

**Grŵp Trawsbleidiol ar Drais yn erbyn Menywod a Phlant / Cross Party Group on Violence Against Women and Children**

**Friday 27<sup>th</sup> October 2023, 12.00-13.00 (Via Teams)**

**Minutes**

Attending	Apologies
Sioned Williams, MS	Mark Isherwood, MS
Jen Mills, Welsh Women’s Aid	Delyth Jewell, MS
Stephanie Grimshaw, Welsh Women’s Aid	Jessica Laimann, Women’s Equality Network (WEN) Wales
Aliya Iftikhar, Welsh Women’s Aid	Peredur Owen Griffiths, MS
Sion Edwards, Senedd Commission Staff	Melissa Wood, Barnardo’s
Bethan Sayed	Michelle Whelan, Calan DVS
Carol Harris, Stori Cymru	Jack Sargeant, MS
Claire short, Stop it Now! Wales	
Gemma Nokes, Calan DVS	
Sian Gwenllian, MS	
Altaf Hussain, MS	
Jennie Henderson, Stepping Stones NW	
Jodie Saunders, SMT	
Fay Jones, MP	
Rhianydd Williams, TUC Cymru	
Johanna Robinson, Welsh Government	
Sarah Thomas, NFWI Wales	
Simon Borja, Safer Wales	
Sharon Smith, Stori Cymru	

Item	Lead
<p><b>12:00-12:05 Welcome, introductions, and apologies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SW thanked everyone for attending, introduced the agenda, apologies, and highlighted housekeeping for the meeting</li> <li>The theme of this CPG is technological abuse. Technology can be used in many different ways to monitor and stalk individuals as well as harass and insult people. We will focus methods of technological abuse and on women politicians’ personal experiences of online abuse.</li> <li>The cross-party group AGM will be conducted prior to starting the meeting</li> <li>AI reminded attendees that translation was available for the meeting</li> </ul>	<p>Sioned Williams MS</p>

<p><b>AGM: Election of Office Holders</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chair: Sioned Williams MS (nominated by Sian Gwenllian MS)</li> <li>• Secretariat: Welsh Women’s Aid (nominated by Sioned Williams MS, seconded by Rhianydd Williams, TUC Cymru)</li> </ul>	<p>Sioned Williams MS</p>
<p><b>Technological Abuse and the role of social media</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SG highlighted how smart devices can be used as tool by perpetrators. Examples were key-tracking, ring doorbells, apple tags, shared location on smart devices such as Alexa, and more.</li> <li>• SG discussed social media abuse and how misogyny online influences and encourages problematic behaviours, highlighting some well-known cases.</li> <li>• Discussion took place afterwards on peer-to-peer abuse. SW asked JR (National VAWDASV Advisor) about how the national VAWDASV strategy touches on this.</li> <li>• JR provided an update on the work Welsh Government is doing on this and where this sits on the Blueprint workstreams. Lots of interlinking between workstreams as it sits within the children and young people and tackling perpetration workstreams.</li> <li>• Peer-on-peer sexual harassment plan is being developed. There needs to be a balance between prevention of sexually harmful behaviour and accepting responsibility.</li> <li>• Lots of schools doing work on influencers and there is recognition that there is a level of independence with this, but when everyone is busy it can be something that is dropped. Some teachers struggle to have a firm understanding of this.</li> </ul>	<p>Stephanie Grimshaw</p> <p>Head of Public Affairs and Communications Welsh Women’s Aid</p>
<p><b>Politicians’ personal experience of online abuse</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BS discussed personal experiences of online abuse as a Senedd member and impact this had. Stated that she couldn’t put a date on when things started and still gets hate online now but it is not constant as when she was elected.</li> </ul>	<p>Bethan Sayed Fay Jones MP</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BS discussed feelings of isolation that resulted from her experiences and the importance of showing solidarity when women in politics experience abuse regardless of political party.</li> <li>• BS discussed the difficulties in getting social media platforms to view content as abusive and the lack of scrutiny.</li> <li>• SW discussed the importance of calling out abuse and supporting other women, for example, encouraging more women into the Senedd.</li> <li>• FJ discussed the start of the online hate she experiences which began on boxing day when she attended a legal hunt and received abuse on social media as a result. This escalated quickly and included intimidation and threats of violence.</li> <li>• FJ highlighted that we don't talk about the consequences of online hate such as humiliation enough. There is a gendered element to this e.g. the language used is often intended to belittle women. Need to look at how women experience this and support each other across political parties.</li> <li>• SW highlighted that this is about misogyny and hate crime against women and should be called out regardless of the motivation or political association. Discussed the lack of procedure for abuse on social media and the relative lack of support for women in some areas, for example, in local government. Public instances of abuse need to be called out to stop them becoming a social norm.</li> <li>• FJ said that she calls out abuse in her own way. We all need to work together to put an end to misogynistic content online.</li> <li>• BS said it would help if there were more women in politics. As a woman, when you voice your opinions on social media more you get more abuse because you are present there. It is important that there are more women in politics, and they can speak out and not fear backlash.</li> <li>• SW suggested we could write out to all political parties in the Senedd and ask whether they could adopt the TUC workplace toolkit and make sure it is being looked at and used.</li> <li>• JR discussed available material on workplaces and harassment of women in public spaces, and the responsibility is on</li> </ul>	<p>Action: WWA to draft letter</p>
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<p>organisations to assess their own culture and processes and scrutinise these to ensure they are safe spaces for women.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RW from TUC Cymru mentioned the Sexual Harassment Toolkit and updated the group around work the TUC are doing to ensure key organisations are using the toolkit, but outlined a lack of clarity in terms of who is taking responsibility for ensuring adherence.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>AOB</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The next scheduled meeting is a joint meeting with the Cross-Party Group on Women to be held on 24<sup>th</sup> November 10am-11am. Please RSVP to Jessica Laimann of Women’s Equality Network (WEN) Wales (<a href="mailto:jessica@wenwales.org.uk">jessica@wenwales.org.uk</a>) if you would like to attend.</li> </ul>	<p>Sioned Williams MS</p>