



VAWDASV

Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence
Trais Yn Erbyn Menywod, Cham-drin Domestig a Thrais Rhywiol

**Gwent Regional Violence Against
Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual
Violence Strategy 2017-2022**

Draft

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1. **FOREWORD**

Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence are fundamental breaches of human rights, a consequence of the inequality between victims and perpetrators, where power and control is used in a way that damages lives, futures and the futures of people around those subjected to the actions of perpetrators. Every year lives are damaged needlessly in Wales, all forms of violence and abuse are unacceptable. Anyone who experiences violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence deserves an effective and timely response from all public services.

The enactment of the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 (VAWDASV) requires the public sector in Wales to work together in a consistent and cohesive way to improve the outcomes for individuals and their families subjected to VAWDASV. The Act sits alongside the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 which requires public bodies to think about what actions and activities are required to improve the well-being of current and future generations. Collaboration, preventative activity, the involvement of individuals, and long-term incremental improvements in the services delivered are threaded throughout the legislative landscape.

The Gwent Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Partnership Board (The Partnership Board) is pleased to publish the region's first joint strategy to tackle VAWDASV by supporting victims and survivors, tackling perpetrators, ensuring professionals have the tools and knowledge to act, increasing awareness of VAWDASV and the support available, and helping children and young people to understand inequality in relationships and that abusive behaviour is always wrong.

This strategy contributes to the national strategy (National Strategy on Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence – 2016 – 2021)¹ and will reflect the six objectives of the national strategy. The Partnership Board have determined that they will adopt the objectives of the national strategy as their overarching Strategic Priorities. It sets out to provide the leadership and direction that will promote consistency and best practice for the way in which violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence is prioritised and tackled across the region.

The South East Wales region, ostensibly considered as Gwent, comprises of five local authority areas: Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Newport, Torfaen and Monmouthshire. It benefits from having the same geographical footprint as Aneurin Bevan University Health Board and Gwent Police.

Gwent has a history of strong partnership working and as the first pilot region in Wales for strategic coordination of VAWDASV services there is significant work taking place under the new legislative framework. With its 'pathfinder' status Gwent has been given many opportunities for pioneering new ways of working and we are proud to be developing this regional strategy ahead of other areas and, in so doing, helping to inform national guidance.

¹ <http://gov.wales/docs/ds/jlg/publications/commsafety/161104-national-strategy-en.pdf>

The Partnership Board members are the core partners required to deliver a cohesive response to VAWDASV². Our aim is to work together in partnership to ensure the most efficient and effective response to preventing serious harm caused by such types of abuse.

People do not experience violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence in a vacuum and neither can services, nor wider society, tackle such issues in isolation. With a strong focus on preventative, protective and supportive mechanisms we will aim to work with survivors to ensure the meaningful delivery of this strategic plan. Strong leadership and accountability is required by us to ensure that the priorities identified are translated into actions that can make a real difference to the well-being and safety of people living in Gwent, both now and in the future.

The Partnership Board aims to lead the way in Wales and our collective vision is for survivors, their children and wider family to know how and where to get the help that they need, to provide that help, and to work towards a society in which no form of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence is tolerated.

Gwent Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Partnership Board

² The Partnership Board includes; the five local authorities, Gwent Police, and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, Wales Ambulance Service Trust, Probation Services, Registered Social Landlords, Supporting People Regional Collaborative Committee, Fire and Rescue Service, Gwent Adult and Children Safeguarding Boards, VAWDASV specialist sector partners and voluntary sector organisations.

2. INTRODUCTION: POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

In Wales, the UK and internationally, violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence is considered to be a violation of human rights and a cause and consequence of inequality between women and men. It happens to women because they are women, and women are disproportionately impacted by certain forms of violence.

Whilst it is important that this Strategy acknowledges and communicates the disproportionate experience of women and girls this does not, in any way, negate violence and abuse directed towards men and boys, or violence and abuse perpetrated by women. This Strategy recognises that anyone (women, men, children and young people) can experience and be affected by domestic abuse, rape and sexual assault, sexual abuse, forced marriage, child sexual abuse, stalking and harassment, sexual harassment and exploitation. This can happen in any relationship regardless of sex, age, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, disability, religion or belief, income, geography or lifestyle. A significant number of those who experience VAWDASV will have one or more 'protected characteristics', under the Equality Act 2010³ and will face additional vulnerabilities and increased barriers to support. This Strategy aims to tackle all forms of VAWDASV.

At a global, European and national level legislation and policy acknowledges that violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence operates as a means of social control that maintains unequal power relations between women and men and reinforces women's subordinate status. It is explicitly linked to systematic discrimination against women and girls. Failing to make the connections between the different forms of violence women and girl's experience, and how this is explicitly linked to the unequal position of women and girls in society, can hinder the effectiveness of interventions and prevention work. It is also important to recognise that different groups of women experience multiple inequalities which can intersect in ways that lead to further marginalisation.

Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence includes the following crime types:

- Sexual violence
- Domestic abuse
- Sexual harassment and stalking
- Trafficking and/or sexual exploitation
- Female genital mutilation (FGM)

³ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>

- Forced marriage
- So-called 'honour' based violence (HBV) and crimes

Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence has far reaching consequences for families, children, communities and society. The direct harm to the health and well-being of victims is clear, and at its most severe can, and does, result in death. However impacts are wide-ranging not just on health and wellbeing but include human rights, poverty, unemployment, homelessness and the economy. It is also important to note that this affects not only adults and children exposed to and who experience abuse in the home or in intimate or family relationships but wider family members also; the experience of abuse and violence can often also be perpetrated in public spaces impacting the wider community.

The International Context

This Strategy is intended to align with the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (1993), most recently enshrined within the UN Sustainable Development Goals 2030 (2015), and the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence- The Istanbul Convention (2014).

The UN Declaration defines violence against women as:

- Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological, or economic harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.
- This encompasses, but is not limited to:
 - (a) Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation;
 - (b) Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the general community, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere, trafficking in women and forced prostitution;
 - (c) Physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the State, wherever it occurs.

Article 4 of the Istanbul Convention covers:

Fundamental rights, equality and non-discrimination

- 1 Parties shall take the necessary legislative measures and other actions to promote and protect the right for everyone, particularly women, to live free from violence in both the public and the private sphere.
- 2 Parties condemn all forms of discrimination against women and take, without delay, the necessary legislative and other measures to prevent it, in particular by:
 - embodying in their national constitutions or other appropriate legislation the principle of equality between women and men and ensuring the practical realisation of this principle;
 - prohibiting discrimination against women, including through the use of sanctions, where appropriate;
 - abolishing laws and practices which discriminate against women.
- 3 The implementation of the provisions of this Convention by the Parties, in particular measures to protect the rights of victims, shall be secured without discrimination on any ground such as sex, gender, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, state of health, disability, marital status, migrant or refugee status, or other status.
- 4 Special measures that are necessary to prevent and protect women from gender-based violence shall not be considered discrimination under the terms of this Convention.

