



Joint Strategy for tackling Violence against Women and Girls, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence 2019 - 2024

There can be no doubt that violence against women and girls is a deep-seated problem in communities across South Wales and that achieving change is a significant long-term project for the police and our partners. I set out a commitment to tackle the issue when I was first elected and both the current Chief Constable and his predecessor have made it a priority within operational policing. We have been helped by the parallel commitment by Welsh Government and the high level of commitment by members of our respective teams and the many partners with whom they work.

In 2014, the then Chief Constable Peter Vaughan and I published our Joint Strategy to tackle Violence against Women and Girls, projecting the need to work consistently over the next four years if we were to make a real difference. The comments in the attached paper provide clear evidence that the commitment we have shown really is making a difference, with each incremental step helping victims and survivors or helping to prevent violence, but with so much still to be done we decided that it was time for a serious stock-take and to set out our strategy and commitments for the next five years.

There is no doubt about the size of the challenge posed by Domestic Violence, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence. The statistics of demand before the Panel show that this is a volume crime, while the situations that have to be tackled are often hidden from plain sight, highly complex and sensitive.

We are developing a better understanding of the causes of violence, with the insights from the Public Health Wales research on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) showing very clearly the inter-generational impact of violence and abuse.

Each incident has to be dealt with on its merits, with violence and abuse on men or between same-sex partners or between generations each dealt with in terms

of the harm that is done and the protection and support needed by individuals. But we have to accept the factual reality that women are by far the largest group of victims and suffer disproportionately the most serious forms of violence and even death. So our approach has to be based on clear evidence and facts, and on listening to the voices of victims and survivors, with a good understanding of links to related issues such as hate crime, the isolation of many within BME communities, the specific needs of disabled and elderly people and the specific needs of children.

When Professor Jonathan Shepherd came to see me some 25 years ago, he was driven by the stark fact that the injuries he saw in his practice as a clinician came in two forms. His in-tray from car accidents was going down in number and seriousness while his in-tray from violence was going up. The explanation for the first was that for 50 years successive Governments had taken incremental steps to make people safer in their cars – seat belts, the breathalyser, better brakes, tyres, airbags, traffic calming, etc. He asked “Why can’t we take the same consistent incremental approach to violence against the person?”

It’s a massive frustration that we still have such a lot to do – and arguably that we have further to go with all forms of violence against women, domestic violence and sexual violence than violence on the streets and in the night-time economy – but there has been progress and our first joint strategy has had an effect and supported many of our partners in their efforts. The new strategy which is currently in its final draft has been designed with our Partners to work in Partnership because together – if we are determined to do so – we can achieve more than we can achieve alone. That’s the Co-operative Principle that underpins the South Wales Police approach.

So we must be impatient for progress while recognising that we are tackling issues that have been deep-seated in our Society and in our Communities for generations. Laws are important, and we should celebrate the legislative leadership from Welsh Government, but “Laws rarely prevent what they forbid”. Similarly, these are problems that policing alone cannot solve – but we can make a significant contribution and that’s what our Joint Strategy will set out.

The comments we have received (below) provide significant encouragement for the determination that Chief Constable Matt Jukes and I share.

Alun Michael, May 2019

Annex 1 : Comments from Partners and Survivors

"To be able to organise getting South Wales Police into a room with survivors and victims who have yet to be heard, and share their experience of using the police with regards to domestic abuse, was just fantastic. It was so powerful and insightful to both the police and the survivors/victims. The only way we will stamp out domestic abuse and violence is by working together and listening to the unmediated voices of the survivors/victims."

Campaigner and survivor Rachel Williams

"Since 2016 the South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner's Victims Fund has been key to resourcing the Welsh Women's Aid survivor engagement project SEEdS, as well as members of the Commissioner Team working in partnership with WWA to offer a range of opportunities for SEEdS participants to engage with key figures enabling them to get their voices heard on a number of crucial issues. We hope that we will be able to continue to work in partnership with the Commissioner's office to shape services, improve the outcomes for victims of abuse and sexual violence and ensure that interventions are effective and informed by those with direct experience."

Kay Lemon, Welsh Women's Aid

In March Welsh Women's Aid, in collaboration with the National Union of Journalists Training Cymru Wales and HTV Wales, organised a media workshop entitled "Reporting on Violence Against Women" which brought together journalists, programme makers and survivors of violence. Two SEEdS participants were supported to sit on a multi-disciplinary panel to answer questions posed by the media representatives present. A total of 32 people attended and Anna Wyn Roberts, Project Manager for the National Union of Journalists Training Cymru Wales, commented on the impact of the SEEdS participants' involvement:-

"I would say that there was a significant impact. It was an eye-opener for many of the journalists present to hear how the survivors viewed a certain kind of portrayal and language used in the media. e.g. the use of 'survivor' rather than 'victim'; their dislike of stock images of despair and hopelessness. Although the event didn't focus on these survivors' past experiences of violence they were mentioned in brief and even in brief it was shocking and sobering to hear it directly from the survivors - and hugely impactful. They spoke eloquently and directly and what came over very strongly was the sense that they are now living happy lives, giving hope to others going through a similar experience."

