

Tackling Domestic Abuse: The All Wales National Strategy

A Joint-Agency Approach



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

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Further Related Information can be found at:

www.wales.gov.uk/subicrimeprevention/index.htm

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Foreword



The growth in public and professional understanding, and acknowledgement of domestic violence has been one of the most important developments of the last 30 years. It is now far more widely recognised that domestic abuse affects people from all walks of life, and from all cultural, social and ethnic backgrounds, the well off as well as the poor. It affects those in work and those out of work, the young and the old, in all parts of Wales. Domestic abuse can include all kinds of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and can occur within all kinds of intimate relationships, including same sex relationships. Women and children suffer in particular but men can also be victims.

There is a significant overlap between the abuse of women and the abuse of children. Where children live in a home where domestic abuse takes place there is a risk of harm. To witness or to be aware of abuse and threats or violence is obviously highly detrimental to children of any age, including the very young. They could also be at risk of, or subjected to, serious systematic abuse themselves.

My message is clear. Domestic abuse must not be tolerated in Wales on any level. I am determined to hold perpetrators accountable for what they do and I am committed to protecting and supporting the victims of domestic abuse.

Domestic abuse, and the terrible crimes associated with it, cannot be resolved by the police and criminal justice system alone. It demands joint action and this strategy sets out how this can be done - bringing down barriers, sharing information and working collectively to meet the needs of victims. We must be alert to domestic abuse, identifying it and making appropriate referrals. Then the incidence of abuse and the risk of serious harm will be reduced.

I firmly believe that by working together to implement this strategy we can make a real difference to the lives of the people in Wales.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Edwina Hart".

Mrs Edwina Hart
Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration

Executive Summary

This document sets out the Welsh Assembly Government's strategy to tackle domestic abuse. The strategy is the result of collaboration between the Welsh Assembly Government and a wide cross-section of Welsh agencies and organisations. The Welsh Assembly Government and its' partners firmly believe that the implementation of a national strategic 'joint-agency' approach is the right way forward to deal with the problem of domestic abuse in Wales.

The strategy's primary objective is to provide the much-needed structural 'backbone' to direct domestic abuse intervention across Wales. It aims to facilitate the development and implementation of a 'joined-up' problem-solving approach which addresses domestic abuse holistically – providing protection for individuals who suffer domestic abuse and simultaneously addressing the causes of domestic abuse.

The strategy draws upon the experiences and expertise of front line agencies: it is evidence-based; it is designed to meet the needs of all domestic abuse victims. It focuses strongly on holding offenders accountable and on the prevention of future domestic abuse.

Strategy Principles

The principle of equality is central to this strategy. Other principles identified as common elements that underpin this strategy include:

- Protection and support for victims
- Perpetrator accountability
- Prevention

Strategy Aims

The overall aims of the strategy are:

- To facilitate the development and implementation of a quality co-ordinated joint-agency response
- To improve the current service provision for all victims and to particularly increase the safe choices for women and children/young people who experience domestic abuse
- To hold abusers accountable for their behaviour

- To increase public awareness as to the issues surrounding domestic abuse
- To challenge the notion that domestic abuse is acceptable
- To protect children and young people in Wales from the negative impact of domestic abuse
- To educate and inform children/young people to enable them to make informed choices

Strategy Recommendations

- Tackling domestic abuse and its causes requires:
- Individual agencies/organisations/employers to adhere to 'minimum standards'
- Specific measures aimed at tackling domestic abuse to be incorporated into local Community Safety Plans
- Domestic Abuse Fora to work closely with Community Safety Partnerships to assist with this work
- Tackling domestic abuse and effects on children should be a key task of Area Child Protection Committees (these will be replaced by Local Safeguarding Boards in 2006)

Introduction

The Reality of Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse is the largest cause of morbidity in women aged 19-44, greater than war, cancer and motor vehicle accidents.[∇] Domestic abuse is usually a hidden crime. Victims suffer silently, afraid for themselves and their children. The trauma and long-term effects suffered by children living in a violent household is incalculable. Domestic abuse is rarely a one-off physical attack and it can often have a highly significant, long term and wide ranging impact on all who experience it. No-one deserves to be assaulted, abused or humiliated there is no excuse. The only person responsible is the perpetrator.

Research indicates:

- Domestic abuse accounts for nearly one quarter of all recorded violent crime in the UK[†]
- Throughout England and Wales one incident of domestic abuse is reported to the police every minute[†]
- Still, because domestic abuse is hidden it is under-reported, and thus under-recorded[‡]

A consequence of under-reporting is that the real extent of the problem is not known: the true costs to society - in both human and financial terms - is currently immeasurable. However, it is known that domestic abuse wrecks the lives of those that suffer it, witness it and live with it.

