

Agenda – Equality and Social Justice Committee

Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 5 (Hybrid)

Meeting date: 19 June 2023

Meeting time: 11.00 – 14:50

For further information contact:

Rhys Morgan

Committee Clerk

0300 200 6565

SeneddEquality@senedd.wales

Pre-meeting registration: 11:00–11:15

1 Introductions, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest

(11:15)

2 Papers to note

(11:15)

2.1 Correspondence from the First Minister of Wales to the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee regarding the British–Irish Council Summit meeting

(Page 1)

2.2 Correspondence between Lord Bellamy KC, Parliamentary Under–Secretary of State for Justice and the Equality and Social Justice Committee regarding Women's Experiences in the Criminal Justice System

(Pages 2 – 5)

2.3 Correspondence between the Minister for Social Justice and Chief Whip and the Equality and Social Justice Committee regarding the Roma Community and the European Union Settlement Scheme

(Pages 6 – 8)

3 Motion under SO17.42 (vi) and (ix) to exclude the public for items 4,5 and 7 of today's meeting

(11:15)



**4 Legislative Consent Memorandum on the Illegal Migration Bill:
consideration of report**
(11:15–11:45) (Pages 9 – 22)

**5 Legislative Consent Memorandum on the Victims and Prisoners
Bill**
(11:45–12:00) (Pages 23 – 48)

Break: 12:00–13:30

**6 The public health approach to preventing gender-based violence:
evidence session 6**
(13:30–14:30) (Pages 49 – 59)

Bethan Pell and Dr Honor Young, School Health Research Network

Alexa Gainsbury and Emily Van De Ventor, Public Health Wales

**7 The public health approach to preventing gender-based violence:
consideration of evidence**
(14:30–14:50)

Huw Irranca-Davies MS
Chair
Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee
Senedd Cymru

Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

SeneddLJC@senedd.wales

12 June 2023

Dear Huw

Inter-Institutional Relations Agreement: 39th British-Irish Council Summit

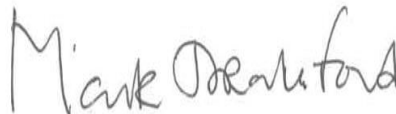
I am writing in accordance with the inter-institutional relations agreement to notify you of the 39th Summit meeting of the British-Irish Council, which will take place this week and is being hosted by the Government of Jersey.

I will be attending the summit in person. As well as the usual opportunity for a general update on issues, the theme of the Summit relates to housing and energy policy and is titled 'Building for the Future: Green and Affordable'

A communiqué will be agreed by the Council at the Summit detailing the discussions held, and I will write to share these with you. I will also update the Senedd with a written statement in due course.

I have also copied this letter to the Climate Change, Environment, and Infrastructure Committee, the Local Government and Housing Committee, and the Equality and Social Justice Committee.

Yours sincerely



MARK DRAKEFORD

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Agenda Item 2.2


Ministry
of Justice

Lord Bellamy KC
Parliamentary Under-Secretary
of State for Justice

Jenny Rathbone MS
Chair
Equality and Social Justice Committee
Senedd Cymru
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

MoJ ref: ADR105254

12th June 2023

Dear Ms Rathbone,

EQUALITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE REPORT: WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Thank you for your letter of 28 April and for providing me with a copy of the Welsh Government's response to your report on women's experiences in the criminal justice system.

As requested, please find below my comments on the recommendations that are relevant to my portfolio.

Recommendation 1: The Welsh Government should map out the cost of the services it provides to identify those that it is responsible for as part of the current devolution settlement and those that currently fall within the responsibility of the Ministry of Justice. This work should be carried out by June 2023 and the Welsh Government should keep us informed of progress.

I note the Welsh Government is undertaking a mapping exercise on the cost of services it provides and that this will be completed by the Autumn. With regard to services that fall within the responsibility of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), reserved authorities and devolved authorities work extremely effectively together to deliver the services for which they are responsible, but it is important to note that the MoJ funds all services for which it is responsible.

Recommendation 7: The Welsh Government should work with the Ministry of Justice and HMPPS to identify gaps and to ensure there are sufficient community-based alternatives to custody available specifically for women across Wales.

