

## **North Wales Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategic Board**

In March 2018, the North Wales Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategic Board published the first regional strategy under the 2015 Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act.

Our North Wales vision:

***That the people of North Wales can live safe, equal, violence-free lives, in communities without violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.***

North Wales is working together to tackle all aspects of Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence, based around 6 key objectives, underpinned by the national objectives enshrined in the 2015 Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act:

### **Prevention**

***Objective 1:*** Increase awareness and challenge attitudes of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence across the North Wales population.

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

### **Protection**

***Objective 3:*** Increased focus on holding perpetrators to account and provide opportunities to change their behaviour based around victim safety.

***Objective 4:*** Make early intervention and prevention a priority.

### **Provision of support**

***Objective 5:*** Relevant professionals are trained to provide effective, timely and appropriate responses to victims and survivors.

***Objective 6:*** Provide victims with equal access to appropriately resourced, high quality, needs led, strength based, gender responsive services across North Wales.

**Progress to date:**

**Objective 1:** *Increase awareness and challenge attitudes of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence across the North Wales population.*

- The Live Fear Free Helpline information and marketing, as well as national communications are supported and disseminated throughout the region.
- The National Training Framework has been rolled out across North Wales, with 93 professionals trained to deliver the “Ask and Act” training across the Local Authorities and North Wales Fire and Rescue Service. Another cohort has also been trained with BCUHB. This training will be rolled out during 2020/21 to all frontline professionals working with vulnerable people across the region.
- The Joint Commissioning sub group of the Strategic Board is made up of 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector specialist services, as well as commissioners from across the region. The group has ensured that during the COVID19 crisis, services across North Wales have been able to continue to offer programmes addressing unhealthy attitudes virtually, to support families in crisis. This includes the online Intervention Hub, a behaviour change programme accessible 24/7 on any device.

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

- The Whole School Approach subgroup is working closely with the ACE hub and EAT team to ensure that all schools are trauma informed, to support all young people affected by VAWDASV as well as other ACE’s appropriately.
- Specialist services across the region are commissioned to deliver a range of programmes including the Freedom programme, ACE recovery toolkit and STAR for children and young people.

**Objective 3:** *Increased focus on holding perpetrators to account and provide opportunities to change their behaviour based around victim safety.*

- Training under the NTF is based on understanding what action to take following disclosure by a victim or perpetrator. North Wales relevant authorities have taken on this training and are ready to roll out further during 2020/21.
- From April 20, North Wales have commissioned a regional IDVA provision, leading to a much more consistent and cohesive service. The IDVA managers work closely with NWP to ensure the 24/7 provision is in partnership with the DAOs on call.
- The ADAPT pilot in the Central region continues to be successful, identifying prolific offenders not open to MARAC or MAPPA. The multi-agency team looks at disruption and diversion activities as well as highlighting opportunities for behaviour change where appropriate.
- The Joint Commissioning group have ensured that for the first time, in 2020/21, there will be region-wide coverage of group based and online behaviour change interventions for

perpetrators of domestic abuse. The group based programme is Relate's Choose2Change and the online provision is the Intervention Hub, utilised by Probation teams across the UK and beyond.

**Objective 4:** *Make early intervention and prevention a priority.*

- Some progress has been made in introducing an IRIS pilot in North Wales. The Regional Advisor and DASU North Wales are working with IRISi to implement this, although funding is still to be agreed.
- Implementation of Group 2 of the National Training Framework, "Ask and Act" has been successful and the roll out to staff teams across the region will commence after the lockdown period. Some virtual sessions are being piloted with a view to offering this as an alternative.
- Children and young people have been a priority for the North Wales Board and part of the 2020/21 Revenue Grant has been ring-fenced to deliver this work. Technology has been secured to enable young people in refuge can access education/social support during lockdown, as well as enabling some services to increase their staffing capacity to work directly with children and young people.
- North Wales has adopted an ACE approach across all sectors and the VAWDASV board work closely with the ACE Hub and EAT teams to ensure that work is not duplicated.

**Objective 5:** *Relevant professionals are trained to provide effective, timely and appropriate responses to victims and survivors.*

- The NTF has enabled the upskilling of all service providers, as well as establishing a quality standard for all provision. The North Wales services have all accessed Groups 4 and 5 of the training.
- ACE training has been rolled out across North Wales Police and it's partners.
- The OPCC, NWP and the Regional advisor work in partnership with HMCTS/Victim service/CPS, to ensure that appropriate training and support is available.

**Objective 6:** *Provide victims with equal access to appropriately resourced, high quality, needs led, strength based, gender responsive services across North Wales.*

- Joint Commissioning and partnership working is highly effective in North Wales and has enabled the provision of a wide range of provision for victims, perpetrators, survivors and their families in the short, medium and long term.
- The Regional IDVA provision is now consistent across the region and offer 24/7 provision for high risk victims across North Wales.

- The Joint Commissioning group has worked with Welsh Government to provide enhanced Capital funding for 8 additional disbursed units across the region. These are to enhance the more traditional refuge-based provision and are available to victims with more complex needs, as well as those with pets, teenage children etc.
- COVID 19 additional support via funding from Welsh Government has been provided to all specialist services across North Wales to ensure there is a continuation of adequate and appropriate services in all areas, as well as PPE etc.
- A Victim Focus group is currently being developed by NWP and partners.
- Weekly virtual MARACs have been piloted during early 2020, with a group of professionals considering cases from the week before and acting on them in a timely manner. Only more complex cases would then be forwarded to the monthly meeting. This was highly successful and during 2020/21 will be rolled out across the other Local Authority areas in North Wales.
- Up to date Safe Lives training to those attending MARAC to ensure that responsibilities are properly understood and that referrals are appropriate. This has been delayed due to COVID 19 but will be offered later in 2020.