



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

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The Right to be Safe





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Ministerial Foreword

“The Right to be Safe” is the Welsh Assembly Government’s six year integrated strategy for tackling all forms of violence against women. Violence against women constitutes a serious violation of the human rights of women and girls and is a major obstacle to the achievement of equality between women and men. We want Wales to be a self confident, prosperous, healthy nation and society which is fair to all. To achieve this we must not tolerate the enduring social problems of domestic abuse, sexual harassment, rape, forced marriage, trafficking, honour crimes (including murder) and female genital mutilation.



The domestic abuse strategy (**‘Tackling Domestic Abuse; a Partnership Approach’**) was launched in 2005 and has achieved a great deal. However, we recognise that it is not broad enough to tackle **all** forms of violence against women. This new strategy aims to ensure that the whole violence against women agenda is tackled effectively.

The Right to be Safe sets out 4 key priorities:

- Prevention and Raising Awareness of Violence Against Women and Domestic Abuse.
- Providing Support for Victims and Children.
- Improving the Response of Criminal Justice Agencies.
- Improving the Response of Health Services and Other Agencies.

The strategy sets out an integrated, cross government programme of action to tackle all forms for violence against women. We have also worked closely with the Home Office and criminal justice agencies in Wales in agreeing the priority areas. All parties are committed to working together, across the boundaries of devolved and non devolved responsibilities, to tackle this important agenda.

We are also publishing a three year implementation plan which will support the delivery of this strategy and the existing domestic abuse strategy. This approach will ensure that we focus attention and resources in a proportionate way but maintain a gender inclusive approach to tackling all forms of domestic abuse and supporting all victims.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my thanks to all those who took part in our consultation events on this important matter and/or responded in writing. Your input has been crucial to the development of **“The Right to be Safe”** and the related implementation plan.

We can only succeed in delivering the strategy if we all continue to work together and I will be seeking to ensure that all partner agencies play their full part in tackling this agenda.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carl Sargeant". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the letter 't'.

Carl Sargeant

Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration

March 2010

The Right to be Safe

The Strategic Context

The Welsh Assembly Government has a vision to transform Wales into a self confident, prosperous, healthy nation and society, which is fair to all. This vision can only be achieved if our communities are resilient, safe places, which provide an equal opportunity for everyone to contribute. The programme for Government underpinning our vision commits us to tackling the causes, rather than just the symptoms, of problematic behaviours and to protecting individuals or groups from suffering harm or discrimination.

The Welsh Assembly Government is already working with and supporting partner agencies to deliver a number of strategies, which support the aim to make communities in Wales safer and more resilient and bring about equality of opportunity. These strategies include:

- Substance Misuse Strategy **“Working Together to Reduce Harm”**.
- Community Cohesion Strategy **“Getting On Together”**.
- **“Working Together to Safeguard Children”**.
- The Communities First Programme.
- Youth Justice Strategy for Wales.
- Refugee Inclusion Strategy.
- Child Poverty Strategy - **“A Fairer Future for our Children”**.

A strategy to tackle all forms of domestic abuse is also in place. It built on the good work of third sector organisations that had for many years provided refuge and support to this vulnerable group and their children. Since that strategy was published more effort and resources have been focused on at improving and co-ordinating services to support citizens of Wales suffering from domestic abuse and significant progress has been made.

The Welsh Assembly Government remains committed to tackling all forms of domestic abuse and supporting all victims, however, the evidence demonstrates clearly that women and children are disproportionately affected by men’s violence and the violence they experience extends beyond domestic settings. The forms of violence women and girls experience are very serious and are often hidden. These include sexual harassment, rape, forced marriage, honour crimes (including murder) and female genital mutilation. The Welsh Assembly Government therefore recognises that the domestic abuse strategy is not broad enough to tackle all forms of violence against women.

We have therefore developed **“The Right to be Safe”** by listening to those who are victims/survivors of violence against women, in order to provide an integrated strategic framework for Wales which sets out a shared understanding and approach to tackle all forms of violence against women. This document seeks to extend the reach of our domestic abuse strategy and ensure that there is sufficient focus on some of the most damaging and often hidden forms of violence in our communities.

This six year strategy builds on the existing domestic abuse strategy. The delivery of **“The Right to be Safe”** and the domestic abuse strategy will be supported by a three year detailed action plan. This plan covers the whole spectrum of issues including sexual harassment, rape, forced marriage, honour crimes, domestic abuse and female genital mutilation. The action plan provides a comprehensive, cross government response to these issues.

We are also putting in place new arrangements to monitor the delivery of the new action plan. As part of these arrangements we have developed a set of indicators which will enable us to begin to measure the impact of the actions we are taking.

The UK context

Tackling violence against women in Wales requires co-ordinated action that cuts across the boundaries of the responsibilities and functions that are currently devolved to the Welsh Assembly Government. This split should not and will not act as a barrier to us tackling these issues in Wales. The UK Government has recently published its own strategy **“Together We Can End Violence Against Women and Girls”** which contains a range of actions for non-devolved bodies and criminal justice measures that will apply across England and Wales and we have therefore not included all these in **“The Right to be Safe”**. More widely, many of the aims and objectives in the Home Office strategy are closely aligned with those in **“The Right to be Safe”**. We have worked with the Home Office and non devolved partner agencies in developing this document and the related action plan. We are all committed to working together to tackle this shared agenda at a UK, an all Wales and a local level.

