

## **Minutes for the Cross-Party Group on Violence against Women and Children**

**Date:** 09/05/25

**Attendees:** Sioned Williams MS, Ali Morris, Rose Baxter-Jones, Stephanie Grimshaw, Yashiba Sanil, Andrea Cooper, Sam Lewis, Emma Rushton, Frances J Beecher, Helen Stacey, Laura Tomsa, Sarah Thomas

**Apologies:** Mark Isherwood MS, Sara Kirkpatrick, Simon Borja, Debbie Woodroffe

12:00: Sioned welcomes all to the CPG. Begins the session by introducing Yashiba Sanil as the new Secretary for the CPG and extended a huge thank you to Stephanie Grimshaw for all her hard work so far as she continues to be a valuable member of the group.

12:05: Rose Baxter Jones from Welsh Women's Aid presents research and findings of No Grey Area Phase 2 which gathered data on the prevalence, impact, and responses to public sexual harassment in Wales.

An overview of the No Grey Area Part 1 was provided which highlighted 81% of women in Wales shared that they had experienced sexual harassment at work on at least one occasion.

Overwhelming number of survivors reported that they did not feel supported coming forward as they were often not believed and showed little trust in the reporting process.

77% respondents stated they did not report SH. 88% respondents think there was enough awareness about SH.

The impact of sexual harassment affects all aspects of life particularly emotional wellbeing and that shapes how individuals view their place in the world.

Only 4% could say that they did not face any impact of sexual harassment whereas others indicated long term emotional distress including anxiety, depression and PTSD.

Survivor testimonies and qualitative responses were shared to highlight change in behaviour after sexual harassment.

Personal testimonies highlighted fear and vulnerability, public apathy and psychological impact.

Recommendations included strengthening reporting, prevention initiatives, support for survivors, bystander intervention and policies to protect victims through a whole systems approach.

Ali Morris inquired about responses to the No Grey Area survey and if respondents highlighted their gender and sex. Rose responded to the same by stating that the survey included a list wherein individuals could state their gender and if they identified with their sex at birth.

Ali also highlighted the need to discuss the RSE curriculum.

Sioned spoke about the general nature of the RSE code.

Helen Stacey highlighted the huge backward cultural shift in attitudes and rising misogyny. Sioned backed this by calling for the need for collective awareness.

A discussion on day and nighttime stereotypes regarding SH took place highlighting both harassment in public spaces, as well as transportation like trains especially at night.

Sioned highlighted NGA's report mentioning 335 contacts to the Live Fear Free Helpline asking if we are seeing a trend of increase in contact for sexual harassment.

Rose stated there being 1,463 contacts to LFF regarding stalking or harassment between April 2022 - March 2025, but would have to look at data in more depth to see the trend

Sioned spoke about highlighting the recommendations of No Grey Area to the Welsh Government and highlighted further action by writing to Welsh Gov to discuss action taken so far around RSE as well.

12: 30: Discussion of the DAC Office report on Children facing domestic abuse as support services risk financial collapse.

Stephanie gave an overview of the report highlighting how children are far more likely to wait for support and children's services are more likely to close due to funding restrictions.

Sioned highlighted 31% specialist had to cease services and there is an urgent need to recognise the danger. Action decided to write to Jane Hutt about conversations about cross-government working regarding the issue and what she plans to highlight before the spending review.

Sam Lewis also echoed the cause for funding. There is no core funding for children's services. And the funding from the Child and Community grant has been cut over the years which have impacted management costs and salaries of support workers.

Laura highlighted upcoming report by Barnados. Also spoke about how funding remains strained with the need for longer funding cycles.

Stephanie highlighted the need for centring children's voices in the discourse.

Following which the group decided on the action to hear more from the Children's Commissioner in the future to speak and hear about her conversations with focus groups and the Welsh Gov on the issue.

The group discussed intersectionality including aspects such as poverty, cross cultural differences and the need for support for children to factor in intersectional lens to ensure holistic support.

12:52: Closing remarks. Group decided on hearing Barnados presentation in the next session on their upcoming report.

Members also spoke about not taking a broad brush to the issue and to not view children and women's issues as a niche problem.

Sarah Thomas highlighted the lack of research about violence against women in rural communities. Stephanie shared State of the Sector report's findings on rural access for support.

Action decided ahead to reach out to the Police and Crime Commissioner to see if someone might be available to discuss stats in North Wales.