



Cymorth i Ferched Cymru
Welsh Women's Aid

**VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN,
DOMESTIC ABUSE AND
SEXUAL VIOLENCE (VAWDASV)
PREVENTION ACTIVITIES
FOR CHILDREN AND
YOUNG PEOPLE**

**A briefing on promising practice on
what works in primary prevention**

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Rhoi Merched a Phlant yn Gyntaf
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As the umbrella organisation for violence against women specialist services in Wales, Welsh Women's Aid would again like to sincerely thank the voices of children and young people, survivors, specialist services and other organisations, which informed the creation of this document.

1. Introduction

This is the first in a suite of four *Prevention Papers* in which Welsh Women's Aid will share research, innovation and promising practice around the prevention of violence against women, including domestic abuse and sexual violence (VAWDASV). These papers will form a body of evidence that will be circulated to decision makers, funders, commissioners, specialist violence against women services and the public sector, amongst others.

The aim of the *Prevention Papers* is to promote awareness of VAWDASV prevention around specific themes, and to prevent abuse, protect and support survivors.

Violence against women, including domestic abuse and sexual violence, is abuse directed at women and girls because they are women or girls, or is experienced disproportionately by women and girls as a group. Violence against women is therefore a cause, and consequence, of inequality between women and men, a violation of human rights, and a result of an abuse of power and control.

Violence against women is prevalent in all areas of Wales, as it is across the UK and the globe. It is not, however, inevitable. It is preventable.

There are requirements to provide preventative services in relation to VAWDASV which are explicitly set out in the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 as well as intentions set out in the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 to prevent escalation of needs of those who need care. In order to provide effective preventative services, professionals require the guidance and training to deal with all aspects of VAWDASV, including prevention. The importance of this work in regards to children and young people cannot be overstated.

This briefing provides an oversight of what 'prevention' means in relation to children and VAWDASV, the importance of prevention work in relation to children and young people, and raising the profile of existing promising practice in Wales.

The aim of this document is to provide a helpful guide to assist with the integration of existing VAWDASV prevention services with wider work underway in Wales regarding the health and well-being of children and young people, and to provide suggested approaches for doing so by identifying and promoting examples of existing promising practice across Wales.

As the umbrella organisation for violence against women specialist services in Wales, Welsh Women's Aid would like to thank the voices of children and young people, survivors, specialist services and other organisations, which form the core of this briefing.



2. The problem we need to prevent

Violence against women and girls, including domestic abuse and sexual violence affect both women and men, but are mainly experienced by women and girls. Research bears this out:

- On average, a woman every 4.5 days is known to have been killed in England and Wales by her partner or ex-partner.¹
- In 2014/15 there were 186 female homicide victims of whom 81 (44%) were killed by partners/ex-partners.²
- In 2016, at least 124 UK women were killed by men, or where a man is the principle suspect (1 woman killed every 2.94 days/71hours).³

Domestic abuse – children and young people: It is estimated that 750,000 children and young people, have witnessed or experience domestic violence in England and Wales. Domestic abuse suffered by children can range from sexual and physical abuse, to direct or indirect coercive control within the household and witnessing all forms of domestic abuse. These experiences can have long-lasting, negative effects on children of all ages, including infants.⁴

Domestic abuse – pregnancy⁵ and early motherhood: A range of research and data highlights pregnancy and early motherhood/childhood as vulnerable times for both mothers and children, and in many cases, abuse escalates during pregnancy: within recent research carried out with survivors, over a quarter of mothers reported that the abuse had started when they were pregnant.⁶ One survivor stated that:

“After I was pregnant, instead of being two times violent to me per year it was like every two months and then he got a 100 times worse. When my daughter was born he thought ‘Oh she’s not going to go anywhere I can do whatever I want.’”⁷

Femicide: Of the 152 women killed following a separation between 1st January 2009 - 31st December 2015 in England and Wales, 8 women were pregnant when killed by their ex-partner or ex-spouse. 106 women killed following a separation had a child, or children under the age of 18.⁸ Women were far more likely than men to be killed by partners/ex-partners

¹ Office for National Statistics: ‘Focus on Violent Crime and Sexual Offences data’, 11 February 2016, <https://www.ons.gov.uk/file?uri=/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/compendium/focusonviolentcrimeandsexualoffences/yearendingmarch2015/bulletintablesfocusonviolentcrimeandsexualoffencesyearendingmarch2015/01bulletintablesviolentcrimeandsexualoffences201415v5tcm77432690.xls>

² Ibid.

³ Counting Dead Women – 2016, <https://kareningalasmith.com/2016/03/03/2016/>.

⁴ Department of Health, 2002.

⁵ In 2015-16, 176 women who accessed Welsh Women’s Aid members’ specialist refuge-based services were pregnant and a further 612 (35%) had their children with them when accessing support.

