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Health Board



Healthy Relationships for Stronger Communities

NPT VAWDASV Strategy 2023-2026

Implementing the Violence Against
Women, Domestic Abuse & Sexual
Violence Act (Wales) 2015

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INTRODUCTION




The human and emotional costs of violence in domestic and public spheres cannot be underestimated.




ACCOMMODATION

Refuges:
3 units, 19 spaces



Move on:
19 self contained units



High Risk
MARAC: 2019/20

612 Cases discussed
468 Children in household
432 IDVA referrals

MARAC: 2020/21

527 Cases discussed
836 Children in household
437 IDVA referrals


Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVA)
NPT – 4 IDVAs, 1 senior IDVA
3 Regional IDVAs – Court IDVA, DRIVE IDVA, Health IDVA

Targeted Specialist Support

- ➔ Thrive Women's Aid
- ➔ Calan DVS
- ➔ Hafan Cymru
- ➔ New Pathways

SUPPORT

- ➔ Floating support
- ➔ Counselling
- ➔ Remote evidence facility
- ➔ CYP programmes
- ➔ Group Programmes
- ➔ Drop-in services



SOCIAL SERVICES

SPOC then signposting to:

- ➔ Early Intervention – Families First
- ➔ Statutory Services
- ➔ Information & advice
- ➔ FAST (Family Action Support Team)

Children's Services – 2020/21
7042 PPN received, 3029 relating to domestic abuse (41%)

FAMILIES FIRST

- ➔ Team around the Family
- ➔ Children & Families Team
- ➔ Domestic Abuse Service
- ➔ Flying Start

Children & Young People EDUCATION

- ➔ Relationship & Sexuality Education
- ➔ Spectrum
- ➔ Camau Training
- ➔ NPT Youth Service
- ➔ South Wales Police Schoolbeat
- ➔ Crucial Crew
- ➔ Freshers/Wellbeing events



This is Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council and Swansea Bay University Health Boards third 'Healthy Relationships for Stronger Communities' strategy, implementing the Violence Against Women Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015. The first strategy was published in 2017 and the second in 2020. Since this time, various changes have been made and this progress is highlighted throughout this revised strategy.

As with our earlier strategies, this is an overarching plan which outlines the priority areas and strategic direction around healthy relationships and the implementation of the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 within Neath Port Talbot. It has been developed with the involvement of partner agencies and survivors. It aims to tackle all forms of violence in relationships, responding to the growing number of referrals being received by specialist providers; reducing harm and improving the lives of those affected.

This agenda is 'everyone's business' and is a cross cutting theme that requires all areas of public policy to address violence in domestic and public spheres, to shape and improve the delivery of services for those affected and to meet the requirements outlined in the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015. This Act places a statutory duty on the Local Authority and Swansea Bay University Health Board to jointly prepare and publish a strategy to meet local needs and to prevent all forms of Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV).

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council (NPTCBC) and Swansea Bay University Health Board has worked with a wide range of partner agencies to develop this strategy and will continue to work with partner agencies to provide services to all victims of crime and to bring all offenders to justice. We have also worked closely with Swansea City Council, to establish areas of work which are best delivered on a regional basis and these will be highlighted throughout the strategy.

The term "Violence Against Women" which is used nationally and in this strategy refers to the range of crime types which are predominantly, but not exclusively, experienced by women and girls. Such gender-based violence includes domestic abuse, rape and

sexual violence, stalking, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, crimes committed in the name of 'honour', trafficking, sexual exploitation, including commercially through the sex industry, and sexual harassment in the workplace and public.

Having a co-ordinated approach to addressing these issues does not mean this neglects abuse directed towards men and boys or other groups and individuals who experience these forms of violence, or neglects to deal with violence perpetrated by women, where this occurs.

Those with the power to transform the cultures that perpetuate violence must work together. This strategy encourages partners to further work together to achieve positive outcomes for all victims of VAWDASV.

It is important that we reflect on the Covid-19 pandemic and the impact this has had on victims. The pandemic has also affected the work of the council and its partners in recent years. During this time, it was recognised nationally and locally that incidences of domestic abuse drastically increased. Victims were presenting with increased complexities and very difficult circumstances. Whilst services continued to support these victims in the best possible way, this undoubtedly put added pressure on all local services who were operating differently due to Covid restrictions.

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OUR VISION, AIMS & KEY PRINCIPLES

“To prevent and eradicate gender based violence by promoting: equality; safety; respect; and, independence to enable everyone to live free from abuse and the attitudes that perpetuate it.”



Having a co-ordinated community response ensures that all relevant organisations effectively respond to these issues, both within their own agencies and in collaboration with other partners, to prevent harm, reduce risk and increase immediate and long-term safety for people living in Neath Port Talbot.

This agenda affects all services including children and adult services, housing, police, health, probation, civil and criminal courts, voluntary and community organisations. We maintain that it is everyone’s responsibility to address all forms of VAWDASV by identifying and supporting survivors and their children and holding perpetrators accountable, whilst offering opportunities to change their behaviour.

Our response to these issues highlights the diversity and needs of people affected and the most significant priority is to keep survivors at the centre of our work.

We recognise that violence and abuse affects people regardless of their age, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender, class and marital status.

Violence in relationships may have a range of consequences including homelessness, mental health, problematic substance use, child protection issues, physical injury, offending behaviour and ongoing trauma.

Aims & Key Principles

In line with the requirements of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, our aims and key principles within this strategy have been developed to meet the following 5 ways of working which will help us to work together better, avoid repeating any past mistakes and tackle some of the long term challenges we are facing.

Long Term

- To ensure there is a strong focus on education and work with young people with the aim of eradicating violence and abuse over the long term
- To work with communities and employers to bring about a cultural shift in attitudes towards violence and abuse so that it is no longer tolerated or considered acceptable
- To provide services that offer best value for money

Early Intervention & Prevention

- To refocus funding and remodel services so that victims and perpetrators can access help and support at the earliest possible time and to prevent cases reaching a point of crisis

Collaboration

- Continue to build and develop a confident, strong partnership
- To develop regional and national collaborative approaches where this is more effective than a local response
- To work towards a collaborative commissioning model for all VAWDASV services in the NPT area

Involvement

- To ensure our service delivery is person centred
- To ensure the voices of people affected by violence and abuse are heard and that more opportunity is created to develop services that are evidence based and include survivor involvement

Integration

- To adopt a holistic approach so that the well-being of people affected by violence and abuse is considered in service responses
- To ensure this work is recognised as everyone's business

ACHIEVEMENTS

3 →

We have made significant progress over the past 3 years, despite the challenges faced during the Covid-19 pandemic. This chapter highlights some of the key areas of progress made against each of the 7 objectives of our original strategy. This revised strategy will further build on these achievements, working towards preventing VAWDASV and better supporting those who are affected.



What have we achieved?

Objective 1

Communications & Engagement

- In addition to extending the membership of our Communications & Engagement Group to include a local survivor and SBUHB representative, recent new members include a regional administrator and a sexual violence support service representative from New Pathways
- Our annual White Ribbon campaign has promoted numerous local and national campaigns including Clare's Law, Bright Sky, Ask Angela, Respect. Our continual rolling campaigns ensure regular awareness raising of all relevant services and resources
- White Ribbon 2021 was supported by local grass roots sports teams across NPT, raising awareness of how young men and boys can address inappropriate behaviour in all aspects of everyday life, with support for the Welsh Government 'Call Out Only' campaign
- Safer NPT White Ribbon campaigns reached over 71k people across social media over the past 3 years
- Our regional 'Heads Up' campaign was rolled out across the hair and beauty industry to upskill staff in identifying domestic abuse and providing confidence in handling sensitive conversations
 - » Information packs were distributed, included promotion of the Live Fear Free helpline, as well as the Respect helpline for perpetrators
 - » Online training sessions and webinars were delivered by Welsh Women's Aid for professionals working in the hair & beauty industry to enable identification of abuse and increase confidence in conversations around advice and support for clients

» In conjunction with partner organisations, Calan DVS recorded a podcast aimed at the beauty industry, the podcast which was uploaded to iTunes and Spotify has had over 200 downloads

- Swansea Bay University Health Board (SBUHB) has also recognised the importance of raising awareness by increasing the visibility of the Corporate safeguarding team across the Health Board by working with high priority areas such as Minor Injuries, Emergency Department, Sexual Health and Midwifery to increase awareness of VAWDASV. With the addition of the violence prevention team (VPT). The purpose of the VPT are to reduce crime and associated harm by providing appropriate support and signposting. Violence Prevention Teams have been successfully implemented across England, with only one other team based in the University Hospital of Wales, Cardiff. Along with the Healthcare IDVA who raises awareness of domestic violence and abuse and is establishing and maintaining health links with Safeguarding/ relevant multi-agency forums
- (SBUHB) raised awareness of White Ribbon Day on their intranet site; Ask and Act champions and trainers were updated on the significance of the day and staff were encouraged to wear the white ribbon and place posters across the Health Board. Due to strict Covid restrictions across all sites the usual awareness raising did not take place in 2020 & 2021
- Calan DVS took part in Neath Port Talbot's safeguarding week to deliver 4 sessions to 37 individuals on: Inspiring Families, The Compass Programme and becoming an organisation that actively includes LGBTQ+

- Swansea Bay University Health Board (SBUHB) raised awareness of White Ribbon Day on their intranet site; Ask and Act champions and trainers were updated on the significance of the day and staff were encouraged to wear the white ribbon and place posters across the Health Board. Due to strict Covid restrictions across all sites the usual awareness raising did not take place in 2020 & 2021

Objective 2

Children & Young People (CYP)

