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Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Bae Abertawe
Swansea Bay University
Health Board



Meeting Date	24 September 2020	Agenda Item	4.5
Report Title	NPT Healthy Relationships for Stronger Communities Strategy 2020-2023		
Report Author	Nicola Edwards, Head of Nursing-Safeguarding		
Report Sponsor	Cathy Dowling, Deputy Director of Nursing & Patient Experience		
Presented by	Nicola Edwards, Head of Nursing- Safeguarding		
Freedom of Information	Open		
Purpose of the Report	<p>The Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 places a duty on Councils and Health Boards to produce and implement joint Strategies.</p> <p>Neath Port Talbot Council and the Health Board have restated their commitment to tackling domestic abuse and prepared the NPT Healthy Relationships for Stronger Communities 2020-2023. The first joint 3 year Strategy was launched in 2017.</p>		
Key Issues	Committee are asked to note the joint commitment of NPT Council and the Health Board to tackle domestic abuse and recommend the Board approve the joint Strategy (Appendix 1)		
Specific Action Required <i>(please choose one only)</i>	Information	Discussion	Assurance
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Recommendations	<p>Members are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> APPROVE the Neath Port Talbot Healthy Relationships for Stronger Communities Strategy 2020-2023 		

NEATH PORT TALBOT HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS FOR STRONGER COMMUNITIES 2020-2023

1. INTRODUCTION

The Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 places a duty on Councils and Health Boards to produce and implement joint local Strategies. The first Neath Port Talbot Council and Health Board joint 3 year Strategy was launched in 2017.

2. BACKGROUND

Neath Port Talbot Council and the Health Board have restated their commitment to tackling domestic abuse and jointly prepared the second Neath Port Talbot Healthy Relationships for Stronger Communities 2020-2023 Strategy (Appendix 1). Since the publication of the first Strategy various changes have been made and progress is highlighted throughout the revised Strategy which has been developed with the involvement of both partner agencies and survivors.

The Strategy 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 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.

The Strategy was approved by Neath Port Talbot Councils' Cabinet in June and presented to and approved by the Health Board Safeguarding Committee on the 14th August.

3. GOVERNANCE AND RISK ISSUES

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 Authorities and Health Boards to jointly prepare and publish strategies to meet local needs and to prevent all forms of Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV).

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.

The Strategy encourages partners to further work together to achieve positive outcomes for all victims of VAWDASV. 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 area.

This agenda affects all children and adult services, housing, the police, health, probation, civil and criminal courts, voluntary and community organisations. 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.

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 misuse, child protection issues, physical injury and offending behaviour

Since the development of the first 'Healthy Relationships for Stronger Communities Strategy' in 2017, significant progress has been made. This revised strategy will further build on these achievements, working towards preventing VAWDASV and better supporting those who are affected.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

This report makes no recommendations to the Group that carry financial implications

5. RECOMMENDATION

Members are asked to:

- **APPROVE** the Neath Port Talbot Healthy Relationships for Stronger Communities Strategy 2020-2023

Governance and Assurance		
Link to Enabling Objectives (please choose)	Supporting better health and wellbeing by actively promoting and empowering people to live well in resilient communities	
	Partnerships for Improving Health and Wellbeing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Co-Production and Health Literacy	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Digitally Enabled Health and Wellbeing	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Deliver better care through excellent health and care services achieving the outcomes that matter most to people	
	Best Value Outcomes and High Quality Care	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Partnerships for Care	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Excellent Staff	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Digitally Enabled Care	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Outstanding Research, Innovation, Education and Learning	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health and Care Standards		
(please choose)	Staying Healthy	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Safe Care	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Effective Care	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Dignified Care	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Timely Care	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Individual Care	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Staff and Resources	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality, Safety and Patient Experience		
<p>The Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 places a duty on Councils and Health Boards to produce and implement joint Strategies. The first Neath Port Talbot Council and Health Board joint 3 year Strategy was launched in 2017.</p> <p>Neath Port Talbot Council and the Health Board have restated their commitment to tackling domestic abuse and jointly prepared the second Neath Port Talbot Healthy Relationships for Stronger Communities 2020-2023 Strategy</p>		
Financial Implications		
Safeguarding is a core duty of care for the Health Board. Financial implications to meet the statutory safeguarding duty are within existing budgets.		
Legal Implications (including equality and diversity assessment)		
<p>The Health Board has a statutory responsibility to make arrangements to protect and safeguard the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk. Safeguarding policies uphold that patient and service users have the right to independence, dignity, respect, equality, privacy and choice.</p> <p>The Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 places a duty on Councils and Health Boards to produce and implement joint Strategies.</p>		
Staffing Implications		
This report makes no recommendations to the Group that carry staffing implications		

Long Term Implications (including the impact of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Prevention - acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help public bodies meet their objectives. ○ Collaboration - Collaboration with persons may help the organisation meet its well-being objectives. ○ Involvement - The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals, which includes staff engagement ○ Improve population health through prevention and early intervention 	
Report History	This Strategy was presented and approved by the Health Board Safeguarding Committee, 14 th August 2020
Appendices	Appendix 1 NPT Healthy Relationships for Stronger Communities 2020-2023 Appendix 2 Press release



NPT Healthy Relationships for Stronger Communities 2020-2023

Implementing the Violence Against women,
Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015

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1. Introduction

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



This is Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council and Swansea Bay University Health Boards second '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. Since this time, various changes have been made and this progress is highlighted throughout this revised strategy.

A with our original strategy, 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 strategies 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.

2. 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, the 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 misuse, child protection issues, physical injury and offending behaviour.