His Majesty's Prisons and Probation Service (HMPPS) officials already work closely with the Welsh Government and other partners to deliver objectives set out in the joint MoJ and Welsh Government Women's Justice Blueprint. HMPPS leads the Community Sentences workstream which is developing, improving, and raising awareness of the community-based alternatives to custody by working with partners, providers and sentencers to ensure robust and effective community options for women appearing in Court.

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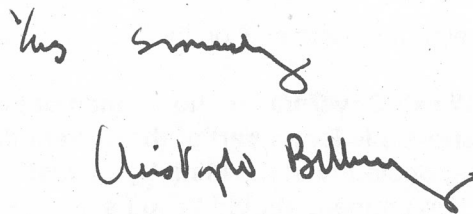
Recommendation 8: The Welsh Government must work with counterparts in the Ministry of Justice and with HMPPS to more clearly articulate the purpose and services the proposed Residential Women's Centre will offer.

Recommendation 9: The Welsh Government should work with the Ministry of Justice to ensure that Wales is represented in the development of the operational instructions and guidance relating to Residential Women's Centres.

We are grateful for the Welsh Government's support for our plans to establish the Residential Women's Centre. Following the rejection by the Swansea planning committee on 4 October 2022 of the planning application for the refurbishment and extension of the proposed site for the Residential Women's Centre in Swansea, the MoJ submitted an appeal against the planning committee's decision on 2 March 2023 and we expect a decision in the Autumn.

In the meantime, the Residential Women's Centre team in HMPPS continues to work closely with Welsh Government officials on the development of plans for the Centre, which will include communicating its purpose and the services it will provide. The Welsh Government is represented on the project board and there has been regular engagement to ensure that the Centre will meet the needs of women and their families.

I am sure the Senedd debate on your report, which I understand is scheduled to take place on 24 May, will be an excellent opportunity for Members of the Senedd to discuss the excellent work on women's justice that is taking place in Wales.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Bellamy', with a stylized flourish at the end.

LORD BELLAMY KC

Lord Bellamy KC
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State
Ministry of Justice

28 April 2023

Dear Lord Bellamy

Equality and Social Justice Committee report: Women's experiences in the criminal justice system

Further to our letter of 9 March enclosing a copy of our [report](#) on women's experiences in the criminal justice system, we have now received the Welsh Government's response, a copy of which is attached for information. Given their relevance to your portfolio, we would welcome your comments in relation to the following recommendations and the subsequent commentary from the Welsh Government:

Recommendation 1: The Welsh Government should map out the cost of the services it provides to identify those that it is responsible for as part of the current devolution settlement and those that currently fall within the responsibility of the Ministry of Justice. This work should be carried out by June 2023 and the Welsh Government should keep us informed of progress.

Recommendation 7: The Welsh Government should work with the Ministry of Justice and HMPPS to identify gaps and to ensure there are sufficient community-based alternatives to custody available specifically for women across Wales.

Recommendation 8: The Welsh Government must work with counterparts in the Ministry of Justice and with HMPPS to more clearly articulate the purpose and services the proposed Residential Women's Centre will offer.

Recommendation 9: The Welsh Government should work with the Ministry of Justice to ensure that Wales is represented in the development of the operational instructions and guidance relating to Residential Women's Centres.

A Senedd debate on our report is scheduled to take place on 24 May and we would therefore be grateful to receive a response by midday on 17 May if possible.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jenny Rathbone". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J' and a long, sweeping underline.

Jenny Rathbone MS

Chair, Equality and Social Justice Committee

Welsh Parliament

Agenda Item 2.3

Jane Hutt AM
Gweinidog Cyfiawnder Cymdeithasol a'r Prif Chwip
Minister for Social Justice and Chief Whip



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Jenny Rathbone MS
Chair, Equality and Social Justice Committee
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12 June 2023

Dear Jenny

Thank you for your letter of 17 May and for sharing the Committee's latest monitoring report.

I note the questions you have raised within your correspondence in relation to support for the Roma community, and I provide a response to those questions below:

Advice and support for the Roma community in relation to EUSS

Although EUSS applications continue to decline, the Welsh Government acknowledges that there will inevitably still be EU citizens in Wales requiring on going assistance with either late applications, refusals, appeals and/or joining family member applications. With this in mind the Welsh Government has recently announced a further package of support to ensure that advice services continue for at least the next 12 months.

