

## Petitions Committee

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | Chwefror 2018

Petitions Committee | February 2018

### Funding for male domestic abuse services

Petition number: [P-05-798](#)

**Petition title:** Male domestic violence victim support services to be independently run & funded

**Text of petition:** Male domestic violence victim support services to be independently run & funded separately from Women's Aid Cymru & all associated.

The cross-government definition of domestic violence and abuse is: "Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality."

Domestic Abuse can effect anyone. With more Male victims/survivors seeking help, advise, support & safety than ever before. It is important that Male victims deserve independent support & funding from such gender bias groups as Women's Aid Cymru & all associated.

Male victims/survivors deserve support/help specific to their needs, while still maintaining their dignity, & providing them and their children safety equal & parallel to that which women currently receive.

## Background

### Definition

The UK Home Office's [cross-government definition](#) of **domestic abuse and violence** (as outlined in the petition) is "any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to: psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional".

The definitions of **domestic abuse** in the Welsh Government's [National Strategy](#) and [Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence \(Wales\) Act 2015](#)) are similar:

“abuse” (“cam–drin”) means physical, sexual, psychological, emotional or financial abuse;

“domestic abuse” (“cam–drin domestig”) means abuse where the victim of it is or has been associated with the abuser

To be ‘associated with’ someone means being married or in a civil partnership, living together in a relationship, relatives, or in an intimate personal relationship.

The Welsh Act and Strategy defines **sexual violence** as “sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, or threats of violence of a sexual nature”

**All of these definitions apply to women and men.**

In the National Strategy, the Welsh Government also recognises **violence against women** as a distinct issue, and “as a violation of human rights and both a cause and consequence of inequality between women and men, and it happens to women because they are women and that women are disproportionately impacted by all forms of violence”.

This recognition is based on international human rights law and practice: the [Council of Europe’s Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence](#) (the Istanbul Convention), and the [UN Convention on the Elimination of Violence against Women](#) (CEDAW) and most recently in the [UN Sustainable Development Goals 2030](#).

## Statistics

Statistics do not accurately measure the scale of domestic abuse, as it is widely understood to be hidden and under–reported.

In the Crime Survey for England and Wales 2015 ([appendix table 4.28](#)), it was estimated that **88% of female victims of abuse told someone about their abuse** (whether it was someone knew personally, someone in an official position or a support professional/organisation), but **only 61% of male victims told someone**.<sup>1</sup>

According to the [Office for National Statistics](#) (ONS), in England and Wales:

- An estimated **1.9 million adults aged 16 to 59 years experienced domestic abuse** in the year ending March 2017 (1.2 million women, 713,000 men);
- **26% of women and 14% of men had experienced domestic abuse in their lifetime** since the age of 16;
- In Welsh police force areas between 2013–14 and 2015–16 there were **21 domestic homicides**– 16 were women and 5 were men;
- In England and Wales, **the majority of male victims of domestic homicide (66%) were killed by another male**, and a **higher proportion of male victims were killed by a family member than females (47% compared with 23%)**;

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<sup>1</sup> Questions on the nature of partner abuse are not asked in every survey year.

According to [Rape Crisis](#), approximately 85,000 women and 12,000 men are raped in England and Wales every year.

## Refuge-based support

Welsh Women's Aid's [State of the Sector report 2017](#) noted that in Wales in 2016-17:

- 1,596 women, 1,221 children and young people and 31 men were supported in refuges;
- 796 women and 51 men were turned away from accessing refuge-based support [and] 213 women and 36 men were turned away due to refuges being full; and
- 16% of men and 10% of women accessing refuge services had a physical or mental disability.

A database of services available to male domestic abuse victims in Wales is available [here](#).

## Welsh Government action

### Funding

The Welsh Government's direct funding allocations for **domestic abuse, sexual violence and violence against women services** (to local authorities and the third sector) are:

- 2017-18: £3.9 million
- 2016-17: £3.9 million
- 2015-16: £3.6 million

The Government does not disaggregate funding for these services on the basis of gender as many of the services are available to both women and men. For example, the [Domestic Abuse Safety Unit](#) in Shotton manages a four bedroomed refuge for women and children, and a two bedroomed refuge for men. The [Live Fear Free helpline](#) also provides advice to both women and men.

The Welsh Government also provides direct funding to the [Dyn Project](#) (run by Safer Wales), which **specifically supports male victims and survivors**. The Project funds a **male IDVA** (Independent Domestic Violence Advisor) service in Cardiff and **an all Wales helpline for men**. Direct funding for Dyn Project from the Welsh Government is: 2017-18: £65,000, 2016-17: £65,000 and 2015-16: £80,000.

### Legislation

The [Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence \(Wales\) Act 2015](#) aims to

- **improve the public sector response** to violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence;
- give **public authorities a strategic focus** on the issue, and
- ensure the **consistent provision of preventative, protective and supportive services**.

Concerns have [been repeatedly raised](#) by the Assembly’s ELGC Committee about the pace of implementation of the Act.

## Policy

The [National Strategy for violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence 2016–21](#) was published in November 2016. It notes that:

“Whilst it is important that this Strategy acknowledges and communicates the disproportionate experience of women and girls **this does not negate violence and abuse directed towards men and boys or perpetrated by women.**”

There are no specific objectives for male domestic abuse victims or services.

## National Assembly for Wales action

The issue of male domestic abuse was [raised in Plenary](#) on 12 December 2017. Mark Isherwood AM said:

In emphasising that women and girls are disproportionately impacted by violence, the Domestic Abuse Safety Unit in Shotton also provides a gender-neutral service, because they say that domestic abuse and sexual violence affect both genders. When I visited them recently, they told me that their male refuge received five referrals for just two spaces on its first day, that it had been full ever since and that they are currently operating waiting lists.

In the same debate, Neil McEvoy AM welcomed a recent legal clarification by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) about the ‘screening’ of male callers to domestic abuse helplines to determine if they are perpetrators of abuse, but not female callers. The EHRC’s position is that screening one sex but not another could constitute discrimination against men.

[Both Parents Matter’s written evidence](#) to the ELGC Committee’s [inquiry](#) into the implementation of the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 stated that:

A gender specific approach needs to be introduced that allows existing services with a strong track record and ideological commitment to support for women to concentrate on the group of survivors that they are best equipped to support. This will allow new services that will support male victims to emerge.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.