



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Strategic Action Plan to address violence against women and to update the Welsh Assembly Government's Domestic Abuse Strategy

Consultation Document



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Introduction

The Welsh Assembly Government published the All Wales Domestic Abuse Strategy in 2005. This document set out a broad strategic framework with the key aims of:

- Reducing the prevalence of domestic abuse, particularly in high incident areas and/or communities.
- Increasing the rate that domestic abuse is reported. Particularly in high incidence areas and/or communities.
- Increasing the rate of domestic abuse offences that are brought to justice, particularly in high incidence areas and/or communities as well as areas with high attrition rates.
- Ensuring victims of domestic abuse are adequately protected and supported nationwide.
- Reducing the number of domestic abuse related homicides.

This strategy has helped to focus efforts and resources in improving and better co-ordinating services to support Welsh citizens suffering from domestic abuse.

The strategy acknowledges that women and children suffer disproportionate levels of domestic abuse and that this must be challenged at every opportunity. The definition of domestic abuse agreed with stakeholders at the time was very wide ranging. It reflected clearly that the specific needs of particular groups needed particular attention. For example, the definition included violence between family members to ensure that issues such as honour crimes (forced marriage and female gender mutilation) would be properly taken into account.

Since the original strategy was published a great deal has been achieved. We have nearly doubled the funding in our domestic abuse budget from £1.4m in 2004 to £3.7m per year in 2009. There is an ongoing investment of around £8.25m on supported people funding for women fleeing domestic abuse and the Home Office has increased funding to support the development of Sexual Assault Referral Centres and Specialist Domestic Violence Courts. There are many examples of progress, including:

- **On project support and strategy co-ordination** - We are now supporting 16 projects across Wales including two domestic abuse telephone help-lines, domestic abuse co-ordinators in every part of Wales, 5 new Domestic Abuse One Stop Shops, eight peripatetic children's workers and a co-ordinator to support children and young people in refuges.
- **In schools**, The All Wales Schools Programme, which includes a module on domestic abuse, is now operating in 97% of primary and secondary schools in Wales. Tai Hafan who supports the Schools Programme is widely distributing a spectrum pack to schools in Wales to raise awareness of domestic abuse. We will shortly be issuing updated domestic abuse guidance to schools.
- **To support victims of sexual abuse**, we now have Sexual Assault Referral Centres, SARCs, in Wales located in Merthyr Tydfil, Colwyn Bay, Carmarthen,

Risca, Cardiff and Swansea. We have provided funds for vital new equipment and for a booklet to raise awareness about sexual violence. Most SARCs provide long-term therapeutic counselling services to victims of sexual violence.

- The Minister for Health and Social Services has established a cross-departmental working group to ensure there is proper engagement by the health service on the development of SARCs in Wales. We have introduced care pathways in maternity and accident and emergency settings.
- **To tackle forced marriage and honour based crimes**, we are delivering a forced marriage and honour based crime action plan and will shortly be issuing new guidance to health, social services and education professionals. We support specialist BME services for women in Swansea, Cardiff, Newport and Wrexham.
- To join up the response across agencies we have been working with the Home Office, Ministry of Justice and the Police to have a network of Mult-agency Risk assessment Conferences (MARACs) and 10 Specialist Domestic Violence Courts (SDVCs) across the country to provide support for victims at different stages of the criminal justice system and beyond.
- To help women fleeing prostitution, we are developing a safe house for women fleeing prostitution including trafficked women in South Wales and developing a new refuge for victims with complex needs in Blaenau Gwent.
- Raising awareness – we are running bespoke publicity campaign such as the one over the 2008 Christmas period which saw a 38 per cent increase in calls to the national help line when comparing December 2007 with December 2008.

However, despite the progress made under the original strategy it is clear from the evidence now available that much more needs to be done. In 2007/08, domestic violence accounted for 16 per cent of all reported violence incidents as measured by the British Crime Survey, BCS. As a Government, we want our citizens, especially women and children, to feel safe in their homes and in society. Over the past 12 months we have therefore reviewed our original strategy and consulted with a range of partners over the development a new strategic action plan which will continue to tackle domestic abuse and make progress on the wider violence against women agenda over the next few years.