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

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

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 develop a collaborative commissioning model for all VAWDASV services in the NPT area

Integration

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

3. Achievements

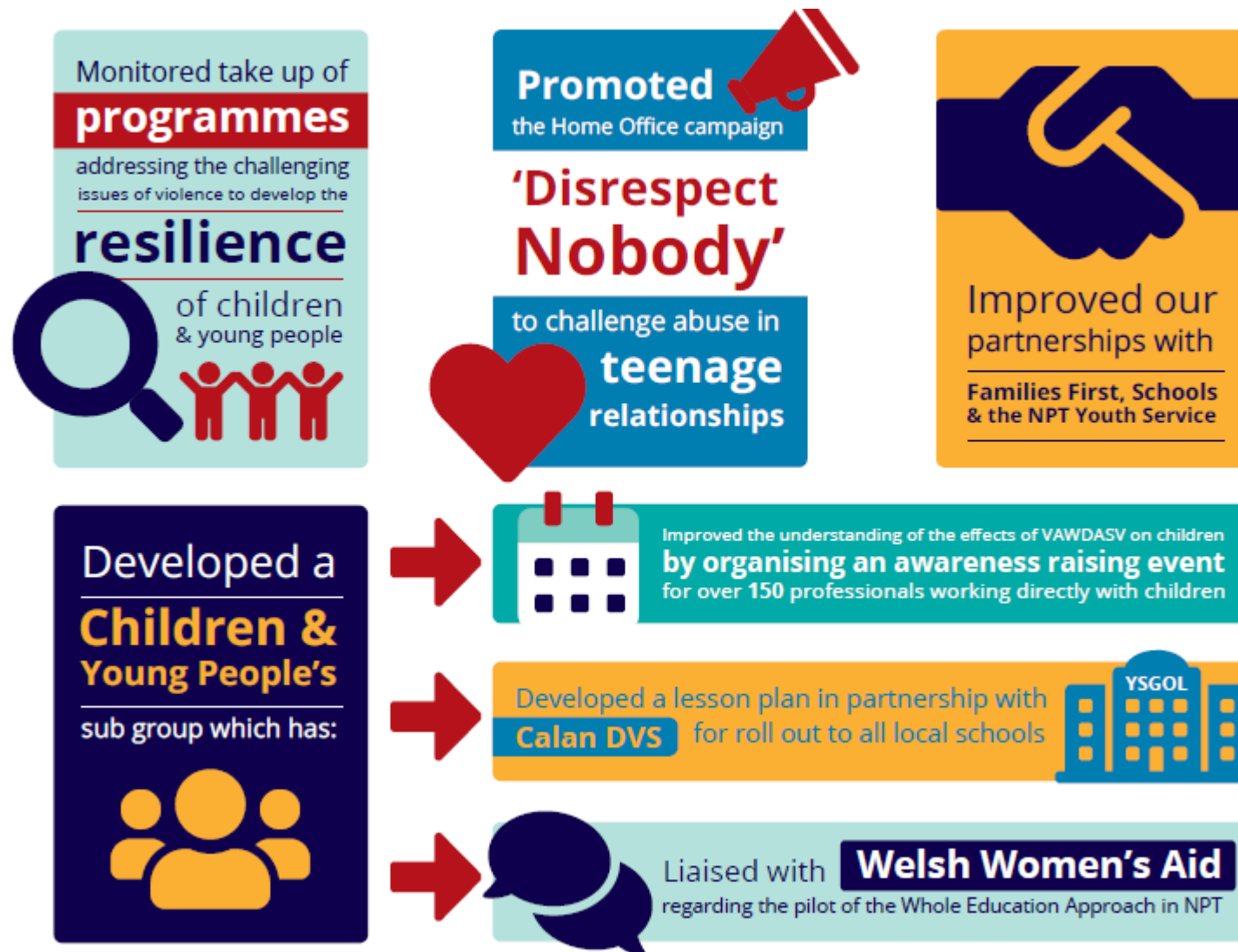
Since the development of the first 'Healthy Relationships for Stronger Communities Strategy' in 2017, significant progress has been made. This chapter highlights some of the key areas of progress made against each of the 7 objectives of our original strategy. This revised strategy will further build on these achievements, working towards preventing VAWDASV and better supporting those who are affected.

What have we achieved?

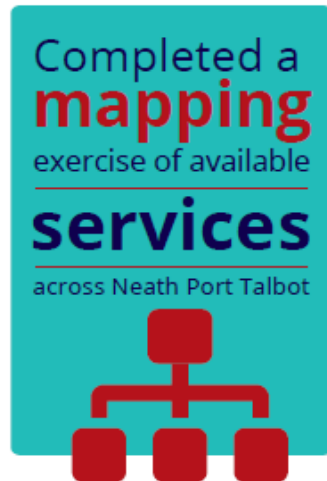
Objective 1 – Communications & Engagement



Objective 2 – Children & Young People



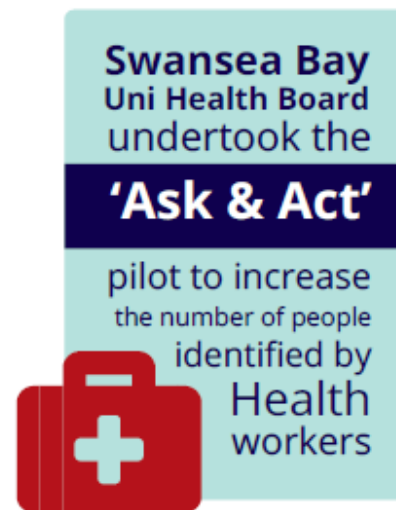
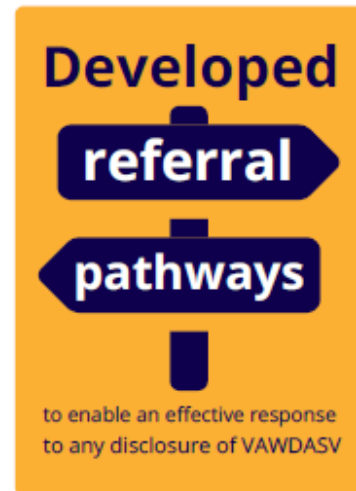
Objective 3 – Working With Perpetrators



Objective 4 – Early Intervention & Prevention



Objective 5 – Training and Development



Objective 6 – Accessible Services



Worked with local providers to review accommodation & support, to develop a new service model enabling

earlier intervention

and greater support in the **community**



Completed
a review of provision for

high risk victims

resulting in:

- increased IDVA provision in NPT
- a regional court IDVA
- business support for the IDVA
- changes to policy & procedure

Developed links with specialist

providers

who meet the needs of people affected by **sexual violence**



Worked in partnership to ensure victims with **complex needs** have increased **opportunities**

for reporting & accessing appropriate support



Local specialist providers have implemented additional support services



LIFE project

to support victims whose mental health has been impacted



EDGE project

to support elderly & disabled victims

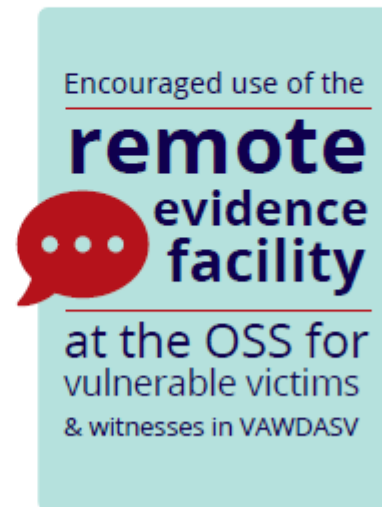


COMPASS Project

to support male victims



Objective 7 – Courts & Criminal Justice



4. Context

In England and Wales, the largest element of VAWDASV cost is the physical and emotional harm suffered by the victims themselves (£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.

