



Cymorth i Ferched Cymru
Welsh Women's Aid

STATE OF THE SECTOR

Building sustainable specialist services in Wales

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 specialist services in Wales (comprising our membership of specialist services and members of the regional 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 direct services including, for example, the Welsh Government funded Live Fear Free Helpline and a National Training Service partnership. We are piloting the Survivors Empowering and Educating Services (SEEdS) project, which is empowering survivors of violence and abuse to collectively influence and inform improvements in public services and commissioning frameworks, and help change attitudes.

We also deliver the [Wales National Quality Service Standards](#), 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 that include sexual violence standards and BME service standards for Wales delivered by partner agencies.

Our membership comprises of 22 third sector violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence specialist services in Wales, with whom we have national partnership agreements to ensure our work is coordinated and integrated.

As the national umbrella organisation for violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence specialist services in Wales, Welsh Women's Aid would also like to sincerely thank all of the specialist services that contributed to the *State of the Sector* report.

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This report is produced with thanks to our specialist service members:



1. Introduction

In 2018, Welsh Women's Aid commemorated its 40th year as a movement to end violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence in Wales. Domestic abuse, sexual violence, prostitution, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, 'honour' based violence, stalking and sexual harassment will impact one in three women at some point in their lives.¹ These forms of abuse are not isolated incidents, but form a pattern of behaviour that violates human rights, limits participation in society, and damages health and well-being. Violence against women and girls is rooted in inequality between women and men which intersects with discrimination based on ethnicity, age, class, sexuality and disability to impact on experiences of abuse and routes to support.

Welsh Women's Aid national network of specialist services provide vital, life-changing support, protection and prevention work in local communities across Wales. They have built a wealth of knowledge and expertise in supporting survivors of abuse, informed by a gendered, equality and human rights framework. They place the needs of survivors at the heart of provision and partnership working, whilst also aiming to robustly evidence their impact and value for money, given the competitive commercial environment services now inhabit.

Our network of specialist services were founded by, and some continue to be delivered by and for women, many of whom have themselves been impacted by abuse. The experiences and needs of survivors of abuse are at the heart of our movement, and are central to our work nationally and locally. Several specialist services in Wales now also deliver support and services dedicated to meet the needs of male victims, and some also deliver interventions to change perpetrators' behaviour, whilst continuing to place the safety of survivors central to their work. Common to all our member services is their ability to stand alongside survivors to meet their support needs, help them access their rights and entitlements and enable them to recover from abuse. Specialist services provide a voice for those who face discrimination and multiple disadvantages so experience barriers accessing services or getting help in local communities.

Our annual "state of the sector" report is informed by the experiences of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence specialist services in Wales that are members of Welsh Women's Aid.

The current climate is extremely challenging for specialist services. Not only are women, and the services that are predominantly used by women and children, being disproportionately impacted by austerity measures and public sector funding cuts², but also charitable investment into the Welsh third sector by trusts and foundations continues to lag behind other parts of the UK.³

Whilst we have successfully campaigned to secure a commitment, by Welsh Government, to ensure sustainably funded specialist services in Wales, the delivery of this on the ground has been slow. To help progress the work by Government and commissioners to deliver on this commitment, in September 2017 we produced a national report that set out how specialist services are defined, the principles that should underpin any model for sustainably investing in the sector, and the level of

¹ <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2014/violence-against-women-eu-wide-survey-main-results-report>

² <https://wbg.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/WBG-Funding-Report-2.pdf>

³ Garfield Weston Foundation (2015) An insight into the future of charity funding in Wales <https://garfieldweston.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/GWF-Insight-into-Future-of-Charity-Funding-in-Wales.pdf>

resources that goes into specialist services (regionally and nationally) broken down by types of funder and service provision.⁴

This report, into the state of the sector in 2018, is informed by further feedback from our members, who told us about the state of their funding, the context within which they deliver services and the challenges they face, and their goals for the year ahead. This report is also supplemented by analysis of the annual data provided by members in 2017-18. We would like to thank our members who have responded to surveys, requests for data and taken part in our discussions, we appreciate it takes time and energy away from their front-line work but is done with the desire to see systematic change to improve the situation for survivors across Wales.