We have worked collaboratively with stakeholders to decide how to make best use of the funds available and we remain focussed on supporting *all* vulnerable and hard to reach groups, including those within the Roma community.

Whilst TGP Cymru is not funded by Welsh Government to provide EUSS Advice Services, the Welsh Government does fund the TGP Cymru Travelling Ahead project to deliver advice and advocacy support to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. This funding currently runs until 31 July 2023. However, we are looking at options to continue the current provision and commission a revised service provision from 2024 to ensure an advocacy service provision for Gypsy, Roma and Travellers is attainable and accessible.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

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In addition, Settled, currently funded until March 2024, is registered to give immigration advice at OISC Level 3 and will continue to support individuals from all backgrounds. Settled has a small staff team of coordinators and lawyers, and a network of 70+ dedicated volunteers based throughout the UK, who speak over 20 European languages, including Romanes for its dedicated Roma service. Settled also manage interactive Facebook groups in a range of languages with multilingual information available on their website.

If TGP Cymru have any complex queries requiring immigration advice above Level 1 OISC, these can be referred to Settled who will assist. However, we are aware that Settled and TGP have recently submitted a joint application for the UK Government EUSS grant funding and pending the outcome of the grant application, the Roma community in Wales could be supported jointly by these two organisations in respect of EUSS and associated rights.

Ethnicity of EU citizens receiving support

The UK Government does not publish information on the ethnicity of EU citizens who have applied to the EU Settlement Scheme and our grant funded organisations are not required to record the ethnicity of the clients they assist to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme.

The EUSS Co-ordination Group offers an opportunity to raise concerns around the EU Settlement Scheme and with a lack of statistical data the Welsh Government does rely on the advice providers to inform us about particular vulnerabilities. We have asked TGP Cymru to provide data on the number of individuals in the Roma community who may still need support so that we can ensure that there is sufficient support available. We await that information. With this in mind we will work with stakeholders from the EUSS Co-ordination meeting to draw on anecdotal information.

I hope this response provides detail and clarity on the points you have raised and reassures the Committee that the Welsh Government is doing its utmost to uphold its promise to support EU, EEA and Swiss citizens who wish to remain here in Wales and to facilitate them with their settlement here in Wales.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jane Hutt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line above the first few letters.

Jane Hutt AS/MS

Y Gweinidog Cyfiawnder Cymdeithasol a'r Prif Chwip
Minister for Social Justice and Chief Whip

Jane Hutt MS
Minister for Social Justice

May 17 2023

Dear Jane

EU Settlement Scheme: monitoring report

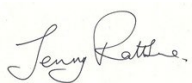
At our meeting on 24 April we considered the latest available statistics on EUSS applications from European citizens living in Wales and subsequently published our most recent [monitoring report](#). We are pleased that the Welsh Government has extended its free advice and support beyond the end of March 2023 and an additional £200k to organisations including Citizens Advice and Settled for the next financial year so they can continue to support EU citizens in Wales.

While we are pleased this additional funding will help support European citizens, we have heard concerns about how advice organisations are reaching those from Roma communities, many of whom are unable to speak English, have low levels of literacy and have complex needs which require additional and ongoing support which is provided face-to-face and in their first language. For all these reasons, Travelling Ahead has alerted us to the possibility that many European Roma have not applied for the Right to Remain in the UK, leaving them open to exploitation or otherwise being charged for services they are entitled to.

Travelling Ahead, is not receiving any funding from the Welsh Government to deliver this support, and is only getting a diminishing sum of money from the UK Government. For your information, I have written to Citizens Advice to ask them how they plan to reach the EU Roma community and their ability to communicate with them in their language.

- Could you outline what steps, if any, are being taken to ensure advice and support is reaching the Roma community.
- We would also be grateful to receive any additional information relating to the ethnicity of those who have received support and advice, and how this is being monitored to ensure it reaches the Roma community.

