

Lesley Griffiths MS
Cabinet Secretary for Culture and Social Justice

8 April 2024

Dear Lesley,

Recommendation and action area 2: Gender-based violence report

Congratulations on your appointment as Cabinet Secretary for Culture and Social Justice. We look forward to working with you and inviting you to a future meeting before too long.

Earlier this year, we published a report: 'How we must all play our part: a public health approach to halting the epidemic in gender-based violence'.¹ Your predecessor was very committed to this issue and in her response to recommendation and action area 2, there was a commitment to publish the workplans and membership details of each of the Blueprint workstreams, as well as the terms of reference for the Partnership Board and its workstreams. As the financial year draws to a close, we would like to request an update on this commitment.

Having considered the [Welsh Government's response to the report](#) more generally we would also welcome clarification in relation to the below.

- **Recommendation 3:** the written response refers to a group tasked with reviewing the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) national indicators. Given that the current indicators were adopted in 2019, Members are concerned they do not align with the updated [VAWDASV Strategy for 2022-26](#). Please could you provide clarification on when the revised indicators will be published? Additionally, how will the government ensure accountability and effective monitoring of the new strategy, particularly if the indicators continue to reflect the previous strategy?
- **Recommendation 4:** the response describes the development a National Practice Framework as part of the Transformation Programme for Children's Services but it is unclear how this relates to recommendation 4. We are calling for urgent action to ensure fast-tracked,

¹ Equality and Social Justice Committee, '[How we must all play our part: a public health approach to halting the epidemic in gender-based violence](#)', 15 January 2024

specialised therapeutic services are accessible for all babies, children and young people affected by or witnessing GBV. As far as we can see, there is no mention of anything to do with specialised therapeutic services (i.e. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) in the [Transformation of Children's Services Programme published by the Welsh Government](#) in September 2023. Would you please provide further details and clarification on this point.

- **Recommendation 6:** in response the Welsh Government commits to writing to schools to reinforce the obligation to report incidence of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and sets out the role of ESYTN inspectors. Given the importance of this issue, can you provide further details about how the government plans to enhance enforcement measures to ensure that teachers fulfil their mandatory reporting duty regarding incidents of FGM, beyond merely reinforcing its importance through written communication?
- **Action 5:** in response you signal that the Minister for Education will write to higher education institutions in Wales to ask them to strengthen their preventative approach to GBV. In light of [recent media reports](#) highlighting the widespread level of sexual violence on university campuses and concerns regarding inadequate record-keeping, what assurances can you provide regarding the safety of women and girls in Wales' universities? How will the government monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of measures taken by Higher Education Institutions to address sexual violence?

You will be aware that a Plenary debate is scheduled for the 8 May and we would therefore welcome a response prior to the debate to enable Members to reflect on it in their contributions.

Yours sincerely,



Jenny Rathbone MS

Chair, Equality and Social Justice Committee
Welsh Parliament