



VAWDASV

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

Title: UPDATE REPORT ON BEHALF OF THE GWENT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, DOMESTIC ABUSE AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE BOARD

Subject: GWENT VAWDASV BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
2021-22

Date: June 2022

Due to elections and summer hiatus, this report has yet to be signed off by each Local Authority Scrutiny Committees or the Gwent Public Services Board, therefore, hasn't been published on the Gwent Safeguarding website.

1.0 Purpose

The Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 places a duty on Local Authorities and Local Health Boards to publish a report of the progress made during each financial year in achieving the objectives specified in local/regional strategies. The statutory responsibilities under the VAWDASV (Wales) Act 2015 are discharged through the VAWDASV Board with annual reporting against the regional strategy and delivery plan were previously submitted to each of the 5 Public Services Board in Gwent. In October 2021, these boards merged into a regional Gwent Public Services Board. This report will be submitted to each Local Scrutiny Committee and to the Gwent Public Services Board for comment and approval.

The Gwent Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) strategy 2018 – 2023, sets out Gwent's aims against the six strategic priorities. This report describes the progress made against the Strategy in 2021/22. A glossary of abbreviations used within the document can be found at the end of the report for reference.

2.0 Background

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. The early development of the regional model based on progress made as the pilot area for regionalisation for Welsh Government. As the national pathfinder region, we have brought together the strategic governance, development and co-ordination of the VAWDASV agenda ahead of other regions in Wales.

The Core Welsh Government VAWDASV Grant is one element of funding that contributes to the regional response to VAWDASV. During 2021-22 this grant was used to fund the regional coordination team, regional multi-agency training, and communication and engagement activities, along with just over 50% towards the regional IDVA service and for funding a specialist HBA advice worker via BAWSO. Funding is provided on annual basis on approval of the regional delivery plan.

Additional Welsh Government VAWDASV regional grants accessed during 2021-22 enabled the region to fund the following

- Additional perpetrator intervention provision
- Specialist advice workers working with diverse communities
- Hospital based IDVA
- Additional counselling provision for those affected by Domestic Abuse
- Additional sessional counselling provision for those affected by Sexual Violence
- Wellbeing worker for children and young people affected by VAWDASV
- Additional ISVA provision and training costs
- Regional training to support practitioners
- Development and delivery of VAWDASV training to the hair and beauty sector
- Counselling, clinical supervision and reflective practice sessions for practitioners
- Target hardening equipment
- Arts and craft resources for children and young people
- Information and materials to raise awareness of where and how to access help and support
- Dispersed accommodation for those where refuge is not appropriate

Within the region specialist services are predominately funded via Housing Support Grants and Ministry of Justice funding through the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

The Gwent Commissioning Board (Board) provides governance for the region in respect to VAWDASV and brings together statutory and commissioning bodies. Board membership includes representatives from each of the five local authorities Social Services and Education, departments Gwent Police and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, Wales Ambulance Service Trust, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service, Registered Social Landlords, Housing Support Grant Regional Teams, South Wales Fire and Rescue Service, and Gwent Safeguarding Boards. A senior Welsh Government Official attends each Board meeting enabling two way sharing of information, practice sharing and risk management.

Through a structure of working groups the Board, ensures that the priorities identified in the regional Strategy translate 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.

Working groups, reporting into the Board, are listed below:

- Gwent VAWDASV Strategic Delivery Group
- Gwent Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) Planning Group
- Gwent VAWDASV Communication and Engagement Group
- Gwent VAWDASV Whole Education Approach Group
- Gwent Honour Based Abuse Group
- Gwent MARAC Steering Group
- Gwent VAWDASV Perpetrator Response Group
- Gwent VAWDASV Training Sub Group
- Gwent VAWDASV Specialist Sector meeting

The level of membership and collaboration across the groups enables representation from all key partners, maintaining a strong focus on those affected by VAWDASV across Gwent.

To strengthen the work of the region and beyond, Gwent is represented on Welsh Government groups including: Sustainable funding group; National Training Framework Ask and Act Steering Group; Single Unified Safeguarding Review Steering Group and associated sub groups; All Wales Honour Based Abuse Leadership Group; and the Welsh Government (WG) Perpetrator Work Stream and associated task and finish groups. All learning from these groups is shared with Board and relevant sub groups, and provides Gwent with the opportunity to raise any concerns with the appropriate members of Welsh Government. During 2021—22 members of the Board were core members of the Welsh Government National Strategy Working Group during the drafting and subsequent publication of the second National Strategy in May 2022.

