

## **Equality, Local Government and Communities (ELGC) Committee**

### **Post Legislative Work of the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act**

Much has been achieved since the last update in February 2018 on the implementation on the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act ('the Act'). This includes:

- March 2018 - Draft guidance for regional commissioning of Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence services in Wales was published for consultation.
- March 2018 – Consultation on methods for consulting with survivors launched
- March 2018 - Local Strategies Guidance was published for local authorities and local health boards.
- April 2018 Welsh Government “Don’t be a Bystander campaign” launched.
- April 2018 – Completed a review of Domestic Homicide Reviews
- April 2018 – Launch of the 2018 – 2023 ‘Framework to Support Positive Change for those at Risk of Offending in Wales’
- April 2018 – Established a Perpetrator Services Network
- June 2018 – Report on improving outcomes from Domestic Homicide Reviews and similar death reviews completed.
- June 2018 second annual progress report: 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018 laid in Assembly
- July 2018 National Delivery Framework published
- September 2018 – Summary of Consultation Responses and Written Statement on next steps for a National Survivor Engagement Framework published.
- September 2018 – Summary of Consultation Responses on Draft guidance for regional commissioning of Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence services in Wales published.
- September 2018 – Stakeholder workshops to prepare Draft National Indicators for consultation
- September 2018 – First National Advisers’ Annual Report laid.

### **National Strategy<sup>1</sup> and cross-government Delivery Framework**

In the National Strategy<sup>2</sup> we confirmed we would publish a delivery framework setting out how Welsh Government will seek to meet the objectives of the Strategy. This was published in July.

The Delivery Framework outlines the actions that have been achieved to date, and what we aim to deliver over the next 3 years in order to achieve the objectives within the Strategy. This will be updated in due course to include the National Indicators.

<sup>1</sup> <https://gov.wales/docs/dsjlg/publications/commsafety/181716-vawdasv-delivery-framework-en.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Published under section 3 of the Act

## **National Indicators**

Officials are supporting the National Advisors in working with stakeholders to develop National Indicators which align with the Well-being of Future Generations Indicators<sup>3</sup> and the Well-being Goals. The VAWDASV National Indicators will be laid before the Assembly early in 2019.

## **Local Strategies**

Under the section 5 of the Act, local authorities and local health boards are required to develop and publish a local VAWDASV strategy, setting out the identified needs and priorities for their area, this may be included with their local well-being plan issued under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

The guidance for local strategies was published in March 2018. Following the publication of the guidance, all local authorities and local health boards published the first strategies for 2018–23 in the Spring. The National Advisors are currently reviewing and analysing the strategies for evidence of high quality strategic planning, co-ordination and consistency.

The National Advisors are committed to working with local authorities and local health boards to support them to update their strategies in 2019 -2020 to ensure that they reflect the National Indicators once they are published.

## **Sustainable Funding Model**

A Task and Finish Group of key stakeholders was set up to develop a sustainable funding model. The work of this group focussed on assisting in the development of the Commissioning Guidance to deliver a multi-agency, needs-based approach. This group was not convened during the consultation and analysis of this guidance and regrouped at the beginning of October under the Chair of one of the National Advisors. The Group will now focus on reviewing the implementation of the Commissioning Guidance to assist in ensuring compliance across the regions.

## **Statutory Guidance**

### Commissioning guidance

Feedback from the consultation on draft commissioning guidance has informed the amendments that are being made to the commissioning guidance following the public consultation process that closed in June. A decision as to when we will issue the commissioning guidance as statutory guidance will be made early in the New Year.

### National Training Framework

Statutory guidance on the National Training Framework was published in March 2016.

- By the end of March 2018 over 127,000 workers in Wales (including those who do not work within the VAWDASV sector) had completed the VAWDASV e-Learning or equivalent training. Post course evaluations show the proportion of participants who:
  - understood what VAWDASV was rose from 51% to 79%;
  - felt confident to recognise signs of VAWDASV rose from 56% to 96%; and they were confident to signpost friends and family for help rose from less than a quarter to 64%

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<sup>3</sup> Published under section 10 of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

### Ask and Act

Ask and Act is being delivered across five regions. This will leave one region in Wales (Dyfed Powys) to join the programme in 2019-2020. Over 1800 practitioners have already been trained to “Ask and Act” and a further 4000 professionals are forecast to be trained during 2018-2019.

Methods used to quality assure the standards of training are through pre- and post-training evaluation forms and through governance of the training sub-groups. This will ensure that the national rollout of “Ask and Act” is complete by 2021. We aim to measure the impact of the training via the National Indicators.

### **Education**

The Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills accepted the Sex and Relationships Expert Group’s recommendations in May 2018. An officials group has been established to take forward the recommendations, which include a statutory requirement to embed sexuality and relationships in the revised national curriculum.

The Welsh Government continues to fund Hafan Cymru’s Spectrum project to teach children and young people the importance of healthy relationships, to raise awareness of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence and where to seek help.

Officials are working with HEFCW to develop guidance that will be issued to higher education institutions under section 10 of the Act.

### **Working with perpetrators**

A forensic psychologist (supported by a project manager) is operating under a collaborative working arrangement between Welsh Government and Her Majesty’s Prison and Probation Service to take forward work on perpetrator policy. Work to date has included the launch of the 2018-2023 ‘Framework to Support Positive Change for those at Risk of Offending in Wales’. The Framework supports the priorities of the All Wales Criminal Justice Board, including violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

A perpetrator services network has been established and regular ‘practice sharing’ events take place throughout the year in both north and south Wales. Advice has been provided on current and potential VAWDASV perpetrator services and a Rapid Evidence Review on ‘what works’ with domestic abuse perpetrators is due to be published.