The approach of the Welsh Assembly Government to this agenda underpinning this action plan is clear - we will not tolerate violence in our society in any form and we will continue to provide support to all victims of domestic abuse. However, we also recognise that women are overwhelmingly the victims of violence in the home and often fear for their safety whilst out in their communities. Statistics from the 2007/08 BSC interpersonal module indicate that 23 per cent of women have experienced some form of sexual assault since the age of 16. The BCS statistics also show that women are the victims in the majority of reported violence incidents and this is borne out by the pattern of calls to the Welsh Domestic Abuse Helpline. In December 2008 and January 2009 the helpline received 3,186 calls nearly all of which were from women.

The evidence is telling us unequivocally that there is still an imbalance of power between men and women in Wales and perhaps this is still representative of a long cultural legacy which has not recognised equality of opportunity for women in domestic settings. Our new strategic action plan therefore recognises and responds to this by placing greater emphasis on actions, which address violence against women more specifically. The Welsh Assembly Government is also responding to this in wider policy agendas for example, the Single Equality Scheme and the Equal Pay Campaign are addressing this cultural legacy as they challenge the view of women being second-class citizens and promote equality of opportunity both within the workplace and in the way in which public services are delivered.

Action under our original strategy did, of course already recognise that certain groups suffer disproportionately. This is reflected in the fact that our domestic abuse activities and funding over the past 4 years has been heavily directed towards helping women and children. However, we recognise the need for this focus to strengthen under this new strategic action plan in order to tackle issues such as prostitution, sexual assault and trafficking as well as ensuring that women feel safe in their homes and in public places.

Clearly further improvements to support victims of violence can only be achieved by partners from all sectors working together to deliver a set of agreed objectives. This plan has been developed, following consultation with partners and stakeholders, and sets how the Welsh Assembly Government, the Home Office Crime Team in Wales and other partners will contribute to driving forward this agenda over the next 3 years. On non-devolved matters we will continue to work very closely with the UK Government to ensure that our actions are coordinated, effective and make a difference. This new plan should not be seen as a panacea, but a continuation of our efforts to make our society a safe place for all our citizens.

Objectives

1. Prevention, Raising Awareness and Protecting Children

	Action/Targets	How it will be delivered	Progress/ Results	Lead
1.1	Publish Forced Marriage Guidance by May 2009.	Guidance to be issued in June 2009.		SJLG – CSD
1.2	Provide targeted services to vulnerable children and their families. Integrated Family Support will be available to parents where substance misuse, mental health problems/illness and domestic abuse may place the child in need or at risk.	<p>Pioneers to be commenced in area of substance misuse in 2010. Roll out across Wales will be subject to the new services being evaluated and funding being identified by 2013-14.</p> <p>Alongside the commencement of the new services there will be ongoing work during the period 2010-2013 to build workforce capacity for categories such as domestic abuse.</p>		DHSS – DCHSS DCELLS – CYPS
1.3	The Flying Start and Cymorth programmes will continue to provide support to families and children who are affected by domestic abuse.	The objectives will be achieved through delivery of the programmes and a national evaluation will be completed by March 2012.		SJLG – CSD DCELLS/CYPS

	Action/Targets	How it will be delivered	Progress/Results	Lead
1.4	Ensure that Children's and Young People's Partnerships and 14-19 Networks to consider how targeted support can be made available to those who are classed as NEET (Not in Employment Education or Training) or are a potential NEET individual placed within vulnerable families who are affected by domestic abuse.	The NEET Policy Implementation Group – will request that Children's and Young People's Partnerships and 14-19 Network Plans outline the support available for this particular client group. This will be reviewed by April 2010.		SJLG – CSD DCELLS
1.5	Future Welsh Assembly Government publications about domestic abuse will make it clear that victims of abuse in a domestic setting can be across the whole age spectrum including older people.	Future Welsh Assembly Government publications will include images that demonstrate the cross-generational nature of domestic abuse. The membership of the All Wales Domestic Abuse Working Group has already been strengthened to include a representative with 'protection of vulnerable adults expertise'.		SJLG – CSD
1.6	Raise awareness about support for male victims experiencing domestic abuse.	The All Wales Domestic Abuse Working Group to consider in October 2009 the success of the Project Dyn project (male helpline) and to suggest ways of improving awareness of the support that is available for male victims.		SJLG – CSD