This report is dedicated to our national network of specialist services and survivors who form part of our movement to create change and bring an end to violence and abuse, for good.

⁴ This report, developed by a national working group, included feedback and findings from 33 responses (from 36 surveys circulated) representing a 92% response rate: Welsh Women's Aid (September 2017) "Report to National Task and Finish Group to inform the development of a Model for Sustainable Funding for VAWDASV Specialist Services in Wales"

Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence data in Wales – 2017/18

Violence against women and girls constitutes a major public health problem and a violation of human rights: **1 in 3 women experience some form of violence and abuse in their lifetime**⁵, particularly intimate partner violence and sexual violence.

There is a gap nationally in the collation of data on the prevalence of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence in Wales. There is also a gap in data about the extent to which survivors and perpetrators use public services, which is not collated regionally and nationally.

What we know from public sector sources of data is:

- The Crime Survey for England and Wales found in the year ending March 2018, an estimated 2.0 million adults experienced domestic abuse (of which 1.3 million were women).⁶
- According to the Crown Prosecution Service; Violence against Women and Girls report 2017-18, there were 140 rape prosecutions in Wales, with a conviction rate of 60.9%. During the same period, there were 563 convictions for serious sexual assault.⁷
- The recorded number of domestic abuse related incidents stood at 36,529 by the Police in Wales during 2017-18.⁸

The largest database of collated data in Wales comprises Welsh Women's Aid members' data returns on a quarterly and annual basis.⁹ The following summarises the demand for these services in 2017-18.

- 12,166 survivors were supported by specialist services during the year.
- 431 survivors referred to refuge were unable to be supported by the service due to resources and capacity (i.e. the service being full, unable to meet/support their needs, lacking accessibility for disabled survivors, or lacking resources to support women unable to claim benefits).
- At the end of March, 292 (26% of referrals) survivors of sexual violence were on waiting lists for support in dealing with their experience(s) of sexual violence and abuse.
- There has been a year on year increase of 14% in the number of children supported in refuge-based support, which equates to 266 children and young people in refuge each quarter.
- In domestic abuse services, three in four survivors were subject to coercive controlling abuse with 74% of survivors experiencing this type of abuse.
- One in four survivors accessing domestic abuse services reported being stalked or harassed.
- 95% of survivors felt safer after using refuge based support.
- The Live Fear Free helpline managed 33,642 contacts, an 11% increase in volume to 2016/17.

⁵ <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2014/violence-against-women-eu-wide-survey-main-results-report>

⁶ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/domesticabuseinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2018>

⁷ <https://www.cps.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/publications/cps-vawg-report-2018.pdf>

⁸ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/appendixtablesfocusonviolentcrimeandsexualoffences>

⁹ Welsh Women's Aid (2018) Annual Report: Data from specialist services in Wales, 2017/18. Cardiff: Welsh Women's Aid



431

survivors were unable to be supported in refuge because of a lack of resources and capacity

Survivors staying longer than **6** months in

refuge has doubled in a year



Referrals to community based support increased by



32%

in the last year

On average

266

children were supported in refuge-based support every quarter



1008



referrals were made to our sexual violence member services during

2017/18



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What are Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence specialist services?

The sector defines¹⁰ violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (VAWDASV) specialist services in Wales as being:

- 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, female genital mutilation, 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 violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence 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 violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence 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. Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence 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;
- Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence specialist services 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 Black and minority ethnic communities, as the client group is reflected in staffing, management and governance structures of these organisations.