Why do we need **“The Right to be Safe”**?

Our vision for Wales is of a strong and confident nation which strives to be fair and just. This can only be achieved if our citizens are safe, and feel that they are safe. As a Government we are fully committed to the Human Rights Act 1998 which places an obligation on all public bodies to protect the human rights of individuals and to ensure that their human rights are not being violated. There are few more basic human rights than that of being protected from violence or exploitation. In England and Wales our criminal laws aim to respond to this obligation in respect of domestic violence and other forms of violence against men and women.

In October 2009 the Council of Europe published a draft convention that recognises that domestic violence affects women disproportionately, whilst noting that men may also experience domestic violence. This draft convention has regard to the UN convention for the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (1979) and its optional protocol (1999). A key purpose of the convention is to design a comprehensive framework, policies and measures for the protection of and assistance to all victims. We support this approach and aspire to these aims. However, the prevalence, impact and consequence of domestic abuse against men can be very different to that of the various forms of male violence against women and girls and all public bodies therefore have a duty to respond to this in a proportionate way.

What is the challenge we face?

All forms of violence against women constitute a serious violation of the human rights of women and girls and are a major obstacle to the achievement of equality between women and men. We have heard from victims and survivors that violence can be extreme and ongoing. We know that many victims do not have the confidence or opportunity to seek help so many of these crimes go unreported. Statistics from criminal justice agencies and data from individual studies reveal a level of violence against women and girls, which is disturbing. Women and girls are often exposed to serious forms of violence such as domestic violence, sexual harassment, rape, forced marriage, crimes committed in the name of honour, and female genital mutilation. Other evidence shows that the exploitation of women through prostitution, sexual harassment and violence and trafficking also continues to be a problem in society. This violence can disproportionately affect those with other problems such as mental health or physical disabilities.

What do we mean by violence against women?

“Violence against women is a form of discrimination against women and a violation of human rights and shall mean all acts of gender-based violence that result in, or are likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological, or economic harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life”.

- UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, 1993.

What do we know about the scale of problem?

- More than one in four women in England and Wales (4.8 million) since age 16 has experienced at least one incident of domestic abuse¹.
- Every year 1 million women experience at least one incident of domestic abuse - nearly 20,000 women a week¹.
- Of the 88 per cent of young people in an intimate partner relationship, 33 per cent of girls reported some form of sexual partner violence¹.
- The British Crime Survey 2008/9 identified across the UK, 12,165 women were victims of rape with 19,740 being victims of other sexual assaults. 968 males were victims of rape with 2,323 being the victims of other sexual assaults.
- In the UK there are estimated to be around 80,000 people involved in prostitution. As well as being at risk of exploitation, they are particularly likely to be the victims of violent or sexual crime².
- There are no published statistics on numbers of Honour crimes in the UK, but it is widely quoted that there are around 12 Honour murders a year³.
- In 2008 the Forced Marriage Unit received over 1600 calls to its helpline on suspected incidences of forced marriage⁴.
- Since implementation of Forced Marriage Protection Orders (FMPOs) in 2009, 86 FMPOs were recorded across the UK⁵.

What have we achieved since 2005?

Since its launch in 2005 the existing domestic abuse strategy has acted as the catalyst for a significant programme of action in Wales by both the Welsh Assembly Government and the Home Office. The main focus of activity and funding has been directed at women and children. Whilst the 2005 strategy was primarily aimed at tackling domestic abuse, action under the strategy has also encompassed work to begin to tackle other forms of violence against women. Key actions since 2005 include:

- Establishing a 24/7 Helpline for all victims of domestic abuse.
- Working with the Home Office, Ministry of Justice and the police to put in place a network of 20 Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs)

¹ Domestic violence and sexual violence: Povey, D.(ed) Homicides, firearms and intimate violence. Supplementary volume 2 to Crime in England and Wales 2007/08.

² Coordinated prostitution strategy and summary of responses to Paying the Price. Home Office 2006.

³ Met Police there are no available statistics on "honour based violence".

⁴ Forced Marriage Unit There are no reliable estimates of the extent of Forced Marriage in the UK.

⁵ Forced Marriage Unit presentation Cardiff 26.01.10.

- A significant increase in the funding available to directly support projects from £1.6m in 2004-2005 to £4.4m in 2010-2011.
- Providing specialist training to enable health professionals to deliver care pathways in ante-natal and accident and emergency settings.
- Establishing another 6 Sexual Assault Referral Centres, (SARCs) and a mobile unit to provide for the Dyfed Powys area.
- Helping to establish another 15 one-stop shops in Wales and provide peripatetic children's workers and a co-ordinator to support children and young people in refuges.
- Funding co-ordinators in every local authority area to ensure the national strategy is delivered at a local level.
- In partnership with the Welsh police forces, introducing the All Wales Schools Programme, which includes a module on domestic abuse which is delivered in virtually all primary and secondary schools in Wales, including pupil support units.
- Producing an action plan to tackle forced marriage and Honour based crimes.
- Providing support to establish specialist refuges for BME communities in Newport, Cardiff and Swansea and an outreach service in Wrexham.
- Encouraging the development of 10 Specialist Domestic Violence Courts (SDVCs) across the country to provide support for victims at different stages of the criminal justice system and beyond.
- Pledging funding for a safe house for women fleeing prostitution including trafficked women in south Wales and a new refuge for victims with complex needs in Blaenau Gwent.
- Taking action to raise awareness of the issues and sources of support by running bespoke publicity campaigns such as the one over the 2008 Christmas period which saw a 38 per cent increase in calls to the All Wales National Helpline.
- Working with the Home Office to develop a network of 20 Independent Domestic Abuse Advisors (IDVAs) across Wales.
- Supporting a wide range of training on domestic abuse issues across Wales.
- Establishing an all-Wales working group to advise us on policy development and deliver and act as a forum to share good practice.

