

Carmarthenshire Council

Outline Service Specification Framework for Mid and West Wales Domestic Abuse Services

August 2021

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1 Introduction

This Framework sets out the standards and (minimum) expectations required for the delivery of domestic abuse services across Mid and West Wales. Services will be commissioned to meet the three key purposes of the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015, namely prevention, protection and support. This specification framework is for domestic abuse services targeting all levels of need including:

- Accommodation based services – refuges, safe houses, dispersed units and supported accommodation.
- Community based support – floating support, outreach, drop in, counselling and mediation services.
- Services for children and young people – including specialist support, play therapy, mediation and counselling.
- Perpetrator programmes – for example ‘Respect’ accredited interventions that aim to change abusive behaviours and beliefs.
- Prevention and awareness raising activities - including contributing to communication campaigns, delivery of training to partner agency staff and healthy relationships education both in and out of school settings.

1.1 Commissioning model and principles

Local authorities, Health, Police and Police and Crime Commissioners across the region have made a commitment to work together to tackle domestic abuse and have set out their shared vision, objectives and priorities in the ‘Safer Lives Healthier Relationships’ Regional Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) Strategy 2018. The strategy document states that:

“We are committed to developing and implementing a ‘one public sector’ commissioning model rather than commissioning in silo; a consistent, collaborative and integrated approach to the commissioning of Violence against women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence services across the region; maximising resources available from a range of public service commissioners including Local Authorities, Health, Police and Police and Crime Commissioners

and determining who is best placed to lead the commissioning of different service elements as part of an integrated, collaborative commissioning model”

1.1.1 VAWDASV principles

The following principles contained in the strategy document were developed by stakeholders and survivors of VAWDASV and are intended to underpin commissioning and service development:

- An understanding of Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence as gendered and both a cause and consequence of women’s inequality. It should recognise the human right to live free from abuse and violence as the underlining principle to commission prevention, protection and support services.
- A commitment to provide all survivors, including children and young people, equal access to holistic, appropriately resourced, high quality, needs-led, strengths-based and trauma informed, gender responsive services across the region.
- A commitment to engage with and be informed by survivors, including children and young people, to inform needs analysis, service design and whole system responses.
- An understanding of the expertise of the specialist Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence sector to inform needs analysis, service design and whole system responses.
- A commitment to children’s rights and recognition of the specific needs of children and young people experiencing or witnessing Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence. Similarly, recognition of the rights of children and young people in preventing Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence happening to or affecting them in the future.
- A commitment to collaborative and equal partnership across appropriate agencies to ensure the effective investment in responses to Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence and enable integrated pathways of support that promote prevention and earlier intervention.
- Commissioning should be based on the principle that no survivor is turned away from accessing critical support services delivered by refuges, rape support centres and FGM and forced marriage units. This should include better access to integrated pathways of support to meet the needs of survivors experiencing multiple disadvantages.
- Commissioning should not be done in silos – it is also about mainstream provision and links with health, education, probation, police etc.
- Where good services are already being delivered, in accordance with recognised standards commissioners should consider how to best facilitate service-continuity, considering the resource implications of tendering so that a proportionate approach is taken to commissioning.
- Commissioning should ensure that essential services and the costs of management and overheads should be met through a full cost recovery model.

1.1.2 Supporting People Principles

Providers should also be mindful of the wider principles for Supporting People projects:

- Person-centred – creating projects that put the individual and their needs at the centre of their support and giving them a voice in and control over reaching the outcomes that matter to them;
- Co-production – encouraging individuals to become more involved in the design and delivery of services, acknowledging that they are the experts in their own lives;
- Independence – maximising people’s independence;
- Accessibility – ensuring services are available and accessible to people from all communities and tenure types irrespective of geographical location;
- Prevention and Early Intervention – focusing on the provision of preventative services at the earliest opportunity within the community to minimise escalation to more costly, intensive services;
- Value for Money - ensuring a good balance of quality, cost and effectiveness to make the best use of resources and achieve positive outcomes for local people and their communities;
- Well-being – supporting people to achieve the best possible outcome with regards to well-being.

