



Cymorth i Ferched Cymru  
Welsh Women's Aid

# Creating Change that Lasts:

Welsh Women's Aid  
Manifesto Priorities for  
Welsh Political Parties 2021

Welsh Women's Aid is calling on the political parties of Wales to carry forward priorities on ending and preventing further Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) in Wales as they prepare their party manifestos for the 2021 National Assembly for Wales elections.

We ask that the parties consider our priority areas below, which cover key areas that impact survivors of VAWDASV and the specialist services which support them. Recognising that a true commitment to ending VAWDASV requires a coordinated response from across government, society and communities.

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## About Welsh Women's Aid

Welsh Women's Aid is the national charity in Wales working to end all forms of violence against women. We are a federation of specialist organisations (*Appendix A*) in Wales (working as part of a UK network of services) that provide lifesaving services to survivors of violence and abuse - women, men, children, families - and deliver a range of innovative preventative services in local communities.

We have been at the forefront of shaping coordinated community responses and practice in Wales since we were established in 1978. We do this by campaigning for change and providing advice, consultancy, support and training to deliver policy and service improvements for survivors, families and communities. We also deliver services including the Welsh Government funded Live Fear Free Helpline and a National Training Service partnership. We champion survivor engagement in all aspects of our work so that the many voices and lived experiences of those impacted by abuse are amplified and understood. Our success is founded on making sure the experiences and needs of survivors are central to all we do.

We also deliver the Wales National Quality Service Standards (NQSS), a national accreditation framework for domestic abuse specialist services in Wales (supported by the Welsh Government) as part of a UK suite of integrated accreditation systems and frameworks.

## Summary of key asks

There is an opportunity now for renewed cross-government and cross-party commitment to ending VAWDASV, which is in itself an 'epidemic'<sup>1</sup>. Our manifesto calls set out the action that is needed.



Commitment to ensuring a cross government National VAWDASV Strategy



Working with an intersectional approach, recognising the needs of all survivors



Secure and sustainable funding for the whole VAWDASV specialist sector across Wales



Well informed, collaborative and effective commissioning



Sustainable funding for children and young people services and support



Survivor voices as key partners in the development and delivery of policy and practice



Prioritise prevention, early intervention and education



Commitment to support women exploited by the sex industry



Commitment to supporting survivors with No Recourse to Public Funds



Investment in perpetrator interventions which have robust quality assurance and address all perpetrators of VAWDASV



Supporting the role of Health in supporting survivors and monitoring duties under the Act



Ensuring there is safe, affordable, suitable housing and support for all survivors



Recognition that sexual harassment harms women across Wales and support for campaigns to end it

<sup>1</sup> <https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/331699/WHO-SRH-20.04-eng.pdf?ua=1>

## VAWDASV and COVID-19

The whole world has been changed by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. For survivors of VAWDASV, threats to safety, access to specialist support and connection to personal support networks have been dramatically altered. For specialist services, existing concerns around supporting staff, access to funding, future planning and sustainability have been magnified. For the nation, a change in narrative in how we view our homes and communities as a places of safety and support. Whilst COVID-19 shone a light on domestic abuse, the continuation of sexual violence, sexual exploitation, forced marriage and FGM often remains unseen.

Pre COVID-19 1 in 3 women were experiencing some form of VAWDASV across their lifetime<sup>2</sup>, this is not a 'normal' we wish to return to. The pandemic created new challenges for the specialist sector and new dangers for survivors, but it also shone a light on existing gaps and failures in the system. There is an opportunity now for renewed cross-government and cross-party commitment to ending the shadow epidemic<sup>3</sup> of Violence Against Women in. Our manifesto calls set out the action that is needed.