Welsh Context

Over the last few years in Wales, significant progress has been made in improving services for those who experience Violence within their relationships, particularly since the enactment of the **Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act** in 2015.

Section 5 (1) of the Act places a duty on Local Authorities and Local Health Boards to jointly prepare and publish a Local Strategy which aims to end and ensure consistent consideration of preventative, protective and supportive mechanisms in the delivery of services.

This strategy has a key role to play in ensuring that Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council and Swansea Bay University Health Board are meeting the requirements of the Act.

Following the introduction of the VAWDASV Act, Welsh Government introduced the **National Strategy on Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (2016-2021)**. 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**.

A suite of statutory guidance has also been issued under the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act, which sets out how relevant authorities should exercise their functions in relation to implementation. This includes;

- a whole education approach,
- National Training Framework, including 'Ask and Act',
- multi-agency working

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

- commissioning
- working with and responding to perpetrators

The National Training Framework has been established by Welsh Government to ensure an unfailing 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.

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

Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014

The requirement to undertake a local needs assessment in relation to the duties in the Act aligns with Section 14 of the **Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014** (SSWBA), which also requires a 'population needs assessment' to inform the development of local strategies. The first population assessment has been published. When a local authority and Local Health Board is exercising functions in relation to children under SSWBA, they must also have regard to Part 1 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

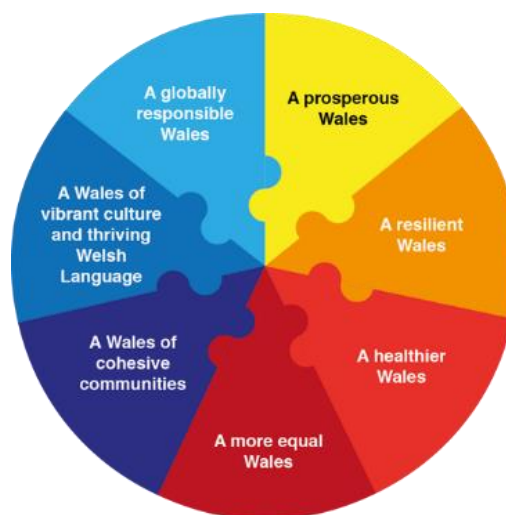
Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

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 7 wellbeing goals are;



The work of the local VAWDASV partnership will contribute to Neath Port Talbot meeting the 7 wellbeing 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;



Long-term

The importance of balancing short-term needs with the needs to safeguard the ability to also meet long-term needs



Integration

Considering how the public body's well-being objectives may impact upon each of the well-being goals, on their objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies



Involvement

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



Collaboration

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



Prevention

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.

The NPT Public Service Board identified key objectives to improve the well-being of the people who live in the Neath Port Talbot area;

Objective 1: Support children in their early years, especially children at risk of adverse childhood experiences

Objective 2: Create safe, confident and resilient communities, focusing on vulnerable people

Objective 3: Put more life into our later years - Ageing Well

The work to tackle VAWDASV in NPT contributes to achieving these objectives, specifically Objectives 1 and 2.

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. The Welsh Government guidance which supports the practical delivery of the legislation advises local authorities and their partners, as follows:

“Local authorities should be led by the wishes and feelings of the victim of domestic abuse when determining accommodation arrangements. The first option, where appropriate, should be for the perpetrator to be removed from the property to enable the victim to remain in their home. The Local Authority must also consider improving the security of the applicant’s home to enable them to continue living there safely. Alternatively, the Local Authority must assist the victim in sourcing alternative accommodation, whether on a permanent or temporary basis”²

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**.

² Welsh Government 2016. Code of Guidance for local authorities on the allocation of housing and homelessness.

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 such as natural disasters and community violence.

The **Wales Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) study**³ suggests that a significant number of adults in Wales have experienced one or more forms of ACE.

Evidence suggests that experiencing 4 or more types of adverse childhood experiences leads to a person being 14 times more likely to be a victim of violence. It also provides evidence that preventing ACE's can significantly reduce the possibility of violence victimisation by 57%, and can further reduce the likelihood of violent perpetration by 60%. Ultimately the provision of effective support and early intervention for those impacted by ACE's will have a longer term impact on the reduced demand and costs to health and social services. The Home Office strategy suggests ACE initial enquiry should be actioned within health care settings.

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

³ Public Health Wales (2015) Wales Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) study, PHW

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.⁴

National Review of Refuge Provision

In 2018, the First Minister announced a review of refuge provision across Wales. The review, led by the Wales Centre for Public Policy, will examine some of best international examples of services and support, and engage with people who have experience of refuge and sexual abuse services, to develop a made-in-Wales model that provides a world-leading standard of support to victims of sexual violence.

Housing First

An updated Housing First model in Wales is imminent, which could influence changes to legislation.

Housing First approaches are based on the concept that a homeless individual or household's first and primary need is to obtain stable housing, and that other issues that may affect the household can and should be addressed once housing is obtained.

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.

⁴ The full suite of recommendations can be found at <http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/PH50/chapter/1-Recommendations>

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

New Safeguarding Procedures

Wales has become the first part of the UK to introduce a single set of safeguarding guidelines for children and adults at risk when the new Wales Safeguarding Procedures launch, online and via an app, launched on 11 November 2019.

The Wales Safeguarding Procedures will standardise practice across Wales and between agencies and sectors.

The procedures will set out the essential roles and responsibilities for anyone working with children or adults who are experiencing, or at risk of, abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm. In doing so they will replace the current All Wales Child Protection Procedures as well as various local safeguarding procedures for adults and other central guidance previously issued by Welsh Government.

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.⁵

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' Rights⁶

⁵ Welsh Audit Office - Progress in implementing the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Act

⁶ 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>

- The Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women, and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention)
- Welfare Reform

The Spotlight Initiative

The European Union (EU) and the United Nations (UN) are embarking on a new, global, multi-year initiative focused on eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls called the Spotlight Initiative.