Specialist services in Wales also recommend that delivery of sustainable funding by commissioners and other funders recognises and reflects the above definition, and ensures specialist services in Wales are equipped to deliver interventions and support within the following framework that underpins delivery:

1. Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence specialist services are delivered within recognised quality assurance and accreditation frameworks.
2. Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence 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

¹⁰ Welsh Women’s Aid (September 2017) “Report to National Task and Finish Group to inform the development of a Model for Sustainable Funding for VAWDASV Specialist Services in Wales”

state services and communities to provide institutional advocacy and improve public sector practice, and prevent abuse from starting and escalating.

3. Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence specialist services collaborate to deliver the core provision set out in the Istanbul Convention requirements (Articles 23-28), namely refuge-based support, community-based support, independent advocacy and counselling, one to one and group support, and within this provision are equipped to deliver dedicated support for children and young people (including one-to-one support, group work programmes and play therapy).
4. Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence 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. Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence specialist services are provided by staff with in-depth knowledge of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence in accordance with National Occupational Standards and the National Training Framework.
6. Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence 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, culture, ethnicity and language based support across their services.
7. Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence 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. Black and minority ethnic specialist services are skilled in identifying needs and experiences of specific forms of abuse, and offer a range of services and are able to access women who may not recognise their experiences as violence, and create flexible and diverse support systems, sensitive to the fact that for many Black and minority ethnic women, refuge, counselling or other support services may be unfamiliar and/or stigmatised.

2. Funding Landscape

It makes good business sense to ensure the sustainability of third sector specialist services, which will help them to continue to fulfil their mission, meet the needs of their beneficiaries and stakeholders, and focus on prevention in local communities. To maintain their financial stability and sustainability, it is critical specialist services are sufficiently resilient and have the capacity to diversify income and access new funds, which maximises the range of income available to them.¹¹

Summary of funding from our annual membership returns in 2017/18

- 41% of services confirmed they were not fully funded for the year (2018/19) ahead.
- 36% of services confirmed they will lose funding for an area of work and 14% (3) reported their funding was insecure for the year ahead. The same percentage (36%) reported they would likely lose staff because of funding cuts.
- 90% of services reported they had not as yet experienced funding cuts since April 2018.
- 63% of services confirmed they have some elements of their funding secured for longer than a year and 40% expected to gain additional funding in 2019.
- However, 36% of services deliver support without dedicated funding.

Sustainable funding: the context

It has been a challenging year for the sector in Wales, at a time when the public sector is seeing its funding being cut through austerity measures, and when welfare reforms are affecting women and the poorest families disproportionately, particularly those who are survivors of abuse (for example, benefit payments into a single bank account leaves women vulnerable to further economic abuse, and the state has introduced economic coercion that controls women's reproductive rights and compels women to disclose sexual violence under threat of financial penalties through the two Child Tax Credit limit).

To counter the worst of these austerity measures, there is a clear legal and strategic context for sustainably funding specialist services in Wales. This includes the enactment of the Violence Against Women Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015, the 2016-2021 National Strategy¹² and resultant commitment for delivering the Istanbul Convention obligations.¹³ These are supported by the Welsh Government statutory guidance for commissioning specialist services to accompany the Lloyds Bank Foundation Tackling Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence: Collaborative Commissioning Toolkit.¹⁴

In particular, the Strategy places duties on devolved public services and commissioners to ensure provision in every area to prevent, protect and provide support for survivors of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence. This does not mean that statutory public services ought to deliver these services, rather, they should be strategically and collaboratively commissioning these

¹¹ These funds would include gifts/donations from individuals and organisations, including corporate support grants from philanthropic or other public sector funders (usually restricted by grant conditions); funding provided through contractual relationships (often paid by results or in arrears); trading income, marketing and selling services or products within the scope of its charitable objects.