3.0 Strategy and Delivery plan

As detailed above the initial focus for the Board was to formalise regional collaboration by developing and publicising The Gwent VAWDASV Strategy 2018 – 2023. Published in May 2018, the strategy identifies six Strategic priorities that will contribute to the pursuit of the **prevention** of violence and abuse, the **protection** of victims and the **support** of all those affected. <https://www.gwentsafeguarding.org.uk/Documents-en/VAWDASV/Gwent-VAWDASV-Strategy.pdf> .

Since publication, detailed objectives, and actions under each strategic priority (SP) are monitored and evaluated through an annual delivery plan. The Strategic Delivery Group is responsible for monitoring and evaluating progress against this delivery plan, with key risks escalated to the Board. In addition to the monitoring and evaluation undertaken by the Strategic Delivery Group (SDG) and Board, relevant authority scrutiny processes also evaluate performance through this annual progress report.

Key progress against each strategic priority is detailed in the appendix and forms the substance of this annual report.

4.0 Key 2021-22 Considerations

As with 2020-21, the COVID19 pandemic had a significant impact on citizens, partner organisations and the types of activities that could be facilitated. Although frontline work returned on a face-to-face basis, due to restrictions at different times during the year, much of the regional work continued via virtual means. As with the previous year, the regional Advisor and Team facilitated a flexible approach, open and regular communication, and an adaptive regional annual action plan to continue to prevent, protect and support those in Gwent affected by VAWDASV. It is important to note the regional team were affected by reduced resources during this year, with the Training and Education coordinator away from September on maternity leave and difficulties with recruitment and retention of cover arrangements.

Partners highlighted a recruitment crisis and staff absence as the greatest challenges of 2021-22 and cross agency and regional strategic support has needed to be more flexible to support survivors, victims, perpetrators and children and

young people during the year. Recruitment issues have also had a significant adverse impact on training provision and attendance showing through the graphs in the appendix of this report.

The multi-agency strategic membership of the Board, and membership of all subgroups has enabled sharing of best practice, risks, and opportunities. Communication has been supported via a weekly roundup of information shared with all contacts.

April 2021 saw the implementation of the Domestic Abuse Act, which provides a legislative framework for Domestic Abuse for non-devolved and devolved organisations, with significant improvements and changes in relation to Criminal Justice processes and charges. It is important to ensure all partners were aware of the implications for this piece of legislation alongside the Welsh Government Act. Work also began on the second Welsh Government VAWDASV National Strategy.

In addition to local actions and activities, Welsh Government campaigns were supported throughout the year to raise awareness of VAWDASV and where and how to access support.

5.0 Survivor Engagement

Survivor engagement is key to the work and focus of the region and the regional strategy. The results of the engagement work undertaken in 2020-21 with seldom heard communities led to the implementation of a Community of Practice to increase awareness of the needs of different groups and communities and to share best practice across Gwent partner agencies, as well as supporting service delivery and commissioning of services across Gwent. To support this area of work the new Gwent VAWDASV Communication and Engagement Strategy was agreed by subgroup members.

6.0 Governance Commissioning and Partnerships

Gwent partnerships and collaboration has continued to develop since the introduction of the VAWDASV (Wales) Act 2015 and the implementation of the Partnership Board in 2016. As mentioned in last year's report, an independent review of the regional resource and governance for VAWDASV in Gwent identified areas of improvement and recommended further work to strengthen Governance and commissioning in line with the Guidance resulting in the introduction of the Commissioning Board. Governance for the agenda is also being considered in line with the implementation of the Gwent Public Services Board in October 2021 and their ongoing review into Community Safety as a whole.

Raising the profile of VAWDASV as 'everybody's business' has been supported both by the above, and increased collaborative working with other relevant regional Boards including the Safeguarding Boards, Regional Partnership Board, Substance Misuse Area Planning Board, the Suicide and Self-Harm Prevention Board, and the Regional Housing Support Collaborative Board.

Gwent Group 6 seminars for strategic leaders across the region facilitated during 2021-22 strengthened knowledge and 'buy-in' from statutory agencies and gave the opportunity for senior leaders to hear directly from survivors, victims and specialist service providers.