1.2 Definition of domestic abuse

For the purposes of this document, the following definition has been adopted from the UK Government’s 2021 Act¹:

Behaviour of a person (“A”) towards another person (“B”) is “domestic abuse” if –

- A and B are each aged 16 or over and are personally connected to each other, and
- the behaviour is abusive.

Behaviour is “abusive” if it consists of any of the following –

- physical or sexual abuse;
- violent or threatening behaviour;
- controlling or coercive behaviour;
- economic abuse
- psychological, emotional or other abuse;

and it does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a course of conduct.

“Economic abuse” means any behaviour that has a substantial adverse effect on B’s ability to –

- acquire, use or maintain money or other property, or
- obtain goods or services.

¹ Domestic Abuse Act 2021 Part 1, Section 1. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/17/section/1/enacted>

For the purposes of this Act A's behaviour may be behaviour "towards" B despite the fact that it consists of conduct directed at another person (for example, B's child).

2 Equality and Accessibility

People who experience domestic abuse have a diverse range of backgrounds and needs. Stakeholders and survivors who were involved in developing the 'Safer Lives, Healthier Relationships' Strategy identified that some people were experiencing barriers to accessing services and/or that services did not meet their needs.

Providers must comply with their statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010 and ensure that people with protected characteristics are able to access services and have their needs met. This may require specialist provision. These groups include:

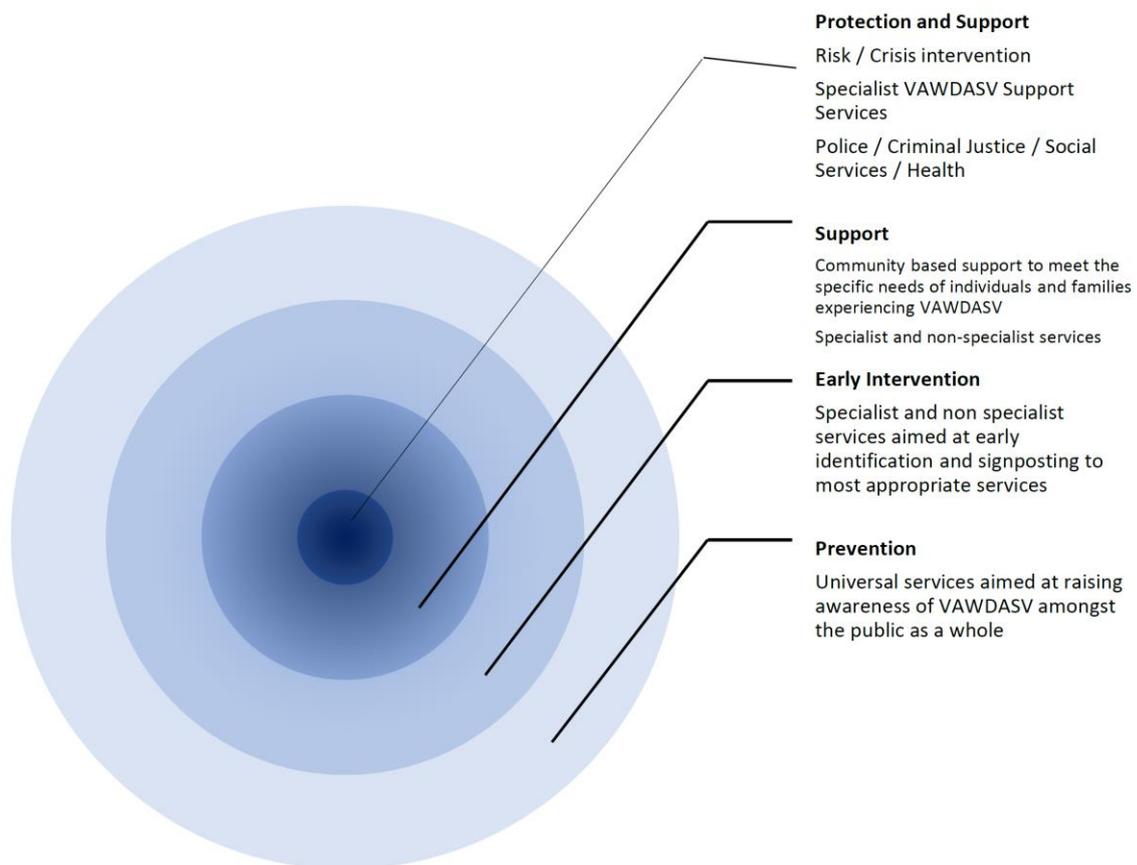
- Women
- Men
- Children and young people
- Older people
- Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities
- Migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women
- Disabled people
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Queer or Questioning (LGBTQ)

3 Service Standards

Providers are required to operate within the **National Shared Core Standards** which align Welsh Women's Aid National Quality Service Standards, Imkaan Accredited Quality Standards, Rape Crisis National Service Standards and Safelives Leading Lights Quality Assurance Accreditation.