	Action/Targets	How it will be delivered	Progress/Results	Lead
1.7	Publish updated guidance about domestic abuse for professionals working in the educational and youth settings in Wales.	This will be completed by December 2009.		SJLG – CSD/ DCELLS
1.8	Future Welsh Assembly Government publications about domestic abuse will carry, where appropriate, explicit references about the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.	By including explicit references in future publications, eg in the revised guidance for professionals working in educational and youth settings.		SJLG – CSD
1.9	Raise awareness about support for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people experiencing domestic abuse.	The All Wales Domestic Abuse Working Group to consider, by March 2010, ways of increasing awareness of support that is available for LGBT people. Broken Rainbow and Stonewall, national UK third sector organisations who support LGBT people, will be invited to provide advice to the All Wales Domestic Abuse Working Group by March 2010.		SJLG – CSD
1.10	Ensure that CAF/CASS CYMRU continue to take actions, through the implementation of their Domestic Abuse Resource Pack, to minimise risks to women and children associated with contact arrangements within family court proceedings.	Cafcass Cymru to provide progress report to the All Wales Domestic Abuse Working Group by September 2009.		SJLG – CSD

2. Provide Support for Victims

	Action/Targets	How it will be delivered	Progress/ Results	Lead
2.1	Enhance support for victims of domestic abuse and sexual assault by making further capital funding available from the domestic abuse budget in 2009/10.	<p>A mapping exercise on service provision across Wales, covering Refuges, Specialist Domestic Violence Courts, Independent Domestic Violence Advocates, Independent Sexual Violence Advisors, Sexual Assault Referral Centres, One Stop Shops and Domestic Abuse Co-ordinators has already been completed.</p> <p>This will be used to assist with the allocation of available SJLG capital funding in 2009/10.</p>		SJLG – CSD
2.2	Evaluate the extent to which available move on accommodation for women and families leaving refuges meets needs.	<p>As a first step, by July 2009, Housing Directorate will seek information from local authorities on the effectiveness of move on accommodation for women and families leaving refuges.</p> <p>This work will then be taken forward, by October 2009, through the development of the Supporting People Strategy and the Homelessness Plan.</p>		ESH – Housing

	Action/Targets	How it will be delivered	Progress/Results	Lead
2.3	Complete the development of a project to support women fleeing prostitution including trafficked women in South Wales.	Cardiff Safety Ltd who are delivering the project will provide a progress report to the All Wales Domestic Abuse Working Group by January 2010.		SJLG – CSD
2.4	The Welsh Assembly Government will continue to liaise with the UK Government about finding a long term solution to support victims of domestic abuse who have no recourse to public funds. This particularly impacts on women with insecure immigration status and trafficked women and there will be ongoing discussions with the Black Association of Women Step Out, BAWSO and Welsh Women's Aid, WWA.	Welsh Assembly Government will continue to discuss with the Home Office until resolved. Welsh Assembly Government to notify key stakeholders, BAWSO and WWA, when Home Office agree new no recourse to public funds grant scheme.		SJLG – CSD and Home Office
2.5	To consider with the Equality and Human Rights Commission, EHRC, how equality legislation impacts on domestic abuse services, and in particular identify ways in which public authorities in Wales can obtain a better understanding of the Gender Equality Duty and how this relates to the provision of services for domestic abuse and violence against women.	Actions to be agreed with EHRC by December 2009.		SJLG – CSD and EHRC
2.6	Support the delivery of the KAFKA Brigade Action Plan in Rhondda Cynon Taff in 2009 and share learning across Wales. The aim of the project is to improve the multi-agency	Welsh Assembly Government and Wales Home Office Crime Team to consider supporting one further area in Wales using the		SJLG – CSD/Wales Home Office Crime Team