⁶ L. Kelly, N. Sharp & R. Klein, ‘Finding the Costs of Freedom’, *Solace Women’s Aid*, 2014.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ D. Brennan, ‘Femicide Census: profile of women killed by men’, *Women’s Aid*, 2016, <https://1q7dqy2unor827bgjls0c4rn-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/The-Femicide-Census-Jan-2017.pdf>, (accessed 20 January 2017).



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(44% of female victims compared with 6% of male victims⁹), and men were more likely than women to be killed by friends/ acquaintances (32% of male victims compared with 8% of female victims).¹⁰ At least 12 women were killed by their partners or ex-partners in Wales in 2016.¹¹

Female genital mutilation (FGM): It is estimated that around 60,000 girls aged 0-14 were born in England and Wales to mothers who were survivors of FGM¹² and approximately 66,000 women in England and Wales are living with the consequences of FGM.¹³ In England and Wales, more than 24,000 girls under the age of 15 are at risk of FGM.¹⁴ FGM survivors are at greater risk of complications during pregnancy and birth difficulties, affecting the health of both mother and child, and are also at high risk of developing post-natal depression after traumatic birthing experiences, which can adversely affect the wellbeing of both mother and child.¹⁵ FGM is a primary risk for girls and a safeguarding matter, and both adult and young women survivors of FGM require support and intervention.

Sexual violence/abuse: 31% of young women aged 18-24 report having experienced sexual abuse in childhood.¹⁶ In a street made up of 100 houses, 20 of the women residing there will have been the victim of a sexual offence.¹⁷ From 6th April 2017, the so-called 'rape clause' policy from the UK Government will be implemented, capping Child Tax Credit entitlement to two children, unless a women can prove that any subsequent children were a result of rape. Therefore, where perpetrators remain within the household and women who have a third child as a result of rape but still live with the perpetrator do not qualify for the recently confirmed 'rape clause' exemption to tax credits limited to two children, which adds an additional economic penalty on survivors of sexual abuse and their children.

Forced marriage: In 2015, the Forced Marriage Unit gave advice or support to 25 people in Wales. In England and Wales, victims' ages ranged from very young children to people post-retirement age: 14% of cases involved victims below 16 years of age, and 27% involved under-18s. Cases involving very young children often involve the promise of a future marriage rather

⁹ In 2014/15, of 186 female homicide victims, 81 women (44%) lost their lives to a partner or ex-partner. By comparison, of 331 male homicide victims, 19 men (6%) lost their lives to a partner or ex-partner. – Office for National Statistics, 'Focus on Violent Crime and Sexual Offences: Year ending March 2015', <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/compendium/focusonviolentcrimeandsexualoffences/yearend ingmarch2015>, (accessed 1 March 2017).

¹⁰ J. Flatley, 'Homicide: Findings from analyses based on the Homicide Index recorded by the Home Office covering different aspects of homicide', ONS, 2016, <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/compendium/focusonviolentcrimeandsexualoffences/yearend ingmarch2015/chapter2homicide>, (accessed 1 March 2017).

¹¹ K. Ingala Smith, '2016', Counting Dead Women, <https://kareningalasmith.com/2016/03/03/2016/>, (accessed 03 Jan 2017).

¹² Macfarlane A, Dorkenoo E. 'Prevalence of Female Genital Mutilation in England and Wales: National and local estimates', *London: City University London and Equality Now*, 2015.

¹³ BAWSO, 'FGM Info', BAWSO, <http://www.bawso.org.uk/assets/Uploads/FGM-Info.pdf>, (accessed 30 January 2017).

¹⁴ A. Topping, 'Schools warned over FGM risk to girls during summer holidays', *The Guardian*, 25 May 2014, <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2014/may/25/schools-warned-fgm-risks-summer-holidays>, (accessed 1 March 2017).

¹⁵ BAWSO, 'FGM Info', BAWSO, <http://www.bawso.org.uk/assets/Uploads/FGM-Info.pdf>, (accessed 30 January 2017).

¹⁶ L. Radford, et al., 'Child abuse and neglect in the UK today', NSPCC, 2011, <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/research-reports/child-abuse-neglect-uk-today-research-report.pdf>, (accessed 13 Feb 2017).

¹⁷ Based on ONS Violent Crime/Sexual Offences 2011/12.



than an imminent marriage. 980 cases (80%) involved female victims and 240 (20%) involved male victims.¹⁸

So-called 'honour' based violence: In England and Wales, the Crown Prosecution Service recorded 216 incidents of so-called 'honour-based' violence in 2015-16.¹⁹ Living in a situation of extended family domestic abuse in the context of forced marriage and so-called honour based violence can severely impact the mental and physical health and wellbeing of women and children.