The Welsh Context

The Welsh policy and legislative landscape has prioritised VAWDASV for a number of years and the objectives and aims of this Strategy encompass these responsibilities as they are placed on those working in the VAWDASV sector in the region.

In 2010, the Wales Right to be Safe Strategy set out an integrated, cross government programme of action to tackle all forms of violence against women and children. This was refreshed in November 2016 and published as the Welsh Government's [National Strategy on Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence, 2016 - 2021](#).⁴ Itself a

⁴ <http://gov.wales/docs/dsilg/publications/commsafety/161104-national-strategy-en.pdf> - pages 5 -8.
<http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/48/a48r104.htm>
<http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/gender-equality/>
<https://www.coe.int/en/web/istanbul-convention/home?desktop=true>

requirement of the [Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence \(Wales\) Act 2015](#).

This Regional Strategy will also support the delivery of a number of key priorities in the Welsh Government "[Taking Wales Forward](#)" five year plan, as well as the following relevant legislation: [The Well-Being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#) sets out seven wellbeing goals relevant to the prevention of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence and support of survivors. The Act puts in place a "sustainable development principle" which requires public bodies to follow five ways of working to ensure they work collaboratively with people and communities, avoid repeating past mistakes and to tackle some of the long term challenges being faced. The five ways of working in the context of VAWDASV are:

- **Prevention:** Understanding and preventing the occurrence of VAWDASV and preventing poor outcomes for victims, survivors and their families.
- **Integration:** Integrating activity across the statutory and third sector and ensuring the coordination of programmes of work such that they achieve the maximum benefit.
- **Collaboration:** Collaborating through the Gwent VAWDASV Partnership Board, the Strategic Delivery Group and Sub-groups and between the partner bodies.
- **Involvement:** Listening to victims and survivors to understand their experiences of the support offered to them to continually review and make improvements in responses. Involving all agencies that are able to make an impact on VAWDASV.
- **Long Term:** Considering the long term outcomes for victims, survivors and their families and in particular any children and young people exposed to VAWDASV.

[The Social Services and Well-being \(Wales\) Act 2014](#) provides a legal framework for improving the well-being of people (adults and children) who need care and support, carers who need support, and for transforming social services in Wales. [The Population Needs Assessment](#)⁵ is a Gwent level area assessment that sets out seven core themes and identifies violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence as one of these. Close working will be established between the Greater Gwent Health, Social Care and Well-Being Partnership Board, the Gwent Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Partnership Board and the five Public Services Boards to align future work plans around early intervention and preventative services.

⁵ Social Services and Well-being Act Population Needs Assessment: Gwent Region Report DRAFT Nov 2016: page 54

[The Housing \(Wales\) Act 2014](#) - enshrines in legislation the role of the local authority in preventing and alleviating homelessness.

The Welsh Government guidance which supports the practical delivery of the legislation advises local authorities and their partners that:

“Local authorities should be led by the wishes and feelings of the victim of domestic abuse when determining accommodation arrangements. The first option, where appropriate, should be for the perpetrator to be removed from the property to enable the victim to remain in their home. The Local Authority must also consider improving the security of the applicant’s home to enable them to continue living there safely. Alternatively, the Local Authority must assist the victim in sourcing alternative accommodation, whether on a permanent or temporary basis”.⁶

[The Renting Homes \(Wales\) Act 2016](#) - sets out a new approach to joint contracts which will help survivors by enabling perpetrators to be targeted for eviction.

The [Wales Adverse Childhood Experiences \(ACE\) study](#)⁷ examined the exposure in childhood to a range of ACE’s and presented research on the developmental well-being of children growing up in such households. Domestic abuse, emotional, physical and sexual abuse, parental separation, as well as parental incarceration, are all indicators that affect childhood development due to the stressors they cause. In addition those exposed to four or more ACE’s are more likely to adopt health harming behaviour in later life and are more likely to be future victims or perpetrators of crime and violence.

The UK Context

For non-devolved services the Strategy is supported by the Home Office Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Cross Departmental Strategy 2016-2020

The Gwent VAWDASV Partnership Board members include Gwent Police, the Office of the Gwent Police and Crime Commissioner, Her Majesty’s Prison and Probation Services and the Wales Community Rehabilitation Company. These arrangements build on the strong long-standing partnerships across the region between the devolved and non-devolved sector and reflect other strategic regional arrangements in the Public Services Boards, the Regional Transformation Board and Safeguarding Boards.

Associated legislation that supports delivery at a UK level includes:

- [Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003](#) (“the 2003 Act”) introduces FGM Protection Orders and an FGM mandatory reporting duty inserted into the 2003 Act by the Serious Crime Act 2015.
- [Crime and Security Act 2010](#) – which introduces Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPOs) and the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS).

⁶ Welsh Government 2016. Code of Guidance for local authorities on the allocation of housing and homelessness

⁷ Public Health Wales (2015) Wales Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) study, PHW

- [Welfare Reform Act 2012](#) – A paradigm change to the current social security system which will change the way welfare benefits are claimed and paid throughout the UK.
- [Anti-social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014](#) - which introduces Sexual Harm Prevention Orders (SHPOs) and Sexual Risk Orders (SROs).
- [The Modern Slavery Act 2015](#) - Considers slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour and human trafficking, includes provision for the protection of victims.
- [Welfare Reform Act 2012](#) – A paradigm change to the current social security system which will change the way welfare benefits are claimed and paid throughout the UK.

Guidance that informs the delivery of this Strategy includes:

- The 2014 [National Institute for Clinical Excellence \(NICE\) guidelines: “Domestic violence and abuse: how health services, social care and the organisations they work with can respond effectively”](#). This guidance, which applies across England and Wales, highlights that domestic abuse is a complex issue requiring sensitive handling collaboratively with health and social care professionals.
- [FGM statutory guidance](#)⁸ issued under section 5C(1) of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 and extends to England and Wales and includes updated procedural information.
- Updated statutory guidance on conducting [Domestic Homicide Reviews](#) (DHR). This considers the changing landscape and makes reference to new tools that have been implemented, such as the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme and Domestic Violence Protection Orders, as well as the new coercive and controlling offence introduced in the Serious Crime Act 2015. This statutory guidance is accompanied by key findings from analysis undertaken by Home Office researchers on a sample of 40 DHRs from across England and Wales completed between 2013 and 2016.⁹
- Updated [Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme guidance](#) – often referred to as “Clare’s Law” – which sets out procedures that could be used by the police to disclose

⁸https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/573782/FGM_Mandatory_Reporting_-_procedural_information_nov16_FINAL.pdf

⁹<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-homicide-review-lessonslearned>

information about an individual's previous violent and abusive offending behaviour, where this may help protect their partner, or ex-partner, from violence or abuse.

- The 2016 [England and Wales National Statement of Expectations](#), sets out what local commissioners (Police and Crime Commissioners, Local Authorities or health commissioners) need to put in place to ensure their response to violence against women and girls is collaborative, robust and effective.