Officials are working with stakeholders across Wales, including Police and Crime Commissioners, to develop evidence-based approaches to prevention and early intervention. Work is also underway to develop commissioning pathways for effective perpetrator services. A mapping exercise of perpetrator services in Gwent has been undertaken and learning from this exercise will be shared with other regions once completed.

Standards for VAWDASV perpetrator services, produced in partnership with representatives of the sector are nearing completion and will be launched later in the year. Good practice guidance for public services working with perpetrators will be going out to consultation shortly.

## **Domestic Homicide Review**

Welsh Government commissioned a review of Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) to assess the effectiveness of the response of Welsh Government, Community Safety Partnerships and other public services to DHRs and make recommendations to improve the response. This review was completed in April 2018 and a final report has been produced that includes findings and recommendations. Officials are reviewing the report and recommendations in order to advise Ministers and to seek agreement on the next steps. The report will be submitted to Ministers for consideration in November, together with the recommendations for the next steps.

## **Communications**

Survivors and service providers have worked very closely with officials to develop the VAWDASV campaigns.

### THIS IS ME

The THIS IS ME campaign that was launched in January 2018 to challenge gender stereotypes has had the following reach to date:

Live Fear Free website use increased by 6,042% compared to the same period last year

- 2 million impressions through TV advertisements
- Almost 5 million impressions through radio advertisements
- 43% increase in page likes on Facebook
- 117 new followers on Twitter.

The campaign aims to start a conversation around gender identity stereotyping and gender inequality as a cause and a consequence of VAWDASV, raise public awareness and challenge attitudes. THIS IS ME forms the basis of a three-year campaign plan with the overarching message:

***Wales will not accept violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence and wants its citizens to challenge its causes, consequences and the inherent behaviours***

### Don't be a Bystander

The second campaign, "Don't be a Bystander" launched on the 25<sup>th</sup> April 2018 using the hashtag #waleswontstandby, and followed on from the THIS IS ME campaign. This campaign shared the words of survivors of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence through film, radio and social media activity. The campaign aimed to show how powerful a positive intervention can be for someone who is experiencing or who has experienced violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

Calls to the Live Fear Free helpline from "concerned others" doubled during the campaign period.

In 2018-2020 our campaigns will continue to build on this key message and values and will have an overarching theme of Coercive Control.

The campaigns reflect two main values

- That everyone has the right to live fear free from violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence;
- That Wales will not stand by or accept violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence

### **National Survivor Engagement Framework**

A commitment in the National Strategy is to develop a sustainable national survivor engagement framework. The Welsh Government consulted on options and published responses in September. Next steps include research with those survivor groups who are under-represented in the findings from previous survivor engagement work and a small-scale pilot for a national survivor engagement panel.

This work will aim to address the knowledge gaps we have identified and progress our commitment to ensuring a more representative group of survivors have a formal role in shaping Welsh Government policy.

The outcomes of the pilot will be evaluated and will make recommendations for a long-term National Survivor Engagement Framework with formal links into national VAWDASV governance structures

### **Live Fear Free**

Welsh Government continues to fund the Live Fear Free website and helpline to provide 24 hour confidential support, information and advice to women, men and children experiencing abuse, concerned others and professionals.

### **FGM, Honour Based Violence (HBV) and Forced Marriage**

Welsh Government jointly chairs the FGM, HBV and FM Leadership Group with the Crown Prosecution Service and BAWSO. The All Wales Honour based Violence (HBV) Delivery Plan sets out the framework for key partners to contribute to tackling HBV in Wales, whilst providing the best possible support to survivors and directly links to the VAWDASV Delivery Framework. The group has created a FGM logo and supported Wales's first specialist Women's Wellbeing clinic.

### **National Advisors' Annual Report and Annual Plan**

As required under section 21 of the Act, the National Advisors have produced and published their 2018 Annual Report, and this was laid before The National Assembly on 25 September. The report provides an overview of their work since they were appointed in November 2017. This report also highlights emerging issues that will form the basis of the National Advisors' Annual Plan for 2019 - 2020, which will be laid before the National Assembly by the end of November 2018.

### **Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Advisory Group and the Gender Equality Review**

The VAWDASV Advisory Group was initiated following the introduction of the Act in April 2015. The group was dissolved following a review of its remit and membership. A smaller Expert group made up of academics with expertise in the field of gender equality and VAWDASV has been established and is due to meet for the first time before the end of this year. This is likely to provide opportunities to

engage with the Gender Equality Review, now in its second phase, following the initial rapid review of Welsh Government's gender and equality policies.

### **Istanbul Convention**

The UK signed the Council of Europe Convention on Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (The Istanbul Convention) in 2012 and the First Minister has written to the Prime Minister about the delay in ratifying the Convention.

The policy choices we have made in Wales have facilitated our compliance with the Istanbul Convention within our areas of competence. Only compliance with Article 44 in relation to extra-territorial jurisdiction, over which the UK Government must make changes to domestic law prevents ratification of the Convention.

The UK Government's Domestic Violence Bill, announced in the 2016 Queen's Speech, is currently subject to scrutiny by the Commons Committee, and will when enacted enable compliance with Article 44 in relation to extra-territorial jurisdiction, which is the one remaining obstacle to ratification.