

North Wales

**Violence Against Women, Domestic
Abuse and Sexual Violence**

Strategy 2018-2023

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1. FOREWORD

As public services leaders there are times when you have to take some personal and moral responsibility for things that you see around you in daily life. These can be complex issues and it can take courage to speak out and to act, rather than leave it to someone else.

Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence are three such things. Yes, some of us will have a role to play in prevention and response in our professional roles, and yes, some of us will have a role to play as managers and supervisors in supporting colleagues who might be victims, and even in acting where an employee might themselves be a perpetrator. Over and above these roles we all have a personal and moral responsibility to act. The more who stand up and speak and act, the greater the effect in helping society to help itself in making positive change happen. We should never underestimate the power of collective action motivated by strong moral purpose.



This strategy combines purpose, resources and action for partner organisations and professionals to grasp the opportunity of new legislation and new policy to both encourage and enforce change – changes in attitudes, changes in behaviours, changes in preventative action by individuals and by society, and change through intolerance of the unacceptable and enforcement.

North Wales has a proud record of working as a region to common purpose and this strategy embodies a renewed set of commitments to work differently to prevent violence and domestic abuse. This is a top priority for us all.

Please do read the strategy and think though what roles you, your organisation and your professional community can play. The training materials we will have all digested should have provoked a reaction. Please take the energy from that reaction and challenge it into some professional and personal purpose.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Colin Everett'. The signature is stylized and written in a cursive-like font.

Colin Everett
Chief Executive
Flintshire County Council

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Our North Wales vision:

That the people of North Wales can live safe, equal, violence-free lives, in communities without violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

North Wales is working together to tackle all aspects of Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence, based around 6 key objectives, underpinned by the national objectives enshrined in the 2015 Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act:

Prevention

Objective 1: Increase awareness and challenge attitudes of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence across the North Wales population.

Objective 2: Increased awareness in children and young people of the importance of safe, equal and healthy relationships and that abusive behaviour is always wrong.

Protection

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

Objective 4: Make early intervention and prevention a priority.

Provision of support

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

Objective 6: Provide victims with equal access to appropriately resourced, high quality, needs led, strength based, gender responsive services across North Wales.

The strategy will show that North Wales is committed to a collaborative, joined up approach to tackling these issues, through co-production of services and partnership working at all levels. Through clear and committed leadership by the North Wales VAWDASV Strategic Board, we will continue to prioritise best practice and ensure that resources are utilised according to the needs of our local communities.

This strategy will enable and support innovative practices and ideas, as well as supporting long-existing services, in order to provide a complete package of support for victims, survivors and their families. It will focus on holding perpetrators to account for their actions, as well as supporting families to build on their relationships and promote an ethos of safe, healthy relationships for all.

2. INTRODUCTION

Wales has had a national Violence Against Women Strategy since 2010 (Right to be Safe Strategy), which was refreshed and updated in November 2016, in line with the new legislative framework in Wales¹. The 2016-2021 National Strategy sets out a renewed commitment to tackling violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (VAWDASV) in Wales², with a focus on prevention, protection and provision of support.

The Welsh Government Strategy recognises the global and UK evidence that violence against women is a violation of human rights and is a cause and consequence of gender inequality. This means that when domestic abuse, sexual violence or other forms of violence or abuse are experienced by women and girls, this operates as a means of social control that maintains unequal power relations, is linked to systematic discrimination against women and girls and reinforces women's subordinate status. Failing to make the connections between the different forms of violence that women and girls experience, and how this is explicitly linked to gender inequality, can hinder the effectiveness of interventions and prevention work. Different groups of women may also experience multiple inequalities which can intersect in ways that lead to further disadvantage.

This understanding and approach is reinforced in the National Strategy and by the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention),³ to which the UK is a signatory and which is due to be ratified by the UK Government.

The Istanbul Convention defines violence against women as:

"Violence against women" is understood as a violation of human rights and a form of discrimination against women and shall mean all acts of gender-based violence that result in, or are 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 private life" (Istanbul Convention).

As the Wales Strategy sets out, this can include:

- (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*

¹ Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Act (Wales) 2015.

www.gov.wales/legislation/programme/assemblybills/domestic-abuse/?lang=en

² <http://gov.wales/docs/dsjlg/publications/commsafety/161104-national-strategy-en.pdf>

³ <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=090000168046031c>

VAWDASV includes: domestic abuse, rape and sexual violence, stalking, female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, crimes committed in the name of 'honour', modern day slavery/trafficking, sexual exploitation, including commercially through the sex industry, and sexual harassment. *See Appendix for further definitions.*

Whilst it is important that this Strategy acknowledges and communicates the disproportionate experience of women and girls, this does not negate violence and abuse directed towards men and boys or perpetrated by women.

This Strategy recognises that anyone (women, men, children and young people) can experience and be affected by these forms of abuse, and it can happen in any relationship regardless of sex, age, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, disability, religion or belief, income, geography or lifestyle.

However the strategy priorities and its delivery (as with the National Strategy) is informed by the global and national evidence that women and girls are disproportionately affected by domestic abuse, rape and sexual violence, sexual exploitation (including through the sex industry), modern day slavery, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, child sexual abuse, stalking and sexual harassment. These are not isolated incidents but rather form a pattern of behaviour that violates the rights of women and girls, limits their participation in society, damages their health and well-being, and are rooted in inequality between women and men which intersects with discrimination based on ethnicity, age, class, sexuality and disability to impact on experiences of abuse and routes to support.

National legislative and policy framework

The Strategy in Wales should be considered alongside the Home Office Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy for England and Wales⁴ that sets out the importance of recognising the complexity of these crimes, the breadth of need and the importance of ensuring joined-up collaborative working to stop the ongoing harm. Also of relevance in the UK is:

- ***The Modern Slavery Act 2015*** aims to provide tools to fight modern slavery, ensure perpetrators can receive suitably severe punishments for these appalling crimes and enhance support and protection for victims
- ***Crime and Security Act 2010*** – which introduces Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPOs) and the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS)
- ***The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014*** makes it a criminal offence to force someone to marry
- ***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*** – introduces a new offence of controlling or coercive behaviour in an intimate or family relationship, an FGM mandatory reporting duty, and strengthened measures to manage people who commit sexual offences or those who pose a risk of sexual harm.
- ***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.

⁴ Ending Violence Against Women and Girl Strategy 2016-2020 HM Government www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/505961/VAWG_Strategy_2016-2020.pdf and VAWG National Statement of Expectations for England and Wales (December 2016) - https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/574665/VAWG_National_Statement_of_Expectations_-_FINAL.PDF

Guidance that should inform the delivery of the 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](#) issued under section 5C(1) of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 and extends to England and Wales and updated procedural information,⁵ and the [Forced Marriage Statutory Guidance](#) for England and Wales
- 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 2016.⁶
- 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 information about an individual’s previous violent and abusive offending 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.

In Wales, the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015, aims to “improve the public sector response in Wales to violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence. It provides a strategic focus and ensures consistent consideration of preventive, protective and supportive mechanisms in the delivery of services”⁷. The Act pledges to:

- Improve arrangements to promote awareness of, and prevent, protect and support victims of gender-based violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence
- Introduce a needs-based approach to developing strategies which will ensure strong strategic direction and strengthened accountability
- Ensure strategic level ownership, through the appointment of a Ministerial Adviser who will have a role in advising Welsh Ministers and improving joint working amongst agencies across this sector
- Improve consistency, quality and join-up of service provision in Wales.