The Initiative is so named as it brings focused attention to this issue, moving it into the spotlight and placing it at the centre of efforts to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Spotlight Initiative will respond to all forms of Violence Against Women and Girls, with a particular focus on domestic and family violence, sexual and gender-based violence and harmful practices, femicide, trafficking in human beings and sexual and economic exploitation. In line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Initiative will fully integrate the principle of 'leaving no one behind'.

Brexit

When the outcome of Brexit is known, it is possible that we may need to review any areas of the strategy that may be impacted i.e. funding arrangements, definitions etc.

5. Resources and Service Mapping

There are a range of services in Neath Port Talbot to address VAWDASV. More detailed information can be found in Appendix 2.



Resources to Address VAWDASV in NPT

The funding of services in NPT is complex. The follow 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 funding	£84,550	Contributes to funding of the IDVA service
	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	£98,174	Early Intervention Prevention Services (Provided by Thrive Women's Aid) see page 19
NPTCBC	Core Funding		VAWDASV Support including; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training Delivery and Roll Out • Policy Officer • MARAC Coordinator

In addition, the majority of the rental income to fund refuge accommodation and move on accommodation is funded from Housing Benefit payments⁷.

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

Recipient	Funding Provider	Amount	Purpose
Calan DVS	Awaiting	Awaiting	Awaiting
Thrive WA	Moondance	£20,000	Video Interaction Guidance
Thrive WA	Henry Smith	£112,359	Children and Young People Service
Thrive WA	Lloyds	£48,198	Crisis Intervention
Thrive WA	Children In Need	£19,742	Children and Young People Trips and Activities
Thrive WA	Comic Relief	£119,903	The EDGE Project
Thrive WA	The National Lottery Community Fund	£101,644	LIFE
Hafan Cymru	Welsh Government	Awaiting	Spectrum Project

⁷ This is not shown in the figure quoted above

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 are often funded on a short term basis, which makes long term sustainability difficult to achieve.

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.
- The focus of the work over the past 3 years has been largely based on Domestic Abuse and we need to ensure there is an increased focus on sexual violence prevention and support.
- We recognize there is a need to commission services differently, for those victims with complex needs, such as mental health and substance misuse.
- Unfortunately, there remains a paucity of support available to perpetrators, which requires further consideration and will be explored further on in this strategy
- We must ensure survivors are involved in every area of VAWDASV policy and local work.

Over the past three years there is far better coverage and focus on VAWDASV within Education and Youth settings, particularly as the approach is now more coordinated, with the amalgamation of the VAWDASV Children and Young Peoples Sub Group and local Relationship and Sexuality Education Group.

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.

6. Consultation and Engagement

During 2019, a regional review of VAWDASV services was undertaken. As part of this process, a range of means were put in place to allow partners and survivors to contribute. This has provided a rounded view of what works well, where there are gaps in provision and opportunities for improvement to be formed.

A workshop was held with members of the VAWDASV Leadership Group as an opportunity to discuss current working arrangements and priorities.

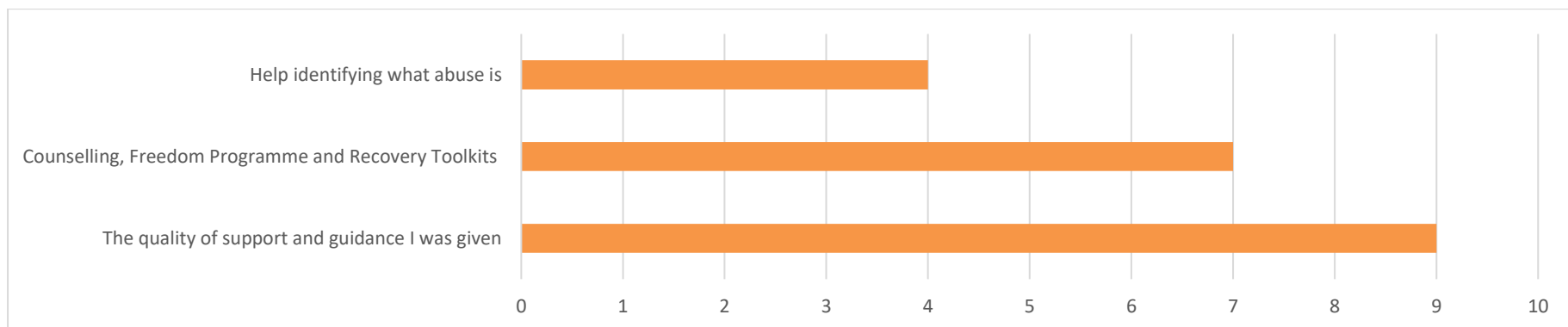
The information obtained from these exercises has been used to inform this strategy, in particular the actions we need to take in order to meet our objectives. The key themes are outlined below;

Priority Themes from Survivors – 1:1 Interviews / Group sessions
More education in schools and in the community about recognising abuse and unhealthy relationships.
Independent units within a refuge with the option of a shared living space for people to meet
Ensuring ongoing support for people after they leave refuge, even if the support is low level (e.g. a drop in facility or social activity)
More support at weekends
Increased volunteering opportunities to develop skill and confidence
More awareness raising of males experiencing domestic abuse
Organised social activities for male victims to reduce the isolation and poor mental health experienced by survivors, which could help people with their recovery.
Lower cost housing options for people when leaving refuge
Access to English lessons and interpreters is essential for BME survivors
Further practical help when transitioning from refuge to independent housing, and more help with securing furniture and whitegoods
Support for pregnant and new mothers and babies in refuge
Waiting lists for Sexual Violence related support are too long
Generic counselling for victims of sexual violence is not helpful- specialist counselling is needed
Lack of confidence in the court process – Victims sometimes feel like they themselves are on trial
Peer support for Sexual Violence survivors and group activities