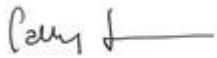
Following the Domestic Homicide-Adult Practice Review pilots Gwent has continued to support the Welsh Government work around the Single Unified Safeguarding Review being led by Liane James with significant progress made during this year. It is hoped elements of this work will help inform and influence the Home Office work during 2022-23 with reviewing and updating the DHR Guidance.

Looking forward

The Gwent Regional VAWDASV Strategy is due to be refreshed during the following year in line with the second Welsh Government VAWDASV National Strategy and associated Blueprint, along with legislative guidance to support the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. This gives the region the opportunity to review progress against and evaluate the impact of

the Regional Strategy published in May 2018 and provides focused opportunity to engage with citizens, practitioners, statutory and specialist organisations, along with other key stakeholders to ensure the second regional strategy continues to prevent, protect, and support anybody affected by VAWDASV across the region.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sally J', followed by a horizontal line.

Sally Jenkins
Chair, Gwent VAWDASV Commissioning Board

APPENDIX

Highlighted progress against each of the six strategic priorities during 2021-22 are listed below, although it is important to note some overlap.

Strategic Priority 1: Increase awareness and challenge attitudes of VAWDASV across Gwent:

Overseen by the Gwent VAWDASV Communication and Engagement Group

- Building on the success of the Gwent campaign supporting the White Ribbon campaign in 2020-21, this year's campaign's #30challenge was based on the average number of children and young people involved in domestic abuse calls reported to Gwent Police and then schools via Operation Encompass. To support this campaign along with a partner communication pack, a specially designed assembly pack was developed in conjunction with Hafan Cymru's Spectrum project and shared with all Gwent schools to use on the 25th of November and the following 16 days of action. Engagement across the region with the campaign was especially strong, including groups not traditionally involved in the VAWDASV agenda
- Collaborative webinar between the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner's Office, VAWDASV Board and Gwent Safeguarding Board facilitated to over 100 people to raise awareness of abuse against older people on World Elder Abuse Awareness Day and to help practitioners understand the link to VAWDASV and Safeguarding
- Utilised additional community-based communication funding from Welsh Government to develop and facilitate VAWDASV training to the hairdressing and beauty sector along with supportive merchandise including hand sanitiser bottles and appointment cards with the Live Fear Free details, together with information on local services.
- Development of the Community of Practice, increasing practitioner understanding of key issues affecting citizens from seldom heard communities and how best to support. Topics for this year included:
 - Provision to support women exploited by the sex industry
 - Domestic abuse and older people and the specific and additional barriers and challenges experienced by older people in Gwent
 - No Grey Area, Welsh Women's Aid sexual harassment research paper
 - Modern Day Slavery
 - Male suicide prevention
- Community Engagement activities in collaboration with Gwent Police, Gwent OPCC, and specialist VAWDASV services to raise awareness and to identify areas of best practice and improvement. These included
 - Community event to raise awareness amongst older women through the Coffee and Laughs social group for women from diverse communities.
 - Seldom heard communities' workshop during Sexual abuse and sexual violence awareness week hosted by BAWSO together with New Pathways and Gwent Police.
- Support and facilitated National and regional awareness raising campaigns and events including:
 - International Day of Zero Tolerance to Female Genital Mutilation
 - 'Break the Bias' on International Women's Day
 - LGBT Domestic Abuse Awareness Day
- Published an article in the free Newport magazine 'The Voice' to promote the hair and beauty training sessions and to raise awareness of VAWDASV and how to access support
- Gwent Safeguarding website, including the VAWDASV pages moved to a different platform to improve visitor experience and ensure practitioners and citizens can access relevant information more easily.

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

Overseen by the Gwent VAWDASV Whole Education Approach Group

- Developed a Gwent specific schools' resource to support education staff to respond to harmful sexual behaviours which has been uploaded to the Hwb and used to facilitate sessions to staff across Gwent schools
- Group
- Higher Education focused Ask and Act Group 2 training developed and facilitated to staff at the University of South Wales to increase awareness and better support staff and students.
- Spectrum Project has also been promoted as schools have gone back with some more flexibility in roll out of sessions in school.
- Operation Encompass continues to support those pupils affected by DA calls to the police, and start figures prompted this year's Gwent White Ribbon #30challenge2. WWA have been commissioned to review OE and support for CYP and schools.
- Links made with the University of South Wales to support a funding bid for research into peer-on-peer sexual abuse
- Funding provided via Welsh Government to recruit a Gwent CYP wellbeing worker, made significant impact during a time when many CYP across Gwent are experiencing difficulties during the pandemic.