	Action/Targets	How it will be delivered	Progress/ Results	Lead
	response to domestic abuse in the light of a victim's perspective of shortcomings in service provision when they were in most need.	KAFKA methodology to improve outcomes for victims. Support the All Wales Domestic Abuse Working Group in sharing best practice and lessons learnt from the project across Wales by July 2009.		
2.7	Publish a module of the Substance Misuse Treatment Framework which sets out good practice in joint working between domestic abuse and substance misuse services which includes admission policies for Women's refuges.	Module to be launched in April 2009.		SJLG – CSD
2.8	Service Level Agreements to be drawn up between the Welsh Assembly Government and key service delivery agencies and progress will be monitored annually.	The first SLA between the Assembly Government and Welsh Women's Aid to be agreed by September 2009. Other SLAs, with funded projects, will be considered once the first one is in place.		SJLG – CSD/ESH HOUSING – WWA
2.9	As part of the Home Office MARAC Implementation Programme, Co-ordinated Action against Domestic Abuse (CAADA) will carry out a quality assurance review of 30 MARACs in England. This will ensure that MARACs are implemented in a consistent	CAADA to complete Quality Assurance by August 2009.		CAADA – SJLG – CSD

	Action/Targets	How it will be delivered	Progress/Results	Lead
	<p>manner. The Welsh Assembly Government will be linking into this work to ensure that new standards are implemented consistently in Wales</p> <p>During the Autumn 2009, there are plans to extend the invitation for quality assurance to other MARACs across England & Wales</p>	ACPO Cymru to implement a consistent approach across the four Welsh police forces, in the light of CAADA recommendations.		ACPO Cymru
2.10	<p>Work will be undertaken by the Welsh Assembly Government to raise awareness about female genital mutilation which has been illegal in the UK since 1985. As part of the delivery of the Welsh Assembly Government's Forced Marriage and Honour Based Violence Action Plan we will be considering what actions can be taken to protect children and raise awareness across the children and young people's workforce.</p>	<p>Welsh Assembly Government's Forced Marriage and Honour Based Violence sub-group to consider this issue at their next meeting in September 2009.</p> <p>Following that meeting a plan will be brought forward, particularly focusing on health and education settings, which will set out what actions the Welsh Assembly Government can undertake to protect children and raise awareness about this issue.</p>		SJLG – CSD
2.11	<p>The Welsh Assembly Government will explore with Community Safety Partnerships what more they can do at a local level to protect women in public places.</p>	<p>The Welsh Assembly Government will, during 2009, discuss with the Welsh Association of Community Safety Officers and Domestic Abuse</p>		SJLG – CSD

	Action/Targets	How it will be delivered	Progress/Results	Lead
		Co-ordinators how to improve the local response to making women feel safe in public places. Following these discussions further actions will be developed.		
2.12	The Welsh Assembly Government will continue to respond to the problem of women and children who are trafficked into sexual exploitation.	The Welsh Assembly Government will continue to work with all agencies to provide protection for victims of trafficking. By March 2010 we will ask the All Wales Domestic Abuse Working Group to consider what further actions might be taken in addition to the Welsh Assembly Government guidance that was published, in 2008 – “Safeguarding Children who may have been trafficked”.		SJLG – CSD

3. Improving the Response of Criminal Justice Agencies

	Action/Targets	How it will be delivered	Progress/Results	Lead
3.1	The Welsh Assembly Government will liaise with the UK Government about securing funding for an “Access to Justice” pilot focusing on vulnerable older witnesses.	Welsh Assembly Government will seek agreement for the setting up of a pilot during 2009.		SJLG – CSD/Home Office

	Action/Targets	How it will be delivered	Progress/ Results	Lead
3.2	Home Office will examine the issue of sustainable funding for SDVCs and Independent Domestic Violence Advocates through the UK SDVC Steering Group.	Welsh Assembly Government will seek a way forward on this issue from the Home Office by June 2009.		Home Office
3.3	Welsh Assembly Government to agree a protocol with the Crown Prosecution Service, CPS, about the provision of regular all Wales data relating to charging, prosecutions and convictions for domestic abuse and violence against women.	1) Standard reporting to be agreed by June 2009. 2) Quarterly reporting to commence by September 2009.		SJLG – CSD/CPS
3.4	Police to work with Welsh Assembly Government in publicity campaigns to raise awareness about domestic abuse and violence against women eg at Christmas and New Year and possibly around the time of large sporting events.	Assembly Government will liaise with ACPO Cymru to enhance delivery of national publicity campaigns particularly at Christmas/New Year.		SJLG – CSD/ACPO Cymru
3.5	Four Welsh police forces to agree standard reporting for domestic abuse/violence against women incidents and forced marriage/honour based crime incidents (including trafficking data) and to provide quarterly returns to the Welsh Assembly Government.	1) Standard reporting protocol to be agreed by July 2009. 2) Quarterly reporting to commence by September 2009.		ACPO Cymru
3.6	Scope the need and deliver forced marriage training, where required, to front line criminal justice agencies (this is in addition to health, education and social service front line staff).	This will be taken forward when the report on forced marriage training is published (see action 5.9).		SJLG – CSD