### **Five years on: What we want from the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015**

It has been five years since this landmark Act was introduced in Wales. With the introduction of the Domestic Abuse Bill in Westminster, we need to ensure Wales remains ambitious in its commitment to end all forms of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence. *We call on parties to commit to:*

- ***A renewed commitment to achieving the purpose of the Act.*** This legislation was intended to enable cross-government commitment to end VAWDASV and end the postcode lottery survivors face when seeking safety and specialist support. We urge all parties to make this a key priority until this goal is achieved.
- ***A national strategy and delivery plan which includes cross-government action, developed, implemented, and monitored in partnership with survivors and the sector.*** The national strategy ends in 2021. The new strategy must be ambitious, and include measurable actions cross-government, local authorities and health boards. There must be a robust governance structure in place nationally and locally to inform development, delivery and monitoring of the strategies implementation.
- ***Roll out 'Ask and Act' training to wider bodies.*** We welcome the commitments laid out in the Act, particularly the expectation on public services to 'Ask and Act' on any concerns about violence and abuse. We call for this mandatory training to remain, as well as considering how this can be rolled out to wider bodies. All employers would benefit from the Trusted Professional training<sup>4</sup> which supports people to recognise the signs of VAWDASV, respond to disclosures and refer to specialist support services.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2014/violence-against-women-eu-wide-survey-main-results-report>

<sup>3</sup> <https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/331699/WHO-SRH-20.04-eng.pdf?ua=1>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.welshwomensaid.org.uk/training/courses/>



### **Commitment to implementing a cross government National VAWDASV Strategy**

As outlined above, the national strategy for VAWDASV ends in 2021. The learning from the first strategy must now be turned into action. The strategy should be ambitious and accompanied by a monitorable delivery plan. For the strategy to be effective, survivors and the specialist sector must be key delivery partners. We

*call on all parties to commit to:*

- ***Developing and implementing the new national strategy across all government departments*** including setting out how the government will deliver the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women (the Istanbul Convention) state obligations that are relevant to its competencies.
- ***The development and implementation of a new national framework with survivors and the specialist sector as key delivery partners*** to ensure accountable and informed monitoring of the national strategy delivery.



### **Working with an intersectional approach, recognising the needs of all survivors**

All work focused on preventing and supporting the response to VAWDASV must have intersectionality at its core. We ask the parties to consider how services for Black and minoritised women, LGBT+, older women, women with disabilities or insecure immigration will be supported to access services and we ask that they prioritise ensuring these services are fully funded to run effectively.

Survivors with mental health needs, substance use, living with disabilities, from Black or minoritised communities or needing to access sexual health services are often not part of wider VAWDASV conversation. There needs to be greater focus on ensuring that these survivors are able to access services, and that services are resourced to meet the diversity of need. *We call on all parties to commit to:*

- ***Commissioning ‘by and for’ Black and minoritised women specialist support services.*** As highlighted in our calls for sustainable funding, specialist services for minoritised women must exist to protect specialist knowledge and support. A commitment to ensuring ‘by and for’ services are commissioned across Wales is essential.
- ***Acknowledging the link between experiencing VAWDASV and substance use, criminal offences amongst women.*** This will help better equip statutory and third sector services to deliver a need led, gendered approach to supporting women’s recovery.
- ***Equipping all statutory services with the knowledge of disability services and signpost to specialist VAWDASV services that can support disabled survivors.*** Disabled people experience disproportionately higher rates of abuse than non-disabled people and the

Violence experienced is also gendered, with disabled women more likely to experience violence and abuse, over longer periods of time.<sup>5</sup>

- **Raising public awareness of disabled women's experiences of VAWDASV.** Publicity campaigns aimed at tackling domestic abuse to include disabled people and diversity across different forms of impairments in different communities, recognising that disabled people are not a homogenous group.
- **Commissioning inclusionary services for LGBT survivors.** In its review of the implementation of the VAWDASV (Wales) Act 2015 the Wales Audit office found there is still insufficient provision of VAWDASV services for members of the LGBT community<sup>6</sup> across Wales. Commissioning of these services is essential to ensuring all survivors have the access to safety and support they deserve.



### Secure and sustainable funding and the network of specialist services across Wales

Despite a commitment to sustainable funding model for the specialist violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence sector, consecutive Welsh Government budgets have so far only delivered further short-term and siloed funding models. Our membership continues to highlight their on-going concerns about short term funding cycles and how these impact on planning and staff retention. The repercussions of which have been throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. *We call on parties to commit to:*