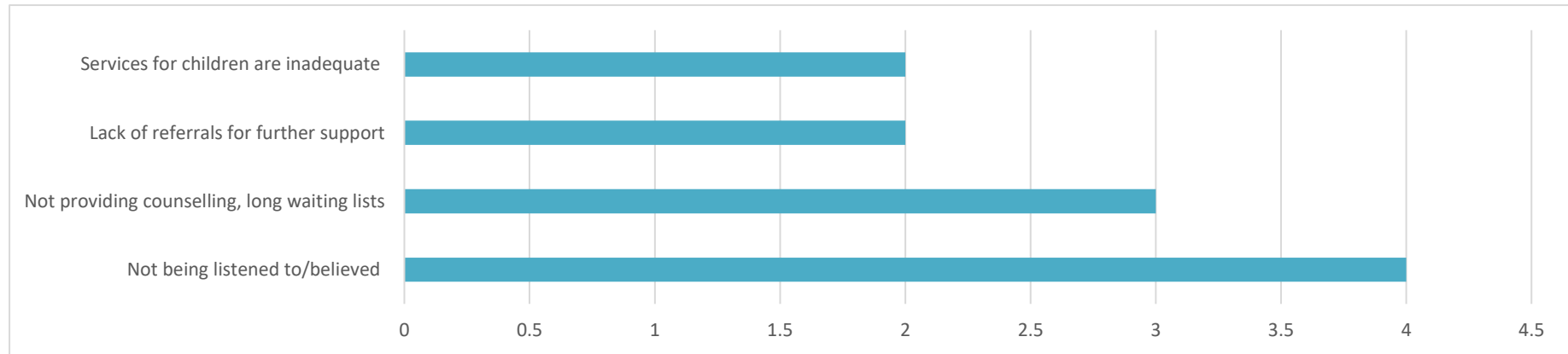
Priority themes from Specialist Services, Commissioners and Partner agencies;
Funding for the full range of needs-led evidence-based services
Build opportunities for improved communication, collaboration and integration (between agencies and between agencies and public)
Sustainable/longer term commissioning
Training/upskilling staff; improving service standards
Increased flexibility (either of funding or of ability to flex services)
Invest in coproduction of services with survivors at the centre
Fund sexual violence services
Make sure the commissioning process meets local needs
Fund more early intervention and prevention and CYP services
Improve mental health access and provision

We produced an open access survey for survivors. 47 responses were received. We asked;

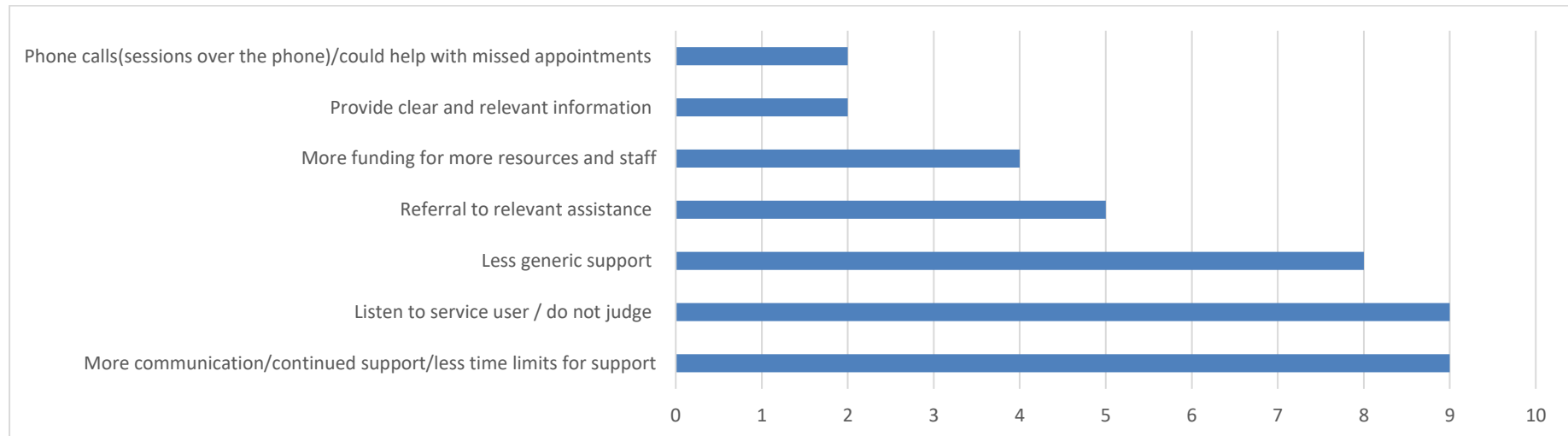
What are the good things about support and what worked well?



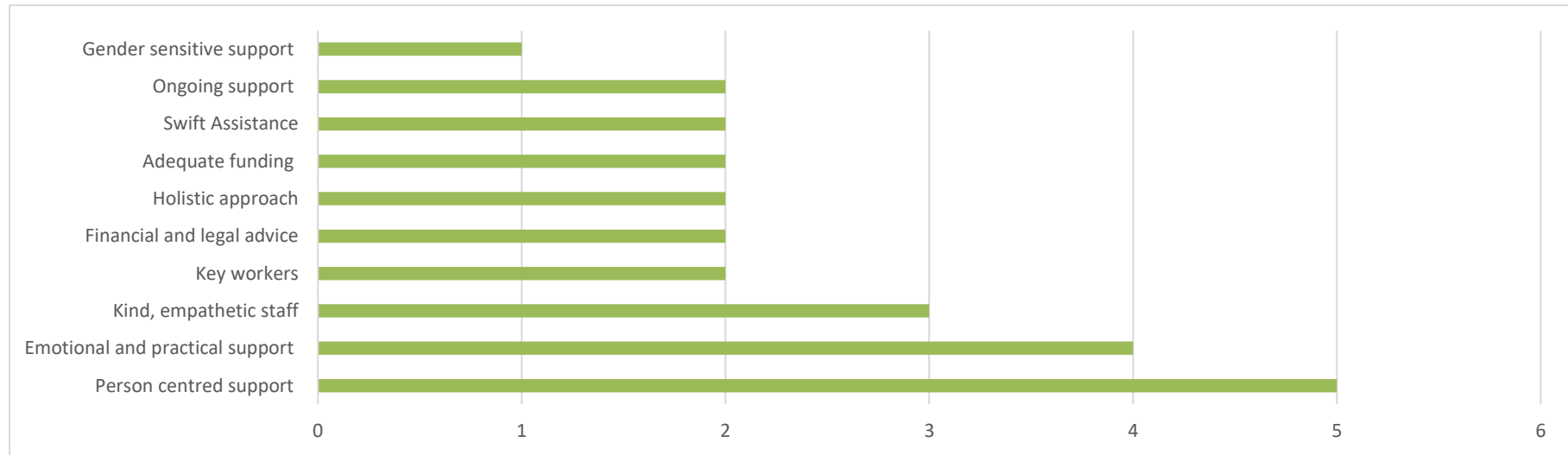
Where support didn't work well and why?



