



**Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence**  
**Trais Yn Erbyn Menywod, Cham-drin Domestig a Thrals Rhywiol**

**Title:** UPDATE REPORT ON BEHALF OF THE GWENT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, DOMESTIC ABUSE AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE REGIONAL TEAM

**Subject:** GWENT REGIONAL VAWDASV REPORT FOR MONMOUTHSHIRE PUBLIC SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE MARCH 2020

**Date:** 4<sup>th</sup> March 2020

### Purpose

The Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 places a duty on Local Authorities and Local Health Boards to publish a report of the progress made during each financial year in achieving the objectives specified in local/regional strategies. The statutory responsibilities under the VAWDASV (Wales) Act 2015 are discharged through the VAWDASV Partnership Board and annual reporting against the Regional Strategy and Delivery Plan are submitted into Gwent Public Services Boards.

This is detailed and strengthened by the Gwent VAWDASV strategy 2018 – 2023 which was approved by each of the Gwent Public Service Boards prior to publication in May 2018. This report describes how the Gwent VAWDASV Regional Team supports all Gwent relevant authorities, and in particular, Monmouthshire County Council, to deliver the responsibilities outlined in the VAWDASV (Wales) Act 2015 and is supported by previous annual reports presented by members of the Regional Team.

### Background

The Gwent Regional Team was established in April 2015 to formalise regional collaboration; to bring together and further develop structures to implement new legislative requirements under the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015. The early development of the regional model based on progress made as the pilot area for regionalisation for Welsh Government. Cordis Bright independently evaluated this in 2015, based on a set of recommendations that has set the direction for continued regional working. As the pathfinder region, we have brought together the strategic governance, development and co-ordination of the VAWDASV agenda ahead of other regions in Wales.

The Welsh Government VAWDASV Grant is one element of funding that contributes to the regional response to VAWDASV. This grant has funds the regional coordination team, training, communication and engagement and just over 50% towards the regional IDVA service. Funding is on annual basis on approval of the Regional delivery plan. Although hosted by Newport City Council, the team is very much a regional resource.

The Regional team reports to the Gwent VAWDASV Partnership Board (Board). Board membership includes representatives from each of the five local authorities, Gwent Police and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, Wales Ambulance Service Trust, Probation Services, Registered Social Landlords, Supporting People (Housing Support Grant) Regional Teams, Fire and Rescue Service, Gwent Safeguarding Boards, and VAWDASV specialist sector partners. A senior Welsh Government Official attends each Board meeting for two way sharing of information, practice sharing and risk management.

The role of the VAWDASV Partnership Board is to provide the governance structure that will develop and monitor VAWDASV regional working. Through a structure of working groups the Partnership Board, ensures that the priorities identified in the Strategy translate into actions that can make a real difference to the well-being and safety of people living in Gwent, both now and in the future.

Monmouthshire County Council regularly represented at the following groups:

- Gwent VAWDASV Partnership Board
- Gwent VAWDASV Strategic Delivery Group
- Gwent Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) Planning Group
- Gwent VAWDASV Communication and Engagement Group
- Gwent VAWDASV Whole Education Approach Group members
- Gwent VAWDASV Commissioners Group members
- Gwent VAWDASV Training Sub Group members
- Gwent VAWDASV Independent Domestic Violence Advisor Steering Group

This level of membership and collaboration ensures Monmouthshire County Council residents are well represented and considered.

It has to be noted, the loss of the regional base in Mamhilad has had a significant effect on the regional team and partners. The impact will be detailed in the end of year progress report to be shared in April 2020.

### Strategy and Delivery Plan

As detailed above the initial focus for the Regional Team was to formalise regional collaboration by developing and publicising The Gwent VAWDASV Strategy 2018 – 2023. Published in May 2018, the Strategy identifies Six Strategic Priorities that will contribute to the pursuit of the **prevention** of violence and abuse, the **protection** of victims and the **support** of all those affected. <https://www.gwentsafeguarding.org.uk/Documents-en/VAWDASV/Gwent-VAWDASV-Strategy.pdf>.

Since publication, detailed objectives and actions under each Strategic Priority are identified and monitored through the annual delivery plan. The Gwent Strategic Delivery Group is responsible for monitoring and evaluating progress against this delivery plan, with key risks escalated to the Gwent VAWDASV Partnership Board. In addition to the monitoring and evaluation undertaken by the Strategic Delivery Group and Board, relevant authority scrutiny processes also evaluate performance through an annual progress report.

