	+100.00%	None
European funding (EU / Council of Europe)	+149.75%	*+393.33%
Charitable / Trust funders	+6.54%	+3.90%
Others (e.g. private, donations, other income generation)	-5.96%	

*This figure accounts for increased successful application for the Active Inclusion Programme

- Dyfed Powys had an overall increase in funding for specialist services of 3.73%. Much of this increase comes from one service having secured some additional funding for expanding work areas from several sources
- A reduction in Local Authority funding across the region – with children and young people being impacted in the region more so than other areas in Wales.
- The levels of funding for work with children and young people vary considerably between regions in Wales; the funding for children's services in North Wales for example is three times the amount in Dyfed Powys
- Neither specialist sexual violence or domestic abuse services in Mid and West Wales receive any funding from the regional health boards.

Breakdown of which service areas funding has increased or reduced in 2017/18 compared to 2016/17

Funding by third sector VAWDASV Specialist Services type	All Wales	Dyfed Powys
	%	%
Sexual violence services (rape crisis, advocacy, counselling) – adults (18+)	-16.82%	-42.56%
Sexual violence services (rape crisis, advocacy, counselling) – children and young people (0-17)	1.39%	-33.99%
SARC – ISVA support (adults and children)	-48.81%	-27.85%
Refuge-based support (DVSV) - adults and children	-1.03%	+1.26%
Domestic abuse community support (outreach, advocacy, floating support, groups) – adult survivors (18+)	-7.07%	+1.11%
Domestic abuse outreach, advocacy, floating support – children and young people (0-17)	+6.22%	+4.20%

MARAC – dedicated IDVAs for high risk DA victims	+1.00%	+8.94%
Dedicated support on forced marriage	+63.17%	None
Dedicated support on 'honor-based violence'	None	None
Support for women & girls at risk of FGM	-26.58%	None
Support for survivors in the sex industry	-3.33%	None
Support for child sexual exploitation	+0.55%	-10.94%
Support for survivors of trafficking	+16.95%	None
Perpetrator interventions – adults	-6.23%	-0.48%
Victim safety work to complement perpetrator work	-15.94%	+4.00%
Prevention work in communities	+40.38%	-4.47%
Other	-7.84%	+228.38%

- All sexual violence and abuse related services in the region have seen a significant reduction in funding, disproportionately so compared to other services
- Funding for refuge and community based support in the region has increased contrary to the national trend
- Funding for MARAC and IDVA's has increased more than the national average
- There is no funding in the region for services on forced marriage, FGM or "honour based violence" (See Priority 6)
- Similarly, there is no funding for support for survivors in the sex industry or survivors of trafficking (see Priority 6)
- Dyfed Powys was the only region in Wales where there was a reduction in funding for preventative work. Given the requirements in Welsh legislation to focus on this area and the priorities identified in this strategy it is imperative that commissioners carefully consider how they resource primary and secondary preventative work as integral elements of a "One Public Service" commissioning model.
- The significant increase in "other" funding relates to successful applications to the Active Inclusion Programme

The reductions in funding are explained in a number of ways by providers;

- Loss of Home Office funding for IDVA's / ISVA's where it has not been sustained through mainstream public-sector commissioning as anticipated
- Loss of Welsh Government Health and Social Services funding for the sexual violence specialist sector that has moved from Welsh Government allocation with the intention that Health Services would allocate this; to date this anticipated change has not been realised

From 2018/19 the Welsh Government will allocate a regional budget for violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence. The purpose of this funding is to support the delivery of this regional strategy. However this regional allocation cannot be considered in isolation or as the sole contribution of Local Authorities to addressing VAWDASV; instead it should be considered as one element of resource alongside which other regional resources from the public and voluntary sector are required to maximise contribution to the delivery of this strategy.

Given the complex delivery landscape, the provision of services to survivors and perpetrators of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence as part of other generic provision and the fact that violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence will often not be a discrete service but part of an element of other case work it is not possible to quantify the total cost of provision across the region.

An understanding of the fragility and precariousness of funding to respond to violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence is required across the region. The totality of funding currently allocated by Local Authorities to violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence relies on specific Welsh Government grant funding. With the expected implementation of an Early Intervention and Prevention Grant in 2019/20 it is imperative that the region understands the resource and funding requirements to deliver this strategy and that the priorities are integrated within any planning structures for an early intervention and prevention grant programme.

To ensure that we meet the priorities set out in this strategy, we have to fundamentally change the way we think about the funding of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence, better understand the cross cutting nature and impact across public services and use available resources differently to increase the provision of early intervention and prevention as part of a "One Public Service" commissioning model.

COMMISSIONING TO MEET NEEDS

Whilst it is important to recognise that this is not a commissioning strategy, its content and associated strategic delivery plan will inform the development of regional approach to commissioning Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence provision and influence commissioning decisions and investment of resources across the region.

We are committed to developing and implementing a “one public sector” commissioning model rather than commissioning in silo; a consistent, collaborative and integrated approach to the commissioning of Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence services across the region; maximising resources available from a range of public service commissioners including Local Authorities, Health, Police and Police and Crime Commissioners and determining who is best placed to lead the commissioning of different service elements as part of an integrated, collaborative commissioning model.

It is important to consider key commissioning principles, drivers and barriers in terms of delivering the strategic priorities.

As a region we will integrate the following core principles into our commissioning framework for Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence services:

- An understanding of Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence as gendered and both a cause and consequence of women’s inequality. It should recognise the human right to live free from abuse and violence as the underlining principle to commission prevention, protection and support services
- A commitment to provide all survivors, including children and young people, equal access to holistic, appropriately resourced, high quality, needs-led, strengths-based and trauma informed, gender responsive services across the region
- A commitment to engage with and be informed by survivors, including children and young people, to inform needs analysis, service design and whole system responses
- An understanding of the expertise of the specialist Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence sector to inform needs analysis, service design and whole system responses
- A commitment to children’s rights and recognition of the specific needs of children and young people experiencing or witnessing Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence. Similarly, recognition of the rights of children and young people in preventing Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence happening to or affecting them in the future

- A commitment to collaborative and equal partnership across appropriate agencies to ensure the effective investment in responses to Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence and enable integrated pathways of support that promote prevention and earlier intervention
- Commissioning should be based on the principle that no survivor is turned away from accessing critical support services delivered by refuges, rape support centres and FGM and forced marriage units. This should include better access to integrated pathways of support to meet the needs of survivors experiencing multiple disadvantages
- Commissioning should not be done in silos – it is also about mainstream provision and links with health, education, probation, police etc.
- Where good services are already being delivered, in accordance with recognised standards commissioners should consider how to best facilitate service-continuity, considering the resource implications of tendering so that a proportionate approach is taken to commissioning
- Commissioning should ensure that essential services and the costs of management and overheads should be met through a full cost recover model.

The core principles are based on the following feedback from stakeholders and survivors in relation to the commissioning of services and the stability, consistency and continuity of funding in the region;

- Development of an integrated outcomes framework agreed by all commissioners to ensure consistent, meaningful and comparative reporting
- Adopt commissioning models that allow for flexibility and development to meet changing needs rather than prescriptive funding that limits creativity / innovation and results in services that are restricted in the services they can provide
- Provide stability to the sector in terms of the duration of the contract(s) and funding for the lifetime of the contract for Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence services
- Development of a service model whereby any eligibility criteria associated with accessing service provision is based solely on a need to access rather than a level of risk, complexity or the availability of services
- Recognise the full range of funding mechanisms available to commissioners. There are significant resource requirements for regional commissioners and service providers if the full tendering process is followed. Regional commissioners still have the opportunity to grant fund; funding services through providing grants can be a simpler and more straightforward process than working through a complex procurement process.
- Involvement of survivors as integral to the commissioning process

- Recognition and acknowledgement of the expertise of the specialist Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence sector as partners in the commissioning process
- Acknowledgement of the opportunities within the specialist Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence sector to attract additional funding aligned to the strategy
- The need for increased regional collaboration across the public and third sector to identify and secure additional resources
- All Public Services acknowledging their role as commissioners of services
- Recognition of the need for services and interventions across the continuum of support and developing a sophisticated commissioning model that not only enables a shift in resource allocation but also maximises opportunities to increase investment through alignments with other priorities in the region.
- The need to develop a Regional VAWDASV Resource and Funding Plan (including capital spend) to better understand the short, medium and long term investments required and the risks associated with existing arrangements

In developing this strategy, we recognise the bespoke resources that are available to support the development of our commissioning model including the Lloyds Foundation toolkit, National Statement of Expectations and Welsh Government Commissioning Guidance.

We further recognise that the knowledge and expertise to guide commissioning across the region resides with the partners within the Strategic Group and the establishment of a Commissioning Group will be key to developing and implementing our principles and approach for commissioning Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence services.

CURRENT PROVISION

Current responses to violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence are delivered by statutory and specialist violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence services.

Statutory duties are organised through criminal and civil justice services, numerous functions of local authorities including housing and homelessness, education and social services, Fire and Rescue Services and health provision including Local Health Boards, the Welsh Ambulance Service Trust and Public Health Wales.

The role of the specialist sector enhances statutory delivery bringing expertise and knowledge that is not possible in the statutory sector and an ability to effectively engage with victims and survivors.

Specialist Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Services are defined by Welsh Government as “a service which is specifically designed to support someone who is, or has been affected by domestic abuse, sexual violence and/or any other form of violence against women”²².

There are currently nine providers in the region delivering a range of services that address violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence;

CALAN DVS, Carmarthen Domestic Abuse Services, Gwalia, Hafan Cymru, Montgomeryshire Family Crisis Centre, New Pathways, Seren, Threshold DAS and West Wales Domestic Abuse Service

As the specialist sector has historically operated on smaller geographies some services operate in smaller areas than the whole region, others more latterly, provide services across local authority boundaries.

The specialist sector delivers a range of services

- Accommodation based services – Refuges (separate provision for men and women), Safe Houses, Dispersed Units and Supported accommodation
- Community based support – Floating support, outreach, drop in, counselling and mediation services for individuals effected by violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence
- Independent Domestic Violence Advisers – The main purpose of independent domestic violence advisors (IDVA) is to address the safety of victims at high risk of harm from intimate partners, ex-partners or family members to secure their safety and the safety of their children. Serving as a victim’s primary point of contact, IDVAs normally work with their clients from the point of

²² Welsh Government Draft Commissioning Guidance (2017)

crisis to assess the level of risk, discuss the range of suitable options and develop safety plans²³.

- Services for Children and Young People – including specialist support, play therapy, mediation and counselling
- Whole family approaches – through the Early Family Intervention Project and Inspiring Families Programme
- Innovative services in response to identified needs e.g. Rural Link workers in Carmarthen and Montgomeryshire, “Be Better at Budgeting”; a Money Coach Project based in Carmarthenshire and the community based initiative “Ask me” in Powys
- Active Inclusion Projects – Accredited activity, skill building and qualifications to improve employability

Sexual Violence and Abuse Services

- Sexual Assault Referral Centres located in Carmarthen, Aberystwyth and Newtown -providing services to victims/survivors of rape or sexual assault regardless of whether the victims / survivors choose to report to the police or not.
- Independent Sexual Violence Advisers (ISVA) – Essential elements of the ISVA role include providing tailored support to meet the needs of individuals before, during and after the court process, providing impartial and accurate information and ensuring the safety of the victims and survivors and their dependents
- Counselling – for victims of sexual violence and abuse and adult survivors of child sexual abuse

The Dewis Choice Project - Delivered by Aberystwyth University, the three and a half-year long *Choice* project runs from 2015 to 2018. Working in partnership with older people, volunteers, local communities and professionals in two pilot areas (Carmarthenshire and Cardiff) the project is aimed at increasing choices for older people who have experienced abuse in the home to access justive opportunities and also explore options that promote wellbeing.