Gender stereotypes: Imposed on children from birth and throughout life, gender stereotypes perpetuate the notion of women as lesser than men and serve to justify the daily inequality suffered by women in a patriarchal world. In Fawcett's 150 years report, 73% of young women and 65% of young men voiced concern about the negative impact on children of gender stereotypes in school or nursery.²⁰

Children online: There were 3,716 counselling sessions with young people who specifically talked about online sexual abuse concerns such as being exposed to online sexually explicit images, sharing sexual images/message and grooming to ChildLine in 2015/16. This was an increase of 24% compared to 2014/15.²¹

Teenage intimate partner abuse: a quarter of girls and 18% of boys experience some form of physical partner violence. One in nine girls and 4% of boys experience severe physical violence. Nearly three-quarters of girls and half of boys experience some form of emotional partner violence. A third of girls and 6% of boys stated that the emotional violence had negatively affected their wellbeing. One in three girls and 16% of boys reported some form of sexual partner violence.²²

3. What is prevention?

'Prevention work' refers to interventions designed to prevent violence against women, including domestic abuse and sexual violence from occurring as well as early interventions to prevent further harm being caused and protect our right to be free from abuse. This can include primary, secondary and tertiary prevention approaches, all of which are used by specialist violence against women services in Wales.

¹⁸ Foreign & Commonwealth Office, 'Forced Marriage Unit Statistics 2015', *Home Office*, 2016, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/505827/Forced_Marriage_Unit_statistics_2015.pdf, (accessed 31 January 2017).

¹⁹ CPS, 'Violence against women and girls: Crime report 2015-16', *Crown Prosecution Service*, 2016, http://www.cps.gov.uk/publications/docs/cps_vawg_report_2016.pdf, (accessed 26 January 2017).

²⁰ H. Taaffee, 'Sound Familiar?', 2017, <http://www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Sounds-Familiar-January-2017.pdf>, (accessed 30 January 2017).

²¹ NSPCC, 'Childline Annual Review 2015/16: It turned out someone did care', *NSPCC*, 2016, <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/annual-reports/childline-annual-review-2015-16.pdf>, (accessed 1 March 2017).

²² C Barter et al., 'Partner exploitation and violence in teenage intimate relationships', *NSPCC*, 2009, <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/research-reports/partner-exploitation-violence-teenage-intimate-relationships-summary.pdf>, (accessed 1 March 2017).

These categories of prevention can be defined as:

- 1) Primary prevention:** aims to stop violence before it occurs and reduce instances of violence and abuse, measured within a population. Typically it involves universal interventions directed at whole communities, as well as targeted interventions for 'at risk' communities, intervening before any violence occurs and therefore reducing the number of new incidences. Primary prevention is reliant upon identification and understanding of the 'up-stream' factors resulting in violence against women, and action to address these factors. Approaches can include education to change attitudes and perception, awareness raising campaigns, interventions for all ages to prevent gender inequality, and informal community responses.
- 2) Secondary prevention:** identification, at an early stage, of individuals or groups who are either showing signs of perpetrating abuse or are at increased risk of violence (for example young women, pregnant women), and providing resources and support to mitigate the immediate consequences and where possible, preventing repeat abuse. Approaches can include: strategies for specific people who are clearly at risk of, or who have recently become affected by violence or abuse. This includes activities such as early intervention, upskilling and supporting staff within the community and public bodies to increase opportunities for survivors to disclose and to access needs-led support.
- 3) Tertiary prevention:** intended to slow the progression of and reduce the harm already caused by violence, and through rehabilitation, to reduce recurrence of the problem. Approaches can include: specialist needs-led support for survivors and appropriate perpetrator programmes that focus on risk management, rehabilitation and behaviour change. This includes refuge, therapeutic services, perpetrator programmes and target hardening such as CCTV, panic alarms etc.
- 4) Primordial prevention²³:** defined as prevention of risk factors themselves including change in social and environmental conditions. In the context of violence against women, this would require genuine equality for women in all aspects of life, including: greater economic prosperity for women and girls, closing the gender pay gap, removing structural barriers to equality, and equal political representation for women.

These four stages of prevention are a useful way to categorise activity to understand the aim of an intervention, although it is important to create comprehensive programmes of prevention, which include primary, secondary and tertiary interventions.