¹² <http://gov.wales/docs/ds/jlg/publications/commsafety/161104-national-strategy-en.pdf>

¹³ <https://rm.coe.int/168046031c>

¹⁴ https://www.lloydsbankfoundation.org.uk/VAWDASV%20Toolkit_Wales_web.pdf

services for the benefit of survivors, to intervene early and prevent further abuse, and to prevent violence and abuse from happening in the first place. Despite this context, however, progress in achieving sustainable funding for all specialist services in Wales has been slow, and much of our activity throughout this year has been to campaign to retain existing public sector funding streams. Little progress has been made nationally to deliver on the Strategy's commitment for long-term sustainable funding for the specialist sector in Wales, a view which is supported by the Wales Audit Office, which found that:

“Short-term funding arrangements and the lack of pooling or prioritising funds for specialist support as a challenge to the implementation of the Act.”¹⁵

In 2018, Welsh Government piloted an “Early Intervention, Prevention and Support” (EIPS) grant, which from 2019 threatened to integrate *Supporting People* and other public sector housing-related grants into its scope. We also faced plans from UK Government to change the way supported housing was funded, which created much uncertainty and risked the closure of many refuge-based support services had this gone ahead.

Welsh Women's Aid, in partnership with other third sector housing related organisations in Wales campaigned for an end to proposed supported accommodation funding reforms and for the proposed EIPS grant in Wales to remain separate from housing and homelessness-related grants.

We welcomed the Welsh Government announcement, in autumn 2018, that the EIPS grant will, for the foreseeable future, comprise two separate grant programmes: a newly established Housing Support Grant (which will include Supporting People) and a Children and Communities Grant (to include Flying Start and Families First, amongst others). We are also pleased that UK Government confirmed housing benefit will be retained for crisis supported accommodation. Both are crucial (albeit limited) wins for the violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence sector in Wales, and now commissioners need to ensure that within these grant programmes, sustainable funding for violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence specialist services is prioritised and delivered.

At the same time, we have advocated throughout the year the need for Welsh Government's allocation of its Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Grant to retain its ring-fence, supported by clear commissioning principles for national and local allocation. Welsh Government recently confirmed in their final budget proposals for 2019 that funding to address violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence will remain static at £5m for the year.

There are already substantial costs to the state of responding to violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence. It is estimated that domestic violence costs over 66 billion in England and Wales.¹⁶ Most of this cost relates to the emotional and physical harm experienced by survivors. UK Government figures estimate that each adult rape costs society over £96,000 in its emotional and physical impact on the survivors, lost economic output due to convalescence, treatment costs to health services and cost incurred in the criminal justice system with sexual violence costing society in England and Wales an estimated £8.5 billion.¹⁷

¹⁵ <http://www.audit.wales/system/files/publications/Call-For-Evidence-Women-2017-English.pdf>

¹⁶ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/772180/horr107.pdf

¹⁷ Home Office (2005) 'The economic and social costs of crime against individuals and households 2003/04', 2005. Figures from this report were up-rated to 2009 prices in the government response to the Stern Review (2011). See https://www.sericc.org.uk/pdfs/5953_government-stern-review.pdf.

We know levels of violence against women and girls increased between 2010–2014 and we have no evidence to show this is diminishing.¹⁸ The sector has been reliant on minimum levels of funding for decades, which is allocated year on year. This piecemeal funding allocation has been insufficient to be truly ground-breaking in its intent to support survivors of abuse.

Not only are survivors still being turned away from under-resourced and over-stretched specialist services, but funding allocation to date has not been ambitious enough. It is vital funders work together with specialist services and survivors – the centres of excellence in local communities – to ensure no survivor of abuse is turned away when they need help from specialist services and that significant inroads are made to not only pick up the pieces but deliver on earlier support and the primary prevention of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

To achieve this, we need a sustainably funded specialist sector, equipped to deliver not only crisis support but earlier help and longer term prevention work.

Wales has already made a commitment to deliver sustainable funding for specialist services. This should mean at least 5 year funding cycles with extensions built in where possible, so that funding is at least the length of government timescales and strategies. We would expect this to include alignment with investment by Westminster Government and bring together resources across criminal justice commissioning, health (for example the Healthier Wales grant has £10m to spend on preventative measures) and local authority commissioning through Children and Communities, Housing Support grants, social care, substance misuse, and education budget streams. Alongside public funding there must be investment into violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence work in Wales by charitable trusts and foundations.

