



**Report from the
Police and Crime Commissioner for Dyfed-Powys
To the
Dyfed-Powys Police and Crime Panel**

**Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse
and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV)**

September 2022

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to update the Panel on activity of the Wales VAWDASV taskforce and local activity led by the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC).

The Police and Crime Plan for 2021-2025 includes a focus on addressing VAWDASV as a public health issue along with supporting victims, tackling perpetrators and ensuring multi-agency prevention and early intervention.

National Picture

Policing in Wales Taskforce

The issue of Violence Against Women and Girls has been described as an 'epidemic' by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary. Recent national cases have shone a spotlight on the issue, putting public confidence in policing at risk and generating widespread activity. As a result, Policing in Wales has convened a temporary taskforce to ensure the response in collaboration with key partners is swift, co-ordinated and drives the required change. The Taskforce has enabled partners to come together and undertake activities that support, inform and assist in driving design and build of the Blueprint.

The taskforce met weekly at the commencement, moving to monthly now that workstreams are underway.

Each force has established a VAWG Gold group, chaired by a Senior Officer to provide oversight and direction. These groups focus on the local policing response, with exception reporting escalated to the Policing in Wales Taskforce.

VAWDASV National Partnership Board

The inaugural Ministerial-led VAWDASV National Partnership Board was held on Monday 23rd May. The meeting was co-chaired by the Minister for Social Justice, Jane Hutt and PCC Dafydd Llywelyn, Chair of Policing in Wales. The meeting was well represented with attendees from Welsh Government, criminal justice agencies and wider stakeholders, including non-government organisations.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss and agree Terms of Reference and consider wider membership, formally agree governance arrangements, receive an update on blueprint activity to date and agree priorities moving forward, including agreeing a performance and outcomes framework.

Actions from the meeting included finalising governance arrangements for the Programme Board and associated work streams in line with the Welsh Government VAWDASV Strategy 2022-26 (published May 24th). This activity is required to be reported on in the next National Partnership Board in September.

The initial governance structure is included in the diagram below.

VAWDASV Strategy and Blueprint for delivery

PCC and Police funding to support the development of the Welsh Government VAWDASV Strategy and Blueprint for delivery has been agreed and a programme of joint work with government officials has begun. This includes a project team to lead the work, with recruitment underway currently.

The PCC's financial contribution to this work will be closely monitored, with key outputs reported back quarterly. The PCC's office is directly involved in recruitment to the funded posts.