There are also several pieces of Welsh policy and legislation which impact on VAWDASV prevention and objectives and actions identified in this Strategy take these into account.

⁵https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/573782/FGM_Mandatory_Reporting_-_procedural_information_nov16_FINAL.pdf

⁶<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-homicide-review-lessonslearned>

⁷ Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Act (Wales) 2015. www.gov.wales/legislation/programme/assemblybills/domestic-abuse/?lang=en

For example, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 aims to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales and it introduces seven well-being goals, which are relevant to prevention of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence and support of survivors:

- A globally responsible Wales
- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales
- A healthier Wales
- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of Cohesive Communities
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language

The [Wales Adverse Childhood Experiences \(ACE\) study](#)⁸ suggested that a significant number of adults in Wales have experienced one or more forms of ACE and determines that the provision of effective support and early intervention for those impacted by ACE will have a longer term impact on the reduced demand and costs to health and social services.

The ***Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014*** also 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. This requires local population needs assessments to inform the development of local strategies.

The ***Housing (Wales) Act 2014*** - enshrines in legislation the role of the local authority in preventing and alleviating homelessness. This Act specifies that whether a person or a member of that person's household is at risk of abuse, including domestic abuse, is a factor in determining whether it is reasonable to continue to occupy accommodation.

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.

National safeguarding protocols and procedures for addressing FGM, forced marriage, honour-based violence, child sexual exploitation and other associated forms of VAWDASV will also be relevant to regional delivery of this Strategy.

Regional strategic and delivery framework

This Strategy has been developed by the North Wales VAWDASV Strategic Group and partner agencies, and outlines how organisations in North Wales will address their responsibilities as identified by the VAWDASV Act, and identify how local aims will contribute to the overall objectives of the VAWDASV National Strategy.

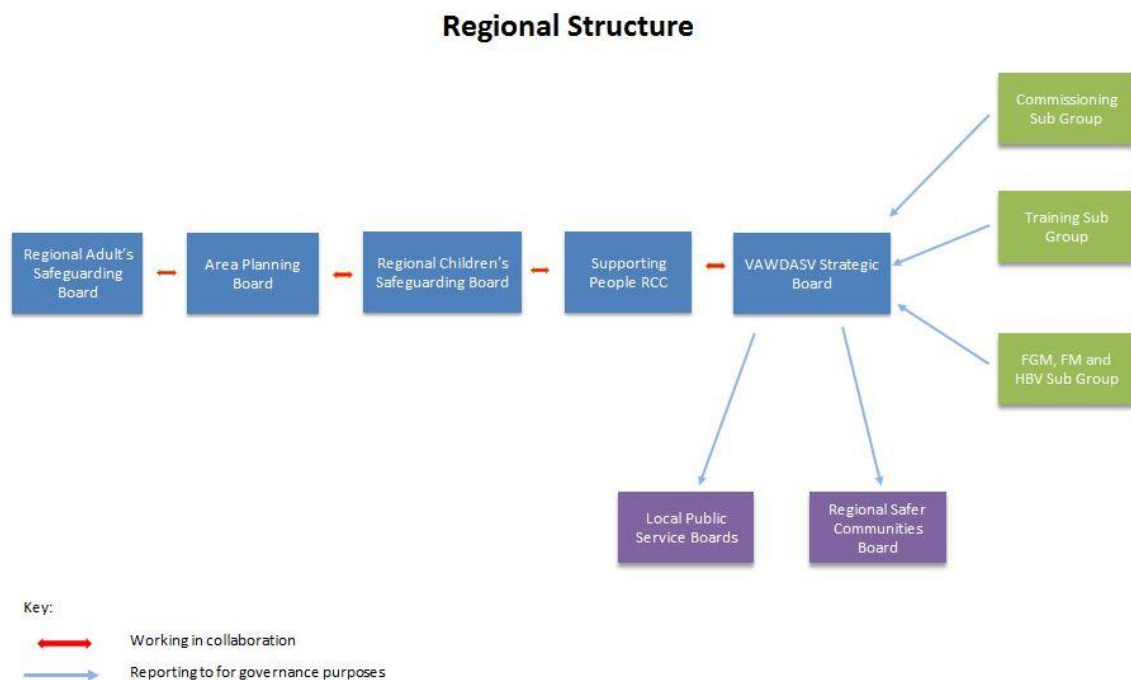
The regional model is made up of six local authority areas:

- Ynys Mon, Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Gwynedd and Wrexham.

⁸ Public Health Wales (2015) Wales Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) study, PHW

The region also benefits from being co-terminous with Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) and North Wales Police.

The regional approach to addressing VAWDASV is new in North Wales. A regional board has been set up with supporting subgroups to key aspects of the strategy.



Successfully tackling violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence requires a commitment to maintaining and developing close working relationships with other public sector partners, government and the voluntary sector. Partners include Local Government in the exercise of their various functions such as Social Services, Education and Housing, Local Health Boards, the Police, Police and Crime Commissioners, National Probation Services and National Offender Management Service, non- devolved organisations and the national network of independent violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence specialist services.

3. METHODOLOGY

A range of means were put in place to allow commissioners, partners and providers and survivors to contribute to the development of this Regional VAWDASV Strategy. We have held three workshops allowing open discussion and debate around current VAWDASV provision and funding in North Wales, gaps in provision and opportunities for improvement over the next five years. The information obtained has been used to develop the strategy, looking at the needs of all victims and survivors across North Wales.

To inform the development of this strategy, reference has also been made to the Wales specific resource produced by Lloyds Bank Foundation⁹ (Tackling Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence: A Collaborative Commissioning Toolkit for Services in Wales). This was developed, with support by the Welsh Government, in recognition of the specific circumstances and changes to violence against women, domestic violence and sexual violence responses that are happening in Wales. It aims to help agencies in Wales to work together to provide an effective commissioning approach to ensure the future well-being of all those affected by violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence. The toolkit is intended for

- Current and future strategic leads and commissioners
- Providers of services
- Welsh Government, to help support local action that will deliver impactful solutions
- Others with a stake in the safety and well-being of local people

In accordance with the guidance within the toolkit this strategy has been designed to identify objectives and actions that will prevent, protect and support those affected by VAWDASV. The Strategy recognises the vital importance of local and regional specialist services that have developed over time as a response to particular needs and determined by funder priorities. They contain decades of knowledge and expertise relevant to the communities they serve. They may, in many cases, be engaging with survivors who may be most reluctant to make contact with statutory services but are often at the greatest risk or have high levels of support needs.

The Strategy aims to ensure that the focus is not only on service provision but on a range of measures to eliminate discrimination, promote substantive equality, and to empower women and girls, within a comprehensive framework to protect and provide assistance to all victims.

⁹ https://www.lloydsbankfoundation.org.uk/VAWDASV%20Toolkit_Wales_web.pdf

4. SURVIVORS AS EXPERTS

This strategy recognises the vital importance of collaborating with survivors of VAWDASV. Specialist services in the region have varied means of involving and engaging with survivors of sexual violence and abuse, domestic abuse, forced marriage, FGM, modern day slavery, stalking and harassment, and survivors' views will continue to be sought once the Strategy delivery is underway.