Where budgets are pooled these should be ring fenced for violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence work in order to support the sustainability of specialist services. We would also expect a level of national oversight of the way regional and local funds are allocated, to ensure no unintended consequences through lack of understanding by commissioners of the nature and benefits of the national network of specialist services in Wales. A robust understanding of local needs should inform any local or regional commissioning of specialist services and this needs to deliver the sufficient range of support services – in line with minimum requirements - that are needed to improve outcomes for violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence survivors and perpetrators.

Sustainable funding models must invest more in earlier identification and prevention, whilst ensuring crisis responses continue in the short/medium term. Commissioners should balance the focus on essential service provision with the need for preventions and early interventions. This will reduce the likelihood of escalation and over the longer term reduce the need for high cost interventions.

¹⁸ S. Walby, J Towers and B. Francis, 'Is Violent Crime Increasing or Decreasing? a New Methodology to Measure Repeat Attacks Making Visible the Significance of Gender and Domestic Relations', *The British Journal of Criminology*, Volume 56, Issue 6, 1 November 2016, Pages 1203–1234, <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azv131>

Case Study: Pooling resources to commission integrated specialist services – RISE, Cardiff

In Cardiff, national and local experts and service providers supporting women have been meaningfully involved and listened to by local decision makers. In addition survivors were involved in designing service specifications and participated in commissioning processes. This has resulted in the commissioning of specialist women-only services for women and children, alongside which separate services are being commissioned for male victims and for perpetrators of domestic and sexual violence.

The commissioning team coordinated with the local health board and police and crime commissioners and included a number of funding streams from across the local authority. This joined up and consultative approach enabled them to commission services to meet the needs of women and children impacted by violence and abuse, which includes specialist sexual violence support and support to meet the needs of BME survivors.

The successful providers, a specialist violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence service, which includes a collaboration with two other organisations, now has a long term contract to deliver specialist provision by and for women and by and for BME women, along with specific responses to children and young people.

The commissioners ensured the sustainability of this provision by providing a 5 year plus 2 contract, allowing for the services to plan, grow and innovate to meet the needs of survivors.

3. Concerns for the Future

Many of our members are small specialist services with a few dedicated staff but with significant experience and expertise in providing effective support to the many survivors that come through their doors. A big concern they have highlighted is losing out on funding via tendering going to larger, generic providers who have more capacity and time to write bids. This impacts on local providers with a history and knowledge of the communities they work with. Additionally, while the majority of providers who responded confirmed no current loss to funding, this may change as funding for the next financial year is announced. Without this, services are unable to plan ahead, but instead work within year on year time-frames.

While 63% of our members do have funding secured for longer than a year, this funding is still usually under 3 years; one noted that some of their funding was only for 18 months, which is due to run out mid-2019. Currently the service is unsure whether they will have secure funding for mid-2019 onwards, as they are still awaiting the outcome of bids. Additionally, other areas of the service went out to tender during 2018/19 – this of course speaks to the uncertainty caused by short-term funding cycles and how it impacts on planning of services. Another service highlighted that Supporting People core funding aside, grant funding for additional projects usually lasts for 3 years. Funding models should be at least 5 years as a lack of sustainable funding impacts services continuity, innovation and staff retention. Services have noted how uncertainty of funding for posts results in workers seeking more secure roles leaving behind a gap in knowledge.

Through Welsh Women's Aid regular national 'Funding Working Group' our members have highlighted the importance of ending the uncertainty of year on year funding for the specialist sector, thus ensuring specialist services have security through a commitment of 5-7 year funding cycles. In turn, this funding certainty will:

- Help towards better staff retention, as previously highlighted, as workers will have better job security.
- Provide services with an opportunity to be innovative with the support they provide, while ensuring the core business is secure and delivered.
- Crucially, ensure survivors do not face the uncertainty of whether services will continue to operate and thus provide support.