Yours sincerely,



Jenny Rathbone MS
Chair, Equality and Social Justice Committee

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LEGISLATIVE CONSENT MEMORANDUM

VICTIMS AND PRISONERS BILL

1. This legislative consent memorandum is laid under Standing Order (“SO”) 29.2. SO29 prescribes that a legislative consent memorandum must be laid, and a legislative consent motion may be tabled, before Senedd Cymru if a UK Parliamentary Bill makes provision in relation to Wales for any purpose within, or which modifies the legislative competence of the Senedd.
2. The Victims and Prisoners Bill (“the Bill”) was introduced in the House of Commons on 29 March 2023. The Bill as introduced can be found at: [Victims and Prisoners Bill](#).
3. On 11 April, I wrote to the Llywydd explaining that it has not been possible to lay this legislative consent memorandum within the normal two-week SO29 deadline. My officials had not had sight of the final version of the Bill, late changes to the Bill or Explanatory Notes prior to it being introduced and were also not informed that the Bill title had been changed to ‘Victims and Prisoners Bill’. A number of additional provisions have also been included within the Bill since a draft copy was initially published in 2022. Due to this it has taken time to fully consider the devolution consequences of what is being proposed through the Bill, which has meant missing the normal two-week laying deadline.

Policy Objective(s)

4. The UK Government’s stated policy objectives are to deliver on three key manifesto commitments; to pass and implement a Victims Law, to reform the parole system, and to establish an Independent Public Advocate to support victims of a major incident. Additionally, the Bill seeks to introduce changes which aim to strengthen the operation of the Parole Board and ensure public confidence in the system. The Bill will also prohibit prisoners who are serving a whole life order from entering a marriage or civil partnership.

Summary of the Bill

5. The Bill is sponsored by the Ministry of Justice (the MoJ).
6. The Bill makes provision about victims of criminal conduct and others affected by criminal conduct; about the appointment and functions of individuals to act as independent public advocates for victims of major incidents; about reforms to the parole system; about the membership and functions of the Parole Board; to prohibit certain prisoners from forming a marriage or civil partnership; and for connected purposes.

Engagement with the UK Government

7. My officials have engaged with officials in MoJ on the clauses expected to be introduced as part of the Bill. A draft version of the Bill, then known as the Victims Bill, was published for pre-legislative scrutiny on 22 May 2022.
8. Since the pre-legislative scrutiny period, MoJ has shared some proposed changes and additional draft clauses relating to the Victims element of the Bill with the Welsh Government. However, the Bill as tabled is considerably wider in scope than the draft Bill published in 2022. In particular, the draft Bill did not include any clauses relating to the parole system, Parole Board or the ability of prisoners to form a marriage or civil partnership. The Welsh Government did not have sight of the final Bill or Explanatory Notes prior to the Bill being introduced, was not informed that the scope of the Bill had widened in this way and was not informed that the title of the Bill had changed to the Victims and Prisoners Bill.

Provisions in the Bill for which consent is required

Clauses 1 to 4, 11, 22 and 23 - Victims of Criminal conduct – Victims' code:

9. Clauses 1 and 2 relate to the definition of a “victim” and the issuing of a code of practice as to the services to be provided to victims by persons appearing to the Secretary of State (“SoS”) to have functions relating to victims, or any aspects of the criminal justice system.
10. Consent is required as these clauses relate to safeguarding, support and information services to victims which are areas within the Senedd’s legislative competence. The UK Government is of the view that these clauses concern the engagement of victims with the criminal justice system and therefore relate to the reserved matters of the single legal jurisdiction, policing and the prevention, detection and investigation of crime and policing (paragraphs 8, 39, 40 and 41 of Schedule 7A to the Government of Wales Act 2006 (“GoWA”). However, although services to victims are provided as a direct result of criminal conduct, the criminal conduct has already taken place. These provisions do not appear to concern the criminal law and our position is that defining a victim of crime for the purposes of the Bill does not impact upon the single legal jurisdiction of England and Wales. This is also the case in respect of the issuing of a code of practice as to the services to be provided to victims.
11. As Clauses 3 and 4 relate to the preparation and revision of the victims’ code and are therefore ancillary to Clause 1 and 2 consent is also required.
12. Clause 11 relates to the requirement on the SoS to issue guidance on the discharge of duties by reserved authorities in respect of the victims’ code. As placing duties on the SoS and / or reserved authorities engages the restriction in paragraph 8(1)(a) of Schedule 7B to GoWA the Senedd could not enact a provision which directly replicates this clause without

the appropriate UK Minister's consent. However, as this provision relates to issuing guidance on the discharge of duties in respect of the victims' code (which falls within competence), the Senedd could, for instance, create a duty on the Welsh Ministers to issue guidance in relation to a victims' code for Wales. This means the Senedd could enact similar provisions to this clause and consent is therefore required.

