

**CARDIFF AND VALE OF GLAMORGAN VIOLENCE AGAINST  
WOMEN, DOMESTIC ABUSE AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE  
STRATEGY 2018-2023**

**SOCIAL CARE, HEALTH AND WELLBEING (COUNCILLOR  
SUSAN ELSMORE)**

**AGENDA ITEM: 9**

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**Reason for this Report**

1. To seek approval of the Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy 2018-2023 attached at **Appendix 1**.

**Background**

2. Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence is a fundamental violation of human rights, and both a cause and consequence of inequality. Tackling violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (VAWDASV) has far-reaching consequences for women, men, children, families, communities and society as a whole. Tackling these enduring social problems requires a distinct and proportionate approach to all victims and perpetrators in order that everyone can live fear free in safe, equal and violence-free communities.
3. The Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Act (Wales) 2015 laid out a requirement for local authorities and health boards to jointly prepare regional strategies to tackle this issue.
4. Welsh Government has also required a move to regional working on VAWDASV in terms of a national approach towards regional funding and commissioning. Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan have agreed to operate as a region for this purpose due to a shared health board footprint, natural travel to work patterns, service access migrations for residents across the area, and the pre-existence of a number of regional services and policies. This includes Cardiff Council acting as the regional 'banker' for managing Welsh Government funding for specialist services.
5. Cardiff Council has recently commissioned a comprehensive specialist service for female victims and their children to deliver a One Stop Shop for all contact and referrals, a range of accommodation-based support and community-based support services. Cardiff Council is also working

with the Vale of Glamorgan and Bridgend Councils to explore a similarly specialist service for male victims.

## **Issues**

6. The regional VAWDASV strategy recognises that anyone (women, men, children and young people) can experience and be affected by VAWDASV. It addresses violence and abuse directed towards women, men, girls and boys and violence and abuse perpetrated by men and women. It acknowledges that it can happen in any relationship regardless of sex, age, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, disability, religion or belief, income, geography or lifestyle. However it is acknowledged that women and girls are disproportionately affected by domestic abuse, rape and sexual violence, sexual exploitation (including through the sex industry), modern day slavery, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, child sexual exploitation and abuse, stalking and sexual harassment.
7. Within the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Act (Wales) 2015, there is a requirement for local authorities and their partners to improve the public sector response to this issue, including re-commissioning services to ensure they are fit for purpose. There is also a need to be smarter with available funding as no additional resources have been identified to support these new duties.
8. The regional strategy is required to have regard to the national Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy 2016-2021, specifically its objectives for:
  - i. Arrangements for the prevention of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.
  - ii. Arrangements for the protection of victims of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.
  - iii. Support for people affected by violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.
9. In recognising the national strategic direction, this regional strategy sets out an overarching vision and high level aims as follows:

## ***Vision***

10. People who live, work and visit Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan have the opportunity to live positive, independent lives without being affected by violence and abuse.

## ***Aims***

### Aim 1 - PREPARE

11. Improve strategic planning and commissioning of VAWDASV services through a more coordinated partnership approach across the region.

## Aim 2 – PURSUE

12. Address perpetrators of VAWDASV by improving intelligence sharing across services and the use of legal powers to disrupt and convict.

## Aim 3 – PREVENT

13. Pro-actively address negative attitudes and behaviours that have the potential to result in VAWDASV, recognising this as everyone's business.

## Aim 4 – PROTECT

14. Improve the multi-agency response and support to all victims and their children regardless of risk level and needs.

## Aim 5 – SUPPORT

15. Ensure that innovative, flexible and evidence-based services are available to meet the needs of victims experiencing any form of VAWDASV.

### ***“We Will” Commitments***

16. To support these aims a large number of actions have been identified as “We Will” commitments. A detailed action plan is being developed with partners to take forward all the commitments set out in the Strategy.
17. A communications plan is also under development to ensure that key messages to the public and professionals are timely and consistent across the region. All partners are committed to disseminating messages and targeted awareness raising campaigns via a variety of means to establish the greatest reach and awareness.
18. As a result of the new regional approach to this issue, the governance arrangements are being amended to reflect both the distinct local issues but also the wider responsibility for joint working where this is feasible. The issue of VAWDASV will continue to report into the Public Service Board via the Community Safety Partnership reporting arrangements that are also currently being revised.