What are we going to do now?

We recognise that violence against women often has a different root cause to domestic abuse and the consequences can be catastrophic for women's lives. Violence against women is both a cause and consequence of the legacy of women's inequality and tackling it requires a distinct approach. It is clear from our extensive consultation with partners and stakeholders across Wales, along with the findings of the Welsh Assembly's Communities and Culture Committee inquiry that we need to broaden our approach from what we set out in our domestic abuse strategy. This document therefore seeks to draw out the distinct approach that we will take as part of the delivery of the wider integrated action plan.

Our programme of action has four broad objectives:

- Challenging Attitudes and Raising Awareness.
- Providing Support for Victims and Protecting Children.
- Improving the Response of Criminal Justice Agencies.
- Improving the Response of Health Services and Other Agencies.

Challenging attitudes, raising awareness

Under this objective we aim to challenge attitudes to prevent violence against women and children happening in the first place. Ultimately we intend to build a society that does not tolerate violence against women. We want to do this by educating our children and young people about healthy relationships and gender equality as well as raising awareness across the whole population. Part of this involves training health and other professionals to recognise when violence is occurring and take appropriate action. We also want to ensure that all schools have professionals who are trained to deal with these issues and to whom children can turn to for support.

Challenging Attitudes

Continuing our campaign to raise awareness of violence against women will be a key component of our action to change attitudes and behaviour. Our aim must be to build a society where violence against women is never acceptable and where people are prepared to challenge the abusive behaviour of others. As part of this, we need to look carefully at the review on the impact of the sexualisation of young girls on violence against women undertaken by Dr Papadopoulos⁶. Dr Papadopoulos's review looked at the links between sexualisation and violence and examined how sexualised images and messages may affect the development of children and young people. This in turn can influence cultural norms

⁶ Sexualisation of Young People Review. 'Sexualisation of Young People Review'
<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/about-us/news/sexualisation-young-people.html>

of what is acceptable. We will be supporting any move by the UK Government to take action to address the concerns raised in Dr Papadopoulos's report.

Raising Awareness

In recent years we have run campaigns around the Christmas and New Year period to ensure that victims of domestic abuse are aware of the help that is available to them. We now need to build on this work and develop an ongoing campaign to target sectors of the community and raise awareness of the other forms of violence against women including sexual harassment, rape, forced marriage, honour crimes and female genital mutilation. This will include exploring opportunities to link into other cultural celebrations and large sporting events. We will ensure that these campaigns and the related publicity material recognise the diversity of the Welsh population. In doing this we will not shy away from tackling culturally sensitive issues such as forced marriage and female genital mutilation which are not acceptable in our society. The campaign will be developed in close co-operation with the violence against women and domestic abuse working group.

Communicating the Strategy

As well as developing an awareness raising campaign, we need to ensure that those affected by sexual harassment, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour crimes and female genital mutilation (including family and friends of victims) know where to go for help. Nationally, we will continue to support and promote the 24/7 helpline and will be working with key stakeholders to improve the information available for the Welsh Assembly Government's own website. This will ensure that there is an online directory of services that will enable a victim, family member or friend to identify what services are available in each part of Wales. At a local level, we are asking Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) to develop directories of services that are available in their local area.

Early Identification

We also need to ensure that front line professionals can recognise and deal with the issues surrounding violence against women. Early intervention can have the immediate benefit of reduced violence and abuse against adults, children and young people as well as protecting victims from developing longer term problems such as substance misuse or depression. Professionals therefore need to be able to recognise the signs, assess the level of risk and respond appropriately to ensure a consistent safe response to victims across Wales. Many of our domestic abuse co-ordinators already provide a range of multi-agency training for this purpose. However, we now need to ensure that this training includes the wider violence against women agenda, covers all key professionals and front line workers and is delivered in a coherent way. We will

therefore be developing a national training plan which will build on the work already being undertaken. Alongside this we will launch specialist forced marriage training to complement the guidance that was issued in 2009. The training programme will be complemented by a number of specific awareness raising initiatives.

Enhancing our Response in Schools

If we are to achieve the cultural change that we wish to see in attitudes and behaviour towards women, then children and young people need to be engaged in these issues from an early age. It is particularly important that we help young people learn about acceptable behaviour and healthy relationships before they begin to have relationships themselves.

As with many other areas of children's development, schools and colleges have an important role to play. We need to ensure that professionals working in schools and other educational settings are equipped to deal with these issues. We have already published updated guidance about domestic abuse and we will next develop 'online' guidance for teachers, other educational professionals and school governors which cover other forms of violence against women.

As part of the delivery of the All Wales Schools Programme, we have held conferences for Personal and Social Education (PSE) teachers and 'Healthy Schools' coordinators to provide updated information and promote best practice in dealing with domestic abuse education in schools and we will continue this programme of training. However, the clear response from our consultation was for violence against women and domestic abuse to be embedded in teacher training. When we next review the Qualified Teacher Status Standards and associated guidance we will therefore include gender awareness and violence against women in the list of topics to be considered.