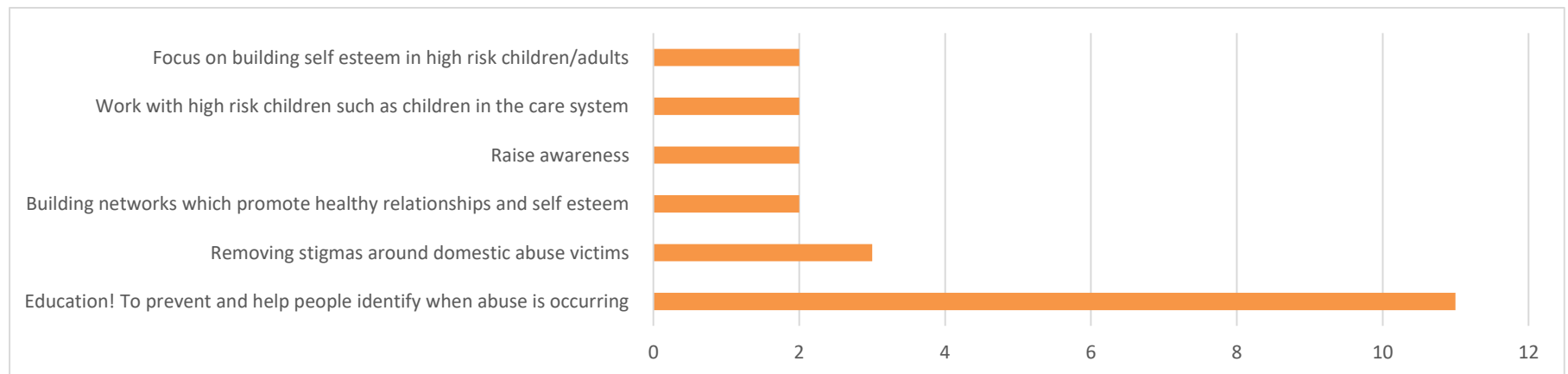
The 3 most important things service providers should do to make sure they meet people's needs:



What would an 'excellent service' look like?



What kind of help and support would assist in preventing and reducing VAWDASV?



22 survivors said they had children who had witnessed or been affected by domestic abuse, and 7 of these said their children had accessed services in relation to their experiences.

Please tell us what you thought was good about the service your child/children received?	Is there anything that could have been done differently/improved on?
The doctor listens to her and did all he could when she had a few epilepsy seizures in one day	No
Nothing	Not to look like a doctor's surgery and waiting room
My child has received support from CAMHS and school. This is still ongoing	No
My son did the STAR course. The best part was that he could do it 1 to 1. He really didn't want to go in a group. His worker went to his school and did the course with him there. He got a lot out of it.	No
Helped them come to terms with what's happened and understand they not to blame and be more open about it	Pursue a bit more: found that 1 to 1 was given up on quickly because child said they were ok but some problems were still there
Support within the school..., constant check-ups, someone always there to talk to.	Not for my child. They received so much help, they're like the old child again!
It was done through play, so my children had fun and wanted to engage	The 3 rd sector provider was absolutely outstanding in supporting my kids through the aftermath of leaving a relationship and relocating via the local refuge.

7. Overarching Framework & Strategic Objectives

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 2020-2023 will mirror those in our original strategy. Our chosen objectives are derived from the Welsh Government 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 three years, a substantial amount of work has gone into the development of the VAWDASV Communications & Engagement Group. Formerly the Prevention, Education & Awareness Raising Group (PEAR), the group has now been refocused by the VAWDASV Leadership Group to provide a more co-ordinated and strategic approach to its work.

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

Going forward, there is a need for a survivor / survivors voice on the group to help shape future awareness raising campaigns, taking into account any situations where they sought help but faced adversity and felt misunderstood or not listened to. This will help us to understand where we need to focus our efforts in terms of awareness raising, not only for members of the community but also for the services and / or organisations they approached for help who were unable to provide appropriate support or advice.

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 2020-2023, on a regional basis, we will;

1. Combine the Communications and Engagement Group with the sister arrangements in Swansea, and ensure the membership of the group is extended to include;
 - a. a local survivor(s), to help shape future awareness raising campaigns and initiatives
 - b. Area Planning Board representative
 - c. Swansea Bay University Health Board representative
2. Raise awareness of the following initiatives to further encourage victims to come forward and access appropriate help and support;
 - a. 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.
 - b. 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
 - c. 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 the following groups, encouraging more people to come forward if they are experiencing VAWDASV;
 - a. Young women
 - b. Older victims
 - c. Disabled victims

- d. Male victims
- 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
- 7. Develop a calendar of national and local events and activities for every year

Objective 2

Increase awareness in children and young people of the importance of safe, equal and healthy relationships and that abusive behaviour is always wrong.

An overview of available research into the effectiveness of interventions around domestic abuse⁸ 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 NICE (2013) Review of Interventions to Identify, Prevent, Reduce and Respond to Domestic Violence prepared by the British Columbia Centre of Excellence for Women's Health.

8. Working in partnership with relevant local experts.
9. Embedding a comprehensive prevention programme

Neath Port Talbot CBC are proud to have been approached by Welsh Women's Aid to pilot the Whole School Approach, via the Relationship & Sexuality Education Group who 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

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' Wellbeing Workshops
- Relationship and Sexuality Education, including age appropriate Healthy Relationship Lessons

For 2020-2023, on a local basis we will;

1. Work with Welsh Women's Aid and the Education Directorate to participate in the Whole School Approach pilot in 4 schools across the borough
2. In partnership with the Relationship & Sexuality Education Group, ensure the Healthy Relationship lesson is rolled out to all schools across Neath Port Talbot, ensuring take up is monitored and increased over the next 3 years.
3. Using existing initiatives (such as Crucial Crew, It's Your World Wellbeing 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 2020-2023, on a regional basis we will;

4. Raise awareness of the Welsh Government VAWADSV campaign targeted at CYP, to strengthen the messages and ensure they become recognisable to as many young people as possible

Objective 3

Increased focus on holding perpetrators to account and provide opportunities to change their behaviour based around victim safety.

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.

Perpetrator Interventions and Programmes

Research shows that when perpetrators are prepared to find help they most frequently access GPs, and are also likely to be in contact with Relate, social services, Samaritans, alcohol or drugs services, hospitals, solicitors, welfare services at work, and use websites to access help.⁹

This research also indicates that where perpetrators went to their GP, they attempted to position themselves as depressed or in need of psychological or psychiatric care, without a focus on, or acknowledgement of, their unacceptable behaviour. Alcohol, drugs, depression and 'jealousy' rather than violence were often presented as the problems requiring 'treatment'.

