

Scrutiny Report



Performance Scrutiny Committee - Partnerships

Part 1

Date: 4th December 2024

Subject Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) National Training Framework

Author Scrutiny Adviser

The following people have been invited to attend for this item:

Invitee:	Area / Role / Subject
Councillor Laura Lacey	Cabinet Member for Social Services
Tanya Evans	Strategic Director – Social Services
Natalie Poyner	Head of Children Services
Finn Madell	Head of Corporate Safeguarding
Amy Thomas	VAWDASV Regional Lead Advisor

Section A – Committee Guidance and Recommendations

1 Recommendations to the Committee

The Committee is asked to

1. Review the progress of the local authority in its implementation of the National Training Framework
2. Consider the role of the Committee and all Elected Members in the promotion and awareness raising of VAWDASV within Council corporate business and community work
3. Determine if it wishes to make any comment / recommendations to Cabinet regarding the report and how the Council is incorporating its VAWDASV requirements and obligations under the Act

2 Context

Background

- 2.1 Section 15 of the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 gives Welsh Ministers the power to issue statutory guidance to a relevant authority on how the authority should exercise its functions, with a view to contributing to the pursuit of the purpose of the Act.
- 2.2 The National Training Framework on violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence is statutory guidance that has been issued under section 15 of the Act, and section 60 of the Government of Wales Act, 2006 to ensure a consistent standard of care for those who experience violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence, and an unfailing standard of service throughout the public service to this client group. Under this guidance the Framework has two main functions
1. To provide consistent, proportionately disseminated training for relevant authorities to fundamentally improve the understanding of the general workforce and, therefore the response to those who experience violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence
 2. To align existing specialist training to further professionalise the specialist sector, to improve consistency of specialist subject training provision nationally and to set core requirements of specialist service provision
- 2.3 The statutory responsibilities under the VAWDASV (Wales) Act 2015 are discharged through the VAWDASV Commissioning Board and annual reporting against statutory guidance is made to relevant authority senior leaders as well as Welsh Government.
- 2.4 Newport City Council are the host for the regional VAWDASV team. Newport Council Officers are involved in all the working groups that report into the VAWDASV Board, as listed below:
- Gwent VAWDASV Commissioning Group
 - Gwent VAWDASV Strategic Delivery Group
 - Gwent VAWDASV Campaign, Communications and Engagement Group
 - Gwent VAWDASV Whole Education Approach Group
 - Gwent VAWDASV Tackling Perpetration Group
 - Gwent VAWDASV Training Subgroup
 - Gwent VAWDASV Multiple and Co-occurring needs Group
 - Gwent VAWDASV Protected Communities and Characteristics Group
 - Gwent Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) Planning Group
 - Gwent MARAC Steering Group
- 2.4 To strengthen the work of the region and beyond, Gwent VAWDASV is represented on Welsh Government strategic groups including: Whole System Approach Workstream, Children and Young Person's Workstream, Tackling Perpetration Workstream; Older Persons Workstream; National Training Framework Ask and Act Steering Group and the All Wales Honour Based Abuse Leadership Group. All learning from these workstreams are shared with Board and relevant subgroups and provides Gwent with the opportunity to raise any concerns with the appropriate members of Welsh Government.
- 2.5 As Scrutiny is not a decision-making forum, the Scrutiny Committee's review and subsequent comments / recommendations on this matter will be reported to the Cabinet for consideration and action.

- 2.6 As Elected Members, and Scrutiny Members, the Committee has an important role in considering the arrangements that the Council has in place as a relevant authority within the VAWDASV Act. To ensure the Council is carrying out all key requirements of the Act to ensure citizens affected by VAWDASV have services available to them on a local footprint.

3 Information Submitted to the Committee

- 3.1 The following information is attached for the Committees consideration:

Appendix A – Gwent National Training Framework Annual Report 23-24
Appendix B - Letter from the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip on the National Training Framework

- 3.2 The following have been provided to the Committee for additional / background reading to support the scrutiny of the Gwent National Training Framework Annual Report 23-24:

- Gwent VAWDASV Regional Strategy 2023-2027



VAWDASV Strategy
2023-2027 final.pdf

4. Suggested Areas of Focus

Role of the Committee

The role of the Committee in considering this report is to:

- Consider if they are satisfied with the level of engagement and uptake by all Newport council employees in meeting their 'Ask & Act' training requirements
- Consider if they are satisfied with the resources Newport has available to deliver training to Newport council employees to meet their 'Ask & Act' requirements
- Consider how the Regional Team can work closely with Members in their roles as Councillors and Members of Scrutiny Committees to plan and access suitable training pursuant to the statutory National Training Framework requirements
- Consider the level of partnership working to effectively improve outcomes for Newport citizens affected by, or impacted by VAWDASV

4.1 Suggested Lines of Enquiry

The below broad lines of enquiry are following reflection on the progress of the authority in meeting the requirements of the National Training Framework:

4.1.1 Meeting the requirements:

- Are all council departments and directorates adequately meeting the requirements of the Act in respect of the National Training Framework, to support collaboration for a single purpose, joint working and tackling issues together?
- Are there adequate arrangements on both a strategic and operational level to implement the requirements of the Act in respect of the National Training Framework?
- Is it evident that Newport CC is maximising its potential in respect of meeting its statutory requirements and obligations under the Act in relation to the National Training Framework?

