

“Safer Lives, Healthier Families” an overview of the draft regional strategy to tackle **Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence in our Communities**

This report is intended to provide an overview of the draft regional Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy to inform relevant scrutiny and sign off processes across Mid and West Wales.

In light of the statutory requirements placed on Local Authorities and Health Boards to jointly prepare, publish and implement a violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence strategy, sign off for this regional strategy is required by the four Local Authorities; Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire and Powys and by the two Local Health Boards; Hywel Dda University Health Board and Powys Teaching Health Board.

The report may also be used to present the Strategy within organisational structures e.g. Police, Police and Crime Commissioner and wider strategic forums both locally and regionally e.g. Public Service Boards, Regional Partnership Boards to ensure that there is strategic awareness and opportunities for alignment of programmes of work identified.

Context

The enactment of the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 (The Act) requires the public sector in Wales to work together in a consistent and cohesive way to improve the outcomes for individuals and their families subjected to Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse or Sexual Violence.

Section 5 of the Act requires local authorities and Local Health Boards to jointly prepare, publish and implement a Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence strategy.

This is Mid and West Wales’ first joint strategy to tackle Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence and outlines how the region will support victims and survivors, tackle perpetrators, ensure professionals have the tools and knowledge to act, increase awareness of the issues and help children and young people to understand inequality in relationships and that abusive behaviour is always wrong.

The strategy aims to underpin, influence and directly contribute to key regional policy priorities including those set by;

- The four Public Service Boards
- CYSUR Regional Children’s Safeguarding Board
- CWMPAS Regional Adult’s Safeguarding Board
- The two Regional Partnership Boards
- Dyfed Powys Police and Crime Commissioner
- The Supporting People Regional Collaborative Committee

- Dyfed Powys Criminal Justice Board

The Strategy aims to embed Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence as “everyone’s business” and a cross cutting theme that requires all areas of public policy to address and to shape and improve the delivery of services for those affected.

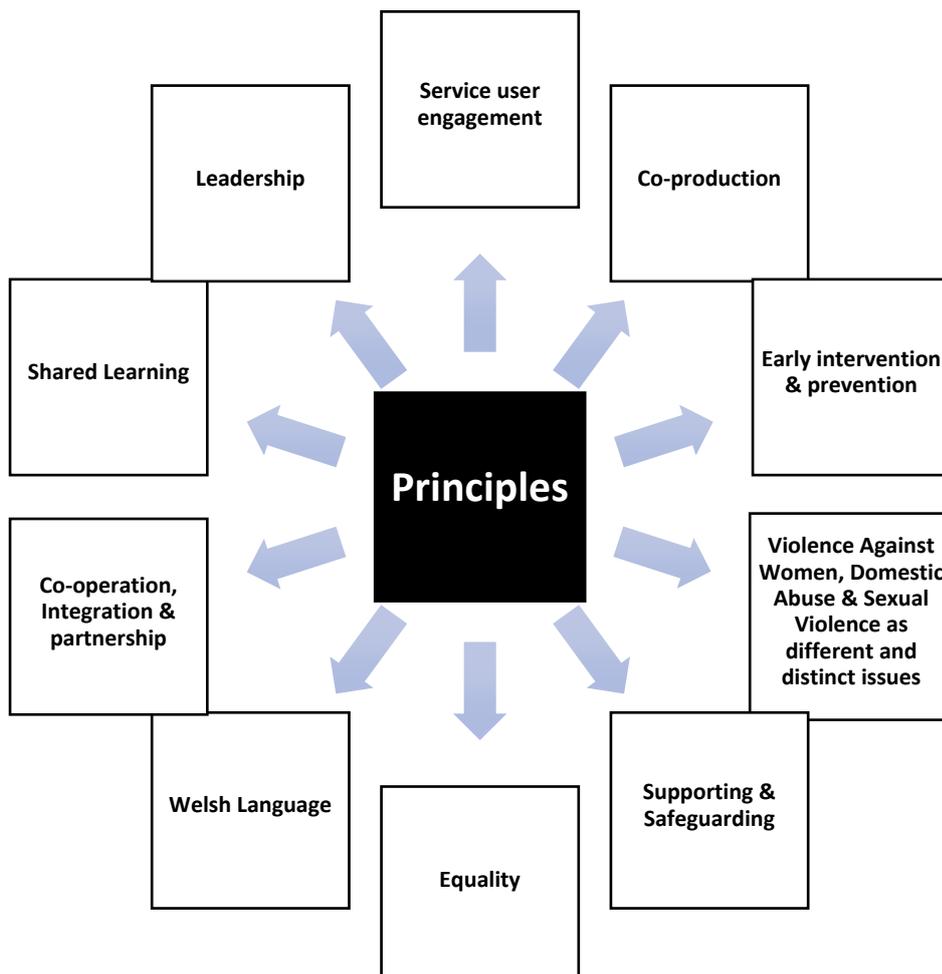
Engagement and Consultation

In drafting the Strategy, engagement and consultation was carried out with survivors, specialist service providers, generic service providers, commissioners, stakeholders and members of the Mid and West Wales Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategic Group.

