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Date February 2019

**Delivering the Violence Against Women & Domestic Abuse and Sexual
Violence Strategy (VAWDASV) in Newport.**

Report Summary

Cabinet in their meeting of May 2018 approved the Gwent VAWDASV Regional strategy to which Newport is one of six members.

- Local Authorities and Health Authorities are required to have a joint VAWDASV Strategy in place to comply with the Act. This has been developed across the Gwent footprint to discharge the duties within the Act for all five Gwent Local Authorities and Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB).

The Strategy contains (6) regional priorities that are being delivered locally and for the purposes of this report concentrate on the delivery/progression of the actions within Newport. (Appendix 1)

Members are requested to comment on progression against the 6 strategic priorities and offer views for improvement and any future scrutiny activity to be undertaken.

The Committee is asked:

- a) To note the progress of the implementation in Newport.
- b) To decide whether Members wish to make recommendations to Cabinet on the progress in Newport is sufficient.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 (the Act) was passed in April 2015 and aims to improve the Public Sector response by providing the strategic focus to improve the arrangements for the prevention, protection and support for individual affected by such violence and abuse.
- 1.2 This Act is set within wider legislative context of the Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 and provides a unique opportunity to embed VAWDASV as a priority in determining well-being.
- 1.3 The Act seeks to:
 - Ensure a shared, collective strategic vision, with the development of both local and national strategies.

Submission of Evidence to Scrutiny Delivering the VAWDASV Strategy in Newport

APPENDIX A

Author Mary Ryan, Service Manager, Safeguarding Newport City Council and
Rebecca Haycock, Regional VAWDASV Team Manager
Date February 2019

- Raise the issue of gender-based abuse and sexual violence with our most senior leadership, and place a responsibility on them to drive forward changes which improve the safety of victims and their children.
 - Provide for the appointment of a National Advisor (Wales) to provide high profile leadership and hold everyone to a higher standard of accountability.
- 1.4 The Act also has a focus on education; Local Authorities will be required to report how they are tackling these issues, including in the schools in their area – for example through lessons on healthy relationships.
- 1.5 The Act also provides Welsh Ministers with powers to publish guidance documents to help relevant, Ask and Act, Commissioning, Perpetrator relevant authorities meet the aims of the Act. These will include: The National Training Framework, Ask and Act, Commissioning, Perpetrators, Older People and Multi Agency Collaboration.
- 1.6 The Gwent VAWDASV Strategy as required under the Act was published in May 2018 and sets out to ensure that as a region (ABUHB, Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport & Torfaen) we work together in a consistent and cohesive way to prevent VAWDASV and to improve the outcomes for individuals and their families affected, supported through the VAWDASV delivery plan.
- 1.7 Progress against the delivery of the 6 Strategic Priorities is reported in the attached Delivery Plan.
- 1.8 National Measures and Indicators are due to be published in 2019/20 and these will further- inform reporting against the strategy on an annual basis.
- 2. Discussion – How will it be delivered locally in Newport**
- 2.1 ***Strategic Priority 1: Increase awareness and challenge attitudes of VAWDASV across Gwent:***
- 2.1.1 The five Local Safeguarding Networks continue to develop a local focus across adult/children safeguarding and VAWDASV.
Local Safeguarding Networks – provide a two-fold approach to ensuring connectivity between the strategic Boards and work of the front-line practitioners. Local safeguarding leads from all relevant agencies meet to ensure that any emerging issues prevalent to each local area are presented and discussed on a multi-agency basis. Also, with the assistance of the regional safeguarding business unit. The group will consistently disseminate a range of messages from practice and reviews to professionals and volunteers across children, adults and VAWDASV Boards in a regular workshop session.
- 2.1.2 The VAWDASV agenda forms part of the agenda, with the May (2018) Local practitioner safeguarding forums focussing on sexual violence and in the November (2018) event the safeguarding forums focussed on the Welsh Government theme of exploitation through a

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case study approach for VAWDASV. This consistently blends the desired legislation outcomes for both VAWDASV Act / Social Services and Well Being Act/ and Future Generations Act.

2.1.3 Future topics are suggested by network attendees and discussed and agreed by the Chairs of the Area Safeguarding Manager Network Groups. To date during 2018/19, **189** Newport practitioners have attended. It is worth noting that the events take place in each region of Gwent and practitioners are welcome to attend any event.

2.2 *Strategic Priority 2: Increase awareness of children and young people on safe, equal and healthy relationships, and that abusive behaviour is always wrong.*

2.2.1 Healthy relationship sessions are delivered by the Welsh Government funded Spectrum Programme to schools across the region in all Local Authority areas. To date during 2018/19, 35 out of 55 (64%) of schools in Newport have accessed the program. The process is overseen by the VAWDASV Team. Planning for completion by all schools will be the target for 2019/2020.