- **Developing and implementing a sustainable funding model for specialist VAWDASV services.** COVID-19 has demonstrated that now more than ever services need to be in receipt of secure and sustainable funding to be able to both react and plan for changing needs and environment. As the specialist support sector navigate the fall out and work to mitigate further damage, secure funding will ensure access to refuge, sexual violence services for recent and historic survivors, trauma informed practice, therapeutic support, prevention work, perpetrator interventions and support in the community can continue. Sustainable funding means sustainability of specialist VAWDASV support and shows a commitment to ending VAWDASV not just managing a crisis response.
- **Proportionate funding for different aspects of VAWDASV.** Each form of violence against women comes with its' own nuances and barriers to recovery. We call for a sustainable funding model which recognises these nuances and commits to ensuring each are fully resourced to support all survivors, including specific support for sexual violence, forced marriage, so-called honour based abuse, FGM and sexual exploitation.
- **Supporting front-line staff by funding clinical supervision.** We advocate that specialist services embed a psychologically/ trauma informed approach<sup>7</sup> into their working practices to support wellbeing. A key element of this is staff training and support, as front-line staff in specialist services also experience trauma through the work they do. Our call is that resources are available to offer support through clinical supervision and therapeutic support to ensure staff can continue supporting survivors.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.welshwomensaid.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/WWA-and-Disability-Wales-2019-report-Final-ENG.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.audit.wales/system/files/publications/VAWDASV\\_eng.pdf](https://www.audit.wales/system/files/publications/VAWDASV_eng.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.cymorthcymru.org.uk/en/resources/psychologically-informed-environments/>

- **Ringfence funding for specialist services which support minoritised women.** Services which support minoritised women have developed specialist knowledge which much be protected. We call for ringfencing grants to fund these services, to show commitment to maintaining this provision. This should recognise and seek to address the structural barriers and discrimination experienced by women and girls due to their race, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, gender identity, sex, age, class, income, and other characteristics.



### Well informed, collaborative and effective commissioning

Good commissioning of services is vital for a specialist sector to thrive. Commissioners therefore must be informed about VAWDASV and the importance of ‘by and for’ services which are gender responsive and specialist.

As well as recognising that both encouraging competition with larger, ‘generic’ providers is problematic for small, local, specialists who are unable to compete and problematic for the survivors that access the services, who need that expert support. *We call on all parties to commit to:*

- **Working with commissioners of VAWDASV services at a regional, local and national level on implementing the statutory guidance, compliance with legislation and delivering sustainable funding.** All parties should priorities facilitating a cohesive partnership between governments, commissioners, survivors, local authorities and specialist services to ensure the calls in this document can be effectively delivered.
- **Encouraging a wide range of commissioning methods.** There are several good examples of approaches to regional and local commissioning, which explore a range of ways of working which most effectively meet need and result in a better experience for survivors. The exploration of commissioning methods such a pooled budgets considered and regional working should be widely encouraged, in partnership with survivors and the specialist VAWDASV sector.
- **Providing support with specialist knowledge.** Commissioners must recognise the importance of services specifically for survivors specialist support needs. Organisations that deliver support at a regional or national level by and for Black and minoritised communities must be supported to continue delivering to meet the needs of the diversity of survivors in every region/locality across Wales. There is a risk that commissioners fail to identify the needs and experiences of survivors from Black and minority ethnic communities in different regions. We support calls from specialist organisations, including Imkaan, for all agencies to take a ‘margins to the centre approach’.<sup>8</sup>
- **Developing and rolling out training on VAWDASV commissioning in partnership with the specialist sector.** Commissioners should have training on VAWDASV commissioning guidance, as set out in the ‘Tackling Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence – A Collaborative Commissioning Toolkit For Services in Wales’<sup>9</sup>. Ensuring commissioners

<sup>8</sup> Imkaan, From the Margin to the Centre: Addressing Violence Against Women and Girls Alternative Bill October 2018 [https://829ef90d-0745-49b2-b404-cbea85f15fda.filesusr.com/ugd/2f475d\\_91a5eb3394374f24892ca1e1ebfeca2e.pdf](https://829ef90d-0745-49b2-b404-cbea85f15fda.filesusr.com/ugd/2f475d_91a5eb3394374f24892ca1e1ebfeca2e.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> [https://www.lloydsbankfoundation.org.uk/VAWDASV%20Toolkit\\_Wales\\_web.pdf](https://www.lloydsbankfoundation.org.uk/VAWDASV%20Toolkit_Wales_web.pdf)

understand the different needs and services for survivors of sexual violence, FGM, forced marriage, sexual exploitation as well as domestic abuse.