- A pilot programme has been developed in partnership with Thrive Women's Aid, NPT Well-Being Service, Youth Service and Llangatwg Community School to respond to CYP who did not receive vital RSE/Healthy Relationships education due to the pandemic and associated restrictions. A bespoke package of support is being delivered to Year 7, 8 and 9 and teachers
- Our Children & Young People Task & Finish group concluded with the development of a visual graphic detailing referral pathways and support services for low, medium and high-risk families. This has been especially useful for partners
- Since the pandemic Hafan Cymru were able to deliver Healthy Relationship education to 547 pupils across NPT and included 48 teachers in the sessions
- Camau Training has delivered Healthy Relationship education to 1800 pupils including added content on consent
- During the pandemic Safer Neath Port Talbot delivered a virtual Crucial Crew event to all 53 primary schools in the borough. This was delivered via a video resource developed with 12 partner organisations and shared on the NPT Education Hwb platform
- Calan DVS developed and delivered a range of CYP programmes including Ar Trac, ACEs Recovery Toolkit and Listen & Hear Me
- New Pathways introduced a regional CYP Sexual Violence Support Worker to work with children and young people who have experienced sexual violence and their families
- New Pathways reduced the high waiting lists for CYP sexual violence therapeutic services by a further 50% and introduced a triage service to ensure highly complex referrals received urgent support
- New Pathways introduced a specialist CYP Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) to cover the Western Bay region
- The School Nursing Service is represented on the Swansea Bay Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) Working Group
- The Group has developed lesson plan packs for Primary and Secondary schools. They are designed to provide good quality, standardised and evidenced based RSE and ensure pupils receive accurate and age appropriate information. School Nurses deliver the lesson plans to Years 5/6 in Primary school and Year 9 in Secondary school
- Thrive WA have secured funding in partnership with Welsh Women's Aid and other Women's Aid organisations across Wales to deliver the Respect programme to young people who are displaying violent or aggressive behaviours to their own intimate partners or family members

Objective 3**Working With Perpetrators**

- Welsh Government funding has been used to explore opportunities to broaden the Equilibrium Perpetrator Programme across the region
- The DRIVE perpetrator programme launched in Neath Port Talbot in September 2020, funded by the Police and Crime Commissioner. 59 high-risk perpetrators have engaged in the programme since its introduction, with 66 associated victims and 120 children
- Thrive Women's Aid are working with low-level perpetrators implementing the CLEAR programme, part of the Change That Lasts model. The programme works with the whole family, ensuring safety of victims and children while raising awareness of healthy relationships
- Calan DVS deliver the Inspiring Families Programme across Bridgend, Neath Port Talbot and Swansea. The programme is a 10-week assessment for families where domestic abuse is an identified component, and the families have chosen to stay together. It can strengthen and stabilise families and provides professionals with a robust framework to assess the parent's behaviour, including any disguised compliance and the level of current risk as well as the likelihood of future risk. In the last financial year, Calan DVS worked with 23 families across Neath Port Talbot
- The implementation of IRIS (Identification and Referral to Improve Safety) has recommenced across Neath & Port Talbot, the programme includes raising awareness of perpetrator behaviour and advice on signposting (IRIS is discussed further in Objective 4)

Objective 4**Early Intervention & Prevention**

- Commissioning work resumed in March 2021 and is continuing to make progress, despite being hindered to the Covid-19 pandemic and associated pressures on the local Commissioning Team
- Work is ongoing between South Wales Police and NPT Social Services on the Early Action Together programme
- Welsh Women's Aid were commissioned to deliver regional Ask Me awareness training sessions and encourage local residents to become community ambassadors, promote awareness of domestic abuse signs and support. A number of online sessions were presented in Autumn 2021 and 18 members committed to sign up to the ambassador programme
- The Communications and Engagement Group has been tasked to consider alternative ways to engage with marginalised groups in our communities. We will continue to research how to identify unidentified need
- Early intervention can reduce the impact of VAWDASV. Priority areas within Health such as Midwifery, Health Visiting, Emergency Department and Integrated Sexual Health continue to use Routine Enquiry/targeted "Ask and Act" intervention during consultations. Staff are trained to ask about VAWDASV and how to signpost appropriately when a disclosure is made. Routine Enquiry compliance is audited as part of the Health Boards annual audit plan along with targeted inquiry. With the introduction of IRIS, GP practice staff will be asking patients about domestic violence and abuse which will increase the disclosures with support being offered at the earliest opportunity rather than at the point of crisis

- Thrive WA currently hold the Families First EIP contract for domestic abuse in NPT. They have completed work over the past 5 years with family members to improve mental health, well-being, increase safety, enhance communication and work together to complete a family-centred support plan
- All health visiting staff have completed ACES training and are aware of the impact of this on families and parenting. All Health visiting staff are currently being trained how to use the Welsh Levels of care framework. This includes the agenda around ACE's
- **SBUHB Healthcare Independent domestic abuse advocate (IDVA):** The Healthcare IDVA is based within the Emergency Department (ED) Morriston hospital, taking referrals from patients and staff across the Health Board area. The Health Based IDVA risk assesses patients, raises awareness of domestic violence and abuse and establishes and maintaining health links with Safeguarding/relevant multi-agency forums
- The Healthcare IDVA provides practical support and empathy, ensuring the safety needs of the client are paramount, as well as ensuring longer term community support. The IDVA liaises with the police regarding bail conditions/remand and engages with housing and refuge providers
- The Health IDVA also provides support to Health Board staff members whom are victims of domestic abuse and violence, with 1-1 trauma recovery toolkit, providing support, understanding, awareness and the ability to thrive following being in an abuse relationship enabling the health professional remain in practice, whilst being fully supported

- The Healthboard has also fully funded the Health IDVA to complete ISVA training

SBUHB Healthcare IDVA 2022	Female	Male	TOTAL
Number of Referrals	357	32	389

- IRIS (Identification and Referral to Improve Safety): Is a general practice-based domestic violence and abuse (DVA) training, support and referral programme, which is a collaboration between primary care and third sector organisations specialising in DVA. IRIS was introduced to all GP practices across SBUHB. In addition to delivering the IRIS programme, Calan DVS delivered training to over 80 Registrars so that they will be better equipped to recognise signs of Domestic Abuse and to make referrals at an early stage. Between 2020-2022 there were 153 referrals from GPs within SBUHB, in the same period pre IRIS there were 9 referrals from GP practices across SBUHB
- The Health Board has a health IDVA based at the Emergency Department of Morriston Hospital. They take referrals for patients and staff and offer risk assessment, signposting, and ongoing support
- In addition to delivering the IRIS programme, Calan DVS delivered training to over 80 Registrars so that they will be better equipped to recognise signs of Domestic Abuse and to make referrals at an early stage
- Over 100 clinician referrals have been made across Swansea Bay since roll out of IRIS in 2020
- During 2021 to 2022, Calan facilitated 15 sessions to 210 professionals which provided a space to build knowledge and confidence in developing an LGBTQ affirmative approach to our work

- Calan DVS worked with 10 schools across Neath Port Talbot to deliver 1-2-1 support for children and people through Listen and Hear Me and to facilitate the delivery of awareness sessions on healthy relationships
- New Pathways introduced an additional specialist ISVA for male clients to bridge a gap in provision
- Cwmtawe Complex Needs - (Awaiting information from the team)

Objective 5 Training and Development

- 6562 (94%) of Neath Port Talbot CBC staff have now received Group 1 of the VAWDASV Training, including our hard-to-reach services
- 10,009 of Swansea Bay University Health Board staff have received Group 1 of the VAWDASV Training over the past three years
- 3689 of Swansea Bay University Health Board staff have received Group 2 of the VAWDASV Training
- 351 GP practice staff have received IRIS Training
- The Training Plan has been further developed to include regional roll out of Group 2 Ask and Act training with Swansea Council and Swansea Bay University Health Board
- The Health Board have made excellent progress in the implementation of their training plan and have to date trained a high percentage of staff which has seen a notable increase in the amount of referrals to specialist services and MARAC
- The Health Board are committed to increasing the awareness of VAWDASV amongst its staff in order to reduce the impact upon victims and their families. IRIS has been implemented across the Health Board's footprint following funding by the Health Board. IRIS is a collaboration between Primary Care and a third sector organisation that specialises in Domestic Violence and Abuse (DVA), GP staff receive DVA training and when a disclosure is made have the opportunity to refer to a specialist Advocate Educator (AE) that will offer specialist support following referral. The programme will be delivered by Calan DVS with funding by the Health Board
- Due to the Covid pandemic, all Group 1 training delivered during 2021 for was via e-learning. Adapted virtual delivery of Group 2 Ask and Act with specialist partners was provided to 226 NPT workers during 2021-22
- The regional Ask and Act steering group with Swansea Council and SBUHB continues to guide the roll out of Group 2 and 3 training
- Local support services are promoted as part of our training. Staff are advised on where to refer those who need support and use the new regional Ask and Act pathway for referrals
- Live training is continually updated to include the latest information on campaigns, services and changes to legislation, where appropriate
- 8 members of staff from NPT Social Services and Education have achieved accreditation to deliver Group 2 and 3. Trainers have also been upskilled with further sessions on specialist VAWDASV areas by our local partners
- Group 3 Workplace Champions training is delivered regionally in partnership with Swansea Council, Swansea Bay University Health Board and specialist partners. Neath Port Talbot CBC has 7 champions so far, Swansea Bay University Health Board have trained 21 during 2021/22
- Calan has delivered a range of training to over 300 professionals including GP's and medical professionals through the delivery of IRIS and sector specific training to statutory and nonstatutory organisations

- New Pathways held an extremely successful Sexual Violence 'Frontline Focus' event for over 800 frontline workers from across Wales attended. Feedback was extremely positive and there was a clear appetite for standalone Sexual Violence specific information and training
- Training has continued to be evaluated to ensure a high standard and consistency of delivery
- Thrive WA, Calan DVS, New Pathways, Hafan Cymru, Swansea Women's Aid and BAWSO have worked together to deliver the co-facilitation of Ask and Act Groups 2 and 3 alongside SBUHB and the LAs