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

Overseen by the Gwent VAWDASV Perpetrator Response Group

- Following successful bids for WG and Ministry of justice funding for perpetrator services, Phoenix DAS and Barnardos Opening Closed Doors projects were able to continue perpetrator programmes and increase perpetrator intervention groups cross the region
- Worked collaboratively with key partners and citizens via social media and radio to increase awareness of the services available in Gwent for those looking to change behaviour
- Phoenix DAS and Barnardos continued working with academics on the evaluation of interventions for although the completion and publication of results has been extended due to the difficult of providing group-based support during the pandemic
- Linked to the newly recruited Perpetrator Intervention lead in Welsh Government to further improve behaviour change programmes and support across Gwent and wider Wales

Strategic Priority 4: Make early intervention and prevention a priority

Shared oversight by the DHR Planning Group and the MARAC Steering Group

- As with survivor engagement, early intervention and prevention is core to each strategic priority throughout the delivery plan and ensures a focus overall VAWDASV agenda and all protected characteristics. Strategic level membership on the Commissioning Board provides a greater understanding of prevention, early intervention and need across the region enabling evidence-based commissioning decisions.
- Gwent as well represented on the WG steering and task and finish groups helping with the development of the Single Unified Safeguarding Review led by Lianne James at Welsh Government, sharing learning from pilots undertaken in Gwent and RCT and supporting taking this process forward
- Ongoing work on the MARAC process and resources to minimise unprecedented impact of the pandemic, including the introduction of an improved communication method utilising Microsoft Teams, MARAC Chair training sessions facilitated across multi-agency partners, and more sustainable funding agreements
- Specialist Sector meetings held monthly to share information and use to feed into all partners via VAWDASV and safeguarding forums including local networking events

- First meeting of the Gwent HBA Group chaired by Gwent Police held during this quarter to support Gwent partners in this aspect of VAWDASV
- Worked with HALT to facilitate a DHR learning event with practitioners from across Gwent to share best practice and learning
- Gwent HBA subgroup linking closely to the priorities of the All-Wales HBA Leadership Group and membership strengthened with a dedicated slot on SDG and Board
- IRISi project implemented in Neighbourhood Care Networks across the region. This project has enabled early identification and referral for support via GP practices.

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

Overseen by the Gwent VAWDASV Training Sub Group

- Ask and Act and Specialist Syllabus training has stayed online this year due to ongoing restrictions. Additional funding accessed via Welsh Government to provide training to Aneurin Bevan University Staff although attendance on all sessions has been adversely affected by the pandemic this year with several sessions needing to be cancelled due to low numbers where staff have been away from work or relocated to cover service provision.
- Strong and effective collaboration both regionally and nationally through Ask and Act Steering Group and National strategy meetings and participation in the national evaluation of the National Training Framework
- Developed and submitted a Gwent Training the Trainer proposal to help alleviate some of the issues with trainer resource and availability across the region
- Group 6 sessions developed and facilitated with great engagement from across the region supporting increased 'buy-in' from senior leaders across the region leading to funding agreements from partners and strategic conversations to increase the profile of VAWDASV work across Gwent.

The regional NTF training information for 2021-2022 is as follows.

Group 1 – Gwent Numbers

Group 1 uptake has taken a dip since last year's increase over lockdowns. As the pandemic has eased and as life has returned to somewhat normal, people's workloads have increased and time for training has become more limited for many staff.

Relevant Authority	Aneurin Bevin University Health Board	Blaenau Gwent CBC	Caerphilly CBC	Monmouthshire CC	Newport CC	Torfaen CBC
Workforce	13060	3096	7758	3070	6500	3900
Year Total 2020-2021	1520	328	486	284	1426	422
group 1 completed training from roll out to date	13652	2729	4636	3018	4110	4480
As percentage of workforce - those trained from rollout to date	104.53%	88.15%	59.76%	98.31%	71.79%	114.87%

Please note that these numbers will differ to the numbers included within the local reports. The local reports are based on live numbers of staff whereas the below requested reports consider a rolling number since 2015, as per the WG request.

Group 2 and Group 3 – Gwent Numbers

As described, the impact of Covid 19 has continued to impact on training delivery and attendance. As Wales has moved closer towards normality from Covid 19, we have seen attendance drop as work returns to normal and competing demands on time have increased. Many departments and areas have returned to more normal working structures and with it a backlog of work to prioritise over training.