4.1.2 Quality and Performance:

- How are the lived experience of survivors represented and embedded within the training arrangements, and how are their voices used to continuously improve the training syllabus?
- Is it evidence that a cross section of the Newport CC workforce is completing the required training under the National Training Framework?
- Have the arrangements that are in place led to improvement in frontline service for those impacted or affected by VAWDASV?

4.1.3 Practice:

- Are members confident that the local authority workforce is sufficiently trained to support citizens impacted and affected by VAWDASV?
- Is Newport CC promoting and using the specialist syllabus training offer to enhance and develop the workforce to further build resilience and develop skills to deliver high quality VAWDASV related services?
- Are appropriate systems in place across NCC to meet statutory requirements, including training targets at each level of the National Training Framework?

Section B – Supporting Information

5 Supporting Information

- 5.1 The Gwent VAWDASV Strategy has Six Strategic Priorities based on the Welsh Government National Strategy. Key priorities under the strategy are included within pages 24 to 31 of the strategy. The Gwent VAWDASV Commissioning Board, convened in November 2021 with the Director of Social Services of Newport Council as Chair, provides the governance and oversight, holding relevant authorities to account against the regional and national strategy and Act implementation.
- 5.2 Following the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent cost of living crisis, there is an increasing level of need and complexity of needs and risks for victims/survivors and families of those impacted and affected by VAWDASV. This increase in need has seen a pressure on service delivery with services stretched beyond capacity.

- 5.3 Newport Neighbourhood Care Network (NCN) saw the end of the IRISi project on 30 September 2024. This project enabled early identification and referral via GP practices of domestic abuse. The health board is currently supporting NCNs in looking at a replacement offer in lieu of IRIS but this leaves a huge gap for vulnerable citizens. The National Training Framework is going to be more important than ever for victims/survivors in the absence of the dedicated IRIS project.
- 5.4 Representatives from NCC and wider Gwent have been instrumental in piloting a new approach for Domestic Homicide and other practice reviews, with a senior leader from NCC leading the work with Welsh Government on a Single Unified Safeguarding Review Process (SUSR) The new SUSR process went live on 1 October 2024
- 5.5 1173 staff attended Group 1 VAWDASV (e-learning) during 2023-2024 which means NCC have trained 84% of their staff in Group 1 since publication of the National Training Framework in March 2016. On 31 March 2024, there were approximately 956 staff that had not completed Group 1 learning. Group 2 (Ask & Act) training continues to be delivered online and has seen 45 NCC staff complete the training. Group 3 (Ask & Act Champions) training has also been delivered during 2023-2024 with 4 NCC staff completing. There has been no Group 6 training (elected members and senior leaders) during 2023-2024.

6 Links to Council Policies and Priorities

- The Gwent VAWDASV Regional Strategy 2023-2027 has links to **Well-being Objective 3 – Quality Social Care and Community Services** of the Corporate Plan 2022-2026 Commitments.

Well-being Objective	1 – Economy, Education and Skills	2 – Newport’s Environment and Infrastructure	3 – Preventative and Equitable Community and Social Care	4 – An Inclusive, Fair and Sustainable Council
Aims:	Newport is a thriving and growing city that offers excellent education and aspires to provide opportunities for all.	A city that seeks to protect and enhance our environment whilst reducing our carbon footprint and preparing for a sustainable and digital future.	Newport is a supportive city where communities and care are at the heart of what we do.	Newport City Council is an inclusive organisation that places social value, fairness and sustainability at its core.

7 Wellbeing of Future Generation (Wales) Act

The Committee’s consideration of the delivery of the VAWDASV Strategy in Newport should consider how the Partnership is maximising its contribution to the five ways of working. The following are examples of the types of questions to consider:

5 Ways of Working	Types of Questions to consider:
Long-term The importance of balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet long-term needs.	What long term trends will impact upon the delivery of the VAWDASV Priorities? How will changes in long term needs impact upon the delivery of the VAWDASV Priorities in the future?

<p style="text-align: center;">Prevention</p> <p>Prevent problems occurring or getting worse.</p>	What issues are facing the Partnership's service users at the moment?
	How is the Partnership addressing these issues to prevent a future problem?
<p style="text-align: center;">Integration</p> <p>Considering how public bodies' wellbeing objectives may impact upon each of the well-being goals, on their other objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies.</p>	Are there any other organisations providing similar / complementary services?
	How does the Partnership's performance upon the delivery of the VAWDASV Priorities impact upon the services of other public bodies and their objectives?
<p style="text-align: center;">Collaboration</p> <p>Acting in collaboration with any other person (or different parts of the organisation itself).</p>	Who has the Partnership been working with to deliver the VAWDASV Priorities?
	How is the Partnership using knowledge / information / good practice of others to inform / influence delivery of the VAWDASV Priorities?
<p style="text-align: center;">Involvement</p> <p>The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves.</p>	How has the Partnership sought the views of those who are impacted by the delivery of the VAWDASV Priorities?
	How has the Partnership taken into account diverse communities in decision making?

8. Background Papers

Include all additional documents that are referenced in the report, and those that you have used as background reading. Hyperlink to online versions of them if available.

- [The Essentials - Wellbeing of Future Generation Act \(Wales\)](#)
- [Corporate Plan 2022-2027](#)
- [Agenda and Minutes of Performance Scrutiny Committee – Partnerships Wednesday 6th December 2023](#)

Report Completed: 4th December 2024