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3. THE GWENT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, DOMESTIC ABUSE AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE PARTNERSHIP BOARD AND ITS VISION

Board Membership

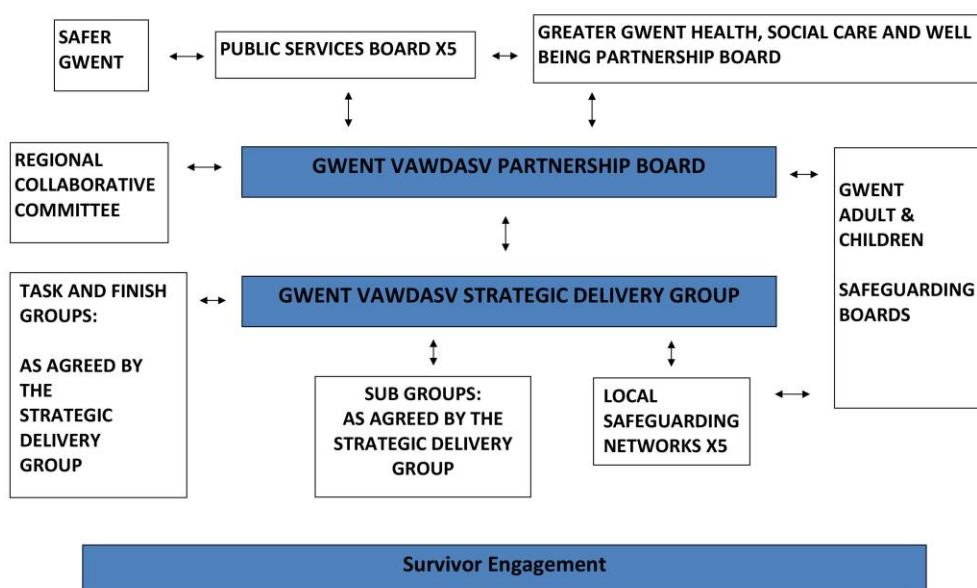
The Partnership Board has been established to provide a governance structure to develop, approve and monitor VAWDASV regional working. A key role of the Board is the development of the Strategy which is a statutory requirement placed on Local Authorities and Local Health Boards under Section 5 the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015.

In recognition that effective responses to VAWDASV must, by necessity, involve the full range of partners including devolved and non-devolved organisations, third sector specialist organisations, survivors and those impacted by forms of VAWDASV, the membership of the Board reflects the widest possible perspective and range of information. Membership also includes representatives able to provide national context and oversight. A full list of Board Membership is available on request from Vawdasv.Gwent@newport.gov.uk.

Board membership is replicated as required across the Strategic Delivery Group which through its Sub Groups and Task Groups will work towards achieving the Strategic Priorities of the Board.

Ensuring regular victim/survivor/service-user engagement and input into all work streams not just participation at the Board level will be an essential requirement for informing the Partnership Board on the effectiveness of its work.

Board Structure



The Regional Context

The regional approach to addressing domestic abuse was developed in Gwent by the Welsh Government funded Gwent Domestic Abuse Pathfinder Project (Puckett 2014) which made recommendations around the need for 'a coherent regional strategic framework regarding accountability, need, service provision, resource allocation, training, performance and outcomes'.

The work now underway in Gwent, including that of the Gwent Domestic Abuse Pathfinder Project, has built upon strongly established regional partnerships. The Pan-Gwent Domestic Abuse Forum provided the baseline for where we are now and enabled such collaboration as the Welsh Domestic Abuse Modernisation Project¹⁰

The Gwent Regional Team was established in April 2015 to formalise regional collaboration; to bring together and further develop structures to implement new legislative requirements under the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse And Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015.

Early development of the regional model was independently evaluated by Cordis Bright 2015¹¹ and based on a set of recommendations that has set the direction for continued regional working.

During this time Gwent has been an early adopter site for 'Ask and Act' targeted enquiry, developing policy and training ahead of national roll out. It is also in this role as a pathfinder region that Gwent develops its regional strategy ahead of national guidance.

The purpose of this strategy is to set out the regional integrated approach to stop violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence, to improve the health and well-being of individuals and families affected by abuse and hold to account those who perpetrate such abuse. It aims to build on existing successful partnerships and collaborative working opportunities in the region, and to further increase public awareness and assist local communities, individuals, family members and agencies to deliver a robust response to violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence prevention across Gwent. The Partnership Board's ultimate goal is to move towards a society where everybody is able to live violence, abuse and fear free.

¹⁰ Welsh Domestic Abuse Modernisation Project: Report from the Gwent Pilot Group, February 2012

¹¹ South East Wales VAWDASV Board: Evaluation of the regional VAWDASV model: April 2016. Cordis Bright

It is intended that this Gwent strategic framework, and the associated actions and activities detailed within the accompanying delivery plan, will support the Welsh Government and UK Government legislative, strategic and delivery framework to achieve the prevention of violence and abuse, the protection of victims and the support of all those affected. The pillars of these devolved and non-devolved strategies have informed this Strategy. Over the next five years, services and commissioners in Gwent will support a transformation in service delivery and a step change in action to achieve a sustainable reduction in violence and abuse, to help survivors of abuse rebuild their lives and to prevent such abuse from happening in the first place.

Our aim for this strategy is to also influence, help shape and contribute to meeting key regional policy priorities. Accordingly, there exists a formal line of reporting for this Strategy and delivery plan from the Partnership Board to demonstrate the role that this strategy has in contributing to a number of key regional priorities for:

- The five Public Services Boards
- The SEW Children's Safeguarding Board
- The Gwent Adult Safeguarding Boards
- The Supporting People Regional Collaborative Committee
- Greater Gwent Health, Social Care and Well-Being Partnership Board
- Safer Gwent
- Gwent Substance Misuse Area Planning Board
- Gwent Criminal Justice Board

This Strategy mirrors the national strategy in organising the work that needs to be done along three key strands:

- ❖ **Prevention**
- ❖ **Protection**
- ❖ **Support**

In developing the Strategy the Partnership Board has considered current service provision, integrated the requirements of the Act and Welsh Government Policy, the result of the needs assessment of the area, a strategic analysis of needs, and involved victims and survivors. The associated Strategic Delivery Plan follows the six strategic aims of the National Delivery Plan

and sets them in a regional context for the area. In so doing the key objectives and activities required to enhance current service provision over the lifetime of the Strategy are captured.

The Partnership Board recognises, and is committed to, regional working with a view to increased consistency of provision, shared best practice including information sharing, the development of common commissioning principles, and harnessing the contributions of all partners in the strategic vision.

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4. CURRENT PROVISION IN THE REGION

Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence services rest within the statutory and specialist sector. Statutory duties are organised through criminal justice services, local authority social services, housing services and local health board provision. The role of the specialist sector enhances statutory delivery bringing expertise and knowledge that is not possible in the statutory sector and an ability to effectively engage with victims and survivors.