- **Commissioning which reflects Wales's geographical reality.** Wales is made up of a range of environments, from sprawling countryside to densely populated cities. The support commissioned needs to reflect this reality to prevent survivors experiencing a 'postcode lottery' of provision. For example, a specialist worker supporting several survivors in a day in an city setting would not be able to support the same number of survivors a day in a rural setting due to travel time. This is just one small example of numerous nuances which need to be considered when commissioning services.



### **Sustainable funding for children and young people specialist services and support**

Dedicated funding for specialist children and young people workers across Wales is closely linked to effective prevention work. Our members continue to report a lack of consistency in provision of workers which has resulted in significant gaps in service.<sup>10</sup> *We call on all parties to commit to:*

- **Championing models which support children and young people as primary survivors of VAWDASV.** In order to deal with the trauma of domestic abuse, sexual violence or FGM, children need specialist workers to support them through the process rather than being secondary to support offered to adult survivors or on long waiting lists.
- **Sustainable funding for Children and Young People services and dedicated Children and Young People workers.** We ask the parties to commit to prioritising children's workers, and that these dedicated workers be adequately funded to carry out their work effectively. These workers at present are stretched across regions but are crucial to individually supporting children and young people, and are key in supporting pivotal change across Wales in tackling both VAWDASV and the wider ACEs and trauma/ psychologically agenda.



### **Survivor Voices as key partners in the development and delivery of policy and practice**

The voice of the survivor must be central to any and all work to end violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence. Survivors are experts in their own experience and this expertise must be *key* in shaping policy and improving practice. *We call on parties to commit to:*

- **Ensuring survivor engagement is paramount in any work they may do in government relating to violence against women.** It should also be recognised that the specialist sector have the trust of survivors to support them in this process, including the time needed to provide training to contribute on all levels and onward trauma informed support. Funding specialist services to continue supporting survivor engagement will ensure a range of experience, supports the safety and wellbeing of survivors, and continues the improvement

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.welshwomensaid.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Children-and-Young-People-participation-report-FINAL.pdf>

and development of services and practice. Survivor engagement must be intersectional and reflect the diversity of women and girls in Wales and their differing experiences of violence and abuse.



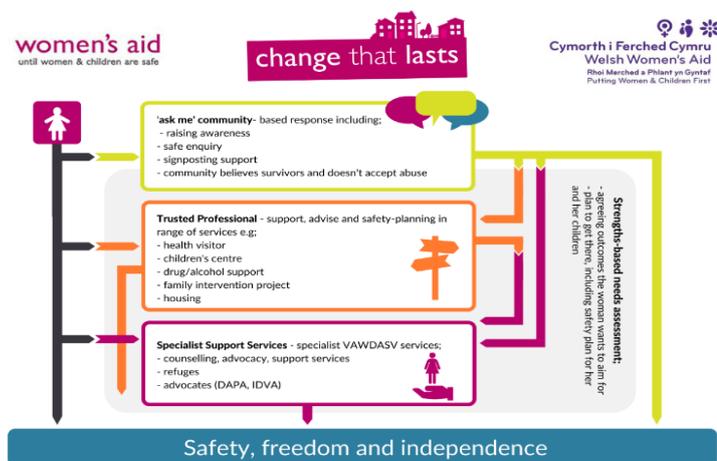
### Prioritise prevention, early intervention and education

Prevention is ultimately the key to eradicating all forms of VAWDASV. Under the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 and the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 there are requirements to provide preventative services, with a clear prevention plan laid out in the

National Strategy on Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence – 2016-2021. We call on all parties to commit to:

- **Including a strong prevention plan in the new National Strategy on VAWDASV.** Build on the work of the former National Strategy, by setting out a clear prevention plan through education, empowerment and engagement that aims to challenge attitudes and behaviours across society at the forefront of the plan.
- **Embedding prevention and early intervention models across Welsh society.** Make prevention and early intervention a priority, challenge the harmful gendered social and cultural norms, roles and attitudes which lead to violence against women and promote respectful, safe, equal relationships.
- **Supporting and expanding the Change That Lasts model and wider community responses to VAWDASV.**

Change That Lasts works on the model of a needs led, strength-based approach to supporting survivors and challenging perpetrators. Ask Me, Trusted Professionals training and specialist services work in tandem to support survivors recovery, promote partnership working between agencies and facilitate understanding, prevention and early intervention within communities.