13. Clause 22 relates to data protection regarding Part 1 of the Bill with clause 23 allowing for consequential provisions. These clauses are ancillary to Part 1 of the Bill and therefore consent is required.
14. Although these provisions fall within competence, the Senedd could not legislate for the entirety of the regime outlined in the Bill in relation to the victims' code. For example, the provisions set out in clauses 5 – 10 place compliance duties on reserved authorities and therefore engage the restriction in paragraph 8(1)(a) of Schedule 7B to GoWA. As noted in paragraph 12 above, to enact equivalent provisions the Senedd would require the appropriate Minister's consent. Without such consent the Senedd would be unable to ensure that reserved authorities (including justice bodies such as police forces and the courts and tribunals service) comply with any Victims' code enacted by the Senedd. This would mean such a code would not be as effective as its English equivalent and likely to be more akin to guidance than a duty.

Clause 15 – Victims of criminal conduct: Guidance about independent domestic violence and sexual violence advisors:

15. This clause provides that the SoS must issue guidance about independent domestic violence advisors and independent sexual violence advisors; and that any bodies having functions relating to victims, or to the criminal justice system, must have regard to it.
16. Consent is required as this clause makes provision with regard to welfare and safeguarding, which are devolved matters. It also requires devolved Welsh authorities with relevant functions to have regard to the Secretary of State's guidance. As such these provisions therefore are "relevant provisions" for the purposes of SO29.

Clauses 24-27 and 29-31 – Victims of major incidents: Appointment of independent public advocate:

17. These provisions create the new statutory role of Independent Public Advocates ("IPA") and allows the SoS to appoint an individual (or multiple individuals) to act as an IPA. The Bill's Explanatory Notes state the purpose of the IPA is to "*provide advice and support to the bereaved and the injured following a major incident and through any investigation, inquest and inquiry that follows.*"

18. Consent is required for clauses 24-27, which concern the appointment and functions of the IPA, as these clauses concern the devolved area of the provision of support services, signposting, advocating and dissemination of information. Clauses 30 and 31, on information sharing practice and broader guidance for IPAs, are ancillary to these clauses and consent is therefore also required.
19. Clause 29 places a duty on the IPA to report to the SoS. Similar provisions could be enacted by the Senedd, such as creating reporting requirements to the Welsh Ministers, and therefore consent is required as the duty is placed on a statutory role which falls within competence.
20. Clause 28, which amends section 47(2) of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 to make IPAs an “interested person” for the purposes of an investigation or inquest into a person’s death, is an exception and consent is not required for this clause. This is because the subject matter of Part 1 of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 is reserved under paragraph 167, section L3 (Coroners) of Schedule 7A to GOWA.

UK Government view on the need for consent

21. The UK Government agree that consent is required for clauses 15 (Guidance about independent domestic violence and sexual violence advisors) and for clauses 24-27 and 29-31 (Appointment of independent public advocates).
22. The UK Government has not yet been able to provide a view on whether consent is required for clauses 1 to 4, 11, 22 and 23 (Victims’ code and ancillary clauses) prior to the laying of this LCM. The Welsh Government will continue to engage with the UK Government as it considers this issue and its position.

Clauses within the competency of the Senedd where consent is not recommended:

Clause 15 - Guidance about independent domestic violence and sexual violence advisors:

23. This clause makes provision with regard to welfare and safeguarding, which are devolved matters. On that basis, our view is that any guidance on this issue in Wales should be issued by the Welsh Government rather than the UK Government, in line with our devolved responsibilities. The Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) Blueprint partnership provides an opportunity to develop our own definitions, and the existence of statutory guidance from the UK Government which applies in Wales could be confusing and restrictive.

24. This approach reflects our devolved competencies on VAWDASV and ensures the specialist sector in Wales will be able to input into any guidance on this issue.
25. My officials have held constructive and collaborative discussions with their UK Government counterparts regarding clause 15. The recommendation to withhold consent is a reflection that the landscape has evolved in Wales, and the inception of the National Partnership and Blueprint structure for delivering the aims of the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) (Wales) Act 2015. This structure is a key forum to broker shared decisions and commitments. We will be pursuing further conversations regarding an amendment to the bill at a later stage following further engagement with MoJ and the specialist VAWDASV sector in Wales.