According to Welsh Women's Aid[§]:

- Seventy per cent of domestic abuse victims are women
- On average a woman is assaulted thirty-five times before seeking help
- One in ten women is severely beaten by her partner at some point in her life
- Twenty-five percent of attacks occur while a woman is pregnant
- Forty-one per cent of all female homicide victims are killed by a partner or former partner

It is also known that:

- Ethnic origin makes no difference^{**}

Further, that children/young people are at risk:

- One in five child abuse cases dealt with by the NSPCC involves domestic abuse;
- in nine out of ten cases, children or young people are present in the home while abuse is going on;
- in about half the cases, there is abuse to children/young people too;^{††}
- Welsh Women's aid estimate that as many as 150,000 children/young people are affected by domestic abuse in Wales at any one time

Research also suggests that:

- The financial costs of domestic abuse are high, but concealed to a certain extent within the service sector - voluntary and statutory, health and welfare, and not just the criminal justice services. Still, it is estimated that each domestic abuse homicide costs approximately £1.1m^{§§}.

Domestic abuse is commonly a repeated offence. This means that both the victim and the perpetrator will often be known, as will the likely severity of the attack. Therefore, resources can be easily targeted to protect victims and ensure that perpetrators are held accountable for their actions.

Defining Domestic Abuse

The Welsh National Strategy definition is:

Domestic Abuse is best described as the use of physical and/or emotional abuse or violence, including undermining of self confidence, sexual violence or the threat of violence, by a person who is or has been in a close relationship.

Domestic abuse can go beyond actual physical violence. It can also involve emotional abuse, the destruction of a spouse's or partner's property, their isolation from friends, family or other potential sources of support, threats to others including children, control over access to money, personal items, food, transportation and the telephone, and stalking.

It can also include violence perpetrated by a son, daughter or any other person who has a close or blood relationship with the victim/survivor. It can also include violence inflicted on, or witnessed by, children. The wide adverse effects of living with domestic abuse for children must be recognised as a child protection issue. The effects can be linked to poor educational achievement, social exclusion and to juvenile crime, substance abuse, mental health problems and homelessness from running away.

Domestic abuse is not a "one-off" occurrence; it is frequent and persistent.

The Welsh definition is a full definition which recognises that any person can be the victim of domestic abuse: Women and men can be victims of domestic abuse in heterosexual relationships; domestic abuse can also take place in lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender relationships. Agencies need to be aware that people with disabilities can be particularly vulnerable. The inclusion in the definition of violence between family members ensures that issues such as 'honour crimes' are properly reflected. It also acknowledges that children/young people who experience domestic abuse can be victims of domestic abuse. Importantly, however, while the definition accepts that men can also be victims of domestic abuse, the great majority of domestic abuse is perpetrated by men against women and their children.**

Domestic abuse cuts across age, race, and religion. Domestic abuse is not necessarily a physical act. It can take many forms. Therefore, it is likely that this comprehensive definition will impact on the future reporting of domestic abuse incidents: It will help to reveal the true extent of domestic abuse in Wales.

The Approach of the Welsh Assembly Government

The Welsh Assembly Government acknowledges that domestic abuse is a serious problem in Wales and is committed to its eradication from Welsh society. The 'All Wales National Strategy' to address domestic abuse has been developed within the existing International^{†††} and European policy framework^{†††} and within the UK legislative framework^{§§§}.

Domestic abuse is first and foremost a crime. Although criminal justice is not an issue devolved to the Welsh Assembly Government, it is committed to supporting local partnerships to create a safe environment free of crime and disorder.

Domestic abuse is also a social policy issue; it impacts on the health and well being of people. Social services, children's services, welfare, health, housing, education and training are all responsibilities that are devolved to the Assembly.

With regard to support through housing, the introduction of Supporting People in Wales on 1st April 2003 established a new funding and administrative framework for the provision of accommodation based support to vulnerable people. Supporting People amalgamated a diverse range of revenue funding streams to produce a unified funding stream to support a range of client groups including women escaping domestic abuse.

Supporting People has been a significant success in attracting new resources to fund supported housing in Wales. Current best estimates put the final budget at £140 million with over £6.5m of that budget devoted to over 500 units of accommodation for women escaping domestic abuse, ranging from refuge provision to move on housing as and when appropriate.

This strategy addresses the issue of domestic abuse and in doing so aims to meet the specific needs of the people of Wales. It reflects the diverse social, economic and cultural differences in Wales by:

- Responding to the rural nature of Wales
- Acknowledging Wales' objective one status
- Taking account of Welsh culture and language
- Working to meet the needs of the diverse black and minority ethnic (BME) communities in Wales

Equality is central to all strategy themes. Every person living in Wales must be treated equally and with respect. The Welsh Assembly Government is committed to supporting the people of Wales and will continue to confront prejudice and unfairness. It is sometimes claimed that there is a lack of recognition that men can also be victims of domestic abuse. The aim of this strategy is to protect all victims of domestic abuse and the Welsh Assembly Government will be expecting all partners to work towards this aim. There are already some projects in Wales supporting men e.g. Project Dyn in Cardiff. These projects will be carefully monitored and the lessons learned shared across Wales.