### Commitment to support women exploited by the sex industry

Sexual exploitation happens because women and girls are not equal within our society, for example; women are more likely to be poor or impacted by austerity measures including welfare reforms. Sexual exploitation disproportionately victimises Black and minoritised women; it commodifies women and girls and

supports a culture that objectifies women. United Nations Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) who in 2019 recommended that women are provided with access to housing, education, employment and social security so that they do not have to resort to 'sex for rent'.<sup>11</sup> It also calls on states in the UK to reduce demand for commercial sex targeted at men and boys, clear the criminal records of women who have been convicted for offences related to prostitution, and ensure the availability of specialist services that are adequately funded, inclusive, and accessible to assist women and girls in exiting prostitution. *We call on all parties to commit to:*

- ***Developing a model which supports women exploited by the sex industry facing multiple disadvantage.*** Women exploited by the sex industry need access to safe, suitable accommodation which takes into account additional support they may need. For example, specialist services report that accommodation providers will not accept a woman unless she is on a script (for drug dependency) creating additional barriers to safe and appropriate accommodation. Specialist accommodation with a health needs and substance component is needed to facilitate better joined up working across the support sector.
- ***Decriminalising women being exploited by the sex industry.*** We support a legislative framework that decriminalises those who sell sex and targets buyers, pimps and those who exploit in the context of prostitution with more robust prosecutions. Advancing these priorities will require commitment for Welsh parties to campaign on a Westminster level.
- ***Embedding exploitation in the VAWDASV strategies, including appropriately resourcing specialist support.*** Women exploited through the sex industry must be seen as a priority within the VAWDASV framework and offered equal protection to other survivors of VAWDASV. Include women involved in prostitution in the national survivor engagement framework or develop an engagement mechanism that ensures that the voices of those being exploited are central in the development of policy and strategies.



### **Commitment to supporting survivors with no recourse to public funds**

As part of our campaign for secure and sustainable funding for the specialist violence against women sector, we want to ensure this is accessible to all survivors across Wales, including those with no recourse to public funds and an insecure immigration status. We therefore ask that the parties commit to a national fund to be established to meet the needs of survivors (or for services to access) who have no recourse to public funds, to have equal access to protection, safety and support. *We call on all parties to commit to:*

- ***Campaigning at a Westminster level to abolish no recourse to public funds rule for women subjected to VAWDASV*** and ensure equal support for survivors with insecure immigration status in line with the ratification of the Istanbul Convention.<sup>12</sup>
- ***Developing a fund that can be used to support survivors with No Recourse to Public Funds and insecure immigration status.*** Wales is a nation of sanctuary and all women must have equal access to protection, safety and support. This needs to include safe and secure

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<sup>11</sup> UN CEDAW Committee (2019), Concluding observations on the eight periodic report of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

<sup>12</sup> Imkaan, From the Margin to the Centre: Addressing Violence Against Women and Girls Alternative Bill October 2018 [https://829ef90d-0745-49b2-b404-cbea85f15fda.filesusr.com/ugd/2f475d\\_91a5eb3394374f24892ca1e1ebf6ea2e.pdf](https://829ef90d-0745-49b2-b404-cbea85f15fda.filesusr.com/ugd/2f475d_91a5eb3394374f24892ca1e1ebf6ea2e.pdf)

accommodation, provision in refuge with local authorities working with specialist services to enable support for survivors with NRPF.



### **Investment in perpetrator interventions which have robust quality assurance and address all perpetrators of VAWDASV**

More must be done to tackle the perpetrators of VAWDASV. At Welsh Women's Aid we advocate for models which aim to reduce a perpetrator's space for action, both in the early stages of abuse and further down their perpetrating journey. Welsh Women's Aid would strongly advocate that any perpetrator programme must be awarded with the recognised Respect UK accreditation, to ensure survivor support and safety is central to the programme. This must inform the commissioning of perpetrator programmes which includes the resourcing of integrated survivor responses. *We call on all parties to commit to:*

- **Invest in Change That Lasts.** The Change That Lasts model includes work with perpetrators, this arm of the model is designed to reach perpetrators at the earliest opportunity, to offer interventions, to address their behaviour and attitudes. Furthermore, Change That Lasts supports communities to challenge attitudes which lead to a tolerance of abuse.
- **Invest in programmes which address all risk levels of perpetrator across all forms of VAWDASV.** Programmes must be of high quality, delivered alongside survivor safety work and be Respect accredited.<sup>13</sup> Like all services, these must be accessible across Wales in rural as well as urban locations.