### **Consultation & Equality Impact Assessment**

19. A number of key partners took part in the development of the strategy; a Regional Strategy Development Group was established, comprising senior officers from both Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Councils, Health, each of South Wales Police's Basic Command Units, Officers representing the South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner and both the Cardiff and Vale Domestic and Sexual Abuse Coordinators. The Group was responsible for developing the vision and aims and detailing the scope and structure of the document. The chapter on Pursue was felt to be an important factor in acknowledging that there would not be

any victims without perpetrators, and tackling this issue was just as important as protecting and supporting victims.

20. The Regional Strategy Development Group was fortunate to have two representatives from the Welsh Women's Aid's SEEdS project (Survivors Empowering and Educating Services) join them. Input from survivors in this way has been extremely beneficial and influential in shaping the direction of the strategy document and in helping to sharpen its contents.
21. The strategy was circulated widely for consultation on 19<sup>th</sup> March for 8 weeks. A 'strategy on a page' version was circulated alongside the full document so that staff within partner organisations could get a sense of what was being addressed. A further version of the 'strategy on a page' was produced for the public and circulated via Facebook and Twitter.
22. The strategy was presented for pre-scrutiny to the Council's Community and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee on 6<sup>th</sup> June, along with a list of consultees and comments received.
23. An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken; a copy of the EIA can be found at **Appendix 2**.

#### **Reason for Recommendations**

24. To comply with the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 regions are required to develop their strategies and arrange for them to be published by the end of May 2018.
25. The Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy 2018-2023 will ensure that the Council works collaboratively with other relevant partners and stakeholders to address VAWDASV.

#### **Financial Implications**

26. The regional strategy sets out a number of targets and actions which will need to be met from existing Council revenue and capital budgets as well as any approved grant allocations.

#### **Legal Implications**

27. The Welsh Government must prepare a national strategy for the purposes of the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015. Local authorities and health boards must in turn jointly prepare local strategies.
28. A local strategy must—
  - (a) specify objectives which the local authority and the Local Health Board consider will, if achieved, contribute to the pursuit of the purpose of this Act;

- (b) specify the periods of time within which the local authority and the Local Health Board propose to achieve the specified objectives;
  - (c) identify the actions the local authority and the Local Health Board propose to take to achieve the specified objectives.
29. Further detail about the requirements of the Act appears in the text of this Report.
30. The Strategy is intended to cover the years May 2018 – May 2023 and must be reviewed no later than May 2023.
31. The Council has to satisfy its public sector duties under the Equalities Act 2010 (including specific Welsh public sector duties). Pursuant to these legal duties Councils must, in making decisions, have due regard to the need to (1) eliminate unlawful discrimination, (2) advance equality of opportunity and (3) foster good relations on the basis of protected characteristics.
32. Protected characteristics are:
- i. Age
  - ii. Gender reassignment
  - iii. Sex
  - iv. Race – including ethnic or national origin, colour or nationality
  - v. Disability
  - vi. Pregnancy and maternity
  - vii. Marriage and civil partnership
  - viii. Sexual orientation
  - ix. Religion or belief – including lack of belief
33. The decision on whether to adopt the Strategy in accordance with the recommendation in this report has to be made in the context of the Council’s Equality Act public sector duties. An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken to ensure that the Council has properly understood and assessed the potential impacts of the proposal in terms of equality so that it can ensure that it is making proportionate and rational decisions having due regard to its public sector equality duty.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Cabinet is recommended to approve the Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy 2018-2023 as set out at Appendix 1.

<b>SENIOR RESPONSIBLE OFFICER</b>	<b>SARAH MCGILL</b> <b>Corporate Director People &amp; Communities</b>
	<b>7 June 2018</b>

*The following appendices are attached:*

Appendix 1: The Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy 2018-2023

Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment