

POPULATION ASSESSMENT BRIEFING DOCUMENT: VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, DOMESTIC ABUSE AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

1. Introduction

Through the Understanding Our Communities project, public services are gaining a better understanding of the good things about communities, what matters to people and how their experiences and what they have to offer can help us to plan and provide services.

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act has been put in place to make sure that public services are doing all that they can to support people using care and support services to have their say and get involved in managing their own well-being. The Act means that public services will need to make sure that the right support is available for the people who need it at the right time and in the right way.

Under this Act, public services must carry out and publish a Population Assessment, which looks at:

- the needs for care and support, and the support needs of carers;
- the extent to which those needs are not being met;
- the range and level of services needed to meet those needs; and
- how services are delivered through the medium of Welsh.

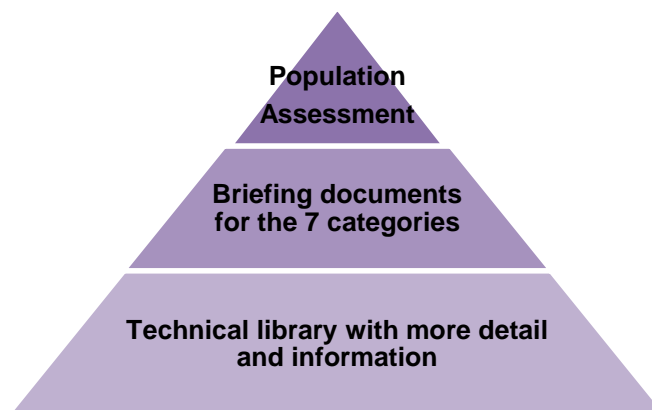
In Cwm Taf, we have been collecting lots of information for the Assessment, from the people making policy and commissioning decisions about services, the people delivering services and the people receiving services. In order to look at all of this information in an organised way, we used the seven 'themes' of the Act;

- Carers;
- Children and young people;
- Learning disability;
- Mental Health;
- Older people;
- Physical disability and sensory impairment; and
- Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

We then spent some time, talking with these people about the headlines that emerged under this theme and really thinking about how they affect people and what we as public services can do to meet the needs of people using our services, in the best possible way, now and in the future.

A summary of the headlines relating to Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence are contained in this document. The document shows how the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence headlines fit into the 'bigger picture' and the key messages which relate to *all* themes and what we currently do and/or could do to deal with these headlines.

The overall Population Assessment report contains the headline information across all themes.



The triangle shows the different parts of our work which taken together make up Cwm Taf's Assessment Report. Each level of this Assessment is supported by a more detailed level of data and information. The Assessment Report has been put together like this so that each reader can explore the information we have collected and analysed in as much or as little detail as they would like and can follow up any particular areas of interest. All of the information gathered throughout the project to inform the headlines in this briefing document is also available in an online library.

2. Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence

For the purposes of this chapter the following definitions apply:

- "*abuse*" means physical, sexual, psychological, emotional or financial abuse.

- “*domestic abuse*” means abuse where the victim of it is, or has, been associated with the abuser.
- “*sexual violence*” means sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, or threats of violence of a sexual nature.
- “*violence against women*” means:
 - violence, threats of violence or harassment arising directly or indirectly from values, beliefs or customs relating to gender or sexual orientation;
 - female genital mutilation;
 - forcing a person to enter into a religious or civil ceremony of marriage.

3. The current position in Cwm Taf

The main document setting the direction for these services is the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act.

The Councils and University Health Board will jointly develop a local strategy that delivers these national priorities. For example, the local strategy will need to set out how we develop and implement a whole education approach to tackling VAWDASV within schools and the National Training Framework for VAWDASV (which outlines the level of training professionals are required to achieve).

The three key themes are:

- Prevent – how we prevent VAWDASV from happening in the first place,
- Protect – how we protect victims and their families from more violence,
- Support – how we support victims and their families affected by violence.

In Cwm Taf we have a range of services to support victims and families. We have begun work with those responsible for violence. However, we need to do more work on preventing violence from happening in the first place.

4. Headlines

People need to be empowered to report incidents of violence and take up the services on offer.