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

2.3.1 There is on-going work developing a regional approach to addressing this priority. There are third sector providers of community based (non-mandated) domestic abuse perpetrator programmes in Gwent.

2.3.2 The 2017 Needs Assessment has highlighted limited provision in some areas of the Gwent footprint, high referrals and an inability to meet the demand within the current funding provision. The recent report mapping VAWDASV perpetrator services across Gwent (Miles 2018) has highlighted that the demand for perpetrator services in Gwent exceeds those available. Perpetrator services are set up to address the behaviours and attitudes of those individuals who commit such acts covered under the umbrella of VAWDASV. This same report identified Gwent community based programmes that are accredited and working towards accreditation. Funding is currently being secured from Welsh Government for quarter 4, 2018/19 to spot purchase interventions on identified programmes to enable equal access across the region.

2.4 *Strategic Priority 4: Make early intervention and prevention a priority.*

2.4.1 Early intervention and prevention is articulated for each strategic priority throughout the Delivery Plan and ensures a focus on the whole VAWDASV agenda and all protected characteristics.

2.4.2 Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences, (MARACs) are run every fortnight in Newport where cases are discussed for victims who have been identified as being at high risk of serious harm and homicide by domestic abuse, stalking and or honour based violence using the DASH risk assessment tool. The MARAC is usually chaired by a

Submission of Evidence to Scrutiny Delivering the VAWDASV Strategy in Newport

APPENDIX A

Author Mary Ryan, Service Manager, Safeguarding Newport City Council and
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Date February 2019

Senior Police Officer and actions allocated to partners. This is now changing with an investment in Chairs training across all partners and MARACs can now be Chaired by any relevant partner.

2.4.3 A review of Gwent MARACs was undertaken by Safe Lives during 2017. Safe Lives Formally Co-ordinated Acting Against Domestic Abuse (CAADA) and is a UK wide domestic abuse charity. Safe Lives collate MARAC data across the UK. This review highlighted significant concerns with MARACs operating across Gwent. These concerns were in relation to the decline in referrals to MARAC (expected numbers per population). Some of the perceived causes for the decline are picked up in the recommendations below.

2.4.4 The MARAC Review Task Group is working to an action plan that is driving forward the recommendations provided by the review.

The Regional Independent Domestic Abuse Advisor (IDVA) manager and Gwent Police are leading on this work. Recommendations are focussed on: the development of protocol and guidance; the role of MARAC Chairs; risk assessment; information sharing; training and awareness raising; protected characteristics; review of the domestic abuse conference call (DACC)/ Share point (a multi-agency sharing platform following a police incident (Domestic Abuse); resourcing; multi-agency engagement and quality assurance. The action plan (Appendix 2) reports into the Strategic Delivery Group for scrutiny and implementation.