²³ <http://rhdinternational.org/about-rhd/prevention-measures/primordial-prevention/>

4. Policy and legislative context

The Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 (the Act): makes arrangements for prevention, protection and support. In Wales, 'The National Strategy on Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence – 2016-2021'²⁴ that supports the Act sets out a clear prevention plan through education, empowerment and engagement that aims to challenge attitudes and behaviours across society which lead to violence against women, and seek ways to prevent them from occurring or repeating. The four objectives under prevention in the Act are:

- Increase awareness and challenge attitudes of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence across the Welsh Population;
- Increase awareness in children and young people of the importance of safe, equal and healthy relationships and that abuse is always wrong;
- Increase focus on holding perpetrators to account and provide opportunities to change their behaviour based around victim safety;
- Making early intervention and prevention a priority.²⁵

When the Act was passed, the Welsh Government also worked with Welsh Women's Aid to publish a 'Good Practice Guide' for educational practitioners on how to promote well-being and gender equalities for respectful relationships²⁶. A key part of this national guide encourages young people to actively start up or get involved in local and global campaigns to stop gender-based and sexual violence in their schools and communities.

The Act also links into other key pieces of Welsh legislation, namely, the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Social Service and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. All three pieces of legislation place legal duties on local authorities to be proactive rather than reactive to the wellbeing of the people in Wales. In addition, links can be made to the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 and the Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016.

The Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act has long-term aims to prevent all forms of violence from happening in the first place, while striving towards an equal society. The Future Generations Commissioner for Wales has highlighted addressing the role of challenging

²⁴ The National Strategy on Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence – 2016-2021 Welsh Government
<http://gov.wales/docs/dsijg/publications/commsafety/161104-national-strategy-en.pdf>

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Good Practice Guide: A Whole Education Approach to Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence in Wales
<http://gov.wales/docs/dsijg/publications/commsafety/151020-whole-education-approach-good-practice-guide-en.pdf>

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs²⁷), which includes domestic violence²⁸, as a priority action to protect well-being.

5. The benefit of prevention services for children and young people

Violence against women, including domestic abuse and sexual violence, touches the lives of many people in Wales, and has particularly serious implications for children and young people. This may impact on their own safety; physical health, mental health and general well-being; their family and peer relationships; their potential to enjoy healthy, happy, respectful relationships in the future; and their current and future educational attainment.

There is a correlation between the prevention of violence against women, and the promotion of well-being and wider public health. The recent research into adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) by Public Health Wales NHS Trust 2015²⁹ highlighted that experiencing adversity in childhood, including violence and abuse, can impact on future health and well-being. Childhood exposure to violence in general, can impact negatively on school achievement and economic prospects as an adult, mental health and resilience, sexual health, physical health and increased likelihood of negative coping mechanisms.

Not only would primary prevention of violence against women improve the well-being of the population and reduce pressure on the public purse, but preventing ACEs and improving resilience and protective factors for children could reduce the prevalence of individuals committing violence in adulthood by 60 percent³⁰.

In one UK survey in 2007 by the UK Youth Parliament of over 20,000 young people aged under 18:

- 40 percent thought the Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) they had received was either poor or very poor;
- 61 percent of boys and 70 percent of girls reported not having any information about personal relationships at school;
- 73 percent felt that SRE should be taught before the age of 13.

The research suggests that children and young people want to learn about sex, relationships, respect and abuse³¹. They have identified that they have insufficient access to information

²⁷ Adverse Childhood Experiences and their impact on health-harming behaviours in the Welsh adult population
<http://www.cph.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/ACE-Report-FINAL-E.pdf>

²⁸ Developing Priorities for the Future Generations Commissioner 2017 – 2023, Future Generations Commissioner for Wales
https://futuregenerations.wales/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/FGCW_Priority_Paper_No_endnotes_ENG.pdf

²⁹ Adverse Childhood Experiences and their impact on health-harming behaviours in the Welsh adult population, *ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ www.preventionplatform.org.uk

regarding relationships and also recognise that the quality of the information that they do receive leaves room for improvement on a large scale. This raises concerns that prevention of VAWDASV is not prioritised within education settings as well as providing an evidence base that young people want access to SRE that is of good quality and at an earlier point in their education journey.

It further confirms more recent concerning facts raised about how young people access SRE in the form of using easily accessible pornography. Research conducted in 2014 found:

- 45% of young men and 29% of young women agree that 'pornography helps young people learn about sex'.
- 21% of young men and 40% of young women strongly agreed that 'pornography leads to unrealistic attitudes to sex'
- 18% of young men and 37% strongly agree that 'pornography encourages society to view women as sex objects'³²

This would suggest that access to the information that young people need and want about sex and relationships is not available to them within regular education settings and so search for the information themselves in the ever evolving digital world. Accessing pornography with ease leads to an unrealistic perception of sex and relationships and contributes to the existing societal issue of gender inequality which is a cause and consequence of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

6. Why do we need specialist support for children and young people?

Today, there is much more of a focus on taking action early before problems occur. The moral and economic cases for intervening early in the life of a problem, preferably before it starts, are powerful. However, despite the increasing amount of good work that is being done, for example by local authorities, charities and voluntary organisations, more coordinated action is needed to create a common framework of policies and high-quality evidence-based programmes to bring about social change and eradicate VAWDASV in Wales.