Male perpetrators are also more likely to seek help at some kind of 'crisis' moment, usually when the partner gives them an ultimatum or actually leaves, or where there are child contact issues. However, this is also when they are likely to be especially dangerous and/or homicidal, and safety for the women and children concerned therefore has to be a priority for any agency intervening with the men at this time.

Reducing a perpetrator's substance use may reduce levels of physical injury but has not been shown to reduce the actual occurrence of domestic violence (i.e. non-physical abuse such as psychological and sexual violence).

Couples-counselling or other therapy is also not appropriate if domestic violence is currently being perpetrated in the relationship. There can be significant dangers of colluding with abuse by reinforcing that the perpetration of abuse stems from communication problems between couples or lack of anger management. For similar reasons, restorative justice is not appropriate in cases of intimate partner domestic abuse.

⁹ Hester, M. and Westmarland, N. (2006) *Service Provision for Perpetrators of Domestic Violence*, University of Bristol; HM Government (2010) *'Call to End Violence Against Women and Girls'*, Home Office

The case for commissioning and delivering community-based perpetrator programmes has been set out by Respect¹⁰ and the largest UK research into programme effectiveness was published recently.¹¹

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

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.

¹⁰ 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

¹¹ <https://www.dur.ac.uk/resources/criva/ProjectMirabalexecutivesummary.pdf>

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.

Mandatory Programmes via Probation

For those perpetrators who receive a criminal conviction or are sentenced to a term of imprisonment for Domestic Abuse related offences, they can sometimes be required to participate in a Perpetrator Programme.

However, there are many perpetrators who would like to access programmes on a voluntary basis, to help change their behavior and prevent the violence from escalating. There is a paucity of support available of this nature.

For 2020-2023, on a regional basis we will;

1. We will work in partnership with Swansea CC to explore funding opportunities and appropriate implementation plans for the regional commissioning of the Equilibrium Programme
2. Ensure we have a suitable referral pathway, to encourage referrals, use and attendance of the programme
3. 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
4. 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'*¹²
5. Continue dialogue with Welsh Government to establish who is responsible and accountable for this area of work

¹² <http://www.cih.org/resources/PDF/Wales%20Policy/Renting%20Homes%20factsheet%20-%20English%20Final.pdf>

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 abuse 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.

Early Identification in Health & Social Care Settings

There is evidence to show that early identification in healthcare and social care settings, leading to referral routes to specialist services, improves disclosures and referrals to support amongst survivors. In GP settings for example where indicators trigger targeted enquiry about domestic abuse, this leads to improved discussion and disclosure. There is moderate evidence that universal screening for domestic abuse in pregnancy, when supported by staff training and support, improves practices, disclosure and documentation of domestic abuse.

The IRIS programme of intervention (Identification and Referral to Improve Safety) is an evaluated service model that can be effectively jointly commissioned by health providers, to enable specialist domestic abuse support workers (advocate/educators) to be co-located in GP and other healthcare settings. These workers, located in and managed by a specialist domestic abuse service, ensure health professionals are skilled in early identification, which enables an immediate response for survivors that links them into a specialist service.

The Homicide Timeline – Dr Jane Monckton Smith

Research published and carried out by Dr Jane Monckton Smith looked at 372 cases of intimate partner homicide through interviews with bereaved families and public protection professionals. Through her study, Dr Jane Monckton Smith, Senior Lecturer in Criminology at the University of Gloucestershire, found an emerging pattern that could be broken down into eight separate stages.

A recent UN study into homicide found fifty thousand women across the world were killed by their partners in 2017. The Homicide Timeline is already being used to help form domestic abuse strategies and policy, as well as supporting police and agencies as they make risk assessments in cases of coercive control, domestic violence and stalking. Contrary to a long held belief by police, practitioners and the public, violence is no longer considered the biggest predictor of homicide. Dr Jane Monckton Smith's research found similarities in many cases in the early stages of a relationship, which may allow professionals more opportunities to intervene and save lives. The research highlights the shift in emphasis that is needed to focus motivation behind actions rather than the actions themselves. The model was designed to help practitioners and professionals engaged in risk assessments to feel confident about the decisions they are making, especially in crisis situations.¹³

'A Cry for Health'

The findings of SafeLives' research, which provides evidence from over 4,000 victims supported in hospital and community settings, show that we are missing opportunities to identify victims of domestic abuse – particularly the most vulnerable – and that locating a team of Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVA's) within a hospital is a key way to address this.

SafeLives is calling for hospital-based IDVAs to be integrated as part of a whole-system approach to support which include community based specialist domestic abuse services, mental health and health services. The charity believes that this provides a way of reaching the 4 out of 5 victims who never contact the police as well as providing an opportunity to save money through earlier identification.¹⁴

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.

¹³ <https://www.glos.ac.uk/news/pages/the-homicide-timeline.aspx>

¹⁴ <http://www.safelives.org.uk/node/935>

For 2020-2023, on a local basis we will;

1. Work with Supporting People, Area Planning Board, Community Safety and Families First commissioners to refocus funding in line with a new service model
2. In considering the findings of the Dr. Jane Monckton Smith research; work with providers to seek out further funding opportunities to support the expansion of early intervention and prevention initiatives
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. Conduct research to identify unidentified need – working with local services to better understand the needs of male victims, LGBT victims, BAME victims, disabled and older people, identifying any gaps in current provision

For 2020-2023, on a regional basis we will;

1. Work with the Health Board to implement, monitor and evaluate the roll out of IRIS across the region
2. Work with the Health Board to consider establishing a hospital based IDVA provision
3. Work 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 2020-2023, on a local basis we will;

1. Work with local service providers to ensure they receive appropriate training on complex needs
2. Ensure all agencies in the local VAWDASV partnership give a commitment to training plans within their own organisation over the next 3 years.
3. When delivering VAWDASV training, 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
4. Raise awareness, through our training roll out, of the newly developed 'Safe Leave' policy for NPT staff who are affected by VAWDASV

For 2020-2023, on a regional basis we will;

Neath Port Talbot Healthy Relationships For Stronger Communities Strategy

1. Continue roll out of Group 1 training to all NPT staff and commence roll out of 'Ask & Act' Group 2 Training across Neath Port Talbot and Swansea
2. Work with Welsh Women's Aid 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, gender responsive services across Neath Port Talbot

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 DA providers in the area, offering refuge accommodation, move on accommodation, floating support, advocacy and advice. The One Stop Shops in Neath and Port Talbot offer a walk in service, operated by the local providers.