The project has developed from the following evidence

- Many older people who experience abuse within their own homes are often unaware of how to find out what help and support is available to them.

²³ National Definition of IDVA work SafeLives

- Many do not want to involve the police or pursue someone through a civil court case – so no other solution is available to them and their case is not taken up by anyone.
- This type of elder abuse is very complex, often involving a family member as the perpetrator, where the older person may be reluctant to try and do anything to stop the abuse because that would impose a strain on the wider family, possibly create a family breakdown and deprive them of family support.

The project aims to provide new options and solutions which reflect the needs of the individual being abused and are more tailored to the local services available in their area.

In each pilot area the intervention and a “wrap around” support service aims to provide a holistic justice package with an emphasis in safety and the provision of a variety of justice options.

Women’s Pathfinder Project - an integrated, women-centred, multi-agency approach to working with women who come into contact with the criminal justice system and is currently delivered by Gwalia in Pembrokeshire

Helplines – Information, support and signposting to local services is available to survivors, perpetrators, professionals and “concerned others” from a range of National Helplines including the Live Fear Free Helpline, RESPECT, Dyn Project and Survivor’s Trust.

Men’s Sheds – There are currently 8 Sheds operating across Mid and West Wales. Men’s Sheds are social groups or enterprises set up in local communities for the benefits of men. The project facilitates support for men to create a safe haven, tackle isolation and supports them to pursue interests. Each group is self governed, self-supported and sustainable.

The information provided describes a range of services operating across Mid and West Wales from primary prevention to recovery and incorporating perpetrator intervention. The range of services demonstrates a comprehensive approach to tackling VAWDASV however many are operating in some but not all Local Authority areas and there is a lack of a consistent or coordinated approach. Many services are at risk of short term funding. Outside of the Supporting People framework and funding commitments of the Police and Crime Commissioner there is limited service planning and access to specialist provision can depend on the locality of the survivor rather than the individual need.

Public Sector

Outside of the specialist sector public services across Mid and West Wales provide support and intervention as part of universal and targeted services.

Criminal Justice Response

The Police, together with Integrated Offender Management (IOM) Cymru and the National Probation Service coordinate a number of specific responses to violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence as part of their approach to

offender management including WISDOM, Priority Perpetrator Identification Toolkit (PPIT) and MAPPA.

The National Probation Service, through the Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service and the Wales Community Rehabilitation Company, provide bespoke interventions and support for offenders with violence against women domestic abuse and sexual violence in their backgrounds.

It is the Police in Mid and West Wales who coordinate the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs), discussing high risk cases referred from all partners to establish what further support is needed and to coordinate that support.

The MARAC's operate in each of the four local authority areas. Chaired by Dyfed Powys Police Detective Inspectors, the frequency of MARAC's in the region vary from fortnightly to monthly.

Goleudy, Heddlu Dyfed Powys Police victims' support service provides victim support services in a centrally managed location so that the most appropriate support can be identified and delivered to victims of crime. Goleudy receive all victim's details electronically direct through Police systems and provide a further coordinating mechanism and pathway to support for victims of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence where consent is given.

There is inconsistency in the delivery of Specialist Domestic Violence Courts across the region. Specialist Domestic Violence Courts (SDVC's) form part of a collaborative approach to tackling the complexities of domestic violence and abuse. The SDVC's should bring together the Crown Prosecution Service, Courts, Police, victim support and specialist services to help ensure the safety of the victim by identifying, tracking and risk assessing the case, support the victim and share information effectively. Effective SDVC's are shown to increase safe outcomes for survivors, increase conviction and reduce attrition and withdrawal rates for cases. SDVC's offer a range of additional measures for victims and witnesses including the option to provide evidence from behind screens or via video link and the role of the Independent Domestic Violence Adviser is critical to the process.

The All Wales ACE Project

Funded by the Home Office Police Transformation Fund this 2 year project aims to establish an ACE lens approach across policing and partner agencies. The national project seeks to achieve four objectives;

- A competent and confident workforce to respond more effectively to vulnerability using an ACE informed approach in both fast and slow time policing.
- Organisational capacity and capability which proactively meets changing demands.
- A 24/7 single integrated 'front door' for vulnerability that signposts, supports and safeguards encompassing 'blue light' welfare and health services.
- A whole system response to vulnerability by implementing ACE informed approaches for operational policing and key partners.

Each Police force in Wales will identify a themed approach and develop an early adopter site to inform the national learning.

Social Care

Local Authority Social Care Services provide care and support to adults and children at risk of abuse or neglect and have a range of preventative and support services which those who have experienced violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence can access including; online counselling, school based counselling, youth services.

The Welsh Government's Families First programme has supported the development of the Team around the Family (TAF) model. This model attempts to assess the needs of children, young people and families and draw in a package of co-ordinated, outcomes based support to help them have their needs met and prevent the escalation of difficulties.

For Families with higher levels of need the statutory Children's Social Care Service provides critical services to keep children safe. The nationally developed Integrated Family Support Service, which operates in all authorities, focusses on delivering intensive support for families where substance misuse is a significant factor and where children were at risk of becoming looked after. Substance Misuse and Domestic Abuse are often co-occurring in these complex families and consequently, a number of IFSS teams have extended their remit to include Domestic Abuse.

Local Authorities, in partnership with Health resource specialist practitioners within Flying Start teams and, in Carmarthenshire, two Domestic Abuse Project Workers are located within Children's Services.

Models such as "Signs of Safety" are providing strengths based tools to assess need and support families to make positive change.

The development of the information, advice and assistance services across the region provide an opportunity to embed violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence in "core business".

Health

Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence within the two local health boards is given focus through safeguarding structures. Mandated routine enquiry exists through midwifery and health visiting services as well as some sexual health, A+E and women's health services.

Both Health Boards use the All Wales FGM Clinical Pathway in line with the mandatory reporting requirements.

More widely within the health boards the health needs of survivors and perpetrators are met and the links to the effects and longer-term consequences of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence are acutely felt e.g. injury, counselling and therapeutic interventions, medical examinations relating to sexual violence and assault, substance misuse and mental health.

As part of the Hywel Dda Health Board Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence policy a care pathway has been established with the Live Fear Free Helpline; providing a direct referral point for information and pathways to support for staff and patients. It is intended for this pathway to be piloted in 2018.

As a relevant authority for the purpose of the Act, the Welsh Ambulance Service Trust already has an all Wales Care Pathway providing an opportunity for individuals to disclose violence and abuse and access information and support via the Live Fear Free helpline. The Service, in partnership with SafeLives will shortly pilot an initiative in Mid and West Wales to consider how they can best engage with the MARAC process.

Fire and Rescue Services

Recent DHR's in Wales have highlighted the key role of Fire and Rescue Services in the prevention and protection of individuals experiencing violence against women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence²⁴. Mid and West Wales Fire Service provide home safety checks and target hardening equipment to protect individuals from the threat of violence and abuse.

Housing and Housing Related Support

Across Mid and West Wales, the Supporting People Programme invests approximately £1.7 million in services for women and men who have experienced domestic abuse. These services include refuge provision for men and women, floating support, drop in services, family support and target hardening. In addition, the programme funding across the region enables people to receive other support that reduces their risk of becoming homeless including direct financial support and support for people with needs that often co-occur with violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence e.g. mental health, substance misuse, debt etc.

The Supporting People planning framework adopted across the region considers population needs, performance information, stakeholder input, service user feedback, best practice, and legal and policy drivers. Plans exist at the regional level and within Local Commissioning Plans.

Survivors spoke about the need for a range of safe accommodation options to meet needs of individuals and families and to address barriers currently facing some individuals e.g. larger families, individuals with complex needs, individuals who are working.

Survivors spoke about positive experiences of housing services in relocating quickly and safely whilst others explained how they had been offered housing close to the perpetrators of abuse.

Older survivors emphasised the lack of safe, appropriate housing to meet their needs with the alternative being staying in the abusive situation;

“nowhere to go”

²⁴ See Bridgend DHR 0213 and Torfaen DHR into the death of Mrs B

“having to live together until financial settlement”

“living in a nightmare until court hearing”

Services for Perpetrators of Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence

The Police, together with Integrated Offender Management (IOM) Cymru and the National Probation Service coordinate a number of specific responses to perpetrators of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence as part of their approach to offender management including WISDOM, Priority Perpetrator Identification Toolkit (PPIT) and MAPPA.

The National Probation Service, through the Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service and the Wales Community Rehabilitation Company, provide bespoke interventions and support for offenders with violence against women domestic abuse and sexual violence in their backgrounds.

In addition to these there is one community based, domestic abuse focused, perpetrator programme working towards the Respect quality and accreditation standards for safe and effective perpetrator programmes.

The Choices Perpetrator Programme, part of the wider Early Family Intervention Project (E-FIP) is delivered by Threshold DAS in Llanelli and is for males over 18 who want to change their abusive behaviours and beliefs. The programme, delivered over 34 weeks and consisting of 60 hours of highly structured interventions is delivered in a group setting / one to one. It is designed specially to challenge men's understanding of abuse and relationships and reduce domestic violence, teaching ways of being non-abusive and supporting positive change over time.

The “Respect” programme run in Pembrokeshire by the Team around the Family works with perpetrators of abuse but is not accredited.

Training

A suite of multi-agency training is delivered by the specialist sector across the region raising awareness on violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

In addition to this, relevant authorities including all Local Authorities, Health Boards and NHS Trusts and Fire and Rescue Services are required to implement the Welsh Government's Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence National Training Framework with training plans and annual reporting to Welsh Government on implementation.

Healthy Relationships Education

Across the region there are a range of universal programmes being delivered to children and young people including Incredible Years, KiVA and the All Wales Core Liaison Programme delivered by Police and partners.

Within schools, healthy relationship sessions are predominantly delivered as part of the Hafan Cymru Spectrum Programme or via Welsh Women's Aid STAR (Safety

Trust and Respect) programme. The STAR programme is also used by Youth Services and Youth Offending Teams in the region.

In 2016/17 533 SPECTRUM sessions were delivered across the region to over 6700 pupils and 516 staff.

In addition, schools across Mid and West Wales have their own Personal and Social Education and Sex and Relationships provision and online resources around respectful and healthy relationships that they can access at their own pace.

The Mid and West Wales Education Safeguarding Leads are key in promoting and monitoring approaches to the implementation of the Welsh Government's "Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence – A Whole Education Approach" through Education Safeguarding Audits.

The regional approach to Healthy Relationships education is explored further in Strategic Priority 2.

Services for Children and Young People

Stakeholders spoke about the inconsistency of specialist provision for children and young people experiencing violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence in the region, with funding and resources varying significantly between local authority areas.

Programmes have been developed in the region aimed at working with young people demonstrating abusive behaviours. The A2P programme (Carmarthenshire County Council) and the Purple Heart Project (Threshold DAS) focus on a mixture of intimate and adolescent inter-familial abuse.