Objective 6 Accessible Services

- Meetings with housing providers and local specialist providers have been convened with the VAWDASV strategic lead and IDVA service manager. The aim of these meetings is to ensure good links across the services, removing any potential barriers that may arise
- A regional MARAC consultation recommended implementation of a weekly MARAC meeting, as a pilot, from January 2022. This model has been positively received by stakeholders and offers an opportunity to improve risk management to high-risk cases. Additionally, a new IT system is being considered which involves live updates to address safety and risk management. Both recommendations would result in an improved, streamlined process
- A working group has been established across Social Services, Statutory and Third Sector providers to review the current response to cases of domestic abuse and develop a user focused service. Review is ongoing and will be shared with all stakeholders once complete
- Thrive WA expanded their EDGE project to include women from Black and Asian Minority Ethnic backgrounds in addition to the specialist support already provided to Older, Disabled and Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller women
- In 2021, Thrive launched the SWAN Project (Support, Well-Being, Advocacy and eEnablement) in partnership with Swansea Women's Aid, working with women who are being or are at risk of being exploited by the sex industry. This is an entirely unique project to Neath Port Talbot as no other dedicated services of this nature were available
- In conjunction with the University of South Wales, Calan DVS has developed the Myriad Programme; an 8-week recovery and resilience programme for LGBTQ+ victims of domestic abuse. Since its launch, Calan DVS has seen a 30% increase into services for LGBTQ+ victims of domestic abuse
- In 2021, Calan commissioned sector experts to support the organisation to develop a sexual violence service. In particular, Calan are developing a programme of support which is being co-produced by survivors of sexual violence and abuse. The organisation is also working with stakeholders and staff to ensure the service provided addresses gaps in support and is accessible. The service was launched in Autumn 2022
- Calan is working in conjunction with Pobl on their Housing for Women Pathways project. The project works with the respective Local Authority Housing Team to agree a proportion of 'Direct Lets' to the women's services provider, this will enable refugees to free up space or to enable women to access a home (Housing First style) without entering refuge

- New Pathways has re-established post-covid face to face presence of a regional ISVA at Neath Port Talbot One Stop Shop
- Therapeutic Referrals for SV have become extremely complex, New Pathways have established an in-depth triage by a multidisciplinary clinical and safeguarding team on daily and weekly basis to ensure clients have access to urgent support
- Thrive WA have launched the first Housing First provision in Wales specifically for women who have experienced domestic abuse. In partnership with Coastal, Pobl and Tai Tarian they will work together over the next 2 years to support women experiencing complex challenges in their lives to access stable accommodation and wrap the support they need around them to maintain this
- New Pathways have identified that NPT is underrepresented in SARC/ISVA referrals for the region, SARC and ISVA Referrals from NPT are:
 - » Children 44%, Adults: 56%
 - » 33% referrals are acute (SV within the last 7 days)
 - » 33% referrals are non-acute (SV within the last year)
 - » 34% referrals are historic 34% (SV older than 1 year)

Objective 7

Courts & Criminal Justice

- Hafan Cymru Remote Evidence sites have been introduced across the region and has been utilised in 17 trials to date. These cases have resulted in a positive outcome with all defendants being found guilty, 2 defendants pleading guilty just before the trial, saving witnesses from giving evidence
- Further plans are underway to develop the remote facility for Family Court
- Thrive and South Wales Police submitted a joint application for funding to deliver the RAPID project. This work will see Thrive join the first response team for incidents of domestic abuse to improve the experiences had by victims and their children when a report of domestic abuse, coercive control, stalking and harassment is made. This project will also deliver comprehensive training to Police Officers to raise their awareness and knowledge of these areas

CONTEXT

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In England and Wales, the largest element of VAWDASV cost is the physical and emotional harm suffered by the victims themselves (estimated £47 billion). The next highest cost is for lost output relating to time taken off work and reduced productivity afterwards (£14 billion)¹. Taking the costs of sexual violence and other forms of abuse into account would significantly increase this amount.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-economic-and-social-costs-of-domestic-abuse>

Welsh Context

Following the introduction of the VAWDASV (Wales) Act 2015, Welsh Government introduced the **National Strategy on Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (2016-2021) and recently published their revised version in 2022**. This sets out a renewed commitment to tackling VAWDASV, building on progress to date and prioritises delivery in the areas of **prevention, protection and support**.

BLUEPRINT

Welsh Government has developed a Blueprint approach bringing together devolved and non-devolved agencies who are tasked with, or commit to, ending VAWDASV.

The approach will do this by putting in place a structure for the development of joint policy, co-ordinating investment and activity between partners and drive delivery through peer support and challenge. The blueprint approach seeks to bring together the resources controlled by partners within the blueprint and contribute to end VAWDASV by facilitating shared understanding and common direction.

The National Training Framework has been established by Welsh Government to ensure an unflinching standard of public service in order to create a consistent standard of care for those who experience Violence.

This National Training Framework has two main functions:

- Consistent, proportionately disseminated training for relevant authorities to fundamentally improve the understanding of the general workforce and, therefore the response to those who experience violence
- Alignment of existing specialist training to further professionalise the specialist sector, to improve consistency of specialist subject

training provision nationally and to set core requirements of specialist service provision

“Ask and Act” is one of the most significant practice changes, facilitated through the National Training Framework.

The ‘Ask and Act’ policy framework is a process of targeted enquiry to be practiced across the Public Service to identify people affected by VAWDASV. These two policies are integrated, in that local delivery of the National Training Framework also delivers key aspects of “Ask and Act”. Statutory Guidance is expected in 2020.

The aims of the national “Ask and Act” framework are to:

- Increase identification of those experiencing Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence
- Offer referrals and interventions for those identified, which provide specialist support based on the risk and needs of the client
- Begin to create a culture across the Public Service where addressing Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence is an accepted area of business and where disclosure is expected, supported, accepted and facilitated
- Improve the response to those who experience Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence with

other complex needs such as substance misuse and mental health; and to pro-actively engage with those who are vulnerable and hidden, at the earliest opportunity, rather than only reactively engaging with those who are in crisis or at imminent risk of serious harm

Complementary Legislation & Guidance

There are various other pieces of legislation, guidance and research that we must have regard to in preparing this strategy and during its implementation. These are outlined below;

Domestic Abuse Act 2021

- The Act provides a statutory definition of domestic abuse, emphasising that domestic abuse is not just physical violence, but can also be emotional, controlling or coercive, and economic abuse, it also recognises children as victims in their own right

Key features of the act will:

- establish in law the office of Domestic Abuse Commissioner and set out the Commissioner’s functions and powers
- provide for a new Domestic Abuse Protection Notice and Domestic Abuse Protection Order
- prohibit perpetrators of abuse from cross-examining their victims in person in the civil and family courts in England and Wales
- create a statutory presumption that victims of domestic abuse are eligible for special measures in the criminal, civil and family courts
- extend the controlling or coercive behaviour offence to cover post-separation abuse
- extend the offence of disclosing private sexual photographs and films with intent to cause distress (known as the “revenge porn”

offence) to cover threats to disclose such material

- create a new offence of non-fatal strangulation or suffocation of another person

The Domestic Abuse Commissioner welcomed a draft **Victims Bill in 2022** which aims to centre the voices of all victims including those who have experienced or are experiencing domestic abuse and offer these survivors more support.

Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014

The Act provides the legal framework for improving the well-being of people (adults and children) who need care and support, carers who need support, and for transforming social services in Wales. This requires local population needs assessments to inform the development of local strategies.

Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The Well-Being of Future Generations Act requires public bodies in Wales to think about the long-term impact of their decisions, to work better with people, communities and each other, and to prevent persistent problems such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change.

The Act is unique to Wales attracting interest from countries across the world as it offers a huge opportunity to make a long-lasting, positive change to current and future generations.

To make sure we are all working towards the same purpose, the Act puts in place seven well-being goals. The Act makes it clear that public bodies must work to achieve all of the goals.

The seven Well-Being goals are;



The work of the local VAWDASV partnership will contribute to Neath Port Talbot meeting the seven Well-Being goals, in particular ‘A healthier Wales’ and ‘A Wales of Cohesive Communities’.

The Act also sets out five ways of working needed for Public Bodies to achieve the seven Well-Being goals;

Acting in collaboration with any other person (or different parts of the body itself) that could help the body to meet its well-being objectives.	Considering how the public body's well-being objectives may impact upon each of the well-being goals, on their other objectives, or on the objectives of other people.	The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves.	The importance of balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard the long-term needs.	How acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help public bodies meet their objectives.

The Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act also requires a Public Services Board to be set up in each local authority area in Wales.

NPT Public Services Board identified key objectives to improve the well-being of the people who live in the Neath Port Talbot area, the following are part of the current draft which is scheduled to be published in May 2023.

- To ensure all children get the best start in life
- To ensure all our communities are thriving and sustainable
- To ensure our local environment, culture and heritage can be enjoyed by future generations
- To ensure there are more secure, green and well paid jobs and that skills across the area are improved

Housing (Wales) Act 2014

The **Housing (Wales) Act 2014** enshrines in legislation the role of the local authority in preventing and alleviating homelessness. This will change the way that services are delivered to survivors of violence who flee their home seeking a safe place to live.

This reinforces the need for local authorities need to work in partnership to ensure that prevention of homelessness is at the forefront of thinking. This will require an alternative approach to the provision of temporary, crisis accommodation and support.

Adverse Childhood Experiences

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's) is now a widely recognised term which stems from research conducted by the leading **National Public Health Institute of the United States**.

The research shows a correlation between childhood trauma and adult health outcomes. The research found children's developing brains and central nervous systems are so profoundly affected by ACE's that they are the root cause of many chronic diseases, most mental illness and most violence. The 10 ACE's measured in the research are:

1. Physical abuse
2. Sexual abuse
3. Verbal abuse
4. Physical neglect
5. Emotional neglect
6. A family member who is depressed or diagnosed with other mental health issues
7. A family member who is addicted to alcohol or another substance
8. A family member who is in prison
9. Witnessing Domestic Abuse
10. Losing a parent to separation, divorce or death

Many other types of trauma may also have an impact. Trauma results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as harmful or life threatening. While unique to the individual, generally the experience of trauma can cause lasting adverse effects, limiting the ability to function and achieve mental, physical, social, emotional or spiritual well-being. It is important to recognise that trauma can affect individuals, groups and communities.

Trauma-informed practice is an approach to health and care interventions which is grounded in the understanding that trauma exposure can impact an individual's neurological, biological, psychological and social development.

Trauma-informed practice aims to increase practitioners' awareness of how trauma can negatively impact on individuals and communities, and their ability to feel safe or develop trusting relationships with health and care services and their staff.