Consultation responses also called for the PSE curriculum in Wales to cover the wider issues of gender equality and violence against women and we will consult on this issue when we next review the PSE curriculum. However, the new Personal and Social Education Framework which was implemented for 7-19 year olds in Wales in 2008 already includes a health and well being theme that encourages children to:

- Develop respect for themselves and others.
- Understand the features of safe relationships; and
- Promote critical awareness of how wider power inequalities, which create gendered division, can give rise to sexual violence.

In addition, in partnership with the four Welsh Police Forces, children in Wales receive a module on domestic abuse in virtually all primary and secondary schools as part of our All Wales Community Safety Schools Programme. The module will be extended to include information about other forms of violence against women. These lessons are complemented by the Spectrum Project run by Hafan Cymru. We are

currently evaluating the All Wales Schools Programme, the Hafan Cymru Spectrum project and other projects to ensure a consistency of message and approach to tackling these issues in schools.

We have recently introduced schools-based counsellors in our schools in Wales. We will ensure that they can identify these issues and offer appropriate support so that children feel confident in approaching them.

As well as being a key forum for delivering equality and relationship education, schools are often best placed to identify where girls may be at risk. We will therefore ensure that the All Wales Attendance Framework which is being developed will be able to monitor and analyse school absences linked to forced marriage.

We must also engage children and young people when we are producing information resources to ensure that these meet their needs. To this end we will be working with young people to develop an information leaflet around the issues of consent and sexual violence.

We will also need to extend our reach to children and young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs) and we will be engaging with Children and Young People's Partnerships to ensure that they consider the support that they can offer to children and young people affected by violence.

Further and Higher Education Settings

The National Union of Students is now represented on the violence against women and domestic abuse working group and we will be working with them to encourage further and higher education establishments in Wales to develop violence against women policies. We will also examine the need for training of professionals in these education settings.

Workplace Settings

Employees who suffer from abuse or violence are often absent from work or perform poorly. This has an impact on the employer's business activity as well as the employee's wellbeing. Employers can therefore play an important role in addressing these issues in their own workforce. The Welsh Assembly Government already has a domestic abuse staff policy in place and will be broadening this to ensure the wider violence against women agenda is covered.

To promote this approach we will be holding a conference for major employers in Wales. The conference will provide an opportunity for us to work with the Equality and Human Rights Commission to promote workplace policies especially to large public sector organisations. It will also serve to remind public bodies of the requirement to promote gender equality. We will use the Corporate Health Standard to promote the development of workplace policies.

Providing Support for Victims and Protecting Children

Our objective is to help women and children affected by violence to get on with their lives by providing effective advice and support services including refuges and safe accommodation. We recognise that it is every child's right to live free from abuse and exploitation, as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The UNCRC accentuates the importance of protecting and listening to children. We therefore also seek to protect children from physical or psychological harm as a result of violence within the family.

It is a sad fact that violence against women and children remains a serious problem in Wales. This is evidenced by the fact that 22,285 people, predominantly women, telephoned the All Wales National Helpline in 2008. At the more serious end of the problem 3,629 high risk victims and their children went through the MARAC process in 2009. So whilst our starting point is to prevent violence in the first place, we must also ensure that women and children already affected by violence have the support services they need.

Building Provision

We have increased services in recent years, but we recognise that some gaps do remain. We know for example that some women living in more rural areas do not have access to services and this is also the case for those suffering from forms of violence such as female genital mutilation that are focused within particular communities. With our partners, we will continue to address these gaps whilst continuing to support those that are already in place and we target additional resources where there is greatest need. We have for example funded a mobile sexual assault referral unit to support victims in Dyfed Powys. We also need to publicise better the services that are available. Working with the network of domestic abuse co-ordinators, we will also consider if alternative models of service delivery, such as outreach services, would better meet an area's needs. In doing so we will examine research on rural victims carried out by the Women's Institute⁷.

There is concern that some women are not accessing services because of their cultural background. We will be working with BME organisations to look at the reason for this and how we can overcome any barriers to accessing services that are identified.

⁷ <http://www.thewi.org.uk/standard.aspx?id=13492>

One Stop Shops

Women who are suffering from violence need ready and easy access to advice and support services. We have therefore continued to develop the network of one stop shops across Wales and 16 will soon be in place across Wales. We now want to ensure that each one is offering a consistent, proven model of service and therefore we will be supporting them to achieve accreditation.

Housing Services

Wherever possible, victims should be kept safe in their own homes by the perpetrator having to leave; not the victim. Unfortunately, however, it is a sad fact that some women see no other option but to leave because the risk to themselves and their children is so great. Preventing these women and their children becoming homeless is a priority. We are providing over £10m a year through our supporting people programme to support women and children. This support is primarily for refuge provision where women can receive the specialist help they need to be safe and build a future free from violence. However women and their families also need to be able to move on from refuges. We have collected information on the effectiveness of existing housing services in meeting the needs of those experiencing domestic abuse and the findings will inform the development of housing policy.

Many accommodation services provided by women for women are vital to the delivery of gender specific solutions and support. However, some of our stakeholders have told us that service commissioners, do not understand the Gender Equality Duty (GED). The GED does not mean that gender specific services cannot be provided or that all services have to be open to both men and women. We are therefore working with the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) to prepare joint guidance about GED for service commissioners across Wales. We will also be working with the EHRC and the Violence Against Women and Domestic Abuse Working Group to promote a better understanding of GED across Wales.