	Action/Targets	How it will be delivered	Progress/Results	Lead
3.7	Local Criminal Justice Boards, LCJBs, in Wales became responsible for the governance and performance management of SDVCS from 1 April 2009. In the light of this we will explore with the LCJBs how to improve and enhance the delivery of the SDVCs. This will build on the monitoring work already in progress.	Welsh Assembly Government/ Welsh Assembly Government/ Wales Home Office Crime Team to have discussions with LCJBs to explore how to take this forward.		SJLG – CSD/ SJLG – CSD/Wales Home Office Crime Team/LCJBs

4. Improving the Response of Health Services and Other Agencies

	Action/Targets	How it will be delivered	Progress/Results	Lead
4.1	Continue to improve the response of the Health Service to supporting victims of domestic abuse, sexual assault and violence against women.	Review progress by May 2009 to ensure that: Publicity material has reached GPs, Dentists, Pharmacies and Optometrists. LHBs have internal domestic abuse policies in place. Agree by June 2009 a timeframe for improving information sharing protocols between NHS, social services and third sector organisations.		DHSS – CPCHSD

	Action/Targets	How it will be delivered	Progress/ Results	Lead
4.2	Prepare guidance to new Local Health Boards clarifying the implications of data protection legislation. This will ensure that senior health service representatives play a full part in multi-agency work to tackle domestic abuse and violence against women and here we will build on the willingness of BMA Cymru to support this work.	Guidance to be developed in 2009/10. Some work has already commenced via the "Informing Health Care Project".		DHSS – CPCHSD
4.3	Ensure that A&E Departments have information systems which are capable of identifying repeat attenders, and particularly repeat attenders who are injured. This will enable appropriate and timely referrals to be made.	Impact assessment to be completed by May 2009 which will enable Department for Health and Social Services to consider how best to take this forward.		DHSS – CPCHSD
4.4	Complete the review of enhancing delivery of services in Sexual Assault Referral Centres, SARCs by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advising the Minister for Health and Social Services on any legislative or structural changes needed to deliver all of the foundations for full public partnership in support of SARCs in Wales. • The action needed to address the identified gap in health and social care policy to facilitate health and social care input to SARCs. 	An internal Assembly Government Task and Finish Group has been set up to complete this work and are expected to report by May/June 2009. There has already been a workshop held for key external stakeholders.		DHSS – CPCHSD

	Action/Targets	How it will be delivered	Progress/ Results	Lead
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The linked policy and commissioning issues arising from services for the examination of children who may have been sexually abused. 			
4.5	Enhance training delivery for roll out of the A&E care pathway to ensure the new A&E pathway is being delivered consistently across Wales and continue to deliver the ante-natal care pathway.	<p>Social Justice and Local Government Department to fund Secondee nurse until December 2009 to deliver additional training across Wales.</p> <p>The additional training to be completed by December 2009.</p>		SJLG – CSD/ DCELLS

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5. Supporting and Monitoring Delivery of the Strategy Including Performance Framework and Research and Evaluation

	Action/Targets	How it will be delivered	Progress/ Results	Lead
5.1	All existing Welsh Assembly Government funded Domestic Abuse projects will be subject to ongoing monitoring via a rolling programme of independent value for money reviews.	Will be part of an ongoing programme of research.		SJLG – CSD
5.2	Evaluate the preventative work currently being undertaken with children in schools and other educational settings throughout Wales. This will cover domestic abuse, violence against women and other gender based violence and bullying.	<p>Specification to be agreed and contact awarded by July 2009.</p> <p>Final report to be completed by March 2010.</p>		SJLG – CSD DCELLS – C&A