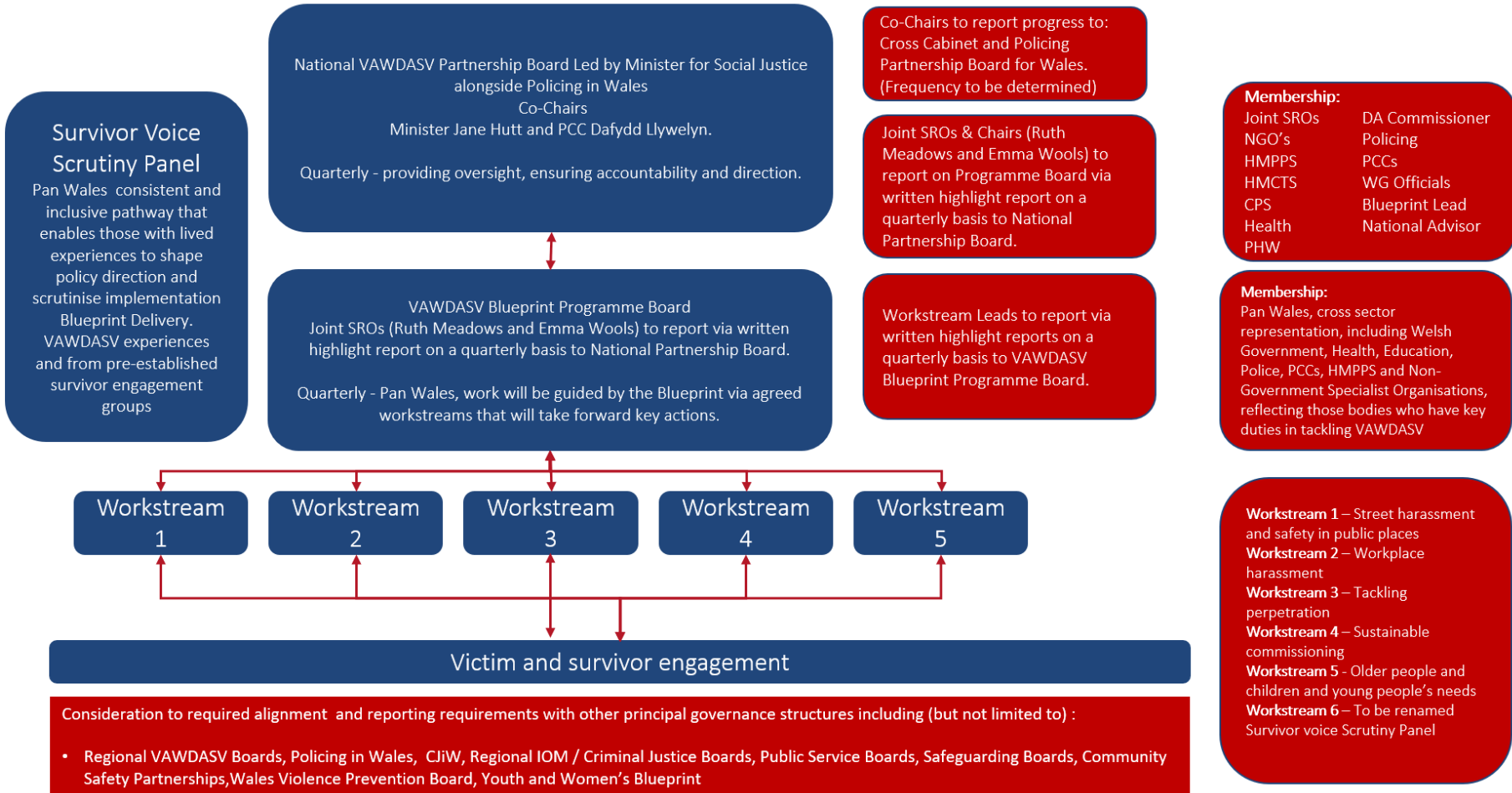
Criminal Justice in Wales and Local Criminal Justice Boards (LCJBs)

The 4 Welsh LCJBs have adopted the priorities of Criminal Justice in Wales, these being:

- Victims
- People Who Offend
- Early Intervention and Prevention
- Race Equality

Violence Against Women and Girls runs as a golden thread throughout the entire delivery plan and priorities and this is reflected at both national and local levels. Specific sections within the plan include RASSO victims, remote evidence sites and domestic abuse perpetrator support. This framework supports a joint approach across Wales and has resulted in joint commissioning opportunities, such as the Women's Pathfinder.

VAWDASV Strategy and Blueprint Governance



Work of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Dyfed-Powys

Oversight and independent assurance

During April 2022 the PCC's Out of Court Disposal (O OCD) Scrutiny Panel reviewed a selection of violence against women and girls cases, which had been dealt with by way of an Out of Court Disposal. The Panel considered a total of 16 cases, 8 involving youth suspects and 8 involving adults.

Good practice identified as a result of the Panel's work included the provision of safeguarding advice to victims.

The PCC has taken an action to raise awareness of the O OCD Panel to Magistrates and raise the profile of the work of the Panel on an All-Wales level.

Areas for improvement identified by the Panel included ensuring that sufficient detail is included in the case file for the Panel to make an informed decision on the appropriateness of the outcome. It was found that some of the YOT reports were missing and therefore key information was not known.

The Panel found 6 of the youth cases appropriate and 2 inappropriate in terms of the resolution. This will be fed back to Dyfed Powys Police, along with areas of good practice and areas for improvement.

During May 2022, members of the PCC's Quality Assurance Panel reviewed stalking and harassment cases. Key observations are as below:

- The Panel felt that on the whole victims were provided with good safeguarding advice and that good safeguarding plans were provided to victims of stalking.
- All cases with a domestic abuse link had received a DASH assessment.
- For all stalking cases a SASH was either completed or considered. Rationale was recorded if a SASH was deemed unnecessary. Members queried if there was any guidance on how quickly a SASH should be completed?
- It was found that on the whole the initial response to both stalking and harassment cases were done in a timely manner.
- It was felt that it would be very useful if there was a safeguarding leaflet/general safeguarding advice information pack that could be given to all victims of stalking.
- It was found in 2 cases that there were a couple of aspects in relation to the investigation that possibly could have been followed-up.
- It was found that the crime was incorrectly recorded in 2 cases.
- It was acknowledged that there is no clear guidance on identifying stalking due to each case being unique. It was however, queried whether all officers understand the difference between stalking and harassment.