A major concern to service providers is their ability to assist victims who have no recourse to public funds. The UK Government is currently piloting a project to assist these victims. Taking account of the views of key service providers, we will be providing feedback to the Home Office on the pilot and working with them to find a sustainable solution. We will be issuing guidance to local authorities on how to manage this complex problem.

To ensure that we are making the best use of the funding available to support children's workers in refuges, we will be conducting a review of the various funding streams with partner organisations. The aim will be to reach agreement on the best model for supporting children in the future.

Prostitution and Trafficking

Women fleeing prostitution or trafficking are particularly vulnerable and need to feel confident that there are services in place to support them. Women affected by these issues are often difficult to reach and the problem is largely hidden. As our knowledge and understanding of these issues increases we are better placed to provide safe exit routes for these vulnerable women. We now have small projects in place in south Wales, such as the Diogel Project developed by Black Association of Women Step Out (BAWSO) which offers services to support trafficked persons including supported accommodation and counselling, health and psychological assistance. The next step will be to work with partners in north Wales with the aim of making provision available in that area. We will also be supporting the Trafficking to ensure frontline staff have the right tools and expertise to identify victims of trafficking and offer them appropriate protection and support, bearing in mind the special needs of children.

Sexual Assault referral Centres SARCs

Together with the Home Office and other partners, we have supported the continued development of Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) in Wales. We now need to ensure that SARCs are delivering against a common service specification that they make further progress towards meeting minimum standards and that best practice and learning is shared between practitioners in Wales. SARCs provide an immediate crisis service for victims of rape and sexual assault and they provide longer-term advocacy and counselling for victims. We want to extend the support for women who are victims of sexual violence so we will be exploring options to extend the service provided by the domestic abuse helpline to meet this need. This will ensure that any victim who does not wish to involve criminal justice agencies is also able to receive a service to ensure their safety and health needs are met.

Citizen Focused Services

Tackling violence against women and domestic abuse needs a well co-ordinated multi agency response. We know that there are times when we let victims down when they are most in need. All agencies must listen to the voice and experience of victims if we are going to improve the response and service victims receive. The KAFKA Brigade⁸ offers a model programme which facilitates an opportunity for victim's perspective of shortcomings in service provision to be heard. Working with the Home Office and local partners, including the Local Service Board, we have supported a KAFKA project in Rhondda Cynon Taff and valuable lessons can be learnt and shared from this exercise. Further KAFKA projects will be run in Merthyr Tydfil and Newport and we will be exploring options for wider roll out and facilitating the sharing of best practice across Wales. We will be hosting a conference to share the experiences of the initial KAFKA Brigade projects.

⁸ <http://www.kafkabrigade.org/home/kafka-team/cs/kafka-team>

Continued Implementation of Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) Programme

The MARAC is a multi-agency meeting that focuses on the safety of high-risk domestic abuse victims. MARACs share information to build a picture of the victim's situation and jointly devise a risk management plan to reduce the harm faced by the victim and their family. Wales was in the vanguard of the development of the MARAC concept in the UK and we are continuing to work with the Home Office to deliver the MARAC implementation programme in Wales. We are also working with the four Welsh police forces to ensure consistency of approach across Wales. As part of this work we will be promoting the Domestic Abuse Stalking Harassment (DASH) risk indicator checklist to ensure that there is a consistent risk assessment and threshold for referral to MARAC. With the introduction of DASH, we hope to be able to capture other forms of violence against women as it also takes into account multiple perpetrators which are often a central element of forced marriage and other forms of honour based violence. We will also be promoting the need for the Welsh MARAC to be quality assured to check that it is providing a high quality, consistent service for high risk victims. We will be also be promoting the need to place MARAC on a statutory basis.

Links with Substance Misuse Problems

“Working Together to Reduce Harm” drew attention to the links between substance misuse and violence against women. In response, we have recently published a module of our Substance Misuse Treatment Framework that sets out good practice in joint working between domestic abuse and substance misuse services. We will now be rolling out further training to ensure that the Treatment Framework assists in improving the quality of both sets of services. We are also promoting the expansion of outreach services to identify women involved in prostitution and ensure they are offered appropriate support; including those women arrested as part of the Drugs Intervention Programme (DIP).

Identifying and Supporting Offenders

As part of the continued development of DIP perpetrators who test positive for CLASS A drugs when arrested will be identified. The individuals identified will be offered treatment for their drug problem but the DIP workers will also be sharing information with the Independent Domestic Violence Advisors services and strengthening their link with the MARAC process. We recognise that once perpetrators are identified they need to be offered help and support to change their behaviour. The Home Office strategy contains a number of commitments relating to the improvement of National Offender Management Service's response to perpetrators and we will be working with them to improve services in Wales.

We will also map the provision of perpetrator programmes available to meet the requirement of the Children and Adoption Act 2006. This will include costing existing programmes and examine the issue of accreditation.

Protecting Women in Public Places

Women should be able to go about their lives free of the fear of violence, but we know that some women feel that they are at increased risk of becoming victims of crime and anti-social behaviour because of their gender. This fear of crime in public places can limit and reduce quality of life and lead to social isolation. We will be working with the Home Office and Community Safety Partnerships in Wales to ensure that they are considering what more can be done at a local level to protect women in public places such as bus stations and car parks. We are also exploring with British Transport Police what new measures can be developed to protect women on rail transport and railway stations in Wales.