However, sustainable funding alone is not enough. The provision of small, independent charities must continue. These services bring a distinct value to local communities, through being embedded in their local areas and having intimate knowledge of their community's needs. Small charities:

*"give voice to those too often ignored, answers to some of our toughest problems, identify and meet the needs of communities and pick up the pieces when other agencies fail. They need to have the power and support to deliver effectively but must also be architects of their own futures."*¹⁹

Their size makes them adaptable to need, with staff taking on multiple roles, but their size can also act as a hindrance; our members have told us that they are concerned about cuts to public sector budgets and the threat of losing out to competitive commissioning and going up against larger, generic providers. It is imperative therefore that the value of the specialist sector is recognised and protected.

The Welsh Government delivery of a model for sustainable funding for violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence specialist services must include the ongoing viability of these services, to enable them to achieve sustainability to deliver for communities in Wales.

¹⁹ <https://www.lloydsbankfoundation.org.uk/Facing%20Forward%20-%202017%20Final.pdf>

4. Specialist Services Landscape 2017/18

Refuge-based support for survivors of domestic and sexual abuse

During 2017/18, 2,505 survivors benefited from refuge based support. However, lack of space in refuge-based support was the most common reason survivors were not able to be supported in the last year, with 190 women and 9 men unable to be supported. Additionally, 200 survivors with 'complex support needs' were unable to be supported by services, again highlighting a lack of resources, staffing and funding. We are also concerned this is compounded by cuts to public services who work with substance misuse, mental health support needs and homelessness needs and how this further impacts already stretched specialist violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence services as the 'nets' designed to catch people with additional and complex needs are diminishing. 112 women were unable to be supported because of additional support needs and a further 94 were unable to be supported because the service was at capacity with the number of survivors they could support with complex needs.

The number of survivors who stayed in refuge for longer than 6 months doubled from 2016/2017 to 2017/18 from 58 to 102, this could be indicative of a shortage of local authority housing or of longer waiting lists or to a lack of housing resources generally, which impacts on survivors being able to move on from support. Additionally the impact of welfare reforms on the affordability of housing for survivors wanting to leave refuge could be causing a hindrance to survivors gaining the independence they want to live a life free from abuse.

According to Routes to Support, (the UK Wide online database which includes information about violence against women services and up to date vacancies in refuges) only 11 refuge services are able to accept survivors with no recourse to public funds²⁰. Access to refuge space for survivors with no recourse to public funds is limited as they are not able to claim most benefits, including housing benefit, which refuges rely on to cover many costs. This has resulted in only 15 women being supported in 2017/18 across our membership.

As mentioned, while the decision not to implement the EIPS grants has been warmly welcomed across the sector, members have highlighted ongoing concerns about the establishment of the new Housing Support Grant (which will include Supporting People). As one put it *'we are out of the water in terms of the EIPs grant but we are still facing cuts to this of pot (Supporting People) of funding which funds a significant proportion of specialist agencies'*. They highlighted that their core funding is currently annually awarded (at very short notice) and it is proposed to be going out to commission in the coming year. Another has already been notified locally that Supporting People funding in the new Housing Support Grant could be reduced for 2019/20. This follows a previous cut in funding which means they are currently operating 6 space refuge provision with funding for 5 spaces.

Domestic Abuse Community-Support

Community outreach support includes specialist services that are provided for survivors in the community, such as drop-in, group work, advocacy, counselling and peer-support.