The overview of current provision combined with the experiences of survivors and stakeholders highlight the following;

- Despite a range of services operating in Mid and West Wales across the continuum of need there is a lack of a consistent, coordinated approach to the planning, commissioning or delivery leading to a "postcode lottery" of provision
- Sexual Violence services in the region cannot meet the current demand and are operating significant waiting lists
- There are significant gaps in the provision of specialist support services for children and young people who have experienced violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence
- There are no services for individuals who have experienced so called "honour based violence", FGM or forced marriage
- A lack of consistency and availability of safe interventions across the region aimed at holding perpetrators to account and providing opportunities to change behaviours

- Need to focus more on the principles of the services rather than eligibility criteria based on risk, complexity or availability of services.
- Uncoordinated public service and specialist sector approaches resulting in confusion, response “overload” and duplication of services in some areas

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Responses to all survivors of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence²⁵

Our communities in Mid and West Wales are diverse and the Public-Sector Equality Duty ensures that equality considerations are built into everything that we do. When considering who is experiencing violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence we will ensure that services can appropriately respond to different population groups and that, where appropriate, specialist provision is available.

Women

There is a legal requirement on all public authorities, when carrying out all their functions, to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on the grounds of sex, and to promote equality of opportunity between women and men. This requires public authorities to recognise that the two groups are not starting from an equal footing and identical treatment will not always be appropriate. Single sex services are lawful where there is a clear need and equality duties do not mean that single sex services should be cut, or that services should necessarily be provided on the same scale for both men and women, in recognition that women make up the majority of victims of domestic violence and rape and sexual abuse.

Children and young people

Since 2004 Local authorities and their partners are required to have regard to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) as the basis of its work for children and young people.

Violence against women and children, including domestic abuse or sexual violence in any family unit is a child protection issue and should be dealt with using the relevant safeguarding procedures. Many survivors have children, and ensuring the well-being of those children must be a priority for both public services and the victim.

We need to ensure that all partner agencies can identify children who are at risk so that appropriate action can be taken.

It will be crucial to ensure that age appropriate services and support are consistently available for children who need them.

Men

- An estimated 1.2 million women and 713,000 men adults aged 16 to 59 years experienced domestic abuse in the last year, according to the year ending March 2017²⁶
- Extrapolating this data to Wales shows that 11% women and 5% men a year experience 'any domestic abuse'

²⁵ Extracts from Welsh Government National Strategy on Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence 2016-20 pg. 12-15

²⁶ Crime Survey for England and Wales

It is often hard for men to get help in these situations because of fears about being ridiculed, not being believed or being treated unfairly by agencies.

Whilst recognising that there are services in Mid and West Wales accessible to men, male survivors spoke about the need for separate, distinct and safe places to access information and support as male survivors.

Men spoke about the

"difficulty accessing services" and "hitting brick walls when trying to access services"

One man said

"Men become victims – they're not given anything to become survivors"

In a recent survey²⁷, when asked how they would like to access help, respondents from Mid and West Wales wanted dedicated space for drop in, information and support separate from services for women. The priorities identified in the Section "Survivors as Experts" include the priorities identified by male survivors including; support to recover from trauma e.g. counselling and mental health services, practical support, a place of safety, advocacy, peer mentoring and support and support to keep their children safe.

Older People

There is sometimes confusion between the experience of domestic abuse in later life and "elder abuse" (a term which encompasses all forms of violence, abuse and neglect experienced by older people). Such confusion can result in victims of abuse falling between the systems which are designed to offer them protection and consequently do not receive appropriate support to help them to stop the abuse or make them safe.

Statistics bear this out; the latest Home Office data indicates that 28 older people (aged 60+) in England and Wales were killed by a family member²⁸. This represented 24% of all victims. However, the reporting of domestic abuse incidents involving older people represented less than 4% of all reported incidences. In Wales older people represented 33% of domestic homicides.

As we work towards enhancing and strengthening the role of our Public Service in preventing these issues, it is crucial that we work to overcome such confusion and, instead, ensure our systems and working relationships are integrated and the knowledge and skill set of our employees is geared towards identifying potential abuse as early as possible and providing tailored, effective support as soon as possible. It is crucial that those working with older people can recognise signs of abuse and are able to offer appropriate advice.

The experience of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence can be even more damaging to victims where it is experienced alongside other complex

²⁷ Insert survey details

²⁸ Homicide Index, Home Office, 2011/12 to 2014/15 14

needs or vulnerabilities. Whilst it is wrong to homogenise older people as “vulnerable” or “frail” it is important that Public Services and specialist providers are prepared and able to link safeguarding systems to offer a suite of support which addresses all the issues which may be faced by an older person experiencing violence and abuse.

In considering whether services are meeting the needs of older people we will consider the key findings of the Dewis Choice project to date namely;

- That older people are falling through the gaps of two pieces of legislation Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence and the Social Services and Well-Being Acts
- Older people are not accessing services and are the least likely group to report the abuse
- That existing services are not suitable for older people
- The need for Healthy Relationships in later life
- The need for “whole family” holistic services, establishing positive networks and increasing survivors space for action

Black and minority communities

Research has found that:

“BME women are disproportionately affected by different forms of abuse e.g. forced marriage, “honour based” violence, FGM, sexual exploitation in the form of commercial sex work, trafficking etc. the multiple vulnerabilities from these overlapping contexts makes it harder for women to flee violence” ²⁹

Survivors may face additional barriers to seeking help, such as racial discrimination, religious stereotyping, fear of community dishonour and rejection, and an insecure immigration status, all of which may prevent them from accessing protection. Additionally, survivors from ethnic minority communities are likely to have barriers to receiving, or asking for, services, including:

- Lack of information and awareness about services and options due to language barrier and lack of familiar community networks.
- Insecure immigration status and no recourse to public funds
- Involvement of family members in interpretation and support to access services that defeats the purpose of confidentiality and elevates risks of harm.
- Pressures of socialisation and from family on the pretext of honour and shame. In such cases, women fear that their experiences will not be validated in an alien, mainstream context.

²⁹ Roy. S and Ravi.T (2012 Vital Statistics Key finding report on black, minority ethnic and refugee women’s and children’s experiences of gender based violence (London) Imkaan

- Concerns around suitable cultural environment for praying, specific socio-religious food habits and familiar environment for children in temporary accommodation. BME women not only fear the perpetrator, but racism and marginalisation in society that undermines their confidence to lead an independent life.
- Fear of isolation and racism within a mainstream service.
- Increased likelihood that perpetrators use other forms as part of the abuse e.g. threats of deportation and abandonment, isolation, entrapment, multiple interested parties and violence condoned by family and community.

The BME population for Mid and West Wales is 4.6% and 3.4% of referrals to MARAC are from BME cases, however, there is no specialist BME funded service in the region to respond to the needs of BME communities.

Migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women

Providers spoke about their ability to assist migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women who have suffered, or are suffering violence against women and who have no recourse to public funds. This group can often be subject to issues such as FGM, so called 'honour' based violence and forced marriage, as well as the already complex issues of domestic abuse and sexual violence. Visa issues, cultural, language and communication barriers can further complicate and isolate these women.

With the region's commitment to the resettlement of 100 Refugee families we need to ensure that information is accessible to migrant, refugee and asylum seeking communities and pathways to appropriate support are identified.

Disabled people

Disabled people experience disproportionately higher rates of domestic abuse and also experience domestic abuse for longer periods of time, and more severe and frequent abuse than non-disabled people. Disabled women are twice as likely to experience domestic violence as non-disabled women and they are likely to experience abuse over a longer period and to suffer more abuse and injuries as result of abuse than disabled men.³⁰

Abuse and the Workplace

Employees who suffer from violence against women, domestic abuse, or sexual violence often have related performance issues or are absent from work, and perpetrators can often target their victims in the workplace or seek to limit their access to work. A recent report found that 52% of women had experienced sexual harassment at work including inappropriate comments, unwanted behaviour or sexual advances³¹. This has an impact on the employer's business activity as well as

³⁰ Welsh Women's Aid, Disability Wales and University of Glamorgan (2011) Domestic Abuse of Disabled Women in Wales

³¹ TUC and Everyday Sexism Report 2016

the employee's wellbeing. Employers can therefore play an important role in addressing these issues in their own workforce.

Sex Industry, Exploitation and Trafficking

People involved in sex work can be particularly vulnerable to sexual and other violent crime and may in fact be victims of child sexual exploitation or modern slavery. Our priority in this context is ensuring appropriate protection and access to support services for this often-vulnerable group.

LGBT+

The Welsh Government funded research in 2014 which highlighted the barriers faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people when accessing domestic abuse and sexual violence services. The report highlighted individual, interpersonal, structural and cultural barriers and made a series of recommendations to improve accessibility to services, including flexibility, confidential access and inclusivity.

Female survivors who commit offences

We know that many victims of sexual, physical and emotional abuse can also be drawn into offending behaviour. Statistically it is shown that women involved in the criminal justice system are more likely to have experienced some form of abuse during their childhood, and many also report that their offending was to support their partner or someone else's substance misuse. Women tend to have shorter sentences than men and they are more likely to self-harm in custody. The Integrated Offender Management(IOM) Cymru partnership's Women's pathfinder Scheme offers an opportunity for a more effective joined-up approach to addressing these women's complex needs.

Gypsy and Travellers³²

No reliable statistics are available regarding the prevalence of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence in Gypsy and Traveller Communities however a 2007 study in Wrexham found that 61% of married English Gypsy women and 81% of married Irish Gypsy women interviewed had experienced domestic abuse.

Gypsy and Traveller women face barriers to leaving an abusive relationship and seeking help and further challenges when help is sought including;

- The Gypsy Traveller community as a barrier to seeking help
- Accessibility issues e.g. low literacy rates, contacting services
- Cultural and social taboos
- Experiences of inequality and racism

In the Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Count report published in September 2017 there were a total of 237 Gypsy and Traveller Caravans in Mid and West Wales.

³² Welsh Library Equality and Human Rights Commission Wales Domestic Abuse and Gypsy Travellers

We have recognised that engagement with survivors to continually improve our understanding of need and inform the development of services must be inclusive. In developing our regional survivor engagement framework, we will consider existing mechanisms that could enable us to strengthen our engagement with these identified groups e.g. Community Cohesion networks, regional and local Junior Safeguarding Boards, Community groups and Academic partners and explore creative ways for individuals to engage and contribute.

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GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

Strong leadership is required to embed Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence as “everyone’s business” that requires all areas of public policy to address. Subsequently, ownership of this strategy must sit at the highest level to secure robust strategic buy in from partners and ensure a significant contribution to shape and improve the delivery of services for those affected.

The strategic direction and oversight of this strategy sits with the Mid and West Wales Safeguarding Executive.

A Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategic Group, accountable to the regional Safeguarding Executive has been established to provide a governance structure to develop, approve and monitor Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence regional working. A key role of the Group is the development of the Strategy which is a statutory requirement placed on Local Authorities and Local Health Boards under Section 5 the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015.

In recognition that effective responses to Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence must, by necessity, involve the full range of partners including devolved and non-devolved organisations and third sector specialist organisations, the membership of the Strategic Group aims to reflect the widest possible perspective and range of information including membership able to provide national context. We recognise that there is an opportunity to further strengthen the membership of the Group ensuring that all relevant stakeholders and survivors are appropriately represented.

The establishment of the Mid and West Wales Strategic Group presents a further opportunity to consider how best the four localities contribute to the regional agenda and ensure effective communication both operationally and strategically at a regional, local and organisational level.