We are also working with NUS Cymru to produce materials that will provide students with information about personal safety in campus settings.

Providing Financial Advice for Victims

When a woman is coping with violence she will often need a range of financial advice and support to develop the knowledge and skills to enable her to become independent. We are therefore working with a number of service providers including the Financial Services Authority and Citizens Advice Cymru to ensure that victims get more support and guidance on financial matters. As part of this work we will be promoting affordable savings and loan providers, such as credit unions to refuges and key staff to enable service users to make safe and well-informed financial decisions.

Protecting Children

Since 2004 the Welsh Assembly Government has used the UNCRC as the basis of its work for children and young people. Domestic abuse in any family unit that includes children is a child protection issue and should be dealt with using the relevant safeguarding procedures.

Many women who are the victims of violence have children, and ensuring the well being of those children must be a priority for both public services and the victim. We need to ensure that partner agencies are able to identify children who are at risk so that appropriate action can be taken. We have already issued a guidance document - **"Safeguarding Children and Young People Affected by Domestic Abuse 2009" for people working in educational settings**⁹.

⁹ <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/housingandcommunity/safety/domesticabuse/publications/goodpractice/?lang=en>

We already know that women and children are at increased risk when they are involved in family court proceedings. For this reason the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (CAFCASS) CYMRU has developed a domestic abuse resource pack aimed at minimising the risk. These resources enable CAFCASS staff to identify and assess the associated risks and impact and appropriately report their concerns to local support services. CAFCASS already have protocols in place which enable the sharing of information with the police and local authorities where concerns has been raised. They will also be developing a “safeguarding children’s framework”.

We are also taking action to ensure that adult’s and children’s services work more effectively together to identify and support families at risk. We have already introduced legislation which requires a radical change in the way in which social services departments operate. As a first step pioneer Integrated Family Support Teams (IFSTs) are being established to provide targeted services to vulnerable children and their families. The initial pioneer teams are focussing on families with substance misuse problems - many of whom will also have domestic abuse issues. The plan is then to extend the approach to families where it is primarily domestic abuse issues that place a child in need or at risk.

Increased access by children and young people to social networking internet sites has introduced an added threat to their safety. Often, adults both parents and professionals fail to recognise the risk this poses to children and young people. We will be working with the Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) Centre to protect children and young people from internet abuse and potential grooming.

Improving the Response of Criminal Justice Agencies

Our objective here is to improve the response of criminal justice agencies to both victims and perpetrators once abuse has been disclosed.

In recent years, there has been an improvement in the response of all the criminal justice agencies in Wales to those who report a crime to the police. However, we need to ensure that victims receive a quality service and we will continue to co-operate with them and build on this.

Working with the UK Government

We will be working with the Home Office to establish domestic violence homicide reviews across Wales and to support the roll out of new domestic violence protection orders in Wales. These orders will give police and courts the power to exclude perpetrators from victim’s homes for up to 28 days, to give victims a breathing space to apply for longer-term protection. When we piloted the KAFKA Brigade project in

Rhondda Cynon Taff one of the many messages we received from the perspective of the victim was that the police needed stronger powers. The new orders will prevent perpetrators from quickly returning to an address where abuse had taken place. This will provide added protection at a time when victims are most vulnerable and most willing to accept help.

Specialist Domestic Violence Courts

We have also worked with the Home Office Crime Team in Wales to ensure that we have a network of specialist domestic violence courts in Wales. In Caerphilly we successfully piloted one of the very first of these courts in the UK and there are now 10 courts operating across Wales. We will be engaging with Local Criminal Justice Boards to see what more we can do to enhance the performance of these courts. This will include organising an all-Wales event that looks at the governance, performance management and quality assurance arrangements for these courts. We will be engaging with Local Criminal Justice Boards to see what more we can do to enhance the performance of these courts. In the first instance it has been agreed with the UK Government's Office for Criminal Justice Reform to cover the changes to the arrangements for governance, performance management and quality assurance of SDVC at forthcoming IDVA and Domestic Abuse Co-ordinators Forums.

We are already in discussion with the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) about an "access to justice" pilot that will focus on the support needed for vulnerable older witnesses. We will be working with the CPS and Age Concern Cymru to bring forward recommendations on how best to take this work forward.

Building the Picture

Since 2005 we have primarily focused on increasing support for victims to ensure that we can continue to meet demand. We know that by raising awareness we increase the confidence of victims which means that more of them seek help. During 2010 we will be signing protocols with the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) Cymru and the CPS to gather regular quarterly data sets. This will enable us to improve our understanding of the pattern of the problem across Wales and the outcomes for perpetrators. The CPS will provide data relating to charging, prosecutions and convictions for violence against women and domestic abuse cases. From ACPO Cymru we will be receiving police recorded data on a quarterly basis about violence against women and domestic abuse incidents. We will also be provided with Welsh-specific data about forced marriage/honour based crime incidents including trafficking. This information will lead to better informed policy making. This will mean that services can be better targeted to meet the needs of victims.

Improving the Response of Health Service and Other Agencies

This objective aims to ensure the health service and other agencies continue to minimise the risk to victims by supporting early identification of problems and by supporting early intervention.

The Health Response

We know that for many victims contact with health service professionals is often their first and sometimes only opportunity to seek help. When victims come into contact with our public services they must be alert to the signs of violence and abuse and be ready to take action to ensure that once a victim has disclosed their experience they will receive proper support to ensure their safety.

