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Welsh Women's Aid
Rhoi Merched a Phlant yn Gyntaf
Putting Women & Children First

Welsh Women's Aid Briefing: Post Senedd Election 2021

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Introduction

The results from the 2021 Senedd election have been announced. The new Welsh Government and Sixth Senedd term will be led by Welsh Labour. Welsh Women's Aid are committed in our actions to work cross-party and cross-government to end violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (VAWDASV) in all its forms.

Welsh Labour secured 30 out of the 60 Senedd seats leaving them one seat short of an overall majority. Despite this, the Party has decided to govern without forming a coalition. Mark Drakeford has been confirmed as First Minister.

You can find your constituency and regional members [here](#).

We have written a welcome letter to all MSs and are in the process of setting up meetings with them. If any Welsh Women's Aid members would like us to raise anything with MSs, particularly their local/regional representatives, or would like support from us to meet with them themselves, get in touch with JordanBrewer@welshwomensaid.org.uk.

Welsh Government priorities

Welsh Labour's [manifesto](#) outlined several commitments relating to VAWDASV. Notably we welcomed commitments to:

1. Strengthen the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy to include a focus on violence against women in the street and workplace as well as in the home.
2. Expand the 'Ask and Act' and 'Don't be a Bystander' training and awareness campaigns.



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3. Embed Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) in the new curriculum, ensuring LGBTQ+ inclusive education for our children and young people.
4. Make Wales the safest place in Europe to be a woman.

All parties made commitments in relation to ending VAWDASV. Cross-party work will continue to be vital and we look forward to working cross-party and cross-Government in achieving these aims and more. We produced a manifesto comparison document on all party commitments which you can read [here](#).

Welsh Women's Aid priorities

Ahead of the election we published a [manifesto document](#), coordinated in partnership with our members, which outlined our key priorities for the next Welsh Government. You can read a one-page summary of these priorities here [\[ENG\]](#) [\[CYM\]](#).

As a matter of urgency we will begin work on the following as all are time sensitive in their own way:

- **Ensuring a cross government National VAWDASV Strategy.**
 - The national strategy ends this year. The new strategy must be ambitious, and include measurable actions that span 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 strategy's implementation.
- **Implementing a secure and sustainable funding model for the whole VAWDASV specialist sector across Wales.**
 - 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 of the pandemic 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. Read our most recent State of the Sector report which sets out both why a sustainable funding model for the sector is needed and how it can be achieved [\[ENG\]](#)[\[CYM\]](#).
- **Supporting survivors with No Recourse to Public Funds.**



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- The Domestic Abuse Act (2021) has fallen short in its potential to protect and support all survivors, regardless of immigration status. It is time for Wales to develop its own solution to supporting survivors with no recourse to public funds, and make good on its claims of being a nation of sanctuary. This needs to include safe and secure accommodation, provision in refuge with local authorities working with specialist services to enable support for survivors with NRPF.

Key ministers

The following ministers have matters relating to the specialist VAWDASV sector in their portfolios.

- Jane Hutt - Minister for Social Justice (*VAWDASV will continue to sit under Jane Hutt MS*)
- Hannah Blythyn - Deputy Minister for Social Partnership
- Julie James - Minister for Climate Change (*Housing will continue to sit under Julie James MS*)
- Jeremy Miles - Minister for Education and the Welsh Language
- Eluned Morgan - Minister for Health and Social Services
- Julie Morgan - Deputy Minister for Social Services
- Lynne Neagle - Deputy Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing

All ministers and deputy ministers can be found [here](#).

Conclusion

Welsh Labour has stated in their manifesto commitments to strengthen the VAWDASV strategy, expand Ask and Act, embed RSE into the new curriculum, and make Wales the safest place for women in Europe. We will be working to ensure that this extends to *all* women living in Wales, and commit to working with the new Government, survivors and our members to ensure the priorities in our own manifesto document are also delivered.

For more information please contact Jordan Brewer, Policy and Research Officer via email:

JordanBrewer@WelshWomensAid.org.uk