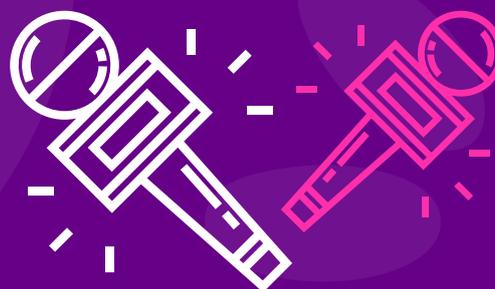




Cymorth i Ferched Cymru
Welsh Women's Aid

Checklist before publication of a story discussing violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.



Why is this important?

Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence can be an emotive and challenging topic to report on and read about. Journalists have a unique and powerful opportunity to raise awareness, inspire reflection and action in society and help those affected by their content to reach out for help. By getting this right, you could improve and save lives.

The below provides a quick 10-point checklist for journalists before publishing any content that discusses violence against women, domestic abuse or sexual violence.



Are there any harmful stereotypes used?

There are a lot of assumptions and misconceptions across society about who victims/ survivors are. Using stereotypes in terms of gender, race, sexuality, age, disability and other characteristics is damaging and contributes to this unhelpful narrative that alienates, marginalizes and victim-blames. Everyone who suffers abuse or violence is an individual, not a statistic or just part of a pattern- try to make sure your reporting reflects that.



Is there any victim-blaming language?

Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence happen because a perpetrator chooses to enact it- it is never the fault of the victim/survivor or a consequence of their circumstances or actions. Avoid using certain language around violence and abuse that contributes to a culture of victim blaming. For example, if you are reporting on sexual violence do not focus on what the victim/survivor was wearing or if they had been drinking. If you are reporting on domestic abuse do not focus on the perpetrator's financial difficulties or stressful work life as a justification for abusive behaviour.



Does the story use accurate terminology about the victim/ survivor?

Within the legalities that surround language, this may include choices around the age of victims/ survivors (are they 'a child' or 'a young woman'), around consent, and around accurately naming the violence or abuse that took place.



If you interviewed a survivor, is their anonymity protected to the best of your ability?

Consultation with survivors has shown that one of their biggest concerns when being interviewed is being identified by their perpetrator. It is important that you are clear about whether you can offer anonymity to a survivor, and what steps you will be taking to enact this- for example, if you are photographing or filming a survivor, can you blur a face, provide a voice-over or change a name? It will be worth checking with your production team beforehand about this process and the different levels of anonymity that can be worked with.

If anonymity cannot be guaranteed, be honest about this. If a survivor is identified, it can potentially create a very dangerous situation, be incredibly traumatic for them and even result in the abuse continuing, so transparency is needed.



If the survivor is not anonymous, have you considered potential impacts?

Has this decision been sufficiently risk-assessed? Are you aware of the survivors' circumstances and the support network they have around them? The impact of a survivor providing a non-anonymised account may be dangerous and last long after your story has been published and your contact with that individual has ended, so it is vital for their safety and self-care, that this is a well-informed decision.



Have you checked any opinions within the piece with specialist/ expert organisations?

Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence are topics with a lot of misconceptions and misinformation attached to them. If you are unsure what language to use to discuss a particular issue, contact an expert organisation for their help. They may be able to provide context, statistics and relevant research, or be able to talk to you about the sensitivities of particular issues and advise you on how best to discuss them.



Does the headline for your story use sensationalised language?

Although word count and a need for engagement is always pressing, avoid using graphic language or details within headlines. This is a trauma it is not salacious. If your article will be shared on social media platforms, be mindful about how audiences might respond to the headline, and the impact this may have on the victim/ survivor or those that know them.



Is there a warning about graphic or upsetting details?

Reading details about violence against women, domestic abuse or sexual violence can be particularly traumatic and triggering. If it isn't possible to place a specific 'trigger warning' ahead of your article, make sure to put in a line informing the reader that the article will contain graphic or upsetting content, so they can prepare and make a choice about reading on.



Does the story signpost to support?

When reporting on violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence it is vital to signpost to support. Support is available for survivors, regardless of how long ago the violence happened. Consuming content on this topic could trigger unexpected, strong emotions and it is responsible to provide your audience with a place to turn to.

The Live Fear Free helpline is a Welsh Government funded 24/7 helpline, offering compassionate support and advice to survivors of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence as well as concerned others, such as loved ones, neighbours, colleagues and professionals.



Llinell Gymorth **Live Fear**
Byw Heb Ofn **Free Helpline**

0808 80 10 800

ffôn • tecst • sgwrsio byw • ebost
call • text • live chat • email



Call: 0808 80 10 800



Text: 07860 077333

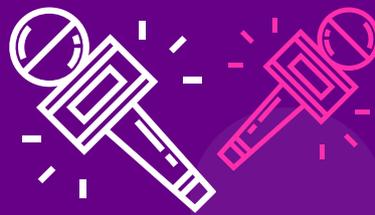


Webchat: gov.wales/live-fear-free



Are you personally affected by writing the story?

Journalists will all have their own personal life experiences and reporting on these instances of abuse or violence could bring up difficult feelings or memories. It is really important to remember that, should you find yourself in this situation, the Live Fear Free helpline is here for you too 24/7.



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Welsh Women's Aid

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