



Cross Party Group on Violence against Women and Children

Extraordinary meeting with Jan Logie MP Parliamentary Under-Secretary to the Minister of Justice (Domestic and Sexual Violence Issues), New Zealand Government

Sponsored by Mark Isherwood AM

9th July 16:30-17:30

Attendees:

Mark Isherwood AM (chair)
Joyce Watson AM,
Ann Jones AM,
Suzie Davies AM,
Gwendolyn Sterk (WWA – Secretariat),
Jan Logie MP (New Zealand Government),
Heather McDonald (New Zealand Government),

Geraldine Newbery (Welsh Government),
Simon Borja (Safer Wales),
Sam Lewis (Llamau),
Hilary Watson (WEN Wales),
Eleri Butler (WWA),
Catherine Phillips (WWA),
Gauri Nayar-Taylor (SEEdS representative),

Apologies:

Bethan Sayed AM

Minutes

The meeting was set up in order to share best practice of the mechanisms of the Cross Party Group and its involvement in the development and implementation of the VAWDASV (Wales) Act with Jan Logie MP Parliamentary Under-Secretary to the Minister of Justice (Domestic and Sexual Violence Issues), New Zealand Government and her team.

Discussion:

Welcome: Mark Isherwood AM welcomed Jan Logie MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary to the Minister of Justice for the New Zealand Government to the Cross Party Group on Violence against Women and Children.

Purpose of the CPG: Gwendolyn Sterk outlined the purpose of the CPG group is to raise awareness of violence against women and children and find solutions. It is attended by AMs across the Senedd and has cross party representation. It facilitates a dialogue between VAWDASV sector, survivors, academic, activists and Assembly Members.

Development of the VAWDASV (Wales) Act: The group played a critical role in the lead up to the development of the legislation – in particular the role of the National Advisors and ensuring the Act had a gendered perspective. It was also important in raising the need for healthy relationships education and a Whole Education approach. These discussions at the CPG informed the scrutiny of the VAWDASV Bill in the Senedd particularly informing the debate regarding healthy relationship education and perpetrator programmes.

Post implementation of the Act: The group has scrutinized the publishing of the National Strategy following the Act and fed into the post implementation review. The group has written to ministers to highlight concerns on delivery and funding. It has highlighted the implication of policies by Westminster on survivors and services in Wales, looking at how these might be mitigated in Wales. It has also supported the launching of perpetrator work standards by Respect UK.

Why it is successful: Ann Jones AM, Deputy Presiding Officer outlined that when the assembly was set up in 1999 there was a duty on equality and sustainability, this led to more engagement with civil society groups. The group was set up due to conversations with the VAWDASV sector and AMs to drive forward these issues in Wales. The size of the National Assembly and the large percentage of women AMs were also noted as a positive for the CPG to have influence. The strength of this group is in the combination and collaboration of the third sector and survivor voices, who help identify issues to the group.

Awareness of VAWDASV in New Zealand: Jan Logie MP explained that they recently had a privately funded people's enquiry that came from survivors. One of the main researchers and drivers for change has been by an academic survivor who recently set up a pathway for survivors to talk about the issues. The New Zealand government then provided tracking of thirty years' of violence against women to review different components of sustained change.

Regarding the public perception, this has shifted slightly due to the work the government is doing to reduce the prison population as research indicates over 80% of those in the children and youth justice system have experienced or observed family violence.

Aside from that there has been a long-running campaign called, 'family violence – it's not ok' that's a Family and Sexual Violence coalition. The government has also started doing training on disclosures as currently only 15% come through specialist agencies.

They are about to pass legislation for survivors to have 10 days paid leave and build on flexible working to be protected by human rights legislation and ensure they can't be discriminated against.

They've also got some great women on-board to do some economic research to frame an approach to tackling VAW to reduce costs and are reviewing their legal aid processes.

The Chair thanked all for attending and the meeting closed at 17:30.