The Council's Housing Options Service, also based in Neath, and offers a walk in service for anyone in housing difficulty, including those experiencing Domestic Abuse.

For 2020-2023, on a local basis we will;

1. Embed and incorporate the VAWDASV Commissioning Guidance into 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. Further develop links with local housing providers and Housing Options to ensure victims in need of alternative housing are appropriately supported

5. Conduct a further review of high risk arrangements to ensure the changes identified are embedded and having a positive impact
6. Work with Social Services to review the response to Adults at Risk, specifically in respect of domestic violence and abuse.

For 2020-2023, on a regional basis we will;

7. Work with Swansea CC to consider the demand for regionally developing the SWAN project

(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

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 police¹⁵ and, that a significant proportion of those who do, later withdraw their complaints¹⁶.

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 CJS¹⁷.

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.

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.

¹⁵ Statistical bulletin: Crime in England and Wales, Year Ending December 2012, Office for National Statistics

¹⁶ CEDAW Thematic Shadow Report on Violence Against Women in the UK, Sen and Kelly (2007)

¹⁷ Victims' views of court and sentencing (October 2011). Commissioner for Victims and Witnesses in England and Wales

For 2020-2023, 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. Working in partnership with the Police and Courts, identify what needs to change to better support victims, including victimless prosecutions and how evidence is gathered.
3. Increase awareness with local solicitors and legal reps of the importance of recognising all forms of VAWDASV and providing appropriate responses in family court situations

8. 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 (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 on page 52 illustrates the revised governance structure around this strategy for 2020-2023.

For 2020-2023 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
- Extend the partnership to ensure there is further involvement from Adult Social Services, BAWSO, YJEIS

Neath Port Talbot Healthy Relationships For Stronger Communities Strategy



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

**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
- Swansea Bay University Health Board
- South Wales Police
- Thrive Women's Aid
- Calan DVS
- Hafan Cymru
- BAWSO
- Tai Tarian
- Police & Crime Commissioner
- Probation
- Welsh Women's Aid
- Welsh Ambulance Service
- Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service
- New Pathways

9. Measures

In order to demonstrate the progress made on each of the 7 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

- Once developed, 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 and 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 facility at the One Stop Shop
- 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
APB	Area Planning Board
BAME	Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic
BAWSO	Black Association of Women Step Out
C&E	Communications & Engagement
CAFCASS	Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service
Calan DVS	Calan Domestic Violence Services
CJS	Criminal Justice System
CSP	Community Safety Partnership
CYP	Children and Young People
DHR	Domestic Homicide Review
EIP	Early Intervention & Prevention
EU	European Union
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
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
RSE	Relationship & Sexuality Education
SBUHB	Swansea Bay University Health Board
SP	Supporting People
SPOC	Single Point of Contact

SSWBA	Social Services & Wellbeing Act
SV	Sexual Violence
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
VAWDASV	Violence Against Women Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls
WA	Women's Aid
WG	Welsh Government
WWA	Welsh Women's Aid
YJEIS	Youth Justice Early Intervention Service



XX August 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Agencies renew focus on supporting healthy relationships in Neath Port Talbot

Neath Port Talbot Council and Swansea Bay University Health Board have restated their commitment to tackling domestic abuse throughout the coronavirus pandemic and beyond as part of their joint 'Healthy Relationships for Stronger Communities' strategy.

Following the progress made since its initial launch in October 2017, a revised version of the strategy was approved at SBUHB Safeguarding Committee meeting on the 14th August and the Quality and Safety Committee on the 22nd September.

Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Public Protection, Cllr Leanne Jones, said: *"Over the past two and a half years the Council and its partners have worked hard to send a strong message to people suffering from violence in relationships that they are not alone and to encourage them to seek out the support that is available."*

"These are issues which take a huge toll on individuals, and collectively, on our communities and society. Addressing these issues is everybody's business and we want to ensure that Neath Port Talbot leads by example."

"The exceptional circumstances that have been brought about by coronavirus have made this message more important than ever and our renewed strategy aims to build on what has already been achieved".

This has included the Council adopting, [in December 2019](#), a ground-breaking 'safe leave' policy to enable staff under pressure from gender based violence or domestic abuse to take time off to get help and support for themselves and their families.

Other achievements also include additional support programmes developed by local providers; engaging closely with survivors to inform future communications campaigns; work with partners such as [Calan DVS](#), [Thrive](#), [Hafan Cymru](#) and [Welsh Women's Aid](#) to embed learning into local schools; and developing a wide range of training for local employers and other organisations.

Neath Port Talbot became, in October 2017, the first area in Wales to have a strategy to meet the requirements of the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015.

The Act placed a duty on each local authority to work alongside its health board to publish and implement a strategy to remove or minimise factors which increase the risk of violence against women and girls or that worsen the impact of such violence.

Swansea Bay University Health Board quote

Swansea Bay University Health Board remains committed to tackling domestic violence and abuse. The Health Board continues to make good progress in relation to the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence, National Training Framework training plan.

IRIS (Identification and Referral to Improve Safety) has been introduced locally in the Neath and Neath Valley GP cluster areas. IRIS is a general practice-based domestic violence and abuse training, support and referral programme, which is a collaboration between primary care and specialist third sector organisations. A virtual training package has been developed and GP practice training has commenced. A Pathway is in place for staff to refer directly to a specialist advocate following a disclosure of domestic violence and abuse.

The Health Board Corporate Safeguarding team has responded to recent reports from other countries that domestic violence and abuse referrals have increased during lockdown with a worrying increase in domestic homicides. The team has increased their working and on-call hours to offer support to Health Board staff and have visited priority areas distributing posters/ leaflets and discussing concerns. Health Board staff have had more than twice the number of disclosures of domestic violence and abuse during lockdown and here have been three times more onward referrals for specialist support and advice than the same period last year.

Swansea Bay University Health Board Chair, Emma Woollett, said: *“Lockdown has highlighted how devastating Domestic Abuse issues are for individuals and their families. Swansea Bay University Health Board is totally committed to tackling these issues in partnership and welcomes the re-statement of this commitment.”*

The strategy can be found on the website of the Safer Neath Port Talbot community safety partnership: www.safernpt.org/VAWDASV

- ENDS -

Notes to Editor

1. Your contact for this press release is media@npt.gov.uk
- 2.