The Strategic Group reports to the regional Safeguarding Executive however, there are currently no formal links with other key regional and local Boards. For this strategy to underpin, influence and directly contribute to key regional priorities there needs to exist formal lines of reporting from the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategic Group to the following:

- The four Public Service Boards
- CYSUR Regional Children’s Safeguarding Board
- CWMPAS Regional Adult’s Safeguarding Board
- The two Regional Partnership Boards
- The Supporting People Regional Collaborative Committee
- The two Area Planning Boards (Substance Misuse)
- The Dyfed Powys Criminal Justice Board

Closer alignment and formal reporting between these Boards will strengthen effective partnerships and present opportunities to align future work plans around early intervention and preventative services.

Ensuring that the Strategic Group informs and contributes to other regional and local plans / strategies is critical if we are to embed violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence as “core business” and we will identify and create links with relevant workstreams e.g. Suicide and Self Harm.

Effective governance arrangements are critical to the scrutiny of the strategy, its delivery and the difference it makes to individuals and families in Mid and West Wales and we recognise the need to establish a mechanism to monitor and evaluate the strategy and its effectiveness.

The strategy and its accompanying delivery plan present an opportunity to develop a governance structure that can drive forward implementation. We recognise an opportunity to establish a small number of focused groups, with appropriate representation who can support the Strategic Group in the implementation of priorities.

Whilst the Strategic Group is responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the Delivery Plan we recognise the need for a “lead” role in the region; a role that will provide strategic leadership for Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence, drive and coordinate implementation and harness the contributions of all partners to the strategic vision.

We recognise the need to strengthen existing arrangements for the governance, accountability and leadership of Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence; ensuring that we have a coherent structure providing clarity and direction for the region and we will do this by;

- Reviewing existing governance arrangements including membership and representation, alignment and reporting structures to other key regional and local boards and strengthening violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence as a cross cutting theme of the Safeguarding Executive
- Appointing a Regional Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Adviser

HOW WE WILL ACT TOGETHER TO TACKLE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, DOMESTIC ABUSE AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE: OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence impacts upon all services, not least adult and children's social services, housing, criminal justice, education, the police, health services, and voluntary and community organisations. This strategy will further enable a coordinated community response across Mid and West Wales in order to reduce the prevalence and impact of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence and increase the awareness and ability to act swiftly and effectively in response to individuals and families experiencing these forms of violence and abuse.

The Strategic Group want to ensure that all agencies and organisations within the region respond effectively to the challenges and issues both within their own organisations and in collaboration with partners to prevent harm, reduce risk and increase the immediate and long-term safety of people living within the region.

In line with The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, we intend to deliver on the actions within this strategy using the "sustainable development principle" and follow five ways of working to ensure we work collaboratively with people and communities, avoid repeating past mistakes and tackle some of the long terms challenges we face.

Accordingly, we will achieve this by:

Prevention: Understanding and recognising that prevention and early intervention are the overarching principles to tackling violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence and improving outcomes victims, survivors and their families

Integration: Integrating activity across the statutory and third sector and ensuring the coordination of programmes of work such that they achieve the maximum benefit. Consider how the violence against women domestic abuse and sexual violence objectives impact upon each of the well-being goals, and on the objectives and priorities of other key statutory strategies and priorities.

Collaboration: Collaborating across the regional and local statutory boards and with partners and survivors to improve the planning and coordination of services and ensuring that the actions and objectives of this strategy are met.

Involvement: Listening to victims, survivors and others affected by violence and abuse to better understand their experiences in order to continually review and inform improvements in responses. Recognition that Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence is "everyone's business" and involving all agencies that can make an impact.

Long Term: Considering the long-term outcomes for victims, survivors and their families and in particular any children and young people exposed to Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence.

The seven well-being goals contained within the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 underpin the objectives which are enshrined within the key thematic purposes of the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual

Violence (Wales) Act 2015 (the Act) which are to improve the arrangements for the prevention, protection and support of individuals affected by all forms of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

Prevention

Violence against women and girls has been described as 'perhaps the most pervasive violation of human rights across the globe' yet it is entirely preventable.

The priorities identified within this strategy and accompanying Strategic Delivery Plan will ensure that the Strategic Group develops a collaborative approach to preventing violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence from happening in the first place by challenging the attitude and behaviours which foster it, intervening early, where possible, to prevent its recurrence, reducing its impact and working toward a future where it is eliminated.

Protection

Protection of survivors is a critical aspect of the coordinated response to violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence and the Strategic Group is committed to working collaboratively to protect and safeguard those who are experiencing violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence from suffering further harm, including any children within the family.

Support

Providing effective support services for people who have been affected by violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence is complex, as people's experiences and needs can be vastly different.

Survivors will choose to engage with services in a variety of ways and there needs to be a range of services that are accessible and can respond effectively and universally to these needs. Public services, community organisations and independent specialist services all have a key role to play.

We want survivors to be able to access the service that they need, delivered in the right place and at the right time on their recovery journey.

Strategic Priorities

In developing the strategy, we have considered the requirements of the Act and wider Welsh Government policy, the result of the needs assessments of the region and the experiences of survivors and stakeholders.

Our priorities are based on the information available to us at a specific point in time and we recognise that, during the lifetime of this strategy, we may identify changing or emerging themes that require a response. Our annual report and strategic delivery plan provides us with an opportunity to dynamically respond to any identified change in need.

Based on the rationale detailed below we have used the six strategic aims of the National Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy 2016-2021 to inform our regional priorities.

Strategic Priority 1: Increase knowledge and awareness and challenge attitudes towards equality and violence against women domestic abuse and sexual violence amongst citizens of Mid and West Wales

We need to increase the awareness and understanding of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence across Mid and West Wales for individuals experiencing violence and abuse, their friends and families, our communities, employers and professionals.

Alongside this we must also promote equality; both gender equality and equality in its widest sense and challenge gender stereotypes. Violence against women and girls is both a cause and consequence of inequality between women and men. It happens to women because they are women, and women are disproportionately impacted by all forms of violence in this context. Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence won't end until gender equality is a reality and promoting gender equality is therefore a critical to the prevention of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence and the reason why it is a key underpinning principle for this strategy.

Survivors told us

"I didn't realise it was an abusive relationship"

"Even I had a preconceived idea of domestic abuse and I didn't recognise it happening to me"

Survivors spoke about the need to challenge bias and assumptions of professionals and how they felt some communities were "complicit" in the abuse; knowing but not wanting to acknowledge or challenge what was happening within their own communities.

Survivors recognised that people feel uncomfortable in talking about domestic abuse let alone sexual violence or wider forms of violence against women and supported community based responses like the "Ask Me" scheme in Powys that is working to change attitudes and behaviours through Ambassadors having conversations with others in the community and creating safe disclosure points to access services.

Survivors recognised the value of initiatives like the White Ribbon Campaign involving men and boys and Welsh Government TV adverts e.g. "Cross the Line" and "This is Me" as ways to increase awareness and public consciousness but felt that campaigns needed to be better coordinated at a regional level with consistent messages and clearly identified routes to accessible support.

The recent global social media campaigns #metoo' #timesup #countmein and #breakthesilence have embedded sexual harassment, violence and abuse into the public consciousness.

We also recognise the role of the media in promoting equality, challenging gender norms and accurately reporting cases of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence and we will work with media partners.

The regional communication plan must have the flexibility to engage with emerging campaigns and maximise opportunities to engage with media outlets to ensure accurate reporting and signpost individuals to appropriate services.

Survivors and stakeholders recognised the role of family, friends and employers in identifying violence and abuse and how these “concerned others” should be able to access resources and practical information that could enable them to best support the individual survivor and facilitate safe access to information and support.

The need to challenge perceptions of “who” experiences violence and abuse was a constant theme from survivors and stakeholders across the region; the need for communities to understand that anyone can be a victim and for awareness raising to reflect experiences of older people, women, men, children and young people, BME, LGBT and other minority and marginalised groups. There was also widespread support for messages that focused on coercive control and other forms of non-physical abuse.

Survivors and stakeholders spoke about a lack of clarity and awareness of support services in the region;

“I had no idea who or where to go and access help”

“not a clue where to start...didn’t know where to go...not sure what help was available”

“why don’t organisations know where to go in a crisis – this should be bread and butter to them”

When discussing how the region should address some of these issues stakeholders and survivors consistently spoke about two critical factors;

Language – neither stakeholders nor survivors felt that the terminology “violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence” was helpful. Many did not identify with the language and felt that it was disconnected from their own experiences, whilst stakeholders questioned its ability to relate to professionals. Survivors felt that language and messaging grounded in “lived experiences” was critical to the effectiveness of campaigns and male survivors suggested that in reframing the language some of the barriers faced by men would be addressed. Stakeholders recommended integrating violence against women domestic abuse and sexual violence into “safeguarding” language for it to be mainstreamed.

Visibility - Survivors spoke about the need for up to date information to be visible in all communities utilising community buildings, supermarkets, schools and colleges, health settings, sports venues and public services as well as effective online platforms enabling victims, survivors and others to access information, help and pathways to support. Survivors spoke about one, consistent “unique” number as a first point of contact for information.

What actions will we take to address this priority?

We will

- Develop a clear communication strategy for Equality and Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence, informed by survivors and stakeholders that will support a coordinated and consistent approach across the region
- Improve access to high quality, up to date information on violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence, help available and routes to support both in public spaces and online
- Support and develop information and resources for friends, families and concerned others to enable them to help survivors seek help
- Increase focus in communications on promoting gender equality and challenging attitudes and behaviours that tolerate abuse
- Actively promote Live Fear Free, Respect and Dyn helpline as a source of specialist support for survivors, perpetrators, professionals and concerned individuals
- Encourage and support local employers to develop and implement workplace policies providing information and routes to support

Strategic Priority 2: Increase awareness of children and young people of the importance of safe, equal and healthy relationships and that abusive behaviour is always wrong

"Evidenced based SRE programmes play a vital role in working with children, young people, parents/carers and communities; exploring the information and values about sexuality and relationships that children are already exposed to and often struggling to navigate for themselves. By building upon children and young people's own informal learning and experience, offline and online, schools have the potential to create safe and empowering environments that enable children and young people to express their views and feelings on SRE issues. Indeed, schools are key sites for learning from and responding to children and young people's questions and needs (e.g. from sexism to sexual consent)"³³

This extract, taken from the "The Future of Sex and Relationships Education in Wales" Report published in December 2017 highlights the key role of schools and sex and relationship programmes in developing resilience to violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence, sustaining healthy relationships and addressing gender norms and attitudes.

The report describes SRE in Wales as being in need of significant reform if it is to meet the needs of children and young people. Drawing upon the available research in Wales, international research and Estyn's (2017) recent thematic review on Healthy Relationships, there were found to be significant gaps between the lived experiences of children and young people and the SRE they receive in school. While there is some promising practice, especially when schools collaborate with SRE experts and external service providers, the quality and quantity of SRE provision was found to vary widely.³⁴

The report mirrors the feedback received from stakeholders in the region relating to the provision of SRE and Personal and Social Education (PSE). Stakeholders highlighted the lack of a consistent approach within education to healthy relationships and wider issues violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence. Stakeholders felt that approaches to PSE in the region were varied with limited time and different degrees of importance being placed on violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence and healthy relationships.

Stakeholders also recognised that this responsibility was wider than schools and there was a need to work in partnership to ensure that all children and young people have the opportunity to participate in a programme to develop resilience to violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence and to sustain healthy relationships e.g. NEET, Elective Home Education, Pupil Referral Units, Private Schools, Colleges and community groups.