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

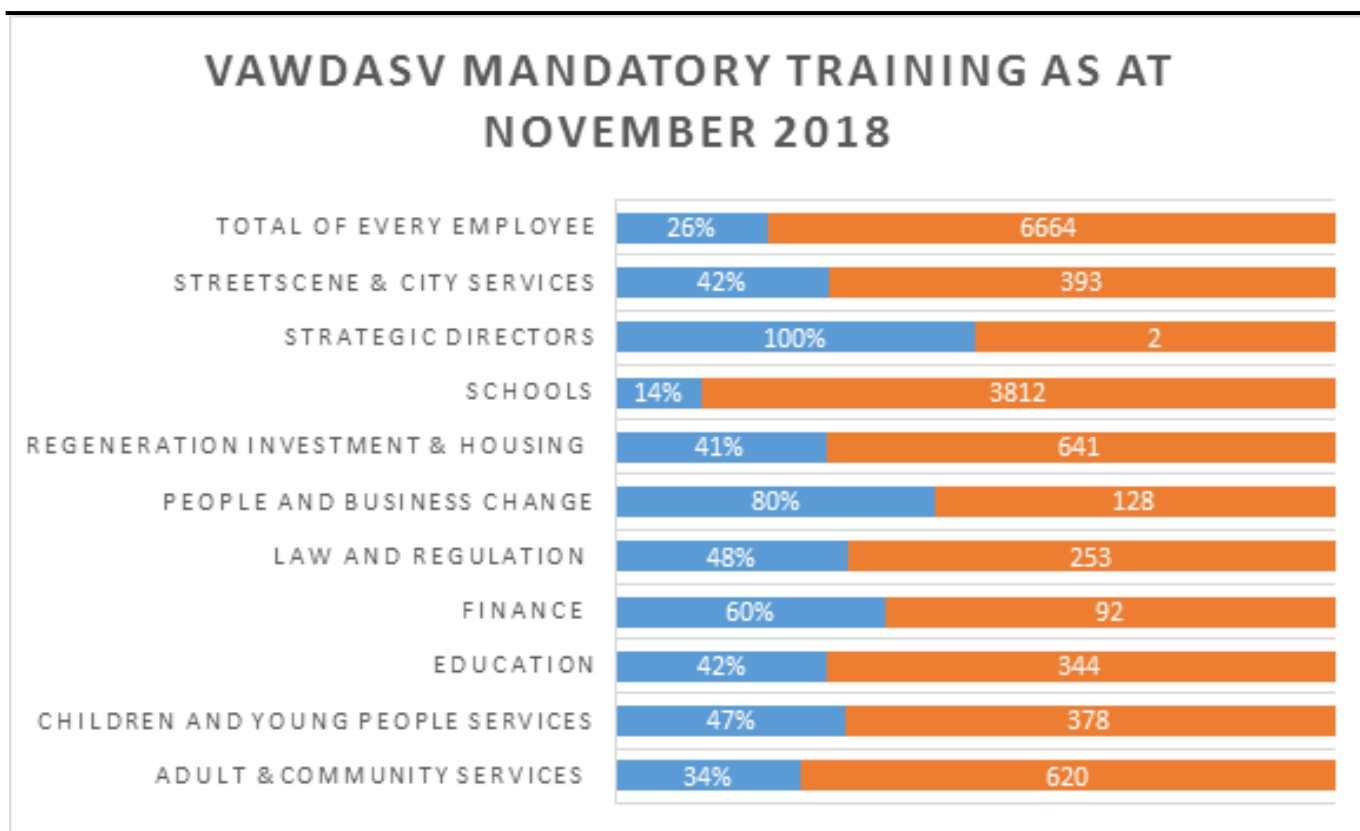
2.5.1 VAWDASV training is delivered across Gwent. This includes implementation of the National Training Framework (NTF), (Appendix 3) ensuring compliance by professionals in relevant authorities (Groups 1-6) and supporting specialist services to achieve Group 4-5 training requirements. Group 1 is generic, group 2 is aimed at relevant professionals, group 3 is aimed at staff in roles which require them to do more than 'Ask and Act' and those who perform a 'Champion' role. Group 4 and Group 5 is training designed specifically for the specialist VAWDASV sector, the workers at group 4 and management at group 5. One example of these qualifications would be completion of the IDVA training.

2.5.2 Below is the required data for Newport City Council that is reported to Welsh Government and evidences the officers by service area who have completed the group requirement for **all** staff to access Group 1 (elearning) VAWDASV training,

Submission of Evidence to Scrutiny Delivering the VAWDASV Strategy in Newport

APPENDIX A

Author Mary Ryan, Service Manager, Safeguarding Newport City Council and Rebecca Haycock, Regional VAWDASV Team Manager
Date February 2019



- 2.5.3 As the early adopter site for 'Ask and Act' Gwent has been responsible for developing policy and training to support the national roll out. During 2018/19, a total of 34 Newport Officers have completed Group 2 training.
- 2.5.4 In addition to the requirements under the VAWSASV legislation, 433 Newport staff have accessed multi-agency regional training on a range of VAWDASV topics since 2017. This training will be through a variety of avenues but mainly through the regional safeguarding business unit.
- 2.5.5 During 2017/18 the regional team have supported Gwent Local Authorities' to review work place policies. This is both an important step for the region in relation to early prevention, prevention and support and also to support the roll out of Ask and Act. Effective and up to date work place policies are integral to the dissemination of Group 1 training which aims to reach 100%
- 2.6 ***Strategic Priority 6: To provide victims with equal access to appropriately resourced high quality need led strength based gender responsive services.***
- 2.6.1 The regional IDVA service is managed by Newport and provides supports to high risk victims of domestic abuse. The IDVA provides specialist support to victims of domestic abuse who have been identified as being at high risk of serious harm and homicide by the domestic abuse, stalking and honour-based violence (DASH) risk assessment tool.

Submission of Evidence to Scrutiny Delivering the VAWDASV Strategy in Newport

APPENDIX A

Author Mary Ryan, Service Manager, Safeguarding Newport City Council and Rebecca Haycock, Regional VAWDASV Team Manager
Date February 2019

2.6.2 Newport council host the IDVA team manager (OPCC funded post) who ensures that a resilient IDVA service operates across Gwent.

2.6.3 From April 2018 to December 2018 there were **332** referrals to the IDVA service from Newport citizens.

Below is a table of the IDVA case files for the previous 3 years evidencing increasing referrals to Newport year on year.