During the last financial year, 10,138 new referrals were recorded, compared to 7,678 in 2016/17, this is an increase of 32%. We can likely attribute this increase to more awareness of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence, for instance through training such as Ask and Act.²¹ It may also be caused by an increase in demand for early intervention services, either because of an

²⁰ <http://www.nrpfnetwork.org.uk/information/Pages/who-has-NRPF.aspx>

²¹ <https://livefearfree.gov.wales/policies-and-guidance/ask-and-act?lang=en>

increase in awareness amongst both professionals and survivors thanks to awareness raising campaigns or the number of survivors who cannot or don't want to access refuge based support. Despite the increase in referrals, the number supported has remained steady, which would infer there is insufficient capacity and resources in services to support survivors being referred and needing access to support. Funding has therefore not increased to meet demand.

Despite the increased demand for community-based support services, it is likely that the true demand for such services in Wales is much higher. Survivors can face multiple barriers to accessing support. Survivors have spoken to us about the need for accessible services for all survivors in every area²², the ambition to address this was included in the Welsh Government National Strategy²³ but funding commitments to make this a reality in every area of Wales have not matched the ambition to make this a reality. Geography (e.g. living in rural areas) can hinder survivors from seeking support or accessing services, and can influence the level of awareness or knowledge surrounding domestic abuse and support available. In rural areas of Wales, distance to community-based support services and subsequent scarcity of public transport acts as a particular deterrent for survivors being able to engage with services.

Sexual Violence Services

The suite of services currently delivered by dedicated rape crisis / sexual abuse support services in our membership include Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVAs), counselling services and group support work, and a refuge-support service for survivors of sexual abuse. The services provide dedicated support for adults, children and young people (0-17 years) effected by recent or historical sexual violence and abuse, and dedicated support for survivors in the sex industry, survivors of sexual exploitation and trafficking.

A total of 1008 referrals were made into dedicated sexual violence services in 2017/18. 1,106 survivors were engaging with and supported. However, 292 survivors of sexual violence were waiting for support, due to demand exceeding capacity, this represents 26% of referrals.

Members continue to highlight to us the uncertainty and chronic shortage of funding for sexual violence services; at the point of responding to our quarterly survey, one member confirmed they were still awaiting the outcome of the Ministry of Justice Rape Crisis fund for 2019 - their main source of funding. They highlighted the concern about how the fund will be commissioned going forward and whether the ring fence for sexual violence and specialist providers will remain.

Specialist sexual violence services are heavily reliant on non-devolved criminal justice funding, with limited funding coming from health, local authority or Welsh Government funding streams. This is despite the specialist mental health and therapeutic support that they provide survivors of sexual violence.

Additionally, despite no direct cuts during the last financial year, members have reported that they have never been fully funded and rely on other sources of income which they have to generate. This results in small teams working within these specialist services being placed under pressure using their time looking for and applying for funding instead of concentrating on delivering and improving service provision for survivors.

²² http://www.welshwomensaid.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Are_you_listening_and_am_I_being_heard_FINAL_July_2016.pdf

²³ <http://gov.wales/docs/dsilg/publications/commsafety/161104-national-strategy-en.pdf>

Children and Young People

In its latest draft budget proposals, Welsh Government has made many commitments to funding work with children, particularly around tackling Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), incorporating mental health provision in schools and the health and wellbeing of young people.²⁴ Despite this, the current provision for young people and children affected by violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence continues to be at the mercy of a post-code lottery. We are aware from our members that many do not have dedicated children and young people provision funding from either public sector or trusts and foundations. Some services have never had dedicated funding for children and young people provision where as others had lost the funding for this prior to 2018. Evidence continues to demonstrate funding is unstable for this service across Wales. In 2016 for example, our State of the Sector report found 46% of services had cuts to their children and young people funding. In the following year, services saw a 14% reduction in funding from Children Services and Families First²⁵. We are currently mapping the provision of dedicated children's workers across Wales and have found inconsistency in funding of services. This inconsistency has resulted in significant gaps in provision.

Individually, members have pointed out that the limited funding they currently have is due to end following just one year of funding provision, when the tendering process is likely to be implemented for services. One service stated:

"We have struggled each year to secure funding to provide specialist provision to support children and young people and although we always manage to deliver the service it is difficult to meet the demand with limited resources. It is also difficult to plan ahead with such short times scales attached to the funding."