Clauses within the competency of the Senedd, where there are key matters of concern to be resolved before consent can be recommended:

Clauses 1 to 4, 11, 22 and 23 - Victims' code and ancillary clauses:

26. We are currently waiting for the MoJ to respond to questions on the legal status of the Victim's Code in Wales, and the risks that it could set out responsibilities and expectations which are within the competence of the Senedd. We are continuing to engage with the UK Government on this issue, but until MoJ are able to address these issues we are not in a position to recommend consent on these clauses.

Clauses 24-27 and 29-31 - Appointment of independent public advocate:

27. As drafted, the Bill states that appointing an IPA is purely a matter for the Secretary of State and does not reflect the fact that these provisions (save for clause 28) are within the legislative competence of the Senedd. We also believe that notwithstanding this legislation, the Welsh Ministers would be able to appoint a non-statutory IPA following an incident in Wales under existing powers. The benefits for Wales of inclusion within these provisions are therefore currently unclear. We need to explore this issue further with the UK Government before we are in a position to make a recommendation with regard to consent on these clauses.

Financial implications

28. There are no financial implications to this Bill.

Conclusion

29. In my view it is not appropriate to recommend consent in respect of Clause 15, Guidance about independent domestic violence and sexual violence advisors.

30. In my view it is not appropriate to recommend consent for the following provisions until further discussions have been held with UK Government:

- Clauses 1 to 4, 11, 22 and 23 - Victims' code and ancillary clauses
- Clauses 24-27 and 29-31 - Appointment of independent public advocate

Jane Hutt MS
Minister for Social Justice
19 May 2023

By virtue of paragraph(s) vii of Standing Order 17.42

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DECIPHer Written Submission – 06.06.23

This submission highlights some relevant completed and ongoing research projects that may be useful to consider during any review of evidence.

1. The School Health Research Network (SHRN):

Our nationally representative survey across Wales included questions for students aged 11-16 related to dating and relationship violence. Only students who had ever dated or been in a relationship with someone of either sex, were asked whether they had experienced or perpetrated emotional and physical DRV. Emotional DRV was defined as hurtful comments, while physical violence included any of the following: being pushed, shoved, slapped, punched, kicked or beaten up.

In 2017, we published a research briefing drawing on this cross-sectional self-report data from 74 908 students aged 11-16 from 193 schools. It examined prevalence and predictors of dating and relationship violence victimization and perpetration separately, as well as overlapping victimization and perpetration. We found more girls (28%) than boys (20%) experienced emotional DRV victimization, but more boys (17%) reported physical victimization than girls (12%). A slightly higher proportion of girls than boys reported physical and emotional DRV perpetration. Compared to students living with both parents, adolescents from single or stepparent homes and those in care were slightly more likely to report some form of DRV victimization and/or perpetration. DRV showed patterning by age, ethnicity and living arrangements, as well as by gender. We found no association between family socioeconomic status and DRV.

The prevalence of DRV among young people in Wales highlighted it as a public health problem that is relevant to secondary schools. The age-related increase in all types of DRV in both girls and boys, highlighted the need for early, universal interventions. Mutual conflict within relationships, where young people are both perpetrators and victims of violence, suggests a need for interventions that focus on development of healthy relationships.

<https://www.shrn.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/ENGLISH-Young-DRV-Research-Brief-FINAL.pdf>

SHRN will be asking the same questions again this year, so will have comparison data available in 2024.

2. Safe sex and relationships in Further Education (SaFE):

The Safer Sex and Relationships in Further Education (SaFE) pilot trial is designed to refine and test 'SaFE' an intervention for Further Education settings to improve sexual health and reduce dating, relationship, and GBV among young people. The project builds on 15 months of work with over 2000 students and 200 staff from six FE settings, 12 sexual health charity staff and an advisory group of 16-21 year olds (ALPHA) which identified that onsite sexual health services and staff safeguarding training about sexual health and relationships were wanted by these key stakeholders, but not currently, consistently available.