NICE Domestic Abuse Guidance and Quality Standards

In 2014, the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) issued *“Domestic violence and abuse: how health services, social care and the organisations they work with can respond effectively”*. The Welsh Government has an agreement in place with the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) covering the Institute's guidelines which highlights; Domestic Abuse is a complex issue that needs sensitive handling by a range of health and social care professionals. The cost, in both human and economic terms, is so significant that even marginally effective interventions are cost effective. NICE issued further Domestic Abuse Quality Standards for healthcare providers in February 2016. These standards are aimed at everyone working in health and social care whose work brings them into contact with people who experience or perpetrate Domestic Abuse. Recommendations include key issues of importance for regions to have regard to when delivering local Domestic Abuse strategies.²

Housing First

'Housing First' is a recovery-oriented approach to ending homelessness that centres on quickly moving people experiencing homelessness into independent and permanent housing and then providing additional support and services as needed <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-03/housing-first-principles-guidance-for-local-authorities.pdf>

Thrive Women's Aid has secured funding of £50k from the Nationwide Community Grant to launch a new 'Housing First' service in Neath Port Talbot (NPT). The grant enables Thrive to not only establish a 'Housing First' service in NPT, the only one within the county borough, but it will also serve as the first women's only 'Housing First' project in Wales.

Thrive will work with up to 7 women who have multiple vulnerabilities and are experiencing entrenched homelessness because of domestic abuse, sexual violence and other forms of violence against women.

South Wales Police and Crime Commissioners' Tackling Violence against Women and Girls Strategy 2019 – 2024

The strategy sets out four key priority areas for action:

- 1) Enhanced Collaboration: We will work together to deliver a whole system approach to preventing violence against women and girls in all its forms
- 2) Prevention and Early Intervention: With partners we will focus on the long-term impact of decisions and work to keep people safe, healthy and well

- 3) Safeguarding: We will build on existing safeguarding arrangements, seeking ways to protect all victims, wherever they may be
- 4) Perpetrators: We will increase our focus on the behaviour of the perpetrator (in parallel with supporting victims and survivors of violence and abuse) to better hold perpetrators to account for the consequences of their actions and offer opportunities to change their behaviour through a range of interventions

Their action plan adopts the widely-recognised "Four P's" framework of Prepare, Prevent, Protect, and Pursue and aligns each of these against the priority areas below.

Prepare: ensuring the best possible governance, collaboration and commissioning of evidence-based models and innovation, understand available resource and effectively targeting it, involving those affected to ensure the best outcomes

Prevent: intervening at the earliest opportunity to prevent violence & abuse from occurring or getting worse

Protect: safeguarding victims and potential victims from harm and providing pathways to services

Pursue: placing an active focus on the behaviour of perpetrators and consequences of that behaviour, alongside supporting victims

Wales Audit Office

On behalf of the Auditor General for Wales, the Welsh Audit Office have examined how the new duties and responsibilities of the VAWDASV Act are being rolled out and delivered. Their report was published in November 2019 and concludes that victims and survivors of domestic abuse and sexual violence are often let down by an inconsistent, complex and fragmented system.

The report sets out a series of key recommendations that are intended to help bodies who support and have responsibility to assist victims and survivors.³

UK and EU

Welsh Government has framed its legislation and guidance on Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence alongside the UK and EU legislation;

- Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (2016-2020)
- European Union (EU) Directive on Victims' Rights⁴
- The Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women, and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention)
- Welfare Reform

Covid 19 Pandemic

The onset of the Covid 19 pandemic in March 2020 raised significant challenges for victims, survivors and specialist services in the sector and required immediate action from Welsh Government to urgently respond to the crisis. The sector responded with a dedicated and flexible approach during this challenging period of enforced isolation.

³ Welsh Audit Office - Progress in implementing the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Act

⁴ A person should be considered to be a victim regardless of whether an offender is identified, apprehended, prosecuted or convicted and regardless of the familial relationship between them. For a summary of European Commission priorities for victims of crime see http://ec.europa.eu/justice/criminal/victims/rights/index_en.htm. The full text of the Directive (2012/29/EU) is available at <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32012L0029>

5 →

Neath Port Talbot has a range of services available across the county to address VAWDASV.



RESOURCES AND SERVICE MAPPING

DATA FROM THE CRIME SURVEY FOR ENGLAND & WALES:

2.4 million adults aged 16 years and over experienced domestic abuse

In the year ending March 2022:

1.7 million women

699,000 men

1,500,369 domestic abuse incidents recorded by police in England & Wales in 2022

THE POLICE RECEIVE A DOMESTIC ABUSE-RELATED CALL EVERY 30 SECONDS

Yet it is estimated that **less than 24%** of domestic abuse crime is reported to the police

National Domestic Abuse Helpline delivered 50,791 support sessions through phone call or live chat in the year ending March 2022



£ Domestic abuse costs the UK an estimated £23 billion a year.

It is not only weighing on our physical and emotional health, but also our economy

DATA FROM REFUGE:

It takes on average **7 ATTEMPTS** before a woman is able to leave for good.

Leaving an abusive partner is a process, not a single act



Resources to Address VAWDASV in NPT

The funding of services in NPT is complex. The following funding underpins the delivery of services to survivors of VAWDASV;

Supporting People	Supporting People Programme Grant	£255,384	33 units of floating support
		£407,255	38 units of refuge and move on accommodation
Community Safety	WG Regional Funding for Swansea and NPT	£424,483	This contributes to funding of the IDVA services across Western Bay. Elements of this funding are awarded to specialist providers across the region to support their project work and service delivery. The remainder is used to fund Communications & Engagement work, Perpetrator related support and training requirements.
	Police & Crime Commissioner	£80,071.50	Contributes to funding of the IDVA service
	Crime Prevention Panel and ad hoc WG funding	£5,000	Target hardening - Security items for victims of VAWDASV
Families First	Welsh Government-Families First	£98,000	Early Intervention & Prevention Services (Provided by Thrive Women's Aid) see page 12
NPTCBC	Core Funding		VAWDASV Support including; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training Delivery and Roll Out • Senior Policy & Engagement Officer • MARAC Coordinator

Each of the three specialist providers are charities and access funding from a range of other sources;

Recipient	Funding Provider	Amount	Purpose
Thrive WA	Children in Need	£133,283	Children & Young People Service
Thrive WA	NPTCBC	£73,884	SWAN
Thrive WA	Nationwide	£25,000	Housing First
Thrive WA	Comic Relief	£119,903	The EDGE Project
Thrive WA	Think Family Partnership	£278,400	Families First (Early Intervention & Prevention)
Thrive WA	The National Lottery Community Fund	£249,838	LIFE

2022			
Calan DVS	Henry Smith Charity	£179,600	ACEs Recovery Toolkit (adults & children)
Calan DVS	Third Sector Resilience Fund (WCVA)	£46,094	Business Development & Fundraising Co-ordinator post
Calan DVS	Tampon Tax funding (via WWA)	£50,632	SV service
Calan DVS	Garfield Weston Foundation	£25,000	SV service
Calan DVS	Moj VAWDASV (via South Wales Police)	£251,016	SV service
Calan DVS	Bristol University	£92,996	Reprovidé - Perpetrator Programme
Calan DVS	Home Office CYP VAWG funding (via WWA partnership bid)	£67,846	Drawing & Talking
Calan DVS	Home Office SVSCSA Funding (via partnership bid)	£123,997	SV service (adults disclosing CSA)
Calan DVS	NPT Third Sector Grant Funding 2023/24	£32,535	Money Coach
Calan DVS	B&Q Foundation	£3,000	Refuge (décor, seating, storage etc.)
Calan DVS	NPT Youth Support Grant (via partnership bid)	£27,888	Myriad Youth Programme (Healthy Relationships) & GSRD training for professionals
Calan DVS	Swansea Bay University Health Board	£346,780	IRIS - Swansea Bay

Recipient	Funding Provider	Amount	Purpose
2021			
Calan DVS	Swansea Bay University Health Board	£180,984	IRIS – Swansea Bay
Calan DVS	South Wales PCC	£22,601	LGBTQ+
Calan DVS	Moondance	£25,539	Peripatetic Support Workers
Calan DVS	HSG – Neath	£20,847	ACEs Recovery Toolkit
Calan DVS	South Wales PCC (via LA)	£45,000	Male IDVA funding
Calan DVS	Moondance	£18,810	SV - counselling
Calan DVS	NPT Third Sector Grant Funding 2022/23	£34,330	ACEs Recovery Toolkit
2020			
Calan DVS	Welsh Government Sustainable Services	£330,871	CYP
Calan DVS	NPT Council	£4,667	Inspiring Families
Calan DVS	National Lottery Community Fund	£464,031	Inspiring Families and Compass (male victims)
Calan DVS	Swansea Bay University Health Board	£21,379	GP training
Calan DVS	NPT Council	£4,667	Inspiring Families
Calan DVS	Welsh Government	£1,200	Advanced training for VAWDASV practitioners working with CYP
Calan DVS	Welsh Government	£700	Communications activity

Recipient	Funding Provider	Amount* (Confidential information)	Purpose
Hafan Cymru	NPT Council		Provision of supported accommodation for women and families experiencing domestic abuse
Hafan Cymru	NPT Council		Provision of floating support for male victims of domestic abuse
Hafan Cymru	NPT Council		Provision of floating support for female victims of domestic abuse
Hafan Cymru	Welsh Government		Spectrum Project in schools in Wales (including NPT) - we have a team of qualified teachers providing the Spectrum Project, teaching young people and teachers about healthy relationships and DA-related information

Resources and Service Mapping Conclusion

Over the past 3 years, the picture has changed across NPT. This is not only due to work undertaken as part of the strategy, but due to changes in funding arrangements. Grant funded programmes continue to be on a short term basis, which makes long term sustainability difficult to achieve.

The Covid 19 pandemic also impacted funding arrangements and led to service providers operating under unprecedented demand and conditions. While restrictions are now largely lifted across the UK, the level of demand on services remains high and is now coupled with the challenges arising from the complex needs of service users as well as the current cost of living crisis and difficulties in recruiting and retaining a skilled and experienced workforce.

We recognise that there is a range of good quality services available in Neath Port Talbot. However, we are still in a position where some of these services need modernisation and work is still underway to achieve this.

