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Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee  
CELG(4)-29-14 Paper 4:

October 2014

The Chair  
Communities, Equalities and Local Government Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
CF99 1NA

Dear Chair,

**RE: Welsh Women's Aid supplementary information to inform Committee scrutiny of the Gender-based Violence, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Bill (Wales)**

I thank the Committee for the opportunity to provide written and oral evidence to inform the scrutiny process for this Bill. During the oral session on the 25<sup>th</sup> of September, I was asked by the Committee to submit further information on an appropriate outcomes framework in relation to this Bill.

Please find attached a paper outlining Welsh Women's Aid's suggested approach to this framework, for local and national strategies under the 'Gender-based Violence, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Bill', to act as supplementary information to our written and oral evidence to the Committee.

I hope that the information provided will be of use to your scrutiny process, and please do not hesitate to get in touch if I, or Welsh Women's Aid can provide further clarification or information to the Committee.

Yours sincerely,

Eleri Butler  
Chief Executive Officer  
Welsh Women's Aid

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## **Welsh Women's Aid supplementary information to inform Committee scrutiny of the Gender-based Violence, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Bill (Wales)**

### **Violence against women prevention: suggested outcomes framework for national/local strategies**

#### **Overview**

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Outcomes are the changes which come about as a result of action, activities or services provided. Outcome indicators are used to measure outcomes, and the change created may be positive or negative. For example a positive outcome may be a sense of increased confidence, and a negative outcome may be an increased feeling of fear after disclosing domestic violence. Both are equally valuable in measuring change and help us understand the impact of services, activities and programmes on individuals and communities.

Having a dedicated violence against women outcomes framework should provide the means to describe and measure the positive change created for adults, children and young people, families and communities across Wales, as a result of violence against women prevention work. The framework should describe and measure positive change using a number of outcome statements which focus on the individual. These statements are the key areas where Government, public services and the community and voluntary sector can make a difference to people and their lives.

The framework should include:

- Organisations contributions to improving outcomes for people and communities affected by and perpetrating violence against women;
- Quality standards for services which tell users what they can expect from the service;
- Outcome measures which measure, for example, the safety, health and well-being of survivors of violence and abuse;
- Performance measures which measure, for example, how organisations are contributing to the outcomes of the people who use their services.

The outcomes framework should contribute to the overarching Welsh Government Programme for Wales, and work to prevent and eradicate violence against women and girls should be interwoven into and across Welsh Government strategies, programmes and frameworks.

#### **Suggested outcomes for a national and local violence against women strategies:**

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The overarching strategic outcome at a national level could be for Government, all services and partnerships nationally and locally to:

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CELG(4)-29-14 Paper 4:

***prevent and eradicate violence against women and girls across Wales so that all individuals are equally safe and respected, and women and girls live free from violence and abuse and the attitudes that help perpetuate it, so they can flourish and actively contribute to communities.***

Strategy and service-level outcomes to be achieved could include:

- ***Increased awareness and knowledge of violence against women and girls and its impact, and a decrease in its tolerance and acceptance;***
- ***Increased knowledge and skills about safe, equal and violence-free relationships;***
- ***Increased awareness of options and rights to access services by individuals and communities;***
- ***Adults, children & young people feel safe to disclose, are listened to, believed, not judged;***
- ***Improved physical /emotional safety, resilience, and freedom from harm for survivors;***
- ***Increased responsibility by perpetrators and reduced risk through timely safeguarding, justice system and public service interventions.***

To achieve these outcomes the Violence Against Women Strategy should be organised through cross-cutting themes applicable to all forms of violence against women and girls, such as prevention and earlier intervention; provision of immediate and ongoing support; protection and prosecution, and partnership working. The Strategy should also be founded on an evidence-based perspective and policy framework which recognises that to be effective in its prevention, violence against women and girls must be addressed within a gender-equality framework, linked to equalities and human rights, non-discrimination and due diligence standards.