### Key Progress

Highlighted progress against each of the Six Strategic Priorities since publication of the Strategy in May 2018 are listed below, although it is important to note that there are elements of each which cross over into others. Where appropriate figures for 2019/20 will be provided in the end of year report. A copy of the 2019/20 delivery plan (not yet completed) and the 2020/21 delivery plan are embedded at the end of this report:

#### ***Strategic Priority 1: Increase awareness and challenge attitudes of VAWDASV across Gwent:***

- Overseen by the Gwent VAWDASV Communication and Engagement Group
- Development and building of the VAWDASV pages on the Gwent Safeguarding website including a Gwent Service Directory
- Development and maintenance of a cascade network to share key information with all partner agencies
- Development and cascading of a Gwent Awareness raising poster campaign with Gwent survivor case studies and images
- Development and cascading of a survivor led brochure with details on the nature of abuse and support available
- Promoting of Welsh Government campaigns including This is Me, the Bystander campaign and This is Not Love, This is Control, along with other key national and international events
- Facilitation of Gwent wide White Ribbon walks, held in Caldicot Castle November 2019
- Hosting and facilitation of a sexual violence conference in February 2019
- Awareness raising and best practice presentations at Local Safeguarding Networks (including Monmouthshire) in May and November of each year
- Promotion of the Live Fear Free helpline and Gwent Safeguarding website through media, posters and merchandise
- Development and promotion of a [Gwent VAWDASV Involvement and Engagement Introductory Guide](#)
- Extensive consultation with male and female survivors, service managers and operational staff in relation to the Strategy and updated Needs Assessment
- Facilitation and promotion of a male survivor consultation and peer support group – M.A.R.S. (Male Abuse and Rape Survivors)
- Feedback to Board and all sub groups on the findings and ideas from survivors
- Planning for two regional community consultation events in March 2020

#### ***Strategic Priority 2: Increase awareness of children and young people on safe, equal and healthy relationships, and that abusive behaviour is always wrong***

- Overseen by the Gwent VAWDASV Whole Education Approach Group
- Development and dissemination of the Gwent Whole Education Approach Guide based on curriculum changes
- Support for Operation Encompass introduction in Gwent schools
- Support and reporting upon Spectrum sessions in Gwent schools
- Discussions with South Wales University on how guidance can be supported within Further and Higher education

- Pilot project to train year 9 healthy relationship ambassadors in Gwent schools, including three Monmouthshire schools

***Strategic Priority 3: Increased focus on holding perpetrators to account and provide opportunities to change their behaviour based around victim safety***

- Overseen by a recently formed Gwent VAWDASV Perpetrator Group
- Publication of the Mapping VAWDASV Perpetrator Services Across Gwent (Miles 2018) report
- Successfully received additional Welsh Government funding in 2018/19 and 2019/20 to spot purchase additional perpetrator interventions
- Sharing and promotion of Welsh Government Perpetrator Service Standards to all key stakeholders, including commissioners
- Promotion of Gwent Perpetrator programmes to professionals and Gwent citizens
- Developing a Gwent Action Plan to meet recently published Welsh Government Guidance for Public Bodies
- Involvement in the review of Specialist Domestic Violence Court (SDVC)
- Cross-sharing of information and priorities with the Criminal Justice Board, SDVC and all key stakeholders
- Sharing Welsh Government best practice and task and finish group progress with Gwent partners
- Developing a referral pathway for perpetrators in Gwent

***Strategic Priority 4: Make early intervention and prevention a priority***

- Shared oversight by the DHR Planning Group and the MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) Steering Group
- Early intervention and prevention is articulated for each strategic priority throughout the Delivery Plan and ensures a focus on the whole VAWDASV agenda and all protected characteristics.
- Development of a DH-APR (Domestic Homicide-Adult Practice Review) process to improve DHR processes for families and learning across Gwent with support and agreement from Welsh Government and the Home office. Piloted successful in Monmouthshire.
- Facilitated training sessions for Chair and Panel members for DHR and Adult and Child Practice Reviews
- Development and sharing of a thematic review of Gwent published DHRs
- Development and achievement of a Gwent MARAC action plan based on a SafeLives report from 2017
- Facilitation of MARAC Chair and conference member training
- Partnership funding of a MARAC Coordinator to improve quality and consistency across Gwent
- During 2018/19 the Gwent Registered Social Landlords' Group launched their Free from Fear web portal which is aimed at professionals working in housing to recognise and support those who may be experiencing domestic abuse. The Free From Fear portal is highlighted as an example of partnership working across the Region and was successful in being awarded the Pat Chown Capturing Creativity Award.