Of the total survivors supported in refuge based support during 2017/18, almost half were children. Of the 266 children in refuge per quarter, 17% were on the Child Protection Register. We know that due to the lack of specialist, dedicated children and young people workers, not all of these children would have received direct support while in refuge. However, regardless of whether there is dedicated work with children and young people, specialist services support for the non-abusive mother also supports the children, particularly via funding for 'family' work. In terms of the Live Fear Free helpline, support was provided to parents of an estimated 3422 children and 29 children and young people who contacted the helpline directly.

One service did report cuts to support for children and young people, resulting in expected waiting lists increasing. Our mapping and scoping exercise on children and young people services within Wales, found that more intensive, specialised, therapeutic services are needed for children and young people experiencing mental health issues as a result of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence. Where there is provision, this is very limited compared to the population. We therefore, remain gravely concerned about the inconsistency in funding for direct children and young people provision. Prevention and early intervention are crucial for tackling violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence and the long-term, sometimes irreversible impact on children. However there remains no direct commitment to filling this gap in provision, despite the high number survivors accessing services with children.

²⁴ <https://beta.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-10/draft-budget-2019-2020-detailed-proposals.pdf>

²⁵ <http://www.welshwomensaid.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/WWA-State-of-the-Sector-2017-ENG.pdf>

5. Conclusion

Funding concerns clearly continue for the sector. The promise of sustainable funding has not led to any formal announcements, although we are pleased that Welsh Government has committed to reviewing this as well as the impact of competitive funding models on the sector – we will continue to campaign on this in 2019. In addition, possible cuts to the Supporting People funding element of the new Housing Support Grant funding pot remains a grave concern for our members. This is core funding, essential to the running of support services, refuges in particular, with so many providers already operating at a loss any further cuts could be catastrophic.

Members have highlighted their concerns about commissioners' lack of understanding about the particular nuances of running a specialist violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence support service. In particular the importance of a gender responsive, needs led strengths-based approach as well as the specialism of by and for women, services by/for BME women, LBT women and disabled women. Additionally, many of the services which have been operating across Wales for 40 years were set up and are run by survivors, providing that essential expert by experience knowledge into the service they deliver.

Finally, this report clearly and worryingly highlights the lack of consistent funding for dedicated children and young people services. Children and young people are not 'secondary victims' of abuse and coercive control, but experience it themselves as well as alongside the non-abusing parent. Without specialist violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence services being enabled to (via funding and resources) help children recover from this trauma, adverse childhood experiences, which the Welsh Government is keen to address, will continue. Additionally, without services having the capacity to work towards preventing violence and abuse from happening in the first place, violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence specialist services of the future will continue to deliver a 'quick fix' without being resourced to deliver a long term approach to prevention.

Recommendations

1. Funding cycles should be at least 5 year with extensions built in where possible.
2. Sustainable funding should be applied to violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence specialist services', as defined, to ensure specialist services do not lose out to 'generic providers'
3. Ensure an element of national funding is retained - which secures core provision and delivery and is sustained from across Welsh Government departments.
4. Ring-fenced funding and diversity of funding streams that address the full range of needs of survivors of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence and invest in earlier intervention and prevention alongside crisis support and emergency provision.
5. Funding is supported by good, collaborative, and integrated commissioning practices, which focuses on support at a regional and local level linked with the specialist sector and informed by survivors. In turn, these practices, recognise that many of the specialist sector has been set up/and or is operated by survivors or that survivors make up staff and volunteer teams.
6. Commissioners across Wales should have training/workshops on the violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence commissioning guidance, to fully understand the needs of survivors and the specialist sector, these should be run in collaboration with local specialist services.
7. 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.
8. Collaboration is needed with non-devolved funding, particularly for sexual violence services which have to heavily rely on Ministry of Justice funding to sustain their provision.



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