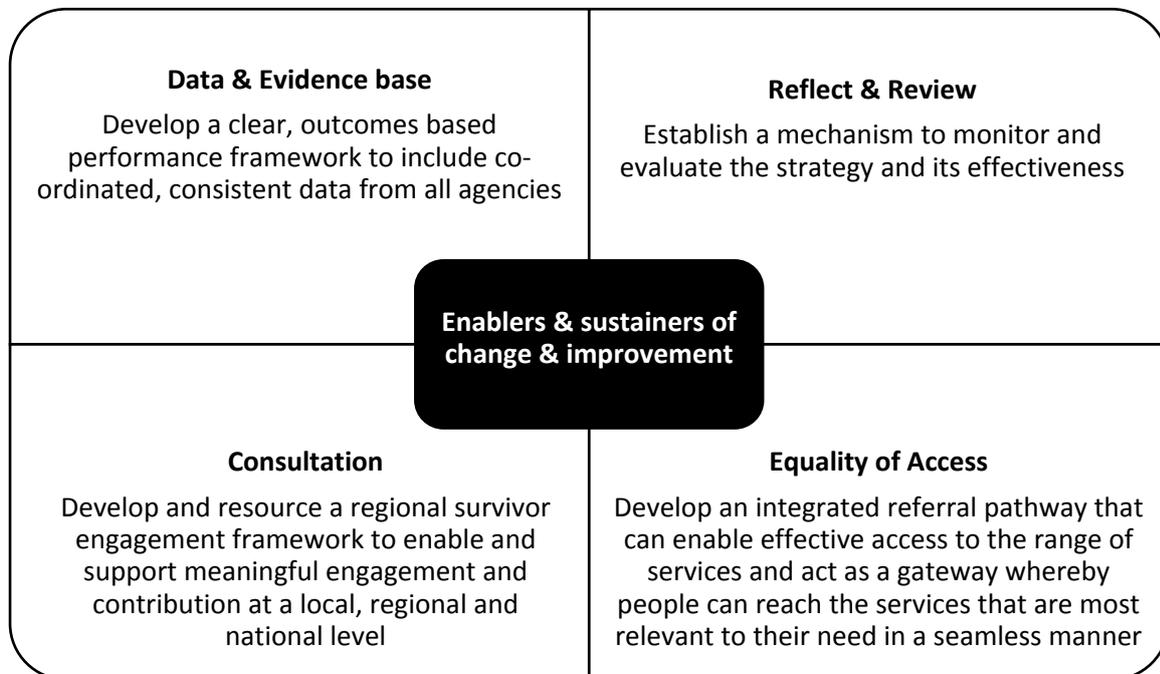
Participants were highly engaged in providing both positive and negative observations of the current and future landscape and the information gathered during this process provided a broad spectrum of opinions which are reflected within the identified strategic priorities.

Principles

Ten key principles have been identified through consultation and engagement with stakeholders and survivors. These principles underpin the priorities set out in the strategy and the approach to implementation and delivery



Four components, which can be seen as **enablers and sustainers of change and improvement** have also been identified. They involve improving and integrating core processes to facilitate the development of consistent and cohesive ways to improve outcomes for individuals and their families subjected to Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse or Sexual Violence.



Strategic Priorities

In developing the strategic priorities consideration has been given to the requirements of the Act and wider Welsh Government legislation and policy, the result of the needs assessments and key priorities already identified in the region and the experiences of survivors and stakeholders.

Based on the rationale detailed in the document the six strategic aims of the National Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy have been adopted as the framework for this regional strategy;

Strategic Priority 1: Increase knowledge and awareness and challenge attitudes towards equality and violence against women domestic abuse and sexual violence amongst citizens of Mid and West Wales

Strategic Priority 2: Increased awareness in children and young people of the importance of safe, equal and healthy relationships and that abusive behaviour is always wrong

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

Strategic Priority 4: Make early intervention and prevention a priority

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

Strategic Priority 6: Provide victims with equal access to appropriately resourced, high quality, needs led, strength based, gender responsive services across Wales

Actions are identified that will enable the region to make the necessary improvements against each of these strategic priorities.

Additional actions are identified in relation to the Governance and Leadership of VAWDASV in the region and those required to deliver the enablers and sustainers of change and improvement critical to the effectiveness of the strategy.

Actions to deliver the strategic priorities will be embedded into an overarching Strategic Delivery Plan which will sit alongside the Strategy. It is envisaged that annual priorities from the Strategic Delivery Plan will be identified by the Strategic Group and reported to the Regional Safeguarding Executive and other key local and regional partnerships to ensure effective discharge of statutory responsibilities under the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015.

Translation

The draft Strategy will be translated prior to public consultation and individuals given the choice to respond in Welsh.

A Welsh Language Impact Assessment will be completed to be published alongside the final Strategy.

Impact Assessments

Equality and Children's Rights Assessments will also be completed to be published alongside the Strategy.

Consultation

The Act does not define a set period or the type of consultation but states at Section 6 (6) *"A Local authority and Local Health Board must consult such persons as they consider appropriate"*.

The VAWDASV Strategic Group has agreed a 12 week public consultation period during which a series of face to face engagement events will be facilitated across the region with survivors and stakeholders alongside opportunities to feedback online.

A Consultation Plan has been drafted and will be managed by the VAWDASV Strategic Group to ensure meaningful and inclusive engagement opportunities.

Consultation will run April – June 2018.

Publication

The Act requires publication of the strategy by 4th May 2018.

A copy of the consultation draft has been provided to Welsh Government with an explanatory note of progress made and the agreed timeline to ensure meaningful engagement and appropriate scrutiny.

The Strategy will be published by 31st July 2018.

The Strategy will also be made available in easy read / accessible formats.

Monitoring of the Strategy

The strategic direction and oversight of this strategy sits with the Mid and West Wales Safeguarding Executive.

The Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategic Group, accountable to the regional Safeguarding Executive has been established to provide a governance structure to develop, approve and monitor Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence regional working.

The Mid and West Wales Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategic Group will be responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the Strategic Delivery Plan reporting to the Regional Safeguarding Executive and other key local and regional partnerships to ensure effective discharge of statutory responsibilities under the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015.