- There is a continued need to further develop Early Intervention and Prevention and Community Based Services to prevent and reduce the number of victims requiring crisis services
- More focus is needed on supporting victims to remain in their own homes
- We acknowledge that there remains to be a limited insight into male victims and marginal groups and we need to explore this in more detail over the coming years
- There has been an increased focus on sexual violence prevention and support over the past 3 years and we will continue to develop this support in partnership with specialist organisations

- We recognise there is a need to commission services differently, for those victims with complex needs, such as mental health and substance use
- A number of programmes working with perpetrators at a range of risk levels have been introduced over the past 3 years and we recognise the value in continuing to develop these interventions
- We must ensure survivors continue to be involved in every area of VAWDASV policy and local work

In terms of criminal justice outcomes, there is scope for further improvement and the three Domestic Homicide Reviews that have taken place in this area emphasise the importance of effective offender management, especially when perpetrators have been shown to demonstrate a pattern of escalating violence. This is also explored further on in the strategy.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

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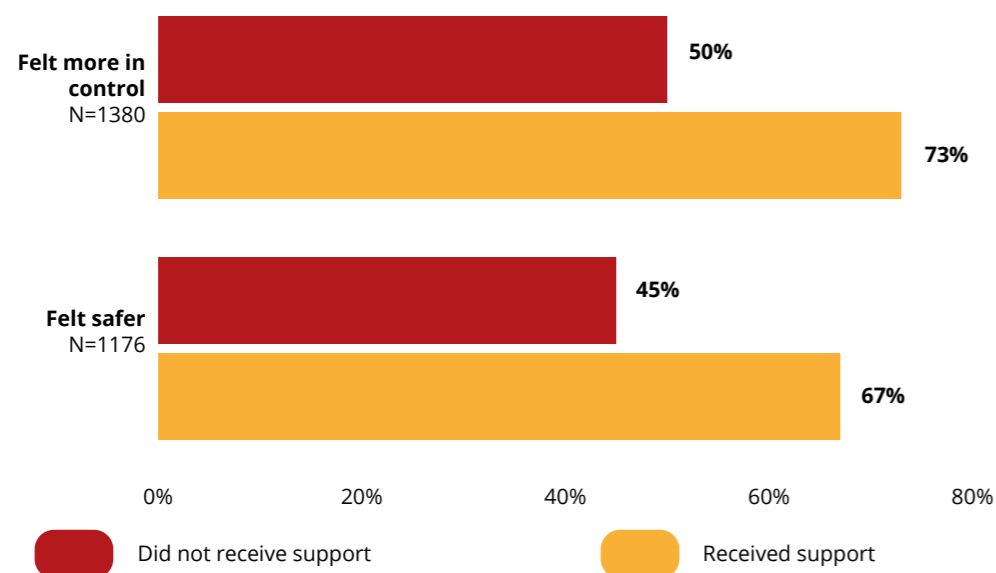
Survivor voice is key to the development of services for VAWDASV and the Domestic Abuse Commissioners report, 'Patchwork of Provision' undertook research across England & Wales in 2022 with survivors and specialist providers.



Some of the findings of this report are highlighted below.⁵

The first key finding was that **specialist support services are effective in enabling victims and survivors to feel safer and more in control of their lives following abuse.**

FIGURE 1 Percentage of respondents who felt safer and more in control than when they first tried to seek support, according to whether they had received support.

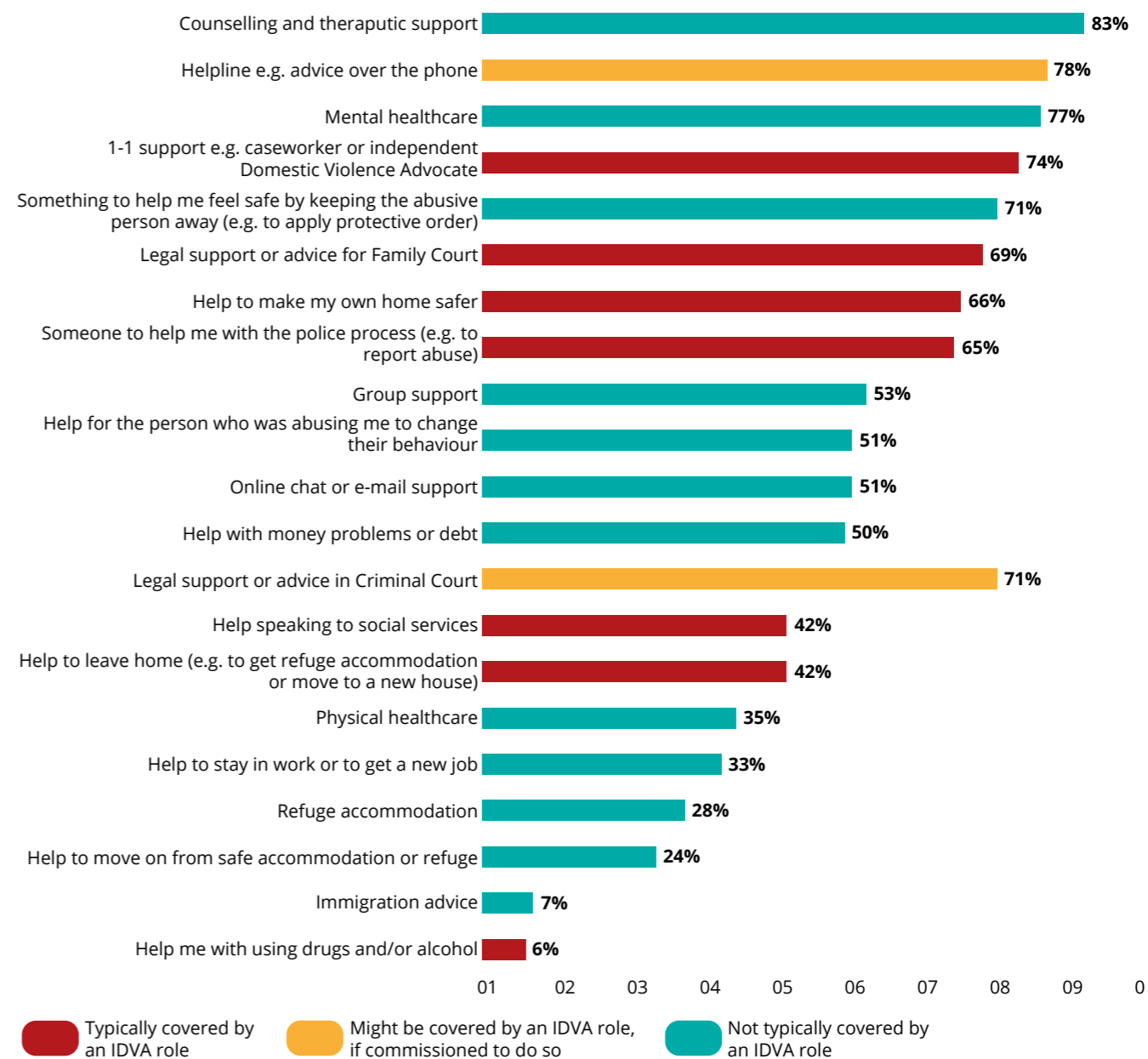


It is clear that being able to access support services had a significant effect on those who were able to gain support compared to those who did not.

A further key finding in the report was that **Victims and survivors need a range of types of support to help them find safety and to cope and recover from abuse.** Most victims and survivors wanted some form of community-based support, and a combination of practical support, such as helpline advice, or one-to-one advocacy or caseworker support, and longer-term therapeutic support, such as counselling or mental health support.

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-patchwork-of-provision-mapping-report/a-patchwork-of-provision-mapping-report-accessible>

FIGURE 2 Percentage of respondents wanting support for domestic abuse during the previous three years according to intervention type.



Local data from survivors was collated in January 2023. A summary of the findings is detailed below.

Did you find it easy to access local services for support?

Some respondents reported they found it difficult to access support services. The reasons included:

- Being unable to make telephone calls to arrange appointments, it would be better if appointments could be made via email or online
- Feeling unworthy or not entitled to access help as a result of years of brainwashing by perpetrator
- Fear of not being believed

- Feeling ashamed of abusive situation
- Services were limited and more suited to people who were not working

What were the good things about the support you received and what worked well?

- Counselling programmes, Freedom Programme etc
- Good quality support and guidance
- Helped me to identify abuse

If support didn't work well, why was this?

- Lack of referrals for further support
- Long waiting lists
- Inadequate services for children

What are the 3 most important things service providers should do to make sure they meet people's needs?

- Continued support/longer timescales for support
- Support tailored to my needs
- Referrals for further support/assistance
- More funding for resources/staff

What do you think an 'excellent service' would offer?

- Someone who is always there and never judgemental, who takes interest in listening & advising
- More options to contact the local office and make appointments without the need for phone call
- More varied advice

What kind of help and support would assist in preventing and reducing Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence?

- Access to housing and employment
- More support and belief of victims.

My ex admitted to some of his abuses but I still didn't have enough evidence for a conviction apparently - this is unacceptable

- More education in coercive control and unhealthy behaviours in schools and colleges
- More police intervention

Overall, how would you describe your experience with domestic abuse support services?

- Always helpful and always there
- Glad they're there but always room for improvement
- They have been so kind and understanding and made me feel believed finally
- Its frustrating that I still haven't been able to progress my personal situation but that's not for the lack of their attempts to assist
- More funding is required

It is clear that respondents require a high quality, personal support service and once able to access a service many found some of the support that they needed. It was important for many to feel they were believed and entitled to ask for help.

However, as pointed out, there is always room for improvement. Some responses stated they felt the need for their involvement with the service to be extended, or to be referred on to a further service for continued support.

OVERARCHING FRAMEWORK & STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

7 →

The purpose of the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 is to;

- improve arrangements for the **prevention** of VAWDASV;
- improve arrangements for the **protection** of victims of VAWDASV and;
- to improve **support** for people affected by VAWDASV.

Prevention

We are committed to preventing violence in relationships from happening, by challenging the attitude and behaviours which foster it and intervening early, where possible, to prevent its recurrence.