The All Wales Partnership

Agencies and organisations from all over Wales**** have come together to pool their expertise in the development of this strategy, reflecting the need to address domestic abuse holistically. And, importantly, the participation of front line workers has ensured that the strategy has taken account of the views and opinions of domestic abuse victims - thus the real problems and the actual needs of diverse communities are better met.

The strategy's three pronged approach namely: to protect victims, to hold abusers accountable and to prevent domestic abuse happening in the first place, will only be realised by the delivery of appropriate and effective services throughout Wales.

This strategy will address domestic abuse by building on current good practice in Wales. It will work to develop a comprehensive network of evidence based services throughout Wales that offers a consistently high level of service that is both appropriate and effective.

The Strategy in Context

The challenge

How prevalent is domestic abuse in Wales?

Quantifying domestic abuse is notoriously difficult for a variety of reasons:

- In England and Wales there is no separate recorded offence classification for domestic abuse. Domestic abuse related offences can be recorded as common assault, actual or grievous bodily harm, harassment, criminal damage, murder or attempted murder. However, Police 'incident' data (based mainly on calls to the police) do classify domestic abuse as a separate kind of incident
- It is difficult to obtain accurate information. In part this is due to the fact that victims of domestic abuse are often reluctant to report incidents and partly due to variations in recording practices
- Under reporting is especially prevalent within BME communities and this makes it impossible to obtain accurate data. Research indicates that as little as four percent of women from ethnic minority communities have experienced domestic abuse⁺⁺⁺

However

- Statistics on homicide in England and Wales show that on average 2 women a week are killed by a male partner or former partner^v
- Domestic Abuse accounts for 16 per cent of violent crime^v
- During the period 2002-2003, 26,854 domestic abuse incidents were reported to the police in Wales⁺⁺⁺
- Every day in Wales an average of forty-nine women contact Welsh Women's Aid because they are experiencing or have experienced domestic abuse
- Welsh Women's Aid's one day count in 2000 revealed that one hundred and seventy three women and two hundred and forty children/young people that day were living in refuges throughout Wales
- The Women's Safety Unit in Cardiff receives fifty referrals each week
- Cymdeithas Tai Hafan's statistical breakdown for 2002/2003 revealed that two hundred and fifty-five women were housed in temporary

accommodation by the organisation. Of those women, two hundred and forty-five were victims of domestic abuse: one hundred and sixty-four were victims of physical or mental domestic abuse while eighty-one were victims of sexual domestic abuse. Importantly, only thirty percent of the women being housed were referred to Tai Hafan by Welsh Women's Aid - indicating the extent of the problem across Wales.

As detailed above, these statistics represent the minimum levels of domestic abuse occurring in our communities - the true levels are likely to be much higher.

What are the problems with the current service provision?

- There is no overall strategy for Wales, little joint-agency working and not enough safe information sharing between agencies.³
- Fundamentally, without safe information sharing the needs of domestic abuse victims cannot be adequately met and perpetrators will not be held accountable. And, importantly, agencies cannot learn from the pockets of good practice that do exist in Wales: if agencies do not know what services exist there cannot be policy replication/transference.
- Many agencies have no specific domestic abuse policy and do not record domestic abuse work, believing it to be a small part of their overall work.
- Hence, it is not known how much time agencies actually devote to dealing with issues of domestic abuse. A further consequence is that agencies which may not consider domestic abuse to be a relevant issue remain outside an integrated strategy.
- Issues of rurality, language and culture in Wales are not being adequately addressed.^{§§§§}

Within rural and language contexts, the detection of domestic abuse is rendered even more difficult in Wales by the isolated position of some victims - some of whom may speak only Welsh or for whom Welsh is their first language. Research carried out by the Law Commission in Wales reveals that a lack of transport and the relative distance of helping services can leave victims in rural communities feeling detached and unable to obtain justice^{*****}

Domestic abuse cuts across every culture, recognising no boundaries. A recent breakdown of the ethnic origin of Black Association of Women Step Out's (BAWSO) service users reveals that: forty-seven percent are Asian, seventeen percent are White European, thirteen percent are Black African, ten percent are Middle Eastern, ten percent are Afro Caribbean and three percent are of Mixed Parentage. There is currently a need to improve the service provision

available in Wales to meet the needs (cultural and religious) of victims from BME communities.

There are particular challenges facing victims in BME communities. Unfortunately, perceptions or experience of racism and lack of confidence in the criminal justice system can make it very difficult for victims to report incidents of domestic abuse. Furthermore, cultural differences can act as barriers to reporting offences; these can include pressures from within the family and also the wider community.

Services in Wales must be educated to understand and recognise the needs of diverse communities and must respond accordingly, appropriately and effectively. Domestic abuse is a crime wherever; whenever and to whom ever it occurs. All victims have a right to be protected and every perpetrator must be held accountable.