³³ Renold, E. and McGeeney, E. (2017) *Informing the Future Sex and Relationships Education Curriculum in Wales*. Cardiff University. ISBN 978-1-908469-12-0

³⁴ Renold, E. and McGeeney, E. (2017) *Informing the Future Sex and Relationships Education Curriculum in Wales*. Cardiff University. ISBN 978-1-908469-12-0

Survivors felt that there was not enough education about healthy relationships and gender equality to prevent future abusive behaviour particularly where children had already been subjected to violence and abuse in their own homes.

Survivors felt that schools played a critical role in providing children and young people with age appropriate information relating to equality and healthy, respectful relationships enabling them to differentiate between what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.

Survivors also recognised education settings as a safe place for children, young people and parents to access support. This, again, is reflected in the recent "The Future of Sex and Relationships Education in Wales" Report;

"(Schools) are places that can support children and young people to gradually develop their confidence to know where and how to seek advice and support in relation to, for example, prejudice, discrimination, abuse and violence".

In recognising schools as opportunities to access support it is essential that integrated referral pathways are implemented and appropriate, dedicated specialist services for children and young people impacted by or experiencing domestic abuse, sexual violence, FGM, forced marriage, sexual exploitation or harassment are available in every area. Furthermore, that children and young people know what help is available as well as how to access that support.

Both stakeholders and survivors recognise schools as important, safe places for the prevention of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence and the protection and support of children and young people.

CADW, the regional Junior Safeguarding Board has identified "how to build healthy relationships" as one of their current priorities and make the following recommendations as to how to achieve this;

- An enhanced PSE curriculum
- National and local up-to-date information on where to go for help and advice to be made available in school
- Greater resourcing to allow teaching staff time to also take on pastoral care roles
- Resilience being integral to Safeguarding — greater recognition and support for family and social circles was identified as the way to build resilience.

We have developed our actions considering the following national, regional and local contexts;

- "Successful Futures" – Independent Review of Curriculum and Assessment Arrangements in Wales; Professor Graham Donaldson (February 2015)

- “Qualified for Life – A Curriculum for Wales, A Curriculum for Life”³⁵ – October 2015, taking forward the recommendations within “Successful Futures” and outlining plans for the development of the new curriculum for Wales
- “The Future of Sex and Relationships Education in Wales”; Recommendations of the Sex and Relationships Expert Panel (December 2017)
- “A Review of Healthy Relationships Education” Estyn June 2017
- Estyn Inspection Framework relating to Care, Support and Guidance
- Safeguarding in Education Audits as required by Welsh Government and Estyn
- Welsh Government Good Practice Guide “Whole Education Approach to Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence in Wales”
- Existing education-based universal provision being delivered in different local authority areas across the region including the All Wales Police Core Liaison Programme, Incredible Years; an evidenced based programme to promote social, emotional and academic competency and KiVA; a research based anti-bullying programme
- Roll out of Operation Encompass in Pembrokeshire – an early intervention safeguarding partnership between Pembrokeshire County Council and Dyfed Powys Police which supports children and young people exposed to Domestic Abuse
- Existing specialist healthy, respectful relationships programmes delivered across the region including Hafan Cymru’s SPECTRUM and Welsh Women’s Aid S.T.A.R (Safety Trust and Respect) programme
- The Sparrow Project, a bespoke healthy relationships programme for children and young people written for Threshold DAS to be delivered in schools and community settings.
- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) – how best to integrate responses to violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence within education based, ACEs focused initiatives

What actions will we take to address this priority?

We will

- Conduct a full analysis of healthy relationships education in formal / non-formal educational establishments across the region
- Work in partnership with CYSUR (Children’s Safeguarding Board), CADW, Youth Services, Schools, Elective Home Education groups, Youth Offending Teams, Colleges, Pupil Referral Units, Safeguarding in Education leads, Parents and community groups and the specialist violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence sector to ensure that all school aged children and young people participate in an age appropriate programme to

³⁵ <http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/151021-a-curriculum-for-wales-a-curriculum-for-life-en.pdf>

develop resilience to violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence and to sustain healthy relationships

- Agree a suite of appropriate resources for professionals and elective home education groups to draw upon and provide a platform to ensure accessibility
- Ensure that all education establishments adopt a suitable programme in line with the Welsh Government Good Practice Guide "Whole Education Approach to Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence in Wales"
- Agree a monitoring framework that will enable the region to meet reporting requirements contained within the Act
- Ensure support services for children and young people experiencing violence and abuse are available across the region and that pathways to appropriate support are accessible and timely

Strategic Priority 3: Increase focus on holding perpetrators to account and provide opportunities to change their behaviour based around victim safety

If we do not hold perpetrators to account, we give them no incentive to change their behaviours. Survivors and stakeholders consistently stated that greater focus needed to be placed on holding perpetrators to account for their behaviours.

Survivors felt that professionals did not recognise abusive behaviours and as a result did not challenge or "call out" the behaviours;

"he would pull the wool over the professional's eyes"

"professionals were manipulated by my ex-partner"

Instead of focusing on the perpetrators abusive behaviours survivors explained time and time again how professionals placed the responsibility on them to safeguard and protect themselves and any children e.g. move from the home, manage conflict situations, leave the abusive relationship and how they were the ones to experience the consequences rather than the abusive partner. This systemic response further demonstrates the lack of understanding amongst professionals of the nature, effects and long-term consequences of Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence which is leading to reduced confidence in professional contacts.

Survivors and stakeholders both highlighted the lack of opportunities for perpetrators to change their behaviours in the region

"nowhere for perpetrators to access support to change"

"need to develop services to change behaviours"

Stakeholders further emphasised the importance to them that any intervention with perpetrators must prioritise the safety of the non-abusive partner and any children and be working towards, or have achieved standards developed by recognised

organisations providing accreditation for 'Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programmes' (DVPPs) e.g. Respect.

Both survivors and stakeholders further identified a gap in provision for "a whole family approach" and for families who wanted to stay together.

One stakeholder described the current landscape of provision for perpetrators as being driven by where additional resources had been successfully applied for rather than where there was an identified need.

Current response

Much of the current response to perpetrators of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence sits with the criminal justice system.

Heddlu Dyfed Powys Police are, in many incidents, the first responders to reports of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence. Since 2015 they have been piloting the Priority Perpetrator Identification Toolkit "PPIT" – an evidence based method for identifying the most dangerous domestic abuse perpetrators with the aim of more effectively focussing multi agency resources to reduce their behaviours.

An evaluation of the pilot was published in November 2017 and the key recommendation arising from the report was for the three pilot sites, including Dyfed Powys to continue to operate the pilots for a minimum of two years to enable a robust evaluation of outcomes to be undertaken.³⁶

In Dyfed Powys, priority perpetrators, when identified, are the focus of targeted monitoring and management and are referred to the MARAC Co-ordinator located in the offender management hub for referral to MAPPA/WISDOM/IOM screening panel (comprising the MAPPA, IOM and WISDOM Co-ordinators, MARAC Co-ordinator, Police and Probation) as appropriate. Priority perpetrators are then subject to ongoing monthly reviews and multi-agency data sharing with NPS/CRC.

Interviewees in the evaluation saw the pilot as representing a shift from a reactive, largely victim-centric approach to dealing with domestic abuse to a more preventative and proactive form of policing the issue which targeted the perpetrators specifically.

Stakeholders identified that a commitment to a further two years of PPIT provides an opportunity to widen the scope of the pilot and improve partnerships with stakeholders specifically the specialist sector, Local Authorities and Health who have key roles to play in the management of offenders, pathways to reduce re-offending and the safeguarding of adults and children.

Opportunities were also identified to increase the role and voice of the survivors in the management of offenders through the PPIT.

The National Probation Service, through the Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service and the Wales Community Rehabilitation Company, accredit interventions for

³⁶ Robinson, A. L. and Clancy, A. (2017). New initiatives to tackle domestic violence using the Priority Perpetrator Identification Tool (PPIT).

convicted offenders attending programmes in custody or in the community where violence against women, domestic abuse or sexual violence is in the offending history. Representatives from both organisations recognise however the small cohort of eligible individuals in Mid and West Wales due to the fact that these programmes are only available to those convicted of offences and qualifying sentences resulting in being managed in the community. By these thresholds alone the number of individuals accessing these programmes are low.

The Early Family Intervention Project (E-FIP) delivered by Threshold DAS in Llanelli for Carmarthenshire offers a whole family approach by providing one to one work for the woman, her partner and any children who are involved. The project offers a perpetrator programme working towards RESPECT accreditation and a mediation service that works with the whole family.

As part of E-FIP, the Choices perpetrator programme is for males over 18 who want to change their abusive behaviours and beliefs. The programme, delivered over 60 hours (34 weeks) of highly structured interventions is delivered in a group setting/ one to one. It is designed specially to challenge men's understanding of abuse and relationships and reduce domestic violence, teaching ways of being non-abusive and supporting positive change over time.

Based on nationally established research a recent evaluation of a Respect accredited perpetrator programme estimated that for every individual who received the intervention the saving to the public purse was as follows; £63,937 per abusive partner (in this case it was a male perpetrator programme) £35,058 per partner and £1,172 per child.³⁷

RESPECT accreditation / standards for domestic abuse perpetrator interventions (individual and group) are recognised as the UK standards for working with perpetrators of domestic abuse. Welsh Government are also expected to develop standards for specialist VAWDASV specialist services acknowledging that there is currently not a set of standards that fit all of the intervention services provided to address the full range of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence offences and associated perpetrators.³⁸

The Inspiring Families Programme is an innovative intervention and assessment of families where domestic abuse is an identified component and the families have chosen to stay together.

It is a programme that can strengthen and stabilise families and provides professionals with a robust framework to assess the parent's behaviour, including any coercive control, disguised compliance and the level of current and the likelihood of future risk.

The programme also assesses the potential for change and reduction of risk within the family, or indeed, whether the risk is too high or the potential for change too low to make working with the family a viable option.

³⁷ Inpact Report Intervening in Partner Abuse Change for tomorrow (Report April 2013 – March 2014)

³⁸ Welsh Government Draft Guidance Commissioning of VAWDASV Services in Wales

Whilst Inspiring Families, to be rolled out in Powys and Carmarthenshire in 2018 is not a perpetrator intervention it does provide families who want to stay together a different option.

The current landscape and engagement with stakeholders and survivors lead to a number of conclusions that should inform regional thinking;

- The current community based interventions delivered by Threshold DAS and Pembrokeshire Team around the Family are focused on male perpetrators of domestic abuse against female victims. Wider consideration is needed of appropriate interventions for other forms of violence against women and sexual violence and for interventions suitable for female perpetrators and perpetrators within a same sex relationships and non-intimate / familial relationships.
- Working with children who are demonstrating abusive behaviours – in the earlier chapter looking at current provision we reference the A2P programme (Carmarthenshire County Council) and the Purple Heart Project (Threshold DAS), programmes which focus on working with young people demonstrating abusive behaviours in a mixture of intimate and adolescent inter-familial abuse. Whilst recognising that there are children and young people who are demonstrating abusive behaviours we feel that it is unhelpful to label as “perpetrators” and we would wish to place our responses to such behaviours within “services for children and young people”.
- A shift in thinking in relation to risk - the need to focus on the perpetrator of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence as the cause of “risk” and repeat victimisation
- Work with perpetrators cannot happen in isolation and needs to be rooted in victim and family safety and prevention.
- To effectively address Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence, high quality specialist services for perpetrators (that meet relevant services standards) need to be commissioned in addition to services for survivors.
- The case for commissioning and delivering community based perpetrator programmes has been set out by Respect³⁹ and the largest UK research into programme effectiveness was published in 2015⁴⁰
- In commissioning specialist services for perpetrators, related resources need to be appropriately ‘ring-fenced’ so that perpetrator services are not seen to be allocated resources intended for survivors, or that perpetrator services are not cut in order to increase services to survivors.