The prevention of violence is central to agendas on public health; reducing crime and the harm caused by serious violent crime; safeguarding children and adults with support needs; promoting education, learning and skills development; and promoting equality.

Prevention involves education to change attitudes and perceptions (to reduce the incidence of a problem among a population before it occurs) and can be targeted, at broad population groups, such as school-age children or members of a particular community.

Protection

We are committed to ensuring those who experience any form of violence are appropriately protected, eliminating the risk of further harm to victims and their children.

We want **anyone** experiencing these issues to be aware of the support that is available locally and we want to be confident that all professionals within our area are equipped with the knowledge to effectively respond to any disclosures.

Support

We are committed to providing high-quality support for survivors and their families, ensuring services meet their needs and prioritise their safety, to enable them to achieve independence and freedom from abuse.

It is vital that survivors receive the right support, at the right time, to enable them to take action that is right for them.

Strategic Objectives

The strategic objectives for 2023-2026 will mirror those in our original strategy as well as aligning with the Wales National VAWDASV Strategy. Having similar Objectives within Neath Port Talbot enables us to demonstrate how we will support the Welsh Government in achieving its policy objectives regarding Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence. However, it is important to note that Objective 7 does not form part of the Welsh Government National Strategy as this is focused on Criminal Justice. Welsh Government do not have devolved responsibility for this area, it remains the responsibility of the UK Government. In order to ensure a holistic response to VAWDASV in NPT we want to reflect the contribution that CJS partners are making locally, and how we will work to improve these arrangements.

The remainder of this chapter will provide a breakdown of each objective and the actions that we will work towards over the next three years. There are actions that can be delivered locally and others that lend themselves to a regional approach.

The actions are designed to be manageable and achievable, ensuring we are able to make a difference to local victims and their families. All actions require a continued, strong, partnership approach for maximum effectiveness and positive outcomes.

Objective 1

Increase the reports of Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence in Neath Port Talbot, through awareness raising and challenging attitudes.

Current Position

Over the past six years, a substantial amount of work has gone into the development of the VAWDASV Communications & Engagement Group. The group now operates on a regional basis and ensures delivery of a coordinated and strategic approach.

The group has a strong, clear Terms of Reference with membership from relevant partner agencies. The group also has a Communications Plan and calendar of key events.

The group continue to be responsible for;

- the development and implementation of a programme of awareness raising of all VAWDASV services
- raising awareness of the impact of VAWDASV on victims
- organising, promoting and undertaking prevention campaigns and initiatives

The group delivers universal awareness campaigns, to raise awareness and increase peoples understanding about VAWDASV, including the help and support that is available locally, regionally and nationally.

The group has benefited from the involvement of survivor members in order to focus the group's efforts in terms of awareness raising, by sharing their experiences, positive and negative.

There will always be a need to raise awareness within our communities and to promote the help and support that is available. Communities need to recognise all forms of VAWDASV and the harm it causes, be supportive of survivors and be able to provide information about the help that is available. This is critical since much

support to victims comes from these sources, not from service providers. A positive and knowledgeable response from the immediate network surrounding victims and their children is critical to increasing the likelihood of early intervention.

For 2023-2026, on a regional basis, we will;

1. Continue the Regional Communications & Engagement group on a regional basis, and ensure the membership of the group remains inclusive. Membership to be expanded where appropriate to include:
 - » a. Area Planning Board representative
2. Continue to raise awareness of the following initiatives to further encourage victims to come forward and access appropriate help and support:
 - » a. Live Fear Free - Welsh Government helpline available 24/7 with free, confidential advice and support for anyone affected by domestic abuse or sexual violence
 - » b. Clare's Law – Clare's Law, also known as the Domestic Abuse Disclosure Scheme, allows people to find out if their partner has an abusive or violent past. It is named after Clare Wood, who was killed by her former partner in 2009
 - » c. Bright Sky – Bright Sky is a **free to download, discreet mobile app** providing support and information for anyone who may be in an abusive relationship or those concerned about someone they know
 - » d. Ask Angela – Ask Angela is a **sexual violence prevention campaign** which aims to help individuals feel safe when they are on a night out. An individual can get help by asking a member of staff for Angela at the bar if they are feeling uncomfortable on a date, or in a potentially dangerous situation

3. Actively promote the Respect Helpline for victims and perpetrators during local engagement events
4. Continue to amplify Welsh Government campaigns regarding VAWDASV, to ensure we play our part in strengthening the messages and making them recognisable across all areas of Wales
5. Consider alternative approaches to engage with marginalised groups, encouraging more people to come forward if they are experiencing VAWDASV
6. Develop, launch and evaluate a local Sexual Violence Prevention campaign, using local data to ensure messages are targeted at those who may be at most risk within our communities as well as identifying perpetrator behaviours
7. Increase awareness of sexual exploitation and street harassment through local, regional and national campaigns
8. Maintain an annual calendar of national and local events and activities

Objective 2

Increase awareness in children, young people and adults of the importance of safe, equal and healthy relationships and empowering them to positive personal choices.

An overview of available research into the effectiveness of interventions around domestic abuse⁶ found that the majority of preventative approaches involved targeting young people and adults through community or school based activities. This would include, for example, work in schools and communities with children and young people, between the ages of 5-25 years on healthy relationships.

Adopting a whole education approach to VAWDASV is a key element to increasing awareness, providing support and creating opportunities for children and young people to understand the importance of safe, equal and healthy relationships. A whole education approach that includes preventative education through all parts of school and college life, involving the community, has been identified as significant in being able to teach preventative education.

Welsh Women's Aid and the Welsh Government have published a good practice guide on a Whole Education Approach to ensure that schools and educational bodies are equipped and considered in their response to VAWDASV and the prevention, protection and support of their pupils and staff.

Under the Welsh Government Whole Education Approach Guidance, there are 9 Key Principles.

1. Children and young people learn about violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence
2. Staff learn about violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence

3. Parents, care-givers and family learn about violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence
4. Monitoring and evaluation systems are in place to measure impact of this work
5. Measures are in place to support people who experience forms of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence
6. Active participation of children and young people, staff and parents/care-givers to prevent violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence
7. Taking action to prevent violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence in the wider community
8. Working in partnership with relevant local experts
9. Embedding a comprehensive prevention programme

Within Neath Port Talbot the Relationship & Sexuality Education Group are responsible for the coordination and delivery of all RSE that takes place in local schools. This group is made up of representatives from NPT Youth Service, Public Health Wales, School Nursing, specialist providers, South Wales Police and others.

Current Position

The current arrangements with the Relationships and Sexuality Education Group have proved a key driving force in delivering a whole school approach to RSE and the roll out of the new code established by the Curriculum and Assessment (2021) Act which makes RSE a mandatory element in all schools.

Within NPT the following initiatives are delivered to children and young people;

- Spectrum
- All Wales School Liaison Core Programme
- Higher Education Awareness Raising Events

- Crucial Crew
- 'It's Your World' Well-Being Workshops
- Relationship and Sexuality Education, including age appropriate Healthy Relationship Lessons

For 2023-2026, on a local basis we will;

1. Continue to work towards a Whole School Approach across NPT
2. Through the Relationship & Sexuality Education Group, ensure the Healthy Relationship lesson continues delivery to all schools across Neath Port Talbot, ensuring take up is monitored and increased over the next 3 years
3. Explore opportunities for challenging misogynistic behaviour and toxic masculinity with young people, considering the influence of social media
4. Use existing initiatives (such as Crucial Crew, It's Your World Well-Being Workshops, the Healthy Relationship Lesson, Spectrum programme and the Whole School Approach) to ensure all children are aware of services or points of contact with whom they can share any concerns they may have about their own relationships or their friends, family or others in the community

For 2023-2026, on a regional basis we will;

1. Raise awareness of all Welsh Government VAWDASV campaigns targeted at CYP with an emphasis on challenging misogyny and developing conversations about acceptable language and behaviour
2. Consider increased opportunities to engage with those in higher education settings about healthy relationships, consent, peer on peer abuse and problematic sexual behaviour, misogyny and related topics

Objective 3

Increase the focus on holding those who commit abuse to account and supporting those who may carry out abusive or violent behaviour to change their behaviour and avoid offending.

We are committed to taking action to reduce the risk to victims, ensuring that perpetrators are provided with opportunities for change in a way that maximises safety.

The case for commissioning and delivering community-based perpetrator programmes has been set out by Respect⁷ and the largest UK research into programme effectiveness was published recently.⁸

Accredited programmes typically have linked safety and/or support services for partners and ex-partners of programme participants and have a minimum time period required for the best possible chance of effective and sustained behaviour change.

Perpetrator programmes are far more than a behaviour change programme. As well as their services for victims (and sometimes children), they also provide a point of reference for advice for other organisations on perpetrators, and write reports for family court proceedings, children's services, CAFCASS (Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service), criminal courts, and child protection conferences. This represents a substantial contribution to informed decision making by a wide range of agencies that are intervening in domestic abuse.

Current Position

In the last three years, local specialist providers and the Community Safety Team have made significant progress around perpetrator related work and support. The available provision is as follows;

Inspiring Families

Calan DVS provide the Inspiring Families Programme which is an innovative intervention and assessment programme that can help strengthen and stabilise families. It is a structured 10 week programme for families that are affected by domestic abuse and provides professionals with a robust framework to assess the parents' behaviour, coercive control, disguised compliance, the level of current risk and the likelihood of future risk. Inspiring Families also identifies the potential for change and reduction of risk within the family, or indeed, whether the risk is too high or the potential for change too low to make working with the family a viable option.

The intervention has been designed to be an accessible tool that will provide professionals with the evidence they need to make an assessment of the family and to identify the need and level of intervention required moving forward.

The programme also supports professionals to make intelligent based decisions on what is the right intervention, for that family or individual members of that family at the right time and in the right order.

In 2022, Calan DVS was appointed to deliver the **REPROVIDE** Programme in key areas across South Wales including Neath Port Talbot, Bridgend and Swansea.