The Vision

The Welsh Assembly Government's vision for effectively addressing domestic abuse in Wales incorporates: -

Consistent, positive action from the Welsh Assembly Government including:

- A clear, unequivocal message that domestic abuse must not be tolerated - the unacceptability of domestic abuse to become embedded within the very fabric of Welsh society
- The importance of joint-agency collaboration and joint-agency policy implementation to be consistently communicated
- Future developments to take place in the strategic context of Supporting People Operational Plans and Community Safety Plans submitted to the Welsh Assembly Government

Also better, more equitable, accessible and effective service provision providing:

- A co-ordinated network of services that meet the needs of all victims including children and young people, people with disabilities, men, people who live in a rural part of Wales, people who do not speak English and those from BME communities
- Adequate and appropriate safe choices for women and children/young people escaping domestic abuse
- Appropriate support and choices for women and children/young people experiencing domestic abuse

- Easily accessible information to ensure that help is available for any victim - when and wherever it is sought
- Help and support for children/young people in violent homes
- Help and support to children/young people living in temporary accommodation, this could include refuges, bed and breakfast accommodation, hostels and extended family
- Education to help prevent domestic abuse

Further, improved protection for victims and effective deterrence by:

- Encouraging Domestic Abuse Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs)
- Holding perpetrators accountable for their behaviour
- Encouraging employees to develop workplace policies about domestic abuse

And, to ensure a continuing progressive response there should be:

- Regular reviews of the Community Safety Partnership's Community Safety Plans

Aims of the Strategy

Increasing Women and Children/Young People's Safety

Any child/young person who lives in a home where domestic abuse is taking place is personally at a higher risk of direct abuse. Therefore this strategy aims to increase the safety of both women and children/young people who experience domestic abuse.

Women and children/young people are entitled to prompt, appropriate protection and this must be backed-up by a legal system which supports them properly. The measures contained in the Domestic Violence Crime and Victims Act 2004 will go some way to achieving the level of support required. The Act provides increased legal protection for women and children/young people - which will enable more victims to stay in their own homes and to feel safe there^{****}. However, the Welsh Assembly Government recognises that the option of staying in the home will not always be available and that in many instances victims will continue to require a network of support services including: advocacy, temporary accommodation, refuge provision and counselling. Thus it is vital that there is continued support for both statutory and voluntary front line services.

Nevertheless, effective support alone will not ensure that women and children/young people are protected from domestic abuse. It is essential that the statutory and voluntary services, internally and externally, co-ordinate their work. Co-ordinated and effective help at the right time can save lives and work to improve a victim's quality of life by reducing the massive and potentially long-term impact of domestic abuse^{****}.

Even then, co-ordinated support is worthless unless those who need it can easily access it - agencies must work to improve the lines of communication across all areas of Wales, particularly within rural Wales and also within our BME communities.

This strategy aims to increase the safety of women and children/young people by recognising the need for:

- Appropriate and adequate legal protection for all including men and people in same sex relationships
- Increased safe choices for women and children/young people
- Appropriate and accessible support and solutions for women and children/young people

- Encouraging policies that oppose the smacking of children and seeking to promote alternatives to physical discipline. The Assembly will be developing a Parenting Action Plan to take this agenda forward.
- Adequate funding for domestic abuse services.
- The need for all Welsh agencies to adhere to minimum standards.
- Improved multi-agency working.
- Accessibility for all including families with pets.

Holding Abusers Accountable

The measures in the Domestic Violence Crime and Victims Act 2004 will enable the police in England and Wales to make an arrest without warrant where common assault has taken place^{§§§§§}. This demonstrates that there is a serious commitment in England and Wales to law enforcement. It means, in practice, the arrest and prosecution of domestic violence perpetrators through the criminal justice system.

The Welsh Assembly Government is committed to positive action on issues of domestic abuse. Domestic abuse must be addressed pro-actively in all areas of Wales, in partnership with front-line agencies.

Essentially, holding abusers accountable in Wales will demand:

- Improved and increased legal sanctions
- A pro-active partnership approach
- Increased positive action from Criminal Justice Agencies including The Courts, Local Criminal Justice Boards and the Crown Prosecution Service
- Increased police positive action including: active reporting, enhanced evidence gathering and improved detection

This strategy also aims to oversee the implementation of interventions which hold abusers accountable for their behaviour in such a way as to effectively deter future abuse and repeat victimisation.

Deterring future abuse and repeat victimisation will require:

- The continuing implementation of intervention and assessment programmes for perpetrators which meet agreed minimum standards
- Improved multi-agency working

Prevention of Abuse

If domestic abuse is to be stopped in Wales it is essential that Welsh agencies/organisations offer an effective service to those who experience domestic abuse. At the same time, however, the **causes** of domestic abuse must be addressed.

