
**REVISED CARDIFF AND VALE OF GLAMORGAN VIOLENCE AGAINST
WOMEN, DOMESTIC ABUSE AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE STRATEGY 2023-2028**

Purpose of Report

1. To provide the Committee with background information to enable pre-decision scrutiny of the draft, revised, **“Cardiff & Vale Of Glamorgan Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse And Sexual Violence Strategy (VAWDASV) 2023-2028”** prior to its consideration by the Cabinet at its meeting on the 18 May 2023.
2. A copy of the draft Cabinet Report is attached at **Appendix A**, which in turn contains:
 - Appendix 1** – the draft revised strategy for 2023-2028
 - Appendix 2** – the draft Regional Strategy Implementation Plan 2023-2028
 - Appendix 3** – Equalities Impact Assessment
 - Appendix 4** - Child Rights Impact Assessment
 - Appendix 5** – “City for CEDAW’ Commitments
 - Appendix 6** – A presentation providing an overview of the strategy – *this will be delivered by officers at the committee’s meeting.*

Scope of Scrutiny

3. The purpose of the VAWDASV Strategy, is to set the Cardiff & the Vale’s Council, and relevant partners, commitment and strategic priorities toward addressing and preventing Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

4. Committee Members are to note an initial, VAWDASV strategy covering the Cardiff & Vale region was agreed in 2018, to cover the period 2018-2023. The proposed strategy, attached to this Cover Report, is a revision to the initial strategy, to cover the period 2023-2028. For Members information, the initial strategy can be found [here](#).
5. During this scrutiny, Members will have the opportunity to:
 - Explore how the strategy was designed, and if, or how, it may deviate from its predecessor.
 - Investigate how the strategy will be put into practice.
 - Assess the governance arrangements for the strategy, including the self-evaluation process.
 - Explore the arrangements with partners for its delivery, in particular the Cardiff & Vale Regional Partnership Board, and external stakeholders.
 - Determine if the strategy provides assurance that there is clear arrangements in place to safeguard and protect children and adults.
6. Councillor Lynda Thorne (Cabinet Member – Housing & Communities) and officers from Adult Services will be available to answer Members' questions and facilitate consideration of the proposed strategy. A representative from Welsh Women's Aid has also been invited to the meeting to contribute to discussions, and facilitate Members consideration.
7. The meeting will begin with the Cabinet Member being offered the opportunity to make a brief opening statement. Officers will then deliver a brief presentation providing an overview of the strategy and its revision (**Appendix 6**). After which, the Welsh Women's Aid representative will be invited to introduce themselves and provide a brief overview of their view on the strategy. An informal question and answer session will then take place between all attendees.
8. Following Committee Members' review of the draft strategy, they will decide what comments, observations or recommendations they wish to pass on to the Cabinet for their consideration.

Background – Legislation & Policy

9. The Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 laid out a requirement for local authorities, and health boards, to jointly prepare regional strategies to tackle this issue.
10. In addition, Welsh Government also stipulated a move to regional working on VAWDASV, particularly around regional funding and commissioning. In response, Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan, agreed to operate as a region due to a shared health board footprint, service access migrations for residents across the area, and the pre-existence of a number of regional services and policies.
11. As mentioned in point 4 of this Cover Report, the initial [Cardiff & Vale VAWDASV strategy](#) was drawn in 2018. The strategy recognised that anyone (women, men, children and young people) can experience and be affected by VAWDASV. It addressed violence and abuse directed towards women, men, girls and boys and violence and abuse perpetrated by men and women. It acknowledged that it can happen in any relationship regardless of sex, age, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, disability, religion or belief, income, geography or lifestyle. However, it recognised 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.
12. Key objectives of the initial strategy was to:
 - Embed a move to regional working.
 - Agree that Cardiff acts as regional 'banker' for managing Welsh Government funding for specialist services.
 - Consider joint commissioning opportunities across the region.
 - Have regard to the national objectives, namely:
 - 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.

13. In May 2022, the Welsh Government published their revised Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy 2022-2026. This strategy can be found [here](#). The revised Welsh Government strategy outlines how organisations across Wales, are to jointly deliver a whole system approach to address this issue through a number of workstreams.

14. The Welsh Government workstreams are to involve policy makers commissioners and delivery agencies, and are categorised as follows:

- ❖ Gender-based Harassment in all Public Spaces
- ❖ Workplace Harassment
- ❖ Tackling Perpetration
- ❖ Sustainable Commissioning
- ❖ Children and Young People's Needs
- ❖ Older People's Needs

15. Committee may wish to explore how the implementation of the proposed strategy, (detailed in the Action Plan at **Appendix 2**), will feed into the Welsh Government's workstreams, and local governance arrangements such as the Cardiff & Vale Public Service Board.

16. For context purposes, Committee's attention is drawn to recent reports of the Welsh Women's Aid, which highlights need for Welsh Government to provide a more sustainable funding arrangements into the sector to help address ongoing capacity issues.

- [A Perfect Storm: The Funding Crisis Pushing the VAWDASV Sector to the Brink](#)
- [State of the Sector 2021: A Strategy for Sustainable Support](#)

Revised Cardiff & Vale Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy (VAWDASV) 2023-2028

17. The revised VAWDASV Strategy, attached at **Appendix 1**, continues with the visions aims and objectives set in the 2018 strategy. A summary of the vision and aims is as follows:

Vision

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.