³⁹ Domestic Violence Perpetrators; Working with the cause of the problem” Respect 2010

⁴⁰ <https://www.dur.ac.uk/resource/criva/ProjectMirabelfinalreport.pdf>

- It must be recognised that perpetrator services should not be commissioned in isolation and should be considered as part of a whole system approach, alongside survivor and other related services.
- The role of public services working with perpetrators, most likely in relation to issues indirectly related to their abusive behaviour, and the importance of a consistent approach to effectively identify such individuals and signpost specialist services. Just as for survivors, it should be recognised that every point of interaction with a perpetrator is an opportunity for accessing support to address their abusive behaviour
- Opportunities to improve the coordination of responses of the Criminal System to survivors of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence e.g. effectiveness of the SDVC arrangements in the region and the potential of SDVC's to consider cases across all aspects of VAWDASV
- Stakeholders believe that there are opportunities both within the Criminal Justice System and within wider public services for earlier intervention and preventative work with perpetrators and those demonstrating abusive behaviours
- Positioning offender management within the "safeguarding" sphere; the best way to safeguard a victim and any children is to address the behaviours of the perpetrator. By re-positioning offender management within the wider safeguarding agenda opportunities can be created for increased partnership working and improved multi agency responses to reducing re-offending

What actions will we take to address this priority?

We will ensure effective, safe responses to perpetrators of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence by;

- Establishing a task and finish group to
 - Consider learning and effectiveness of approaches and interventions operating in the region
 - Better understand how existing approaches are linking together and opportunities for improved partnership working by positioning responses to perpetrators as "safeguarding"
 - Consider wider public service responses to perpetrators of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence
 - Identify opportunities for earlier intervention with perpetrators and those demonstrating abuse behaviours
 - Develop a pathway out of re-offending for perpetrators of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence
- Agree a regional model of intervention which will be used as the basis for commissioning services which prioritise victim and children's safety and provide a pathway into services for perpetrators

- Work with partners to identify and refocus funding in line with the agreed model

Strategic Priority 4: Make early intervention and prevention an integrated priority in Mid and West Wales

Early intervention and prevention of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence is a fundamental building block for this strategy and underpins all other strategic priorities. There remains a persistent challenge however to define, prioritise and resource early intervention and prevention alongside other competing priorities for public services.

Given the requirements in Welsh legislation to focus on early intervention and prevention it is imperative that commissioners carefully consider how they resource early intervention and primary / secondary preventative work as integral elements of a “One Public Service” commissioning model. A sophisticated model is required to consider how services across the continuum of support, including early intervention and prevention, are appropriately resourced and opportunities identified to align priorities across the region and increase resources to maximise early intervention and prevention.

Existing innovative approaches for early intervention and prevention of Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence in Mid and West Wales include;

Operation Encompass – an early intervention safeguarding partnership between Pembrokeshire County Council and Dyfed Powys Police, Operation Encompass is intended to safeguard and support children and young people who are affected by domestic abuse by ensuring that appropriate services are made aware of an incident at the earliest possible opportunity. Already, in the first stages of implementation awareness of the operation is being raised with children and their families and Safeguarding Leads are receiving early notifications of police incidents enabling them to strengthen safeguarding arrangements and offer routes to support at the earliest opportunity.

Early Family Intervention Project – Delivered by Threshold DAS E-FIP offers a whole family approach by providing one to one work for the woman, their partner and any children who are involved. The project offers a perpetrator programme working towards Respect accreditation and a mediation service that works with the whole family.

Inspiring Families - designed as an assessment tool to help strengthen and stabilise families this is a structured 10-week programme for families affected by domestic abuse who wish to stay together as a family unit. The programme provides professionals with a robust framework to assess the current level of risk within the home and will be rolled out by Calan DVS in Powys and Carmarthenshire in 2018.

Slough Children Services Trust published a Cost Benefit Analysis of the pilot Inspiring Families programme in December 2016. The headline findings from this report demonstrate that the Programme saves the taxpayer an estimated £2.62 for every £1 spent in the first 6 months after the start of intervention.

There was an average saving of £4,114 for every family who attended the Programme, compared to an average cost of £1,572 per family.

Ask Me scheme – a community based initiative creating safe spaces in the local community where women experiencing domestic abuse can safely tell someone about their experience. The scheme recruits members of the local community as “Ask me Ambassadors” who are trained to know how to ask the right questions, respond appropriately to disclosures of abuse and know where to signpost for further help.

Women’s Pathfinder - an integrated, women-centred, multi-agency approach to working with women who come into contact with the criminal justice system and is currently delivered by Gwalia in Pembrokeshire

Bystander Initiative – Aberystwyth University, in partnership with Welsh Women’s Aid has recently piloted the Bystander Intervention Training. The Bystander Intervention is designed to help male and female students recognise sexual harassment and abuse, and give them the skills and confidence to respond appropriately. It also looks at changing cultural norms that condone sexism and harassment.

The concept of the Bystander Initiative, providing skills and confidence to individuals to recognise and respond to any form of violence and abuse is one that could be further developed in the region in response to this and other priorities and also as a mechanism for early disclosure and access to appropriate support and information.

To ensure that early intervention and prevention becomes “everyone’s business” greater coordination and consistency of approach is required to ensure that every contact is an opportunity for an effective and preventative intervention.

The provision of Information, Assistance and Advice Services across the region in line with Section 17 of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 provides an opportunity to embed early identification and intervention into the development of these mainstream services.

Survivors spoke about the need for professionals to recognise signs of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence, to safely ask questions and take appropriate action.

Integration of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence into regional safeguarding thresholds presents an opportunity improve the consistency of professional responses and address some of the complexities and overlapping of existing processes and systems.

The introduction of “Ask and Act” as part of the Welsh Government’s National Training Framework is key to developing a more consistent approach to identifying violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence. ‘Ask and Act’ is a

principles based approach to targeted enquiry and its aim is to increase identification and support for those who experience violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

Guidance on the delivery of “Ask and Act” was published in December 2017⁴¹ and relevant authorities are expected to implement this approach as part of the wider delivery of the National Training Framework.

There is evidence to show that early identification in healthcare and social care settings, leading to referral routes to specialist services, improves disclosures and referrals to support amongst survivors. In GP settings for example where indicators trigger targeted enquiry about domestic abuse, this leads to improved discussion and disclosure. There is moderate evidence that universal screening for domestic abuse in pregnancy, when supported by staff training and support, improves practices, disclosure and documentation of domestic abuse. This evidence was further supported by a number of survivors who had first disclosed their abuse within a healthcare setting e.g. GP practice or Health Visitor.

The IRIS programme of intervention (Identification and Referral to Improve Safety) is an evaluated service model that can be effectively jointly commissioned by health providers.

IRIS is a general practice-based domestic violence and abuse training, support and referral programme aimed at improving the health care response to violence against women and domestic abuse. Core areas of the programme are training and education, clinical enquiry, care pathways and an enhanced referral pathway to specialist support services. It is aimed at individuals who are experiencing domestic abuse and also provides information and signposting for perpetrators.

IRIS is a collaboration between primary care and third sector organisations specialising in violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence. An advocate educator is linked to general practices and based in a local specialist support service. The advocate educator works in partnership with a local clinical lead to co-deliver the training to practices ensuring that health professionals are skilled in early identification which enables an immediate response for survivors that links them to a specialist service.

In terms of invest to save principles the cost benefit analysis of IRIS showed that the intervention saved an average of £37 per female patient registered per practice⁴² and the recent pilots in Cardiff and Vale and Cwm Taff Health Boards evidenced a significant increase in disclosures and opportunities for early intervention, protection and pathways to support.

An online app developed by Registered Social Landlords in Gwent is providing all frontline housing practitioners with information relating to violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence enabling them to identify potential violence and abuse, intervene earlier and provide pathways to the most appropriate local services.

⁴¹ <http://livefearfree.gov.wales/policies-and-guidance/ask-and-act?lang=en>

⁴² Cost effectiveness BMJ, Devibe.A Spencer. A Eldridge.S Norman,R Feder.G June 2012

Innovative approaches within the housing sector across the UK are improving responses to violence and abuse and the introduction of an established set of standards and accreditation process by the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) aims to support and embed best practice across the sector.

Domestic Violence Protection Orders and Notices and the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme offer opportunities for the Police to intervene earlier by putting in place protective measures in the immediate aftermath of a domestic violence incident or disclosing information about an individual's previous violent and abusive offending behaviour, where this may help protect their partner, or ex-partner, from violence or abuse.

The numbers of DVPN's issued by Dyfed Powys Police between 2015/16 and 2016/17 nearly halved, from 48 to 25. Considering the high percentage of DVPO's granted in response to the notices and the relatively low rate of order breaches we want to better understand how these mechanisms are being used as a preventative and protective measure for individuals.

Dyfed Powys has a 19% repeat rate of cases being discussed at MARAC which is lower than the national average but still represents over 260 individuals and families in the region.

We want to further reduce repeat incidents of violence and abuse by strengthening the use of preventative remedies available to public services and considering their effectiveness.

There have been two Domestic Homicide Reviews published in the region since they were established on a statutory basis under the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 and there are currently three DHR's ongoing at different stages.

One purpose of the DHR is to;

"prevent domestic violence and homicide and improve service responses for all domestic violence and abuse victims and their children by developing a co-ordinated multi agency approach to ensure that domestic abuse is identified and responded to effectively at the earliest opportunity"⁴³

The Statutory Guidance for DHR's is published by the Home Office and places the overall responsibility for establishing the review with local Community Safety Partnerships. This has effectively resulted in locality focused approaches to DHR's and missed opportunities to share learning and inform practice on a wider footprint.

With the existing governance structures for violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence sitting with the Regional Safeguarding Executive and an acknowledgement within their Annual Plan of the need to improve the interface between Child and Adult Practice Reviews and Domestic Homicide Reviews; this strategy further recognises the need to review the current governance, accountability and scrutiny arrangements for DHR's with a view to aligning closer

⁴³ Section 7 d) Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004

with existing safeguarding review structures. A review will also present an opportunity to consider current funding arrangements for DHR's and the opportunity to align again with arrangements for other safeguarding reviews ensuring that violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence is embedded within the safeguarding agenda.

What actions will we take to address this priority?

We will

- Consider learning and effectiveness of EIP models operating in the region
- Agree an integrated and coordinated EIP model which will be used as a basis for re-modelling and commissioning services
- Work with Local Authorities, Welsh Government, Health, Police, Police and Crime Commissioner and the Specialist Sector to re-focus funding in line with the agreed service model
- Identify funding opportunities to support expansion of the EIP model
- Support GP's to pilot IRIS in identified clusters in each Health Board area
- Support and deliver community approaches to prevention
- Improve earlier identification of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence by public service professionals through effective implementation of "Ask and Act"
- Work with partners to review and strengthen the MARAC process including referral pathways, partner engagement, data recording and reporting and maximise access to holistic support to increase victim safety and interventions with perpetrators to prevent further abuse and reduce the risk they pose
- Monitor effective use of preventative tools e.g. DVPO's / DVPN's, Disclosure Scheme and target hardening
- Review governance, accountability and scrutiny arrangements for Domestic Abuse Homicide Reviews
- Embedding violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence into regional safeguarding thresholds ensuring a consistent response to violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence across the region

Strategic Priority 5: Relevant professionals are trained to provide effective, timely and appropriate responses to victims and survivors

Survivors felt that there were people in all services who lacked the necessary knowledge, understanding and empathetic attitude to encourage confidence to disclose violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

Survivors felt that staff in both statutory and other professional services were not trained and/or did not have the confidence to pick up on issues raised, albeit that this may be indirect.