### **Supporting the role of Health in supporting survivors and monitoring duties under the Act**

The World Health Organisation sites violence against women as both a major public health crisis and a violation of women's human rights.<sup>14</sup> Health is a crucial part of the response to VAWDASV; whether it's primary interaction with a GP, a pregnant woman presenting to her midwife, a survivor of FGM identified during pregnancy or childbirth, or a perpetrator concerned about their behaviour. Health services can pick up on nuanced signs of abuse. They are also likely to be working with both a survivor and perpetrator. Therefore, health professionals are well placed to pick up on 'warning signs' at an earlier stage and before escalation occurs. There is much crossover between the work of specialist VAWDASV services and wider health and mental health services, providing therapeutic counselling for adult and child survivors, with Rape Crisis and SARC services particularly having a strong health focus. Alignment with health and mental health is vital. *We call on all parties to commit to:*

- **Ensuring VAWDASV specialist services are recognised both professionally and financial for their work in delivering healthcare and improving public health.** Currently specialist services in Wales do not benefit from health service/health commissioner investment nationally or regionally, despite their core business having a positive impact on health and well-being of adults and children who face adverse experiences in childhood or as adults. While there are examples of good practice in areas of Wales, for example the Identification and Referral to

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.respect.uk.net/pages/20-accreditation>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.who.int/en/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-women>

Improve Safety (IRIS) project launch in South Wales by the South Wales PCC and Cardiff and the Vale University Health board, as well as awareness raising campaigns, community projects, education interventions and work with children and young people to mitigate the impact of trauma. This is not consistent across Wales.

- **Monitor the duties of health services under the VAWDSASV (Wales) Act 2015.** We ask parties to consider how to achieve a commitment from across health boards and how this can work towards better early identification within health settings.



### Ensuring there is safe, affordable, suitable housing and support for all survivors

Housing must be central to a coordinated community response to violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence in all its forms. Specialist services provide safety and support to survivors in times of crisis and are crucial to preventing homelessness. Specialist services also support survivors in gaining independence and sustaining tenancies. Like health, housing providers have opportunities to spot signs of abuse before someone comes into contact with specialist providers and again, like health professionals, they work with both a survivor and perpetrator. We call on all parties to commit to:

- **Ensuring specialist services are recognised both professionally and financially for their work in preventing and ending homelessness, and supporting survivors to sustain tenancies.**
- **Ensuring all housing providers are supported to recognise VAWDASV and refer to specialist support.** Housing providers across local authority housing options teams, social housing, hostel and homeless day centres/outreach services and the private rented sector must be supported to respond appropriately to survivors, ensuring survivors are either supported to stay in their own home, where it is safe to do so and what the survivor wants or to move into other safe, appropriate accommodation.
- **Increasing the Housing Support Grant.** The 2019 Housing Matters campaign called for an increase in the Housing Support Grant to end homelessness in Wales.<sup>15</sup> Part of this increase would ensure no survivor is turned away and that services are able to provide change that lasts through a holistic model of support from identification to recovery including supporting children and young people alongside the non-abusive parent.
- **Developing affordable, safe, appropriate housing options for all survivors.** Whether it be safety from exploitation, risk of so-called honour-based violence, or moving on from refuge that supports and enables recovery, appropriate housing options will be crucial to providing safety and support for survivors.



### Recognition that sexual harassment harms women across Wales and support for campaigns to end it

Sexual harassment in the workplace impacts over half of all women in the UK.<sup>16</sup> This abuse intersects with other forms of discrimination and LGBT+, BME

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.welshwomensaid.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Housing-Matters-report-2019-Eng.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> [https://www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/2019-09/SHConsultation\\_TUCRepsonse.pdf](https://www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/2019-09/SHConsultation_TUCRepsonse.pdf)

and disabled women are disproportionately more likely to experience sexual harassment at work.

