

Leighton Andrews AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Gwasanaethau Cyhoeddus
Minister for Public Services



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-540
Ein cyf/Our ref LA -/00641/15

William Powell AM
Chair - Petitions Committee
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

29 September 2015

Dear William

Thank you for your letter dated March 2015 regarding the petition "Stop sexism in domestic abuse".

My officials have been in regular correspondence with the petitioner over the course of this year and have provided a number of assurances regarding Welsh Government policy in this area.

I can further assure you that the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 applies to all victims of gender based violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence, both male and female. Whilst women are more likely to experience gender-based violence, the Welsh Government recognises victims can be from across the whole spectrum of society, irrespective of gender.

The provisions of the Act also cover victims of all ages and in recognition of the substantial impact on children, both as victims and as witnesses of such violence and abuse, there is no age threshold.

The Act requires Local Authorities and Local Health Boards to develop and publish local strategies for tackling domestic violence and abuse, based on the identified problems in their area. We will expect Local Authorities and Local Health Boards, in the preparation and implementation of these local strategies, to focus on the different needs of victims, recognising that gender is an important consideration and reflecting the identified needs in the services which are provided. The Act allows Authorities to provide, or continue to provide, gender-specific services. This may include, for example, provision of services or refuges for men.

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Wedi'i argraffu ar bapur wedi'i ailgylchu (100%)

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The Act is a central part of a wider package of measures to tackle all forms of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence for all victims. For example the Welsh Government funds the Dyn Project which specifically supports male victims. The Project provides frontline advocacy support for men, as well as telephone and web-based support and contact details for local services. The Project also delivers training and works to raise awareness across Wales about how men can be victims, and how best to support them in these circumstances.

Welsh Government funded services, such as the All Wales Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Helpline and Bawso, also support both men and women. Our website "Live Fear Free" provides targeted information specifically for male victims, including a video highlighting one of the biggest challenges facing men suffering from abuse - admitting what is happening and feeling able to ask for help.

The Act reflects the commitment of the Welsh Government to support all victims suffering from violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence. It will create stronger leadership and it will ensure a more robust, consistent focus and response to tackling these extremely serious issues across Wales for all victims, male and female.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Leighton Andrews', followed by a long horizontal flourish.

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Minister for Public Services