



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

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John Griffiths AM
Chair of the Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

10 October 2019

Dear John,

In your letter to me dated 18 December 2018, you requested periodic updates every three months from the National Advisers to provide reassurance on the pace of implementation of the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Act 2015.

I am very pleased to enclose the third of these updates from the National Advisers which covers the period July to September 2019.

*Your sincerely,
Jane*

Jane Hutt AC/AM
Y Dirprwy Weinidog a'r Prif Chwip
Deputy Minister and Chief Whip

National Advisers' Report to the Equality, Local Government and Communities (ELGC) Committee September 2019 update

1. Purpose

In his letter dated 18 December 2018 to the Deputy Minister and Chief Whip, John Griffiths, AM Chair of the ELGC Committee, requested periodic updates from the National Advisers to provide reassurance on the pace of implementation of the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015.

This is the third update from the National Advisers and covers the period July 2019 to September 2019 inclusive.

The sub headings below, "National Advisers" and "Welsh Government VAWDASV Officials," indicate ownership of actions described in the respective sections.

2. Introduction

National Advisers:

The National Advisers recognise that this is a cross-cutting area of work which demands commitment across Welsh Government departments, local authorities, the public sector, UK government organisations, the third sector and other relevant partners.

We finalised membership and draft terms of reference for the new Expert Stakeholder Group on VAWDASV which met for the first time this quarter.

We have formally met the four Directors-General at the Welsh Government and they agreed to engage individually or at decision-making director level with the Expert Stakeholder Group. They further agreed to meet with us half yearly to ensure that VAWDASV remains a cross-government priority.

3. National Indicators

Welsh Government VAWDASV Officials:

As proposed in the April to June update provided to the committee, the National Indicator Working Group has now been established and is currently reviewing the published National VAWDASV Indicators, proposed measures and data sources with a view to agreeing any amendments by the summer of 2020. The group first met on 12 September 2019 and will continue to meet monthly until the indicators are fully developed.

The Group is exploring the use of open data to overcome issues identified during the consultation phases around the lack of consistent available data across Wales.

National Advisers:

This quarter following the publication of the draft National Indicators for VAWDASV, the Government has been setting up several consultation events which we are chairing this autumn.

4. Local Strategies

National Advisers:

The progress reports on the local strategies were published this summer. We intend to consider the responses with a view to determining best practice in this area. We met with the NSPCC, Children in Wales and Welsh Women's Aid to discuss their perceived lack of focus on children and young people within these strategies. We will investigate these concerns within the next quarter with the aim of identifying any improvements to chief executive officers.

High quality, professional services by frontline staff are essential to meet the overarching aim of improving public sector responses to the needs of survivors.

5. Statutory Guidance

Welsh Government VAWDASV Officials:

Regional Commissioning Guidance

The Statutory Guidance for the Commissioning of VAWDASV Services in Wales continues to be rolled to all relevant authorities under the VAWDASV Act.

National Training Framework

Relevant authorities must prepare an annual report of the progress they have made regionally or locally in delivering the actions specified in their local training plan as required in National Training Framework for Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence statutory guidance.

In May 2019, the relevant authorities submitted their second annual report to the Welsh Government. Over the past two years, significant partnership working has taken place in relation to planning and implementation of the National Training Framework across Wales. Many of the early challenges associated with implementation of the Framework have been overcome and it is clear that significant work has been undertaken to meet the requirements of the statutory guidance.

As of March 2019, 167, 207 people in Wales have accessed training under the National Training Framework. .

Services have been working towards completion of the Group 1 eLearning module (basic awareness training) and the average completion rate for all authorities increased last year.

- The average completion rate for the combined Fire and Rescue Authorities is: 93%
- The average completion rate for the combined Local Health Boards is: 81%
- The average completion rate for the combined local authorities is: 60%

Public sector professionals continue to be trained through our early intervention and prevention training 'Ask & Act' (group 2 & 3), where identifying coercive control is a key aspect and 3,300 public sector workers have been trained to date. Ask and Act training is now available across Gwent, Cwm Taf, North Wales, Mid and West Wales, Fire and Rescue Services, Welsh Ambulance Service Trust as well as Health Boards and Trusts. The full roll out of Ask & Act will be completed during 2020-21. Implementation meetings have commenced within Bridgend and within Swansea Western Bay.

Planning has been underway for another fully funded Welsh Government specialist course and service manager course for groups 4 and 5 of the framework (those whose specialism in the field of VAWDASV), and regional workshops for group 6 leaders (includes those with commissioning and planning responsibilities) to begin in October.