Commissioned, and grant funded services, have historically evolved at the individual geographical level of the five constituent authorities in the region. Notably those services commissioned through the management of Welsh Government anti-poverty programme funding by local authorities. More recently regionalised planning of the Supporting People Programme, through the Regional Collaborative Committee and the VAWDASV fund has determined regionalised arrangements, including the Regional VAWDASV Team and commissioned homelessness prevention services. Other Welsh Government programme funding i.e. Flying Start, Families First, and the former Communities First funding has been managed at local authority geographies. Due to the prevalence of VAWDASV in the casework of social services departments, core local authority funding has also been used to commission specialist services from the third sector to enhance statutory provision. There is, however, no local authority funding or commissioning of sexual violence services. Devolved and non-devolved funding models have presented an immediate risk to the sustainability of Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) as identified in the needs assessment that underpins this strategy.

The Greater Gwent Health Social Care and Well-being Partnership Board is the statutory regional board under the Social Services and Well-being Act and has identified VAWDASV as a key strand in its Area Plan (under development).

Specialist Sector

There are currently 10 specialist sector providers in the region delivering a range of services that address violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence. As the specialist sector has historically been operating on smaller geographies some services operate in smaller areas than the whole region, others more latterly provide services across the area.

1. Barnardos
2. BAWSO
3. Cyfannol Womens Aid
4. Hafan Cymru
5. Llamau
6. New Pathways
7. Newport Women's Aid

8. Phoenix Domestic Abuse Services
9. Victim Support/Connect Gwent
10. SEWREC

The specialist sector has developed in response to need over many years and while services may serve similar client groups the mechanisms and specialisms differ in each provider. In addition to the local sector provision, national services also exist. A current directory of services available in the region is held on the Gwent Adult Safeguarding Board website at:

[http://www.gwasb.org.uk/fileadmin/documents/Handout_7 -
_Gwent VAWDASV services directory 3 amended 16.12.16 HG.pdf](http://www.gwasb.org.uk/fileadmin/documents/Handout_7_-_Gwent_VAWDASV_services_directory_3_amended_16.12.16_HG.pdf)

The VAWDASV needs assessment and strategic analysis includes further information on specialist services.

There are multi-agency centres in each of the five local authorities that have been supported by Welsh Government capital funding. Historically this was managed by local authority Community Safety Partnerships and hence there is a 'centre', often termed a 'one-stop shop', in each local authority that provides a focus for support services to operate out of, and a centre for victims, survivors and their families to receive services and programmes of support from the specialist sector. The benefits of multi-agency centres is that they are close to populations and therefore will continue to be important in the delivery of the Strategy going forward. Multi-agency centres across the region are either owned and provided by the local authority or the specialist sector.

Other grant funding includes that which is devolved through the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Home Office. Aligned to criminal justice provision, the support for victims and the reduction in attrition of witness evidence in order to increase the conviction of perpetrators, the funding supports specialist Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVA) and Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVA) positions. The Gwent Police and Crime Commissioner (along with Welsh Government) has funded a regionalised approach to IDVA provision including support for posts across Gwent and a regional IDVA manager located within the Regional VAWDASV Team.

Specialist criminal justice support for victim/witnesses through ISVA and IDVA positions also exist within specialist sector arrangements, including the local Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC), located in Risca.

Public Sector

Outside of the specialist sector public services across Gwent provide support and intervention as part of universal services.

Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs) operate in each of the five local authority areas. Chaired by Gwent Police Detective Inspectors, with a fortnightly frequency of

meetings, the MARACs discuss high risk cases referred from all partners to establish what further support is needed and to coordinate that support through the MARAC.

Domestic Abuse Conference Calls (DACCs) are an early prevention mechanism with the aim of identifying interventions for victims who come to the attention of Gwent Police prior to MARAC threshold levels. The call has been replaced by a Microsoft Sharepoint package that currently delivers the necessary information on victims to all partners. DACCs are managed from the Gwent Police Public Protection Unit.

Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (“MAPPA”) operate in Gwent. These are designed to protect the public, including previous victims of crime, from serious harm by sexual and violent offenders. They require the local criminal justice agencies and other bodies dealing with offenders to work together in partnership in dealing with these offenders.

WISDOM (Wales Integrated Serious and Dangerous Offender Management) is a multi-agency team consisting of Probation, Police, Psychologists and other local partners working together to risk of serious harm through offending by integrating agencies in the management and supervision of offenders. Priority domestic abuse perpetrators fall within the WISDOM definition of high risk of causing serious harm and are the focus of the Gwent pilot.

Violence against women, in its definition includes; female genital mutilation, forced marriage, so called ‘honour based’ violence and trafficking of women and has lead police officers within the Gwent Police Force structure to link closely to specialist Black Minority Ethnic (BME) support providers and national coordination mechanisms.

Connect Gwent, the Gwent Police victims’ hub draws together specialist victim support services in a centrally managed location so that the most appropriate support can be identified and delivered to victims of crime. Connect Gwent receive all victims details electronically direct through Police systems and hence provide a further coordinating mechanism for VAWDASV victims where consent is given.

Probation services, through the Her Majesty’s Prison and Probation Service and the Wales Community Rehabilitation Company, provide bespoke interventions and support for offenders with VAWDASV in their backgrounds.

VAWDASV within the local health board is given focus through safeguarding structures. Mandated targeted enquiry exists through midwifery and health visiting services. The Aneurin Bevan University Health Board will also form part of the Gwent early adopter site for Ask and Act. More widely within the health board the links to the causative factors of VAWDASV e.g. mental health, substance misuse and the effects of VAWDASV (i.e. injury, counselling needs) are acutely felt.

The impacts on adults, children and young people exposed to VAWDASV are all too evident. Local Authority Social Care Services provide care and support to adults and children at risk of abuse or neglect. All forms of VAWDASV feature significantly as presenting issues. Ask and Act policy framework will support earlier disclosure and appropriate referral into services.

Housing Related Support

Across Gwent the Supporting People Programme invests approximately £1.8 million in services for women and men who have experienced VAWDASV. These services include refuge provision, specialist refuge provision, floating support, drop in services, family support, specialist BME services, and target hardening. In addition the programme funding across the region enables people to receive other support that reduces their risk of becoming homeless including direct financial support and support for people with needs that often co-occur with VAWDASV e.g. mental health, substance misuse, debt etc.

The Supporting People planning framework adopted across the region considers population needs through the Gwent Needs Mapping Exercise, performance information, stakeholder input, service user feedback, best practice, and legal and policy drivers. Plans exist at the regional level and within Local Commissioning Plans. A regional refuge equipped to address more complex needs is being developed in the South of Gwent to receive referrals from across the region.

Registered Social Landlords, and in Caerphilly council 'Caerphilly Homes', have their own programmes of support that prioritise VAWDASV victims and provide target hardening so that they may stay in their own homes.

Perpetrator Services

Programmes to deter the continued and escalating abusive behaviour of perpetrators exist within Gwent although, as with the rest of the UK, some of these are relatively new and have strict criteria for inclusion. Within Gwent, in addition to court mandated programmes run by the Wales Community Rehabilitation Company (probation service), there are community based perpetrator programmes. These consist of a Barnardos programme based in Caerphilly and Newport (since January 2017) which are both funded by Social Services working with perpetrators where there is a recognised risk to children, and one operated by Phoenix Domestic Abuse Services in Blaenau Gwent which is open access for local residents and at cost for others. Programmes for young perpetrators (under 18 years of age) are run in Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly and Newport usually through the local Youth Offending Services. These programmes focus on a mixture of intimate and adolescent inter-familial abuse. Work needs to be undertaken to understand perpetrator work in relation to early intervention and other forms of VAWDASV within all types of relationships.

Training

The region has been one of the Welsh Government early adopter sites for Ask and Act and as such has begun the roll out of Group 1, 2 and 3 of the National Training Framework to relevant authority staff across Gwent. A suite of VAWDASV multi-agency training is delivered across the region raising awareness on specialist topics: Domestic Abuse; Sexual Violence; Working with Male Victims; 'Honour-Based Violence'; Understanding Perpetrators; Effects upon Children; Coercive Control; referral into MARAC.

Healthy Relationships

Across the region there are a range of healthy relationship programmes being delivered to children and young people both within educational and community settings. Whilst there are a number of organisations delivering preventative work, within schools healthy relationship sessions are predominantly delivered as part of the Hafan Cymru Spectrum Programme funded by Welsh Government. In addition schools across Gwent have their own provision and online resources around respectful and healthy relationships that they can access at their own pace. The Gwent Education Safeguarding Leads have been critical partners in identifying pilot sites within education for the early adoption of Ask and Act.

5. NEEDS ASSESSMENT

This Strategy has been informed by a VAWDASV needs assessment for the region, and an associated strategic analysis. The full assessment document and strategic analysis is available on request from Vawdasv.Gwent@newport.gov.uk. The Partnership Board commissioned Welsh Women's Aid to undertake the needs assessment, building on the 2014 work done as part of the Gwent Domestic Abuse Pathfinder Project. Further work has been done to analyse the results of the needs assessment through a strategic analysis to help define the strategy and delivery plan for the region.

The needs assessment is linked to the Greater Gwent Health, Social Care & Well-being Partnership [Population Needs Assessment](#) required under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. There is a commitment to ensure that this strategy and its underpinning needs assessment will be used as the basis for forward planning and to inform the Area Plan for the region.

Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence in Gwent

It should be noted that a detailed demography and population profiles for individual local authorities is included in the five Public Services Board's well-being assessments under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Included within the Board's assessment and analysis are snapshots from the abbreviated profile and population projections for the region contained within the Social Services and Well-being Act Population Needs Assessment: Gwent Regional Report (2016)¹² In addition the Safer Gwent Strategic Assessment¹³, national data, and proxy data e.g. number of children on the child protection register has been included in the full assessment document

¹² [http://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/CaerphillyDocs/Council-and-democracy/PopulationNeedsAssessment\(eng\).aspx](http://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/CaerphillyDocs/Council-and-democracy/PopulationNeedsAssessment(eng).aspx)

¹³ <http://onewportlsb.newport.gov.uk/documents/One-Newport/Safer-Gwent-Strategic-Assessment-2016-DRAFT-v3.pdf>

Commissioning to meet needs

Whilst it is important to recognise that this is not a commissioning strategy, its content and associated strategic delivery plan will inform the development of regional commissioning guidelines. It is important to consider key commissioning principles, drivers and barriers in terms of delivering the strategic priorities. Currently the Partnership Board does not directly hold any budget for commissioning VAWDASV services. Services are commissioned by a wide range of funding sources and directly from funding providers to those services themselves, rather than through any centrally held procurement arrangements. Likewise, Board partners commit significant core funding to mitigate the effects of VAWDASV across the population. However, in developing this strategy the knowledge and expertise resides in the Board's partners, and its operational groups. It will be the aim of the Partnership Board to use this expertise at the earliest opportunity to guide commissioning across the region.

For example, in order to deliver a mixed market of specialist support services for violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence survivors it is essential that we consider at an early stage the approach we will take and the principles we will adhere to when doing this. Our commissioning principles will be informed by the 10 procurement principles of [The Welsh Public Procurement Policy](#)¹⁴.

This also takes into account the feedback that we have had from providers and survivors in terms of stability, consistency and continuity of services and will contribute to the delivery of strategic priorities.

Accordingly we will develop commissioning principles based on:

- Using the data and information contained within this strategy to inform our thinking in the development of a regional commissioning strategy.
- Developing specifications that take into account the delivery of our strategic priorities for violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence in Gwent.
- Considering the sustainability of funding for services and contributing to the Welsh Government scoping on a sustainable funding model for VAWDASV
- Where possible, providing stability to the sector in terms of the duration of the contract(s) and funding for the lifetime of the contract for violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence services
- We will work collaboratively with our partners and stakeholders within the violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence sector and other associated sectors (for example, education) in the development and commissioning of a mixed market for violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence services.

Furthermore, during workshops with providers to map out and understand current and potential future referral pathways and survivor journeys a number of barriers were identified. This led to

¹⁴ Wales Procurement Policy Welsh Government 2015:

the focus groups determining that it is essential that any eligibility criteria associated with accessing service provision is based solely on a need to access any violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence service rather than a level of risk, complexity or the availability of services.

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6. SURVIVORS AS EXPERTS

This strategy recognises the vital importance of collaborating with survivors and service users, who are ‘experts by experience’ in terms of what has worked for them, their pathways through services and how easy (or difficult) it has been to find the right service and move towards independence and freedom from abuse.

‘Putting our opinion forward is most important’ *‘Our feedback matters’*

‘I can make a difference to others’ *‘I have a voice’*

(Strategy consultation – survivors)

Local survivor engagement has informed the development of this Strategy and will continue to be an important aspect for delivery for the Partnership Board. Without the input and opinion of service users providers cannot shape service provision to be responsive to the very individual needs of victims and survivors. Service user perceptions provide the continuous opportunity to inform, refine and improve services.

To underpin and inform the development of this strategy, two focus groups were held in Gwent with survivors who have been involved in services within the Region. The purpose of the focus groups was to map the experiences of survivors and service users of specialist services in Gwent and to assess the coverage and availability of services.

Following publication of the draft strategy the Regional Partnership consulted widely in the form of a survey monkey questionnaire and focus groups held with survivors. This has been critical to further develop the strategy, and has significantly informed the intentions and understanding of our 6 strategic priorities as outlined in chapter 8.

National survivor consultation has also informed this document taking the key findings of the Welsh Government “Are you listening and am I being heard?” report¹⁵. This work was informed by 66 survivors who attended focus groups, having experienced a range of violence and abuse including domestic abuse, sexual violence, forced marriage, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), ‘honour-based violence’, sexual exploitation, trafficking and child sexual abuse.

