

## **Equality, Local Government and Communities (ELGC) Committee**

### **Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence**

#### **Draft Budget Scrutiny**

##### **Background**

The overarching objective of the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 (“the Act”) is to improve the Public Sector response in Wales to gender-based violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence. It is intended to provide a strategic focus on these issues and ensure consistent consideration of preventive, protective and supportive mechanisms in the delivery of services.

##### **VAWDASV Grant Budget**

The Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) grant is directed towards delivering the objectives of the Act. The grant provides funding to local authorities and third sector organisations to deliver direct service provision to support and protect victims; strategic coordination of services at a local level; and training. The funding also supports preventative work, including healthy relationship education in schools and VAWDASV awareness raising campaigns

The total revenue budget for 2019-2020 is £5million. Of this, the costs of directly implementing the Act will be £361,296. This consists of the costs to deliver the National Training Framework and the costs associated with the National Advisor role.

- *National Advisor role*  
In accordance with the Act the National Adviser for Violence against Women and other forms of Gender-based Violence, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence is a statutory role. The Adviser works alongside officials to advise and assist the Welsh Ministers in tackling these issues.
- *National Training Framework*  
The National Training Framework on VAWDASV outlines the Welsh Government's requirements for training on these subjects across the public service and specialist third sector. The Framework is made up of six groups. All professions within the Public Service will fall into one of these groups and a minimum training requirement is outlined per group.

The remaining funding is provided to support the key priorities that are identified under the VAWDASV Act and contributes towards:

- VAWDASV Regional Boards and third sector stakeholders to support frontline delivery of VAWDASV services.
- Discussions, training, support and awareness-raising on Female Genital Mutilation, Honour Based Violence and Forced Marriage issues, including modern slavery.

- Support for an umbrella organisation, Welsh Women's Aid, to support the VAWDASV agenda across Wales, including the Children Matters Project.
- Support for the preventative concept of an educational project in which teaches children about healthy relationships, abuse, its consequences and where to seek help.
- Provision of the Dyn Wales Helpline Monday to Friday to support male victims across Wales, and a dedicated Independent Domestic and Sexual Advice Adviser for men who live in South Wales.
- Training for professionals who work with people affected by sexual violence or at risk. Working with Sexual Violence and Human Trafficking and Children and Young People Counselling across South, Mid and West Wales.
- The Live Fear Free Helpline which is the Welsh Government's all Wales VAWDASV helpline which offers confidential, quality information and support to all victims experiencing gender-based violence, domestic abuse, and sexual violence. This encompasses all groups outlined in the Act including honour based violence, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.
- Communications/Publicity including:
  - Contract for a full service agency for three years from July 2017. This provides specialist skills such as media planning and buying, consumer PR, animation, television advertising and digital targeting are only available via a full-service agency.
  - Support community-led work to take forward the THIS IS ME and the Bystanders communications campaign.

Key to the administration of this funding is value for money and the requirement to meet the needs of survivors and victims of VAWDASV at a national, regional and local level.

### **Governance - VAWDASV Regionalisation**

From April 2018 local authorities began working on a regionalised basis to deliver VAWDASV services. This was first mooted in 2012 in the White Paper, and it has been understood by stakeholders that in conjunction with the implementation of the Act, a regional funding approach would be the preferred model for future funding.

The move to a regional approach encompassed the VAWDASV revenue grant provided to local authorities. Local authorities have the autonomy to align to provide increased consistency and effective multi-agency collaboration for VAWDASV services.

Along with this collaborative approach, local authorities and local health boards are required under section 5 of the Act to develop and publish a local VAWDASV strategy, setting out the identified needs and priorities for their area. This may be included with their local well-being plan issued under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

These strategies are intended to support the improved alignment of funding with policy direction, including the Act; ensure greater focus on the delivery of services; and facilitate greater value for money and flexibility of regionally funded services to meet local need.

The guidance for local strategies was published in March 2018. All local authorities and local health boards published the first strategies for 2018–23 in the spring. The National Advisers are currently reviewing and analysing the strategies for evidence of high quality strategic planning, co-ordination and consistency.

The National Advisers are committed to working with local authorities and local health boards to support them to update their strategies in 2019 -2020 to ensure that they reflect the National Indicators once they are published.

The move to a regional approach to funding links with the Finance Committee's agreed four principles of financial scrutiny and it is anticipated that as the momentum of regionalisation becomes embedded, it will achieve the following key outcomes:

- Improved alignment of funding allocation with policy direction and objectives of the Act at a regional level;
- Greater focus on funding to support the direct delivery of services as opposed to general co-ordination/administration, in line with the forthcoming duty to deliver local VAWDASV strategies from May 2018;
- Greater value for money and efficiency savings with regional joint funding for services and shared administration;
- Reduction of duplication of services achieved through greater collaboration;
- Strengthening of accountability and co-operation of local and regional partnerships by encouraging areas to work together to prioritise their objectives and plan to address priority areas. This will help pave the way for further implementation of the Act, in particular in relation to the delivery of local strategies.
- Better partnership working and information sharing: better inter-area knowledge, shared resources and information;
- A more resilient service with increased shared capacity to contingency plan, e.g. around bed spaces in refuges.

