



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council



Healthy Relationships for Stronger Communities Strategy (2023-2026)



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Officers;

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Introduction

- The Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence Act (Wales) 2015 placed a duty on Local Authorities and Health Boards to jointly prepare a strategy for their local area in order to improve prevention, protection and support for victims.
- The first Healthy Relationships for Stronger Communities Strategy was launched in 2017 and subsequently revised in 2020 and now 2023.
- The Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) Leadership Group has overseen the implementation of each strategy with various sub-groups commissioned to undertake certain objectives and actions

2023-2026

- Significant developments have been made over the past 3 years, despite the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown restrictions. These achievements were outlined in our recent annual report.
- However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, a number of actions contained within our 2020-2023 strategy inevitably had to be postponed, as the primary focus of our VAWDASV Leadership Group was to ensure we were working together to address the significant increases in demands across all services, and ensure victims were aware that they could still access help and support.
- As a result of this, a number of actions have been carried forward into the 2023-2026 strategy.

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Objective 1

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

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

- Continue the Regional Communications & Engagement group on a regional basis, and ensure the membership of the group remains inclusive.
- Continue to raise awareness of the following initiatives to further encourage victims to come forward and access appropriate help and support;
 Clare's Law / Bright Sky / Ask Angela
- Actively promote the Respect Helpline for victims and perpetrators during local engagement events

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- 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.
- Consider alternative approaches to engage with marginalised groups, encouraging more people to come forward if they are experiencing VAWDASV
- 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
- Increase awareness of sexual exploitation and street harassment through local, regional and national campaigns
- 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.

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

- Continue to work towards a Whole School Approach across NPT
- Through the Relationship & Sexuality Education Group, ensure the Healthy Relationship lesson continues delivery to all schools
- Explore opportunities for challenging misogynistic behaviour and toxic masculinity with young people, considering the influence of social media
- Use existing initiatives 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.

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

- Raise awareness of all Welsh Government VAWADSV campaigns targeted at CYP with an emphasis on challenging misogyny and developing conversations about acceptable language and behaviour
- Consider increased opportunities to engage with those in higher education settings about healthy relationships, consent, 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

During 2023-26, on a local basis we will:

- Continue to promote and develop clear referral pathways to CLEAR, to support men who have identified concerns about their behaviour
- Continue to work with local specialist providers to support families and identify the most effective interventions
- 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

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During 2023-26, on a regional basis we will:

- Ensure perpetrators of domestic abuse receive appropriate intervention to disrupt and change perpetrating behaviours
- Promote interventions like Reprovide across the region to raise awareness and encourage participation
- Ensure there are suitable referral pathways, to encourage referrals, use and attendance of all perpetrator programmes
- 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
- Work with Housing Options to monitor the number of perpetrator evictions under the Renting Homes Wales Act

Objective 4

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

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

- 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
- Consider the work of the Dr. Jane Monckton Smith when planning or commissioning services
- Continue to work with South Wales Police on the Early Action Together programme
- Work with the Communications and Engagement Group to conduct research to identify unidentified need
- Continue to support local services in developing targeted outreach provision to tackle violence against those experiencing harm or exploited by the sex industry

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

- Continue to support the roll out of IRIS across the region
- 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

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

- 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.
- 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
- 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.
- When delivering VAWDASV training, continue to give consideration to the recommendations of local Domestic Homicide Reviews
- 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;

- 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
- 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
- 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
- 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.

During 2023-26, on a local basis we will:

- 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
- 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)
- Work with Supporting People to complete the commissioning exercise to implement a new service model for Accommodation and Support.
- 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
- Continue to support the new RAPID project delivered in partnership by Thrive Women's Aid and South Wales Police

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

- 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 wellbeing of women accessing the service)

Objective 7

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

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

- 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
- 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.
- 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
- 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

Leadership & Governance

The strategy is overseen by the NPT VAWDASV Leadership Group, which remains a very strong partnership. During 2023-2026, the 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 areas for the following year

Ensure membership of the Group remains appropriate and inclusive of all relevant services and partners

Next Steps

- Following Cabinet approval, strategy will be live as of 1st August 2023
- Launch event to be arranged during Autumn 2023

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Please forward any questions to;


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Thank You
Any Questions?

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