4 Service Model

Commissioning intentions for domestic abuse services are that they are part of an integrated response to VAWDASV and will contribute across the spectrum of need, as shown in the **Sphere of Service Types** diagram, from the Regional Framework for Service Development and the Commissioning of VAWDASV Services in Mid and West Wales, 2019:



4.1 Protection and Support

Services will respond to individuals and families who are at risk and are in need of immediate and specialist response and protection. This will include the provision of both accommodation based services and community support (two inner rings in the diagram above).

4.1.1 Service description

The service will provide as a minimum:

- Accommodation including refuges, safe houses, dispersed units and supported accommodation (this will need to be specified locally).
- Advice, information, guidance, practical and emotional support.
- 24 hour telephone help-line (advice and support for victims and concerned others, not for reporting of incidents. Outgoing calls should be routed through a local telephone line and incoming calls should be on a low cost telephone number – to be agreed with the Commissioners).
- Assessment (need and risk).
- Care planned, tailored individual support.
- Key working / Support co-ordination.
- Intensive and tailored educational support.

- Group work programmes.
- One-to-one support, based on an assessment of needs.
- Peer support.
- Assess levels of risk, consider options and develop and implement coordinated safety plans in conjunction with other agencies / forums.
- Signposting to appropriate positive activities.
- Community-based after care.
- Range of techniques (to be defined by the provider).
- Appropriate managed handovers to other generic / specialist services.
- Floating support for victims, regardless of accommodation type.
- Safety planning for victims and their families.
- Support throughout civil and criminal justice processes, advocating and accompanying as appropriate.
- Support for victims providing evidence in court or via video links.
- Counselling and mediation services.
- Services for children and young people – including specialist support, play therapy, mediation and counselling.

4.1.2 Eligibility

Adults, children, young people at risk of serious harm or death as a result of domestic abuse (as either victims or witnesses).

Adults, children, young people whose lives are seriously disrupted by domestic abuse (as either victims or witnesses).

People living in Mid and West Wales and beyond e.g. for refuge provision.

Adults, children, young people who have experienced historical domestic abuse.

4.1.3 Referrals

Partner agencies including:

- Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)
- Individuals (self referrals)
- Statutory Services (Safeguarding etc)
- Police/ NPS
- Local Authority (Housing etc)
- Other Specialist Providers
- Health

4.1.4 Service access and availability

Services will operate

- Without charge for individuals.
- Flexibly (office hours, evenings, weekends, bank holidays), able to meet peak demand, localised and easily accessible and giving due consideration to the geography and particular needs of service users.
- Telephone and on call cover available 24 Hours a day and 365 days per year.
- Highly visible and be widely promoted (including those groups with protected characteristics).
- To meet the needs of the diverse communities of Mid and West Wales.
- For an agreed, time-limited basis, or until agreed objectives are reached.

4.2 Early intervention and prevention

Services will contribute to raising awareness of VAWDASV amongst the public as a whole and ensuring that should people need services at a point in the future they have knowledge about what they or those around them are experiencing and know where to go for help and support. Preventative work could include participating in national and local campaigns, leading community based initiatives, contributing to whole school approaches and workplace policies and training staff in other agencies to support them to do early intervention and signposting to appropriate services. (See two outer rings in the diagram on p5).