A Pro-active, Evidence Based Approach

It is vital that all statutory and voluntary agencies make a concerted effort to address domestic abuse. Agencies must develop closer working mechanisms: joint-agency protocols and policies need to be developed; effective interventions need to be recognised and service provision gaps need to be identified.

Sustaining a positive, progressive response to domestic abuse in Wales requires:

- A firm stance against domestic abuse by all statutory and voluntary organisations
- Evidence based criminal justice agency interventions
- Examination of robust data to monitor progress

Knowledge and Communication

All agencies/organisations must cut across the current service provider boundaries in Wales - it is essential that agencies/organisations are all going in the same direction and that direction must be the right one. This can only be achieved if information and knowledge is shared.

Each individual agency/organisation has a depth of experience: there is a lot to learn from each other. Agencies/organisations that work closely with black and ethnic minority communities for example can educate others to better understand the diverse needs of domestic abuse survivors.

All agencies/organisations must aim to:

- Deliver a clear and consistent message that domestic abuse is wrong
- Encourage training on domestic abuse
- Share good practice and research
- Improve multi-agency working and approaches to preventative action
- Develop effective information sharing protocols (See the Home Office report "Safety and Justice: sharing personal information in the context of domestic

violence -an overview” has been endorsed by the Welsh Assembly Government. This report provides an introduction to responsible and lawful sharing of personal sensitive information between practitioners in domestic abuse contexts in England and Wales). Copies available on <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds>^v

Education and Raising Public Awareness

On a primary level, prevention work in Wales aims to stop abuse before it happens.

It is important to address the root causes of domestic abuse. Stereotypes must be confronted, the hidden nature of domestic abuse must be emphasised and the unacceptability of domestic abuse must be effectively communicated. Information must be accessible to all people which means that it must be available in a range of formats and languages and be culturally relevant.

This strategy aims to encourage:

- Provision of education to prevent offending in the first place
- Raising of public awareness about the unacceptability of domestic abuse
- Publicising the issue of domestic abuse and in doing so make use of positive role models
- Community involvement and responsibility
- Implementation of perpetrator re-education programmes

Supporting and Informing Children/Young People

The Welsh Assembly Government recognises that domestic abuse is a grave crime and that witnessing it or being the subject of it can have a serious adverse effect on a child/young person’s well-being and development. It is essential therefore that children/young people who are affected by domestic abuse have accessible support services^{*****}.

The Welsh Assembly Government aims to support children/young people by:

- Providing “Sure Start” support - targeted at under fives
- Working with Young People’s Partnerships to ensure that the opinions and concerns of children and young people are taken into account when planning services
- Providing active support services for those living with and/or experiencing domestic abuse

- Encouraging the use of the Assembly's Good Practice Guide on Domestic Abuse guidance in school settings. School nurses are well placed to identify early signs of domestic abuse

Domestic abuse may impact on an individual's ability to parent. It is important that children/young people are taught parenting skills together with appropriate information on sexual relationships. Children/young people need to know how to form supportive and respectful relationships - they need to be able to identify with basic values: equality, value of cultural diversity, dignity, respect, mutual support and responsibility for actions.

This strategy aims to encourage greater awareness of domestic abuse issues by children and young people in a variety of different ways:

- Provision of information to enable and encourage children/young people to build positive relationships based on a solid foundation of mutual respect
- Provision of informal and formal education about domestic violence and its effects on adults and children/ young people
- Inclusion by schools of parenting skills in Personal Social Education work
- Recognition of the need to reach particular groups of children, such as those excluded from school, looked after children or children in youth offending institutions

Recommendations

Minimum Standards

The Welsh Assembly Government is committed to effective action on domestic abuse.

This strategy sets out a national framework for the delivery of comprehensive and effective services to domestic abuse survivors. Essentially, however, the aims of the strategy will only be realised if there is a nationwide' commitment to minimum standards of service, and, ultimately, the implementation of 'best practice'. Towards this end, it is imperative that all agencies/organisations and employers ensure that they have the appropriate mechanisms in place to improve individual responses to domestic abuse.

Implementing and sustaining an effective response to domestic abuse in Wales requires service development in the following key areas:

- Services to protect all victims particularly women and children/young people
- Work with perpetrators
- Prevention work
- Services to support and inform children/young people

An effective national response also demands positive action from:

- Employers
- Trade Unions

This strategy encourages all services (statutory and voluntary), agencies/organisations, private practice solicitors and employers (public and private) to:

- Be aware of needs of individual victims

Including: male victims, those in same sex relationships, victims from BME communities, victims living in rural Wales, victims who are refugees or asylum seekers, victims with language needs, victims with disabilities and victims with health mental health and substance misuse problems

- Have appropriate systems in place for identifying domestic abuse where there are no outward signs

Domestic abuse has a significant detrimental effect on those who experience it and thus domestic abuse has serious implications in the workplace. Physical abuse and emotional abuse can cause victims to fail to meet the requirements of employers and even to miss work. However, there may be no outward signs. Therefore, it is important that there is a general awareness of the issues surrounding domestic abuse.