To inform completion of the regional strategy, the Strategic Board initially aims to ensure the survivors' priorities reflected in the Wales national strategy are addressed regionally:

- I. Dedicated specialist services for children and young people impacted by or experiencing domestic abuse, sexual violence, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, sexual exploitation or harassment.
- II. Specialist domestic abuse and sexual violence services for survivors that are accessible and resourced to meet the needs of specific survivor groups, such as adult survivors of child sexual assault.
- III. Improvements in family court and CAFCASS Cymru practice and safe child contact for children in cases of domestic abuse and sexual violence.
- IV. Accessible 'refuge service' support in every area, accompanied by safe, affordable, longer-term housing options to provide flexibility and choice.
- V. Women's groups and peer support that reduce isolation and maximise independent spaces to increase confidence, esteem, and empowerment.
- VI. Equal access to safety, support, protection and justice, and finances to live independently, irrespective of survivors' immigration status.
- VII. Counselling and therapeutic services for survivors that is available when needed and is age-appropriate, and helps build resilience and recovery.
- VIII. Greater focus on stopping perpetrators' behaviour and, where coercive control is a feature, on getting perpetrators to leave and end abusive relationships.
- IX. Improved training for all services on all aspects of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence, informed by survivors' experiences.
- X. Preventing violence against women from happening in the first place, through compulsory prevention education in all schools and increasing awareness of the issues and help available in local communities.

To ensure that survivor's voices and experiences continue to inform the national legislation policies and guidance it is Welsh Government's intention to develop a sustainable national survivor engagement framework to ensure that the needs and experiences of the most marginalised survivors, those who face multiple disadvantage in accessing help and support are understood.

5. VISION AND STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Our vision for North Wales:

That the people of North Wales can live safe, equal, violence-free lives, in communities without violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

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 and accompanying strategy:

- **Prevention:** Arrangements for the **prevention** of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence;
- **Protection:** Arrangements for the **protection** of victims of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence;
- **Support:** Arrangements for the **support** of people affected by violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

Therefore it is upon these themes that the North Wales Strategy is based and its aims and objectives derived. As the Strategy progresses it will be reviewed against developments in the formation of the national delivery framework.

In line with The Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, we intend to deliver on the actions within this strategy using the “sustainable development principle” and follow the nationally recognised ways of working to ensure we work collaboratively with people and communities and tackle some of the long term challenges we face.

Accordingly we will achieve this by:

- **Prevention:** Actions that prevent problems occurring or getting worse
- **Integration:** Consider how the violence against women domestic abuse and sexual violence objectives impact upon each of the well-being goals, and on the objectives and priorities of other key statutory services strategies.
- **Collaboration:** Work collaboratively with partners and stakeholders to ensure that the actions, objectives and targets of this strategy are met with and through the membership of the Strategic Board
- **Involvement:** We will ensure that we engage and involve the right people at the right time.
- **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 so that service beneficiaries receive a continuum of preventive, safe and supportive services, according to their needs that is consistent throughout the region.

North Wales Strategic Objectives:

Prevention

Objective 1: Increase awareness and challenge attitudes of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence across the North Wales population

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

Protection

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

Objective 4: Make early intervention and prevention a priority

Provision of support

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

Objective 6: Provide victims with equal access to appropriately resourced, high quality, needs led, strength based, gender responsive services across North Wales

The North Wales VAWDASV Strategic Partnership Board is committed to preventing all forms of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence, improving services for survivors, and ensuring that long term support is available for all those affected, regardless of where they live.

The Board believes in working together to address all areas of the VAWDASV agenda. The VAWDASV strategy has been developed using the cross cutting themes that run through a range of relevant regional and national strategic plans, including that of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, the regional Safeguarding Boards, Supporting People, North Wales Police and the Home Office, Local Homelessness Strategies as well as the VAWDASV National Strategy.

Some of the main areas of consistency across the various strategies are:

- 1) A reduction in the prevalence of all forms of violence against women and girls. (*Home Office – Violence against Women and Girls Strategy 2016-20*)
- 2) A focus on earlier intervention and prevention so that fewer women reach crisis point and every victim gets the support she needs (*Home Office – Violence against Women and Girls Strategy 2016-20*)
- 3) Making disclosure as straightforward and safe as possible. (*North Wales OPCC Police and Crime Plan 2017-21*)
- 4) The need for effective partnership working to reduce harm. (*North Wales OPCC Police and Crime Plan 2017-21*)
- 5) The need for a joined up approach in strategic planning and direction for VAWDASV work. (*North Wales Supporting People Regional Strategic Plan 2017*)

Our objectives in the North Wales VAWDASV Strategy 2017-22 will reflect the six objectives under the national strategy, but will have a regional and localised focus to specifically recognise the needs of the people of North Wales and incorporate the cross-cutting strategic themes of our regional partners.

Commissioning

This Strategy is intended to inform the development and delivery of a regional commissioning strategy, so it is important to consider key commissioning principles and drivers in terms of delivering the strategic objectives contained within this strategy.

To deliver a mixed market of support services for violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence survivors, it is essential to consider at an early stage the approach to be taken and the principles that will inform commissioning. Our commissioning principles will be informed by the 10 procurement principles of [The Welsh Public Procurement Policy](#)¹⁰, and the forthcoming statutory commissioning guidance being developed by Welsh Government.

Commissioning principles will also be informed by:

- 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 6 strategic objectives for violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence services
- Providing stability to the specialist services 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
- Working collaboratively with our partners and stakeholders within the violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence sector and other associated sectors in the development and commissioning of a mixed market, building on local and regional community-based expertise already held by specialist services.

¹⁰ Wales Procurement Policy Welsh Government 2015:

6. NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The VAWDASV needs assessment is available (published separately) and has informed the production of this Strategy. A summary is provided here for ease of reference.

The methodology used has been informed by the Tackling Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence: A Collaborative Commissioning Toolkit for Services in Wales, issued by Lloyds Bank Foundation in August 2016, and supported by Welsh Government. The Toolkit includes advice and checklists for development of a needs assessment for VAWDASV.

The North Wales Needs Assessment provides a picture of current service delivery and known demand using 2016/17 data and existing analysis. Where gaps have been identified, national statistics and research have been used to inform the strategy or extrapolate a possible requirement.

Links to population needs assessment required under the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 have been made to ensure that they are complementary and informative.

Additionally, known external conditions have been identified which may impact the outcome of identified need in North Wales.

The initial data gathering relates to financial year 2016-17 unless stated otherwise.

VAWDASV specialist services commissioned to deliver support across the region provided data via Welsh Women's Aid. Additional questions regarding capacity were then asked of each of the specialist services along with requests for any missing data. Further services (including other third sector and statutory services) were then emailed a request for basic demand and capacity data which can be used as a base to evidence the need in North Wales. To keep in line with the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015, services were asked to provide data not only on sexual violence and domestic abuse, but all forms of abuse covered in the Act, in order to determine whether there are any gaps in provision for certain issues. To gather stakeholder feedback on the emerging data, workshops were conducted with commissioners, specialist providers and partners. The findings from these have also contributed to this assessment and strategy.