***Strategic Priority 5: Relevant professionals are trained to provide effective, timely and appropriate responses to victims***

- Overseen by the Gwent VAWDASV Training Sub Group
- Monitoring and reporting of Group 1, 2 and 3 of the Welsh Government VAWDASV National Training Framework
- Liaising and supporting Monmouthshire County Council to develop a training needs analysis and plan to meet Welsh Government requirements
- Working with Monmouthshire County Council and the specialist sector to deliver Group 2 and 3 training to practitioners across Monmouthshire
- Supporting Monmouthshire County Council with quarterly Welsh Government reports on NTF compliance
- Working with Monmouthshire to develop different methods to support compliance with training plans and share best practice and achievement solutions, including the creation of non-active email accounts for education staff in Monmouthshire
- Early adopter site for 'Ask and Act' training, positively influencing improvements in all aspects of policy and delivery
- Providing support to other areas of Wales on the roll out of the NTF across all areas

- Facilitating, coordinating and supporting Train the Trainer sessions, along with mentoring new trainers
- Management of the Gwent Training Consortium and Welsh Government subsidy to support achievement of targets
- Working with Specialist sector organisations to support Group 4 and 5 training to relevant practitioners across Gwent
- Sharing of Group 6 briefings for chief executives and senior leaders within relevant authority organisations
- Providing advice and guidance on work place VAWDASV policies
- Coordination of regional VAWDASV training to practitioners across Gwent
- Development and dissemination of a Gwent Ask and Act policy

***Strategic Priority 6: To provide victims with equal access to appropriately resourced high quality need led strength based gender responsive services.***

- Overseen by the Strategic Delivery Group and newly formed Gwent VAWDASV Commissioners Group
- Supporting the region to meet the requirements of the Welsh Government VAWDASV Commissioning Guidance to become statutory in April 2020
- Development and agreement of a Gwent Commissioning Strategy and Framework to promote collaboration and regional commissioning based on the updated needs assessment
- Development of a Gwent VAWDASV Needs Assessment (currently being updated) and gap analysis
- The regions IDVA service has continued to provide a consistent service to high-risk victims across Gwent.
- Appointment of a MARAC Coordinator
- To further support high-risk victims the Welsh Government VAWDASV Grant has been utilised to purchase target-hardening equipment
- Identifying at risk services and researching solutions. A key example of this has been using VAWDASV Welsh Government grant underspend to part fund the Gwent Sexual Exploitation Advocacy Support Service (SEASS) following uncertainty of funding.
- Representation on the Welsh Government Sustainable Funding Group
- Extensive consultation with victims, survivors, family members and service providers to identify areas of good practice and improvement

Wider Regional Team Responsibilities

Since its initial path-finding status the Gwent Regional Team and Partnership Board, continue to influence National policy via Welsh Government. Key examples are this are in relation to the new DH-APR review, the National Training Framework, Sustainable funding, and overall progression of the VAWDASV Act. This has been achieved, through face-to-face and written submissions and position papers.

The Regional team continue to use their membership of the Gwent Safeguarding Board and associated sub groups to ensure a focus on VAWDASV and the context is included in all Safeguarding procedures and developments across the region. Work is ongoing as to how to better align all regional groups to further raise the VAWDASV agenda across Gwent and ensure it is seen as 'Everybody's Business'

Focus for 2020/21

- Influencing, shaping and embedding Welsh Government National Indicators, and advising relevant authorities on how these can be achieved
- Publication of the updated Needs Assessment including a Gwent action plan
- Development of a focused action plan to address the findings of the Wales Audit Report on progress against the Act
- Further development of the Gwent VAWDASV Partnership Board including cross-cutting governance arrangements
- Development of a Gwent Action Plan to support Regional authorities to meet the requirements of the Welsh Government Good Practice Guidance for Non-specialist Welsh Public Services on Working with Adult Perpetrators