4.2.1 Service description

Strategic

- Specialist domestic abuse-related advice to inform the planning, design and delivery of the PSHE agenda/curriculum in educational establishments (primary, secondary and higher) and alternative education provisions (in line with the agreed Mid and West Wales approach).
- Specialist domestic abuse-related advice to assist the development/purchase of related education resources.
- Specialist domestic abuse-related advice to inform the design of related prevention campaigns or all cohorts.
- Specialist domestic abuse-related advice to inform the design and delivery of education and training for professionals, communities, businesses and workplaces.
- Specialist domestic abuse-related advice to inform the development, implementation and review of related policies (such as Hidden Harm and Domestic Abuse in the Workplace), as required.
- Input into relevant research projects and needs assessments (such as the joint Strategic Needs Assessment, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)).
- Specialist domestic abuse-related advice concerning the development/use of domestic abuse-related assessment, risk and referral tools (such as the domestic Abuse, Stalking and Honour Based Violence risk model (DASH), and Domestic Incident Abuse Logs (DIAL)).
- Advise Commissioners/planning bodies of gaps/related needs.

Operational

- Delivery of the domestic abuse-related element of the PSHE agenda / curriculum in educational establishments (primary, secondary and higher) and alternative education providers (in line with the agreed Mid and West Wales approach and with the agreement of the Commissioner).
- Delivery of domestic abuse-related campaigns and communications/promotions.
- Delivery of domestic abuse-related education and training for professionals (particularly within primary care), businesses, workplaces and communities, including support of implementation of the NTF.
- Participation in Domestic Homicide Reviews (as appropriate/by invitation).
- Participation in local Children's Serious Child Practice Reviews and Learning Reviews (as appropriate/by invitation).
- Participation in Safeguarding Adult Practice Reviews (as appropriate/by invitation).
- Participation in relevant community events (as appropriate).

4.2.2 Eligibility

- Whole population (including potential victims, victims, potential perpetrators, perpetrators, businesses, workplaces, communities, professionals).
- Education delivery in schools and other educational establishments to be agreed with the Commissioner.
- Training delivery to professionals, businesses, workplaces and communities to be agreed with the Commissioner.

4.2.3 Referrals

Requests for this service element will be accepted from:

- Partner Agencies.
- Partnership Boards (such as the Local Operational Groups, Regional Safeguarding Board and VAWDASV Board).
- Educational establishments.

4.2.4 Service access and availability

The input/advice/guidance will be provided flexibly to meet the demands of the required activity. For instance some training/campaigns may need to be delivered in the evenings and weekends to maximise attendance/audience.

4.3 Perpetrator Programmes

Perpetrator programmes have been identified as a gap in the Safer Lives, Healthier Relationships strategy. They are an integral part of tackling VAWDASV. The aim is to ensure we have a consistent offer of evidence based provision delivered across the region.

4.3.1 Service description

- Delivery to ensure and promote increased safety of victim, survivors and children.
- Advice, information, guidance.
- Intensive and tailored educational information.
- Group work / programmes (time limited, well defined).
- One to one support (if group work not deemed appropriate following assessment).
- Regular reviews of risk and programme suitability.
- Identifying and managing risk throughout delivery (in multi-agency environment as appropriate).
- Signposting to appropriate diversionary activities.
- Appropriate managed handovers to other generic/specialist services.
- Range of techniques to be defined by the provider.
- An assertive persistent non-collusive approach which challenges attitude and behaviour, enables them to take full responsibility for their actions and supports them to identify and work towards positive change.
- Sufficient hours of contact over a long enough period to provide a reasonable opportunity for behaviour change and to sustain a reduction in risk/future risk.

4.3.2 Eligibility

- Potential Perpetrators (those exhibiting signs of perpetrating abusive behaviour in their relationships, young people and adults).
- Perpetrators (those beginning to practice abusive behaviour in their relationships, young people and adults).
- Perpetrators subject to a Domestic Abuse Out of Court Disposal.
- People living in Mid and West Wales.

4.3.3 Referrals

Requests for this service element will be accepted from:

- Specialist VAWDASV Services
- Individuals (self referrals)
- Police/ NPS
- Health
- Statutory Services (Safeguarding etc)
- Local Authority Services (Housing etc)

4.3.4 Service access and availability

The service will operate:

- Without charge for those accessing services.
- Flexibly (including office hours, evenings, weekends, bank holidays), able to meet peak demand, localise and easily accessible and giving due consideration to the geography and particular needs to service users.
- Visibly and be widely promoted (including those groups with protected characteristics).
- In an appropriately tailored way, delivered to meet the needs of the diverse communities of Mid and West Wales.
- For an agreed, time-limited basis, or until service users agreed objectives are reached.