National data and research papers have been analysed to support and inform the regional data. This data set has been used as a basis for further information gathering in engagement activities with stakeholder and service providers.

Key findings from North Wales VAWDASV Needs Assessment 2017

- 1) **'Postcode lottery'** - Provision has historically developed according to the availability of funding, which has resulted in a 'postcode lottery' of services availability. Changes in legislation in Wales are increasing the number of survivor victims of VAWDASV identified who require support and protection.
- 2) **Funding** - Disclosures are increasing at a time where their funding is reducing. It is vital that North Wales is able to identify those areas where provision is lacking (and potentially where service models commissioned need to change) to produce improved

outcomes for survivors and direct its efforts to identifying where an increased focus may make the largest improvements.

- 3) Increased focus on earlier intervention and prevention so that fewer cases escalate to crisis point, as well as an increased focus on addressing abusive behaviour.
- 4) **Crime** - Improved multi agency approaches and information sharing have the potential to assist Police in increased reporting and successful prosecutions in VAWDASV related crimes. Improvements in appropriate information sharing (including those not currently deemed to be high risk) will also improve access to specialist services and reduce the volume of cases including repeat reports that North Wales Police are currently dealing with.
- 5) **Housing** - Where it is the survivors wish and where it is safe to do so, they should be supported to remain in their own home. This will assist with ensuring that spaces in refuge are not taken up by those who do not need or wish to be there, and reduce the intensity of support required associated with moving home and loss of community support networks. Target hardening is not currently available in all counties in North Wales therefore our strategy needs to address how this will be overcome.
- 6) **Health** - All levels of risk need to be routinely recorded in order to effectively reflect levels of need and provide a care pathway for those affected by VAWDASV. Health funding in relation to VAWDASV is currently mainly directed towards funding of sexual violence services, which have seen a marked increase in waiting lists for support in recent years. Consideration needs to be given as to where Health are able to invest in areas of prevention, early intervention, support and protection that will assist with reducing the number of presentations in health settings.
- 7) **Safeguarding** - Current recording does not adequately reflect levels of need of those experiencing VAWDASV. Work is needed to ensure that recording, safe sharing of information and care pathways are developed and strengthened to provide a seamless service for survivors.
- 8) **Training** – The majority of training has been offered by the 3rd Sector, out of goodwill and without dedicated funding. The introduction of the National Training Framework will dramatically increase pressure on these services.
- 9) **Specialist Third Sector Services** - The increase in demand for support and the reductions in available funding has resulted in some cases in these services being unable to provide the range of 'goodwill' services they previously provided, such as free training and awareness raising campaigns and events; unfunded recovery programmes; dedicated support for children in refuge and community settings (i.e. support for the full range of support needs children present with that cannot be provided through SPPG refuge funding and in cases where there has been no additional funding available to provide this) ; drop-in services; and support for those with no recourse to public funds.
- 10) **Working with Perpetrators** - Consideration needs to be given as to which programmes available in the UK provide the most improved outcomes for families and how these can be effectively provided across North Wales.
- 11) **Awareness Raising** - Consideration needs to be given to utilise existing opportunities and resources to build upon this for the future. This should include an examination of which methods of delivery will improve public confidence to know where to go to with

information, and where awareness raising will produce the greatest improvements in understanding both what is a healthy relationship and what is abusive.

- 12) **Funding** - Historically funding has been available for services to address VAWDASV developed on an ad-hoc basis. Greater collaboration and services being commissioned on a regional rather than local basis should enable greater planning and development of services.
- 13) **Survivor Engagement** - Consideration needs to be given as to how survivors can be actively involved in decision making on the provision of services in North Wales.

Key findings from engagement and consultation:

Areas of current good practice highlighted during the workshops:

- 1) There is a great deal of expertise and knowledge in North Wales and some specialist services in the region have attained the Welsh Women's Aid National Quality Service Standards (Welsh Government supported, for domestic abuse services), Rape Crisis Standards, and Respect Standard for perpetrator interventions and partner safety work.
- 2) There is already a strong ethos of partnership working but this can be improved
- 3) Specialist providers are working with schools, colleges and young people's centres, to improve responses to sexual violence.
- 4) Specialist providers often act as a valuable resource and information hub for other agencies.
- 5) Specialist providers often deliver unfunded workshops and intervention programmes for service users, to help enable long-term recovery; it is recognised this is not a sustainable model of delivery.
- 6) There are increased resources for male victims within refuge and outreach programmes across the region.
- 7) Work is underway to build strong referral pathways between specialist services, social services, BCUHB and NWP for survivors assessed as 'high risk' and specialist cases.
- 8) The region benefits from specialist services led by and for women, and by and for BME women. In doing so, these services provide safe spaces to deliver woman-centred support informed by values of empowerment, rights and self-determination. The importance of services by and for Black and minority ethnic women is equally vital, to offer gender and culturally responsive support, and a space to identify priorities and strengthen and promote the leadership, autonomy and self-determination of BME women.

Areas for improvement highlighted during the workshops:

- 1) Commissioners need to work more closely with specialist service providers and service users to understand the barriers to accessing services and co-produce the most effective means to minimise the barriers and enable equal access to support.
- 2) Collaborative working is essential as smaller service providers risk being unable to participate equally in procurement processes.
- 3) The current situation of piecemeal funding means a multiplicity of recording/monitoring/reporting responsibilities for VAWDASV specialist service providers.

- 4) There is no consistency of provision across the region. Accessing services has become a postcode lottery, due to short term and 'silo' funding.
- 5) In order for specialist VAWDASV services to be sustainable, we need to consider how finances for these services are provided over a longer agreed period in order that specialist services are able to plan for the future and so provide flexible, responsive services based on what survivors need. In particular we need to consider improving levels of specialist support for children that have been affected by abuse.
- 6) Current provision is often funder and service led, rather than survivor led – commissioners regionally need more emphasis on survivor voice.
- 7) Where violence and abuse impacts a range of family members (as victims or perpetrators), safe separate provision is needed so that all family members can be supported to maximise their safety, change abusive behaviour and support children impacted by abuse.

The feedback, ideas and information from the workshops, as well as the data sourced for the Needs Assessment has helped to shape the Objectives and Action Plan for the next five years.

7. SERVICES AND RESOURCES MAPPING

Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence services sit within the statutory and 3rd sectors in North Wales. The police, social services, housing, education, community safety partnerships and health all have statutory duties to provide certain areas of support, but this is greatly enhanced by the specialist services provided across the region, through the 3rd sector. They provide expertise and knowledge and are funded through a wide range of grants and charitable trusts.

Funding for VAWDASV work across North Wales is largely provided by the Supporting People grant, which funds all refuge provision, as well as some preventative services and other work with high risk victims of domestic abuse. Other Local Authority funding areas, such as Community Safety Partnerships, Social Services and Housing contribute a significant amount, as does the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for North Wales and the Area Planning Board. The Welsh Government's Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Grant (previously the Domestic Abuse Services Grant) has historically been distributed by the various local Community Safety Partnerships, this grant is due to become a regional resource from April 2018. By working together to jointly commission these resources as a region, North Wales will be in a much better position to meet the needs of all victims and survivors of VAWDASV. Services such as MARAC, IDVA/ISVA and Target Hardening have long been funded by contributions from a range of these grants, as well as core funding given to local authorities, health and the police.