Earlier this year, whilst conducting a mapping and scoping exercise about children and young people services across Wales, Welsh Women's Aid found that more intensive, specialised, therapeutic support is needed for children and young people experiencing VAWDASV. Current interventions are often brief where services are under pressure to work with high volumes of referrals and quality is sometimes compromised. Specialist services could offer specialised domestic abuse/ sexual violence counselling/ play therapy services for children and young people affected by VAWDASV as generic counselling services for young people (for example

³² Parker, I. (2014). 'Young People, Sex and Relationships: The New Norms. Institute for public policy research

in schools) are not always able to meet demand. Specialist counselling for VAWDASV in rural areas of Wales is also very difficult to access. For example, one worker from our member service in de Gwynedd referred a child for sexual violence counselling but the appointment was two hours away from where she lived. There are also very few specialist counselling services available in Welsh which is a barrier to accessing this service as children whose first language is Welsh would not be confident enough in English to access counselling until they were older. A trauma informed service would be able to respond to the need to relate to children in their first language.

7. Promoting and protecting children and young people, from pregnancy onwards

There is good evidence of interventions that can prevent or mitigate factors which increase the risk of poor outcomes at age two (such as domestic abuse, exposure to violence and abuse, poverty and disadvantage, exposure to problematic substance use, mental ill-health and poor emotional well-being of mothers) and these have been well described in research and within professional and NICE guidance (e.g. NICE Domestic Violence Guidance³³). However there are significant challenges in ensuring that this evidence is implemented and embedded into professional practice.

Early identification and appropriate intervention and access to independent specialist support services in the third sector will promote and protect the health and wellbeing of children adversely impacted by violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence. Significant progress can be made to improve women and children's lives during the early year's period through informed, structured training of public sector staff and clear referral pathways to specialist services. New public sector duties within the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015, requires trained public sector professionals including health professionals to make direct enquiries, called 'Ask and Act'.

Promising Practice:

Port Talbot and Afan Women's Aid: Video Interaction Guidance (VIG) Project

Port Talbot and Afan Women's Aid (PTAWA) has been providing the VIG project since October 2015. The VIG project is a unique project that uses the method of Video Interaction Guidance to help mothers with infants (under the age of two) who have been affected by domestic abuse.

The bespoke method involves filming an interaction between mother and child, and then editing the footage to highlight three positive moments of interaction. This is then watched

³³ Domestic violence and abuse: multi-agency working, 2014 Nice.org.uk/guidance/ph50



back with the client and discussed in depth. The VIG Project improves communication between mother and child, which can help with attachment and bonding.

Recognising that the relationship between mother and child may have been affected by domestic abuse, VIG focuses on the positives and recognises what parents are already doing well, in order to encourage that behaviour to be repeated. The service is offered at a key time of childhood between 0-2 years, thus minimising any long term effects that domestic abuse can have on later childhood.

Testimonials from survivors illustrate the success of VIG:

- *"Gives you confidence."*
- *"Watching the video makes you more aware."*
- *"It feels special to watch back, and watch your bond."*

The VIG project accepts referrals from all professionals and self-referrals.

There is significant evidence that co-locating specialist VAWDASV support workers in GP practices (e.g. IRIS³⁴), mental health services and A&E facilitates early intervention and access to support for women who would otherwise not seek help or disclose abuse. If applied to Welsh maternity wards and other healthcare settings, the co-location of specialist domestic abuse support workers (advocates) could heighten the impact of current 'Ask and Act' practices, set out in the National Training Framework, by strengthening the quality of support available to mothers and children and the speed and efficiency of referral pathways, while also supporting staff. One survivor stated:

"I was worried about the baby (in pregnancy), did not want to entertain the idea of going to the police or social services, but when the midwife offered me to talk to someone who could help me with the abuse, I was glad."

Additionally, health professionals have been integral to early identification and contributing qualitative and quantitative data around the crime of female genital mutilation of girls, which is further supported by the Serious Crime Act 2015, making it mandatory for frontline professionals to report safeguarding concerns in relation to female genital mutilation (FGM). This has helped to highlight the prevalence of the practice, as well as increasing the number of cases reported to the police and social services, with the aim of preventing girls and women from experiencing FGM and eradicating this by 2030. Further work is needed in Wales to ensure robust data and responses to the prevention of FGM is embedded across all services,

³⁴ IRIS is a GP health based training and referral scheme for domestic abuse. It is aimed at women who are experiencing abuse from a current partner, ex-partner or adult family member. IRIS also provides information and signposting for male victims and for perpetrators. The programme is a collaboration between health and specialist third sector VAWG services. <http://www.irisdomesticviolence.org.uk/iris/>

working in partnership with and being led by specialist BME services like Bawso³⁵, who are leading the way on developing community prevention of FGM in Wales³⁶.