- It was queried whether the force have champions for stalking/ specific points of contact that officers can speak to if they need advice on stalking cases?

The findings will be shared with Dyfed Powys Police for further consideration and action.

Lobbying of government and partner agencies

As Chair of Policing in Wales, the PCC has met with the Chair of the Regional Collaborative SARC Project to seek progress and resolution regarding a number of significant concerns including provision of a second paediatric hub and the timeline for provision of a new acute site in Aberystwyth.

This was a positive meeting and some progress has now been made by the Regional Health Collaborative SARC Project Board, with decisions documented regarding the location of the Aberystwyth hub and the provision of a second paediatric service in Swansea. However, the PCC retains a close watching brief in his remit as Chair of Policing in Wales in order to ensure that the next key steps are delivered within the strict deadlines necessary.

Engagement Activity

Victim Engagement Forum

The Dyfed-Powys Victim Engagement Forum currently has 101 members, and the latest members to join have come through the DPP Crime Victim Satisfaction Survey.

Most recent activity of the Forum related to VAWDASV services includes:

- 1.** Goleudy's service hours – In reviewing the provision of their Saturday service, Goleudy wished to explore when the most suitable times would be for Goleudy to contact victims and for victims – to have confidential discussions and to deliver support. 83% selected Mon-Fri and 43% 10am-12pm.
- 2.** Independent Domestic Violence Advisory (IDVA) service – a 2-phased approach is being adopted for this engagement. Firstly, Forum members were asked to complete an online survey providing feedback on their experiences of accessing an IDVA service. The second phase is a series of focus groups. The first one was held on the 15th June with members of the Forum, and another two are scheduled with clients of Carmarthen Domestic Abuse Service and Calan Domestic Violence Service. Responses and feedback will be considered in the re-tendering process for the Force-wide service. Focus group participants are asked to consider the same questions as in the survey, but in more detail.

They are also provided with some information on the survey results and asked whether they agree with what has been said – based on their experiences.

Dyfed-Powys Police's Learning and Development team have now incorporated the Victims' Voice video into their training package. A number of Forum members were interviewed about their experiences; what went well, what didn't go as well, what advice they would give to an officer dealing with a similar case to theirs, and how their experience has affected their interaction with the police (both positively and negatively). These interviews were collated to develop a video portraying members' experiences, which is now being used by Dyfed-Powys Police's Learning and Development team specifically in training on vulnerability and responding to incidents.

Forum members have recently been invited to take part in two online discussions with senior Police colleagues:

1. In June, a small number of Forum members joined an online discussion chaired by Assistant Chief Constable Emma Ackland, where they were asked to feed back on the content of the Force's draft Delivery Plan.
2. On the 5th July, Forum members will take part in an online workshop chaired by Det Supt Gary Phillips, to discuss how the Force can improve its services to victims and survivors of domestic abuse, stalking and harassment and rape and serious sexual offences. 12 Forum members have expressed an interest in joining this workshop.

In addition to engagement on local victims' services, we regularly take steps to advise our Forum members about national consultations – this is to ensure their voices are heard at a national level. Most recently, we advised them of the Home Office's consultation on the draft statutory guidance on controlling behaviour and coercive control, and members' feedback will be incorporated into the Commissioner's response to the consultation.

We have received positive feedback from a number of our Forum members recently, who truly believe that sharing their experiences through this platform, and taking part in our engagement activities, is helping them work through what has happened to them.

Safety survey

In response to the national coverage regarding crimes against women and girls, it was important that the PCC considered the local situation. Is Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) prevalent in the Dyfed-Powys area? Do women and girls feel disproportionately unsafe across the Force area?

In order to answer the second question, the PCC launched a public consultation to assess general feelings of safety within the four counties of Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire and Powys. The information gleaned through this

consultation will allow us to identify any cause for concern locally in terms of feelings of safety, specifically within our female population.

