Change that Lasts:
Preventing violence against women

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Welsh Women’s Aid

National charity in Wales (est. 1978) aims to prevent domestic abuse & all forms of violence against women, and promote strengths-based services that meet needs

Membership charity: support independent specialist DA/VAW services across Wales

Survivors voices, experiences & needs central to our. We deliver e.g:

- National Quality Service Standards for specialist services
- Wales ‘Live Fear Free’ Helpline - SV/DA, men and women
- National Training Service partnership
- Children Matter: prevention, training, support

Domestic abuse costs Wales £303.5m annually, its human and emotional cost totals an additional £522.9m

Part of UK and EU network
Violence against women

Directed against women & girls because they are women & girls or affects women & girls disproportionately...

- likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological, or economic harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or deprivation of liberty, in public or in private life, including –

- (a) Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family,

- (b) Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the general community,

- (c) Physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the State, wherever it occurs.”

Domestic abuse
Female genital mutilation
Child sexual abuse
Forced marriage
‘Honour’ based violence
Rape and sexual violence
Stalking
Sexual harassment
Sexual exploitation including through sex industry
Modern slavery/trafficking
Femicide
Violence against women & health

1 in 3 women in Wales will experience violence and abuse incl domestic abuse, rape and sexual violence, FGM, forced marriage, sexual exploitation, harassment, stalking, ‘honour-based violence ...

When the cumulative impacts on mortality and morbidity are assessed, the health burden is often higher than for other, more commonly accepted, public health priorities: more women suffer rape than have a stroke each year, and the level of domestic abuse in the population exceeds that of diabetes by many times

Violence against women has huge economic costs, including the direct costs to health, legal, police and other services: NHS spends more time dealing with the impact of violence against women and children than other agencies

Health systems have a crucial role in multisector responses to violence against women: strengthening health systems can enable providers to address and better prevent violence against women
VAWDASV (Wales) Act 2015, legislative & policy framework includes:

- **Sustainable Development Goal (SDG5): gender equality and women’s empowerment** incl:
  - Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation
  - Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation

- **Welsh Public Authorities’ duty to prevent violence against women** (s2 VAWDASVA): remove or minimise factors which increase the risk or exacerbate the impact of violence against women and girls

- **New National VAW Strategy** (s3 &s4); public authorities local VAWDASV strategies (s5-8)

- **NICE Guidance for Domestic Violence; Public Health Wales: Making A Difference**

- **Statutory guidance to be issued:** (s15-19)
  - Delivery of Ask & Act policy framework: increase early identification, improve public sector responses based on need, culture change and proactively support survivors with complex needs
  - National Training Framework: Ask and Act training for public sector
  - Whole education approach, multi-agency working, commissioning guidance

*Aligns with Wales Well-Being of Future Generations Act, Social Services and Well-being Act*
Our investigation: The problem with systems ...

- Consultation with survivors, specialist services, review of research, Advisory Board

- **(High) Risk is the gateway to support & management of risk criteria of success:** short termism, doesn’t meet survivors and their children’s needs, no focus on behaviour change, prevention and recovery become secondary

- **Women with additional and complex needs are falling through the net:** growing crisis of unmet need

- **Survivors in frequent contact with a wide range of agencies** that either fail to provide an environment in which abuse could be disclosed, or fail to respond to a disclosure in a way which enables the survivor to get the help they need

- **Many survivors are not engaged formally with services at all,** and their opportunities to disclose abuse are limited to the “community”. Misunderstanding and fear prevent communities from demonstrating that disclosure is encouraged and abuse is not tolerated
Yasmin’s Journey
The true story of a domestic violence survivor, and what could have been

- What actually happened
- What could have happened with needs-led intervention

Yasmin has always suffered from OCD and depression. She meets her partner in 2012 and moves in soon after.

After 4 months the abuse starts when she discovers he is a heroin addict.

She is kept safe in hospital overnight until she can be moved to a refuge.

A&E staff call the police, and a nurse refers her to the A&E IDVA.

The refuge helps her access mental health support.

Eventually she is referred to the local housing team.

He beats her regularly. She sees A&E every fortnight. She calls the police more than 50 times but doesn’t feel supported to leave.

She is discharged with painkillers.

He breaks in and the downstairs alarm fails. He holds her hostage, repeatedly raping and injecting her.

She is housed near the perpetrator. He regularly breaks in, until she agrees to move back in with him.

He tries to burn down the house with her inside. She flees and a MARAC assesses her as high-risk. Alarms are put in a new property.

MARAC: £11,900

A woman’s aid

Cymorth i Ferched Cymru
Welsh Women’s Aid
Rhêl Merched a Phelant yn Gyntaf
Putting Women & Children First

£452

£5,300

He rehouses her for the rest of her life.

£47,323.50 per year

He now lives in supported housing because she can not live independently. She can not contact friends or family in case they lead him to her.

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women’s aid
until women & children are safe

£2,018,943

£13,700

£1,660

£9,500

£1,179

£648

£102,938
Partnership working to achieve Change that Lasts:

Pre-conditions -

Central involvement of survivors in planning, delivery & review

Sustainable independent specialist VAW services: needs-led, strengths-based, trauma-informed & woman-centred

Supported by

- Effective legal & public policy, coordinated state & community responses focussing on needs & prevention
- Data collection & evaluation
We have developed a scheme that widens opportunities for survivors to access help within their communities.

Local ‘Ask Me’ scheme: informed by diverse experiences of survivors, and the expertise of specialist services.

Individuals in local communities will be equipped with basic skills, knowledge and tools to have a supportive conversation and provide an appropriate response – incl access to Live Fear Free Helpline.

It will also help achieve primary prevention through raising awareness, challenging attitudes.

- every point of interaction with a survivor is an opportunity for intervention. It should not be missed, and should never add to the barriers survivors face.
Survivors have paid testament to the importance of a trusted relationship with a trained professional in facilitating change e.g. specialist service, health worker, advice worker, childcare professional.

**Allow** – not blocking or undermining women

**Enable** – help women to access and use their own resources and rights

**Assist** – when women’s own efforts are reduced, blocked or depleted, help them in the way that will be effective, and in the aspects of their lives where they need help.

**Wales National Training Framework**

Ask and Act’ training for all public authorities

Training, assessment and support planning tools will be provided, appropriate to the level of response expected.
Specialist independent VAWDASV support

Strengths-based, needs-led, woman-centred and trauma-informed practice (informed by practitioner competencies, skills and values):

› Services support women to identify their strengths and to (further) use their resources to develop resilience
› Recognise and support women’s intersecting experiences and needs
› Solutions not the same – women fully involved in identifying their goals and building on their strengths and resources
› Specialist services’ also equipped to deliver prevention/women’s empowerment: community resilience as important to good outcomes as the strengths of individuals
Next steps:

Survivor involvement framework:
Women want to be trained/supported to empower and educate public services to improve their responses to violence against women:

• **Survivor panels, survivor representation at Advisory Board**
• **Survivor-led events focussed on themes to improve practice eg forced marriage, FGM**
• **Survivors identify safe disclosure points in communities – to train communities to increase their knowledge**
• **SEEdS groups: accredited training and support**

Benefits: survivors visible, voices central to service development, delivery, review, to funding decisions, peer support development

Ask Me pilots in England and Wales
Sussex, London, Powys – funded by Comic Relief and Home Office

Wales: aim to pilot Change that Lasts for violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence

• Trained trusted professionals in specialist / generic services
• Specialist services resourced to deliver trauma-informed, needs-led and strengths based support
• Action learning sets to be part of the evaluation