## **Prevention and early intervention**

The prevention of violence against women and girls must be seen as 'core business' for Government, public services and partnerships, and for commissioning, strategy, policy and service improvement work nationally and locally. We need to see a step change in emphasis on preventing violence from occurring in the first place, and where it does occur intervening at the earliest possible stage to minimise the harm caused.

Gender inequality is a root cause of the problem and despite the many advances being made, there remain persistent inequalities between men and women. Prevention involves challenging and changing the systems, attitudes and behaviours which perpetuate and promote violence against women and girls: this involves challenging and changing cultural norms and practices; the promotion of socially prescribed gender roles and women's economic, social and political inequality. This also involves using the media, publicity and education programmes to change societal, institutional, community and individual attitudes and responses to violence against women and girls.

Prevention work involves challenging structures that perpetuate gender and other forms of inequality: this involves addressing gender and other inequalities in terms of ethnicity, age, class, immigration

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status and nationality, disability and sexuality, which intersect with gender inequality to affect individual experiences of and vulnerabilities to violence.

Prevention work also involves identifying and responding early to violence against women and girls, wherever it occurs: in the family and intimate relationships; in local communities; in the workplace or at school or college; in public spaces; in institutions, and through commercial sexual exploitation in sex industries.

A long-term commitment to prevention should incorporate clear messages about the unacceptability of using power over women and girls and the necessity of transforming perpetrators' behaviour whilst at the same time challenging the broader 'conducive contexts' of inequality and misogyny which reinforce violence against women.

#### ***Prevention and early intervention: suggested outcomes***

Outcomes for survivors, perpetrators, children and young people, and communities through prevention work could include:

- Increased public awareness and knowledge of violence against women and its impact;
- Increased knowledge and awareness within communities of violence against women as it impacts on different groups;
- Reduced stigma, tolerance and social acceptance of violence against women within communities;
- Increased knowledge of rights to access services for those affected by violence against women and of the right to live violence-free lives;
- Increased awareness of the options and resources available for communities and individuals affected by violence against women;
- A positive change in people's perceptions of what is acceptable behaviour within relationships;
- Increased education on healthy relationships and the skills to sustain safe and equal, violence-free relationships;
- Increased knowledge of rights by women and girls in terms of gender equality.

Outcomes for adult survivors, children and young people, to be achieved through early intervention could include:

- Improved ability to speak freely about violence against women, access to a safe environment and an increase in physical and emotional safety;
- Increased understanding that violence against women is not their fault;
- Feeling of improved responses from professionals / family / community members which includes being treated with dignity and respect; feeling listened to, believed and not judged;
- Increased knowledge of options and help available;
- Improved access to violence against women services and support when required.

Outcomes for perpetrators to be achieved through early intervention could include:

- Increased responsibility for their actions and behaviour;

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- Increased ability to manage and reduce the risk they pose to victims and to stop further violence;
- Increased recognition that their behaviour is abusive and to name it as 'violence against women';
- Increased awareness that help is available and where to get help to change their abusive behaviour.

### **Provision of immediate and ongoing support**

In addition to obligations to prevent violence, Government, local authorities and other public services have a duty to take appropriate and effective action concerning violence against women, including provision of redress and support services.

Any strategy should recognise the unique role that independent violence against women services play in the provision of support and advocacy for survivors: the most consistent findings in successive evaluations show that women and girls who use specialist women's support services report being safest and are the most satisfied by interventions. Specialised independent violence against women organisations are acknowledged to be a key source of expertise at a local and national level, and the strategic and economic value of women-only provision should be recognised and promoted.

Provision of specialist support is necessary to ensure that all women have routes to safety that are not determined by their personal circumstances, through provision of a range of services and creating options through welfare provision, access to an independent income and employment.

*For example, women are three and a half times more likely to be subject to domestic violence, two and half times more likely to experience sexual violence and more vulnerable to stalking if they cannot find £100 at short notice. This not only illustrates connections between violence against women and wider gender equality but also reveals how women subject to financial abuse, women who have lower employment rates and pay levels, and women with no recourse to public funds are especially vulnerable to violence since they are least likely to have independent income.*

The provision of services needs to be coordinated within commissioning and funding streams. Through joint strategic commissioning that involves pooling resources, commissioners will ensure consistency and quality of service provision as well as opportunities for development work to be implemented. Outcomes for survivors, in terms of safety, access to support, well-being and empowerment should be the measure of success across the statutory and voluntary sector.