There are a number of 3rd Sector specialist services working with victims and survivors of Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence across North Wales, with some working locally and others covering the entire region. The list below shows the main providers of specialist VAWDASV provision, although this is not an exhaustive list as some smaller charities may support vulnerable people with a range of issues, including VAWDASV.

- 1) Wrexham Welsh Women's Aid (WWA)
- 2) Domestic Abuse Safety Unit (DASU)
- 3) Clwyd Alyn Housing Association Women's Aid (CAHA)
- 4) Glyndwr Domestic Abuse Services
- 5) North Denbighshire Domestic Abuse Services (NDDAS)
- 6) North Wales Women's Centre (NWWC)
- 7) Colwyn Welsh Women's Aid (WWA)
- 8) Gorwel
- 9) Bangor Women's Aid
- 10) Rape and Sexual Assault Service Centre (RASASC)
- 11) Stepping Stones
- 12) SARC

13) BAWSO

14) Victim Support

15) Hafan Cymru

The specialist sector has developed in response to funding availability and need over many years and while services may offer similar support and work with similar service users, there are local differences in provision.

8. OUTCOMES

This section details how the North Wales VAWDASV Board, providers of services and local communities will work collaboratively to deliver the strategic objectives.

The actions to achieve the objectives, together with the evaluation and impact measures are detailed within the action plan (see below).

If this Strategy is successful and partner agencies effectively collaborate to meet the desired objectives, the following positive change should be created, for survivors, commissioners, service providers and local communities.

Objective 1: Increase awareness and challenge attitudes of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence across the population of North Wales

As a **survivor** this means:

- Increased understanding of the impact of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence, including the long term effects it can have on them and their family.

As a **commissioner** this means:

- More effective work with partners and other regional structures to ensure that challenging attitudes to VAWDASV remains within all integrated strategic planning.

As a **service provider** this means:

- Improved collaborative working to show a strong, cohesive approach to awareness raising and challenging attitudes to gender inequality and VAWDASV.

As a **community** member this means:

- Increased understanding the impact of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence and knowing where to signpost friends/colleagues/family members to go to access support.

As a **child** this means:

- Increased understanding and awareness of the impact of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence, and where to access support if necessary.

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

As a **survivor** this means:

- Improved understanding what makes a safe, equal, and healthy relationship.

As a **commissioner** this means:

- Ensuring sustainable and long term support is given to work with children and young people to promote healthy and safe relationships.

As a **service provider** this means:

- Developing and delivering age appropriate, awareness programmes for children and young people that focus on building strong, equal and healthy relationships.

As a **community member** this means:

- Knowing that children are learning to develop healthy, equal and safe long-term relationships.

As a **child** this means:

- Increased awareness and understanding of what constitutes an unhealthy relationship and where to access support if necessary.

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

As a **survivor** this means:

- Knowing that they have the support they need to engage with the criminal justice system if appropriate and that you can trust that their safety and that of their family is the priority for all agencies involved.

As a **commissioner** this means:

- Ensuring that the programmes and individual interventions commissioned are delivered within recognised accreditation frameworks and adequately address the need to change behaviours/manage risk as well.

As a **service provider** this means:

- Providing a robust and evidence based programme for perpetrators, giving them to opportunity to understand the impact of their actions and looking at alternatives to violence.

As a **community member** this means:

- Knowing that perpetrators of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence are properly held to account and that families are protected from harm and further distress.

As a **child** this means:

- Knowing that they have the support they need if their family is affected by violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence, and that they will be kept safe while family members are engaging with appropriate services.

Objective 4: Make early intervention and prevention a priority

As a **survivor** this means:

- Knowing who to go to for immediate support and getting the help they need from all agencies in a timely manner.

As a **commissioner** this means:

- Resourcing partners to work together to maximise availability of safe and early disclosure points and deliver a complete package of awareness raising and preventative services that target all members of the community.

As a **service provider** this means:

- Effectively implementing 'ask and act' so that public services ensure that VAWDASV is identified at the earliest opportunity and that they have the training necessary to address any disclosures and respond/signpost to appropriate specialist services.

As a **community member** this means:

- Understanding VAWDASV and where to access support and advice for friends/colleagues/family members

As a **child** this means:

- Knowing who to go to for immediate support, information and advice.

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

As a **survivor** this means:

- Knowing that they will receive appropriate and timely support, regardless of which agency they approach.

As a **commissioner** this means:

- Ensuring that all partners working within communities and with the public, as well as specialist providers, are trained to an appropriate level to provide support for victims and survivors of VAWDASV.

As a **service provider** this means:

- Ensuring all staff members are appropriately trained to work with all victims and survivors of VAWDASV, recognising that many will present with multiple disadvantage and support needs.

As a **community member** this means:

- Knowing that if they approach a professional for support and advice, this will be consistent, accurate and appropriate for their situation.

As a **child** this means:

- There are always appropriately trained and experienced people available to support them.

Objective 6: Provide victims with equal access to appropriately resourced, high quality, needs led, strength based, gender responsive services across Wales

As a **survivor** this means:

- Being able to access appropriate high quality person-centred support services that meets their needs and builds on their strengths in order to increase their health and well-being, maximise their safety, and improve their knowledge about rights and entitlements, regardless of the nature of abuse or their support needs, or where in North Wales they are based.

As a **commissioner** this means:

- Ensuring that specialist support services are resourced to attain accreditation and be accessible, gendered, trauma informed and meet needs, regardless of where in North Wales they are based.

As a **service provider** this means:

- Developing and delivering accessible needs-led, strength-based, trauma-informed and person-centred support for victims of VAWDASV across all of North Wales.

As a **community member** this means:

- Knowing that wherever they live in North Wales, they can access the same level of support and advice.

As a **child** this means:

- Having the same opportunities for support, information and advice, regardless of where they live in North Wales.

These outcomes/indicators will be reviewed subject to Welsh Government development of VAWDASV National Indicators

9. ACTION PLAN and TIMEFRAME

Using the 6 strategic objectives and informed by the needs assessment, service and resources mapping, and outcomes to be achieved, the following identified actions will be prioritised across the region.

These will be expanded on to include the “Impact Measure”. In this context the impact measure is the measure of success and the board can manage the progress and performance of the strategy through these measures.

This plan also makes clear the interfaces with the Modern Slavery objectives in North Wales and the Modern Slavery Chair will work closely with the VAWDASV Strategic Board. This is necessary as the Wales National VAWDASV Strategy recognised that to achieve Wales’s objectives regional action needs to be “informed by global and national evidence that women and girls are disproportionately affected by, rape and sexual violence, domestic abuse, sexual exploitation (incl. through sex industry), modern **slavery**, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, child sexual abuse, stalking and sexual harassment”

OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS	IMPACT MEASURE
OBJECTIVE 1: Increase awareness and challenge attitudes of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence across the population of North Wales		
Utilise available resources giving information about VAWDASV that can be promoted in all public places, focusing on all areas of VAWDASV and available in a range of locally used languages. (Live Fear Free)	Link with modern slavery and trafficking agenda to ensure that national resource is available in local languages and encompasses all elements of the VAWDASV agenda.	Live Fear Free resources available across North Wales – measure usage of resources
	Work with private sector employers to recognise their corporate responsibilities, particularly in certain sectors (hotels and restaurants, taxi drivers); looking at licensing requirements in order for them to recognise and report issues such as CS, forced prostitution and trafficking, as well as VAWDASV.	Number of employers engaged in training (links with Modern Slavery work).