All delivery across this last year has been online and regionally delivered. The plans for the year ahead remain with the focus on online regional delivery.

Attendee numbers for Group 2 training below:

	ABUHB	Blaenau Gwent	Caerphilly	Monmouthshire	Newport	Torfaen	USW - Newport
Area Totals Attendance Group 2 *	26	33	131	52	23	4	4
Education Regional Package			24	5	3	2	19
ABUHB Health package *	530						
Overall Totals	556	33	155	57	26	6	23

*This includes regional attendance and in house local delivery

Attendee numbers for Group 3 training below:

Group 3 2021-2022	ABUHB	Blaenau Gwent	Caerphilly	Monmouthshire	Newport	Torfaen	USW - Newport
Area Totals Group 3	6	6	4	4	2	0	7
Year total	29						

Group 6

	ABUHB	Blaenau Gwent	Caerphilly	Monmouthshire	Newport	Torfaen	Gwent Police	OPCC	SWFR	National Agencies	Specialists
Seminar 1	2	2	8	2	7	3	7	1	0	1	7
Seminar 2	3	3	4	4	5	2	6	1	0	3	6
Seminar 3	2	3	5	1	4	2	5	1	1	4	7
Overall Totals - individuals attended	4	5	11	5	10	4	9	2	1	5	14
Group 6 Seminar Total - Individuals Attended	70										

Specialist Syllabus 2021-2022

As part of the ongoing commitment to training staff across Gwent on various aspects of VAWDASV multi-agency specialist syllabus training continued. This was delivered online via MS Teams. Details of the sessions and attendees follows below.

Course	Provider	Delivery Days	Attendees
Understanding Domestic Abuse and Coercive Control	Llamau	4	47
Understanding Domestic Abuse, Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference	Llamau	4	44
Understanding Domestic Abuse and the Effect on Children and Young People	Hafan Cymru	4	51
Understanding Sexual Violence	New Pathways	4	48
Understanding Perpetrators	Phoenix DAS	3	42
HBA, FM and FMG Training	BAWSO	2	21
Understanding and Working With Male Victims	Hafan Cymru	4	40
Vicarious Trauma and Wellbeing	New Pathways	4	38
Perpetrators in the Workplace	Phoenix DAS	3	6
Sexuality and Gender Diversity Awareness Training	In=Equality	1	7
Neurodiversity and Trauma Training	New Pathways	4	88
Total for 2021-2022			432

Strategic Priority 6: To provide victims with equal access to appropriately resourced high-quality need led strength-based gender responsive services.

Overseen by the Strategic Delivery Group and Gwent VAWDASV Commissioners Group

- The newly formed Commissioning Board has representation at a level enabling a regional, collaborative, and multi-agency response to preventing VAWDASV across Gwent whilst supporting those affected.
- Gwent Suicide and Self-Harm prevention group set up this year, with the regional advisor and chair of the SDG part of the membership to support cross-working in relation to victims, survivors, and perpetrators of VAWDASV and the work of this group.
- Developed a briefing and facilitated sessions to devolved and non-devolved agencies to update partners on the Domestic Abuse Act, 2021, with a focus on how this and the VAWDASV Act will interact.
- Supported partnership and collaborative additional capital and revenue funding bids to increase high quality services across the region based on unprecedented demand. This included Safer Streets submissions to reduce violence against women and girls, dispersed accommodation funding for provision in all areas across the region, and to increase provision for high-risk victims.
- Worked with Gwent Police, South Wales OPCC and Welsh Women's Aid to form an All-Wales Operational Sexual Exploited Adults group to feed into WG and raise the profile of preventing adult sexual exploitation
- Preparation work began on the regional needs assessment to inform the update of the regional strategy in line with the second Welsh Government VAWDASV national strategy.

GLOSSARY

A&A – Ask and Act

APR – Adult Practice Review

DHR – Domestic Homicide Review

GTC – Gwent Training Consortium

HSG – Housing Support Grant

IDVA – Independent Domestic Violence Advocate

ISVA – Independent Sexual Violence Adviser

LBGTQ+ - Lesbian, Bi-sexual, Gay, Transsexual, Queer

Live Fear Free Helpline – National Advice Help line

MARAC – Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference

NTF – National Training Framework

OPCC – Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

PSB – Public Services Board

RA – Relevant Authorities

RSL – Registered Social Landlord

SDG – Strategic Delivery Group

TSG – Training Sub Group

VAWDASV – Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence

WG – Welsh Government