REPROVIDE is a research study looking at the effectiveness of a group behaviour change programme for men. The programme aims to:

- Support with safety planning in the early stages
- Work with men to increase capacity to 'straight talk' and explore denial
- Develop a critical awareness of attitudes, beliefs and expectations that support the use of violence and abuse (CBT)
- Build empathy for victims
- Identify and practice alternative behaviour

DRIVE

The Drive project is an innovative domestic abuse intervention rolled out in NPT in 2020 with funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner. It aims to reduce the number of child and adult victims by disrupting and changing perpetrator behaviour.

The project focuses on high-risk, high-harm and/or serial perpetrators, as this group carries the greatest risk of serious harm, and engagement with available services is low. Drive implements a whole-system approach using intensive case management alongside a coordinated multi-agency response, working closely with victim services, the police, probation, children's social services, housing, substance misuse and mental health teams.

The Drive Project focuses on reducing risk and increasing victim safety by combining disruption, support and behaviour change interventions alongside the crucial protective work by victim services.

Change That Lasts – CLEAR

Thrive Women's Aid launched their CLEAR programme in 2022, an awareness raising course aimed at motivating men to make positive changes, building on their existing strengths and resources as well as working with each man to address his identified needs.

The course provides a space for men to: -

- Identify the different forms of abusive behaviour and the impact of this behaviour on others
- Examine their own thinking and behaviour and how gendered cultural messages can influence their thinking and behaviour
- Identify and regulate emotions to promote pro-social behaviour
- Identify and encourage positive support networks
- Identify, set and work towards goals to promote well being

For 2023-2026, on a regional basis we will;

1. Ensure perpetrators of domestic abuse receive appropriate intervention to disrupt and change perpetrating behaviours
2. Promote interventions like Reprovide across the region to raise awareness and encourage participation
3. Ensure there are suitable referral pathways, to encourage referrals, use and attendance of all perpetrator programmes
4. Consider what measures we can take to improve the identification of perpetrators and engage them in programmes that tackle their behaviour and hold them to account

⁷ The Respect document, published in 2010 – 'Domestic Violence Perpetrators: Working with the cause of the problem – is available at http://www.respect.uk.net/data/files/lobbying/lobbying_tool_with_refs_30.11.10.pdf

⁸ <https://www.dur.ac.uk/resources/criva/ProjectMirabalexecutivesummary.pdf>

5. Work with Housing Options to monitor the number of perpetrator evictions under the Renting Homes Wales Act, which states *'perpetrators of domestic abuse can be targeted for eviction to help prevent those experiencing domestic abuse from becoming homeless; supporting the aims of the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 to provide preventive, protective and supportive mechanisms in the delivery of services'*
6. Explore opportunities to work with female perpetrators and perpetrators of sexual abuse

For 2023-2026, on a local basis we will;

1. Continue to promote and develop clear referral pathways to CLEAR to support men who have identified concerns about their behaviour
2. Continue to work with local specialist providers to support families and identify the most effective interventions
3. Work with the Communications and Engagement Group to encourage workplaces to develop a zero tolerance environment to workplace harassment by raising awareness with organisations and sharing consistent messages

Objective 4

Make early intervention and prevention a priority – To reduce the number of repeat victims and reduce the number of high risk cases

Preventing violence and intervening at the earliest possible stage to prevent its occurrence is the fundamental building block to an effective strategy. The need to minimise reactive interventions once a crisis has occurred is pivotal to the ambition to end violence.

We know that adults in Wales who were physically or sexually abused as children or brought up in households where there was VAWDASV, alcohol or drug use are more likely to adopt health-harming and anti-social behaviours in adult life. Research is identifying the long-term harm that can result from chronic stress on individuals during childhood. Such stress may arise from the abuse and neglect of children, but also from growing up in households where children are routinely exposed to issues such as VAWDASV, or individuals with alcohol and other substance use problems. It is critical therefore, for the long term health and welfare of our nation that we intervene early to reduce and prevent the incidence of violence, reducing the harm to victims and their children.

Current Position

A high proportion of funding in NPT continues to be focused on medium / high risk victims. More focus is needed on prevention and early intervention to avoid violence escalating and victims needing the high risk services or crisis interventions. NPT has worked with Welsh Women's Aid, implementing elements of their Change That Lasts model to develop a community based approach to achieve an earlier, more informed and supportive response from community members and professionals.

For 2023-2026, on a local basis we will;

1. Continue to work with Supporting People, the Area Planning Board, Community Safety and Families First commissioners to refocus funding in line with a new service model
2. Consider the work of the Dr. Jane Monckton Smith when planning or commissioning services
3. Continue to work with South Wales Police on the Early Action Together programme, incorporating ACE'S into their work and integrating services into the Social Services front door
4. Work with the Communications and Engagement Group to conduct research to identify unidentified need – working with local services to better understand the needs of marginalised groups in our area, identifying any gaps in current provision
5. Continue to support local services in developing targeted outreach provision to tackle violence against those experiencing harm or exploited by the sex industry

For 2023-2026, on a regional basis we will;

1. Continue to support the roll out of IRIS across the region
2. Consider further working with Welsh Women's Aid to deliver on their Change That Lasts Model

Objective 5

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

Current Position

A National Training Framework Sub Group has been developed involving representatives from Training & Development, Community Safety and Swansea Bay University Health Board. The group is responsible for the development of the training plan for roll out across the authority – identifying those who require varying levels of the training and how this will be rolled out, whilst learning from the experiences of the Swansea Bay University Health Board pilot and sharing best practice.

With the roll out of the National Training Framework it will undoubtedly increase referrals into local services and we need to be clear of a referral pathway for all professionals to follow. The VAWDASV Leadership Group will have an important role to play in how we overcome any issues that may arise as a result of this.

For 2023-26, on a local basis we will;

1. Provide Group 1 training to all new NPT staff as part of their induction and provide refreshers to existing staff in line with the National Training Framework
2. Work with local service providers to ensure they continue to receive appropriate training on complex needs in line with Groups 4 and 5 of the National Training Framework
3. Ensure all agencies in the local VAWDASV partnership continue to give a commitment to training plans within their own organisation over the next 3 years

- 4 When delivering VAWDASV training, continue to give consideration to the recommendations of local Domestic Homicide Reviews, to ensure everyone feels confident to signpost victims to appropriate support services or VAWDASV champions
- 5 Continue to raise awareness, through our training roll out, of the 'Safe Leave' policy for NPT staff who are affected by VAWDASV

For 2023-26, on a regional basis we will;

1. Continue to roll out 'Ask & Act' Group 2 Training promoting the Ask & Act Pathway and regional specialist partners to priority groups of staff across NPT in partnership with Swansea
- 2 Roll out 'Ask & Act' Group 3 Training to organisational champions across the region in partnership with Swansea, Swansea Bay University Health Board and specialist regional partners
- 3 Provide accredited local authority and health board 'Ask & Act' trainers with additional training to support their continuous professional development and the sustainability of their training
- 4 Work with Welsh Women's Aid and partners to deliver Group 6 of the National Training Framework to all local members and senior leaders

Objective 6

Provide all victims with equal access to appropriately resourced, high quality, needs-led, strength-based, inter-sectional and responsive services across Wales.

Current Position

Current services within NPT are detailed in Chapter 5 of this strategy. A high proportion of funding supports high risk victims and whilst services are county borough wide, access points are principally in the two main towns of Neath and Port Talbot.

As outlined earlier in the strategy, we have 3 specialist Domestic Abuse providers in the area, offering refuge accommodation, move on accommodation, floating support, advocacy and advice.

Thrive Women's Aid have secured funding to develop a supported housing programme providing specialist accommodation to victims of domestic abuse and their families. Four properties will be available from March 2023, increasing to twenty properties by March 2024, along with 2 Housing Officers providing additional support.

Sexual Violence Counselling services are offered across the region by New Pathways.

The Council's Housing Options Service, also based in Neath, is available for anyone in housing difficulty, including those experiencing Domestic Abuse.

For 2023-2026, on a local basis we will;

1. Continue to have regard for VAWDASV Commissioning Guidance in our practice so that those who commission services can ensure activity is better informed, more joined up and value for money, ensuring that specialist services in NPT meet victims' needs

2. Further develop links with local specialist providers who meet the needs of people affected by other forms of violence such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
3. Work with Supporting People to complete the commissioning exercise to implement a new service model for Accommodation and Support
4. Implement the findings of the Review of Social Services response to domestic abuse to improve support which is survivor informed and joined-up with good communication channels across all organisations
5. Continue to support the new RAPID project delivered in partnership by Thrive Women's Aid and South Wales Police

For 2023-2026, on a regional basis we will;

6. Consider ways to further expand the provision of the SWAN service across the region
The SWAN Project, delivered by Swansea Women's Aid, supports women who are sex working. They provide practical and emotional support and aim to improve the safety and well-being of women accessing the service)

Objective 7

Increase focus on improving the recognition of, and responses to VAWDASV in all Criminal Justice proceedings.

An integral element of this strategy is justice and protection for survivors and their families according to their needs, within a criminal and civil justice framework and also within a wider social context.

Prosecution

It is well documented that many victims do not report VAWDASV related crimes to the police¹⁰ and, that a significant proportion of those who do, later withdraw their complaints.¹¹

There needs to be greater confidence in the Criminal Justice System (CJS) in order to increase reporting and as a result, increase victims' access to safety, support and justice and reduce the risk of re-victimisation.

A number of studies have shown that in the policing context, perceptions of fairness and decent treatment were at times more important than effectiveness and outcomes in determining satisfaction and confidence. Victims want to be treated with respect and dignity. Research also highlights that the outcomes and sentence are highly influential on victims' views of the CJS.¹²

The majority of perpetrators are men and boys. As most cases never come to the attention of the Criminal Justice System, there are few sanctions for their behaviour. Therefore, a drive to improve criminal justice system services, ensuring a renewed focus on prosecuting and convicting perpetrators is essential to driving victim and wider public confidence.

¹⁰ Statistical bulletin: Crime in England and Wales, Year Ending December 2012, Office for National Statistics

¹¹ CEDAW Thematic Shadow Report on Violence Against Women in the UK, Sen and Kelly (2007)

¹² Victims' views of court and sentencing (October 2011), Commissioner for Victims and Witnesses in England and Wales

Family Courts

For specialist service providers supporting victim the Family Court process has long been a cause for concern. Whilst improvements have been made in the criminal courts, there is an increasing need for the Family Courts to follow in their footsteps. Domestic Abuse is an issue in 70% of cases in the family courts across England and Wales. Providers have expressed concerns of victims having to participate in mediation with the perpetrator, needing to represent themselves at Court and sometimes being cross examined by the perpetrator during the process.