	Work with current commissioners and providers of family support and parenting programmes to ensure that safe, healthy relationships are promoted and any inappropriate attitudes towards gender inequality are challenged and addressed appropriately.	Regional Commissioning plan
Implement National Training Framework to ensure that all professionals working in public facing roles are equipped to support victims and survivors of VAWDASV.	Group 2 and 3 - Ask and Act Roll out across North Wales from April 2018	Regular updating and monitoring of Regional Training Plan data
	Routine Enquiry within BCUHB. Ensure consistency and roll out across all health services.	Recording of all disclosures at low and medium risk as well as high risk
	Appropriately trained staff within all specialist providers - roll out of Groups 4 and 5	Regional Training Plan
	Full implementation of specialist syllabus	Regional Training Plan
Work with and support specialist BME VAW services to undertake community development to challenge cultural attitudes and change practice which can underpin FGM and forced marriage <i>(Source - Welsh Government and Home Office)</i>	Work with specialist organisations to develop resources and training to challenge cultural attitudes and practices within certain BME communities. Work with community leaders and representatives to engage vulnerable women and girls within their communities, in a safe and secure environment.	Regional Training Plan
	Ensure that all specialist organisations are inclusive and have received appropriate training in working with victims of FGM, forced marriage and honour-based violence.	Regional Training Plan

<p>Encourage all employers to develop workplace policies to raise awareness of, change attitudes to, and address the impacts of VAWDASV in employment <i>(Source - Welsh Government)</i></p>	<p>Work with large local employers within public and private sector, to encourage a culture of support following disclosure by victims and perpetrators.</p>	<p>Numbers of employers engaged in training</p>
<p>Improve access to high quality and up to date information on VAWDASV and the help available in public spaces and online (accessible in the main community languages and alternative formats)</p>	<p>Review the advice and contact arrangements on partners websites Ensure that all data and information is current and that statutory partners maintain and update interface</p>	<p>Regional Safeguarding Boards to monitor</p>
<p>Ensure regional commissioners (drug and alcohol services, homelessness services, health and children's services) integrate VAWDASV into mainstream contracts to embed support for victims and their families in generic services.</p>	<p>Develop Commissioning Sub group, made up of funders from across a range of services, (including Supporting People, Office of Police and Crime Commissioner, Area Planning Board etc) to work collaboratively at addressing the needs of victims and survivors of VAWDASV.</p>	<p>Regional Commissioning Plan</p>
<p>Develop and deliver programmes that (1) improve the resilience, confidence and empowerment of women and girls and (2) positively engage and develop coalitions with men who chose non-violence in challenging VAWDASV.</p>	<p>Work with specialist services and training providers to develop recovery based packages of support to increase resilience and empower women and girls.</p>	<p>All providers offering suitable, accredited programmes</p>
<p>OBJECTIVE 2: Increased awareness in children and young people of the importance of safe, equal and healthy relationships and that abusive behaviour is always wrong</p>		
<p>Implementation of a prevention framework that challenges the underlying structures that perpetuate gender inequality and VAWDASV.</p>	<p>Utilising the All-Wales education framework</p>	<p>Numbers of children and young people recognising unsafe relationships, knowing where to access support</p>

	Whole family interventions – intergenerational support to enable families to develop healthy and safe relationships	Regional Safeguarding Boards to monitor
Develop robust pathways for children and young people to report violence and seek support and advice.	Links with safeguarding – all partners to ensure that they can offer support and advice to children and young people, following disclosure and adhere to care pathways currently in place.	Regional Safeguarding Boards to monitor
	Provision of children’s support workers in specialist agencies, (according to level of need identified) as well as work with local schools and youth groups, encouraging the use of “champions” to work as peer mentors and support.	Dedicated children and young people’s worker in every specialist service, where appropriate.
Work with schools and colleges to support staff to implement a trauma-informed ethos, enabling young people to feel safe to disclose abuse.	Use language and communication methods that young people can relate to within awareness raising and prevention work.	Numbers of children and young people recognising unsafe relationships, knowing where to access support
	Schools in the region deliver the national requirement a ‘whole school approach’ to VAWDASV prevention.	Numbers of children and young people recognising unsafe relationships, knowing where to access support
	Education services establish systems to identify and respond effectively to learners who are affected by VAWDASV and ensure they have pathways to support.	Numbers of children and young people recognising unsafe relationships, knowing where to access support

Develop and deliver programmes to educate, inform and challenge young people about healthy relationships, abuse and consent (<i>Source – Home Office</i>)	Work with WG to look at provision in schools to challenge attitudes and promote healthy relationships.	Numbers of schools adopting Healthy Relationships ethos and provision of new syllabus.
Work with further/higher education colleges to develop an approach to working with young people as bystanders to promote VAWDASV prevention and further social change (<i>Source – Home Office</i>)	Work with Higher Education providers to focus on safety during Fresher’s Week – particularly focussing on issues of consent and vulnerability when under the influence of substances.	Inclusion of VAWDASV information and advice in Fresher’s Week syllabus
OBJECTIVE 3: Increased focus on holding perpetrators to account and provide opportunities to change their behaviour based around victim safety		
Ensure that perpetrators of VAWDASV are always held to account for their actions	Provide training for all frontline staff to have a consistent response to perpetrator and victim disclosures. Training should enable staff to make an assessment of risk.	Regional training plan
	Consistent IDVA/ISVA support regardless of geographical area, throughout the criminal justice process and afterwards.	Regional IDVA/ISVA provision
Work with perpetrators and give them opportunities to change at the same time as protecting their victims/ families from further abuse.	Evidence-based perpetrator programmes and whole-family interventions with a focus on encouraging and creating change	Evidence-based perpetrator programmes available across the region
	Work with HMP Berwyn to ensure that custody to community support is seamless for the perpetrator and their family (if appropriate and correct risk assessments are in place). Robust pathway from assessment to	Reoffending outcomes

	programme within prison and then continuation in the community following release.	
	Ensure specialist support is offered following disclosures of Honour based Violence or Forced Marriage, only involving families if risk has been assessed as low.	Numbers of victims supported and families engaged.
OBJECTIVE 4: Make early intervention and prevention a priority		
Support improvements in responses of health professionals to VAWDASV <i>(Source – Home Office)</i>	Consider the implementation of a project similar to the IRIS programme, using the model and applying this to VAWDASV (roll out of IDVA provision within GP surgeries, as well as other primary health provision)	Implementation of adapted IRIS model
	Numbers of mental health services implementing Group 2 of National Training Framework ('Ask and Act').	Embed 'Ask and Act' in mental health services
Maximise safe disclosure points and opportunities for early help-seeking in local communities for survivors (adults and children) and for perpetrators <i>(Source Welsh Government, Home Office)</i>	Embed Ask and Ask across North Wales, to ensure that all frontline staff understand the need to provide a safe and secure environment to enable disclosure.	Numbers of disclosures made through 'Ask and Act'
Continue to deliver women-centred support for women who come into	Work with North Wales Women's Centre to build on their current work with women who come into contact with the	Number of women involved in the criminal justice system engaging with services