8. Prevention through education

A whole-education approach to preventing violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence is imperative in order to mitigate the impact of adverse childhood experiences associated with exposure to domestic abuse and sexual violence that happened or began during a child's first 1,000 days. All education institutions should develop and implement a whole-education approach, as outlined in the Welsh Government 'Good Practice Guidance',³⁷ which promotes staff and student learning on violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence, as well as gender equality, respect, and healthy relationships.

In order to help schools and further education institutions tackle VAWDASV, there are nine key elements that should be in place³⁸:

1. Children and young people learn about violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence
2. Staff learn about violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence
3. Parents, care-givers and family learn about violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence
4. Monitoring and evaluation systems are in place to measure impact of this work
5. Measures are in place to support people who experience forms of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence
6. Active participation of children and young people, staff and parents/care-givers to prevent violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence
7. Taking action to prevent violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence in the wider community
8. Working in partnership with relevant local experts
9. Embedding a comprehensive prevention programme

Each of these elements is important to ensure a comprehensive 'whole education' approach. Information about resources which are suitable for use in educational establishments is

³⁵ Bawso <http://www.bawso.org.uk/>

³⁶ FGM Helpline, NSPCC fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk / 0800 028 3550

³⁷ <http://gov.wales/docs/dsjlg/publications/commsafety/151020-whole-education-approach-good-practice-guide-en.pdf>

³⁸ Adapted from the UK Violence Against Women Digital Prevention Platform. AVA Digital Prevention Platform www.preventionplatform.co.uk

included in the [Education Resources Toolkit](#) available through the Live Fear Free website. The following are examples of particularly promising practice.³⁹

Promising Practice:

AGENDA: A young people's guide to making positive relationships matter

AGENDA comes from the Latin - "to get things done". It is Wales' first national guidance for young people on how they can safely and creatively make positive relationships matter. Its aim is to help young people exercise their rights, be inspired by the stories of others and support each other in getting started to share and change what matters to them.

Created with a diverse group of 12 young people, AGENDA has been designed so that young people can explore different things at their own pace. It is based on key principle six of the Whole Education guide, which calls for 'active participation of children and young people'.⁴⁰ Rather than bombarding young people with facts, definitions and statistics, AGENDA hopes to connect young people to the different ways in which other young people in Wales and around the world are raising awareness of how gender-based and sexual violence impact upon their lives and the lives of others.

Promising Practice:

Bawso's school engagement work on female genital mutilation (FGM)

Bawso is an all Wales accredited support provider, delivering specialist services to people from Black and Ethnic Minority (BME) backgrounds who are affected by domestic abuse and other forms of abuse, including female genital mutilation, forced marriage, human trafficking and prostitution.

Bawso also engages with education settings around preventative work, including both secular and religious primary schools and high schools.

Workshops for teachers: The aim of the workshops are to raise awareness of FGM and discuss how teachers could provide support to students. The workshop aims to enable teachers to identify the risk of FGM amongst pupils in a safe way. Content of the workshop included in-depth knowledge about FGM including the background of the practice, types of FGM and the health impact, how to spot the signs of students at risk and how to deal with the situation. The workshop also discusses ideas about how teachers and pupils can work together to promote FGM awareness in their school.

Awareness session with pupils: The sessions consist of a presentation, workshop and ideas generator of how young people can raise awareness about FGM and help to end the

³⁹ <http://livefearfree.gov.wales/policies-and-guidance/violence-teaching-resources?lang=en>

⁴⁰ *Good Practice Guide: A Whole Education Approach to Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence in Wales*, (2016) p.21.



practice. The presentation content includes information of FGM and the background of the practice, where it is practiced, the types of FGM, FGM and the law, FGM and human rights and how young people can get involved in awareness raising to end the practice. The workshops explore how to identify signs of a friend who might be at risk, how to deal with the situation and who to speak to or to whom they could go to for access to support and advice. At the end of the session, Bawso plays a video about a young people's group working on a drama project to raise awareness of FGM and asks the pupils to sing a song together about fighting against FGM.

Promising Practice:

Hafan Cymru's Spectrum Project

The Spectrum Project is Hafan Cymru's preventative programme funded by the Welsh Government. This delivers awareness raising sessions in primary and secondary schools across Wales to teach children about healthy relationships, abuse, and its consequences and where to seek help. In addition to raising awareness of abuse amongst students the Spectrum Project also delivers sessions to teachers and teaching support staff, youth workers, social workers and other interested professionals.

