

National Advisers' Report to the Equality, Local Government and Communities (ELGC) Committee June 2019 update

Purpose

In his letter dated 18 December 2018 to the Deputy Minister and Chief Whip, John Griffiths, AM Chair of the ELGC Committee, requested periodic updates from the National Advisers to provide reassurance on the pace of implementation of the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015.

This is the second update from the National Advisers and covers the period April 2019 to June 2019 inclusive.

Please note that the sub headings below "National Advisers" and "Welsh Government VAWDASV Officials" indicate ownership of actions described in the respective sections.

Introduction

National Advisers:

The National Advisers recognise that this is a cross-cutting area of work which demands commitment across Welsh Government departments, local authorities, the public sector, UK government organisations, the third sector and other relevant partners.

National Indicators

Welsh Government VAWDASV Officials:

The Welsh Government National Indicator consultation summary was published on 21st June 2019. The National Indicators and Technical Document was laid before the National Assembly and was published at the end of June 2019.

Although the consultation responses did not recommend any of the indicators should be removed, there were suggestions for improvements to the measures and data sources identified to report against these indicators.

Welsh Government Officials will be establishing a working group made up of all stakeholders that formally fed into the consultation exercise, together with stakeholders who have expressed an interest in being involved in the development of the National Indicators. The aim of this working group is to review the current indicators, measures and data sources with a view to developing and agreeing any amendments which may be required. The finalised indicators resulting from the review work will continue to be used to report against the current strategy and will inform any revised strategy from 2021 onwards.

National Advisers:

The National Advisers are of the opinion that a comprehensive set of indicators (including for sexual violence) was presented during the consultation exercise. The consultation document was framed as simply as possible without too much technical terminology in order to facilitate understanding by prospective consultees.

Local Strategies

Welsh Government VAWDASV Officials:

Welsh Government Officials engaged with VAWDASV regional co-ordinators on the content and format of their annual reports for 2018/19. These are progress reports on the local strategies published in May 2018. All the reports will be forwarded to the National Advisors for their comment.

National Advisers:

The National Advisers wrote to regional VAWDASV Boards last May and have written again to each Board to establish what progress each has made against their own Action Plans. We intend to consider their responses with a view to determining best practice in this area.

High quality, professional services by frontline staff are essential to meet the overarching aim of improving public sector responses to the needs of survivors.

Statutory Guidance

Welsh Government VAWDASV Officials:

Regional Commissioning Guidance

The Statutory Guidance for the Commissioning of VAWDASV Services in Wales was published on 15 May 2019.

National Training Framework

The National Training Framework is made up of six groups. All professions within the Public Service will fall into one of these groups and a minimum training requirement is outlined per group offering a proportionate training syllabus.

As of March 2019, 158,500 people in Wales have accessed training under the National Training Framework. Updated figures (including 2018-19) will be available in the forthcoming weeks and will be included in the next report to the Committee. Training opportunities for all groups of the National Training Framework are available across Wales during this year. These opportunities include another fully funded Welsh Government specialist course and service manager course for groups 4 and 5 of the framework (those whose specialism in the field of VAWDASV eg domestic abuse advisers, sexual abuse advisers and refuge workers), and regional workshops

for group 6 leaders (includes those with commissioning and planning responsibilities eg chief executives of local authorities and local health boards).

National Training Framework annual reports from the majority of relevant authorities have been submitted and analysis of training will be completed when the full complement of reports is received.

Ask and Act

Ask and Act awareness sessions continue to be delivered to relevant authority staff across the five early adopter/pilot sites. Planning and implementation meetings have commenced in North Wales and 'Train the trainer' training has been completed to 20 professionals in Mid and West Wales during the period.

Initial analysis of the National Training Framework annual reports forecast that 4,000 professionals will be trained in 2019-2020.

Welsh Government Officials have engaged with key partners and pilot area leads to review how third sector support will continue during the next phase of the roll out of Ask and Act.