Male survivors in particular felt that professionals made assumptions and were biased in their understanding of domestic abuse and this resulted in reduced confidence in professional contacts.

Survivors consistently reported that professionals lacked knowledge and understanding of non-physical abuse including coercive and controlling behaviours and stalking and harassment resulting in incidents not being taken seriously and survivors feeling that they were responsible for proving the ongoing abuse.

Survivors spoke about the attitudes they had experienced from public services and how these impacted on them;

"I was made to feel like I was to blame"

"A police sergeant told me to "Man up" (male survivor)

A victim of sexual assault "felt like I was a tick box"

Survivors consistently spoke about not being listened to or believed by professionals in public services

"When I had the strength to leave I was victimised again by service who took over"

Survivors expect professionals to

"see it, know what it is and do something"

and to respond to individuals by

"sitting down, listening, believing and asking us how you can help"

One survivor simply asked

"don't treat us differently because we're in an abusive situation – we didn't ask for it"

Survivors raised particular concerns relating to their experiences in the Family Courts and prioritised the need for improved awareness of and response to domestic abuse, sexual violence and all forms of violence against women by professionals involved in the family justice system (CAFCASS Cymru, judges and court personnel, contact centres).

We want to be confident that all professionals within our area are equipped with the knowledge to respond effectively to any disclosures of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

The National Training Framework aims to strengthen the response amongst those offering specialist or universal services. It aims to bring quality assurance and consistency with respect to training professionals around violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence issues. Through the National Training Framework, we will improve responses across public services, promoting early intervention and providing a gateway for victims to access appropriate forms of help and support.

Some stakeholders however are frustrated about the delay in implementing the National Training Framework in the region whilst others spoke of a lack of clarity in terms of expectations relating to the Framework. We also heard how the approach towards, and communications relating to the Framework could be improved to better explain expectations and relevance for frontline professionals.

The National Training Framework relates to “relevant authorities”; the four Local Authorities, Hywel Dda University Health Board and Powys Teaching Health Board, Public Health Wales and Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service.

CAFCASS CYMRU also fall within the remit of the National Training Framework.

Housing Associations, Police, Criminal and Civil Justice partners and the Family Court system fall outside of the remit of the Framework and there is a need to ensure that training provided to these agencies fully encompass wider elements of sexual violence and abuse, violence against women alongside domestic abuse and that their responses are informed by models of good practice with the specialist sector and survivors as key contributors e.g. Safe Lives “DA Matters” programme, College of Policing approved Controlling and Coercive Control and Stalking and Harassment training, DAHA (Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance – standards and accreditation).

It is in response to survivors and specialist’s experiences with the criminal and civil justice system that Threshold DAS have secured funding to develop and deliver a training programme for legal professionals across the criminal and civil justice system with a view to improving understanding, awareness and opportunities to refer individuals for appropriate support.

The National Training Framework also applies to our specialist violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence services ensuring that professionals working with those affected by violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence are professional, expert and appropriately qualified and enhancing professional standards to support the delivery and leadership of services.

Specialist services report however limited availability and resource implications of existing training compatible with the National Training Framework. To address this and respond to the demand from specialist services, Threshold DAS is in the process of developing a Wales specific qualification for professionals working within domestic abuse specialist services.

Oversight of the Framework's implementation sits with the Training and Development Group, accountable to the Safeguarding Executive and the development of this strategy provides an opportunity to ensure that there is appropriate representation and partnerships to support effective implementation of the Framework in the region.

This strategic priority aligns with workforce development priorities set by the Regional Safeguarding Boards and Regional Partnership Boards, providing an opportunity for a regionalised, mainstreamed approach to implementation.

What actions will we take to address this priority?

We will

- Embed the National Training Framework into regional strategic workforce development planning
- Oversee, monitor and review regional implementation of the Framework ensuring compliance by professionals in relevant authorities and supporting the specialist sector to achieve Groups 4/5
- Identify opportunities to pilot elements of the Framework to inform wider regional roll out
- Ensure a programme of multi-agency training available regionally for all professionals relating to all forms of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence
- Ensure appropriate strategic and operational partnerships to support effective implementation of the Framework

Strategic Priority 6: Provide victims with equal access to appropriately resourced, high quality, needs led, strength based, gender responsive services throughout the region.

Providing support to people affected by VAWDASV can be complex and people's experience and needs can be vastly different. Survivors will choose to engage with services in a variety of ways and there needs to be a range of services that are accessible and can respond effectively and universally to these needs. Public services, community organisations and independent specialist services all have a key role to play.

We want survivors to be able to access the service that they need, delivered in the right place and at the right time on their recovery journey.

We recognise the need for different and distinct service responses for survivors who have experienced sexual violence and abuse, FGM, Forced Marriage and so called "Honour Based Violence" and furthermore it is clear that a pluralist response is required to meet the diverse needs of our communities. No one group covered in the Act constitutes a homogenous group and therefore responses will need to be complex, sophisticated, diverse and locality sensitive to respond to needs.

Throughout this document we have aimed to reflect survivor experiences and highlighted some of the gaps, capacity issues and opportunities for remodelling of services which contribute to this strategic priority.

Stakeholders spoke about existing provision being fragmented and inconsistent with survivors facing a "postcode lottery" in terms of provision across the region. It was felt that current provision was reactive and focused on crisis rather than services that provided earlier intervention and preventative approaches.

Stakeholders also spoke about a lack of clarity in terms of what services were available across the region, eligibility criteria and appropriateness to meet the needs of individuals.

There was much discussion during the engagement events about the complexity of current referral pathways, which were felt to present barriers to disclosures and were dependent on an individual's ability to negotiate the relevant service information. Where professional's identified violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence they wanted a clear, consistent referral pathway that facilitated a quicker, better coordinated route to services best placed to meet needs.

Engagement events determined that the region needed to get to a position where there was a suite of services, ranging from primary prevention through to protection and longer-term support and recovery that take into consideration the spectrum of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence and the diverse needs of our communities. To further illustrate this a continuum of services document has been developed and is included overleaf.

Stakeholders and survivors both recognised the need to identify the likely nature of future demand for services. Many of the factors within this strategy e.g. "Ask and Act", the National Training Framework, increased awareness and information and

early intervention and prevention initiatives are likely to increase identification and demand for services and, as a region we have to ensure that the right service models are in place to respond. We have seen in recent years how media reporting of sexual abuse and exploitation has resulted in increased demand for specialist sexual violence services, a demand that isn't currently being met in the region and must be considered as part of the strategic service planning.

It was felt that eligibility for services should be “**requiring services associated with violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence**”, focussing more on the principles of the services rather than eligibility based on risk, complexity or availability of services. This was considered to be an immediate priority for the Strategic Group.

Specialist Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence services operate within a framework of accredited quality service standards which provide benchmarks for service providers, funders and commissioners about the extent and mix of services that should be available, who should provide them and the principles and practice base from which they should operate.

These standards and accreditation frameworks are referenced and endorsed by the Home Office in their “Supporting Local Commissioning Guidance” which states that

“it is important to align the quality of service with the National Shared Core Standards....Services should be commissioned based on the relevant national service standards for that service.....The shared standards support commissioners to ensure the independent standards can be used both nationally and locally for joint commissioning purposes. They are not intended to stand alone but have been agreed as designated core standards, namely the minimum standards common to all member organisations”.⁴⁴

Services available in the Welsh Language

This is an important consideration for our region as the proportion of Welsh speakers is considerably higher in Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion than in Wales as a whole. This is not the case in Pembrokeshire and Powys, although it is still vital that services are available in Welsh for people within the community for whom Welsh is the language of choice.

Local, Regional or National provision

In developing this strategy we have been mindful of balancing the regional strategic approach and local delivery. We are committed to ensuring that wherever people live in Mid and West Wales they can be assured of consistent responses and access to high quality services to meet their needs.

To achieve consistency and economies of scale we will work regionally to achieve sustainability in the commissioning and delivery of specialist services. However, this does not mean that all services will look exactly the same in all areas. Our respective

⁴⁴ Refer to pages 68-74 of Wales commissioning toolkit for the shared core standards across accrediting bodies IMKAAN, Rape Crisis England and Wales, Respect, Safelives and Women's Aid. Each national body has its own Quality standards covering its specialist work.

Population Needs Assessments recognise the diversity of our region, which includes post-industrial areas with significant social deprivation, rural and coastal communities. The way in which services are delivered and accessed must reflect the particular needs of such communities.

Welsh Government recognise that many specialist services will be provided by small third sector organisations and there is a risk within regional commissioning approaches that such providers can be significantly disadvantaged in large scale procurement exercises. It is therefore important that commissioners seek to safeguard and enhance the strengths and expertise of small community based specialist service providers when considering procurement approaches across their region.⁴⁵

As a region we will, as part of developing our commissioning strategy, ask ourselves whether elements of the continuum of services are best commissioned locally, regionally or nationally. An example of such consideration could be specialist services for FGM, Forced Marriage and so called "Honour based violence". Based on the needs-related information available it may not be feasible to commission a service to support individuals at a local or regional level however, in cases where it is identified that individuals require specialist support we require a clear referral pathway to the national specialist organisation, BAWSO to support the individual and family and work alongside the professionals involved.

As a region we have recently commissioned a regional Mid and West Wales IDVA service, recognising the need for regional consistency of standards and service delivery whilst still requiring the locality focused accessibility and delivery of services.

Local, regional and national consideration will shape our response to the continuum of services ensuring that survivors of all forms of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence can access appropriately resourced, high quality, needs led, strength based, gender responsive services throughout the region.

What actions will we take to address this priority?