The SaFE intervention addresses these gaps by: 1) offering free onsite sexual health (e.g. condoms, STI tests and pregnancy tests) and relationship services; 2) publicising these services at a college level and; 3) training FE staff how to promote sexual health and recognize and respond to dating, relationship and GBV. We have worked with Further Education students, staff, parents, policy makers, subject experts (including third-sector) and a youth advisory group to adapt existing publicity and staff training materials for use in Further Education.

We have also now conducted a larger pilot trial of SaFE. We have surveyed students in eight Further Education settings across England and Wales about their experiences of sexual health, dating, relationship and gender-based violence, then randomly allocated six settings to receive the SaFE intervention and two to act as comparison 'control' sites. In sites delivering SaFE we have interviewed staff and students to find out what they think of the intervention, and we have observed the delivery in these settings. We then surveyed students in all sites 12 months later. The findings are currently being analysed, and will tell us whether a much larger study to test the effectiveness of SaFE is worthwhile.

3. School-based interventions TO Prevent Dating and Relationship Violence and Gender-Based Violence (STOP): DRV-GBV systematic review

This project involved a systematic review of existing school based GBV and dating and relationship violence interventions, exploring how they were expected to work, what factors affected their implementation in practice, how they had an impact on DRV and GBV, and what specific parts of the interventions were most effective and in what contexts.

The review found 247 reports on school-based interventions to prevent GBV or dating and relationship violence, most of which were conducted in North America. Interventions had student components (e.g. group discussions, individual reflection), staff components (e.g. training, lesson plans), parent/family components (e.g. involvement in intervention) and school structures or physical environment (e.g. changes to school policies).

There was stronger evidence for intervention effectiveness in reducing DRV than for GBV, with significant long-term impacts on DRV victimisation and perpetration. There was some evidence that interventions in high income countries could be effective for reducing victimisation and perpetration of GBV in the long-term. More complicated interventions were not more effective, and interventions tended to reduce dating and relationship violence perpetration in boys more than in girls. This project has identified where there are gaps in available evidence, which may provide avenues for future research.

4. Peer on peer abuse

A project commissioned by Welsh Government and led by Cardiff and Vale college is exploring learner experiences of peer-on-peer abuse, and perceptions around college level policies and procedures for responding to, and managing, peer-on-peer abuse. In this project, peer-on-peer abuse is defined as experiences of discrimination, hate speech, harassment and violence that arise within college, or beyond college, because of relationships formed at college - thus relevant to and including GBV. The project will answer the following research questions: - What are learner perceptions, experiences, and opinions of college level responses to peer-on-peer abuse across Wales? - How do colleges across Wales respond to peer-on-peer abuse? The ultimate aim of this work is to develop a professional learning resource for college staff to support them in effectively managing and responding to peer-on-peer violence; and the current research will inform subsequent years to develop this resource.

5. Published paper in collaboration with Cardiff Women's Aid.

DECIPHer worked closely with Cardiff Women's Aid to explore how the first COVID-19 lockdown impacted GBV. This paper examined their police referral data and demonstrated an increase in high-risk referrals, and the rise in children seeking help for GBV due to prolonged exposure from being at home. It also evidenced an increase in child to parent violence, accounting for 2% of police contacts in total. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34568944/>

6. Child to parent violence and abuse:

Bethan Pell's PhD aims to extend the theoretical understanding of child to parent violence and abuse in the context of Wales. This is important and relevant to GBV, as the evidence suggests child to parent violence is a gendered phenomenon, instigated by sons towards mothers. However, these results are currently subject to methodological limitations, with varying results depending on samples, research methods and definitions used. These issues hinder our ability to make generalisations in the literature and ultimately impedes our understanding of this issue and ability to develop effective interventions. Developing a conceptual and theoretical understanding of CAPVA in Wales will go some way to extend the theoretical framework from which the knowledge base can be formed – a crucial first step for developing effective interventions.

7. Health Pathfinder:

This was a realist evaluation of a health-based GBV intervention in England which looked to increase awareness and expertise of health professionals to recognise, enquire, signpost and refer victim-survivors of GBV to specialist services, that were sometimes co-located in Health settings. Although these settings were based in England, it is clear that we need to continue this evidence-based practice across different systems, including health to target all victim-survivors of GBV.