

PLVAW 16

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: Comisiynydd Pobl Hŷn Cymru

Response from: Older People's Commissioner

I am responding to the consultation into the progress made following the implementation of the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015.

I welcome the Act as it provides a legal framework that will enable those who are affected to receive the most appropriate support to help them during extremely difficult situations.

In regards to the question as to whether survivors of abuse are beginning to experience better responses from public authorities as a result of the Act, I consider that the establishment of a national mechanism would be of great benefit in determining their experiences.

The work of the Independent Domestic Violence Adviser (IDVA) is crucial in helping to engage and support those people who are affected by these forms of abuse. The IDVA's will also have a greater understanding of the effectiveness of public authorities

I am aware that SafeLives have their 'Insights' programme, which is able to identify where support has been effective in helping to make survivors safe. It also helps to identify operational issues where there is a need for improvement. However, this system only operates in a small number of areas in Wales.

Through my contact with older people who are experiencing Violence , Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence, I am aware that many do not consider or identify that specialist services are set up to meet their needs and as a consequence they will continue to live in the recurring cycle of abuse.

I would therefore expect there to be a national campaign that recognises older people are being subjected to violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence and shows that there are support services that are able to help them.

There is an increasingly and worrying problem with older people being victims of Domestic Homicide Reviews. The latest Home Office data indicates there 28 older people victims (aged 60+) in England and Wales were killed by a family member. This represented 24% of all victims. However, the reporting of domestic abuse incidents involving older people represented below 4% of all reported incidences.

Whilst I recognise and welcome the considerable progress that has been made across Wales, I believe that there are still some areas that need to be addressed.

My report 'Crimes Against, and Abuse of, Older People in Wales - Access to Support and Justice: Working Together', published in January 2015, provided an insight as to how agencies can work better together to prevent older people falling through the 'gaps' that exist between services.

I would expect to see local strategies developed to be able to report on how they are going to address those gaps identified in my report. If this is not reflected in their local strategies, I would expect Ministers to use their powers to issue statutory guidance and the duty to follow such guidance.

I hope this information is of use, please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any further information.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah Rochira". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sarah Rochira
Older People's Commissioner for Wales