Welsh Government officials, in partnership with the National Assembly Wales, are arranging for Ask and Act training to be made available for all Assembly Members and their support staff. Planning meeting is scheduled for October. The training will be useful in their roles working in constituency areas. It allows Assembly Members to pro-actively engage at the earliest opportunity with those who are vulnerable and experiencing violence and abuse, and to signpost them to relevant support services.

Welsh Government officials have engaged with key partners and pilot area leads to review how third sector support will continue during the next phase of the roll out of Ask and Act.

National Advisers:

The Advisers attended the NHS Wales Safeguarding Network meeting in July. One of the key messages we imparted was on improving VAWDASV referral pathways within health, especially for victims of sexual abuse and historical abuse. The improvement of health outcomes for diverse groups was stressed. Our input highlighted the need for public health approaches to tackling domestic and sexual abuse and violence. We also stressed the need for training to make a difference in the way professionals support victims by early identification, reducing risk and repeat victimisation.

6. Health

Welsh Government VAWDASV Officials:

Officials met with representatives of the IRIS (Identification and Referral to Improve Safety) programme for GP surgeries to discuss synergies between Ask and Act and IRIS. Where funding is available to deliver IRIS, it was agreed that this was the appropriate route for GP surgeries as there is additional support for an Advocate Educator; otherwise Ask and Act training will be delivered to support early identification and referral.

National Advisers:

We were extremely fortunate to meet with all four Director Generals of the government to discuss how the work on VAWDASV can be co-ordinated across all departments. We are keen to explore how we may better align VAWDASV priorities and how we may identify areas of good practice and mainstream the public health approach towards eliminating VAWDASV.

7. Education

Welsh Government VAWDASV Officials:

Sex and Relationships Education will be renamed as Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE). This will be made a statutory part of the new curriculum for all learners between the ages of 3 and 16 and updated guidance will be produced for the current curriculum. VAWDASV officials fed into the updated guidance for RSE in the current curriculum in Wales: the guidance was recently published for public consultation. The new guidance takes account of the evidence presented by the Sex and Education Expert Panel and aims to give schools up to date information and support regarding this often sensitive and fast moving area of study.

Officials met with WJEC to discuss the development of an Advanced Welsh Baccalaureate Health and Wellbeing Peer Mentoring programme. We will work closely with WJEC to design this specific challenge and propose to pilot across South Wales schools early in 2020 prior to full roll out by September 2020.

HEFCW is developing VAWDASV guidance with the support of officials and aim to publish and disseminate this guidance throughout Welsh universities by April 2020.

8. FGM, Honour Based Abuse (HBA) and Forced Marriage (FM)

Welsh Government VAWDASV Officials:

The membership of the All Wales HBA Leadership Group was reviewed to ensure that members were leads for honour-based abuse within their organisations. A meeting with the refreshed membership was held on 12 August. The discussion focused on terms of reference, meaningful engagement, collaboration and delivery

priorities. It was agreed that “violence” should be replaced with “abuse” because the latter incorporates all types of abuse including emotional, psychological and financial. The next meeting is scheduled for November.

National Advisers:

Our engagement with BAME groups has highlighted the need to establish a Learning Panel. We will draw upon previous cases which have been brought to our attention and engage all relevant agencies to identify improvements to service provision.

9. Sustainable Funding Model

Welsh Government VAWDASV Officials:

Work to develop a sustainable funding model for VAWDASV is continuing through the Sustainable Funding Group.

National Advisers:

We chair the sustainable funding group and continue to find it challenging to manage stakeholder expectations. We have identified a lack of join-up with commissioners across Wales and the work to provide a coherent approach to funding remains ongoing.

There have been challenges for the members of the group to understand the concept of sustainable funding that is not dependent on Welsh Government financial support. We will be hosting a workshop during the next quarter to promote a discrete commissioning group to provide a steer towards identifying collaborative funding opportunities wherever possible. We also aim to explore the Cardiff and Vale Regional Commissioning approach which entails working towards a seven year cycle.

10. Funding Allocations

Welsh Government VAWDASV Officials:

Revenue Funding

Since the last update the situation remains the same; Welsh Government continues to provide revenue funding to Regional Partnerships and third sector organisations on an annual basis.

Officials are continuing to monitor delivery against stakeholders’ delivery plans via quarterly claim cycles which include monitoring meetings.

Capital Funding

The 2019-2020 Capital grant scheme which totals £969k has been rolled out and received an unprecedented amount of interest. Over £1.4m worth of applications have been received at full application stage from a variety of stakeholders including

statutory organisations and those from the third sector. Officials are currently scoring the applications against robust criteria and applicants will be informed of the outcome in the autumn.