- Provide clear information and referrals to victims

Information about both statutory and voluntary domestic abuse services and private practice solicitors should be made available in an accessible format. In appropriate settings, posters and information booklets/forms sign-posting agencies and organisations that can offer support will direct victims to the help that is available.

- Provide relevant training to staff with one specific nominated individual to have overall responsibility

Raising awareness about the scale and extent of domestic abuse as well as prevention issues can only be achieved through comprehensive training. Training will raise standards of practice both individually and collectively across Wales.

- Have a domestic abuse policy in place

In developing and implementing work-place policies advice should be sought from Community Safety Partnerships and front line agencies such as Trade Unions and voluntary sector organisations.

- Develop safe information sharing protocols

Local Policy Formulation and Implementation

The holistic approach outlined in this strategy must be mirrored at the local level. Community Safety Partnerships have a statutory responsibility to develop and implement local strategies to reduce crime and disorder in our communities.

Community Safety Partnerships

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 provides the legislative foundation for effective partnership working between agencies and organisations. The Act requires the implementation of Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategies in all localities. This encourages a co-ordinated approach to crime reduction.

In formulating local strategies, local crime audits are taken in all areas of England and Wales in order that the nature and prevalence of all local crime can be fully determined. Given the hidden nature of domestic abuse and its consequences, and its under-reporting, the message from central Government is very clear: Domestic abuse must be prioritised and form part of the local Community Safety Plan.

Thus the Community Safety Partnerships, the key local partnership for reducing crime in the community, will be the driving vehicle to deliver this strategy.

Partnership membership will include:

- Police
- Police Authorities
- Local Authorities
- Local Health Boards
- Fire Authorities

Relevant agencies that may be invited by responsible authorities to participate include:

- Domestic Abuse Fora
- Area Child Protection Committees
- Crown Prosecution Service
- Probation
- Prison Service
- Social Services
- Housing
- Education
- NHS Trusts
- Voluntary Sector/Support Agencies - in particular specialist domestic abuse agencies such as women's refuges and advocacy services, perpetrator programmes and associated support services and children's services
- Youth Offending Teams
- Young Peoples Partnerships
- Religious Organisations
- Appropriate quality advice services

When formulating the domestic abuse section of the Community Safety Plan, it is recommended that full use be made of local Domestic Abuse Fora expertise⁺⁺⁺⁺⁺. Importantly, the involvement of Domestic Abuse Fora will ensure that the voice of the victim remains central to the policy making process.

The delivery of the strategy will also require co-operation from:

- Judiciary
- Local Criminal Justice Boards
- Community Legal Service Partnerships

Also, the Private Sector:

- Employers
- Trade Unions

Delivering the Strategy

Taking the Strategy Forward

The delivery of this strategy requires:

- The commitment of all agencies/organisations and employers to this national strategy
- Community Safety Partnerships to steer joint-agency collaboration including links with Area Child Protection Committees
- Strong links to be established with 'Supporting People' groups and homelessness services leading to full engagement in the establishment of Supporting People Operational Plans and local Homelessness Strategies
- Mechanisms to be developed for sharing good practice
- Recognising that prevention and education is fundamental in helping break the cycle of abuse

Funding, Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

Adequate funding, consistent monitoring, timely evaluation and review are essential if the response to domestic abuse is to continue to improve in Wales. Reliable data is needed to realistically assess the scale of the problem and the effectiveness of services: evaluation and review will ensure that the national response continues to adapt to meet the needs of the people of Wales.

Specifically:

- Partners need to ensure they make maximum use of available funds to improve the response to domestic abuse in Wales
- Community Safety Partnerships will also need to carry out regular audits to ensure they are making progress. However, progress in addressing domestic abuse will be measured centrally whenever possible, e.g. through the use of police data and calls to the National helpline
- That the Partners use effectively robust domestic abuse data to monitor progress including assessing the impact on children who are in need of protection or affected by domestic abuse
- The Working Group on Domestic Abuse should continue to monitor and review the strategy

FUTURE PLANS

The delivery of the strategy will be monitored by the Assembly's Working Group on Domestic Abuse. Seminars were held for Community Safety Partnerships in September and October 2004 advising them that plans for addressing domestic abuse must be included in their Community Safety Plans that run from April 2005. To assist this process new Home Office Guidance on how to address issues around domestic abuse was launched in January 2005.