National Advisers

The National Advisers are of the view that the training is comprehensive and tiered for various personnel in accordance with their involvement in situations around violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence. It is also tailored to the needs of specific organisations. The National Advisers think it would be beneficial to map the impact of the training to assess for example the increase in early identification or the decrease in risk. It is important to ensure that training for professionals, service providers and members of the public does actually make a positive difference to victims and survivors. It is suggested that assessing the impact of training could be picked up when looking at the measures for the National Indicators.

Health

National Advisers:

The National Advisers met with Andrew Goodall, Director General for Health and Social Services and Chief Executive of NHS Wales in May when mental health referral pathways and waiting lists for sexual assault referral centres were discussed. The National Advisers also flagged up that data is often not shared with other service providers. For example, health visitors are asked to complete a domestic violence assessment, but it is not known if this assessment is shared or even transferred onto a national database.

The Director General committed to a range of follow up actions at the meeting, including to arrange a discussion for the National Advisers with all four Directors General; share a new proposal for sexual assault referral centres; share the proposal for an All Wales Trauma Stress Quality Improvement Initiative; facilitate health boards to carry out a framing session on cultural harms; and arrange a meeting with the National Independent Safeguarding Board.

Education

Welsh Government VAWDASV Officials:

Welsh Government Officials are meeting with the WJEC to discuss the possibility of including a Peer Mentoring Challenge around Healthy Relationships and Sexuality within the Welsh Baccalaureate. This was an action arising from a meeting on 30 April between Kirsty Williams AM, Minister for Education and the National Advisors to discuss health and well-being aspects of the draft Curriculum for Wales 2022.

Welsh Government Officials with responsibility for VAWDASV and for Education are working together to plan a series of communication events with schools, communities and young people to ensure the correct information is being provided around the new curriculum development.

National Advisers:

The National Advisers met with the Minister for Education on 30 April 2019 and agreed a number of actions which are being taken forward by the Minister. The National Advisers will continue to provide advice and practical assistance specifically in relation to the potential parental resistance to specific strands of the Health and Well-being Area of Learning and Experience.

The National Advisers have hands-on experience of mediating in schools in Birmingham where there are currently parental protests against the curriculum. Another approach the Advisers have offered is to work with organisations like BAWSO and Henna Foundation for the purpose of encouraging dialogue with mothers about Relationships and Sexual Education (RSE)

FGM, Honour Based Violence (HBV) and Forced Marriage (FM)

Welsh Government VAWDASV Officials:

A meeting of the Honour Based Violence Leadership Group jointly arranged by Welsh Government and BAWSO was held on 25 April. Welsh Government Officials are currently reviewing the membership of the group in order to ensure lead decision makers are represented. This will be followed by a review of the delivery plan so that it is focused on key priorities. The group has achieved a great deal over the past few years, but now needs to refresh the delivery plan in order to move forward.

National Advisers:

The National Advisers have considered how barriers to reporting these heinous crimes has highlighted the need for awareness raising and building up trust with BAME groups. The Welsh Government National Survivor Engagement framework will help address many of these issues through targeted engagement with diverse groups and

the specific training currently being delivered through the National Training Framework.

The National Advisers intend to visit the Wales FGM Clinic and review the number of FGM referrals received. The findings will be provided in the National Advisers' Annual Report 2019.

Sustainable Funding Model

National Advisers

One of the key challenges for 2019-20 remains developing and implementing a sustainable funding approach. The National Advisers have been working alongside Welsh Government Officials to undertake significant work to develop a long term and sustainable funding model following the publication of the statutory Commissioning Guidance in May 2019. It is our aim that this model will provide the foundations for a funding mechanism to give vital and sustainable financial security to our specialist services. It was for this reason the National Advisers re-established the Sustainability Funding Task and Finish Group, which met for the third time in April 2019. Key outputs from this meeting are a common understanding of what sustainable funding means and an agreement to meet with commissioners to better align priorities.

Membership for this group has been agreed to ensure key stakeholders are fully engaged. The National Advisers are now working to include commissioners so that potential joint commissioning and new funding streams may be identified.