contact with the criminal justice system (<i>Source Welsh Government</i>)	criminal justice system and roll out this support across the region.	
Work with the criminal justice system to reduce short term prison sentences for women and engage them in diversionary activities.	Support the diversionary work currently being done by the Local Criminal Justice Board and their partners, and further develop this support.	Number of women involved in the criminal justice system engaging with diversionary services.
Ensure that evidence-based early intervention approaches are being used across the region	Look at specialist providers being co-located with NWP, Health, Education, Social services and other appropriate services.	Specialist providers working from co-located offices
	Build up capacity and sustainable funding for intervention work with children and young people	Sustainable funding allocated for work with children and young people
Ensure that families identified and needing support for living with VAWDASV have early access to specialist support to mitigate the trauma associated with adverse experiences in childhood and as adults (<i>Source Welsh Government</i>)	Work with specialist providers to inform the development of ACE awareness and how it can be used to respond to victims and survivors of VAWDASV	Numbers of specialist services offering trauma-informed support, through the ACE lens.
Introduce an ACE approach to existing early intervention programmes	Roll out of ACE training	Numbers of staff ACE trained
OBJECTIVE 5: Relevant professionals are trained to provide effective, timely and appropriate responses to victims and survivors		
Fully implement the National Training Framework	Training Sub Group to develop full NTF project and action plan for the next five years, showing how the NTF	Training Plan to be monitored

	will be rolled-out, when each LA will begin their roll-out and how this will be monitored.	
Ensure that specialist service providers are able to support victims and survivors experiencing multiple disadvantage	Provide recovery based, trauma informed training for all specialist service providers and partner agencies.	Number of staff ACE trained
Deliver VAWDASV training to criminal and family justice partner agencies, aligning this with College of Policing requirements, and delivering with accredited providers in the specialist sector, where available. <i>(Source – Welsh Government)</i>	Provide training for court staff to emphasise the importance of victim safety during criminal justice proceedings, as well as understanding that decisions made in criminal proceedings, may affect civil orders.	Number of court staff undertaking available training
Ensure the regional Safeguarding Board reviews systems, data and monitoring requirements for safeguarding approaches as they relate to violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence <i>(Source – Welsh Government)</i>	Work with Regional Safeguarding Boards to encourage them to monitor the effects of VAWDASV on adults and children across North Wales.	Regional Safeguarding Board to monitor
Improve the training provided for professionals who come into contact with perpetrators to ensure that disclosures are managed appropriately.	Training to be offered to professionals giving them an understanding of the need to involve internal disciplinary/misconduct procedures, as well as criminal justice procedures.	Regional Training Plan
Develop a more integrated response across criminal and civil/family courts by providing access to independent advocacy for victims using civil remedies to access protection, and ensuring these do not contradict protective measures	Work with criminal justice partners, to ensure that adequate training is provided in supporting victims of VAWDASV through the use of civil remedies.	Regional Training Plan and numbers trained to support victims through the use of civil remedies

within the criminal justice system. (Source – Welsh Government)		
Proactively ensure the safety of women and girls involved in the sex industry, through coordinated action to address violence or exploitation and supporting their safe exit if needed	Provide advice and information to women wishing to exit the sex industry and ensure they are offered relevant and timely support if and when appropriate. Work with the Wales Sex Worker, Reducing Exploitation through Prostitution Group to ensure appropriate support is provided.	Numbers accessing relevant support
Ensure that there are appropriately trained specialists available to work with children and young people affected by VAWDASV.	Work with commissioners to focus on the need for specialist services for children and young people in refuge and in the community.	Sustainable funding for work with children and young people
OBJECTIVE 6: Provide victims with equal access to appropriately resourced, high quality, needs led, strength based, gender responsive services across Wales		
Create an ethos of collaboration and transparency amongst commissioners, providers and survivors	Developing and planning services to be done collaboratively.	Regional Commissioning Plan
	Work with commissioners to ensure that all recording and reporting is done using regional indicators. Ensure that data collection and monitoring is consistent across all partners and that data is shared appropriately.	Use of centrally agreed recording and monitoring indicators
Ensure that victims of VAWDASV can consistently access a place of safety, advocacy and support immediately, regardless of where they live in North Wales.	Helpline – ensure adequate resources are available to ensure that the North Wales population has access to the 24 hour helpline.	Evidence of working collaboratively across the region
	Refuge – consistent across all areas with support for CYP in every area.	Number of refuges offering dedicated support for children and young people

	Specialist provision for victims with a dual diagnosis – mental health, substance misuse etc	Number of specialist services offering dedicated support for victims with multiple disadvantages
	Recognise geography of North Wales and the need to have regard to rurality when providing support.	Local provision recognising rurality and additional needs of victims living in rural communities
	Ensure target hardening provision is available and consistent across all areas.	All areas having consistent target hardening provision
Ensure that the views of survivors are incorporated routinely and consistently into service improvement (<i>Source – Welsh Government</i>)	Use of focus groups to regularly assess effects of service provision and areas for improvement.	Concentrate on outcomes and impact for survivors – use of “journeys” to indicate improvements and recovery.
Map resources/funding across the public sector that contributes to VAWDASV responses to ensure that public services are making the best use of available resources and can demonstrate value for money when responding to survivors and perpetrators (<i>Source – Welsh Government</i>)	Commissioning Sub Group and Regional Development Team to look at current funding models and work with all commissioners to ensure that funding is used in the most cost effective way.	Sustainable funding for areas of best practice and appropriate use of resources
Joint strategic commissioning plan to be developed and all VAWDASV commissioning to adhere to the Wales good practice guide	Develop robust Commissioning Plan to look at resources across North Wales currently contributing to the VAWDASV agenda and ensure that all funding is commissioned in line with need (as evidenced in the Needs Assessment).	Regional Commissioning Plan

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Deliver Sexual Assault Referral Centre provision in accordance with the review of SARC delivery in Wales and quality assure and bench mark service against national indicators	Work with SARC to ensure that national indicators are utilised to monitor delivery and quality of services.	Use of national indicators for monitoring performance
Ensure survivors who have 'no recourse to public funds' can access support and safety from specialist services, including refuge based support, by developing multi-agency procedures for responding and pooling public sector resources to establish a 'destitution fund' for the region	Work with BAWSO (and other specialist services) and Welsh Government to ensure there are adequate resources available for survivors who have no recourse to public funds.	Numbers supported with no recourse to public funds
Ensure that victims of VAWDASV have appropriate support throughout the criminal justice process, from disclosure to prosecution.	IDVA/ISVA – Develop a consistent provision across North Wales, offering the same service to victims of VAWDASV, regardless of where in North Wales they are based.	Regional IDVA service
	MARAC – adequate support for high risk victims More standardised MARAC processes. Each area should be monitored regularly on governance and implementation of processes. Create a NW MARAC Steering Group to oversee this process	North Wales MARAC Steering Group
Ensure that there is long-term support in place for survivors to recover from their	Sexual violence support and specialist provision	Adequate funding for sexual violence support

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experiences, using recovery based, trauma-informed interventions.	Housing support, promoting victims being supported to remain in their homes and the perpetrator being removed	Numbers of victims being supported to remain in own home
	Specific specialist support for those who have experienced FGM, HBV, FM and/or have no recourse to public funds	Numbers of victims supported

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Definitions

Domestic abuse

This is a pattern of coercive control, by one person using emotional, financial, physical and/or sexually abusive behaviours to ensure power and control over another with whom they have, or have had, an intimate or family relationship. The main characteristic of domestic abuse is that the behaviour is intentional and is calculated to induce fear, and involves the misuse of power to control how the victim thinks, feels and behaves.