For 2023-2026, on a regional basis we will;

1. Work in partnership with South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner to further improve outcomes; to reduce the number of repeat victims; and to identify how we can intervene effectively much earlier
2. Continue to work in partnership with the Police and Courts, to identify what needs to change to better support victims, including victimless prosecutions and how evidence is gathered
3. Continue to increase awareness with local solicitors, magistrates, and legal reps of the importance of recognising all forms of VAWDASV and providing appropriate responses in family court situations
4. Continue to promote the use of remote evidence facilities across the region. To ensure victims are fully aware of the service and are appropriately supported throughout the court process

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LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE

The strategic direction and oversight of the Healthy Relationships for Stronger Communities Strategy is held by the VAWDASV Leadership Group, which is accountable to the Safer Neath Port Talbot Community Safety Partnership Board (CSP).



The Public Services Board will provide challenge and support to the Community Safety Partnership in progressing this Strategy.

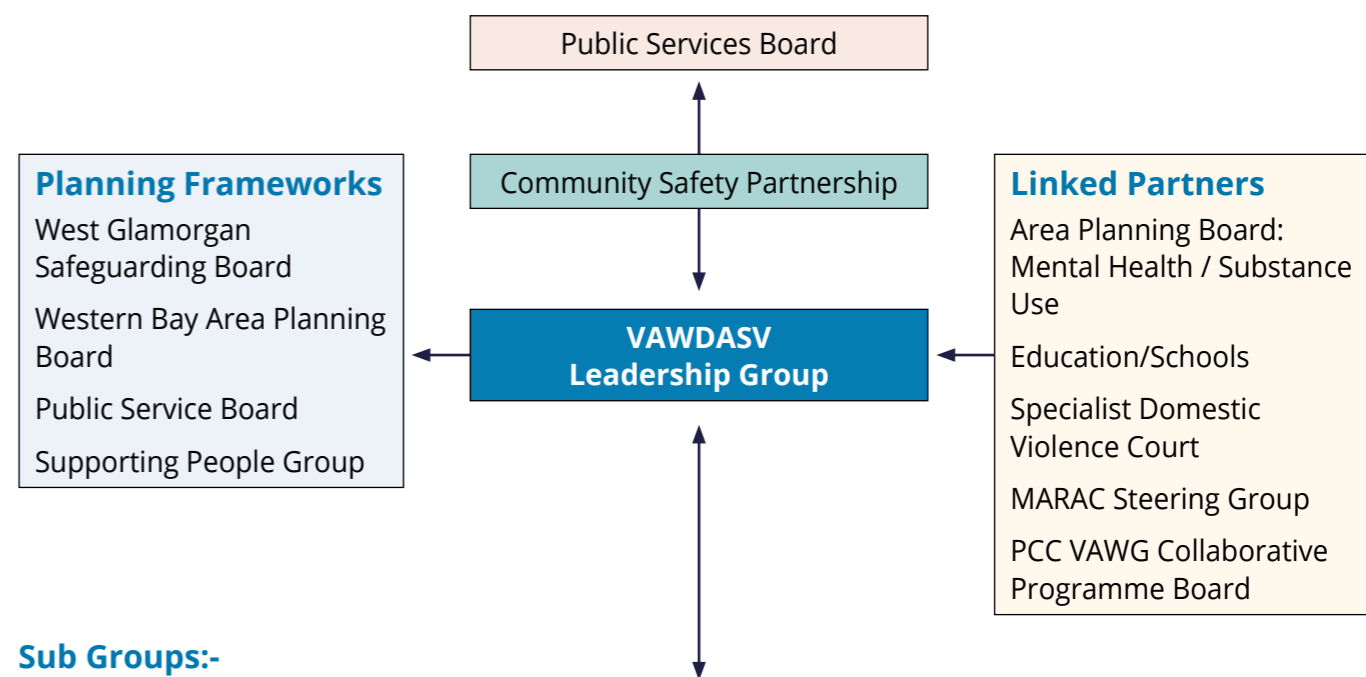
The Leadership Group will continue to establish annual priorities drawn from this Strategy that will be progressed through clearly agreed actions plans. A delivery plan will be developed to highlight which aspects of the work will be delivered locally and regionally and to allow the Leadership Group to easily monitor progress.

The measures listed in this strategy will be regularly reported to the Leadership Group by the designated leads for each objective.

The diagram opposite illustrates the revised governance structure around this strategy for 2023-26.

For 2023-2026 the Leadership Group will;

- Publish an annual report to highlight progress made on all areas of this strategy
- Hold a regional annual event to discuss progress made and agree the priority area's for the following year
- Ensure membership of the Group remains appropriate and inclusive of all relevant services and partners



Sub Groups:-

Communications & Engagement Group	Raise awareness of VAWDASV and local partnership work Delivering on Objective 1 within the Healthy Relationship for Stronger Communities Strategy	Lisa Potterton
Relationship & Sexuality Education Group	Overseeing the continuous improvement of the RSE Lesson packs, ensuring age appropriate RSE lessons are delivered across all schools in NPT Delivering on Objective 2 within the Healthy Relationship for Stronger Communities Strategy	Corinne Fry
National Training Framework (inc Ask & Act) Group	To implement the National Training Framework, Ask & Act Model and identify / arrange other relevant training Delivering on Objective 5 within the Healthy Relationship for Stronger Communities Strategy	Rachel Dixon
Service Provider Forum	To share good practise and raise and formalise escalation of concerns	Lisa Potterton
MARAC Steering Group	To oversee the MARAC arrangements for Neath Port Talbot Council, ensuring it is fit for purpose and effective	Claire Jones

**Sub Groups to feed in to Quarterly Leadership Group meetings via a Highlight Report – Agenda Items to be scheduled.*

Time Limited Task & Finish Groups:-

As Required by VAWDASV Leadership Group	Time limited Task & Finish Groups can be established by the VAWDASV Leadership Group, for any emerging issues that would not otherwise be appropriate for the Sub Groups to address or take forward
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Membership of the VAWDASV Leadership Group

- NPTCBC
 - » Community Safety
 - » Children's Services
 - » Commissioning
 - » Adult Safeguarding
 - » Substance Misuse
 - » Education
 - » Training and Development
 - » Youth Service
- Swansea Bay University Health Board
- South Wales Police
- Thrive Women's Aid
- Calan DVS
- Hafan Cymru
- BAWSO
- New Pathways
- Tai Tarian
- Police & Crime Commissioner
- Probation
- Welsh Women's Aid
- Welsh Ambulance Service
- Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service

MEASURES

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In order to demonstrate the progress made on each of the seven objectives within this strategy, a set of key performance indicators will be developed.

Progress reports will be discussed at the VAWDASV Leadership Group meetings and integrated into every Annual Report.



How will we know we are making a difference?

Survivor Feedback

As outlined earlier on in this strategy, survivor engagement and feedback is vital to shaping future services and understanding whether the work we do and the services we offer are meeting the needs of our communities.

Objective 1 - Communications & Engagement

- The number of Clare's Law requests made within Neath Port Talbot and the number of those where VAWDASV related concerns were raised
- The social media reach of all VAWDASV campaigns promoted by the Communications & Engagement Group
- The number of people reporting VAWDASV and/or accessing specialist support services
- The number of calls made to the Respect Helpline from the Neath Port Talbot area and their outcomes

Objective 2 - Children and Young People

- The number of children in Neath Port Talbot schools who have received a Healthy Relationship lesson and the % of those children who retained some the key information from that lesson 6 months later

Objective 3 - Perpetrators

- The number of referrals made to the local Perpetrator Programme, including the % of those referred who have successfully engaged with the programme

Objective 4 - Early Intervention & Prevention

- Of the referrals into SPOC, the number of these that were VAWDASV related and the % referred for statutory services or early intervention. What were the outcomes?
- The number of referrals into services from those who are affected by any form of VAWDASV, but who identify as LGBT, are older, disabled, a male victim, or a member of the BAME community

Objective 5 - Training

- The number of staff who have been trained to the appropriate level of the National Training Framework, depending on their individual roles
- The number of staff within partner organisations who have completed VAWDASV related training

Objective 6 - Accessible Services

- Survivor Feedback
- Number of presentations to Housing Options as a result of VAWDASV and their outcomes
- Referrals to specialist providers, programmes offered, and outcomes
- % of cases known to Adult Services where VAWDASV is a concern

Objective 7 - Criminal Justice Proceedings

- Usage of the remote evidence facilities and the outcomes
- The number of high risk victims supported by the IDVA service; the % of those who engage with support and the % who are repeat victims
- The number of victims supported through a court process and the % of those that have a positive outcome

Appendix 1 - Glossary

ACE's	Adverse Childhood Experiences	RSE	Relationship & Sexuality Education
APB	Area Planning Board	SBUHB	Swansea Bay University Health Board
BAME	Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic	SP	Supporting People
BAWSO	Black Association of Women Step Out	SPOC	Single Point of Contact
C&E	Communications & Engagement	SSWBA	Social Services & Well-Being Act
CAFCASS	Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service	SV	Sexual Violence
Calan DVS	Calan Domestic Violence Services	UK	United Kingdom
CJS	Criminal Justice System	UN	United Nations
CSP	Community Safety Partnership	VAWDASV	Violence Against Women Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence
CYP	Children and Young People	VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls
DHR	Domestic Homicide Review	WA	Women's Aid
EIP	Early Intervention & Prevention	WG	Welsh Government
EU	European Union	WWA	Welsh Women's Aid
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation	YJEIS	Youth Justice Early Intervention Service
GP	General Practitioner		
IDVA	Independent Domestic Violence Advisor		
IRIS	Identification and Referral to Improve Safety		
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender		
MARAC	Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference		
NICE	National Institute of Clinical Excellence		
NPT	Neath Port Talbot		
NPTCBC	Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council		
OSS	One Stop Shop		
PCC	Police and Crime Commissioner		
PSB	Public Services Board		