5 Outcomes and targets

Three Purposes of the VAWDASV Act	Strategic Objectives	Suggested Measures
<p>Prevention</p> <p>Raising Awareness around all areas of VAWDASV.</p> <p>Sustainable funding with a more coherent and clear approach.</p> <p>Need to focus on changing attitudes and removing the stigma.</p> <p>Perpetrator interventions and holding perpetrators to account.</p>	<p>Outcome 1: Increase awareness and challenge attitudes of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence across the Population.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of engagement with Regional and National Communication Campaigns • Delivery of VAWDASV training both internally and externally • Support Delivery of the NTF
	<p>Outcome 2: Increased awareness in children and young people of the importance of safe, equal and healthy relationships and that abusive behaviour is always wrong.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sessions delivered in Schools and education establishments • 1-1 Sessions with CYP • Group Sessions with CYP
	<p>Outcome 3: Increased focus on holding perpetrators to account and provide opportunities to change their behaviour based around victim safety.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of Perpetrator intervention/ referral to regional offer of intervention • Numbers of referrals • Numbers of completed referrals and attainment
	<p>Outcome 4: Make early intervention and prevention a priority.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment to Regional EIP initiatives (IRIS, CPA)

Three Purposes of the VAWDASV Act	Strategic Objectives	Suggested Measures
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management of waiting lists/ times (prioritisation and minimising time between referral and assessment) • Evidence of accessibility • Demographics of service users
<p>Protection</p> <p>Regional referral pathway.</p> <p>Sustainable funding for specialist services.</p> <p>Focus on Early intervention and Prevention.</p> <p>National Training Framework.</p> <p>Efficient and effective regional processes.</p>	<p>Outcome 5: Relevant professionals are trained to provide effective, timely and appropriate responses to victims and survivors.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment to NTF groups 4 and 5 within staff teams • Staff training plan to support Specialist Syllabus • Support of Regional NTF co-delivery
<p>Support</p> <p>Sufficiency of services or funding to meet the need and demand.</p> <p>Long term sustainable funding.</p> <p>Regional Commissioning Guidance and framework.</p> <p>Regional Pathway to support.</p> <p>Holistic, consistent, accessible service provision.</p>	<p>Outcome 6: Provide victims with equal access to holistic, appropriately resourced, high quality, needs led, strength based, gender responsive services across Wales.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adherence to contact specification and contract compliance • High quality- service user engagement activity • Needs led- Service user engagement • Engagement with Regional Survivor engagement framework • Quality Assurance practices and framework • Case studies – consistent regional template

6 Monitoring arrangements

Commissioners will need to give assurance that their monitoring framework aligns with and evidences the outcomes using a Results Based Accountability approach - How much did you do? How well did you do it? Is anyone better off?

Objective 1: Increase awareness and challenge attitudes of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence across the Population.

Objective 2: Increased awareness in children and young people of the importance of safe, equal and healthy relationships and that abusive behaviour is always wrong.

Objective 3: Increased focus on holding perpetrators to account and provide opportunities to change their behaviour based around victim safety.

Objective 4: Make early intervention and prevention a priority.

Objective 5: Relevant professionals are trained to provide effective, timely and appropriate responses to victims and survivors.

Objective 6: Provide victims with equal access to holistic, appropriately resourced, high quality, needs led, strength based, gender responsive services across Wales.

7 Whole System Approach

Commissioners and Providers are required to work with partners as part of a whole system approach. As part of this they will be required to attend the Mid and West Wales commissioner/provider Forum. Relevant partners include (add own local partners):

- Partnership Boards (such as the Local Operational Groups, Regional Safeguarding Board and VAWDASV Board)
- Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC)
- Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)
- Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC)
- Victim services
- Witness services
- Police/ NPS
- Local Authority (Children's Social Care / Early Help services, Adults Social Care, Housing etc)
- Youth Offending Services
- Probation Service
- Restorative Justice services
- HM Court Services
- Educational establishments.
- Health services including Adult and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
- Drug and Alcohol providers

- Other Specialist VAWDASV Providers
- National helplines and other services