5 high level Aims, which are the Chapter headings in the strategy.

Aim 1 - PREPARE

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

Aim 2 - PURSUE

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

Aim 3 - PREVENT

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

Aim 4 - PROTECT

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

Aim 5 - SUPPORT

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

18. Contained within the Strategy document at **Appendix 1**, under each of the Aims, are details on how they will be developed and implemented, presented as “**We Will” Commitments**. An Implementation Plan of how these “We Will” commitments will be achieved (by the council and partners) is attached at **Appendix 2**.
19. For ease of navigation, set out below is a summary of the headline information contained in the revised strategy at **Appendix 1**.

For further information, Members are requested to refer to the appropriate page numbers listed below. ***Please note that the page numbers listed below refer to the pages of the original document, and are the numbers marked at the bottom of Appendix 1.***

AIM 1 – PREPARE (pages 19-30 at Appendix 1)

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

Sub-headings/Details - Regional Overview; Needs Assessment; Equality & Diversity; Regional Working; Available Specialist Services; Governance; Regional Commissioning Approach; Expert Voices.

“We Will” Commitments

- Work with partners across the region to continually improve data collection and analysis.
- Ensure the lived experiences of survivors informs ongoing service development and delivery.
- Continue to learn from experts.
- Support the Welsh Government's Blueprint work to ensure that survivors of all ages receive the support that they need.
- Seek to understand the distinct needs and barriers to support that disabled survivor experience, in order to improve access.

- Continue to pilot the Cedar Project for male victims to inform formal procurement of a bespoke service.

AIM 2 – PURSUE (pages 32-37 at Appendix 1)

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

Sub-headings/Details - Criminal Justice Response; Legislative & Policy Changes; Community Programmes for Perpetrators of Domestic Abuse; Probation; Holding Perpetrators to Account.

“We Will” Commitments

- Improve our understanding of sexual violence to develop and enhance our response.
- Support partners to implement the new powers originating from legislative changes.
- Raise awareness of legislative changes to encourage appropriate reporting, signposting and support.
- Continue to place accountability for abuse on those who cause harm.
- Tackle perpetration by supporting the Welsh Government's relevant Blueprint workstreams.
- Explore accredited and evidence-based programmes that address harmful behaviours related to all forms of VAWDASV and support efforts to secure interventions.

AIM 3 – PREVENT (pages 39-46 at Appendix 1)

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

Sub-Headings/Details – Children & Young People; Colleges & Universities; Preventing Harmful Behaviours; Online abuse, Misogyny, Extremism, Working with Communities; Workforce; Access to Rights; Societal Change

“We Will” Commitments

- Encourage more schools to embrace the whole school approach to VAWDASV.
- Continue to work with universities and colleges to strengthen their response to students experiencing VAWDASV.
- Use every opportunity to challenge victim-blaming attitudes and raise awareness of support services.
- Continue to ensure the workforce is skilled to identify, refer and support victims and perpetrators.
- Support partners to continue to reapply for the White Ribbon status.

AIM 4 – PROTECT (pages 48-57 at Appendix 1)

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

Sub-Headings/ Details – Legislation; Multi-agency Response; Safeguarding; VAWDASV in the Workplace; Women's Safety in Public Spaces; Technology.

“We Will” Commitments

- Agree on and implement the key recommendations from review of Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs)
- Continue to ensure that children subject to safeguarding are given

specialist support to recover from the abuse and trauma they have suffered.

- Work with the Regional Safeguarding Board to implement recommendations from the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) report.
- Ensure there are more safe spaces throughout Cardiff, involving women and girls in their creation.
- Strengthen our safeguarding response to honour-based abuse and female genital mutilation by developing clear pathways of support.
- Assist partners to update workplace policies to include workplace sexual harassment.
- Work with the Welsh Government to implement actions arising from the workplace harassment Blueprint workstream.

AIM 5 – SUPPORT (pages 59-68 at Appendix 1)

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

Sub-Headings/ Details - Children & Young People; Minority Communities; Women with Multiple Disadvantage; Accommodation Based Support; Sexual Exploitation; Modern Slavery; Human Trafficking; Sexual Violence; Health Response; Our Services.

“We Will” Commitments

- Ensure children and young people continue to have access to age-appropriate specialist support.
- Gather data and experiences of BME communities to better understand their needs.
- Implement recommendations from the Complex Needs Task and Finish Group.
- Review all refuge accommodation to ensure that it continues to meet need.

Legal Implications

The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct legal implications. However, legal implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any legal implications arising from those recommendations. All decisions taken by or on behalf of the Council must (a) be within the legal powers of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers on behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. Scrutiny Procedure Rules; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

Financial Implications

The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct financial implications at this stage in relation to any of the work programme. However, financial implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any financial implications arising from those recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is recommended to:

- i. consider the information set out in the appendices to this report;
- ii. consider the information provided in the presentation to this meeting;
- iii. decide whether it wishes to relay any comments or observations to the Cabinet at its meeting on the 18 May 2023

DAVINA FIORE

Director of Governance and Legal Services

9 May 2023