It is important to note that there was limited consultation with male survivors during the development of the strategy which has highlighted significant gaps in knowledge. The Partnership Board will endeavour to consult widely with all survivor groups including male victims and others who are affected by VAWDASV (including community support networks). Survivor consultation underpinned by best practice guidance for the Region, will continue to inform the delivery of this strategy.

¹⁵http://www.welshwomensaid.org.uk/wpcontent/uploads/2016/03/Are_you_listening_and_am_I_being_heard_FINAL_July_2016.pdf

Output from Consultations with Survivors

The detail associated with the focus groups, together with the outputs and outcomes from other survivor consultation is included at **Appendix 2**, however, a summary of key points is provided below.

- Survivors identified a number of key concerns in terms of the levels of awareness and knowledge when trying to get help, assistance and advice that were common across statutory services, encounters with GPs, ambulance and paramedics, and housing organisations.
- Survivors felt that their experience may have been different if professionals had received appropriate training in order to be able to identify violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence and know who to inform.
- Some survivors felt that in their encounters with (for example) social services (adults and children/young people), survivors reported that (it) frequently felt like "...a secondary source of victimisation..." and reported experiences of "bullying" in terms of their choices and decisions they needed to make.
- The perception of some survivors was that services were sometimes disjointed with eligibility, access, and referral pathways not always clear, whilst services for women from black and minority communities were only available in certain areas and not always accessible throughout Gwent. However, it should be noted that this is not the perception of all survivors who were consulted.
- Survivors expressed their fear of disclosing to Social Services in case their children were removed from their care. This view is also reinforced by perpetrators to exert further control over their victims.
- Survivors recognised that the National Strategy includes priorities for action that if implemented would challenge the behaviours and actions of perpetrators, and they felt that this is very positive. They identified a number of actions in terms of how they felt perpetrators should receive harsher consequences for violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence offences and actions to address issues at an earlier age to prevent abusive behaviours.
- Survivors felt that it is essential that trained staff from independent specialist violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence services are co-located in a wide range of public services
- Survivors (along with other stakeholders) identified a range of suggestions for improving services in Gwent, details of which are provided at **Appendix 2**.

7. ENGAGEMENT FINDINGS

Engagement and consultation was carried out with survivors (see Section 6 Survivors as Experts), specialist service providers, generic service providers, commissioners, stakeholders and Partnership Board members.

Participants were highly engaged in providing both positive and negative observations of the current and future landscape. To achieve this level of engagement considerable effort was made to engage with contributors and to arrange one-to-one appointments and/or focus groups. Contributors were also offered the option of filling in a questionnaire.

The information gathered during this process formed a broad spectrum of opinion. Issues highlighted can be matched to the Welsh Government six national strategic objectives (see Chapter 8) and are presented within **Appendix 2**.

Key concerns are outlined below:

- Lack of understanding amongst professionals leading to reduced confidence in professional contacts.
- Both recognition and concern over the preventative and pastoral role of education in dealing with issues of VAWDASV.
- The effectiveness of services aimed at holding perpetrators to account and the consistency and availability of provision across the region.
- The persistent difficulty to prioritise and define early intervention.
- Consistency and sustainability of training.
- The lack of an integrated referral pathway into services and how to ensure that services are sustainable long term.
- Perceived victim blaming by statutory services

The findings from this engagement process are fully integrated within the Partnership Boards Strategic Priorities going forward.

8. HOW WE WILL ACT TOGETHER TO TACKLE VAWDASV: OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence impacts upon all services, not least adult and children's social services, housing, criminal justice, education, the police, health services, and voluntary and community organisations. This strategy will further enable a coordinated community response within Gwent in order to reduce the prevalence and impact of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence and increase the awareness and ability to act swiftly and effectively within communities and professionals.

The Partnership Board want to ensure that all agencies and organisations within the region respond effectively to the challenges and issues both within their own organisations and in collaboration with partners and stakeholders to prevent harm, reduce risk and increase the immediate and long term safety of people living within the region.

In line with The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, we intend to deliver on the actions within this strategy using the "sustainable development principle" and follow five ways of working to ensure we work collaboratively with people and communities, avoid repeating past mistakes and tackle some of the long terms challenges we face.

Accordingly we will achieve this by:

- **Prevention:** Recognising that early intervention is the primary overarching principle to tackling VAWDASV and improving outcomes for victims and those closest to them, particularly children in families.
- **Integration:** Consider how the violence against women domestic abuse and sexual violence objectives impact upon each of the well-being goals¹⁶, and on the objectives and priorities of other key statutory services strategies.
- **Collaboration:** Members of The Partnership Board will work collaboratively with partners and stakeholders to ensure that the actions, objectives and targets of this strategy are met.
- **Involvement:** We will ensure that we engage and involve the right people at the right time with a focus on survivor engagement.
- **Long Term:** We will approach regional commissioning and the implementation of an agreed sustainable funding model pragmatically and ensure that the short term needs of survivors continue to be met whilst any longer term reconfiguration is undertaken

We will also ensure the efficient **integration** of services in terms of the effective management and delivery of specialist violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence services

¹⁶ [The Well-Being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#)

so that service beneficiaries receive a continuum of preventive, safe and supportive services, according to their needs that is consistent throughout the region.

The seven well-being goals contained within the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 underpin the objectives which are enshrined within the key thematic purpose of the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 (the Act):

- ❖ **Prevention**
- ❖ **Protection**
- ❖ **Support**

Preventing violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence is the predominant outcome that the Partnership Board will focus its efforts on. The associated Delivery Plan will align its milestones and targets against the above themes and the strategic priorities.

Preventing violence and abuse

Violence against women and girls has been described as 'perhaps the most pervasive violation of human rights across the globe'¹⁷ yet it is entirely preventable.

The priorities identified within this strategy and accompanying Strategic Delivery Plan will ensure that The Partnership Board continues to build upon the collaborative approach to preventing violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence from happening, by challenging the attitude and behaviours which foster it, intervening early, where possible, to prevent its recurrence, reducing the impact of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence and working toward a future where it is eliminated.

- We will actively work together with schools, government, health, the police/criminal justice system, local authorities, and the community to work in a coordinated and collaborative way to raise the awareness of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence to stop abuse before it begins.
- We want to be confident that all professionals within our area are equipped with the knowledge to effectively respond to any disclosures of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

Protection

Protection of survivors is a critical aspect of the coordinated response to violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence and The Partnership Board is committed to working collaboratively to protect those who are experiencing violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence from suffering further harm, and protect any children within the family.

¹⁷ <http://www.un.org/press/en/1999/19990308.sgs6919.html>

- Through collaborative working with partners we will ensure that alleged perpetrators of abuse in Gwent are dealt with appropriately and that survivors and their children are given protection against further abuse.
- We want to further develop the evidence base on different manifestations of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence to help inform regional targeted and innovative approaches.
- We will consider the evidence base for what works in the context of perpetrator programmes, identify and disseminate good practice.