We will

- Develop an integrated referral pathway that can enable effective access to a range of services and act as a gateway whereby people can reach the services that are most relevant to their need in a seamless manner
- Adopt the Continuum of Services as a model to develop efficient integration of services so that victims, survivors and perpetrators receive a continuum of preventive, safe and supportive services, according to their needs that is consistent throughout the region
- Establish an integrated, coordinated and multi-agency referral and assessment hub where violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence takes an "everyone's business" approach and is considered within a wider

⁴⁵ Welsh Government Draft Commissioning Guidance 2018

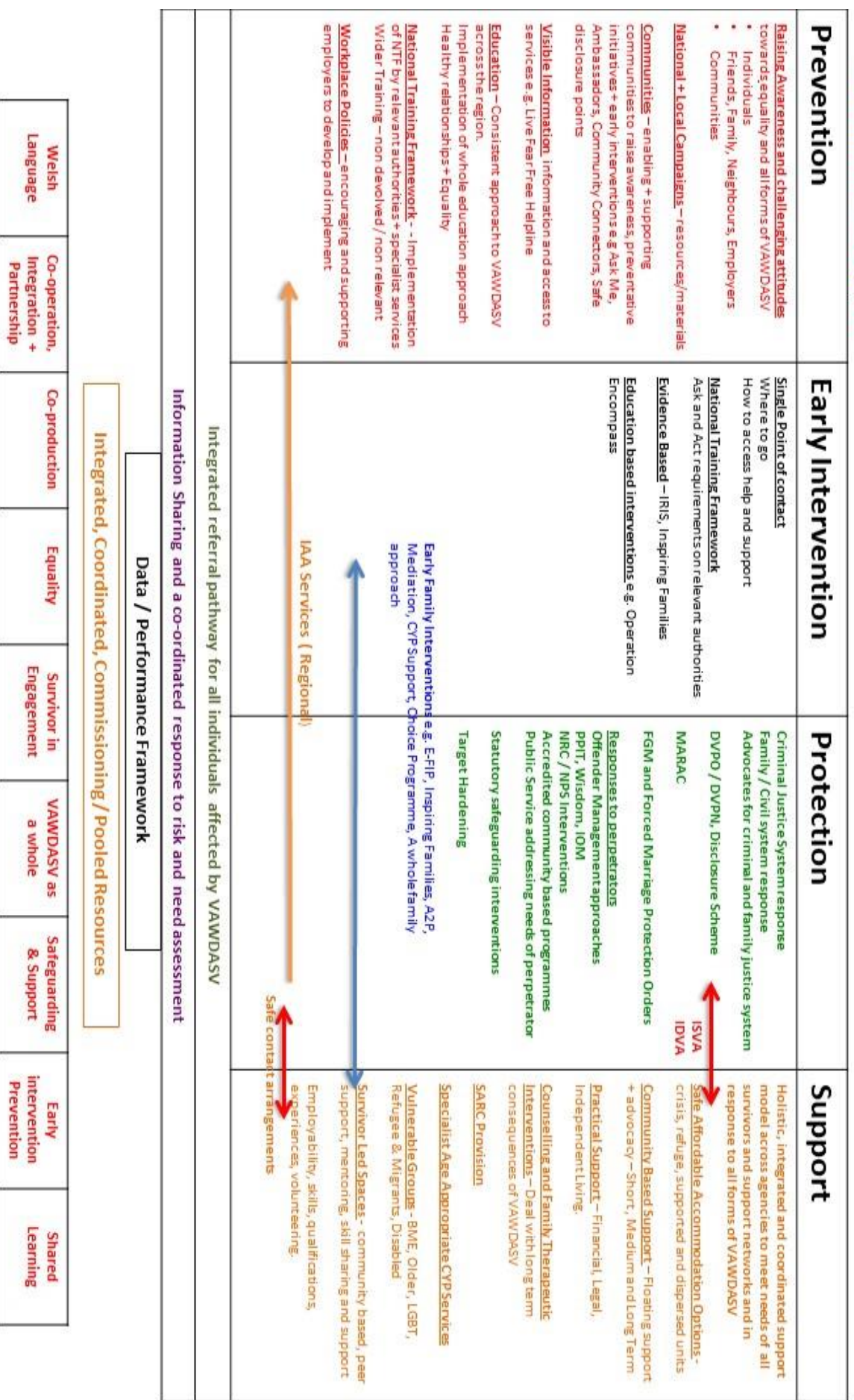
safeguarding focus; enabling earlier intervention with victims and perpetrators.

- Review existing commissioning arrangements and prepare a joint, integrated “one public service” commissioning strategy based on the principles outlined in this documents in line with the continuum of services.

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An Integrated Response to VAWDASV

A Continuum of support



HOW WE WILL MONITOR OUR PROGRESS: OUR STRATEGIC DELIVERY PLAN

The strategic direction and oversight of this strategy sits with the Mid and West Wales Safeguarding Executive.

The Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategic Group, accountable to the regional Safeguarding Executive has been established to provide a governance structure to develop, approve and monitor Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence regional working.

It is intended for this strategy to underpin and directly contribute to key regional priorities identified in the Well-Being, Area, Safeguarding and Policing and Crime Plans. For this strategy to be aligned with these wider plans, there is a need to develop formal lines of reporting from the Strategic Group into the four Public Services Boards, the CYSUR and CWMPAS regional Safeguarding Boards, Regional Partnership Boards and other regional structures, with opportunities identified to influence and inform regional strategic planning.

Measuring the progress of the Strategy

Welsh Ministers are required to publish annual reports of the progress made towards achieving both the objectives in the National Strategy and achievement towards the purpose of the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015. Section 11 of the Act also requires Welsh Ministers to 'publish national indicators that may be applied for the purpose of measuring progress towards the achievement of the purpose of this Act.' The national indicators will measure collective national progress in achieving the purpose of the Act.

The National Indicators, alongside the National Outcomes Framework, Well-Being Indicators and Supporting People Outcomes present agencies and partnerships in Mid and West Wales with a renewed opportunity to work towards a coordinated and coherent measurement framework and to mainstream Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence data across wider policy areas, in a way that aligns with these national indicators.

In developing this strategy we have identified four components which can be seen as enablers and sustainers of change and improvement. They involve improving and integrating core processes to facilitate the development of consistent and cohesive ways to improve outcomes for individuals and their families subjected to Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse or Sexual Violence.

Two of these enablers are key to monitoring and measuring the impact of this strategy;

- The development of a clear outcomes based performance framework that collates coordinated and consistent data from across organisations and policy areas and;
- A mechanism to monitor and evaluate the strategy and it's effect

The Strategic Group will identify regional outcomes and indicators to measure progress and success in delivering this Strategy which will help public bodies, other stakeholders and communities to understand the difference our strategy is making to individuals and families and the extent to which our priorities are being achieved.

The performance framework, to include outcomes and indicators to measure and monitor progress in delivering this strategy will be developed by the Strategic Group. This performance framework which will complement other regional and national frameworks will enable robust scrutiny of delivery and be supported by a comprehensive data set through which we will look to standardise data across wider policy areas, services and population.

The Strategic Delivery Plan

Through its Strategic Delivery Plan the Mid and West Wales Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategic Group has set clear objectives that address each of its priorities and contribute to the prevention of violence and abuse and the protection and support of all individuals affected by these issues and how to achieve these. The Strategic Delivery Plan is a working document that outlines the Strategic Group's commitment to the next 12 months activity and will be reviewed annually to reflect the priorities agreed by the Strategic Group.

The Mid and West Wales Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategic Group will be responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the Strategic Delivery Plan reporting to the Regional Safeguarding Executive and other key local and regional partnerships to ensure effective discharge of statutory responsibilities under the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015.

Closing remarks

In developing this strategy, the focus and direction for the work of the Safeguarding Executive and the Strategic Group has been defined and a framework for action set out in the strategic delivery plan.

As a partnership we are committed to strengthening and improving our collective responses to violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence so that that the priorities identified in this strategy are translated into actions that can make a real difference to the well-being and safety of people living in Mid and West Wales, both now and in the future.

This, our first regional strategy provides an opportunity for us to challenge the status quo identified by survivors and stakeholders and embed a culture where violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence will not be tolerated in our communities and where all individuals can live free from violence and abuse.

APPENDIX 1

UNDERSTANDING THE LANGUAGE USED

1. **Definitions of abuse** (Mid and West Wales Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategic Group Terms of Reference).

Violence Against Women

The United Nations defines "Violence against Women" as a "form of discrimination against women and a violation of human rights and shall mean all acts of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life."

Domestic Abuse

According to the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 domestic abuse means 'abuse where the victim of it is or has been associated with the abuser. This can be committed by an intimate partner, ex-partner, spouse, civil partner or family relative' (a full definition of intimate and familial relations can be accessed within the Act).

The abuse can be physical, sexual, psychological, emotional or financial abuse.

This is in line with the Home Office's definition of domestic abuse as 'any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality'.

The Serious Crime Act 2015 legally defines the offence of coercive and controlling behaviour within intimate or familial relations as domestic abuse. 'Controlling behaviour is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour is an act or a pattern of acts of assaults, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish or frighten their victim'.

Rape and sexual violence

Sexual violence is any unwanted sexual act or activity. According to the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 sexual violence means sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, or threats of violence of a sexual nature. The act further defines sexual exploitation as something that is done to or in respect of a person which warrants an offence under Part 1 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003. This includes the following definitions:

- Rape is when a person intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person with his penis when that other person does not consent to the penetration, and/or he does not reasonably believe that the other person consents.
- Assault by penetration is the intentional sexual penetration of the vagina or anus of another person with a part of the person's body or anything else, when that other person does not consent to the penetration, and/or he does not reasonably believe that the other person consents.
- Sexual assault is a person intentionally touching another person sexually in a manner to which the other person does not consent to the touching, and/or the person does not reasonably believe that the other person consents.
- Child sex offences including rape or any sexual activity with a child, familial child sex offences and meeting a child following sexual grooming.

Sexual harassment

According to the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 harassment means a course of conduct (including speech) by a person which he or she knows or ought to know amounts to harassment of the other. For incidents that took place after 1st October 2005 there are two types of sexual harassment – unwanted contact on the grounds of your sex and unwanted physical verbal or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature.

Gender Based Violence

According to the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 gender-based violence means:

Violence, threats of violence or harassment arising directly or indirectly from values, beliefs or customs relating to gender or sexual orientation.

This includes 'Honour based violence' which can be distinguished from other forms of violence, as it is often committed with some degree of approval and/or collusion from family and/or community members. Examples may include murder, unexplained death (suicide), fear of or actual forced marriage, controlling sexual activity, domestic abuse (including psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional abuse), child abuse, rape, kidnapping, false imprisonment, threats to kill, assault, harassment, forced abortion. This list is not exhaustive.

- Female genital mutilation which is an act that is an offence under sections 1, 2 or 3 of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003.
- FGM also known as female circumcision or female genital cutting, is defined by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as "all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons" as defined by the World Health Organisation (WHO).
- Forcing a person (whether by physical force or coercion by threats or other psychological means) to enter into a religious or civil ceremony of marriage

(whether or not legally binding). This is commonly known as Forced Marriage. The pressure put on people to marry against their will can be physical (including threats, actual physical violence and sexual violence) or emotional and psychological (for example, when someone is made to feel like they're bringing shame on their family). Financial abuse (taking your wages or not giving you any money) can also be a factor.

2. Glossary

Victim/Survivor: The term used to describe the person who is potentially experiencing Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence. Other terms encompassed may include; 'service user' 'client' and 'patient' and reflect the terms used by different organisations to define their relationship to the person at risk. In practical terms it is suggested that the person experiencing these issues selects the term they prefer, where a term is required.

Public Service: Public services are services delivered for the benefit of the public, supported via government, to serve people in a particular society or community. This can include services delivered through the third sector, through social enterprise or through services that are contracted out.

Local Authority: A county council or county borough council

Relevant authorities: county councils and county borough councils, Local Health Boards, fire and rescue authorities and NHS trusts

Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence specialist sector: Third sector organisations whose core business is Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence.

Independent Domestic Violence Adviser (IDVA): Trained specialist worker who provides short to medium-term casework support for high risk victims of domestic abuse.

Independent Sexual Violence Adviser (ISVA): Trained specialist worker who provides support to victims/survivors of rape and sexual assault.

BME/BAME – Black and Minority Ethnic or Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic is the terminology used to describe people of non-white descent.

Ask and Act: A process of targeted enquiry across the Welsh Public Service in relation to Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence.

Specialist Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Services: A service which is specifically designed to support someone who is, or has been affected by domestic abuse, sexual violence and/or any other form of violence against women.

Target Hardening: Target hardening is a means with which to make a property safer for the resident and reduce the risk of attack in this case by the perpetrator of domestic abuse. (It should be part of a 'spectrum' of services made available to help

to protect victims of domestic abuse alongside support in the community, access to refuge provision, involvement of the police or other statutory services and programmes for perpetrators of domestic abuse - Domestic Abuse and Housing in Wales Factsheet (CIH Cymru 2013)

Avril Bracey Chair Mid and West Wales VAWDASV Strategic Group

26th March 2018

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