	Action/Targets	How it will be delivered	Progress/ Results	Lead
5.3	<p>The Assembly Government will continue to uphold the revised <i>Personal and Social Education Framework for 7 to 19-year-olds in Wales</i> was implemented in schools in September 2008 and is the key document for schools. Under the health and well being theme there are opportunities for learners to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop respect for themselves and others. <p>And to understand</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The features of safe and potentially abusive relationships. <p>The Framework will be evaluated as appropriate as part of the review of the curriculum.</p>	<p>This links into action 5.2. The research will examine how the schools based programme links in with the health and well-being theme in the curriculum. This matter will be considered further by the Welsh Assembly Government after the research report is available.</p>		<p>SJLG – CSD DCELLS – C&A</p>
5.4	<p>Work with the All Wales Domestic Abuse Working Group to develop a national information hub.</p>	<p>The All Wales Domestic Abuse Working Group to be consulted during 2009 on how to develop the hub and improvements to be introduced, probably to the Welsh Assembly Government website, by March 2010.</p>		<p>SJLG – CSD/ DA Working Group</p>

	Action/Targets	How it will be delivered	Progress/ Results	Lead
5.5	Complete the evaluation of the Caring Dad community perpetrator programme.	The 3 year evaluation is already happening and will assess the impact of the programmes on behaviour. To be completed by July 2010.		SJLG – CSD
5.6	Increase capacity on the range of perpetrator programmes to be available to meet the requirement of the Children and Adoption Act 2006 that came into force in December 2008.	Welsh Assembly Government officials from SJLG and DHSS will work together in 2009 to scope how to take this forward. The work will focus on service standards and workforce occupational standards.		SJLG – CSD/ DHSS – DCHSS
5.7	Evaluate the role of domestic abuse co-ordinators and how their work assists Community Safety Partnerships in the implementation of the national domestic abuse strategy.	Specification to be agreed and contact awarded by July 2009. Final report to be completed by March 2010.		SJLG – CSD
5.8	The Assembly Government will work with the All Wales Domestic Abuse Working Group to see how best to adopt the UK Government's national service standards for the domestic and sexual violence sector.	This will be linked to action 5.5.		SJLG – CSD
5.9	Review progress with the new BME outreach service in North Wales.	The All Wales Domestic Abuse Working Group to consider a progress report by March 2010.		SJLG – CSD/Black Association of Women Step Out

	Action/Targets	How it will be delivered	Progress/ Results	Lead
5.10	Produce a report with recommendations for Forced Marriage training by August 2009. This will be aimed at primarily front-line staff in health, education and social service settings.	Under the auspices of the Forced Marriage Action Plan.		SJLG – CSD
5.11	Consult with Community Safety Partnerships and agree a set of key performance standards for Domestic Abuse co-ordinators.	Following consultation with CSPs in March 2009 it was agreed to set up a small task and finish group to finalise interim standards by September 2009 (this will include examining data to be provided by CSPs). Final standards will be agreed in March 2010 in light of the research report (see 5.6).		SJLG – CSD
5.12	To develop an annual report on progress which will include data from all agencies.	Annual report will be provided by Cabinet Written Statement.		SJLG – CSD
5.13	The Assembly Government will work with the UK Government in taking forward relevant actions arising from the Violence Against Women consultation exercise launched on 9 March 2009. There will be further consultation events on the Assembly's new plan.	The Welsh Assembly Government will carefully consider any new initiatives emerging from the UK government's consultation.		SJLG – CSD
5.14	Enable children to access the School-based Counseling Service as outlined in the School-based Counseling Strategy	Officials from DCELLS are currently working with partners to oversee the development. The School-based Counselling toolkit		SJLG – CSD DCELLS – SLD

	Action/Targets	How it will be delivered	Progress/ Results	Lead
		<p>(advice, guidance and standards) is currently being developed and will be launched on 1 October 2009.</p> <p>DCELLS will monitor the implementation of the Counselling Service and provide a progress update to the All Wales Domestic Working Group.</p>		



Specific violence against women actions.