The Sustainable Funding Group members expressed the need for the Housing Support Grant to support all forms of VAWDASV, not just domestic abuse. It has been proposed that there will be representation from the Sustainable Funding Group on the group that oversees the Housing Support Grant. The Sustainable Funding Group has also raised concerns about the disparity of funding for women with no recourse to public funds; this has been raised as an action with the Vice Chair of the Group and the Deputy Minister through our regular meetings.

Funding Allocations

Welsh Government VAWDASV Officials:

The VAWDASV revenue grant continues to support the Regional Partnerships to provide a co-ordinated approach to providing VAWDASV services throughout Wales. This support includes Independent Domestic Violence Adviser (IDVA) services.

Funding is directed at supporting black, Asian, and minority ethnic services, sexual violence services, a helpline for male victims of VAWDASV, preventative educational support in schools in Wales as well as supporting the functions of the umbrella organisation for VAWDASV services in Wales.

Funding is also directed at supporting regional partnerships to develop perpetrator services in their regional areas.

National Advisers

Grant funding from the Welsh Government has improved since it became a needs and evidence based model. It is hoped that this will improve the sustainability of the third sector and reduce the reliance of the sector on government funding.

Working with perpetrators

Welsh Government VAWDASV Officials:

Practice sharing events were held in North Wales (Llandudno Junction) and South Wales in April and May. Events continue to be well received and attended. Speakers for this period represented Phoenix and Reprovide, Relate Cymru and the Choose to Change programme, the Offender Personality Disorder Pathway and Data Cymru.

The Welsh Government is providing ongoing support and supervision for the Swansea University harassment research study, which the Welsh Government funded in collaboration with KESS II (Knowledge Economy Skills Scholarships), part of the European Social Fund.

Following the review of the Drive Project (perpetrator-focused programme) in Merthyr (commissioned by the Office of the South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner, Welsh Government Officials are continuing to provide advice on the implementation of the review's recommendations.

The Welsh Government's good practice guidance for public services working with perpetrators is being finalised and will be published in July.

The Head of Perpetrator Policy presented at the two CAF/CASS Cymru annual conferences in May, speaking on the importance of safe, effective and evidence-based practice with perpetrators.

The VAWDASV Act has been reflected in the blueprint for female offending, published in May, on which the Deputy Minister gave an oral statement on 21 May.

Input was provided to the North Wales VAWDASV Board in April and Dyfed-Powys VAWDASV Board in May, advising on work towards objective 3 of the National Strategy: "Increased focus on holding perpetrators to account and provide opportunities to change their behaviour based around victim safety."

Her Majesty's Prison & Probation Service (HMPPS) in Wales has agreed to implement the Welsh Government's VAWDASV Perpetrator Service Standards for all non-accredited VAWDASV-related interventions.

Welsh Government Officials are providing advice to the Home Office and Ministry of Justice on the development of Domestic Abuse Prevention Orders (DAPOs), with particular consideration for the needs of Wales.

National Advisers:

There has been some excellent work in this area which the National Advisers discussed with the Deputy Minister and Chief Whip in May. As this work currently requires additional funding, various options for funding have been discussed with the Deputy Minister. The National Advisers strongly support the perpetrator policy agenda and see this as best practice, and wish to highlight this area of work across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

National Survivor Engagement Framework

Welsh Government VAWDASV Officials:

Further to the last update, colleagues from the Internal Research Programme have developed a survey which ended in June to engage with under represented groups. This survey also contains the option for participation in more in-depth interviews.

Interim findings from the survey will be provided in the summer to enable the formation of a pilot panel. This will be monitored over a three-month period to establish whether it is the best approach and whether the survivor voices and experiences have made a difference. This will inform the final report which will influence a sustainable survivor engagement framework.

Welsh Government Officials are also exploring ways in which to best engage with a diverse range of survivors for the Wales Centre for Public Policy review on accommodation-based services.