11. Working with Perpetrators

Welsh Government VAWDASV Officials:

Practice sharing events were held in both Cardiff and Llandudno Junction in July. These well-attended events included presentations from STOP-SO, Drive and Caring Dads.

The VAWDASV work stream of the 'framework to support positive change for those at risk of offending in Wales' met in July. Three task and finish groups reporting to the work stream are now underway, focusing on perpetrator service commissioning, service standards and service user engagement.

The Welsh Government is providing ongoing support and supervision for the Swansea University harassment research study, which the Welsh Government funded in collaboration with KESS II (Knowledge Economy Skills Scholarships), part of the European Social Fund.

The Welsh Government's good practice guidance for public services working with perpetrators will be published in October.

National Advisers:

We continue to highlight the need for this work as part of the "prevention" aspect of the VAWDASV Act 2015.

12. National Survivor Engagement Framework

Further to the last update, the pilot project to develop a national survivor engagement framework has continued. A theory of change model for engaging with survivors has been developed.

Findings from the survey to engage with those survivors who had been under represented in our engagement so far (101 returns) supported the formation of a pilot panel which has now been established. The panel met for the first time on 30 September and included a mix of ages, gender and ethnicities.

The purpose of the pilot panel will be for survivors to share their knowledge and lived experience to influence the development of the next National Strategy on Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence. The pilot panel will also feed into the work of the Expert Stakeholder Group chaired by the National Advisers.

The panel will be monitored over the three-month period. Evaluation meetings will take place with those engaging and will be combined with other findings from the pilot work to establish whether it is the best approach and whether the survivor

voices and experiences have made a difference. This will inform the final report which will influence a sustainable survivor engagement framework which we anticipate will include multiple ways of engaging with survivors across Wales.

National Advisers:

We continue to engage with the victim and survivor networks and they remain pivotal to the development of policy. However, we remain concerned about the sustainability of some groups and the rural / urban complexities of service provision.

13. Live Fear Free

Welsh Government VAWDASV Officials:

Officials commissioned an evaluability study to inform future contracts for the delivery of the Live Fear Free helpline. The study will enable improved evaluation criteria to form part of the contract specification when the contract is re-let next year.

National Advisers:

The National Advisers are pleased to note the increase in new followers and the lively online debate and feedback generated by the Welsh Government's communications campaigns. Where possible the National Advisers continue to share key messages on their respective social media channels.

14. Communications

Welsh Government VAWDASV Officials:

Campaigns

Planning for phase 3 and 4 of the 'This is not love. This is control' campaign, which was launched in January 2019, has continued to develop during the period. The campaign highlights the treacherous, cumulative nature of coercive control as well as its subtlety. It will continue to reflect more examples of controlling behaviour across a range of experiences throughout the year. Phase 3 and 4 of the campaign will reflect the experiences of young people, and control and sexual violence. Phase 3 will highlight the challenges young people face as they develop relationships and a sense of individual identity. Phase 4 will continue to explore and highlight the exploitation, grooming, manipulation and fear that coercive control involves when perpetrated within families and within intimate relationships.

Welsh Government officials have closely engaged with the Expert Stakeholder Communications Group, key stakeholders whose specialism is with young people or within the sexual violence field and survivors; to develop messaging and imagery for the next 2 phases.

Early indicative data from the Live Fear Free helpline and from the police continue to suggest that the campaign is having an impact on the number of coercive control related calls to the helpline and reported coercive control offences in Wales.

We have worked closely with regional coordinators to seek bids for community communication activities this year. Community communications activity will be funded in each region which will offer the opportunity to focus on our previous campaigns and our most recent campaign: This is not Love, This is Control. Activities this year will be led by survivors of abuse in partnership with specialist stakeholders across the seven regional areas in Wales.

We have also run mini campaigns on Live Fear Free social media channels highlighting our achievements from the annual report, and street harassment commitments, gained from a round table event we held with public sector organisations.

15. Conclusion

National Advisers:

We have prepared our annual report for 2018-19 in keeping with our statutory responsibility to provide the Welsh Ministers with a progress report each year. This was published on 30 September.

We attended the Domestic Abuse Round Table chaired by the Right Honourable Priti Patel MP Home Secretary on 28 August. We provided examples of our work, our national VAWDASV groups and how we approach prevention, protection and support. In particular, the Home Secretary was keen to find out more about our effectiveness in Wales of raising awareness of VAWDASV issues. The National Advisers recommend regular meetings should take place with the relevant UK government officials, primarily the recently appointed Domestic Abuse Commissioner. We also wish to encourage continued collaboration and learning amongst officials of the four administrations.

National Advisers

September 2019