There is a clear need to ensure that all agencies dealing with domestic abuse work together to pool their expertise. Community Safety Partnerships will be responsible for steering this collaboration. There will be a need for each Community Safety Partnership to regularly audit the measures that they have introduced to address the problems of domestic abuse. In particular the Community Safety Partnerships will need to consider how the following outcomes can be delivered:

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

The Assembly will undertake the following specific measures in 2005/06 to assist with this process:

- The funding stream for providing support to domestic abuse initiatives, including the new funding announced in December 2004 by the Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration, will be formally reviewed to ensure that it is properly targeted at delivering this strategy
- Continue to support the Working Group on domestic violence and violence against women
- The All Wales National Helpline will be reviewed to ensure that it is effective and provides value for money
- Consider how to develop the evidence base to close key knowledge gaps

- Encourage further the development of an All Wales network of Domestic Abuse Co-ordinators to share best practice
- Organise at least one training seminar/conference for Community Safety Partnerships
- Encourage the use of the new All Wales Pathway to ensure that health professionals in Wales carry out routine enquires for domestic abuse within the antenatal period
- To produce supporting people/ domestic abuse guidance

Members of the Working Group on Domestic Violence and Violence against Women

This strategy has been made possible due to the following agency representatives and their valuable depth of knowledge:

All Wales Saheli Association	Shahien Taj
AWEMA	Naz Malik
BAWSO	Mutale Nyoni
CAFCASS	Teresa Hallett
Cardiff Women's Safety Unit	Jan Pickles
Criminal Justice Board	Stephen Routledge
Crown Prosecution Service	John Lloyd
Cymdeithas Tai Hafan	Cathy Davies
Legal Services Commission	Tiana Williams
National Offender Management Centre	Ian Fox
Nevill Hall Hospital, Abergavenny	Dr Aideen Naughton
North Wales Domestic Abuse Project	Amanda Clare
NSPCC	Kevin Gibbs
RELATE	Rose O'Driscoll
Social Services Department Denbighshire County Council	Sally Ellis
South Wales Police	DCI Steve Bartley
University Hospital of Wales	Professor John Shepherd
Victim Support Wales	Jon Trew
Wales Association of Community Safety Officers	Jane Griffiths
Wales TUC	Margaret Hazell
WLGA	Daisy Seabourne
	Judith Doenhoff
Welsh Women's Aid	Sian James
	Lynne Sanders

Glossary of Terms

Domestic Abuse Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC)

The MARAC is a formal conference to facilitate the risk assessment process. The purpose is for agencies to share information with view to identifying those persons at a 'very high' level of risk and thereafter to jointly construct a management plan to provide professional support to those at 'high risk'.

Risk assessment and the sharing of information across the relevant agencies enables limited resources to be targeted. In South Wales, local agencies signed up to an agreement to share information where children are resident in the household or where the victim is pregnant in accordance with the principles of the 'interests of the child' as contained within the Children Act 1989 and pursuant to the Crime Reduction Partnership Strategy set out by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 section 115. This single, joint approach to exchanging information has proved a highly efficient mechanism for reducing crime and disorder and also for the protection of vulnerable persons.

Local Criminal Justice Boards

Criminal Justice Boards were created to ensure a unified approach to improve our criminal justice service at a local level. Core membership of the forty-two boards in England and Wales consists of chief officers from the police, crown prosecution service, probation service, prison service, magistrates and crown courts and youth offending team managers.

Perpetrator Programmes

The Probation Service runs programmes for perpetrators convicted of an offence related to domestic abuse and sentenced to attend as part of a Community Rehabilitation Order(CRO). The Probation Service has a recently accredited programme - Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme (IDAP) - which is due to be rolled out across Wales from April 2005. This programme includes information sharing with the police and social services and basic women's safety work as well as the perpetrator programme itself. The perpetrator programme is based on the Duluth curriculum.

The voluntary sector runs programmes for perpetrators who wish to self-refer and for referrals from agencies such as Social Services, CAFCASS and Health.

Supporting People's Groups

'Supporting People' is a funding framework and policy for delivering accommodation and support to vulnerable people. Supporting People uses one budget and aims to distribute funding at a local level based on need.

Sure Start

Sure start programmes offer on-going support to children and families by bringing together early education, childcare, health and family support to give a sure start to young children living in disadvantaged areas.

Young People's Partnerships

Young People's Partnerships (YPPs) were established in Wales under the "Extending Entitlement" initiative. YPPs have a role in co-ordinating support and services for young people aged between eleven and twenty-five years who are victims of domestic abuse.