National Advisers:

To ensure that a broad representation of survivor voices, in terms of their experiences, is captured, the National Advisers welcome the piece of work through the National Survivor Engagement Framework. A survey has been undertaken to identify certain groups which are not currently represented, the survey will also include in-depth interviews which will help Welsh Government build a greater understanding of need. The National Advisers continue to work with existing survivor forums and individuals to inform our analysis and work.

Live Fear Free

Welsh Government VAWDASV Officials:

Welsh Government Officials have received approval to extend the Live Fear Free helpline contract for one year.

National Advisers:

The National Advisers are pleased to note the increase in new followers and the lively online debate and feedback generated by the Welsh Government's communications campaigns. Where possible the National Advisers continue to share key messages on their respective social media channels.

Communications

Welsh Government VAWDASV Officials:

Campaigns

The "This is not love. This is control" campaign which was launched in January 2019 continued throughout this April to June reporting period with the launch of the 'Control and Diverse groups' phase. The campaign highlighted the treacherous, cumulative nature of coercive control as well as its subtlety.

This later phase of the campaign reflected the experiences of diverse and under-represented groups and narrowed the messaging to the specific experiences of those with a protected characteristic groups, such as older people, LGBT, black and minority ethnic groups, men and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

The campaign highlighted the specific types of controlling and abusive behaviour that survivors within these groups have described. It also aimed to help people recognise these behaviours as wrong and abusive and encouraged people experiencing or witnessing such behaviours to seek advice and support from the Live Fear Free helpline.

This phase of the campaign saw the creation of 22 digital videos, shared on social media, over 5000 posters shared with relevant stakeholders and key locations and ongoing interactions with groups working with the target audience.

Interim results for the 'This is not love: this is control' campaign show that the campaign films have been viewed more than 300,000 times across digital channels, including social media, and more than 30,000 sessions have been recorded on the campaign website. Early indicative data from the Live Fear Free helpline and from the police suggests that the campaign is having an impact on the number of coercive control related calls to the helpline and reported coercive control offences in Wales.

The Welsh Government funded community communications activity aims to broaden and strengthen the reach of our campaigns which include "This is Me" and "Don't be a Bystander". Cardiff University has included the 'This is Me' campaign in its Agenda resource for primary schools. Agenda is a resource pack to be used by teachers when discussing healthy relationships in a school setting. It includes topic suggestions, worksheets and activities to be used. It is available for both secondary and primary schools.

National Advisers:

The National Advisers have been closely engaged with the Welsh Government's communication team to ensure that more and better information is shared with our citizens. The National Advisers endorse the recent campaign for "This is not love. This

is control” which focusses on coercive control and which has seen an increase of reported incidents. The National Advisers are working with the communications team to improve the messaging on social media and to publicise the work of the Welsh Government, and continue to respond to news stories which impact of VAWDASV.

Conclusion

National Advisers:

The National Advisers will engage Welsh Government as well as external stakeholders in the planning of the ‘stocktake’ conference scheduled for November 2019 to coincide with the period around White Ribbon Day. Through the National Advisers’ work with the specialist sector and speaking directly with survivors of abuse, the need to re-establish the All-Wales Learning Panel has been identified. This was a commitment originally in the National Strategy. This Panel will focus on improving multi-agency responses to cases where victims have identified safeguarding concerns. The initial meeting will involve BAME survivors who have experienced sexual abuse. It is hoped that a systematic change where required within a multi-agency discipline and across Welsh Government policy can be implemented.

The National Advisers’ annual report is expected later this year. It will be focussing on the gaps and specific actions required to ensure the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 Act and the work flowing from it is being implemented across Wales and the service user’s journey has seen demonstrable change for the better.

In light of the continuing passage of the Domestic Abuse Bill through the Houses of Parliament, the National Advisers propose regular meetings should take place during the next quarter by the Advisers with the relevant UK Government Officials, primarily with the proposed Domestic Abuse Commissioner (when in post). We also wish to encourage continued collaboration and learning amongst the officials of the four UK Administrations (England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) as a legacy of our appointment as National Advisers for Wales.

June 2019