Specifically, respondents were asked to consider:

- Feelings of safety
- Views on the local Police
- Street safe Tool
- Support services in the local area
- Safety focused community groups

532 individuals responded to the PCC's consultation.

Summary of findings:

- Encouragingly, the majority of respondents (81.6%) felt safe within their local area
- However, overall, it was evident that female respondents felt significantly less safe than men in all areas considered in the survey, both during the day and at night.
- The highest number of respondents who said they felt 'fairly' or 'very' unsafe were from rural areas.
- Feeling unsafe was much more prominent during the night-time in comparison with the daytime.
- Llanelli was the location that showed most frequently when respondents were asked to state locations where they feel most unsafe.
- The majority of respondents felt unsafe due to the lack of police presence in their local areas for both day and night-time.
- The majority (58.5%) of respondents who participated in the survey were 'White – English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British'.
- Although there were no obvious patterns with age and feelings of safety, many of the respondents who said they felt 'fairly' or 'very' unsafe were aged 35 and over.

Analysis continues to ensure the rich data is utilised to its full effect. For example, we have been able to acquire postcode data for some respondents, which will enable us to provide specific locations to local Neighbourhood Policing Teams.

Discussions have been held with the Force's lead on the Street-Safe tool, assisting us in our considerations as to how to best share the data retrieved regarding specific locations.

Further recommendations are being considered and will be put forward to Dyfed-Powys Police and partners where relevant.

Commissioned services

Re commissioning of Independent Domestic Violence Advisory service

The current service providing Independent Domestic Violence Advisors across Dyfed Powys represents the first instance of a single contract bringing together the provision across the Force area. This was awarded in July 2018 and was a significant step forward from previous disparate arrangements.

The service has run for the full length of the contract award utilising the available extension periods. We are now in a position as Commissioners where we must re-commission the service. In doing this we recognise the vital cross-agency work that takes place between the IDVA service and other key partners in safeguarding our high-risk victims of domestic abuse and their families.

We will be seeking to commission a service to support high risk victims of domestic abuse as identified via a DASH assessment. Although the service will not work directly with children under the age of 16, it will be expected to make referrals to safeguard children at risk of harm and ensure appropriate signposting to specialist support services. The service will be available for all clients affected by domestic abuse, regardless of age, gender, sexuality, ethnicity or disability.

A series of market engagement events have recently taken place, with the Director of Commissioning and Dyfed Powys Police's Procurement Manager leading this piece of work. Feedback has been sought from stakeholders, providers and service users to assist in development of a final specification. The service went out to tender in July 2022 with a decision to be made in late 2022 and the new service contract commencing in April 2023.

Review of Independent Sexual Violence Advisory service

Following agreement at the Wales SARC Regionalisation Board meeting in February 2020, it was agreed that the Police and Crime Commissioners for Dyfed Powys, Gwent and South Wales would jointly commission an independent review of the capacity and specification required for Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) provision across South, Mid and West Wales. This work would support phase two of the Regionalisation Programme.

A transparent procurement process was undertaken in April 2021, the brief for the review required a focus on the provision of ISVA services and to give consideration to service responses to both children and adults. Rhian Bowen-Davies and Caroline Humphreys were commissioned to undertake the review, with field work for the review taking place between May and August 2021.

The aim of the review was to inform the development of a consistent, costed service model and service specification and to provide Commissioners with an understanding of:

- The existing ISVA service provision for victims of sexual violence in South, Mid and West Wales.
- A clear picture of both victim needs (including current unmet need) and demand upon services in South, Mid and West Wales;
- The voices of individuals affected by sexual violence, their experiences of accessing support services and their reflections on what could be better or different.
- The views of local stakeholders in the victim services landscape on what works and where improvements could be made; and
- A set of recommendations and a costed model to inform future service provision.

In line with the original service model agreed by the Board, a programme of work is proposed to secure provision of the separate elements of service delivery at the spoke sites, namely the criminal justice ISVA support, the therapeutic support and the wider interagency third sector service provision.

Policing colleagues, working with Joanna Williams as senior representative of the wider Board, will be convening a governance group to progress and oversee the delivery of the ISVA provision. The paper recommends that similar approaches are established to deliver the remaining elements. All work streams will be overseen and report into the wider Wales Sexual Assault Services Board structure.