Across Wales we have already embedded routine questioning in ante natal and accident and emergency settings. This is now starting in some gynaecology and sexual health settings. We have provided specialist training to ensure that our midwives and nurses are confident in asking assessment questions in relation to abuse and violence experiences. We have also provided advice about how to signpost services to ensure that every victim receives proper support and protection.

We do not want concerns about information sharing to get in the way of protecting a victim from violence and or abuse. Local Health Board policies will be required to ensure that personal information sharing protocols, based on the Wales Accord for the Sharing of Personal Information (WASPI) are developed. This will enable service providing organisations directly concerned with protecting a victim to share information between them in a lawful and proportionate way. This is taking place alongside the UK Government's work to determine whether a clearer framework for sharing information about vulnerable women is required.

Professional accident and emergency departments have a role to play in reducing community violence through the collection (electronically wherever possible) of data about assault victims, including identification of women who are repeat attendees for injuries. Handled sensitively, this provides an opportunity for engagement with the victim and referral be made but ensuring that data is correctly stored and safely shared is crucial. To make this happen we will carry out an impact assessment to ensure that all accident and emergency settings have compatible information systems. Following this we will develop an implementation plan informed by the level of available resources. To support this work we will be placing requirements on the NHS in Wales in relation to the delivery of this strategy and the related action plan within NHS Operating Framework from 2011.

Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs)

The twenty two Community Safety Partnerships bring together a number of the organisations that are key to the delivery of this strategy at a local level - i.e. the police, local health, local authority, probation and the third sector. Within their wider responsibilities of tackling crime and disorder and addressing community safety, they have a key role to play in delivering this strategy and the related action plan.

In order to comply with the requirements of the Crime and Disorder Strategies (Prescribed Descriptions) Wales Order 2009, Community Safety Partnerships will now be expected to promote the interests of, or provide services to women in accordance with the Order. Many CSPs are already working closely with their local co-ordinators to improve the multi agency response in their area. However, in order to ensure that the violence against women agenda is given sufficient focus in all CSPs we will be asking them to appoint board level champions who will be responsible for promoting the delivery of this strategy at a local level.

Supporting Delivery

This section sets out our plans for supporting the delivery of the strategy at both a national and local level. It also describes the mechanisms we are putting in place to monitor the impact of the strategy and measure changes in the demand for services.

The Violence Against women and Domestic Abuse Working Group

This strategy and the related implementation plan include actions for a wide cross section of Welsh Assembly Government Departments and other partners and agencies. We are putting in place arrangements to ensure that the implementation plan is kept on track by establishing a forum at which all parties can be held to account. The title, remit and membership of the existing Domestic Abuse Working Group will be revised so that the group properly represents the wider violence against women agenda. This group will include representation from across the Welsh Assembly Government as well as key partner agencies and stakeholders. It will agree a set of indicators to monitor both the implementation of the action plan and its impact. It will also advise on further actions to ensure that the strategy is reviewed and refreshed in the light of emerging developments or changes in the patterns of domestic abuse and wider forms of violence against women. The working group will be chaired by the Welsh Assembly Government and report to the Minister for Social Justice and Local Government.

Measuring the Impact

Until recently there has been little detailed data collected centrally by the Welsh Assembly Government (other than Home Office data) on the pattern of and incidents of violence against women, or the response of agencies. Over the past twelve months we have worked with partner agencies to agree a range of data sets to enable us to have a much clearer picture of incidents of violence against women, the numbers accessing services and the outcome of criminal justice interventions across Wales. For example, we have provided additional funding to Welsh Women's Aid to roll out the use of the Support People Recording Information New Technology SPRINT IT system in all their refuges. The SPRINT system will, for the first time, provide us with information about the outcomes of women who access refuges in Wales. A summary of the information that will now be collected is set out in Annex 1 to the action plan.

However, we need to continue to improve the information that we have available to us and partner agencies to enable us to judge whether the action we are taking is having an impact. We will therefore be asking the Working Group to help us identify additional data sources and where we need to undertake specific research to provide a fuller picture. This information will help inform future actions and allocation of available resources.

Reporting Progress

From 2010-11 onwards, the Welsh Assembly Government will publish a detailed annual report on progress of the delivering the action plan which will include validated impact data. The first annual report will be published in the financial year 2010-11.

Improving the Response of Local Government

Local Government has always been a key partner in delivering services for women and children affected by domestic abuse. We now want to ensure that the broader violence against women agenda is reflected in the activities they undertake particularly around issues such as prevention and housing support. To focus more attention on these issues we will examine the scope for including an indicator in the Local Government Performance Framework. We will also work with stakeholders to develop an advice note on the role that local authorities can play in tackling violence against women and domestic abuse. These actions will ensure that addressing violence against women is much more aligned to the core business of local authorities.

Local Co-ordinators

Under the domestic abuse strategy we have put in place local Domestic Abuse Co-ordinators to assist CSPs to deliver on this agenda. We are in the process of reviewing the role of the co-ordinators and as part of this we will be expanding their remit to ensure that the wider violence against women agenda is included. Key performance standards will also be introduced to ensure that there is a consistency of approach across CSP areas in Wales.

Service Standards

Women in Wales should be able to access a consistent level and quality of support services wherever they live in Wales. Along with the UK Government, we will be considering the development and introduction of a set of national service standards for Wales.