Support

Providing effective support services for people who have been affected by violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence is complex, as people's experiences and needs can be vastly different. However, we will work with partners to promote a supportive culture that is underpinned by a range of services that respond to individuals and their families.

Specialist services in Gwent have adopted an empowerment approach which seeks to restore the control to survivors that is stolen by violence. The support they provide creates an environment in which survivors can exercise choice and self-determination.

Gwent has a range of excellent services established over many decades. Access to such services is a right for survivors when suffering domestic violence or abuse, when at risk of forced marriage or female genital mutilation, when subject to abuse related to sexual violence, prostitution, and all other forms of gender based violence. The Partnership Board will ensure that this good practice is replicated across the region and that the availability of services is consistent.

- We want anyone experiencing violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence to be aware of the support that is available within Gwent and have the confidence to access them
- We want survivors to be able to access the service that they need, delivered in the right place and at the right time on their recovery journey

Strategic Priorities

The Partnership Board has set a clear rationale for identifying the six Strategic Priorities based upon the evidence provided:

Strategic Priority 1: Increase awareness and challenge attitudes of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence across Gwent.

Survivors felt that there were people in all services who lacked the necessary knowledge, understanding and empathetic attitude to encourage confidence to disclose violence against

women, domestic abuse and sexual violence. We need to increase awareness for all staff within public services; we need also to challenge public perceptions. We need members of the community to spot the signs and know where there is support available. At the same time we need to send a clear message that these forms of abuse are not acceptable.

'The media, family, schools and employers all need awareness'

'People need practical advice on safe ways to contact the police or other agencies'

'[We] need to get this issue into public consciousness'

(Strategy consultation responses – survivors)

Strategic Priority 2: Increase awareness in children and young people of the importance of safe, equal and healthy relationships and that abusive behaviour is always wrong

Survivors felt that there was not enough education about healthy relationships and gender equality to prevent future abusive behaviour particularly where children had already been subjected to violence and abuse in their own homes. Raising awareness of safe and healthy relationships enables young people to differentiate between what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. It is also important that we educate children and young people to know that help is available, as well as how to access that support.

'I met him when I was 13. He used to stand outside the school'

'Schools have firework safety sessions every year, but we need to do something with VAWDASV which is happening every day of the year'

(Strategy consultation responses - survivors)

Strategic Priority 3: Increase focus on holding perpetrators to account and provide opportunities to change their behaviour based around victim safety

There is a need for increased understanding of the current provision across Gwent and development of best practice guidance for commissioning services which prioritises victim safety. If we do not hold perpetrators to account we give them no incentive to change their behaviour. At the same time we need to provide a clear message about what behaviour/s are acceptable in our society. Some survivors felt that perpetrator programmes did not always consider the safety of victim/survivor and any children as a primary focus. Work with perpetrators cannot happen in isolation and needs to be rooted in victim safety and prevention. If the cycle is to be broken, there is a huge role to play for all services.

'The cord is cut once you go to court...if a perpetrator is found not guilty in court they can walk down any street and knock on any door...the victim has to change their whole life'

'Perpetrator programmes are 'enigmas that need much more research''

(Strategy consultation responses – survivors)

Strategic Priority 4: Make early intervention and prevention a priority

Providers tell us that there are many lost opportunities to make every intervention an effective and preventative one. Domestic Homicide Reviews highlight missed opportunities to intervene. We need professionals and members of the community, to recognise signs, to safely ask questions and take appropriate action. A focus on prevention is important if we are to break the cycle of abuse and will mean working holistically to tackle VAWDASV, including working with perpetrators, undertaking awareness raising work across all communities including children and young people. Providers have expressed concern about prioritising early intervention and prevention alongside other competing priorities for the public sector. We must ensure early intervention and prevention is core business across all Strategic Priorities.

'Support can be good from GPs but you need to be able to have a voice. It takes time to build a relationship which is difficult in 10 minutes'.

"Survivors spoke of the need to promote early awareness to by-standers so 'individuals feel empowered to speak up'".

(Strategy consultation – survivors)

Strategic Priority 5: Relevant professionals are trained to provide effective, timely and appropriate responses to victims and survivors

It is clear from the evidence that disclosures are made by survivors and their families to a range of public services. Survivors felt there was a need for more consistency between services e.g. police, housing and support services. Some survivors felt that staff in both statutory and other professional services were not trained and/or did not have the confidence to pick up on issues raised, albeit that this may be indirect. The National Training Framework (NTF) aims to strengthen the response amongst those offering specialist or universal services. It aims to bring quality assurance and consistency with respect to training professionals around VAWDASV issues. Through the NTF we will improve responses across public services, promoting early intervention and providing a gateway for victims to access appropriate forms of help and support.

'Professionals kind of know what you're going through but they don't acknowledge it because then they would need to do something with the information'.

'Referral process is like walking on hot coals'.

'I went to the GP every Monday after an incident and I just wanted him to ask why are you here? What is happening?'

(Strategy consultation – survivors)

Strategic Priority 6: Provide victims with equal access to appropriately resourced, high quality, needs led, strength based, gender responsive services throughout the region.

Providing support to people affected by VAWDASV can be complex and people's experience and needs can be vastly different. Survivors will choose to engage with services in a variety of ways; there needs to be a range of services that are accessible and can respond effectively and universally to these needs. Survivors felt that there were not enough experts based in key disclosure points like police stations, hospitals and GP surgeries, The Needs Assessment highlighted some of the gaps and capacity issues in specialist service provision. Providers of services raised concerns over insecure funding. Services that are strength- based increase resilience, independence and a life free from abuse. Public services, community and voluntary organisations and independent specialist services all have a key role to play. We will focus on working collaboratively to develop a framework for service delivery that is sustainable, informed by survivors and enables clear referral pathways into specialist services.

'You can't overturn a situation on your own when you're already vulnerable. Living in fear all the time you are a nervous wreck. [You] don't always have control over your responses'

'You have to stand on the other side of the glass and explain why you are there – people in the waiting room can hear...we need opportunities to speak alone'

'Referral process is like walking on hot coals'

'Once you've told someone you need to leave straight away'

'Getting help was the best thing that's ever happened to me'

(Strategy consultation – survivors)

There will be critical challenges to achieving these which the underpinning engagement work and Needs Assessment has articulated.

9. HOW WE WILL MONITOR OUR PROGRESS: OUR STRATEGIC DELIVERY PLAN

The Partnership Board will provide the governance structure to develop, approve and monitor this joint regional strategy as required by Local Authorities and Local Health Boards under the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015.

There will be formal lines of reporting from the Partnership Board into Public Services Boards, Safeguarding Boards and other regional partnerships with opportunities identified to influence and inform regional strategic planning. The cross-working and aligned work plans across adults and children's safeguarding structures will assist in the delivery of this strategy.

Measuring the progress of the Strategy

Welsh Ministers are required to publish annual reports of the progress made towards achieving both the objectives in the National Strategy and achievement towards the purpose of the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015. Section 11 of the Act also requires Welsh Ministers to 'publish national indicators that may be applied for the purpose of measuring progress towards the achievement of the purpose of this Act.' The national indicators will measure collective national progress in achieving the purpose of the Act.

