

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: Dinas a Sir Abertawe

Response from: City and County of Swansea

1. To what extent the approach to tackling VAWDASV is improving as a result of the Act

The Act has pushed forward the VAWDASV agenda in Swansea giving the impetus for organisations to improve the response across all sectors and services. The Act has enabled organisations across the City & County to have guidance on improving their responses, and currently, focus has been on 'Ask & Act' and the Training Framework. Improvements are currently being made in ensuring a robust framework and pathway of care by embedding the 'Ask & Act' in service structure, policy and provision. To further this approach, we have developed a DA Strategy Group which includes high level members from a number of organisations including the council, police and health. This Group will ensure a consistent approach across all services. It has been positive to see that organisations such as housing associations and third sector agencies have started to make changes and look at the way they work as well as public sector organisations. Since the implementation of the Act in April this year, it has been too short a time to effectively evaluate any improvements in tackling VAWDASV as the majority of the work has been around discussions on implementing new structures needed to deliver the provisions in the Act.

2. What are the most effective ways 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?

To effectively capture the views and experiences of survivors a number of different options must be available to ensure all survivors are comfortable in feeding back in ways which are practical and suitable to their needs. Since 10,000 Safer Lives we have had a number of survivor groups which have fed back into our local work.

Currently we use a number of ways to capture survivor feedback, these include; traditional Survivor Groups/forums, Survey Monkey, feedback/comment forms and Facebook page. We use these as ongoing feedback and also do one off pieces of work to capture specific feedback. Options are also available around language needs. Survivor feedback is fed back into the DA Partnership from a number of partner agencies plus the DA One Stop Shop. We recognise the value of this feedback and use it to inform our partnership work. It has recently been agreed that there will be a Survivor Rep on our DA Monitoring & Delivery Group which will help implement the Act. It is too early to capture to what extent this survivor input will have, as it is still at the implementation stage.

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

As stated above, it is too early to evaluate whether or not survivors are beginning to experience better responses because of the Act. Work is currently being done on strengthening pathways and models of care and haven't as yet been rolled out. Training is being rolled out across the area with access available to both statutory and 3rd sector organisations which will upskill and make staff aware of VAWDASV.

4. Whether the National Advisor has sufficient power and independence from the Welsh Government to ensure the implementation of the Act?

The National Advisor has been a welcome addition. The Advisor is seen by some as a Welsh Government appointment so further work needs to be done on ensuring people are aware of the independence of the post and its remit. It is too soon to see how the role will develop in terms of having sufficient power and independence.

5. To what extent the Good Practice Guide to healthy relationships is successfully influencing the development of a whole school approach to challenging VAWDASV?

Without there being a statutory duty placed on schools, they still have the option of non-engagement in healthy relationship sessions. The Good Practice Guide is a useful tool in pushing the VAWDASV message forward and is well written, but too many schools do not engage in the Agenda or engage in a meaningful way. In those schools that engage with the work of the VAWDASV agenda, it is a useful tool in guiding them to develop a whole school approach. The Whole School Approach has meant the SPECTRUM has been successful in delivering programmes in schools, but WG money could have been better spent on funding local schools' Healthy

Relationships programme. Swansea has its own RAY (Reduce Abuse in Youth) Project which has been developed with local knowledge in mind, and delivered by workers who know the specific issues that local schools are reporting.