Improving the Effectiveness of Projects

Expanding services is crucial, but we must also ensure that all the existing services that we support meet the needs of women and children and provide quality services that offer value for money. We will therefore continue with a rolling programme of evaluation of all the existing services that we support. We have already reviewed the service provided by our All-Wales Helpline and by Welsh Women's Aid and are in the process of the review of co-ordinators. We are also currently reviewing the programmes that are delivered in our schools and we are reviewing the Caring Dads Programme (a NSPCC perpetrator programme). The results of these external reviews will enable us to have a better understanding of the outcomes of the services we provide, promote women's safety and will enable us to adjust and tailor our responses in the future.

Engagement with the Third Sector

In Wales we have a long-standing and productive partnership with the third sector in tackling violence against women as they are without doubt the most important service provider in Wales in this regard. The UK Government is currently reviewing how to develop long-term and sustainable government engagement with the third sector to address violence against women. We want to contribute to this and we will be carefully examining any proposals that emerge from the UK Government.

Funding the Strategy

The domestic abuse and violence against women budget has increased significantly over recent years and for 2010-11 onwards now stands at £4.4m per annum. A further £10m of supporting people funding is also spent on tackling this agenda each year.

Funding from the Home Office aimed at protecting women and girls has also increased since 2005. The dedicated domestic violence fund has increased by 30 per cent since 2005 and was £350,000 in 2009-10. In addition other funding streams including the Home Office Regional Fund and the Crime Reduction and Anti- Social Behaviour Fund has supported this agenda.

We will also be working with partner agencies to encourage and support them to do more to access other potential funding sources such as the European Union Convergence Fund and lottery funding.

Glossary of terms

ACPO	Association of Chief Police Officers
A & E	Accident and Emergency
BAWSO	Black Association Women Step Out
CAADA	Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse
CAFCASS	Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service
CEOP	Child Exploitation and Online Protection
CPS	Crown Prosecution Service
CSP	Community Safety Partnership
DA	Domestic Abuse
DASH	Domestic Abuse Stalking and Harassment
DCELLS	Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills
DIP	Drug Intervention Programme
DVHR	Domestic Violence Homicide Review
EHRC	Equality and Human Rights Commission
GED	Gender Equality Duty
IDVA	Independent Domestic Violence Advisor
NHS	National Health Service
LCJB	Local Criminal Justice Board
MARAC	Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference
NEET	Not in Employment Education or Training
NOMS	National Offender Management Service
NSPCC	National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
PSA	Public Service Agreement
PSE	Personal and Social Education
SARC	Sexual Assault Referral Centre
SDVC	Specialist Domestic Violence Courts
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
WASPI	Wales Accord for the Sharing of Personal Information

Annex 1

Indicator	Information Source	Frequency of Measure
Wales Domestic Abuse Helpline Data: Number of total calls of which were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Female Callers:- • Male Callers:- • Female Callers with children: • Children Callers:- 	Welsh Women's Aid	Annual Report by WAG
Number of incoming calls to Dyn Project Helpline:-	Dyn Project	Annual Report by WAG
School-based Counselling Service. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of children receiving service where domestic abuse is an issue: 	Welsh Assembly Government. DCELLS	Annual Report by WAG
Refuge Data: Number of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clients entering refuge: - • Clients with children entering refuge:- • Children entering refuge: - 	Welsh Women's Aid	Annual Report by WAG
Police Data Number of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic Abuse Incidents:- • DA related arrests:- • DA related homicides:- • Forced Marriage Incidents:- • Honour Based Violence Incidents:- • Human Trafficking Incidents:- 	ACPO Cymru	Annual Report by WAG
MARAC Data Number of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cases referred to MARAC:- • Children in household referred to MARAC:- • Repeat MARAC Cases:- 	CAADA. Home Office.	Annual Report by WAG
PSA 23:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The level of violence with injury (which includes most serious violent crime and domestic violence with injury) 	Home Office	Annual report by Home Office Team

Indicator	Information Source	Frequency of Measure
Prosecution of Domestic Violence cases: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charged:- • Convictions:- • Unsuccessful Prosecutions:- • Acquittals:- 	Crown Prosecution Service	Annual Report by WAG
Prosecution of Rape cases: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total victims:- • Decision to charge:- • Successful prosecutions:- • Unsuccessful Prosecutions:- • Acquittals:- 	Crown Prosecution Service	Annual Report by WAG
Prosecution of other Sexual Offences: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total victims:- • Decision to charge:- • Successful prosecutions:- • Unsuccessful Prosecution:- • Acquittals:- 	Crown Prosecution Service	Annual Report by WAG
Prosecution of Forced Marriage Cases: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total cases:- • Convictions:- • Unsuccessful Prosecutions:- • Acquittals:- 	Crown Prosecution Service	Annual Report by WAG
Prosecution of Honour Based Violence Cases: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total cases:- • Convictions:- • Unsuccessful Prosecutions:- • Acquittals:- 	Crown Prosecution Service	Annual Report by WAG
Prosecution of Human Trafficking Cases: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total cases:- • Convictions:- • Unsuccessful Prosecutions:- • Acquittals:- 	Crown Prosecution Service	Annual Report by WAG

* Unsuccessful Prosecutions are cases which have not proceeded due to a particular factor or a variety of factors, i.e. essential legal element missing, victim refuses to give evidence etc.