Area	2015/16	2016/17	Comparison to previous year	2017/18	Comparison to previous year
Newport	129	151	17%	275	82%
Gwent-wide Totals	369	473	28%	731	55%

2.6.4 Support is provided on a regional basis by Cyfannol Women's aid including, family refuges, dispersed refuge, move on accommodation, crisis intervention, floating support, support groups, mentoring projects, STAR (Safety Trust and Respect) groups and also Horizon Sexual Violence Services.

2.6.5 Hafan Cymru provide floating support (44 units) to people living in their own homes and a Nurturing Programme designed to provide adults and children with the understanding, skills and ability to lead emotionally healthy lives, build resilience, empathy, self-esteem and support positive relationships.

2.6.6 New Pathways provided sexual violence services to people across Gwent, including a Sexual Assault Referral Centre, counselling and therapy.
The greatest risks to services is due to insecure and unsustainable funding (often annual)

2.6.7 Whilst the Regional Strategy is not a commissioning strategy the VAWDASV Partnership Board recognise that a collaborative approach to commissioning will ensure a greater focus on the delivery of and access to services that meet the needs of people of Gwent. Without this the intention of the Strategy cannot be achieved. There is a commitment from Welsh Government to develop a model for sustainable funding and work underway in Gwent to develop a commissioning framework.

2.6.8 The VAWDASV team are managed within Newport Safeguarding services and as such Newport officers have Chaired and led on many of the priorities. The safeguarding Service Manager Chairs both the regional MARAC group and the Domestic Homicide regional group.

Submission of Evidence to Scrutiny Delivering the VAWDASV Strategy in Newport

APPENDIX A

Author Mary Ryan, Service Manager, Safeguarding Newport City Council and
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Date February 2019

2.6.9 Domestic Homicide reviews across Gwent are commissioned by the 5 Public Service Boards, and are subject to non-devolved legislation from the Home Office. During the last year and through the VAWDASV priorities we have successfully undertaken a pilot with the agreement of the 5 PSB's, to look at how we conduct and commission authors/chairs for DHR's and the methodology routinely used, to ensure clear learning, timeliness of the review and quality of the reviews are improved. We have trialled blending the safeguarding case review meeting whereby Heads of Service meet to review child and adult deaths and near misses across Gwent, (Social Services and Well-being Act). We have completed the first pilot review for a DHR using adult practice review methodology. The reviewers (1 from Newport) were invited and attended the Home Office quality assurance panel in December, to discuss the pilot D-APR process and report. The Home Office had received the report and all methodology used and received praise for the pilot, methodology of the review with clear reporting and learning evidenced.

The review will be submitted to the Home Office formerly and also to Welsh Government who are keen to track the DHR process and are undertaking how learning from all reviews are disseminated across Wales.

3. Implications

3.1 The report supports the legal duty for the Council to commit to the delivery of the VAWDASV agenda with its partners in Health, and, to undertake this further on a regional footprint offering consistency of approach ensuring we can support victims in the Gwent area generally and the provision of local support.

4. Conclusions

4.1 Following adoption of the Gwent regional VAWDASV strategy and development of the delivery plan, colleagues in the VAWDASV team have continued to progress the 6 key strategic activities.

4.1.2 This report has outlined progress and information against the priorities. Progress may be limited in some areas as this is new work but does provide scrutiny an opportunity to consider the activity that has taken place and be assured that delivery is taking place in Newport.

4.1.3 The VAWDASV agenda has been included within the safeguarding HUB pilot, (based in Civic centre) ensuring an active role for IDVA's in Newport working alongside and accessing all HUB partners. Early identification of adult safeguarding has been identified through close working and it has enabled citizens of Newport access to a range of services in the community at a much earlier point.

5.1 The Performance Scrutiny Committee - Partnerships are invited to:

- Consider how the Gwent VAWDASV regional strategy will effectively meet local delivery in Newport.
- Comment on progress against each of the 6 priorities that are delivered in Newport and recommend continuation of the action plan.

Submission of Evidence to Scrutiny Delivering the VAWDASV Strategy in Newport

APPENDIX A

Author Mary Ryan, Service Manager, Safeguarding Newport City Council and
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Date February 2019

- Consider the take up of the group 1 mandatory elearning by the council, which is a requirement for Welsh Government and for Cabinet to support all service areas to complete as a recognised requirement of employment within Newport City Council.

Appendices	Appendix 1 – VAWDASV Regional Delivery Plan
	Appendix 2 - Gwent MARAC Review Action Plan
	Appendix 3 – National Training Framework

For a copy of the back ground papers or for further information about this report, please contact Mary Ryan Service Manager Safeguarding. Mary.ryan@newport.gov.uk
