

PLVAW 09

Ymchwiliad ôl-ddeddfwriaethol i Ddeddf Trais yn erbyn Menywod,
Cam-drin Domestig a Thrais Rhywiol (Cymru) 2015

Post legislative inquiry into the Violence against Women,

Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015

Ymateb gan: Mae darparwyr gwasanaethau o fewn y Rhanbarth Cwm Taf

Response from: Service providers within the Cwm Taf Region

This response has been prepared on behalf of a number of organisations who either provide or are involved with services for tackling violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence within the Cwm Taf region

Our comments are as follows.

- **To what extent the approach to tackling violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence is improving as a result of the obligations in the Act?**

1.1 The general opinion of service providers in Cwm Taf is that it is too soon to be considering the impact of the VAWDASV Act in relation to service improvement. Most Local Authorities have been waiting for the publication of the National Strategy to inform their local strategies. Although local delivery plans are already focused on the key elements of the Act the National Strategy has only recently been released for consultation. Therefore, it will take time before all of the objectives of the Act become actions in a Cwm Taf strategy and delivery plan. It is our understanding that local strategies are required to be in place by May 2018.

1.2 Whilst the Act has yet to make an impact on service improvement in Cwm Taf it has been a positive tool in raising awareness of the responsibilities of Local Authorities and Health Boards in relation to VAWDASV.

1.3 The National Training Framework associated with the Act, hopefully, will ensure widespread awareness of the issues. The Cwm Taf region are currently focusing on development of a programme of roll out of stages 1 and 6 (which is in its infancy) and starting to think about the development of its training plan as required under the Act in order to meet the May 2017 deadline; However it is too early to assess impact.

- **What are the most effective methods of capturing the views and experiences of survivors? Are arrangements in place to capture these experiences and to what extent is this information being used to help inform the implementation of the Act's provisions?**

2.1 In Cwm Taf it is our view that in order to successfully capture service users views a range of methods need to be offered as one size does not fit all. Cwm Taf providers offer a variety of engagement approaches including drop in groups, evaluation forms, on line surveys and occasional consultation workshops. Whilst there are mechanisms in place to capture service user's views the provision of engagement opportunities is not consistent across all services.

2.2 Service user views on the implementation of the Act have not been sought recently as local strategies have yet to be developed. Service User views will be asked for in the near future in order to inform the Cwm Taf VAWDASV needs assessment, which in turn will inform the commissioning of service provision.

2.3 The view of local providers is that many service users are currently unaware of the legislation and its intentions. It is intended to rectify this across Cwm Taf with active engagement and consultation for the aforementioned needs assessment and in addition consultation on the draft Cwm Taf Regional Strategy.

- **Whether survivors of abuse are beginning to experience better responses from public authorities as a result of the Act, particularly those needing specialist services?**

3.1 Leadership and Accountability has improved and in Cwm Taff a VAWDASV Executive Group has been introduced. However, as outlined in Paragraphs 1.1 and 1.3 it is too early to see notable changes as progress is still in its infancy, although focus has shifted to a robust needs assessment, strategy development and then appropriate commissioning strategy. At this current time it is fair to say though that services have not been changes as a result of the Act, therefore service users will not be experiencing better responses that can be directly attributed to the Act.

- **Whether the National Adviser has sufficient power and independence from the Welsh Government to ensure implementation of the Act?**

4.1 This is a difficult question to address as we are unaware of a situation where the National Advisor has had to challenge either Welsh Government or other public bodies. However we are aware the Regional Advisor is involving themselves in matters with key public bodies to ensure that the Welsh context is understood, particularly in relation to the Act. It is difficult to assess whether the National Adviser has sufficient independence or power. However it could be suggested that it is difficult for the National Adviser to be completely independent from the organisation that employs her.

- **To what extent the good practice guide to healthy relationships is successfully influencing the development of a whole school approach to challenging violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence?**

5.1 Again it is rather too early to assess the influence that the good practice guide is having upon schools as many schools have only become aware of the guidance very recently.

5.2 In Cwm Taf briefing papers have been developed for school governors and school safeguarding groups to ensure that they are aware of the whole school approach to VAWDASV. The next step will be to determine what schools are currently delivering in relation to this agenda and where there are gaps in provision.