### **Third Sector Funding**

The intention was to redirect most funding currently provided to the third sector to the Regional Partnerships from April 2019 to enable them to commission services from third sector organisations directly. Following meetings with the Partnerships, however, it was agreed that the Welsh Government will continue to directly fund third sector organisations in 2019-20 to enable a thorough review of VAWDASV third sector grant funding.

### **VAWDASV National Indicators**

To help organisations prioritise areas for spending, the National Advisors are supporting Welsh Ministers to develop and publish a set of National Indicators. The Indicators will be measures of progress against the purposes of the Act. The Indicators will be subject to public consultation by the end of this year, with the aim to publish final indicators by May 2019.

### **VAWDASV Sustainable Funding Group**

The Sustainable Funding group has been set up to ensure that funding provided to stakeholders meets the priorities within the VAWDASV Act, offers value for money, and provides collaborative, consistent and needs led services for victims and survivors of VAWDASV in Wales.

The group supports the VAWDASV National Strategy Delivery Plan by:

- reviewing Welsh Government and other funding sources that currently support VAWDASV services and interventions across Wales,
- considering options to move to a more regionalised approach that encourages and facilitates greater collaboration between relevant partners and provides the opportunity for future funding to take account of gaps in service provision and be more responsive to local needs. This will include reviewing the implementation of the statutory Commissioning Guidance to assist in ensuring compliance across the regions;
- developing the principles and framework for a model for sustainable funding of VAWDASV specialist services that takes account of the above review and regionalisation agenda.

The VAWDASV Sustainable Funding Task and Finish Group meet on a quarterly basis and is chaired by one of the National Advisors.

The Group applies the 'five Ways of Working from the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 ('WFG Act').

The Group will consider all relevant funding streams that support VAWDASV specialist service provision in Wales – including Welsh Government, UK Government and non-statutory and unrestricted sources with a view to assisting those with statutory functions to ensure better alignment that supports future service planning and commissioning.

The scope of changes to funding arrangements that can be recommended by the group is limited to the VAWDASV revenue Grant, although the Group may seek to influence the way other VAWDASV funding streams are managed.

The Group informs the VAWDASV National Expert Panel chaired by Professor Jackie Jones.

## **VAWDASV Funding Principles**

Officials are currently working with the Sustainable Funding Group to finalise the definitions of the VAWDASV Funding Principles. These principles will be cross-cutting throughout all the provision that is funded under the Act, for example Delivery Plans will need to demonstrate how they are acting in line with the 5 Ways of Working.

The seven funding principles outlined below will be implemented for the VAWDASV Grant from April 2019. The Finance Committee's agreed principles of financial scrutiny are cross-cutting throughout all seven of the VAWDASV funding principles.

- 1. Show clear evidence of need in Wales and also of effectiveness.***
- 2. Have clear aims and objectives***
- 3. Have a clear explanation of how outcomes and benefits will be measured***
- 4. Align to at least one of the Welsh Government's objectives in the National VAWDASV Strategy, and to all relevant local strategies under the VAWDASV Act***
- 5. Demonstrate how they complement and add to existing services rather than duplicating them***
- 6. Have a clear project plan including an exit strategy***
- 7. Demonstrate consistency with the 5 ways of working in the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015***

## **VAWDASV Statutory Commissioning Guidance**

The Welsh Government's National Strategy on VAWDASV 2016 – 2021 commits the Welsh Government to publishing statutory guidance for relevant authorities on the commissioning of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence services.

The aim of the Commissioning Guidance is to promote high quality collaborative commissioning that delivers more consistent and effective services to prevent VAWDASV and protect and support victims of VAWDASV across Wales. This guidance applies to the commissioning of both specialist and non-specialist VAWDASV services, whether commissioned from the public, third or private sectors.

The guidance supports the national, regional and local commissioning of evidence-based and integrated interventions by both specialist and non-specialist VAWDASV services to meet the purpose of the Act.

The guidance applies to the commissioning of VAWDASV and related services by relevant authorities under the Act. Relevant authorities are defined as local authorities, local health boards, fire and rescue authorities and NHS Trusts, and to that extent the guidance is issued under section 15 of that Act ('power to issue statutory guidance').

The Sustainable Funding Task and Finish group assisted in the drafting of the guidance for consideration by the Welsh Government, based on a commissioning toolkit funded by the Lloyds Foundation and framed within the context of regionalisation of the Welsh Government violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (VAWDASV) funding. This Guidance as finalised by the Welsh Government was consulted on between 29 March 2018. The consultation closed on 22 June 2018 and the Guidance is being amended in light of consultation responses.

A decision as to when it will be issued as statutory guidance will follow.