The gradual return to working places and communal working practices post-COVID offers us the opportunity to make fundamental changes that can put an end to sexual harassment in the workplace in Wales once and for all. *We are calling on all parties to:*

- ***Acknowledge the serious and lasting impact of sexual harassment.*** Welsh parties must recognise that unless the safety of women at work is prioritised, sexual harassment will continue to be a threat to women and to equal opportunities for women in Wales.
- ***Commit to collecting annual data.*** Data on the prevalence of workplace sexual harassment in Wales and the impact of sexual harassment on those who experience it must be collected so that the scale of the issue in Wales can be properly examined.
- ***Commit to campaigning at a Westminster level for safety at work.*** Welsh Parties should urge UK Government to place a statutory duty on employers to take steps to prevent sexual harassment or victimisation in the workplace.

## Appendix A

### What are VAWDASV specialist services?

The accepted definition of VAWDASV specialist services in Wales is:

Services that are delivered independently from the state (i.e. third sector) and whose core business it is to support survivors and/or perpetrators and/or children and young people impacted by any form of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (i.e. rape and sexual assault including child sexual abuse, domestic abuse, sexual harassment, forced marriage, FGM, sexual exploitation including through the sex industry, trafficking and modern day slavery and so-called 'honour' based violence);

Whose delivery is needs-led and gender-responsive, recognising the continuum of violence against women and ensuring interventions and prevention work connects VAWDASV to wider patterns of sex and other intersectional inequalities, including ethnicity, class, gender identity, age, ability, sexuality, religion and belief;

Whose understanding and delivery is informed by analysis of VAWDASV being gendered and a cause and consequence of inequality between women and men, which intersects with factors such as ethnicity, age, class, sexuality and disability to impact on experiences of abuse and routes to recovery. VAWDASV specialist services recognise that these forms of violence are entirely preventable, they happen to women and girls disproportionately because they are women and girls as a means of social control, which maintains and reproduces unequal power relations and presents an obstacle to achieving equality and human rights for women and girls;

That differ from 'general support' services in that the organisations/services have a gender and culturally responsive and holistic service delivery model, in accordance with the UK quality standards frameworks for such services, and are run by and for the communities they serve. In doing so they offer a uniquely empowering experience particularly to women and children and to BME communities, as the client group is reflected in staffing, management and governance structures of these organisations.

VAWDASV specialist services work in accordance with the following criteria (subject to availability of funding):

1. VAWDASV specialist services are delivered within recognised quality assurance and accreditation frameworks. A summary of common standards across these frameworks are set out by the Lloyds Foundation Commissioning Guidance for VAWDASV for Wales.
2. VAWDASV specialist services not only deliver protection, prevention and support services that empower survivors (adults and children) and/or address the behaviour of perpetrators, but also work in partnership with state services and communities to provide institutional advocacy and improve public sector practice, and prevent abuse from starting and escalating.
3. VAWDASV specialist services collaborate to deliver the core provision set out in the Istanbul Convention (Articles 23-28), namely refuge-based support, community-based support, independent advocacy and counselling, one to one and group support, and are equipped to deliver dedicated support for children and young people (including one-to-one support, group work programmes and play therapy).

4. VAWDASV specialist services are locally-based and Welsh-specific, offering services in Welsh and English, and able to meet service users' multi-lingual language and support needs where Welsh/English aren't their first language.
5. VAWDASV specialist services are provided by staff with in-depth knowledge of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence in accordance with DVSV National Occupational Standards and the National Training Framework.
6. VAWDASV specialist services maintain the vital importance of survivor support services delivered by and for women, and by and for Black and minority communities, that embed gender, sexuality, age, ability, culture, ethnicity and language based support across their services.
7. VAWDASV specialist services do not impose services but work alongside survivors (adults, children and young people) to ensure they are able to make informed choices and involve survivors in their development, delivery, management and review.
8. BME VAWDASV specialist services are skilled in identifying needs and experiences of specific forms of VAWDASV that may be missed within specialist services not led by/for BME communities. They offer a range of services and are able to access women who may not even recognise their experiences as violence, and create flexible and diverse support systems, sensitive to the fact that for many BME women, refuge, counselling or other support services may be unfamiliar and/or stigmatised.

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Putting Women & Children First