Spectrum sessions conform to the requirements of the Personal and Social Education Framework and are suitable for all key stages across the primary and secondary range. Each session is age appropriate and intended to promote discussion without prompting pupils to disclose personal experiences. Every session includes discussion around where young people can go to for help and support if they feel they need to. The Spectrum sessions usually last an hour and are run in a workshop style. All the resources are free and bi-lingual.

The aim is to encourage young people to feel supported and confident enough to voice their opinions and to hear the views of their peers. All members of the Schools Liaison Team are trained and experienced teachers and educators. They are also bi-lingual and therefore able to offer sessions through the medium of English or Welsh.

9. Prevention in the community

Community engagement is vital to achieving the long term goal of stopping VAWDASV and this includes providing prevention programmes within the community such as bystander intervention initiatives, awareness raising and education so that women, children and men know that this behaviour is unacceptable. The quality and accessibility to programmes of support for those who are at risk of or who have perpetrated abuse need to be prioritised in order to change their behaviour. Current programmes for perpetrators are often limited to those who have already committed abuse and are in the criminal justice system, therefore excluding those who are at risk of using the abusive behaviour and also those who have used

abusive behaviour but have not entered the criminal justice system. The prevention of abusive behaviour starts with young people at risk of becoming adult perpetrators.

Effective projects aimed at changing harmful beliefs and practices in a community must engage and have members of that community involved. Specialist organisations can play an important facilitative and supportive role, yet the change must occur in the hearts and minds of the community members themselves. Specialist third sector violence against women organisations (such as Welsh Women's Aid's members) can work closely with individuals (including children and young people), groups, and institutions to strengthen their capacity to be agents of change in their community.

Promising Practice:

Welsh Women's Aid – S.T.A.R (Safety, Trust and Respect) Suite of Services

Specialist support programmes such as S.T.A.R (Safety, Trust and Respect) provides children and young people who have experienced VAWDASV an opportunity to move beyond what happened in a safe and therapeutic way. The specialist support focuses on helping children and young people understand that what happened to them is not their fault. Another important focus is on helping children and young people develop plans for their safety in the event of further exposure to abuse.

The S.T.A.R. Suite of Services promotes education and community approaches to prevention of all forms of violence against women, including domestic abuse and sexual violence. The programmes are designed to challenge gender inequality experienced by children and young people, and to improve safety and minimise the future impact on children and young people of witnessing/experiencing such violence and abuse.

Weekly one-to-one or group work sessions help children and young people identify and express their feelings about abuse, separation and loss. Children learn to recognise their feelings and understand how important feelings are, and strategies on managing intense feelings are explored through fun, child-centred activities. Positive conflict resolution through role modelling and play help children to practice new skills explored in the sessions.

Welsh Women's Aid deliver training for specialist services to run group work and individual support for children and young people (and their parent/carer) affected by abuse; training on and delivery of healthy relationships and awareness-groups for children and young people (aged 4-25) in education or using other services; and training for professionals who work with children and young people and need to provide support around violence against women, domestic abuse or sexual violence. This wider community prevention project complements Hafan Cymru's Spectrum programme delivered in schools.



Promising Practice:

Barnardo's Cymru's Taith service

Barnardo's Cymru's Taith service works with children and young people who display inappropriate sexual behaviour to other children and young people, to promote both safeguarding and appropriate healthy, respectful relationships. They are an assessment and intervention service for children and young people aged 8 to 21 years who are alleged to have engaged in sexually harmful behaviour.

The Service employs specialist workers from professional backgrounds in child protection, youth offending and psychology. The Service comprises four full time practitioners, four part time practitioners, a team manager, one full time administrator, one part time administrator and a Children's Services Manager.

They believe that all children and young people have the capacity to change and develop. They aim to help prevent sexual abuse by children and young people by enabling them to learn to control their sexually harmful behaviour. The Taith Service also helps parents, foster care-givers and other professionals to support the young people.

They employ a variety of techniques to engage children and young people, helping them to take responsibility for their behaviour and to move on to develop safe and healthy relationships.⁴¹

Promising Practice:

Cyfannol Women's Aid Mentoring Project

Cyfannol Women's Aid provides boys who have experienced domestic abuse with mentors to act as positive role models. The mentoring uses a solution focused approach to build on the child's strengths. Together with their mentors, boys have worked on projects that give a sense of personal achievement, including:

- Climbing Snowden
- Cycling over the Severn Bridge
- Learning to swim underwater

After a year of mentoring, boys tend to improve dramatically in terms of concentration, aggression and anti-social behaviour. Crucially, Cyfannol ensures that parents are also able to access support as part of the project.