Regionally, these National Indicators present agencies and partnerships in Gwent with a renewed opportunity to work towards a quality assured coordinated and coherent measurement framework and to mainstream violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence data across wider policy areas, in a way that aligns with these national indicators.

The Partnership Board will identify regional outcomes and indicators to measure progress and success in delivering this Strategy which, along with the National Indicators, will help public bodies, other stakeholders and communities to understand the extent to which our priorities are being achieved.

Regional data will also be used to inform national progress reports, referred to above, which will help demonstrate how effective we have been in achieving the Strategic Priorities set out in this regional and National Strategy.

In recognising its role as the 'Pathfinder Region' the Partnership Board will commit to influencing and contributing to the national VAWDASV agenda.

The Strategic Delivery Plan

The Strategic Delivery Plan which accompanies this strategy is a working document that outlines The Partnership Boards commitment to the next 12 months activity. The 6 Strategic Priorities detailed within the Delivery Plan will contribute to the pursuit of the **prevention** of violence and abuse, the **protection** of victims and the **support** of all those affected.

The statutory responsibilities under the VAWDASV (Wales) Act 2015 will be discharged through the VAWDASV Partnership Board and annual reporting against this Regional Strategy and its Delivery Plan will be submitted to Gwent Public Services Boards and incorporated into Well-being plan reporting.

In developing this strategy and its underpinning research, the on-going work and the focus of the Partnership Board has been defined. The work undertaken to date has provided the region with an overview of provision whilst revealing gaps in knowledge and data and that will be necessary to address in the immediate and longer term.

Through its Strategic Delivery Plan the Board has set clear objectives that address each of the 6 Strategic Priorities and the means by which to achieve these. The Partnership Board will be committed to building on successful work with the specific aim of strengthening and progressing provision collaboratively across all areas.

The Partnership Board through its Strategic Delivery Group will be responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the Strategic Delivery Plan. This document is available on request from Vawdasv.Gwent@newport.gov.uk. Through its communication framework the Partnership Board will ensure that information relating to this Strategy reaches the relevant audience by a variety of different methods which are relevant to their needs.

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Appendix 1

UNDERSTANDING THE LANGUAGE USED

1. Definitions of abuse (*Gwent Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Partnership Board Terms of Reference*).

Violence Against Women

The United Nations defines "Violence against Women" as a "form of discrimination against women and a violation of human rights and shall mean all acts of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life."

Domestic Abuse

According to the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 domestic abuse means 'abuse where the victim of it is or has been associated with the abuser. This can be committed by an intimate partner, ex-partner, spouse, civil partner or family relative' (a full definition of intimate and familial relations can be accessed within the Act).

The abuse can be physical, sexual, psychological, emotional or financial abuse.

This is in line with the Home Office's definition of domestic abuse as '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 Serious Crime Act 2015 legally defines the offence of coercive and controlling behaviour within intimate or familial relations as domestic abuse. 'Controlling behaviour is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour is an act or a pattern of acts of assaults, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish or frighten their victim'.

Rape and sexual violence

Sexual violence is any unwanted sexual act or activity. *According to the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 sexual violence means sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, or threats of violence of a sexual nature. The act further defines sexual exploitation as something that is done to or in respect of a person which warrants an offence under Part 1 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003. This includes the following definitions:*

- Rape is when a person intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person with his penis when that other person does not consent to the penetration, and/or he does not reasonably believe that the other person consents.
- Assault by penetration is the intentional sexual penetration of the vagina or anus of another person with a part of the person's body or anything else, when that other person does not consent to the penetration, and/or he does not reasonably believe that the other person consents.
- Sexual assault is a person intentionally touching another person sexually in a manner to which the other person does not consent to the touching, and/or the person does not reasonably believe that the other person consents.
- Child sex offences including rape or any sexual activity with a child, familial child sex offences and meeting a child following sexual grooming.

Sexual harassment

According to the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 harassment means a course of conduct (including speech) by a person which he or she knows or ought to know amounts to harassment of the other. For incidents that took place after 1st October 2005 there are two types of sexual harassment – unwanted contact on the grounds of your sex and unwanted physical verbal or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature.

Gender Based Violence

According to the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 gender-based violence means:

- *Violence, threats of violence or harassment arising directly or indirectly from values, beliefs or customs relating to gender or sexual orientation.*

This includes 'Honour based violence' which can be distinguished from other forms of violence, as it is often committed with some degree of approval and/or collusion from family and/or community members. Examples may include murder, un-explained death (suicide), fear of or actual forced marriage, controlling sexual activity, domestic abuse (including psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional abuse), child abuse, rape, kidnapping, false imprisonment, threats to kill, assault, harassment, forced abortion. This list is not exhaustive.

- *Female genital mutilation which is an act that is an offence under sections 1, 2 or 3 of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003.*

FGM also known as female circumcision or female genital cutting, is defined by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as "all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons" as defined by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

- *Forcing a person (whether by physical force or coercion by threats or other psychological means) to enter into a religious or civil ceremony of marriage (whether or not legally binding). This is commonly known as Forced Marriage. The pressure put on people to marry against their will can be physical (including threats, actual physical violence and sexual violence) or emotional and psychological (for example, when someone is made to feel like they're bringing shame on their family). Financial abuse (taking your wages or not giving you any money) can also be a factor.*

2. Glossary

Victim/Survivor: The term used to describe the person who is potentially experiencing violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence. Other terms encompassed may include; 'service user' 'client' and 'patient' and reflect the terms used by different organisations to define their relationship to the person at risk. In practical terms it is suggested that the person experiencing these issues selects the term they prefer, where a term is required.

Public Service: Public services are services delivered for the benefit of the public, supported via government, to serve people in a particular society or community. This can include services delivered through the third sector, through social enterprise or through services that are contracted out.

Local Authority: A county council or county borough council

Relevant authorities: county councils and county borough councils, Local Health Boards, fire and rescue authorities and NHS trusts

VAWDASV specialist sector: Third sector organisations whose core business is violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

Independent Domestic Violence Adviser (IDVA): Trained specialist worker who provides short to medium-term casework support for high risk victims of domestic abuse.

Independent Sexual Violence Adviser (ISVA): Trained specialist worker who provides support to victims/survivors of rape and sexual assault.

BME/BAME – Black and Minority Ethnic or Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic is the terminology used to describe people of non-white descent.

Ask and Act: A process of targeted enquiry across the Welsh Public Service in relation to violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

Target Hardening: Target hardening is a means with which to make a property safer for the resident and reduce the risk of attack in this case by the perpetrator of domestic abuse. *(It should be part of a 'spectrum' of services made available to help to protect victims of domestic abuse alongside support in the community, access to refuge provision, involvement of the police or other statutory services and programmes for perpetrators of domestic abuse - Domestic Abuse and Housing in Wales Factsheet (CIH Cymru 2013)*

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