Many victims don’t report the violence or abuse they are experiencing. Many people who do report incidents to the police or other agencies do not go on to take up the

offer of support. The services we do provide often predominantly help those at the greatest risk and less support is available for others.

This means that many victims of violence and abuse are unheard and receive little or no support. We need to ensure victims are informed of the services that are available. We need to ensure that victims can easily access the services we provide and understand that they don't have to report it to the Police. We need to provide services that meet the needs of all victims and not just those at the greatest risk.

To do this our staff need to make every contact count, whatever service they work in. If they feel that someone may be a victim of violence or abuse they must be confident enough to ask the question and act on the information they receive. Our services need to be redesigned to ensure that we can respond as early as possible before the situation gets worse. Our staff need to be trained to deliver this new approach.

Services need to meet the needs of all groups in our communities.

The information we have on people who use our services suggests that we are not meeting the needs of some groups in our communities. For example, there are no services specifically provided for men. Historically our services are designed to meet the needs of women rather than the more diverse communities of today. As services for domestic abuse have been extended, this has not been the case for victims of sexual violence.

This means that there are gaps in our services and some groups are not provided for. We need to ensure that our services reach everyone who needs them. To do this when we design our services we must ensure that the needs of men are recognised and responded to appropriately. We need to recognise that different groups within our communities have specific needs and our services need to respond to those needs accordingly.

Services need to work together to tackle the underlying problems that are leading to violence.

Many people who access our services are experiencing a range of problems such as substance misuse or poor mental health and may be known to other services. These may be causing or contributing to the violence or abuse they are experiencing and should not be tackled in isolation.

If we don't work together to tackle all of the underlying causes of violence and abuse, then it is unlikely that any improvement will last. Services need to be

designed around supporting people and families rather than around tackling individual issues. To do this we need to be more flexible in how our services are funded and organised so that a range of provision can be joined up.

Services need to protect and support children in families where violence and abuse is happening.

The information we have from our services tells us that children are present in most homes where we are supporting a victim of violence or abuse. Children who see or have experience of domestic abuse are more likely to experience problems in later life.

We need to provide more services to directly support children where violence or domestic abuse is happening in their family or to them directly. We need to work with schools to ensure that children know as early as possible what a healthy relationship is and how to report problems when they are experiencing violence or abuse.

People who use our services should tell us what they need and how we can do better.

The people who use our services do not routinely get involved in telling us what they want or how we should meet their needs. This means that services are designed by professionals who believe they know what people need without being informed by the people who will ultimately use the service.

We need to find a way to have a conversation with people that allows them to inform the way we are designing and delivering our services.

5. Links to other headlines and common themes

The things which affect people with Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence do not stand alone. The same things are likely to affect other people who use care and support services, but who are not victims of violence or abuse. Likewise, there are other headlines and common themes which will affect people who are victims of violence and abuse, but will not be related to that violence and abuse. Some of the common themes are:

- We need to be able to use information between services and across organisations in a more intelligent way to better inform how our services are designed and delivered; to enable us to identify people who are vulnerable and in need of support and to provide a joined up package of services.

- We need victims of violence and abuse to be more aware of the services that are available so they can access information, advice and assistance when they need it.
- Services and organisations need to work better together to provide a joined up approach to effective family support.
- Funding arrangements are often fragile and rely on external grants. There is a lot of unmet need. We need to organise and manage our resources in a different way across our services and organisations to provide sustainable services.

6. References

1. [The Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence \(Wales\) Act 2015](#)
2. [National Strategy on Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence](#)
3. A framework for delivery 2016 - 2021
4. [The Well-Being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#)
5. [The Housing \(Wales\) Act 2014](#)
6. [The Renting Homes \(Wales\) Act 2016](#)
7. UK Government, [Ending Violence against Women and Girls Strategy 2016-2020](#)
8. [The Serious Crime Act 2015](#).
9. The Council of Europe, [Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence](#) ('Istanbul Convention')
10. United Nations, [The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women \(CEDAW\)](#)
11. Council of Europe, [The European Convention on Human Rights](#)
12. Welsh Government, [A Whole Education Approach to Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence in Wales](#)
13. Welsh Government, [The National Training Framework on violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence](#)

14. Local Data sources

15. Cwm Taf VAWDASV Service Map