Journalist at the event

"The confidence and skills I have developed since joining SEEdS has enabled me to return to work after a period of uncertainty and lack of self-belief."

Survivor A October 2017

"I wanted you to know that personally SEEdS has helped me in my job. They feedback to me that I have grown in the last two years...Suddenly I have a voice here too. To the extent that they are

considering further training for me to specialise and make my hours permanent. I feel SEEdS has helped my confidence and my self-worth and my work now sees me as someone moving forward and worth investing in. I can't tell you the difference this has made to me"

Survivor B July 2018

"For the first time since I ran from my husband with my children 7 years ago I have felt a positive shift from fighting alone and having no voice alone to changing to driving together to change services and have a positive voice where we are listened too"

Survivor C October 2017

"Not only has this empowered seeds survivors but it has also given us rest from the intensity of surviving to comfortably and rationally see what needs to be addressed and how to do so. The work in itself seems to be a lifelong process and once the movement of accountability has started its needs to be supported as it gathers momentum. It's also needs to be monitored and evaluated in order to sustain itself."

Gauri Taylor-Nayar, Cardiff Methodist Community Choir

"Working with the PCC has enabled us to deliver services across Swansea and make a difference to the lives of people we support. Having support from and working in partnership and collaboration means we are able to deliver services that are more innovative and evidence based which has strengthened our response to VAWDASV issues. I am pleased to see that the PCC had continue to see VAWDASV as a priority and I look forward to working with the Team in the future."

Ali Morris, VAWDASV Coordinator, Swansea Council

Annex 2 : STATEMENT OF VALUES

Our learning from the collaborative Whole Systems Approach programme of work to date has been translated into the below values, designed to provide the foundation for policing and partnership working when seeking to develop and implement VAWDASV policies, programmes and practices. Each value is considered to be of equal value and importance, and have been endorsed by partners, including survivors:

1. Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence are fundamental violations of Human Rights and will not be tolerated in any community or culture.
2. Preventing violence and abuse is the responsibility of the whole community and requires a shared understanding that it must not be tolerated under any circumstance.
3. The safety and well-being of those affected by Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence will be the first priority of any response.
4. Perpetrators of Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence will be held accountable for their behaviour and acts that constitute a criminal offence will be dealt with accordingly.
5. Collaborative working across South Wales Police will be based on and reflect the following principles: Openness, constructive challenge, clear and effective decision making.

6. Victim, survivor and community voices will be at the heart of shaping the work that we do.
7. Victims and survivors will not be held responsible for the perpetrator's behaviour.
8. Children have unique vulnerabilities in situations of violence and abuse, and all efforts must be made to protect them from short-term and long-term harm.
9. We will seek to share learning and build an evidence base to inform decision making, and invest in evaluation of innovation and seek ways to develop a sustainable specialist provision for victims and survivors and their families.
10. We will work with partners to ensure that we recognise the links between other work streams and Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence.

ANNEX 3 : Joint Strategic Priorities for tackling Violence against Women and Girls, 2019-2024

This strategy sets out four key priority areas for action:

- **Enhanced Collaboration:** How we will work together to deliver a whole systems approach to preventing violence against women and girls in all its forms
- **Prevention and Early Intervention:** How partners will think about the long-term impact of decisions and work to keep people safe, healthy and well
- **Safeguarding:** How we will develop existing safeguarding arrangements seeking ways to protect all victims, wherever they may be.
- **Perpetrators:** How we will increase our focus on the behaviour of the perpetrator (in parallel with supporting survivors of abuse) to better hold perpetrators to account for the consequences of their actions, offering opportunities to change their behaviour through a range of interventions

The action plan below adopts the widely-recognised "Four P's" framework of Prepare, Prevent, Protect, and Pursue and aligns each of these against the priority areas below.

- Prepare:** ensuring the best possible governance, collaboration and commissioning of evidence-based models and innovation, understand available resource and effectively targeting it, involving those affected to ensure the best outcomes
- Prevent:** intervening at the earliest opportunity to prevent problems from occurring or getting worse
- Protect:** safeguarding victims and potential victims from harm and providing services
- Pursue:** placing an active focus on the behaviour of perpetrators and consequences of that behaviour (whilst maintaining a focus on victims)

The following sections focus on the priority areas for action, setting objectives under-pinned by examples of the activities to be undertaken in the short and medium term. This strategy will be supported by an annual action plan developed in collaboration with partners ensuring the most contemporary evidence and learning is driving our actions.