### ***Provision of support for survivors: suggested outcomes***

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Outcomes for survivors (adults, children and young people) to be achieved through effective provision of services could include:

- Increased physical safety and freedom from harm caused by violence and abuse, including:
  - Reduced risk of further harm;
  - Feel safer in their environment;
  - Free from immediate harm and in the longer term;
- Increased emotional safety, social and personal well-being for survivors, including:
  - Increased feeling of trust and belonging;
  - Improved ability to build supportive relationships;
  - Improved emotional well-being;
  - Increased positive functioning;
  - Increased resilience and self-esteem;
- Improved physical and mental health and well-being;
- Ability to have safe, healthy and equal relationships, free from violence;
- Improved quality of life;
- Independence and access to training, education, employment opportunities;
- Increased access to immediate safety for their children and to longer term support for their children to recover from violence against women;
- Safe and supportive contact arrangements with non-resident parents.

### Protection and prosecution

Protection is not just about immediate physical safety but also a deeper sense of safety and security, and in order for survivors to realise their right to live free from violence, accessible protective measures must be available across all forms of violence against women and girls.

The Strategy should recognise that the provision of high-quality violence against women support services is a core form of protection. Such services provide the foundation for all protective measures, since they keep survivors safe in the moment (through crisis intervention) and in the aftermath of violence (through ongoing practical and emotional support).

Effective protection is also dependent on access to criminal and civil law measures designed to address violence against women and girls, through various protection orders and arrangements in respect of access to children. The accessibility and effectiveness of civil remedies are crucial, given that so few survivors choose to pursue a criminal prosecution. Greater focus must also be given to targeted perpetrator interventions.

*For example, Police Scotland is introducing Multi-Agency Tasking and Co-ordinating Groups (MATAC) across Scotland to target serious and serial offenders of domestic abuse and is committed to developing a Performance Framework to measure outcomes, recidivism and rates of re-offending.*

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The strategy should also recognise that if protecting women from violence is to be realised, public safety issues must also be addressed, whether this be through environmental design or addressing public space harassment or representations of women that reinforce their sexual availability and commodification. Parallel approaches to protection and prosecution will be developed, for example prioritising the protection and promotion of the rights of women and girls while they are still involved in the sex industry, or in conditions of sex trafficking or sexual exploitation, whilst penalising traffickers, pimps, procurers and promoters of the sex industry and simultaneously supporting women who chose to exit the sex industry.

#### ***Protection: suggested outcomes***

Outcomes for all through protection and prosecution could include:

- Safety and well-being is increased while the risk posed by perpetrators / offenders is reduced;
- Men desist from all forms of violence against women and girls and perpetrators of such violence receive a robust and effective response;
- Improved feeling of physical safety and reduced risk of harm;
- Improved health and well-being, increased feeling of trust, independence and self-esteem;
- Reduced risk posed by perpetrators through timely safeguarding / justice system interventions;
- Increased ability by women to reduce or prevent their offending.

Outcomes for perpetrators to be achieved through effective intervention by services could include:

- Cessation of violence and abuse in the short and longer term, improved relationships based on equality and respect, and ability to sustain safe and violence-free relationships in future;
- Increased self-awareness, recognition of and responsibility for their abusive and violence behaviour;
- Increased awareness, understanding and empathy of the full impact of violence on their victims;
- Increased ability to reduce the risk they pose to their victims and stop further violence;
- Reduced risk and threat to victims, children and family through criminal and civil justice interventions, safeguarding and integrated offender management;
- Increased understanding of the impact of their abuse and violence on their family and children;
- Improved parenting;
- Increased safe contact with children and their primary carer, post separation.

#### **Partnership working**

Work in partnership nationally and locally is needed to deliver co-ordinated action across all services and partnerships, informed by consistent and coordinated policies, systems and leadership, to obtain the best outcome for survivors and their families.