The Home Office definition of domestic abuse is:

'Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members¹ regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse: psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional.

'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 assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.'

The UK Government definition, which is not a legal definition, includes so called 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage, and is clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group.

It has been widely understood for some time that coercive control is a core part of domestic violence. As such the extension does not represent a fundamental change in the definition. However it does highlight the importance of recognising coercive control as a complex pattern of overlapping and repeated abuse perpetrated within a context of power and control.

Rape and sexual abuse

Sexual assault is an act of physical, psychological and emotional violation, in the form of a sexual act, which is inflicted on someone without consent. It can involve forcing or manipulating someone to witness or participate in any sexual acts. It ranges from adults exposing their genitals ('flashing') through to repeated brutal sexual torture, and in the most extreme cases death.

Rape is an act of violence and domination using sexual acts including penetration as weapons. The Sexual Offences Act 2003 extended the definition of rape to include the penetration by a penis of the vagina, anus or mouth of another person. It can be committed against men or women but since it involves penile penetration it can only be committed by men. The Act also changed the law about consent and belief in consent: a person consents if he or she agrees by choice, and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice.

Child sexual abuse involves sexual activity with children by adults, and coercive sexual activity between children themselves. It involves an abuse of power and an abuse of trust to persuade or force a child to take part in sexual activities, or encourage a child to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).

Sexual violence may also involve ritual abuse, which usually starts in early childhood and usually involves more than one person as abusers, and is defined as organised sexual and other forms of abuse, using rituals (with or without a belief system) and patterns of learning and development to sustain the abuse and silence the abused.

Perpetrators can include relatives, intimate partners and strangers, although most are known in some way. It can happen anywhere – in the family/household, workplace, public spaces, social settings, during war/conflict situations.

Sexual exploitation, including through the sex industry

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Sexual exploitation breaches a person's human right to dignity, equality, respect and physical and mental wellbeing. It becomes commercial sexual exploitation when another person, or group of people, achieves financial gain or advancement through the activity. These activities have been shown to be harmful for some individual women involved and have a negative impact on the position of all women through the objectification of women's bodies. Activities such as pornography, prostitution, stripping, lap/table dancing are forms of commercial sexual exploitation.

Sexual exploitation eroticizes women's inequality and is also a vehicle for racism, which disproportionately victimising minority women. Commercial sexual exploitation commodifies women and girls and supports a culture that views women as objects who are more a 'sum of body parts' than a whole being, and eroticises men's violence and their perceived 'right to buy' whatever acts they have sexualised. It is essential to separate sexual activity from exploitative sexual activity.

Sexual harassment in the workplace and public sphere

Sexual harassment is unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature which:

- Violates your dignity
- Makes you feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated
- Creates a hostile or offensive environment

You don't need to have previously objected to someone's behaviour for it to be considered unwanted.

Sexual harassment may occur in a context of domestic and/or sexual violence and abuse, and can also occur in the workplace or in the public sphere. Sexual harassment may be verbal (comments about appearance, requests for sexual favours) non-verbal (display of sexually explicit material) or physical (touching, pinching, assault, rape). Sexual harassment at work can also involve conduct based on sex affecting a person's dignity of women and men at work, which include physical, verbal and non-verbal conduct. Conduct is unacceptable if it is unwanted, unreasonable and offensive to the recipient.

Public sexual harassment occurs by those who feel a sense of entitlement. At its core it is a power dynamic that constantly reminds historically subordinated groups (women and LGBTQ people, for example) of their vulnerability to assault in public spaces. Further, it reinforces the ubiquitous sexual objectification of these groups in everyday life

Stalking and harassment

Repeated harassment or other behaviours causing fear, alarm or distress. It can include repeated or threatening phone calls, texts or letters, cards or 'presents'; damaging property; following someone and turning up at their home or workplace; faking someone's identity to contact others; targeting friends, family and neighbours.

Stalking can be defined as persistent and unwanted attention that makes someone feel pestered and harassed. It includes behaviour that happens two or more times, directed at or towards the victim by another person, which causes alarm or distress, or to fear that violence might be used. The problem isn't always 'physical' — stalking can affect victims psychologically. Social media and the internet are often used for stalking and harassment, and 'cyber-stalking' or online threats can be just as intimidating.

Forced marriage

A marriage in which one or both spouses do not, or in the case of some adults with learning or physical disabilities, cannot, consent to the marriage and duress is involved, which can include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure.

Forced marriage affects people from many communities and cultures, - for example, people from Black, minority ethnic and refugee communities; lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people; and disabled people.

So-called 'honour' based violence

Different forms of violence, mainly but not exclusively against women, including assault, imprisonment and murder, which is used to control behaviour within families and communities to protect perceived cultural and religious beliefs and/or honour.

Victims are punished for actually, or allegedly, undermining what the family or community believes to be the correct code of behaviour. In transgressing this correct code of behaviour, the person shows that they have not been properly controlled to conform by their family and this is to the "shame" or "dishonour" of the family.

The concept of 'honour' is a motive for violence, or a constraining factor preventing women from leaving abusive situations, rather than a specific form of violence. It cuts across all cultures,

nationalities, faith groups and communities, and transcends national and international boundaries.

Female genital mutilation (FGM)

This involves the complete or partial removal or alteration of external female genitalia for nonmedical reasons. FGM is classified into four types: Type 1 – Clitoridectomy: partial or total removal of the clitoris and, in very rare cases, only the prepuce; Type 2 – Excision: partial or total removal of the clitoris and the labia minora, with or without excision of the labia majora; Type 3 – Infibulation: narrowing of the vaginal opening through the creation of a covering seal. The seal is formed by cutting and repositioning the inner, or outer, labia, with or without removal of the clitoris; and Type 4 – Other: all other harmful procedures to the female genitalia for non-medical purposes, for example, pricking, piercing, incising, scraping and cauterising the genital area.

The practice is medically unnecessary, extremely painful and has serious health consequences, both at the time when the mutilation is carried out and in later life. It is mostly carried out on young girls at some time between infancy and the age of 15 or before marriage, and occasionally on pregnant women and on widows. FGM is illegal (Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003) and its extensive harmful health consequences are widely recognised.

Trafficking/modern day slavery

Modern Slavery is defined within the Modern Slavery Act 2015, which categorises offences of Slavery, Servitude and Forced or Compulsory Labour and Human Trafficking (which comes from the Palermo Protocol). These crimes include holding a person in a position of slavery, servitude forced or compulsory labour, or facilitating their travel with the intention of exploiting them soon after. Although human trafficking often involves an international cross-border element, it is also possible to be a victim of modern slavery within your own country.

Children cannot give consent to being exploited therefore the element of coercion or deception does not need to be present to prove an offence.

Trafficking involves the action of the recruitment, transportation, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person; for the purposes of exploitation.

Appendix 2 – Commissioning Plan (to follow)