References

- * Flood-Page, C. and Taylor, J., (eds.) (2003) 'Crime in England and Wales 2001/2002: Supplementary Volume', (London: Home Office).
- † Stanko, E. 'The Day to Count: A Snapshot of the Impact of Domestic Violence in the UK', at http://www.domesticviolencedata.org/5_research/count/count.htm#police
- ‡ Ibid.
- § Welsh Women's Aid, (1999) 'Domestic Violence: Making a Difference in the Millennium', (Welsh Women's Aid). Information can also be found at, www.welshwomen'said.org
- ** Mirrlees-Black, C. (1999) 'Domestic Violence: Findings from a New British Crime Survey Self-Completion Questionnaire', Home Office Research Study 191 (London: Home Office).
- †† See, www.barnardos.org
- ‡‡ Welsh Women's Aid, op. cit. n. 4.
- §§ Brand, S. and Price, R. (2000) 'The Economic and Social Costs of Crime', Home Office Research Study 217, (London: Home Office).
- *** Welsh Women's Aid, op. cit. n. 4.
- ††† Domestic abuse has drawn increased political attention on the world stage. The United Nations estimates that up to 38% (1 in 3) are victims of domestic abuse. Member governments acknowledge that domestic abuse is a human rights violation and have agreed to implement legislation to provide services for women and children, to hold perpetrators accountable and also to provide education in order that moral, social and cultural practices may be challenged. Further information is available at, www.un.org.
- †††† At European level, the European Commission is making a significant contribution to the battle against domestic abuse by ensuring that the issue is a priority on the European Union's political agenda. The Commission is encouraging member states to co-ordinate their domestic abuse response and thus further the support and protection of domestic abuse survivors and foster the

implementation of effective preventative measures. Funding has also been made available to innovative preventative projects, for example Cymdeithas Tai Hafan's PSE Activity Pack for schools in Wales. Further information can be found at, www.Europa.eu.int/comm/dg10/women/violence

§§§

The new measures contained in the Domestic Violence Crime and Victims Act 2004 represents the most significant overhaul of domestic abuse legislation for three decades. The measures will facilitate a more effective police response when survivors report domestic abuse. This response is supported by civil and criminal law measures that aim to provide the greatest protection to all survivors of domestic abuse and which also aim to eradicate repeat victimisation:

Common Assault will be an arrestable offence;

Restraining orders will be available for all offences;

Persons mentioned in a restraining order will have the right to be heard upon an application to vary or terminate the order;

Persons mentioned in a restraining order will be contact if an application is made to vary or terminate an order;

Where a court is considering an occupation order under Part IV of the Family Law Act 1996 it will be compelled to consider whether in issuing such an order it should also issue a non-molestation order;

Non-molestation and occupation orders will be available to cohabiting same-sex couples and also to couples who have never married or co-habited;

It will be a criminal offence to breach a non-molestation order - enabling the police to arrest for breach. The penalty for breach will be up to five years imprisonment on indictment;

Where the Secretary of State considers appropriate domestic violence homicide reviews will be held.

Further information can be found at,

www.homeoffice.gov.uk

Details of members of the working group can be found at Appendix 1.

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Mirrlees-Black, C. (1999), op. cit. n. 5.

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Figures confirmed by ACPO.

§§§§ There are other contentious issues in the context of the domestic abuse service provision in Wales.

For example, some women have no 'recourse to public funds' - women who enter the UK to join their partners are not allowed access to public funds during the first two years of their marriage. This means that any such woman who finds herself in an abusive relationship is unable to claim housing related state benefit making it impossible to secure temporary accommodation. Consequently, refuges providing accommodation for women who are subject to immigration control are faced with a shortfall in their income.

Another prominent issue is the need for specialist refuge provisions for women with older teenage boys - admittance rules currently dictate that teenage boys aged 16-18 are not accepted into refuge. See, generally, Women's National Commission, (2003) 'Unlocking the Secret: Findings from Consultations with Survivors' (London: Department of Trade and Industry/Women's National Commission).

Domestic Violence, sexual assault and stalking: findings from the British Crime Survey (2004) Walby and Allen. Home Office Research Study report no 76.

***** See, "Wales Regional Report 2004" at, http://www.legalservices.gov.uk/contract/regional_plans_and_strategies.htm

††††† The Act proposes that restraining orders could be imposed when sentencing for any offence, and on acquittal for any offence. Further, that any person mentioned in a restraining order has the right to make representations in court where an application to vary or terminate the order is made, op. cit. n. 12.

‡‡‡‡‡ See, Mullender, A. and Humphrey's, C. 'Children and Domestic Violence: A Research Overview of the Impact on Children' at, www.rip.org.uk

§§§§§ Op. cit. n. 12.

***** For further information see, Mullender, A. 'Meeting the Needs of Children', in Taylor-Browne, J. (ed.) (2001) 'What Works in Reducing Domestic Violence? A Comprehensive Guide for Professionals', (London: HMSO).

®®E††††††† The need for local Community Safety Partnerships to work closely with non-statutory organisations has been emphasised by central Government. See, Home Office & Cabinet Office, (1999) 'Living Without Fear: An Integrated Approach to Tackling Domestic

Violence', (London: Home Office), Home Office, (2000) 'Domestic Violence: Break the Chain Multi-Agency Guidance for Addressing Domestic Violence', (London: Home Office), and Home Office, 'Safety and Justice: The Government's Proposals on Domestic Violence', (2003) Cm 5847 (London: HMSO).

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www.homeoffice.gov.uk/crime/domesticviolence/index.html)