⁴¹ www.barnardos.org.uk/taith.htm

10. What do survivors say about prevention work for children and young people?

*“You must give young people a chance to speak and then listen to what they say”
(Young person at the Children Matter Too Conference, March 2017).*

It is important to listen and hear the voices of children and young people, including their experiences as infants. A good guide for approaching this can be found in the Children's Commissioner for Wales' recent report 'The Right Way: A children's rights approach in Wales'.⁴²

This needs to be done in an age-appropriate manner, as well as – if appropriate and safe – listening to the needs of the non-abusive parent. Survivor-informed specialist violence against women organisations have an expert understanding of the impacts of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence on children and can also facilitate the involvement of survivors and their children in any early years services and systems development and review.

“Our children need support too. They need to be able to get help to help them understand what's happened”

(Survivor, Are You Listening, Am I Being Heard?)⁴³

In 2016 a survivor consultation⁴⁴ was undertaken to inform the new National Strategy for VAWDASV in Wales. Survivors identified 10 key recommendations for priority inclusion in the updated national strategy, to be delivered by Welsh Government, four of which were specifically related to children and young people:

- Dedicated specialist support services for children and young people impacted by or experiencing domestic abuse, sexual violence, FGM, forced marriage, sexual exploitation or harassment, available in every area.
- Improved awareness of and response to violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence by professionals involved in the family justice system (CAFCASS Cymru, judges and court personnel, contact centres (and safe child contact with parents/carers following separation, in cases of domestic abuse and sexual violence.
- Counselling and therapeutic services for survivors that is available, in every area, when needed, is age appropriate, and helps build resilience and recovery from abuse.
- Preventing violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence from happening in the first place, through compulsory prevention education in all schools

⁴²'The Right Way: A children's rights approach in Wales', (March 2017), www.childcomwales.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/The-Right-Way.pdf [accessed Sep 2017].

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Are you listening and am I being heard?
<http://www.rhianbowendavies.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Are-you-listening-and-am-I-being-heard-FINAL-July-2016.pdf>



and colleges, increasing awareness of the issues and the help available in local communities across Wales.

Promising Practice:

'Ask Me' Scheme

Welsh Women's Aid and Women's Aid Federation England, working with local authorities, has launched the 'Ask Me' scheme to train 'community ambassadors' in Powys, as part of the new *Change that Lasts*⁴⁵ early intervention service model. This enables more opportunities for safe disclosure and sign-posting to help and support within local communities through local businesses and community centres. This is particularly important in cases where perpetrators have used language and integrational barriers in, for example, rural communities to further isolate survivors, and in some cases denying expectant/new mothers some or all maternity and post-natal care, therefore effectively bypassing any access to good 'Ask and Act' practices.

"I was totally cut off. Training and posters wouldn't have meant anything... I was just too frightened, that's the biggest barrier. Being physically locked up, isolated, kept like a prisoner, and being frightened."

Perpetrators understand survivors' fears that any involvement of Social Services may result in their children being taken from them, and such fear can be used to silence and control mothers. Survivors stated that the safety of them and their children should be paramount in cases of violence and abuse. Safeguarding training was a particular concern for some survivors who recommended that there is further training to ensure professionals have a trauma-informed, needs-led and gender responsive understanding of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

"Safeguarding training for agencies just isn't enough. It gives a bit of knowledge but there's no information or in depth understanding of domestic abuse included in safeguarding courses."

Survivors have told us that they feel judged and sometimes asked to mediate with the abuser by professionals working with children, which places both women and their children at increased risk of harm. Welsh Women's Aid is currently working with CAF/CASS Cymru to deliver a programme of work to enhance their understanding of coercive and controlling behaviour and the impact on children and young people to enhance their response to women and children using the family court.

⁴⁵ <https://www.womensaid.org.uk/our-approach-change-that-lasts/>



Cymorth i Ferched Cymru Welsh Women's Aid

Rhoi Merched a Phlant yn Gyntaf
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“...what happens time and again is they expect women to mediate with their own abusers when they've lived with them in a war zone, and if you don't do this you're judged by agencies for failing in some way or for not doing what they expected you to do.”

11. Conclusion

There is a great deal of innovative work underway in Wales with children and young people to prevent violence against women (including domestic abuse and sexual violence), and we hope that this briefing has provided a helpful guide to assist with the integration of these prevention services with wider work underway in Wales.

Of specific note is the prevention work underway regarding pregnancy and the health and well-being of children and young people, as well as work around education in schools and the wider community on healthy relationships.

Investment in specialist violence against women support services to support this prevention work with children and young people is a vital consideration moving forwards, as it can help to support and strengthen wider responses (such as work underway regarding ACEs and the well-being of future generations etc.). The opportunities for partnerships with survivors, and children and young people will also continue to add value and help us to achieve a Wales that is truly free of violence and abuse.

Welsh Women's Aid will continue to work to improve the safety of children who have experienced domestic abuse and other forms of violence against women by working with survivors and their children to get their voices heard. If you have any comments or questions about this briefing, please don't hesitate to get in touch with:

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