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Violence against women and girls prevention is central to agendas on public health; reducing crime and the harm caused by serious violent crime; safeguarding children and adults with support needs; promoting education, learning and skills development; and promoting equality.

Those with the power to transform the cultures that perpetuate violence against women and girls must work together to achieve positive outcomes.

#### ***Partnership working: suggested outcomes***

- Women and children's experiences inform improvements in services, policies, practice and partnerships;
- Women and children feel listened to and involved in the development and review of services;
- Improved coordinated agency and community responses;
- Improved access to effective awareness and skills-based training for employers and services;
- Resources maximised, used strategically and efficiently, to achieve most value for service users.

#### **Measuring impact**

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Violence against women and girls prevention requires a clear, visible focus within strategic national and local planning. To increase prioritisation of the issue and enable improved understanding of the effectiveness of strategies and action plans, there is a need to take a more explicit approach to collective public accountability. Any strategy should be accompanied by a Performance Framework with appropriate outcome indicators to enable measurement of performance and progress, and to support strategic investment and commissioning to ensure that survivors across Wales benefit from consistently high-quality services.

A national accountability working group should be established and tasked with developing a robust performance management framework. This will include clear outcome indicators, and, where appropriate, targets to drive improvement.

#### **Examples of outcomes from other national Violence Against Women Strategies**

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##### **Home Office Violence Against Women Strategy: Call to End Violence Against Women and Girls:**

Prevention of violence from happening in the first place:

- A greater proportion of society believes violence against women and girls is unacceptable and is empowered to challenge violent behaviour;
- Fewer victims of sexual and domestic violence each year;
- Frontline professionals (e.g. teachers, doctors, police and prosecutors) are better able to identify and deal with violence against women and girls;
- More employers recognise and support victims of domestic and sexual violence.

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### Provision of services:

- Violence against women and girls victims receive a good and consistent level of service across England and Wales;
- Statutory, voluntary and community sector get the response right the first time;
- High quality commissioning and service provision at a local level.

### Partnership working:

- Better support available for victims and their families with statutory, voluntary and community sectors working together to share information and agree practical action;
- Improved the life chances of victims of violence against women and girls overseas, with this issue an international priority for the UK.

### Justice and risk reduction:

- Increased confidence of women and girls to encourage access to the Criminal Justice System;
- Improved criminal justice outcomes for victims of violence against women and girls, including the rate of convictions;
- Increased rate of rehabilitation among offenders;
- Reduced multiple incidents of violence by using the appropriate risk management tools.

### **Crown Prosecution Service outcomes for violence against women prevention:**

- Improved effectiveness and efficiency of the CJS in bringing offences to justice;
- Improved public confidence in the fairness and effectiveness of the CJS;
- Improved experience of the CJS for victims and witnesses;
- Improved understanding and addressing of race disproportionality at key stages in the CJS;
- Greater recovery of criminal assets.

### **Scottish Government outcomes for violence against women strategy ('Equally Safe'):**

- Scottish society embraces equality and mutual respect, and rejects all forms of violence against women and girls.
  - Positive gender roles are promoted;
  - People enjoy healthy, positive relationships;
  - Individuals and communities recognise and challenge violent and abusive behaviour.
- Women and girls thrive as equal citizens: socially, culturally, economically and politically.
  - Women and girls feel safe, respected and equal in our communities;

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- Women and men have equality of opportunity particularly with regard to access to power and resources.
- Interventions are early and effective, preventing violence and promoting women's safety and wellbeing.
  - Justice responses are robust, swift, consistent and coordinated;
  - Women and girls access relevant, effective and integrated services;
  - Service providers competently identify violence against women and girls, and respond effectively.
- Men desist from all forms of violence against women and girls and perpetrators of such violence receive a robust and effective response.
  - Justice responses are robust, swift, consistent and coordinated;
  - Men who carry out violence against women and girls are held to account by the criminal justice system;
  - Men who carry out violence against women and girls are identified early and held to account by the criminal justice system.

Welsh Women's Aid  
October 2014

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