



Llwybr Newydd: a new Wales transport strategy

Name:	<i>Jordan Brewer Policy and Research Officer</i>
Organisation:	<i>Welsh Women's Aid</i>
Email address:	<i>jordanbrewer@welshwomensaid.org.uk</i>
Telephone number:	<i>02920 541 551</i>
Address:	<i>Pendragon House, Caxton Place, Pentwyn, Cardiff CF23 8XE</i>
These are the views of:	<i>Welsh Women's Aid (Third Sector) - the national charity in Wales working to end domestic abuse and all forms of violence against women.</i>

About Welsh Women's Aid

Welsh Women's Aid is the umbrella organisation in Wales that supports and provides national representation for independent third sector violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (VAWDASV) specialist services in Wales (comprising our membership of specialist services and members of the regional VAWDASV Specialist Services Providers Forums). These services deliver life-saving and life-changing support and preventative work in response to violence against women, including domestic abuse and sexual violence, as part of a network of UK provision.

As an umbrella organisation, our primary purpose is to prevent domestic abuse, sexual violence and all forms of violence against women and ensure high quality services for survivors that are needs-led, gender responsive and holistic. We collaborate nationally to integrate and improve community responses and practice in Wales; we provide advice, consultancy, support and training to deliver policy and service improvements across government, public, private and third sector services and in communities, for the benefit of survivors.

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. (More information on the NQSS can be found here: <http://www.welshwomensaid.org.uk/what-we-do/our-members/standards/>)

Introduction

Welsh Women's Aid welcomes the opportunity to respond to this consultation on the draft strategy for the future of transport in Wales. In this short response we will highlight our key points for consideration, with an invitation to provide further information and coordinating the views of survivors and specialist services as the plan develops.

Pendragon House, Caxton Place | Pentwyn, Cardiff | CF23 8XE
 Tel: 02920 541551 | Fax: 02920 736128 |
 Email: info@welshwomensaid.org.uk | Web: www.welshwomensaid.org.uk
 Registered Charity Number: 1140962





We welcome the recognition of diverse needs and efforts to align with the Well-being of Future Generations Act, but would call to see the needs and safety of survivors of Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse, and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) to be more widely considered in the strategy.

Ending VAWDASV in Wales is everyone's business, with each sector playing a role in providing safety and support to survivors. The transportation sector in Wales has a unique opportunity to ensure survivors have access to safe and affordable travel from dangerous or abusive situations and that they can attend appointments and opportunities that support their recovery.

Key call

To commit within the first two years of the five-year strategy to developing and implementing a scheme which helps all survivors of VAWDASV to seek safety and support their recovery. This scheme should be developed in partnership with survivors and the specialist support sector.

Rail to Refuge

We welcomed the Great Western Rail, Rail to Refuge scheme¹ which allows women experiencing domestic abuse, particularly if they are experiencing financial abuse, the opportunity to travel free of charge to a refuge once they have secured a place. We were pleased to note that Rail to Refuge has been expanded as rail companies came under government control due to the pandemic, however we need long term guarantee on this and expansion to other forms of transport. With the development of the new strategy for the future of transport in Wales there is an opportunity to expand on this scheme and make it inclusive and accessible for survivors of all forms of abuse in all parts of the country.

Intersectionality

VAWG is 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.² Recognising the intersecting experience of homophobia, racism, and ableism with misogyny is critical to recognising the full experiences of different women and girls. Similarly building this recognition into our responses is vital in addressing the additional barriers some women and girls experience.

In developing this scheme core recognition must be given to the ways in which these protected characteristics impacts the way people access travel and ensure there are accessible options for all survivors.

¹ <https://www.womensaid.org.uk/rail-to-refuge/>

² <https://www.welshwomensaid.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Annual-Membership-Report-2018-19-FINAL.pdf>





We would also call for this scheme to be applicable to forms of transport outside of rail travel. Travel options differ wildly depending on location and a survivor in an urban area may have more options in this respect to people in rural settings. We would call for this scheme to be stretch to buses, taxis and rental vehicles in some fashion so that lack of rail services is not an additional barrier to women escaping any dangerous situations.

This scheme would also need to be accessible to survivors with no recourse to public funds (NRPF). Women with insecure immigration status, or whose immigration status is dependent on a spouse or employer are often at a heightened risk of violence and exploitation. This cohort of women also face barriers to accessing protection, support and specialist services, because of a lack of funding within the sector, or through isolation, language and cultural barriers.³ Survivors in this situation are also often subject to economic abuse and may not have any access to money of their own. Access to free travel would mean an additional route to safety.

We would also urge this scheme to show recognition for all forms of VAWDASV not only domestic abuse. Many survivors who face sexual exploitation, sexual violence, so called honour-based abuse and street based sexual harassment will also be in need of reaching a place of safety. This scheme should support them to do so.

This scheme would also need to support the needs of children and young people and develop options for young people either traveling alone or with a non-abusive parent to flee violence and abuse.

Active travel and the Well-being of Future Generations

The need for free and affordable travel doesn't stop with a survivor reaching a place of safety. Throughout their recovery survivors will need to attend counselling services, house viewings, court dates, job interviews and much more as they begin to rebuild their lives. In these instances, the same issues of either inaccessible or unaffordable travel options can prevent survivors for fully participating in these vital steps of recovery. We would call for this scheme to consider either free or subsidised travel for survivors at various stages of recovery and across various modes of transportation.

The vision and 20 year ambition for the strategy aligns with the core goals of the Well-being for Future Generations Act and we believe supporting the recovery of survivors so they can thrive and live independently is also a key part of achieving this goal for every person living in Wales.

Conclusion: The voice of survivors and the specialist sector

We welcome the opportunity to input our priorities and the priorities of our members and the survivors they support at this stage of development. However, the needs of survivors are missing in large parts of this strategy, and work to ensure there is recognition of these needs and plans to meet them is in its infancy. As this work develops it should do so in partnership with survivors and

³ <https://www.welshwomensaid.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/NRPF-and-VAWDASV-Briefing-for-MSS-Final-ENG.pdf>



the wider specialist sector. This is the only way to ensure what is developed is accessible and beneficial to all survivors in Wales.

Welsh Women's Aid is the umbrella body VAWDASV services in Wales, we hold regular meetings with our member services as well as the wider sector and have specialist links with survivor networks across Wales. Going forward we would be keen to work in partnership to facilitate wider consultation, to bring together far reaching and diverse views.

Pendragon House, Caxton Place | Pentwyn, Cardiff | CF23 8XE
Tel: 02920 541551 | Fax: 02920 736128 |
Email: info@welshwomensaid.org.uk | Web: www.welshwomensaid.org.uk
Registered Charity Number: 1140962



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government