Grant funding

Perpetrator Programme Fund

The PCC has been successful in obtaining £417,509 (with an additional £112,000 match funded from PCC funds) from the Home Office Perpetrator Fund for the development of a perpetrator specific project. Recognition that addressing the abusive behaviours of perpetrators of abuse is fundamental in keeping victims and children safe, has been a focal point of our strategic VAWDASV work across the region.

This provision includes three specific programmes;

- The DA Intervention Hub- delivered by Montgomery Family Crisis Centre and Calan DVS
- The Choices Programme- delivered by Threshold DAS
- The Stalking Intervention- delivered via Dyfed Powys Police (DPP), Forensic Psychology UK and Threshold DAS

This proposal aims to support the implementation of the above initiatives, into everyday business across the region. It also aims to increase capacity within certain elements of delivery, where the regional funding agreement is limited. Lastly it aims to expand on this provision, to ensure we have a holistic approach that reaches all communities within MWW.

The pilot work has also identified the need for a role within Dyfed Powys Police to sit within the Vulnerability Hub, in order to effectively identify and coordinate referrals into the relevant offer of intervention. This will ensure eligible perpetrators are being considered, correctly referred and progress/impact is tracked through attrition and re-conviction rates etc.

This role will also participate in existing processes, such as Daily Discussions and MARAC meetings, where they can identify repeat/serial offenders, criteria for Stalking Prevention Orders, Domestic Violence Prevention Notices and Domestic Violence Prevention Orders.

The grant will also enable region-wide delivery of Respect- Working with Perpetrators Training. This will be delivered across our Safeguarding, Early Help and Specialist Service Provider teams, to ensure consistency of quality delivery, risk awareness and responsive approaches to domestic violence across the whole region.

The Home Office have recently announced continuation of the grant funding at the same level, allowing the programmes to be extended up until 31st March 2023.

Physical Empowerment CIC project

The PCC has funded £12,000 towards the development of a pilot project working with a charitable organisation to run a 10 week course for VAWG survivors. The course will consist of one x 2 hour session per week and the sessions include topics such as owning your personal space, being aware, saying No, assertive behaviour and positive self-talk. The course offers attendees the opportunity to learn physical self-defence moves.

The External Funding Manager is in consultation with PE CIC and our local VAWDASV partners to decide the best geographical area to undertake the pilot and reflect the current need.

Safer Streets 4

Through consultation with Dyfed Powys Police Safer Communities Hub, Carmarthenshire County Council Youth Services and our VAWDASV delivery partners in the community, the OPCC submitted a bid for Safer Streets round 4 which will focus on:

- Community Champions' education programme
- ASB Help partnership training
- CCTV rapid deployment units
- Youth Support Service prevention interventions co-ordinator
- Hollieguard Extra personal safety app
- Additional CCTV camera units in Aberystwyth.

The total amount requested in round 4 is £292,741. The OPCC has recently been notified that the bid was successful and will now be project managing the delivery of the various workstreams.

Conclusion

The Commissioner continues to work locally with partners such as the health service and nationally with other Police and Crime Commissioners, Assembly Members, Welsh Government and Home Office to lobby for improved services for victims of domestic and sexual abuse. This commitment is further enabled by his position as Chair of Policing in Wales and co-chair of the National VAWDSAV Partnership Board.

Through this work, the PCC is ensuring progress against the priorities within his Police and Crime Plan, the Local Criminal Justice Board delivery plan and national Welsh Government and Home Office strategies to tackle violence against women and girls.

The Commissioner's direct engagement with victims allows him to understand the individual experiences of the service provided by the Force and other criminal justice partners. This insight allows the Commissioner to identify the improvements required regarding how victims are treated and supported throughout their journey. Through his work with partners and his influence over commissioned services, the Commissioner is able to drive forward these improvements. His oversight of the work within the Force has helped to ensure a continual focus on achieving better outcomes for victims.

The Commissioner's financial commitment to service provision and contributions to charities based within the Dyfed-Powys Force area ensures a vital network of support services for those experiencing domestic and sexual abuse. The significant development of jointly commissioned services and the introduction of the Victim Engagement Forum have received recognition at national level.