

GBV 01

Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee

Gender-based Violence, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Bill : Stage 1
Response: Royal College of General Practitioners



Response to the consultation on Gender-based Violence, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Bill

The Royal College of General Practitioners is the largest membership organisation in the UK solely for GPs, with almost 2,000 members in Wales. It aims to encourage and maintain the highest standards of general medical practice and to act as the 'voice' of GPs on issues concerned with education, training, research, and clinical standards. Founded in 1952, the RCGP has over 38,000 members UK wide, who are committed to improving patient care, developing their own skills and promoting general practice as a discipline.

The College in Wales very much welcomes the opportunity to respond to this consultation.

1. We welcome the introduction of this Bill to help the work in this area that is already being undertaken in Wales by different agencies. Regrettably the services available are not always equitable and we hope that the Bill will aid the standardisation of care to prevent, manage and support victims. We are disappointed that there is no mention of the role of education both of the general public and via the school services to improve person wellbeing, relationships and the treating of everyone with dignity and respect. In addition victims of gender based violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence are often unaware of how and where they should seek help. Consequently additional ongoing public information is required.
2. These issues are important to GPs who may be first to identify a victim or perpetrator of the crimes but may need to manage the resultant short and long term physical, emotional and psychological health in their patients often without being aware of the underlying causes or without getting consent to disclosure when the causes are revealed or suspected.
3. In section 2. 3&4 we welcome the development and publication of a Welsh Strategy with the review 6 months later and in section 4 the Local strategy developed by Local Authorities and Local Health Boards. The Bill does not set out explicitly if these need to be joint strategies. We would like to raise concerns that the borders of the organisations are not co- terminous and this means that sometimes the individuals fall between the border boundaries as well as service boundaries (which may be different). There needs to be effective mechanisms for multi- agency and

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multi disciplinary working with the potential for joined up budgets. There are financial implications of addressing these issues effectively across Wales and with provision for cross Border issues into England. We welcome the mechanisms for regular review of these strategies as set out in section 5.

4. Section 6. 1 d says there needs to be strategy for substance misuse. This needs to include drugs **and alcohol** plus legal high use. There not only needs to be medical management and treatment but also counselling, support and rehabilitation. In some parts of Wales the services have long waiting lists or rely heavily on over subscribed third sector provision. There could be financial implications as these services may require improvement in some areas.
5. We welcome the potential under the Bill for the appointment of an Advisor to the Minister on Gender-based Violence, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence and the need for an annual report to be published. There are obvious implications of this appointment together with supporting staff and the need to audit and review services across Wales.

Thank you for asking RCGP Wales to contribute to this consultation. We are happy for this response to be published.

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